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Dear Readers,

Each semester, I am equally astounded by what I have learned and by what I have yet to learn. For every book read, there's another I would like to have read; for every insight gleaned, another has just eluded me. Indeed, each course we take at UD is but a passage to vaster possibilities. Reflecting thus, it was with great joy that I read this semester's contributions to the *Scholar*. The selected works are diverse in form and content, representing a variety of stages in scholastic development – different facets of the “UD experience.” All of these scholars are visibly progressing in the goodness and knowledge that make us more what we are.

Much of the work evinces a burgeoning knowledge of and love for the intellectual feast UD first sets before us in the form of the Core. Charles Shaughnessy's “Coming At Me” rings with the enthusiasm of the early phases of the Lit Trad sequence; Alex Taylor's “Being Alone Together,” which examines the relationship between fornication and the infamous pear tree incident in Augustine's *Confessions*, represents a growing ability to engage traditional texts. With a blossoming command of the lyric, Theresa Sawczyn describes an experience familiar to those of us who have been to Rome, while Vincent Athas' “Self-portrait” exemplifies in artistic form the examination of self that necessarily occurs when we place ourselves in dialogue with the classics.

As we progress in our university education, we are asked to pursue the implications of what we have learned as far as we are able. The spirit of wonder and hunger for truth encouraged in the Core curriculum comes to fruition in work like that of Samuel Henderson, who, having taken previous findings into account, forges a path to future discovery in his research on neutron scattering. Likewise, in her prize-winning essay on the creation of the fairy tale in Nabokov's fantastical *Pnin*, Deandra Lieberman makes mature forays into the text in her senior novel project, unafraid to address the highly imaginative, the mysterious, and even the absurd while developing her own perspective from the writings of previous commentators.

But as Eleanor Carrano aptly notes in her essay on the limitations of the liberal arts in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, “book-learning” is hardly the end of all education; an entirely new and vast body of knowledge is to be obtained in the world outside the Bubble, and all of the classics put together cannot replace that sage instructor, experience. Yet even the outside world, with all its pragmatic concerns, longs for what a liberal education can teach us, as is evident in Caroline Watanabe's poignant “Nails on the Blackboard,” in which the speaker is confronted with the dehumanization that occurs when eternal truths about the human person are forgotten

in the bustle of secular, professional life.

Pondering the content of these pieces, I am thankful, first and foremost, for the guidance of our beloved alma mater, who has inspired us all with love for the good, the true, and the beautiful, and without whom none of these works would be possible. I would also like to thank our faculty advisor Dr. Bernadette Waterman Ward, our submissions coordinator Mrs. Concetta Nolan, and my fellow editors for their dedicated assistance in the collection, selection, and revision of the contents of this journal, as well as the English Department and our chapter of Phi Beta Kappa for the funds necessary to publish it. Most of all, I'd like to thank our student contributors for their rich and thought-provoking work and for their willingness to share with us the fruit of one stop on the lifelong journey that is education.

Christina Witkowski

Contents

Front Cover	Gem of Light.....	Kathleen Ramirez
5—13	Squirrel Fur To Glass: The Creation of the Fairy Tale in Pnin.....	Deandra Lieberman
13	Self-portrait.....	Vincent Athas
14	"Coming At Me".....	Charles Shaughnessy
15—18	Liberating Arts: Practical Education and Limitations of the Liberal Arts in The Tempest.....	Eleanor Carrano
18	Studies of neutron scattering off Fe with monoenergetic neutrons at 3 and 4 MeV.....	Samuel Henderson
19	"April in Rome".....	Theresa Sawczyn
19—21	Carmine Velvet.....	Marie McDonough
21—25	The Pear Tree, Fornication, and Being Alone Together.....	Alexander Taylor
25 — 32	Nails on the Blackboard.....	Caroline Watanabe
Back Cover	Ballet Russe.....	Katie Hand

The Dr. Katherine Maren Sorensen Award for Excellence in the Study of the Novel

Description: The Katherine M. Sorensen Award recognizes one student in Literary Study II whose presentation reveals him or her to be a superior reader of the novel, exhibiting in his or her reading, writing, and delivery Katherine's characteristic virtues: a precise intelligence and wit, a capacious imagination, and a humane learning.

**Squirrel Fur To Glass:
The Creation of the Fairy Tale in *Pnin***
by Deandra Lieberman

The greatest similarity between the University of Dallas and Vladimir Nabokov's *Pnin* is that both provide homes for a really outstanding number of squirrels. In the case of *Pnin*, however, the squirrelly presence transcends natural plausibility to acquire the beauty and complexity of a truly Nabokovian pattern. Nearly every significant image or theme within *Pnin* at some point touches the squirrel theme, with squirrels becoming indispensable to the artistic integrity of the story. *Pnin*, however, is more complex still, departing from the limitations of reality by utilizing a third-person omniscient narrator who, in personality and interests, sounds suspiciously like Vladimir Nabokov himself. Yet *Pnin* accuses the narrator of being "a dreadful inventor (*on uzhasniiy vidiushchik*)" (185), and in Chapter 7, the narrator reveals that he has actually had precious few encounters with his supposed friend, Timofey *Pnin*, the émigré professor of Russian at Waindell College. Because of the obvious artistry of the squirrel theme, squirrels actually do help provide a means of approaching the puzzling narrator, and of understanding the idea of art that the real Nabokov expresses through and embodies within his short, complicated, hilarious *Pnin*.

The fascinating squirrel theme knows no dearth of attention in *Pnin* scholarship. On one end of the squirrel spectrum, W.W. Rowe argues that the squirrels are actually under the spectral direction of *Pnin*'s deceased sweetheart, Mira Belochkin. At the other end of that spectrum, Gennady Barabtarlo, who annotated the novel, dismisses both Rowe's too-literal explanation, along with any symbolic interpretation: "does the Squirrel Theme have a special allegoric mission, besides sharing in the general symbolism of all artistic expression? Not in a Nabokov novel" (23). Although I largely agree with Barabtarlo, "artistic expression" does matter when the behavior of the narrator-as-artist is considered. Paul Grams does, however, consider the squirrel theme in relation to the narrator. He observes that the squirrel that appears before feverish *Pnin*

in Chapter 1 is “at the center of a constellation of images” (199). In tracing the squirrel and several related images throughout the novel, Grams observes that “[the] recurrences [grow] fantastic,” resulting in a “degeneration of this constellation of images” that “can be associated with the narrator’s obsessive repetition of it in increasingly artificial guises,” as seen especially in the final appearance of a stuffed squirrel in Chapter 7 (200). The squirrel theme *does* become increasingly fantastic as the novel goes on. From a living squirrel on the ground before Pnin in Chapter 1, by Chapter 4, the etymology of “squirrel” is discussed; by Chapter 7, the squirrel is merely a stuffed toy. Although Grams does notice this trend, he errs in supposing that it is solely indicative of the narrator growing bored with his reductively parodied protagonist. When Grams says that “Nabokov’s peeping eventually makes [Pnin’s heart] appear to *him* a rubber motor: his obsessive indiscretion kills Pnin for him” (201), Grams misses one important truth to be gained from properly pursuing the evolution of the squirrel theme in the novel: the imposition of a pattern, however much it may deprive Pnin of privacy, does not kill Pnin but immortalizes him through the magical enchantment of art.

There is at least one major squirrel appearance in each chapter of *Pnin*; these appearances have thematic value not only within their immediate contexts, but also when viewed in relation to other appearances of the squirrel theme. There are a number of ways that the squirrels can be approached in order to shed light upon the narrator’s behavior as an artist. The squirrels are a part of the novel’s world, and several ways of interpreting that world are proposed by the novel itself. The first of these ways would be the way of Liza and Eric Wind—what Pnin would call the “‘*pshooslinie*’ (‘psychoasinine’) way (50). The second would be the historical method of methodical Timofey Pnin. The third way, the way of the artist—of Victor and the narrator—which warps the world beyond the constraint of nature to get at something more than simple fact.

Charles Nicol makes the important observation that “squirrels are not symbols for Pnin, shorthand to represent him, or reductions of him, but only themes associated with him” (200). Throughout the novel, psychiatry is mocked for its determination to crush people and art into conformity with pre-determined systems that deny individuality and originality. Pnin’s ex-wife, Liza Wind, and her husband, Eric, both psychiatrists, are confounded by the artistic genius of their son Victor: “instead of delighting in Victor’s artistic genius, they used to worry gloomily about its genetic cause” (89). Victor is subjected to a barrage of psychiatric tests—primarily because his parents are concerned that he is not more of a problem child (90). Because Victor “[makes] drawings that [have] no *subhuman* significance whatever” (91, emphasis mine), his parents neglect the fact that his drawings may have very great *human* significance. The researchers do finally decide that “the psychic

value of Victor's Mind Pictures and Word Associations is completely obscured by the boy's artistic inclinations" (92). Even where art is not valued for itself, it cannot be rendered a mere psychiatric tool. But before we become too acquainted with Victor's clinical travails, we see Pnin send Victor a "picture postcard representing the Gray Squirrel" from which Victor is "glad to learn that 'squirrel' [comes] from a Greek word which [means] 'shadow tail'" (88). The squirrel theme, previously embodied by several living squirrels with which Pnin crosses paths, here acquires a great significance in that it is rendered more complex through the metaphorical depth of its etymology. As Nicol puts it in his analysis, "Nabokov investigates events not in their reduction to a hidden simplicity, but in their hidden complexity" (201). Nabokov would never take seriously the comment of Professor Tristram Thomas who, when asking Pnin about a cake baked in the form of a bird, says that "[b]asically, of course, the symbol is phallic" (150).

"Methodical" (23) Pnin, like Nabokov himself, is keenly aware of the complexity of his world. When telling his class the story of his immigration, Pnin, relates an amusing conversation in which, when asked whether he were an anarchist, he responds: "First of all, what do we understand under 'Anarchism'? Anarchism practical, metaphysical, theoretical, mystical, abstractical, individual, social? When I was young... all this had for me signification" (12). Pnin is often overwhelmed by the real complexity of the world, for "[it] was the world that [is] absent-minded and it [is] Pnin whose business it [is] to set it straight" (13). Although Pnin has spent his life in a time so politically unstable that the certainty of his date of birth has been lost (Pnin is not aware that Chapter 3 occurs on his own birthday), and, perhaps ironically, although Pnin lives in a fictional reality where time is rather flexible, Pnin is "a stickler for historical truth" (164). When Pnin recovers from his cardiac seizure of Chapter 1, "the back of the bench against which he still [sprawls] [feels] as real as his clothes, or his wallet, or the date of the Great Moscow Fire—1812" (24). But finally, there is the matter of Pnin's research itself: "He contemplated writing a *Petite Histoire* of Russian culture, in which a choice of Russian Curiosities, Customs, Literary Anecdotes, and so forth would be presented in such a way as to reflect in miniature *la Grande Histoire*—Major Concatenations of Events" (76). In this research, Pnin who will be overcome by the "rapture of endless approximation" (143), notices deepens the complexity of history by connecting it with culture—reducing neither of them to the other.

Pnin's particular method of research, using culture to reflect history, has its own reflection elsewhere in the novel. In Chapter 4, the narrator explores the life and artistic development of Victor Wind, making note of the rather singular opinions of Lake, the art teacher Victor reveres. By Lake's reckoning, "if Degas could immortalize a *caleche*, why could not Victor Wind do the same to a motor

car?" (97). His idea for how to do this resonates significantly within *Pnin*:

One way to do it might be by making the scenery penetrate the automobile. ... break the body of the car into separate curves and panels; then put it together in terms of reflections. These will be different for each part: the top will display inverted trees with blurred branches growing like roots into a washily photographed sky, with a whalelike building swimming by—an architectural afterthought; one side of the hood will be coated with a band of rich celestial cobalt; a most delicate pattern of black twigs will be mirrored in the outside surface of the rear window; and a remarkable desert view, a distended horizon, with a remote house here and a lone tree there will stretch along the bumper. This mimetic and integrative process Lake called the necessary 'naturalization of man-made things' (97).

Like Pnin's *Petite Histoire*, the creation of this painting depends upon the recognition of differences and the careful establishment of a connection between one object and another, which is reflected and refracted. In Victor's case, however, the thing created is art. Victor is not, like Pnin, making associations that uncover the hidden complexity of reality; rather, he is warping the ordinary, rendering reality unfamiliar in order to immortalize it. As Barabtarlo notes, this passage may be "an important clue to [the narrator's] method of narration ... applicable to the way in which Pnin's life is dissected into 'curves and panels' and then 'put together in terms of reflection'" (172). The reason for artistic creation comes more to the forefront when we encounter the outer limits of the Pninian historical method.

In Chapter 6, Pnin speaks to Hagen, his faculty protector, about the courses that the two plan to teach: "On Tyranny. On the Boot. On Nicholas the First. On all the precursors of modern atrocity. Hagen, when we speak of injustice, we forget Armenian massacres, tortures which Tibet invented, colonists in Africa. ... The history of man is the history of pain!" (168). Throughout the novel, it is pain which leaves Pnin feeling "porous and pregnable" in a way that Grams and others identify with the lack of discreteness perpetrated by "Nabokov's" cruel art (20). Pnin has established a number of mental walls to protect himself from painful realities. Before Pnin ever meets Liza, he is engaged to a girl named Mira Belochkin—"Belochkin" being the diminutive form of *belka*, Russian for "squirrel." Mira and Pnin did not split up of their own accord: "The Civil War of 1918-22 separated them: history broke their engagement" (134). Eventually, Mira Belochkin marries "a fur dealer of Russian extraction" (134) and later is murdered in the Buchenwald concentration camp. The

overwhelming awfulness of this history of pain utterly exceeds the capacity of Pnin's reason and conscience to contain it:

In order to exist rationally, Pnin had taught himself, during the last ten years, never to remember Mira Belochkin... because, if one were quite sincere with oneself, no conscience, and hence no consciousness, could be expected to subsist in a world where such things as Mira's death were possible. One had to forget—because one could not live with the thought that this graceful, fragile, tender young woman... had been brought in a cattle car to an extermination camp and killed by an injection of phenol into the heart, into the gentle heart one had heard beating under one's lips in the dusk of the past. (135)

In his reading of *Pnin*, Grams notes "how much the notion of 'discreteness' under pins the esthetics as well as the ethics of *Pnin*—or rather how little esthetic and ethical discreteness there is in the book and how cruel it is as a result," (197) and focuses upon the evil of the narrator who, "in the interest of making a pattern of Pnin's life... plays too easily with Pnin's privacy" (201). His accusations are correct, but misguided, for the greatest invader of Pnin's privacy has been human history, which forced an element of discreteness, a separation, between Pnin and Mira, which condemns Pnin to permanent exile. Mira's heart is penetrated by the poison which now, less literally, has poisoned Pnin's memories of Mira, making his memories painful and causing him physical distress.

Because history has created a pain that exceeds categorical explanation and invades Pnin's heart more than a mere lack of privacy does, Pnin's imagination compensates for what his reason cannot comprehend:

And since the exact form of her death had not been recorded, Mira kept dying a great number of deaths in one's mind, and undergoing a great number of resurrections, only to die again and again, led away by a trained nurse, inoculated with filth, tetanus bacilli, broken glass, gassed in a sham shower bath with prussic acid, burned alive in a pit on a gasoline-soaked pile of beechwood. According to the investigator Pnin had happened to talk to in Washington, the only certain thing was that being too weak to work (though still smiling, still able to help other Jewish women), she was

selected to die and was cremated only a few days after her arrival in Buchenwald, in the beautifully wooded Grosser Ettersburg, as the region is resoundingly called. (135)

Without a historically specific account of Mira's death, Pnin becomes something like the narrator, creating events that could not all have happened, simply because his own pain and horror at her death warp his reality and exceed what can be known for certain. The narrator seems to share this reaction; through Mira's surname, she is incorporated into the squirrel pattern that bears her suffering throughout every chapter of the novel, tying the artificiality of the pattern to Mira's "dark brows... [and] slenderness of arm and ankle," which the narrator renders just as "unchanged" and "immortal" as Pnin himself has once believed (134). At the end of this passage, the narrator mockingly adopts the tone and diction of a tour book. Buchenwald is "only five miles from the cultural heart of Germany" (135). Dr. Hagen, Head of the German Department and Pnin's protector, wails in response to this fact, "*Aber warum*—but why—... why had one to put that horrid camp so near!" (135) Hagen is condemned by his own reaction, which mourns the infection of culture more than the loss of many lives. The narrator's sarcastic presentation of Hagen here suggests that the narrator is conscious of a suffering world beyond the world of art, in a way that Hagen is not.

The narrator, who can be snide and condescending, creates with the squirrel theme a pattern that cannot easily be reduced to a single symbolic meaning, but through which a myriad of interconnected themes—shadows, hearts, snow, trees, discreteness, art—can be traced, in the Pninian associative style. The narrator receives a very dark condemnation from most critics; yet we would not know the narrator was unreliable if he did not tell us this himself. It is in Chapter 7 that, for the first time, the narrator references dates in his own life, saying "My first recollection of Timofey Pnin is connected with a speck of coal dust that entered my left eye on a spring Sunday in 1911" (174). It is the narrator who, even while he insists his memories are legitimate, acknowledges that he could err: "Perhaps because on my visits to schoolmates I had seen other middle-class apartments, I unconsciously retained a picture of the Pnin flat that *probably* corresponds to reality" (176, emphasis mine). It is the narrator who shows Pnin denying the narrator's previous acquaintance with him, and actually telling a third party, "Now, don't believe a word he says, Georgiy Aramovich. He makes up everything. He once invented that we were schoolmates in Russia and cribbed at examinations. He is a dreadful inventor (*on uzhasnnyi vidumshchik*)" (185). Most of Chapter 7 is the narrator providing for the reader a number of meetings with Pnin, which totally undercut the intimacy implied elsewhere throughout the novel. In her brilliant ex-

amination of the novel's self-referentiality, Leona Toker observes that "[o]n repeated reading, aware of the narrator's cognitive unreliability, we have to treat the narrative of Chapters 1 through 6 as recording not the random flow of plausible events but the workings of the narrator's imagination" (27). Among the many anticlimactic recollections of Chapter 7, the narrator recalls that, the one time that he went to Pnin's home, he "could see a map of Russia on the wall, books on a shelf, a stuffed squirrel, and a toy monoplane with linen wings and a rubber motor" (177). Grams views this stuffed squirrel as expressing the disintegration of the squirrel pattern due to the narrator's lack of respect for Pnin: "the image is fully perverted, and the narrator's probe into Pnin's consciousness has become a snobbish 'Nabokov' peeping into Pnin's schoolroom." But since the narrator himself suggests that this recollection precedes every later story, I agree with Toker that, "The 'shadow-tailed' little animals that abundantly populate Pnin's world turn out to be the progeny of the stuffed squirrel... in chapter 7" (27).

The narrator has created a novel with an *overt* patterning of squirrels. Between the previously explored "squirrel appearance" of Pnin's anguish for Mira "Little Squirrel" Belochkin in Chapter 5, and this final appearance of a stuffed squirrel in Chapter 7, there is a very important appearance of the squirrel in Chapter 6. To understand this reference in Chapter 6 requires a return to Pnin's research for his *Petite Histoire*. By Chapter 6, in the Fall Term of 1954, Pnin is reluctantly nearing the end of his research: "Index cards [are] gradually loading a shoe box with their compact weight. The collation of two legends; a precious detail in manners or dress; a reference checked and found to be falsified by incompetence, carelessness, or fraud" are all making Pnin a very happy scholar. In one of Nicol's most insightful moments, he connects Pnin's scholarship to a scene that occurs at Pnin's memorable "house-heating" soiree. Pnin is serving "Pnin's Punch" in a beautiful and significant blue-green bowl that Victor has sent him, and his guests have noticed the gorgeous glasswork:

Margaret Thayer admired it in her turn, and said that when she was a child, she imagined Cinderella's glass shoes to be exactly of that greenish blue tint; whereupon Professor Pnin remarked that, *primo*, he would like everybody to say if contents were as good as container, and, *secundo*, that Cendrillon's shoes were not made of glass but of Russian squirrel fur—*vair*, in French. It was, he said, an obvious case of the survival of the fittest among words, *verre* being more evocative than *vair* which, he submitted, came not from *varius*, variegated, but from *veveritsa*, Slavic for a certain beautiful, pale, winter-squirrel fur, having a bluish, or better say *sizily*, columbine, shade—"from *columba*,

Latin for “pigeon,” as somebody here well knows—so you see, Mrs. Fire, you were, in general, correct.” (158)

What Pnin does here is to trace out the history of a story, a story that was changed from its original state by authorial license or fraud, thus acquiring fantastic qualities: a plausibly furry shoe has turned into a necessarily magical glass slipper. In showing us the stuffed squirrel, the original for the pattern pervading *Pnin*, what the narrator does is admit that more stories than just Cinderella’s have an original version without the magical glass slippers. The increasingly artificial squirrel references throughout the novel, then, are indicative not of the narrator’s immaturity and boredom, but of the transformation of the fairy tale that is *Pnin*. As Nabokov says in his lecture on one of Jane Austen’s drily realistic novels, “*Mansfield Park* is a fairy tale, but then all novels are, in a sense, fairy tales... There is no such thing as real life for an author of genius: he must create it himself and then create the consequences ... *Mansfield Park* never existed, and its people never lived” (*Lectures*, 10).

Art, for Nabokov, is a transcendence of simple reality. Mocking those who would ferret simple symbols out of art, Nabokov shows the ideal reader in Pnin himself, who seeks hidden complexities. Pnin’s focus on time enables him to make non-reductive but compelling observations about history and about art: when he applies his keen awareness of time to *Anna Karenin*, he observes that “there is a significant difference between Lyovin’s spiritual time and Vronski’s physical one. ... It is the best example of relativity in literature that is known to me” (130). There is relativity in art, which the narrator fully shows by juxtaposing his version of Pnin’s life with Pnin’s opinions about his narrator. Pnin and his narrator reflect each other and throughout the novel, Nabokov shows the role of the artist as the one who warps the world, coping with what cannot be rationally accepted and immortalizing what cannot really live forever.

The narrator has told the glass slipper version of Pnin’s life, while Pnin insists upon the squirrel-fur shoe version. But the important thing to remember with the novel *Pnin* is that no matter what version of Cinderella you go with, no version of Cinderella is more than a fairy tale. Professor Timofey Pnin, at the center of an evolving fairy tale, never did exist. Neither the narrator nor Pnin present the objective truth. But within the world Nabokov has created, it is possible, in one way, to reconcile the narrator and his protagonist. At the party, Mrs. Thayer says that Pnin’s bowl reminds her of the color of Cinderella’s glass slippers; Pnin says that the slippers are not glass, but that, etymologically, the squirrel fur shoes of the original tale possessed the same shade of wintry pale blue. So Mrs. Thayer is “in general, correct” (158). The narrator allows contradictions to arise between himself and Pnin because he wants to stress that although both give different reports of Pnin’s life, both versions of the story are nonetheless painted with what Lake would call “Cinderella shades transcending human perception” (96).

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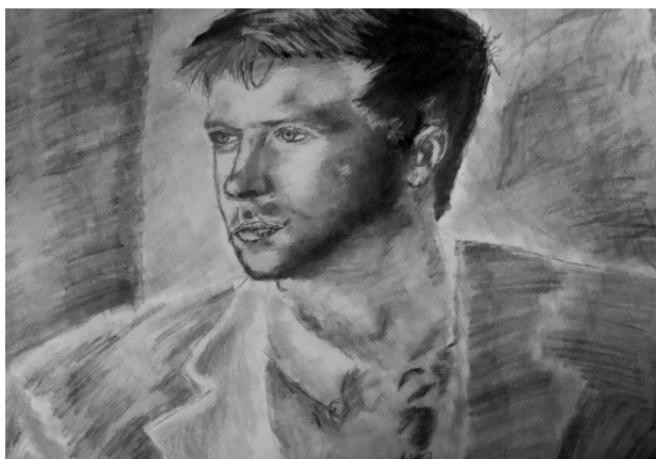
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Self-portrait
Pencil on Paper
by Vincent Athas

2013



Coming At Me

by Charles Shaughnessy

Coming at me, huge and heavy
Scenes of peace, what I wish for
Scenes of slaughter, drawing closer
The shield of Achilles comes

Coming at me, round and terrible
This war, killing and slaughter
This war, magnificent and heroic
The shield of Achilles comes

Coming at me, gold and bronze
Reminding me of my home
Reminding me I will never see home again
The shield of Achilles comes

Coming at me, silver and tin
My life, in metal
My life, about to end
The shield of Achilles comes

Coming at me, earth and sky
Inevitable, my death
Inevitable, Achilles' glory
The shield of Achilles comes

Coming at me, moon and stars
Behind it, a fearsome visage
Behind it, my death approaches
The shield of Achilles comes

Coming at me, sun and sea
Now near, my end
Now near, my destiny
The shield of Achilles comes

Coming at me, terrible and close
The shield smashing my helmet
The pitiless bronze on my face
The sword pierces my armor
The shield of Achilles arrives.

Liberating Arts: Practical Education and Limitations of the Liberal Arts in *The Tempest*

by Eleanor Carrano

The Tempest is fundamentally a story about the relative worth of education in a world that demands practical experience, and more particularly about the efforts of one man to successfully impart learning to the unschooled world around him. The theme of education is introduced almost immediately as we discover that it is Prospero's passion for learning, at the expense of attending to "worldly ends," that has brought about the loss of his kingdom (1.2.89). It is clear from the beginning, however, that Prospero will struggle with the role of educator, not only student. He admits that his absorption in study "awakened an evil nature" in his usurping brother Antonio, and "like a good parent, did beget of him, /A falsehood ..." (1.2.93-95). There is great significance in Prospero calling himself "a good parent" to Antonio, beyond the obvious irony that Prospero, if he *were* Antonio's parent, would be said to have failed miserably in his responsibility. Prospero, as a brother, is not charged with Antonio's moral education, but his inability to use his own extensive learning to bring about good in Antonio reminds him of his true child Miranda, to whom he has a duty to be a much better teacher. Prospero's "good parent" anticipates the proverb Miranda will cite upon being informed of her uncle's treachery, when she concedes that "Good wombs have borne bad sons" (1.2.119). Miranda unwittingly suggests that her father's learned mind might be a womb, with as great a potentiality for producing both good and evil as her grandmother's body. Miranda's expression of faith in her grandmother – and thus the potentiality of her family in general – encourages us to believe that Prospero still has the chance to put his learning to good use by instructing Miranda well, but the verbal link to Antonio's botched "education" sustains an element of suspense.

As Antonio threatens to intrude once again on his calm coexistence with Miranda, Prospero is anxious to fortify his role as Miranda's schoolmaster. Frequently demanding her attention with such interjections as, "Dost thou attend me?" and "Dost thou hear?" Prospero emphasizes that "The hour's now come; / The ver minute bids thee ope thine ear" (1.2.37,78,105). "Tis time," he insists, that Miranda should learn the truth about their past (1.2.24). In laying aside his "magic garment" and his "art" before proceeding, Prospero seems to be devoting his attention even more closely to the business of teaching Miranda (1.2.25). In hindsight, his gesture will suggest an element of insecurity in his mastery over her education. He recalls this gesture at the end of the play when he informs Ariel of his intention to quit magic: "I will disuse me, and myself present / As I was sometime Milan" (5.1.85-86). In laying aside his magic robe, Prospero is setting aside the role of fearsome wizard in order to teach Miranda as a loving father, but he is also divesting himself of insulation from the past, and its remembrances of an unhappier effect of his devotion to learning. It is difficult for the reader – as it is presumably for Prospero –

to recollect his days as the rightful Duke of Milan without recalling how they were ended through “closeness” (1.2.90). As used by Prospero, this “closeness” signifies the seclusion of an intellectual absorbed in his books, but the word suggests an additional meaning: the nearness of father and child that Prospero seeks to create during his intimate talk with Miranda. Even as Prospero seeks to orient his efforts at education in the direction of Miranda’s benefit, he is encouraged to look backwards toward failure.

That Prospero has a challenging task before him as Miranda’s educator becomes obvious soon after he begins to recount their past, when Miranda poses this question: “What foul play had we that we came from thence? Or blessed was’t we did?” (1.2.60-61). Although Prospero admits that the truth encompasses both foul play and blessing, Miranda’s ignorance of how to react to what she has just been told signifies her struggle to grasp the new lessons unfolding before her (1.2.62). That Miranda is disproportionately educated in the liberal arts seems more than probable. Prospero describes himself as “unparalleled” in the liberal arts, and reminds her: “I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit / Than other princess’ can, that have more time / For vainer hours, and tutors not so careful” (1.2.74, 1.2.172-174). The experience of forging new personal relationships, however, is quickly outpacing her reserves of book-learning. Presented with an attractive young man for the first time, Miranda declares the very mortal Ferdinand – half-drowned and wandering about in search of his companions – “A thing divine” (1.2.418). The sheer novelty of Ferdinand’s appearance makes him more of a god to Miranda than her father, who is directing the action of the play with god-like omnipotence, “as [his] soul prompts it” (1.2.421). Perhaps the most significant thing about Miranda’s assessment of Ferdinand is that he is simultaneously “divine” and “natural”: “I might call him / A thing divine, for nothing natural / I ever saw so noble” (1.2.417-19). For Miranda, conditioned to living in a world that her father controls so completely, “divinity” has become commonplace, and what must obey the laws of nature supernaturally fascinating. As Prospero tells Miranda himself, she is ignorant that her father is “more better / Than Prospero ...” (1.2.19-20). Miranda’s education seems to be tending toward imbalance – erudition at the expense of practical experience – that led to her father’s demise.

As Prospero wonders at the naiveté of Miranda, who is “skilless of” “How features are abroad,” *The Tempest* calls into question the importance of education in general (3.1.52-53). Upon hearing Miranda for the first time, Ferdinand exclaims: “My language? Heavens! / I am the best of them that speak this speech, / Were I but where ‘tis spoken” (1.2.429-431). This is a recurrent recognition in *The Tempest*, as each character discovers the worthlessness of his learning in responding to the realities of living on the island. Our understanding of who possesses and who lacks knowledge is turned on its ear when

Ferdinand's recognition of his helplessness leads him to reach out to a new teacher in the form of Miranda, whose own ignorance has just caused her to mistake him for a god: "Vouchsafe my prayer ... that you will some good instruction give / How I may bear me here" (1.2.423-426). Caliban, whom Prospero "Took pains to ... make speak" and "taught ... each hour" when he was ignorant of "[his] own meaning," recognizes the emptiness of knowing language in a world he only wishes to curse (1.2.354-364). Later on, he will find fulfillment in the service of Stephano, whom he calls a "wondrous man" (2.2.172). Speaking to Trinculo, Stephano wonders: "What the devil should he learn our language? I will give him some relief, if it be but for that" (2.2.67-68). The obvious meaning of this is that Stephano is moved to help Caliban by a sense of solidarity, upon having found a fellow Italian-speaker in a strange new environment. Given Stephano's seeming preference for drunken jesting in the company of Trinculo the fool, however, his words might also suggest that he understands the great limitations of formally taught language. Stephano teaches Caliban to apply language in a way that genuinely fulfills him, replacing proper constructions with inane but pleasurable ditties (3.2.122). Although Trinculo calls him a "ridiculous monster, to make a wonder of [Stephano,] a poor drunkard," Caliban is grateful to his new schoolmaster, asking him to "troll the catch" he "taught [him] but whilere" (2.2.173-4, 3.2.122-23). Thus Ferdinand and Caliban both rely on "skillless" instructors who are themselves impaired – Miranda by her ignorance of the outside world and Stephano by his drunkenness – to teach them a new mode of existence.

This new "language" that each of the characters must learn is ultimately the practical experience of forging human relationships which nothing but real interaction can teach. Prospero "endowed [Caliban's] purposes/With words that made them known," but it is not until Caliban experiences the desire to follow Stephano that he can articulate his intention to be of service: "I'll show thee the best springs; I'll pluck thee berries; I'll fish for thee ..." (1.2.357-8, 2.2.168-89). Prospero, although he has already learned how to control the world around him through wizardry, finds himself a weak tutor in the face of Miranda's unprecedented encounter with love. It is through the lack of attention or learning that Prospero fails to equip his daughter for such an experience, but by the lack of opportunity for a practical demonstration. When Miranda pleads with her father to deal more gently with Ferdinand, Prospero is incredulous that his daughter is presuming to educate him: "What, I say, / My foot my tutor?" (1.2.468-69). Nonetheless, it is by witnessing the development of a successful relationship between Miranda and Ferdinand that Prospero becomes educated in the practice of those human interactions he failed to engage in as Duke of Milan. Approaching his union with Miranda, Prospero addresses Ferdinand: "I / Have given you her third of mine own life, / Or that for which I live..." (4.1.3-4). This recalls Prospero's accusation of Ferdinand upon first encountering him on the island: "Thou dost here usurp / The name thou ow'st not, and hast put thyself / Upon this island ... to win it From me, the lord on't" (1.2.454-57). Ferdinand is innocent of both these charges; he calls himself the King of Naples only because he believes his father to be dead and knows himself to be successor, and he has neither the means nor the ambition to

the island from Prospero's dominion. Ironically, however, he *will* take from Prospero his most important possession when he marries his daughter, and he *will* take another's title: Prospero's, as Miranda's educator. Just as Stephano puts Caliban's knowledge of language to use by liberating it in song, Ferdinand gives Miranda practice in the exhilarating and very real experience of loving a new human being, causing her to remark: "But I prattle / Something too wildly, and my father's precepts / I therein do forget" (3.1.57-59). By taking over Miranda and Caliban's education, however, Ferdinand and Stephano will ultimately facilitate Prospero's return to a duke's duties at the end of the play. Dispossessed of his worldly kingdom at the beginning of the play by Antonio, Prospero will return to it freed from responsibilities as schoolmaster and himself reeducated in practical human exchange.

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Studies of neutron scattering off ^{54}Fe with monoenergetic neutrons at 3 and 4 MeV.¹

by Samuel Henderson

Accurate and precise neutron scattering data from ^{54}Fe and other structural materials in the fast neutron energy region are essential for the optimization of current and future fission reactors. Neutron scattering and absorption by Fe affects the ideal operating parameters for the nuclear fission process and also affects the overall efficiency of the nuclear reactor. While neutron elastic cross sections for ^{54}Fe at incident neutron energies between 3 and 4 MeV have been previously measured, the previous experiments tended towards larger error in the elastic, and there is a significant dearth of experimental data for the inelastic states. Neutron elastic and inelastic differential scattering cross sections of ^{54}Fe have been measured at the University of Kentucky Accelerator Laboratory at the fast neutron energies of $E_n = 3$ MeV and 4 MeV. Results from our measurements and comparisons to evaluated cross sections from the National Nuclear Data Center will be presented.

SAMUEL HENDERSON, LESLIE SIDWELL, SALLY HICKS, University of Dallas Department of Physics, JEFFREY VANHOY, EVARISTO GARZA, JOSHUA STEVES, United States Naval Academy Department of Physics, STEVEN YATES, MARCUS MC-LISTREAM, University of Kentucky Department of Physics and Astronomy, ERIN PETERS, University of Kentucky Department of Chemistry, BENJAMIN CRIDER, TIM ROSS, FRANCISCO PRADOS-ESTEVEZ, University of Kentucky Department of Physics and Astronomy -- This material is based on work supported by the Department of Energy under grant NEUP: NU-12-KY-UK-0201-05 and the Cowan Physics Fund at the University of Dallas.

April in Rome

by Theresa Sawczyn

The flowers are out, and so are the tourists.
Each dries up quickly,
Red petals fade, droop, and fall;
They spend themselves - color drains away -
Those who wander in
And blossom for the day.

Shame on the reckless ones,
The makers of Music that deviates
From the melody of wind in the reeds,
Clashes with water on stones -
The creek as it flows, birds in the trees,
Windsong on the peak -

Shame on those who play the whirl
Of the windmill false, who steal the strength
Of coyote's call to moon in mist,
Shame! Shame on the singers who

Weave the song of the sparks and
Silent speech of the stars into songs unfitting
With the quiet. And the stillness.
And the hay waving under the sky.

Carmine Velvet

By Marie McDonough

The soft tips of the rose petals tickled her lips like a kiss as she buried her nose between them. *Carmine velvet*. She had read the phrase once in a book and decided that the author must have had red roses in mind, or else didn't understand the concept of *carmine velvet*. Nothing else would do.

“Chloe, are you listening to me?”

She inhaled as deeply as she could, and let the carmine velvet settle in her nostrils. It was every bit as sweet as she had hoped—How disappointing. Just once she wanted roses to smell like strawberries or cheap cologne.

“Chloe.”

“They're always bitter when they're dying,” she said softly, whispering into the petals so that just maybe he wouldn't hear. Her eyes flickered upward,

and found him leaning against the doorframe with his arms crossed in front of him.

She smiled. "What, are you holding up the wall?"

"What do you mean, bitter?"

"Roses," she replied, and sat up in her chair. She twirled the stem between her slender fingers, feeling for thorns, but her eyes never wavered from his. "I picked it yesterday morning, and it's already on its way out. Shame, they don't live long when you don't nurture them."

"Just tell me what you want from me."

"Was I talking about you?"

He sighed, but dutifully he ran to her, kneeling and taking her hands in what she supposed was intended as a romantic gesture. The rose pressed into their palms. She winced at the pain, not knowing if it was his touch or the thorns, but she didn't care to wonder. His red hair fell over his eyes. For once, he did not fix it; he must have been growing desperate.

"Please, Chloe. I know you're upset."

"Oh, you guessed that, did you?"

"What do you want me to be?"

She paused for a moment, staring off at a cobwebbed corner of the dining room until she could practically see the anticipation burning off of him. Red—orangey red—and flickering like fire. Not carmine velvet. She pursed her lips and said, "Benedict Cumberbatch."

He threw her hands down into her lap and growled in frustration as he stormed off to some other dark corner he could sulk in. She shrugged lamely—he did love to be dramatic—and examined her palms. One held the rose, a little crumpled now, and the other cradled a droplet of blood that had escaped when a thorn pricked her skin. It was smooth, and red, but it stung. Also not carmine velvet.

"I'm serious, Chloe!" he declared suddenly, as if it needed stating. She glanced at him, measuring to what degree she could believe him, but one fist was clenched against the wall and his misty eyes gazed longingly into the distance. Still mere theatrics. She turned away.

"So am I," she replied, and busied herself by plucking the petals from the stem. They formed a small pile on the tabletop, the type of haystack she would paint if she were Claude Monet.

He returned to the table, but did not touch her. This was a good sign. The less emotional he seemed, the more emotional he felt. "What are you doing?"

"He loves me," she sang, "he loves me not."

"I love you."

"You love me not." The last petal fell onto the stack. She looked up at him expectantly. "Fix your hair. It's bothering me."

"I *love* you," he repeated with special emphasis. She steepled her fingers in her lap, just in case he tried to hold them again. He didn't reach for her; he could hardly look at her. She followed his gaze to her knees and suppressed a smirk. He actually meant it. "Please. What do I need to do?"

With a resigned sigh, she declared the game over and pushed back her chair. As she rose, she ran her hands over the petal-pile and scattered them across the table. Then she handed him all that remained: the stem of thorns.

“If you mean it, put it back.”

“Put what back?” he asked, bewildered.

“The rose. Put it back together. I have no use for sticks—make it a rose. And while you’re at it, fix your hair.”

He crossed his arms in front of him, pouting. “If you wanted a rose, you shouldn’t have taken it apart.”

“I could say the same.” She dipped her head and left the room, retiring to the steps on the porch.

It was a long while before she heard the sound of footsteps on the wooden planks, and even longer before she admitted that she’d heard them. His presence filled the world behind her, begging to be noticed, but wisely he did not touch. That was his, and this was hers, and she wanted carmine velvet.

“Chloe,” he said finally, pleadingly, and she placed her hand on the space beside her. Hesitating, he sat. “Chloe, I’m sorry.”

“Yes.”

“I fixed it.”

“I’m sure you will.”

“No, I did.”

She didn’t want to look, but his anticipation was palpable again and she couldn’t bear to hold out for long. Finally, she turned her head and studied the object in his hands.

Cautiously: “Is that Scotch Tape?” Each rose petal was coated in a thick layer of sticky plastic, which spiraled down the stem for additional stability. Not the prettiest thing in the world, and still covered in thorns, but it was a start.

“I didn’t know what else to do,” he admitted. “It was Scotch Tape or scotch whiskey. I thought maybe you’d get drunk enough to change your mind. Or think I was Benedict Cumberbatch.”

She sighed but he could only laugh, apparently reveling in his triumph.

She didn’t feel like denying it to him anymore.

“I thought I told you to fix your hair.”

He shrugged, and she reached out a hand to sweep his ginger bangs out of his face. He closed his eyes beneath her touch. Each strand was red, and smooth, and soft.

She smiled. *Carmine velvet.*

The Pear Tree, Fornication, and Being Alone Together

By Alex Taylor

Scholarly examinations of Augustine's account of the theft from the pear tree often seek to understand why Augustine devotes nearly half of Book 2 of his *Confessions* to a seemingly minor event. While many authors have shed light on the importance of the incident in terms of its aesthetic, ethical, political, and religious importance in and of itself, much is left to be done in terms of understanding how the theft relates to Book 2 as a whole, with its theme of descent into lust by fornication. Through discussing the friendship and relation of persons involved in the pear theft, Augustine clarifies the nature of the relation in fornication such that it can be better understood as theft and an act which necessarily isolates and causes deeper loneliness rather than the intimacy which one seeks through it. To explain this clarification, first emphasis will be given to understanding the friendship involved in the pear theft, which will be followed by interpretation of how Augustine presents his acts of fornication, such that they may be further understood in the light of the idea of negative community and infinitization of human finitude.

It is an understatement to say that the friendship between Augustine and his fellow pear thieves was important in the execution of the theft. Augustine repeats seven times that he would not have stolen the pears alone; however, upon asking whether it was for love of friendship that he stole the pears rather than the love of the theft alone, he responds negatively, "because that gang-mentality too was a nothing." He is not here denying that friendship is a good, but that in this particular case, it is a nothing, due to its foundation upon an intrinsically evil act. Augustine understands friendship as based upon what the friends hold in common, where genuine friendship exists where friends are bound together by God in charity (4.4.7); however, in this situation, Augustine and his friends were united together in the pear theft, which, as evil, is necessarily a privation, or nothing where there ought to be something. Being united in nothing is the very definition of separation, such that while Augustine and his friends seemingly acted together, they all in fact acted separately. This separation is due to the reorientation of their common affection to an act of nothingness, whereby their friendship is deprived of its common good, and they can only be said to be together by some common nothingness.

In his discussion of the pear tree incident, Carl Vaught terms this friendship "a negative community in which its members stand alone together" (Vaught). This description suggests that the relation between Augustine and the other pear thieves becomes an inversion of friendship: rather than being united in their common affection for God in positive community, they pursue an evil action, which necessarily causes division and increased loneliness through collective spiritual decay. Augustine seemingly concludes that he found pleasure "in the crime as committed in the company of others who shared in the sin" (2.8.16). The possibility and emergence of the negative community was necessary for Augustine to revel in the

nothingness of the theft, as its existence, insofar as it can be said to exist, is a privation of the positive community that he desired. Vaught asserts that those words which express the group's intention to act in unison, "let's go and do it!" (2.9.17), are also "the vehicle through which Augustine and his friends masquerade as divinities" (Vaught, 64). In this, they seek in their finitude to become infinite through a twisted imitation of divine creation. Augustine himself supports this interpretation when he asks if he was "attempting a shady parody of omnipotence by getting away with something forbidden" (2.6.14). Both the conception of negative community and the idea of seeking to infinitize human finitude on one's own are instrumental to understanding Augustine's portrayal of fornication.

The language which Augustine uses to describe his fornications strongly contributes to the concept of negative community, as he focuses almost completely on himself and his own deeds rather than mentioning those with whom he engaged in fornication. His descriptions center on himself: "I was afire to take my fill of hell" (2.1.1), "I boldly thrust out rank, luxurious growth in various furtive love affairs" (2.1.1), and "I was flung hither and thither, I poured myself out, frothed and floundered in the tumultuous sea of my fornications" (2.2.2). Augustine's focus on his subjective 'I' shows a certain self-centeredness as a dominant element that colored his fornicatory relationships. While some may protest this assertion by saying that Augustine's emphasis on his own person results merely from the genre of the *Confessions*, or his acceptance of his own guilt for his fornications, one must ask in response why Augustine discusses the camaraderie between himself and his fellow pear thieves. Given the exegetical interpretation of the Old Testament through the New Testament that was prevalent in Augustine's time, it is highly probable that Augustine meant the reader to understand the relationships within his fornications in light of the community of thieves, the community of nothingness. Congenial to this understanding is the explanation that Augustine's description of his fornications is necessarily more self-centered than his description of the pear theft due to the deeper intrinsic potential for negative community in the former.

While the community in regard to the pear theft was merely a condition of the act, albeit a necessary one, the community in regard to fornication is essential, as community is the end of the sexual act, which is ordered towards creating deeper intimacy. As such, the privation of the *communio personarum* within fornication is necessarily greater than the privation of the same good within the context of the pear theft, such that a deeper sense of negative community exists within Augustine's fornications. A common purpose unites the pear theft and his fornications as in both cases he acts out of desire for "the crime as committed in the company of others who shared in the sin" (2.8.16), such that a commonality of purpose can be said to connect the pear theft and his fornications. Augustine writes that his delight in his fornications came from "only loving and being

loved. . .[without] proper restraint, as in the union of mind with mind, where a bright boundary regulates friendship" (2.2.2). This understanding of love-passion unrestrained by reason constitutes the essence of lust, the crime which Augustine commits in the species of fornication. Augustine and his fornicatory partners create a negative community quintessentially divisive due to the privation of the essential unitive aspect of the sexual act, resulting from the lack of exclusive and permanent commitment to the other. This division is so complete that Augustine's self-centeredness can be understood to objectify the other, so as to love the relationship more than the beloved.

With the understanding of Augustine and his fellow pear thieves' actions as seeking to transcend their own finitude and become infinite, Augustine's objectification of the other in fornication can be understood as an attempt to infinitize finite human love. While Augustine writes that he only took pleasure in "loving and being loved" (2.2.2), without the proper restraint he was unable to ascertain true love from lust, such that he "turned away from. . .the one God, and pursued a multitude of things" (2.1.1). By turning away from God, who is his highest good, and pursuing the good of human love for its own sake, Augustine pursues it as if it were infinite and ultimately fulfilling, seeking to love individual women as if they were gods. He describes his fornications as "my pursuit of fleeting beauties" (2.2.3), by which it can be understood that in pursuing a human love affair as if to make it infinite, the beauty in the intimacy is continually lessened by fornicatory acts, such that Augustine is forced to see the finitude of the affairs, and seek infinity in a new relationship. In seeking wholly infinite love from another human, who is necessarily finite in an aspect of their being, Augustine is seeking divine love apart from God, and wallows in the futility of his experiences.

By the time he writes the *Confessions*, Augustine has realized his fault in his attempts in both events, such that he compares his motivations in the pear theft directly to his fornications. He writes that "a soul that turns away from you [God] therefore *lapses into fornication* when it seeks apart from you what it can never find in pure and limpid form except by returning to you [emphasis mine]" (2.6.14). Seeking solidarity and the exercise of his free will in the pear theft, Augustine found only negative community and mutual willfulness; by seeking infinite love apart from God through lust, Augustine lapsed into fornications, both in the formal definition and the analogical definition he gives above. Augustine and his partners mutually deprived themselves and each other of the infinite aspect of human love as grounded in God and of the truly infinite divine love; while this privation occurs through violation of God's law, it can be under-

stood as an evil by reason, as it concerns the nature of man and the natural law. In fornication, those acting do not do too much together or show too much of their person, but rather do too little together and express a “mutual loneliness” (Vaught, 65) as their relationship devolves into negative community, and show too little of their selves, as fornicatory acts do not affect the same spiritual intimacy as do conjugal acts performed in the context of exclusive and permanent commitment. As the deliberate, unjust privation of another’s goods is the definition of theft, so Augustine and his partners steal from each other the good of truly human intimacy resulting from the fullness of human love as understood in light of the divine love, such that they find “nothing to love save the theft itself” (2.8.16).

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Nails on the Blackboard

By Caroline Watanabe

The smell of burnt coffee and stale air filled my nose as I entered the small room. I could almost taste the bitter black coffee in the hands of the couple, already seated and comfortable. This was the first time I had seen the room occupied. I felt the excitement of what I was finally about to witness. I had spent days warming up to copy machines, filing, and alphabetizing for my boss. I was glad to take a break from that and sit in on one of the interviews everyone kept talking about.

The large man with white whiskers sat near the door I walked in. He was in business casual attire. I noticed his weapon holstered on his right hip. He was asking the young woman sitting across from him a favor.

“The grape one, if you can find it.”

“There’s only cherry.”

“Damn it. Need to tell Shannon to refill that.”

“Still want something?”

“Humph. Just grab me a Tootsie Roll.”

“Here you go, O’Conner.”

The lady chuckled and grabbed the cherry sucker for herself and looked up to me.

“Are you sitting with us for this one? I saw you in the lobby and

was wondering who you were. My name is Joy. I'm with Child Protective Services."

She smiled and held out her hand. I immediately noticed her swollen midriff. Her pregnant stomach did not match her business attire.

"Hi, nice to meet you. I'm Emma, the intern."

The whiskered man added, "Oh, sorry, I'm detective O'Conner. Here as an intern, eh? I remember when I was a rookie. Glad those days are gone."

Yes, I get the grunt work. But not today, I thought, seating myself between them in the black leather chair. It tilted ever so slightly backwards when I leaned back. I was somewhat jealous of O'Conner and Joy who got to sit in chairs for hours. This was a luxury for me. I had gotten used to hard uncomfortable wooden chairs and working on my feet.

"Bout to retire now though," O'Conner said with a relieved sigh.

"How long have you worked here?" I asked.

"I've worked for the police for over 40 years. Joined fresh out of college."

This man has worked for two of my lifetimes, I thought. I suddenly felt very young working alongside someone who had seen so much.

"Have you always worked with cases like this?" I asked.

"No, I started about 10 years ago. It's tough work, but worth it."

"Well, congratulations on your retirement. Can't say any of us will miss you here," Joy teased with a wink. I noticed the wrinkles around her eyes that she attempted to cover with make-up. I did not think she was very old but her face looked tired and worn out.

"So how many months?" I asked, eyeing Joy's stomach.

"Five and counting. It's been rough. I've had to skip a couple of days of work. I hate doing that. Plus my ex keeps calling me up, so that doesn't make things easier."

"Boys are always trouble, I tell you. Get rid of the rotten ones when you can," O'Conner chimed in.

"Is this your first pregnancy? Is it a boy or girl?" I hoped I wasn't asking for too much information.

"No, I have a son. This one's with my second husband. It's a girl."

"You better watch those kids," O'Conner said.

"Oh, believe me I do, and I will."

The temperature rose with another body in the little room.

Though the metallic blinds shut out the August sun, I could feel warmth radiating from the windowsill. The low hum from the recording devices filled the lulls of our conversation. I examined the room, but there was

nothing that greatly attracted my attention. The walls were off-white and bare. Tack holes dotted some parts of the wall. The plain gray carpet looked new, but it already had a coffee stain near my feet. The wall we faced hid behind several heavy duty pieces of devices used to record the interviews conducted in the room next door. A small TV screen sat on the desk with two large speakers on each side with live-feed from the hidden camera in the interview room. A thin layer of gray dust shrouded the tops of the equipment with the exception of a small area on a black metal drawer near Joy where the cup of candy sat. The heat was starting to get more noticeable. The bottom of my thighs began to stick to the leather padding on my chair.

“So what made you want to come into our cave of pedophiles and perves? School? I’m sure it’s put a damper on your summer,” Joy asked.

“I needed to get an internship and I happened to come across the advocacy center. And I wanted to be able to help out in our community,” I answered.

To be honest, this was an internship that began as an excuse to get out of the house during the summer. It turned out to be a great opportunity for me as a psychology major interested in social work. The job soon pulled me into a world of crises, but I enjoyed the work for the most part.

“I understand,” Joy smiled, tired.

“Sometimes you need more than good intentions, though. This is real work,” grunted O’Conner, without looking at me.

Silence ensued. I readjusted myself awkwardly in the chair.

“So what’s the case today?” I asked.

“We got a call from a teacher at the local school the day before last. One of her students said she was raped by a family friend,” the detective said, preparing his notepad.

“Did her parents come with her then?” I asked.

“No, the teacher. The mom was busy. I think her aunt is on her way.”

The door clicked open and I turned towards the door, but no one came in. I realized it was the sound coming from the speakers on the TV as it came to life. The interview room was spacious and had one table and two chairs. A girl slumped into one of the chairs.

The door to our room opened abruptly, and a middle aged woman walked in. The cooler air rushed in from the hallway. Shannon was the head of the interviewers, and my boss. I found myself straightening my back.

“God, it’s so hot in here. The air never works right in this room.”

“Tell me about it. And where are my damn grape suckers?” com-

mented O'Conner.

"We like to torture our detectives." Shannon winked and asked me, "Are you ready for your first observation, Emma?" I nodded.

"This will be a good one to watch. And I told Jessica to have you observe her filling out paperwork with the family after this," she said and turned to O'Conner.

"Have you met the girl?" Shannon asked, lowering her voice.

"Yeah. I know, it'll be interesting."

"Tell me about it."

"Do you think she'll talk?"

"Not sure. I think so. What do you think of this case?"

"As long as she doesn't say anything stupid and make shit up like the last one, I'll be happy," O'Conner said.

Shannon put a blank DVD into one of the recorders, but did not start recording. She left the room as abruptly as she came in. I saw her reappear on the small screen.

Shannon informed the girl about the hidden camera and the microphone. I was hoping to get a look at the girl's face, but she remained still, her black hair covering her face.

"Shannon is one of the best we've got," O'Conner said to me, without taking his eyes off the screen. "If you want to learn how to do this, learn it from her."

"I'll be asking you many questions," Shannon's voice echoed in the speakers. "We're recording this so that you don't have to tell this story over and over again."

The girl adjusted herself. She sat on the edge of the chair, both hands under the table. She was tense, and looked eager to leave. Shannon asked if she was ready for this. The girl tightly shrugged.

Shannon came into our room again and clicked the button to start recording.

"Well, this may end up being a short interview," Shannon said, leaving.

"Let's get going, I want to have lunch with my wife today," O'Conner said, checking his watch.

"Do you know the perpetrator?" Joy asked O'Conner. "I heard he was quite a catch."

"Yeah. Adrian caused us trouble before with girls her age and was apparently her mother's frequent customer."

Joy winced.

"How old is he anyway?"

“Twenty-five.”

“I was informed that the mother had two kids. Where’s the other one?”

“The son is in prison for drugs. He didn’t know anything about Adrian. Not surprising.”

“And the Dad?”

“A drunk. Last time I checked he was doing time too.”

“Can’t say I don’t know how that feels. That’s too bad,” Joy shrugged.

I wished they would stop talking. I wanted to listen to what the girl was saying. They probably knew where the cruxes were in the interview, but I wanted to soak in every detail. I could barely hear Shannon’s voice, and the girl’s soft voice was even harder to hear over the high pitched voice of Joy and the gruff voice of O’Conner. I never took my eyes off the girl on the screen.

“Do you know why you are here today?” Shannon asked.

“I think so,” the girl said. I thought I heard an accent. Joy and O’Conner finally quieted down.

“Can you tell us more about that?”

The girl began to defend her friends at school, how they were not a bad influence, and that they did not actually smoke pot. Her mother had accused them falsely, the girl said. Her mother did not like her friends.

“It’s okay, we’re not out to get your buddies about that,” Joy said.

“Maybe. I’m going to check on that later, to be sure. She never talked to me this much, I swear girls just open up better to other girls,” O’Conner added.

“Well, that’s because when you ask questions, you look scary as hell,” Joy laughed.

I could imagine O’Conner being a strict officer. The creases on his forehead told of many frowns.

“Let’s just hope she doesn’t bullshit us like the last one did. That just pisses me off,” O’Conner said. “Cops aren’t dumb.”

“Why did your Mom leave?” I heard Shannon’s voice clearly.

“We had a fight.”

“Can you tell me more about that?”

“There’s this girl I like at school. She doesn’t like that.”

O’Conner sat up to write something in his notes. It was like watching and critiquing a movie. I had to pause and tell myself this girl in the screen was real. She was in the room next door. I felt a vibration. Joy fumbled around in her red purse and pulled out her phone. She smiled at the text. I guessed it was her current husband.

“Then what happened?” Shannon asked.

“Mom left. And Adrian came in the apartment awhile later.”

“How did he come in?”

“Through the door, obviously.”

“Does he have a key?”

“No. Mom usually keeps it open for her guys.”

“Do you know him?”

“Yeah. He chills with Mom a lot. He knows some of my friends too. He buys us dinner sometimes. He’s nice for the most part. He said he wanted to play with me. But I didn’t want to.”

“What do you mean by ‘play’?”

“He wanted me to take off my clothes.”

“Have you played this game with him before?”

“Sometimes.”

O’Conner and Joy groaned.

“Tell me more about what happened that night when your mother left.”

Anticipation shot through our room as we waited for her answer. I had an idea of what she was going to say, but I wanted to know for sure. I wanted to hear it from her.

“He came in the house, and just sat on our couch and stared at me. I told him to leave me alone but he wouldn’t leave. I told him Mom would be back soon, but he just kept staring. It was really creepy. I went into my room and shut the door and tried to do some homework. He came in my bedroom and told me to never talk to him like that.”

The girl’s voice had been steady all along, but it began to waver. She whispered and we all leaned closer to the speakers. We could barely hear her.

“Damnit girl, speak up; this is important,” O’Conner said impatiently.

“You can do this,” Joy said. I wondered who they were really talking to.

The girl further sank into her chair, and recounted to us what Adrian had done. Her posture made me think of a child cowering in shame after losing something dear to her. *But there was no need to be sorry*, I thought. It wasn’t her fault, but did she know it? Her fingers uncomfortably scratched her thighs. I wondered if she was reliving the incident, perhaps trying to scratch away the memory on her skin of his violent touch. She tried to pull her skirt down. It was too short. She looked like a child to me.

“How long did he stay for?”

“I don’t remember. It felt like a couple of hours.”

“The nurse did mention some scarring,” Joy murmured almost to herself as she traced her bulge with her fingers.

Together, we sat there in the room and listened to her cry.

Shannon paused, and let the girl sob for a minute or two. All I heard was her amplified whimpering from the speakers. I felt like an intruder witnessing something I was not supposed to see. I turned away from the screen, though it did not make a difference. She did not even know I was there, hanging on her every word. A small lens separated us, preventing any form of contact or comfort. Her whimpers came across to me like nails on a blackboard and were seared on my memory.

“Did your mom come back?”

“No. She went to stay at a friend’s house. I called her to tell her what happened.”

“What did she do?”

“Nothing. Said I was being whiny and didn’t believe me at first. But then she said...” There was a long pause. I almost thought I just missed what she said.

“What did she say?”

“She said...that I deserved it.”

The detective raised his eyebrows and Joy scribbled something down on her notes.

I tried to think of my mother saying those words to me, but I could not. The back of my eyes stung. I was afraid to be the only one struck by her mother’s words. I turned my eyes towards Joy, measuring her response. She was texting again while she continually stroked her belly. My struggle to stay tearless managed to go unnoticed.

O’Conner began his commentary again: “We’re not the shrink. Come on, get it out. We all want this over too.”

“Did you catch the guy?” I asked.

“Yeah, we got him. He ain’t gonna be touching any of those girls for a long time.”

“So what’s going to happen?”

“We’ll use this girl’s testimony to lock him up for as long as we can. There were others too, but hers would be crucial. It’ll depend on the jury, but we got this guy good, I think,” O’Conner said.

“It’s still hard to say now, Emma. O’Conner and I will be working on this case for a while, but really nothing is for certain until he’s behind bars for good. Even then...knowing her lifestyle, there’s a high chance this may not even be the first or last time for this kind of thing to happen to her.”

“Gotta pick your battles, or you won’t win any.”

This was the tip of the iceberg, but they had to start somewhere. I wondered how many cases failed to even get to court. I looked at the girl. Would she also slip through the cracks of this system?

“Is this the only time this has happened?” Shannon continued.

“Please say yes,” O’Conner mumbled.

“Mhm.”

Sighs gave out from O’Conner and Joy. Less paperwork and less time in this sauna - I could just hear their thoughts. Shannon also asked about her sexual history.

“Have you been sexually active?”

“I wouldn’t be surprised,” huffed O’Conner.

“No,” the girl said.

O’Conner grunted.

“What? That’s bullshit,” Joy snapped, “I swear she told me something else when we talked before this.”

“Has anyone tried to play these games with you before?” Shannon asked.

O’Conner prepared to write down names.

“No.”

O’Conner grunted again. Joy was still mumbling to herself in frustration. Shannon began to ask questions on a lighter and casual note. It sounded like she was wrapping up.

“Well, I’m going to leave you for a second to check on how the video recording is going.”

Shannon walked back into our room.

“Did I hit everything you wanted?”

“Yup. You read my mind. Thanks,” said O’Conner, putting up his notes.

“I swear, she told me something else when I talked to her yesterday” Joy said, looking at the girl on the TV screen.

“You get what you get,” O’Conner said, sighing.

Shannon went back to inform the girl the interview was over, and that she could return to the waiting room when she was ready.

Jessica walked in and informed me that the girl’s aunt would arrive in half an hour, and that she was expecting me to be there to meet the aunt in the family room. There, I was to watch another part of the process unfold.

“Meanwhile, go take your break,” Jessica said, leaving.

I stood up and left our little room.

My mind was elsewhere, thinking back on the girl and her tears

and the reactions from O'Conner and Joy. I wasn't sure what to feel, or what I should feel. I wanted a cold drink. As I was fumbling for my car keys, I walked straight into the girl coming out of the interview room. My sweaty arms recoiled reflexively at the touch of her cool skin. She was about my height, on the shorter side. If she straightened her back, she might have been an inch or two taller than me. Her dark caramel skin was contrasted with the white see-through shirt and blue jean skirt hugging her hips. Her eyes were narrow, swollen, and red. She was heavy set despite her small frame. She looked much younger than the ripe age of sixteen. When my eyes met her black almonds, I did not know what she saw. I hoped she saw some form of sympathy I tried to convey in the split second we collided. Yet the way she looked at me made me doubt it. I feared her impression of me. She scrutinized my countenance, my clothes, and my slender frame. Her sharp gaze resented my approach, resented me. I stepped back and managed to let out an "I'm sorry," but she had already walked off.

I turned the corner of the hall to escape from the building. I pushed open the emergency exit door leading to the parking lot in the back. The sudden sunlight was blinding. The blistering panhandle Texas air choked me. I hopped into my Cadillac and drove to the nearest coffee shop to get myself a cold frappe. I did not feel like waiting for the drive-thru, so I parked the car and walked in. I felt out of place with my professional dress amidst the bored teens and middle aged women gossiping around tables. I must have drawn some attention to myself, because the young man taking my order kept smiling at me. I gave a faint smile back, but felt self-conscious. I checked myself to make sure I was not giving off any mixed signals, wondering what he thought of me. I fumbled for my change as he made my drink. I walked out of the coffee shop with a large frappe with his name and number written on the side. I questioned his intentions for doing so, and I threw the container away as soon as I finished it.

I got back just in time. I entered the family room where Jessica and the aunt sat around a round wooden table. This room was brighter and less stuffy. The cool air was a welcome relief to my sweaty skin. The blinds were open, revealing the great August sky. Its beauty was almost enough to keep my thoughts away from the girl.

I quietly sat down next to Jessica, tucking myself into the chair. The aunt filled out paperwork as Jessica pointed out the areas to fill out. I observed on the paperwork that the aunt's name was Nadia.

"I just don't understand her..." Nadia said, and abruptly stopped her pen. "I never really liked my sister-in-law, but this?"

Jessica and I listened.

“A woman of that profession should not be raising children. She was always a terrible mother. I told Maggie she’s welcome in my home any time, but her mother and I have never really gotten along. Maggie comes to me crying from fights with her mother. Every time it’s something different. Maggie can’t be perfect; I don’t expect my children to be. She calls Maggie names I don’t want to repeat. Disgusting words. And not even coming here to support her today? She is my niece, this is the least I can do, but I wish I could do more.”

“I’m sure Maggie knows that you support her and your doors are always open,” Jessica said softly. Those words that meant to comfort sounded rehearsed to me.

“I know...I just wish I could kidnap her to live with me. Maggie has no business living with that whore. I don’t care if you have a daughter that’s unattractive, bi-sexual, fat or even retarded. That’s her daughter, for God’s sake. She has no right to treat her daughter like that. I mean, she said *this* was Maggie’s fault. This is her *baby* we’re talking about. But I guess to some people that doesn’t mean anything.”

I gave out a sigh, glad to know there was someone that could look after Maggie. Nadia continued.

“And when the cop told me he may have been there for a couple of hours with no one to call for help? I might have died. Did Maggie say anything about that in the interview?”

Nadia looked straight at me. I immediately turned to Jessica.

“I’m sorry, we’re not allowed to disclose that information. And I wasn’t there listening to the interview, so I don’t know what happened.” gaze to the paperwork. It was an application to be reimbursed by the local government for any monetary costs incurred from criminal victimization. It also potentially paid for counseling services if they were advised. It was almost comical to me to see how even in the most emotionally draining circumstances, money managed to poke its ugly head out to pester those in distress. It was almost a sick reminder for the families that their emotional pains were translated into monetary terms by the government. Nadia was filling out these forms in the place of Maggie’s mother.

“This is how I see it, and it has helped me when working with cases like these,” Jessica started, “if children have the courage to tell us the truth, I feel it my duty not to let them down and do my job right, whatever that may be. Because that’s the least I can do.”

“Yeah, you’re right... But that woman should be locked in jail with that bastard,” she growled and began to choke up. “I just feel so helpless. Can’t I do more?”

Nadia began to sob, like the girl on the screen.

I glanced sideways at Jessica. Her face was empathetic, but I felt there was still a layer of emotion hardened by years of practice and training. I had no layer. I was raw, vulnerable to feelings. I pretended to scratch my nose as I quickly wiped away a tear that had fallen out of place. I felt this woman's tears to be the only genuine expression in this room. My heart was slowly numbing, but it still ached to feel.

I handed her some Kleenex, wishing it was something more. Several minutes passed in silence. The aunt finished the paperwork while blowing her nose and wiping away her tears that never seemed to stop flowing.

“Did I fill out everything right?”

“Yes ma’am. You’re good with us here. I’ll let you collect yourself before going back to Maggie. She’s waiting for you in the lobby.” Jessica got up to leave.

“Okay, thank you so much. I don’t know how you guys do this. Thank you...”

No, thank *you*, I wanted to add. I stood up and left with Jessica, but not before one last glance at the aunt who was slouched over the table, her face in her hands, trembling. I was glad to have met her. I was thankful for her presence in Maggie’s life. I wanted to touch her shoulder, her arm, her back, anything to encourage her and communicate my gratitude, but I could not. I felt insufficient and unworthy to offer that touch.

I got busy with helping the social workers organize some paperwork again. O’Conner left to go have lunch with his wife, and Joy hung around for a while talking to Jessica. Shannon was in the interview room again, with another child.

All the while I thought of ways to communicate in a small way that I felt for Maggie, for Nadia, and for this whole situation. But words of hope and sympathy coming from me sounded superficial and died on my lips. I thought of offering them a drink to take with them, or a snack for the road back home, anything to release myself from the anguish of helplessness.

I went back into the lobby with a couple of Cokes in my hand, just in time to see Maggie and Nadia reunite. I saw them talk to each other, embrace, and even smile. The smile on Maggie’s face lit up her dark eyes. She looked like a different person in that moment. She looked strong, young, and innocent. It was the most beautiful thing I saw that day; a smile that had every right to be extinguished forever. But there it was. I put the drinks down on the table to give to the next family, who had just arrived.

That was the first and last day that I saw a piece of Maggie’s broken life. Yet without forgetting her tears, I would remember her with that smile. As I observed more interviews and remained behind hidden cameras in the heat of crisis, I clung onto her smile as a beacon of my hope.

Ballet Russe

