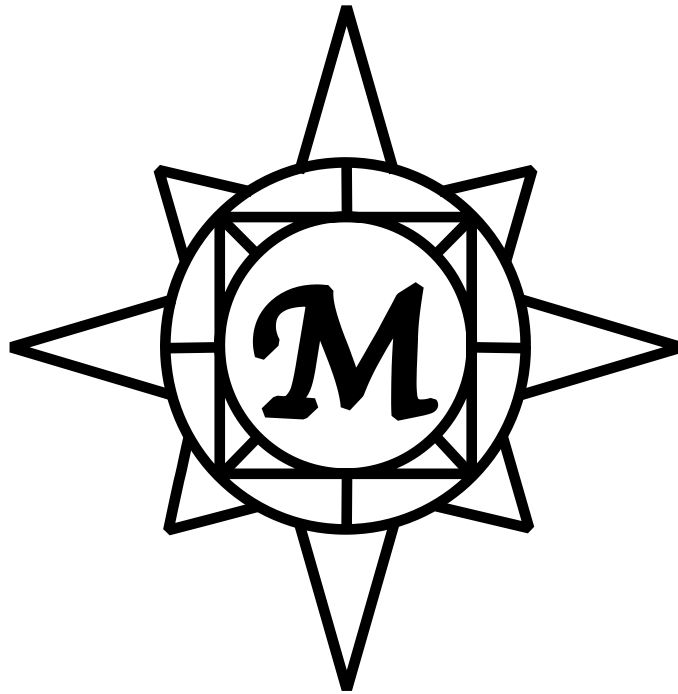


English Capstone Edition

Morpheus Literary Magazine



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Alexandra Chakov

A Year of Jewells: Short Story Collection

Summer
Red Handed

The sun shined brightly, the kind of brightly that made your skin feel like it glowed and you were perfectly warm. Mama decided it was the perfect day to do laundry so our clothes could dry on the line outside and smell like the flowers and trees from the yard.

“You two can go play in the woods if you want, but don’t go too far, and be back before dark for dinner,” Mama told us.

She loved when we played out in the woods in the back of our property on laundry day so we didn’t dirty it while we played. We never argued, the woods were the best place to go on adventures and play games, plus we didn’t like getting yelled at for ruining the laundry. When we did that it was always, “Eleanor Jewell! You need to go rewash this. Look what you did,”.

“Can we play house today since we played kickball yesterday?” I asked my big brother Glenn.

“No. I have a better idea Eleanor,” he said, “Let’s build a treehouse.”

“That would be so cool!” I said. “How are we gonna do that though? We don’t have any stuff for it.”

“I have an idea, c’mon.” Glenn replied, running further into the woods. It didn’t take me too long to figure out that he was taking us towards the new construction site where our neighbor’s house used to be. Now they were building a brand new house for brand new people.

*

The construction site was eerily quiet. The cranes and diggers sat idly waiting for Monday morning to be brought back to life again. Glenn and I weaved around the beginnings of the new house, trying to find the things we needed for our treehouse.

“I found wood, hammers, and nails,” said Glenn. “Is there anything else you think we need?”

“No, but there’s paint here that would make it look better.” I replied.

“Alright, well, you grab that.” Glenn said.

Glenn and I loaded up our little red *Radio Flyer* wagon with the supplies we found for the tree house. We left exactly how we came, through the rear side of the construction site into the woods behind our house. I wanted our treehouse to actually be in a tree, but Glenn is too big of a baby and insisted we just make it up against a tree. We used the big tree that I chose, as the one corner and decided we would just have three walls, making a triangular treehouse.

Glenn and I worked for what seemed like forever to get the walls put up and nailed together. Building was a lot heavier and harder than I thought it would be—but I didn’t tell Glenn that I wanted him to think I was super strong. Once the walls were up, I convinced Glenn that we should paint them before, working on the roof. We hadn’t looked at the paint color, I had just grabbed the first container I saw, which made it even more exciting when I had opened it and saw red paint. Red was my favorite color.

“Gross, you picked this color on purpose didn’t you?” Glenn accused me.

He hated the color red because I liked it; blue was his favorite color. I rolled my eyes in response and grabbed a paintbrush. Glenn and I had never painted walls before and didn’t realize how difficult it was. Before long, our arms ached from reaching up on our tiptoes to reach the top of the wall.

“Hey Eleanor, come here,” Glenn called at me from the wall he was working on.

“Why?” I questioned.

“Just come here.”

I went over to see what he could possibly want, only to be met with a paintbrush to the face. My big, bratty brother had started a war he would not win. Soon, paint was flying all over the treehouse and the trees surrounding it, and it was especially all over us. We looked like human-sized lobsters when we were done.

“We should probably get home, I’m hungry.” Glenn said.

“Okay, we can finish painting the last wall tomorrow.”

We put the leftover paint, wood, and our tools inside the unfinished treehouse before we started our trek through the woods home. We left a red foot-printed trail behind us, like a colorful Hansel and Gretel.

*

Mama was in the kitchen finishing up with dinner when we got back. The paint seemed dry enough at that point, so Glenn thought it would be okay to walk into the house if we took our shoes off outside. Glenn was wrong. As soon as Mama turned around and saw us, she screamed. I think it was a mix of horror and anger at seeing us covered in red, but I didn’t have any time to process her reaction before she threw Glenn and I into a bath.

Usually I loved getting to take a bath with Glenn because we could play water games, but lately Glenn thought taking a bath with his six-year old sister was too lame—I guess being eight years old just made him *so* mature. That night though Mama scrubbed and scrubbed at our skin with washcloths and did not let us play anything.

“Eli!” Mama yelled to Dad, “I think it’s oil-based paint, not water-based paint. They’re going to be red for forever it’s not coming off.”

“Here, I’ll try scrubbing them.” Dad answered.

Dad washing us was even worse than when Mama had been doing it. He scrubbed even harder, but we were still pink. Personally, I couldn’t tell if we were pink from the paint or from all the scrubbing at that point. It felt like we were in the bath for hours with Mama and Dad taking turns trying to make us normal again. When they finally decided we were as clean as we could get, they sent us off to bed without dinner, which I didn’t think was fair at all. We had worked up quite an appetite building, but I knew better than to argue I didn’t want to get thrown into the bath again.

*

“You two can go play outside. I still have a headache from last night,” Mama told Glenn and I once we were done with our breakfast.

Glenn and I were excited to go back to finish our treehouse, so we yelled a quick “Goodbye, love you!” as we ran out the door. Once we reached our treehouse we figured we should get the roof built first since it would be harder than painting the last wall will be. By the time we got the roof finished, we were exhausted. This tree house made me decide I did not want to be a builder when I grew up—it is way too much work. Glenn wanted us to just finish painting tomorrow, but I thought that it was better to just get it all done with. This way we have the rest of the summer to just play. No work and all play *is* the whole point of summer.

“I have an idea, Eleanor,” Glenn said.

“For finishing painting?” I asked.

“Yeah, watch this!”

Before I could even react Glenn took the paint can and threw the paint at the wall. The red paint splattered all over the wall, the ground, and us.

“Glenn!” I yelled, “Mama is going to kill us! Look what you did!”

My red-paint-covered brother burst out laughing in reply.

“You look so funny.” He sputtered out between fits of laughter.

Instead of replying I decided to run over and give him a huge hug so some of the paint on me would rub off onto him.

“Get off of me!” he shouted. “We need to even out the paint on the wall before it dries.”

Glenn’s dumb idea made our last wall look a little weird due to the middle being bright red and the edges not nearly as red, but it worked, and it was all ours. We left our treehouse and made our way through the woods back to our house. We followed the same path we took the day before, making our red footprint trail even brighter. Mama was out in the garden beside our house when we got back. Our garden was huge and filled with tomato plants, basil, oregano, and so many other things Mama would use to make dinner.

“What’s for dinner Mama?” Glenn yelled when we got closer.

“Meatloaf and I’m thinking a big salad with—“ Mama started to say while looking up at us.

Mama’s whole face contorted when she saw with horror that we were covered in paint again. She started to sputter out nonsense, and I looked at Glenn scared for all the trouble we were about to be in. Then, Mama went from shocked and angry to tears—so many tears.

Autumn
Out of the Woods

“School’s been hard Mama! Can’t we do our chores later it’s so nice out?” I begged.

“Yeah? First grade is so hard?” Mama teased me.

“It really is. We don’t get nap time anymore. Its just boring work all day,” I whined.

“Alright, you and Glenn can go play outside for a little bit, but you need to get your chores done before your Dad gets home.”

“Yes! Let’s go Glenn,” I yelled.

Glenn came flying out of the living room where he had been eavesdropping on the conversation. He always said Mama is more likely to say yes to me because I’m her baby, but I don’t know about that. The autumn leaves had just begun to fall in the woods that made up most of our backyard. I jumped from leaf to leaf to find the crunchiest ones; they’re my favorite. Glenn also likes stepping on crunchy leaves, but he’s decided he wants to be a soldier one day, so whenever we take walks through the woods he insists on walking all prim and proper anymore.

Our property went pretty far back, but Mama and Dad didn’t like us going too far back because there are wild animals and hunters. We’re also not supposed to go too close to the dairy farm on the right side of our house. Mama said it’s because they don’t want us bothering the cows and stuff, but I think it’s because of Great Great Grandma Elsie. She was licked by a cow that had rabies, and it killed her.

“Glenn, maybe we should start walking back...we’re really far out,” I said.

“We’re not that far. Plus it’s still early, so we’re not gonna get lost in the dark or anything,” He said.

I sighed. Glenn never listened to me, but I continued to follow him through the woods anyway. All the trees were changing colors, making overhead a mix of green, orange, red, yellow,

and brown with the blue sky peeking through. The leaves fell gently around me as I jumped from leaf to leaf trying not to touch any grass. I had been enjoying my own made up “don’t touch the ground” kind of game until I heard some rustling in the distance.

“Did you hear that?” I asked.

“Yeah. Maybe we should head back after all,” Glenn said.

“I told you so,” I muttered to myself still looking at the ground.

The rustling grew louder and louder making the hairs on my arm stand on end. I didn’t understand why I was getting so nervous the woods always made noises from the squirrels and wind. When the rustling started again I turned around quickly to see a dark blur run by.

“Glenn, did you see that?” I asked.

“See what?” he asked.

Before I could respond, I heard rustling again, but this time there wasn’t a black blur running by, but a dog standing further out in the woods. His lips curled back and made a growl. I turned to look at Glenn, and saw another dog further out in the woods behind him. Glenn’s eyes were popping out of his head leading me to believe he saw a dog too.

“Eleanor what do we do?” Glenn exclaimed.

Fear crept over me; the dogs were getting closer with each second we wasted. We had heard story after story about the wild dogs, but we had never thought we’d see them for ourselves.

“Okay, we’ll climb a tree and stay out of their reach.” I said.

“I can’t climb trees like you can, you’re going to have to give me a boost.” Glenn said.

Panic really started to hit me then, Glenn was terrible at climbing trees, but if I got him started he could do it. Quickly I had to come up with a new plan for us.

“Okay, then run,” I said, “Run as fast as you can and I’ll climb a tree and keep the dogs occupied.”

So Glenn ran. He didn’t argue with me, or insist we run together. For once he just listened to his little sister and ran. And I climbed the first tree I saw. I wrapped my body around it and used my feet to push me upward; I felt like a strong little squirrel. Once I was pretty high on a secure branch I let myself finally breathe again. Then, I started yelling and shaking the tree branch above me. The dogs were close and I hoped they would come pay attention to me in the tree instead of Glenn wherever he was at that point.

Thankfully, my plan worked. There were five dogs surrounding my tree; they jumped and snarled, wanting to do who knows what to me. I continued to shake the tree and yell until I thought I was going to collapse. I wanted Glenn to have as much of a head start as he could before they got bored of me. I felt like I was in the tree for hours, but it had probably only been a few minutes when the dogs left. They ran in the opposite direction of home, but with all the trees and bushes in the woods I didn’t know how long they went in that direction.

I sat in my safe tree for what felt like forever before I decided that I needed to start heading home. I climbed down the tree slowly trying not to make a sound. Once I reached the ground I crept through the woods listening for any sign of the wild dogs.

Crunch.

Panic swept through me. *They were back for me, they were back for me*, repeated in my head over and over again. As quickly as I could, I climbed another tree. I sat high up in the branches, waiting for the vicious dogs to be back for me, but after a few minutes I realized they weren’t coming back. I descended my tree once again and returned to my slow walk home. But

with every *crunch*, *crack*, and *rustle* I flew up another tree. Fear had been consuming me, leaving me unable to go five minutes of walking without climbing a tree for safety.

Once I made it home it was almost dark. I could see the light of my kitchen from the back window, and as soon as I opened the door I could hear Glenn's cries and my parents yelling about how he could leave his little sister out for the dogs—literally. Before I yelled to them that I was there and okay, I breathed in the safety of home.

Winter Slippery Slope

The snow was falling gently down just barely then, each flake getting lost in the white sheet that enveloped our yard. It was like over-night our home transported itself into a perfect, just shaken, snow-globe. I immediately got myself dressed in layer after layer before I ran over to Glenn's room to wake him. As soon as I knocked on the door, he swung it open completely dressed as well. Our hurried footsteps on the stairs must have alerted Mama from the kitchen.

"Have fun you two," She yelled knowing the first snowfall meant sledding.

Glenn and I ran out the door and headed out to our shed to get our sleds. We always sledded down the same hill just down the road from our house. It was fun, but all the other kids in the area also would sled there, so sometimes it got kind of crowded.

"C'mon lets go to Big Ridge Hill for once," Glenn pleaded.

"We're not allowed to go there it's all rocky," I said.

"It'll be fine. I have an idea." Glenn said, heading in the direction of Big Ridge Hill.

I tried arguing with Glenn the entire walk to the hill, but he never listened to me.

*

This hill was much larger than the one we usually would go sledding at, and it was empty. There were no tiny kids with their parents giggling and getting in our way. The rocks were big though, and they littered around the bottom of the hill barely visible with all the snow.

“How are we going to know where it’s safe to sled down?” I asked.

“I told you I have an idea.” Glenn responded. “C’mon, I’ll tell you when we get up there.”

I grumbled to myself about Glenn being a brat as we climbed up the hill. Between the snow and the steep slope it felt how I imagined climbing Mount Everest would feel. When we finally reached the top I plopped down into the snow letting it’s coldness cool me off. It was below freezing out, but with all my layers on and the hike up the hill I was sweating.

“Okay, so here’s the plan. We’re going to take turns sledding down to find a clear spot.” Glenn explained.

“You’re kidding right?” I asked.

“No. It’s a good plan. We’ll take turns.”

“That’s not a plan it’s a death sentence.”

“C’mon, we’re already up here you might as well sled down.”

“I am not going first!” I demanded.

*

I went first. Every time Glenn had a terrible plan I ended up going along with it. This is exactly how I ended up at the bottom of Big Ridge Hill with blood pouring out of my nose surrounded by rocks. My screams when I reached the bottom must have clued Glenn that my path was not safe. Luckily for him, the spot he chose to go down first was completely clear. Luckily for me, my kind big brother checked on me and simply said, “Oh, it’s just a bloody nose”. Then,

he ran back up the hill and sled down over and over. All the while I sat in the snow with my bloody nose, which looked extra dramatic with the sharp contrast of pure white and bright red.

“Okay Eleanor, let’s head back. Maybe Mama will make us hot chocolate. I’m freezing,” said Glenn.

I rolled my eyes at him and started to follow him home. When we got to the house I stood in the entryway shedding off layers before heading to the kitchen where Glenn was already asking Mama about the hot chocolate.

“Yes, yes, I’ll make it for you two in just a minute.” Mama said, while turning to face us.

“Oh my,” Mama gasped. “What happened?”

Mama put her hands against my face, the concern shined in her eyes. I recounted the story, completely throwing my brother in front of the bus, and watched as her emotions switched from concern to anger at Glenn.

“Glenn Jewell!” Mama yelled before diving into her lecture.

*

I curled myself up on the couch with a blanket while I waited for Mama to finish up making the hot chocolate. Glenn was sent to his room to, “think about what he’s done”. Mama helped me clean myself up before making the hot chocolate. While I waited I breathed in the sweet smell drifting in from the kitchen and took in the warmth from home.

Spring
S.O.S.

The water of the Chesapeake Bay shimmered in the sun. Each ripple of water glowed from the reflecting sun. An unusually warm day in April lining up on a Saturday meant my constant wish to go out on the boat got to come true. I loved riding in the boat and feeling the bumps from

the waves we created, not to mention being able to fish in silence, listening to the nature that was so different from the woods by our house.

Glenn and I sat at the front of the boat where it comes into a tip. The waves felt even bumpier there, so it was our favorite place to sit while we travelled out to a place to stop for fishing. With each bump we squealed in delight as our stomachs dropped and the water sprayed our faces. I turned to Mama to point out a bird that kept swooping down to try to catch fish, but then I heard a loud splash. Glenn was gone vanished into thin air.

“Help!” Glenn screamed from someplace I couldn’t see.

I could hear splashing and trashing in the ocean, but it was getting quieter as the boat propelled forward. I leaned over the boat hoping it wasn’t true, but there Glenn was frantically splashing in the bay.

“Dad!” I yelled. “Glenn fell off the boat! Stop the boat!”

Dad looked confused at first, but as soon as he processed what I said he stopped. I watched as he looked over the boat to see Glenn splashing in the ocean, drowning. Then, Dad did the strangest thing. He turned the boat back on and slowly inched it towards my drowning brother.

“Help!” screamed Glenn, over and over again.

“Glenn,” Dad said, “just stand up.”

Glenn wasn’t listening though, he was too busy splashing and yelling.

“Glenn,” Dad yelled this time. “Stand up.”

Glenn glanced up this time and seemed to hear our Dad. He stopped splashing and screaming and stood all the way up. The water only reached his chest.

Erica Dame

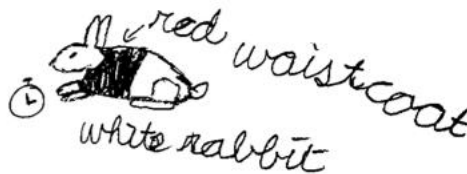
My Experiences In Wonderland

1861

Seeing the young ones is the most difficult. They come chasing dreams and imaginary friends.* Most of them grow out of it and leave, but some become so affected by the "treatment"† of this institution that they can no longer comprehend the world around them. She's been here‡ a while now. Her uncle used to visit and ask her questions, but he stopped. I could not understand why, I always find her company intriguing and enlightening.

It is always the same with her. She calls out to her rabbit, who she describes as white carrying a pocket watch. I look outside the window after she calls out to it. She tells me to find the one in the red waistcoat, that he is her friend. This is a daily ritual for her, but what is unusual is that she tells me the rabbit is late today, but she does not know what for, only that he rushed off.

There is no rabbit.



* They also tend to draw on things that aren't theirs. Hence the scribbles in my notes. They are from when she first arrived and had some semblance of reality. That is gone now.

† Ah, yes, "treatment." They try to call locking us up in plain, four-wall rooms "treatment." I, for one, see that they have no intention of treating anyone. In my time here, I have not seen anyone cured or set free.

‡ It is reasonably important to mention the location: Healing Hearts Asylum for the Wayward. I laugh at the idea of healing in this place. It is not equipped for such matters. The girl has named it Wonderland. I much prefer her title. For I often wonder what I'm doing here.

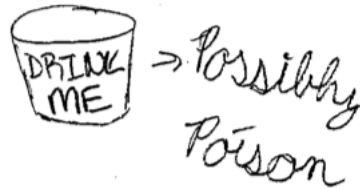
Then she wanders off to get her “medicine.”* Nasty stuff. I spit it out myself. Still, the rotten taste never goes away. But I try to keep smiling at the nurse. I try to keep a close eye on the girl as she moves about. Upon receiving her “medicine,” she turns to the lunatic behind her saying, “How curious! It says ‘Drink Me.’”

I assure you, it has no label. Something I find curious.

She giggles. “What if it’s poison?”

The eyes of the gullible lunatic widen.

“No, I’ll look first,”² she assures him.



I watch as she checks around the whole cup. Her inquisitive little blue eyes squint as she inspects the cup and its contents. The nurse becomes impatient with her, sighing in an audible huff and crossing her arms. But, to my surprise, the nurse says nothing. None of them speak without consulting the Queen[†]. “It’s not marked as poison,” she says, then takes her drink and hands the cup back to the nurse.

I step up to the desk for my cupful, smiling as politely as I can manage at the nurse in her own starched garb. I swallow enough where I can stop its corruption with my throat and smile at her as I hand the cup back. I continue to hold it as I make my way to the common area, which is only available to us pauper lunatics – those who take their medicine at least. As I sit in the wooden

* I believe the “medicine” to be a way for them to keep us quiet. To lull us into a sleep from which we may never awaken. Accompanied by this nightmare reality.

[†] Don’t worry. She comes in later.

chair by the window, basking in the rare sunlight, I watch as she stumbles around the room a bit.

Then she says, "What a curious feeling! I must be shutting up like a telescope!"³

She has not changed size.

Everyone else in the room ignores her. Then she sits in a chair of her own, continuing to mutter to herself: "for it might end, you know, in my going out altogether, like a candle. I wonder what I should be like then."⁴ At this point in her babbling, she usually drifts off from the "medicine" like they all do. And while they do, I pretend to as well, letting the "medicine" drip out of my mouth like drool. They never notice.

I wake up to her sudden thoughts and questions, but they do not startle me anymore. The "medicine" has less and less effect on her. I imagine her world is becoming more of a reality to her, especially since she asks a new question. I keep one eye open on her as she says: "Dear, dear! How queer everything is to-day! And yesterday things went on just as usual. I wonder if I've been changed in the night? Let me think: was I the same when I got up this morning? I almost think I can remember feeling a little different. But the next question is 'Who in the world am I? Ah, *that's* the great puzzle."⁵ That is the end of her making any sort of sense to me and she goes into reciting a few lines of rhyme terribly different from the original.

Nothing has been done to her in the night.

Wonderland

How doth the little crocodile

She sits, staring wide-eyed at the floor. I see one of the therapists, the one for our section, come into the room and examine it. His body is tall and he appears to be the same shape all the way down, with a tall peak of curls on his head. His shirt is too tight. I can tell because the buttons appear strained and they give him rings around his body. He glances with squinting, reddened, tired eyes at each of us. His eyes focus on her, like usual, and he gently taps her on the shoulder. She is not startled. Instead, as he whispers to her, she simply gets up and follows him to his office. He does not close the door and I can see her sitting on the rough, leather couch. Her eyes light up, she mentions something about a mushroom. I get up and move to another chair, so their conversation is within earshot.



The crackly intake of his hookah is faint. Then he lets out a breathy: “Who are *you*?”⁶

This is not an unusual question for the Caterpillar – how we lunatics refer to him – to ask of anyone. Especially not her. She’s been mumbling about being herself or not since she arrived. Normally she has no real answer for him. But today is different.

“I – I hardly know, Sir, just at present – at least I know who I *was* when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then.”⁷

Finally, the Caterpillar is onto something. “What do you mean by that? Explain yourself!”⁸ He sounds excited. I wonder what he hopes to gain from continuing this conversation with her.



"I ca'n't explain *myself*, I'm afraid, Sir, because I'm not myself, you see."⁹

She sits back in her chair, crossing her arms. I am surprised she manages that, given the constricting gown she wears. Thinking of it makes my starched trousers itch. We are all constricted.

"I don't see."

"I'm afraid I ca'n't put it more clearly, for I ca'n't understand it myself, to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing."

After a moment of pause, he responds with, "It isn't." Interesting tactic, doctor, going along with our views of the world.*

"Well, perhaps you haven't found it so yet, but when you have to turn into a chrysalis – you will some day, you know – and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you'll feel a little queer, wo'n't you?" She looks down at the couch she's sitting on, touching it gently as if it might be brittle.



Wonderland He continues to go along with this. I wish that I could see his expression. Another breathy intake of his "hidden"[†] hookah. "Not a bit."

"Well, perhaps *your* feelings may be different. All I know is, it would feel very queer to *me*." She crosses her arms again, wrinkling her nose.

* *My interactions with lunatics have proved to me that yes, pretending to understand their realities will aid in conversation. That is, until your family thinks you actually believe their realities. Then they send you far away, to be with **your** people.*

[†] *I find it humorous that he thinks no one can see the instrument of his own sanity, let alone the blood-red eyes.*

"You!" he says with excitement. "Who are *you*?" His beady, red, wet eyes widen. I wonder what it must feel like to truly get somewhere for the first time in his work in this place.



"I think you ought to tell me who *you* are, first."

Another puff on the hookah. "Why?"

She gets up with her arms still crossed and leaves him sitting there.

Usually their conversations go a different way, talking about how she can't remember things and she recites wrong rhymes. Today, though, she leaves.

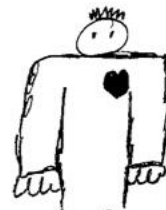
Unusual for her.

She walks towards me, not seeming to notice I'm in the chair. By the time she does, she's practically stepping on my shoe. She looks up, startled. I smile at her, hopefully showing her there's nothing to be startled by, though I can't be sure what my teeth look like.

"Cheshire-Puss. Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?"¹⁰ Her eyes are always inquisitive and intense. Always seeing things that aren't there.

Odd, I think. What does she mean?* Though, the Caterpillar went along with her, so I should too, if *I'm* to get anywhere. "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to." I glance around the room where everyone is gathered. The hallways are blocked by the men in white.

"I don't much care where —"



men in
white

** Do I like to sit and bask in the sun? Of course! It's a habit I developed as a child in the long Cheshire winters. But who wouldn't when reality is as cold as the interior of this place? And I am quite stealthy. But does that make me a Puss?*

Wonderland

"Then it doesn't matter which way you go," I interrupt, taking another glance around. Where does she think she's going to go? Escape is impossible.*

"— so long as I get *somewhere*."

I look around the small room again. What does she see in it? I wonder.

"Oh, you're sure to do that if you only walk long enough."

"What sort of people live about here?"

"In that direction," I point to one corner of the room at the gentleman with a tall hat, "lives a Hatter: and in that direction," I point to the man in the other corner, with long hair and constantly wrinkled nose, "lives a March Hare. Visit either you like: they're both mad."

not my rabbit

The gentleman was indeed a missiner. But the man was no hare.

"But I don't want to go among mad people."

"Oh, you can'n't help that." I chuckle to myself. "We're all mad here. I'm mad." Another chuckle. "You're mad."

Wonderland

"How do you know I'm mad?"[†] Again with crossing her arms. Is she trying to compact herself? Or look threatening?

"You must be, or you wouldn't have come here."[†] *Wonderland*

Then I remember the activity planned for later: a game of croquet on the ground. Only for our compliant bunch. I ask her about going, adding in her name for the head nurse. Maybe it's because of the way the starched white cap sits on her large head. "Do you play croquet with the Queen to-day?"

* *Nearly impossible.*

[†] *Though, I guess this is not entirely true. I am not mad, yet I find myself in this place.*

"I should like it very much, but I haven't been invited yet."

Odd, she should have heard the announcement like the rest of us.

"You'll see me there," I say, getting up to go. I much prefer watching her from afar, so I cannot taint her mind with my own imagination. She is much more interesting when left on her own.

*always
watching*

She continues to stand there, appearing dazed and slightly confused. She continues to talk to herself, even though I have gotten up from my spot. It seems like she's trying to converse with me still and, to my astonishment, I seem to be responding – but only in her head. The announcement for the afternoon meal comes, and we got to take our customary seats.

She walks over to the two gentlemen, both now seated at their usual table. Upon seeing her approach, they cry out: "No room! No room!"¹² They spread themselves out to cover the empty chair between them. Even here, she is different.

"There's *plenty* of room!" she retorts, seating herself at their table.

I take my seat one table over. Listening to the mad rambles of mad minds. I tend to follow along easily. The difference is, I am not mad.

"Have some wine," the man with long hair, the March Hare, says. No wine in sight. They barely even let us have water.

"I don't see any wine."

"There isn't any."

"Then it wasn't very civil of you to offer it."

"It wasn't very civil of you to sit down without being invited."

"I didn't know it was *your* table. It's laid for a great many more than three."

The three of us – the two gentlemen and I – looked down at the small table for four. It is only now that I notice a rather small man occupying the fourth seat.

"Your hair wants cutting," the Hatter chimes in.

They spend their time discussing riddles and not making sense. I begin to eat my own meal, chuckling about their riddles. How, indeed, is a raven like a writing desk? To this day, I have no answer.

"What day of the month is it?"¹³ the Hatter asks her, taking out his watch.

She ponders for a moment. "The fourth."¹⁴

It is actually the 15th of May 1861.

"Two days wrong!" he exclaims. He turns to the Hare: "I told you butter wouldn't suit the works!"¹⁵

"It was the *best* butter."¹⁶

Now that they say it, I do recall them lathering a watch with butter. It was an amusing sight. A shaggy-haired man, opening a pocket watch and spreading the butter on his finger like it was a dinner roll. Though, scenes such as that are not uncommon here. We are compliant lunatics after all. Completely harmless. They let us do odd things, then give us "medicine" before bed. Everyone sleeps, besides the girl and I.

 → *definitely poison*

"Yes," the Hatter continues, "but some crumbs must have got in as well. You shouldn't have put it in with the bread-knife."¹⁷ He thrusts the watch at the Hare, who dunks it in the tea.

It was just his finger. We are not allowed to have knives.

"It was the *best* butter, you know."^{*}

She looks at the face of the watch. "What a funny watch! It tells the day of the month, and doesn't tell what o'clock it is!"

It is a perfectly normal, but inoperable pocket watch.

They argue a bit about time and what clocks should measure. Personally, I think watches should tick down the time until the end. That way you know when to live and when to pray.

"The Dormouse is asleep again," the Hatter comments, dripping tea on the small man's red nose.

The Dormouse replies, still asleep, "Of course, of course: just what I was going to remark myself."

They start to bicker about the gender and personality of Time. I imagine her to be a strict old woman. Straight to the point, no compromising, marching on and on in a firm line. The Hatter explains how he used to get along with Time, and now he doesn't.

"We quarreled last March – just before *he* went mad, you know,"¹⁸ pointing to the Hare.

It's true. The Hare arrived here in early April. Poor, pauper lunatic.

^{*} *I do not know what butter he speaks of. Surely not the dry, crusty stuff we can barely scrape with our nails.*

"Twinkle, twinkle, twinkle, twinkle —"¹⁹the Dormouse sang in his sleep. The Hatter and the Hare pinched him so he would stop, lest he draw attention to the men in white.



little bat

When the meal time is deemed over — though the four queer folks had not touched their meal — the girl gets up and says, "It's the stupidest tea-party I ever was at in all my life."²⁰

There is an announcement about the organized outdoor activity for the evening: croquet. No one seems excited, simply because they are incapable of that now. The "treatment" will do that to a person. We line up to receive our afternoon "medicine," then to be sent to our rooms for a nap. Again, I store the "medicine" in my throat to be drooled out later. Afterwards, I enter my room, a small cell where my roommate — a mute gentleman* — and I sleep. Somehow he seems extra quiet today. That means I can hear all of her mumblings from down the hall. She goes on and on, having a conversation with more than one person.

The announcement of the croquet match wakes us up. Though I am already awake. I have been awake since I arrived, though they thought me to be sleepwalking.

The garden they lead us compliant lunatics to is well-kept[†]. To give the appearance of luxury, I think. The Commissioners never suspect a thing. The men in white trim the trees. Perhaps the Commissioners are to come to the match.

* *I have never experienced trouble with him. He keeps to himself. Keeps to his thoughts. At first I attempted communication. It proved futile.*

[†] *My favorites features are the rosebushes. Rows of white roses. The girl has never taken to them. She seems to think they'd look better red. I can't say I disagree.*

Won't that be interesting, I ponder. As we file out, she goes up to one of the men. I hold my breath.



Timidly she asks, "Would you tell me, please, why are you painting those roses?"

They go on a tangent about how she needs to go back with us "inbred crazies" before they toss her in a room of her own. She appears to hear nothing. Then they point out the Queen, who finally arrives. And with the head doctor, no less. The magnificent King and Queen of Hearts, I chuckle to myself. Of all the nonsense she spouts, I think naming the two of them is my favorite. When she stands stupidly and watches them, the Queen stops in front of her.



"Idiot! What's your name, child?"²¹

"My name is Alice, so please your Majesty,"²² she says, giving a curtsy.

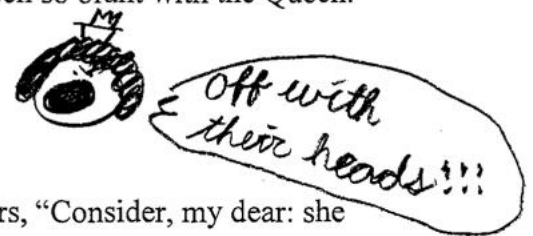
The Queen asks her about what she was doing conversing with the men in white.

To which she replies: "How should I know? It's no business of mine."²³

I start to chuckle to myself. No one has ever been so blunt with the Queen.

"Off with her head! Off with —"²⁴

"Nonsense!" she yelled back.



The head doctor, the King, practically whimpers, "Consider, my dear: she is only a child." He appears small next to such a large woman.

The Queen begins to yell at the men in white for speaking to her and for trimming the plants at such an awful time. After all the fuss, she turns to her:

"Can you play croquet?"

"Come on then!"

We are all gathered on the grounds, though one of us is missing. A rather large personality indeed. Keeps calling herself Duchess. Not sure what of, exactly.

I see the girl bend low to the ground and whisper something to the grass. It seems like it's whispering back.

"Get to your places!"²⁵ cries the Queen.



The croquet mallets and balls are handed out. The girl holds hers in a peculiar way. Like the ball has spikes. And the mallet refuses to cooperate.

What's going on in there? I wonder. The men in white stand about the grounds, legs apart. They are acting as our arches. She continues to struggle with her mallet and ball. I look at my own mallet and ball.

There is nothing peculiar about them.



As the game commences, all hell breaks loose: pauper lunatics running this way and that way after their balls, shouting, chasing, even the Queen has her part. I try to stay in a spot close to the girl because I never know what she might say next. "What would become of me? They're dreadfully fond of beheading people here: the great wonder is, that there's anyone left alive!"²⁶ she mumbles to herself. What a great wonder indeed.*

wonderland

* Occasionally, the Queen will say those magic words: "Off with their head!" Then the lunatic in question is carted off and they are never seen again. Only a hollowed-out husk reforms with a similar visage.



I stroll over to her. The way she blinks at me seems as if her vision is fuzzy. She says to herself, "It's the Cheshire-Cat: now I shall have somebody to talk to."

"How are you getting on?" I ask.

"I don't think they play at all fairly, and they all quarrel so dreadfully one ca'n't hear oneself speak – and they don't seem to have any rules in particular: at least, if there are, nobody attends to them – and you've no idea how confusing it is all the things being alive: for instance, there's the arch I've got to go through next walking about at the other end of the ground – and I should have croqueted the Queen's hedgehog just now, only it ran away when it saw mine coming."

Oh, a hedgehog, I realize. That's why she acts like the ball has spikes.

"How do you like the Queen?" I whisper to her.

"Not at all, she's so extremely –" she begins, then we both see her coming, "– likely to win, that it's hardly worth while finishing the game."

The King comes over to the two of us. "Who are you talking to?"²⁷ he asks her, motioning to me and my shabby attire. Believe me, dear king, I would be dressed better had I had the opportunity.

"It's a friend of mine – a Cheshire-Cat," she says. "Allow me to introduce it."

"I don't like the look of it at all," he replies. He mumbles about how I can shake his hand.

"I'd rather not," I say.



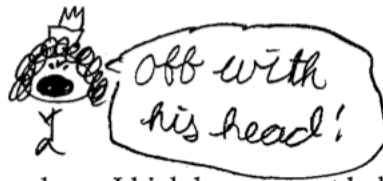
"Don't be impertinent, and don't look at me like that!" he says, moving so she is between him and me. Oh, dear King, afraid of a lunatic? Feelings boil inside me. Yes, feel afraid. Feel the fear we do when you walk into the room. Taking one of us to never return.

"A cat may look at a king," she says in a dreamy voice. "I've read that in some book, but I don't remember where."

I smile as wide as I can at the King, who cowers behind this girl.

"Well, it must be removed." He looks to find the Queen. "My dear! I wish you would have this patient removed!"²⁸

"Off with his head!" she cries out.



Before any of the men in white can apprehend me, I kick her croquet ball into the bushes as hard as I can and make sure she goes after it. Then I shove the Queen and King aside, making my break for the opposite trees. My head is attached quite nicely, thank you, I will not lose it now. Not when I've stayed sane amidst these lunatics. The ever definable "them" that exists in my world. I run until I disappear completely into the woods. I hear the shouts behind me, calling out my name, though it isn't my real name. I wasn't really myself all cooped up in there.

Now, looking up at the blue sky, I am free.

Wonderland



Years later, back in Cheshire, as a Christmas present from my wife in 1865 I receive a copy of Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. I give her the necessary hug and kiss of thanks. Then, that night, I take my baby daughter up to her room, lay her down, and I begin to read. And as I read, I begin to think about my time in Wonderland, as Carroll calls it. Word for word, my experience is read aloud. Though, it certainly isn't from my perspective, but hers. The silly names she called everyone, they were her reality. At the end, I know what has happened to her and I cry. Memories of returning to visit, disguised by their perception of my sanity. They informed me she was no longer available for visitors. Upon inquiry, they told me she hadn't kept her head.*

My daughter has long been asleep as I finish the story, but I tell her anyway: "No matter what, there is no such thing as normal. We're all mad..." I give her the stuffed cat toy I got her. "Have curious dreams, Alice."

* Of course, they meant that figuratively. They could not possibly be aware of the quite literal implications.

End Notes

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- ¹ In reference to Herman Merivale's *My Experiences in a Lunatic Asylum*.
- ² The majority of Alice's dialogue in this story comes from the work cited here: Carroll, Lewis. *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Dover Publication, 1999. Page numbers are given in footnote citations, all of which come from this source. The page number for this quote is 4.
- ³ Page 5.
- ⁴ Page 5.
- ⁵ Page 8.
- ⁶ Page 27.
- ⁷ Page 27.
- ⁸ Page 27.
- ⁹ Page 28. Until otherwise cited, the dialogue after this point is from this same page.
- ¹⁰ Page 41. Until otherwise cited, the dialogue after this point is from this same page.
- ¹¹ Page 42. Until otherwise cited, the dialogue after this point is from this same page.
- ¹² Page 44. Until otherwise cited, the dialogue after this point is from this same page.
- ¹³ Page 45.
- ¹⁴ Page 45.
- ¹⁵ Page 45.
- ¹⁶ Page 45.
- ¹⁷ Page 46. Until otherwise cited, the dialogue after this is point is from this same page.
- ¹⁸ Page 47.
- ¹⁹ Page 47.
- ²⁰ Page 50.
- ²¹ Page 53.
- ²² Page 53.
- ²³ Page 53.
- ²⁴ Page 54. Until otherwise cited, the dialogue after this point is from this same page.
- ²⁵ Page 55.
- ²⁶ Page 56. Until otherwise cited, the dialogue after this point is from this same page.
- ²⁷ Page 57. Until otherwise cited, the dialogue after this point is from this same page.
- ²⁸ Page 57. Though slightly altered: "cat" has been changed to "patient."

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Julie Hild

The Monster Mash: An Exploration of the Child Psyche

I. Introduction

Children, especially the children of the modern age, have familiarity with death. From television shows and films that are directed at a younger audience to personal life experiences, children are exposed to the concept of someone leaving and never returning from a young age. Though millions of children have been exposed to this concept, however, their familiarity does not necessarily mean that these children have been taught or simply possess the emotional capability to deal with such trauma. Two such characters that cannot handle the trauma of a sick and dying parent are Conor O'Malley of Patrick Ness's novel *A Monster Calls* and Barbara Thorson from Joe Kelly and J. M. Ken Niimura's graphic novel *I Kill Giants*. Both pieces explore the children's trauma and grief as they watch their mothers slowly and eventually die of cancer. When it comes to all people dealing with death, including children, the Kübler-Ross model is the most widely accepted way of showing how most people grieve. There are five stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. However, Conor and Barbara exhibit only a few of these stages rather than all five. Additionally, they exhibit a sixth stage of grief that is not only unexpressed in the initial five stages, but is unique to children: imagination. In both *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness and *I Kill Giants*, written by Joe Kelly and illustrated by J. M. Ken Niimura, the lead characters deal with their trauma and grief through denial, anger through aggression, and acceptance as well as their imaginations.¹

II. Summaries of Stories and Establishment of Psychological Condition

¹ Note: it is not actually possible to diagnose Conor and Barbara due to their fictitious state. All diagnoses and symptoms suggested are speculation that is supported with information from the original texts.

Patrick Ness's *A Monster Calls* follows Conor O'Malley, a British thirteen-year-old boy with problems that thirteen-year-olds should not have to deal with. He is mercilessly bullied by his schoolmates, particularly by Harry and his cronies, Anton and Sully. Conor lacks friends, especially after cutting off his best friend, Lily, for spilling a secret he felt she had no right to share; she told everyone at school that his mother has cancer. His mother's illness is the primary conflict that drives Conor throughout the story. In his effort to deal with the weight of her sickness—especially as it becomes more obvious that his mother is growing worse and not better—he invents the monster. The monster, who never gives Conor an official name by which to call him, visits Conor multiple times throughout the novel. During three of his most notable visits to him, the monster tells the boy a story. These stories are the reason why the monster has come to see him; each of these three stories is meant to teach him that the world—especially the adult world—is more confusing, complicated, and tragic than he could have ever anticipated. Finally, the story ends with Conor telling his own story, in which he accepts his mother's closeness to death. He is able to acknowledge that while he loves her and does not want her to die, he emotionally needs her to die to end his own suffering. His mother dies, and Conor comes one step closer to adulthood.

Author Joe Kelly and artist J. M. Ken Niimura together tell the story of Barbara Thorson in *I Kill Giants*. She is a sassy, smart, eleven-year-old American girl that refuses to be anything but herself. Barbara is very open with her classmates about the fact that she and she alone is capable of killing giants that pose a threat to her family and community. Using the weapon Covaleski—inspired by Norse mythology but named after a baseball player—she can defeat any giant that comes in her way. Almost as a means of juxtaposition, Barbara stores Covaleski in her

heart-shaped pocketbook,² which she carries around everywhere. Unfortunately, not everyone around Barbara is as believing of her story as she seems to be. She is bullied by Taylor, a physically bigger girl, and her two sidekicks, who remain unnamed. Eventually, she is befriended by another classmate, Sophia, who is curious to learn more about Barbara's world; however, Barbara unintentionally pushes Sophia away after accidentally hitting her in a fight with Taylor. To help her cope with her issues, Mrs. Molle, the school psychologist, tries to work with Barbara to open up about what is going on at home; it is not revealed until near the end of the novel that her mother is dying of cancer. Barbara only accepts this after she confronts a titan—the worst of all the types of giants—and with that finds peace within herself, even though her mother's illness does end her life.

There are many similarities between the lives of the two characters: they both have mothers that are dying—and by stories' end do die—of cancer, and they are bullied by a leader with two others. Additionally, there is another aspect of their lives that they have in common: both characters are missing their fathers. Conor's parents divorced when he was younger, and his father married another woman and now lives with her and their baby in the United States. "That had been six years ago," the unidentified narrator explains, "so long now that Conor sometimes wouldn't remember what it was like having a dad in the house" (Ness 27). Not only does he rarely see his father, but they also do not communicate frequently; the narrator implies that Conor's father is supposed to call every two weeks, but he does not always meet that deadline. All that is ever said about Barbara's father, on the other hand, is that he is "god-know's where"³ (Kelly np). He has been out of the picture for years, to the point where no one knows how or

² According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, a pocketbook is defined as "a flat typically leather folding case for money or personal papers that can be carried in a pocket or handbag" ("Pocketbook").

³ Typically, it is considered correct to say "God knows where," but this spelling it how it is presented in the original text.

where to locate him. Barbara nor anyone else in their family mentions him again for the rest of the story, signifying that he has not only disappeared, but that the Thorson family is not particularly concerned about finding him.

Combined, these factors have taken a serious psychological toll on the children that they have affected. In her article “The Mind and Mental Health: How Stress Affects the Brain,” Rebecca Bernstein explains how stress, especially long-term stress, can affect the human brain. She says:

High levels of cortisol can wear down the brain’s ability to function properly. According to several studies, chronic stress impairs brain function in multiple ways. It can disrupt synapse regulation, resulting in the loss of sociability and the avoidance of interactions with others. Stress can kill brain cells and even reduce the size of the brain. Chronic stress has a shrinking effect on the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain responsible for memory and learning.

The loss of a healthy social life is noticeable in both Conor and Barbara’s lives; throughout both of their respective stories, each child only has one friend to speak of. Yet, for the majority of their narratives, Conor and Barbara have—intentionally and unintentionally, respectively—pushed their friends away. Not only that, but Conor and Barbara are still young; they have not fully learned how to interpret and deal with their emotions in psychologically healthy ways. Using these conditions as their psychological foundations, it is easier to see how and why Conor and Barbara react to their mothers’ illnesses in the ways in which they do.

III. Stage One: Denial

Before either character can accept the fates of their mothers, they first went through an intense stage of denial. In his online article, “15 Common Defense Mechanisms,” John M.

Grahol defines denial as:

the refusal to accept reality or fact, acting as if a painful event, thought or feeling did not exist. It is considered one of the most primitive of the defense mechanisms because it is characteristic of early childhood development. Many people use denial in their everyday lives to avoid dealing with painful feelings or areas of their life they don’t wish to admit.

In this sense, denial occurs when someone cannot emotionally accept hardship or trauma that has recently occurred or is currently happening.⁴ It should also be noted that denial is common in “early childhood development,” a stage in which Conor and Barbara have just recently left themselves (Grahol). Because of their emotional immaturity due to lack of life experience, denial is an automatic and somewhat comforting method of coping. Furthermore, because they are young and have not had to deal with such traumas before, they are handling their grief at their own paces. According to FamilyDoctor.org, which is supported by the American Academy of Family Physicians, “There is no set timetable for grief... The whole process can last anywhere from 6 months to 4 years” (“Grieving: Facing Illness, Death, and Other Losses”). Therefore, this stage can last for as little or as long as their brains need in before it can move on to the next stage of grief. However, when it comes to outwardly displaying this stage, Conor and Barbara manifest their inability to accept their situations in different ways.

Conor even has moments of denial far before his confrontation with the monster. After his mother receives her most recent treatment near the start of the novel, Conor notices that she is

⁴ This is not true of everyone who grieves; however, it does prove true for Conor and Barbara, as they are expressing their denial while their mothers are sick.

not recovering at the speed at which she normally does. Not only that, but her condition appears to be worse than it was before. He begins to worry, but before he allows himself to become too stressed, “He pushed the thoughts out of his head but they returned and he had to push them away again” (Ness 44). In this moment, Conor is actively denying his mother’s declining health even as they are staring him in the face. His mind is not yet ready to face the reality of his mother’s worsening condition, so rather than confront her status of her illness head on, he chooses to force himself to stifle such negative thoughts.

Conor’s most obvious example of denial, though, is when he has a direct confrontation with the monster he has created. Near the end of the novel, Conor accosts the monster, asking it why it has not yet healed his mother as he believes it is supposed to do. The conversation goes as follows:

I did not come to heal her, the monster said. I came to heal you.

“Me?” Conor said, stopping his squirming in the monster’s hand. “I don’t need healing. My mum’s the one who’s...”

But he couldn’t say it. Even now he couldn’t say it. Even though they’d had the talk.

Even though he’d known it all along. Because of *course* he had, of *course* he did, no matter how much he’d wanted to believe it wasn’t true, of course he knew. But *still* he couldn’t say it. Couldn’t say that she was— (Ness 172).

In this scene, the monster is trying to push Conor into admitting that his mother is dying.

Although he knows the truth that lies behind this statement, he refuses to accept it. Conor has shoved his denial so deep down inside of him that, even when he subconsciously knows the truth about his mother’s condition, he cannot consciously acknowledge it. This demonstrates the

amount of emotional pain Conor is in; the thought of his mother dying is so heartbreaking that he cannot bear the thought of it.

Barbara, on the other hand, is confronted with her truth by her school psychologist, Mrs. Molle. Throughout the graphic novel, Mrs. Molle is trying to persuade Barbara into opening up and expressing her emotions; it is her job to ensure that Barbara has all of the mental and emotional support that she needs. However, the conversation between the pair does not go nearly as well as Mrs. Molle planned. She begins to try and coax Barbara with a word association game but quickly realizes that it will not succeed; instead, she tries a more direct approach. She begins by comforting Barbara, saying:

“I’m your friend, Barbara. Not like Sophia...I’m a friend who you can talk to about your problems. Things that make you *angry*...”

“Please let my hand go.”

“Things that you’re *afraid* of. Things that make you *sad*...”

‘I have to go to the bathroom--’

“Like what’s going on at *home*, maybe? With Karen and Dave and-- [REDACTED]”⁵

[Pause. Mrs. Molle continues.]

“I think we need to talk about [REDACTED]” (Kelly np).

Not only is she in an extreme state of denial, but she is forcibly blocking out bits of conversation that she does not want herself—or the audience—to hear or see. Even on the page itself, once Mrs. Molle says, “I think we need to talk about [REDACTED],” Barbara’s eyes shrink and she appears to be in a state of shock. Behind these redacted sections there are words, words that the audience can assume reveal what is truly going on in Barbara’s home and where her mother is, words that

⁵ Note: what words are behind the blocks are never revealed to the audience; therefore, any and all words found behind the blocks belong to the author of this paper and do not necessarily reflect the ideas of Joe Kelly.

Barbara is so desperate not to acknowledge that they are scribbled out. Her denial overrides even the truth, so those words remain a mystery to the reader. This incident is the only demonstration of metatheatricity in the graphic novel; only with these black boxes does Barbara override the storyteller and edit out pieces that she does not want to see. Clearly, she is in such denial about her situation that she does not even want the audience to know what is happening until she is ready for them to know. Furthermore, these edits show that Barbara has more authority over her story than the audience was originally led to believe, meaning that Barbara's story could have elements of bias.

Additionally, there are multiple elements of denial besides the black boxes that are occurring in this tense scene between Barbara and Mrs. Molle. Barbara, as if anticipating what Mrs. Molle is going to try and discuss with her, is constantly trying to verbally stop what is happening. She interrupts Mrs. Molle multiple times to demonstrate her wish for Mrs. Molle to be silent, but she also makes excuses as well. Barbara is trying to escape this deeply uncomfortable situation by physically removing herself from it; this shows that she, like Conor, is not emotionally prepared to face the emotional ramifications of confronting her home situation.

IV. Stage Two: Anger through Aggression

Unlike Barbara, Conor does not try to scribble out his reality; he does, however, perform acts of aggression—which is a form of the second stage of grief, anger—to try and cope with his situation. In the cases of both Conor and Barbara, aggression is most accurately defined as “hostile, injurious, or destructive behavior or outlook especially when caused by frustration” (“Aggression”). With Conor, though, there are multiple instances in which his violent tendencies come to light. Throughout the novel, Conor does express combative thoughts; for example, at

one point he becomes so angry with his only friend, Lily, that “he felt as if he could grab hold of the very air and twist it around Lily and rip her right in two” (Ness 67). These moments of mental aggression, though not shown to other characters, are shown to the audience. Not only does expressing these thoughts give the audience a further understanding of where Conor is mentally, but they also serve as a warning sign that Conor is not psychologically okay. However, the physical manifestations of his anger are more noteworthy due to their excessiveness, like when he destroys his grandmother’s sitting room.

In this scene, the monster appears and tells Conor a story in which he tore a man’s house apart. While telling the story, he encourages Conor to help him destroy the house; however, once Conor snaps out of his daydream, he realizes he is destroying not a stranger’s house, but his grandmother’s sitting room. Ness describes Conor’s wildness:

He was yelling as he did it, so loud he couldn’t hear himself think, disappearing into a frenzy of destruction, just mindlessly smashing and smashing and smashing. The monster was right. It was *very* satisfying. Conor screamed until he was hoarse, smashed until his arms were sore, roared until he was nearly falling down with exhaustion (111).

Not only does Conor participate in such a ferocious demolition of his grandmother’s space, he also did so to the point of physically over-exerting himself. This shows both his pent-up emotions and his willingness to act out his anger in such an unhealthy way. He has every reason to be full of strong, intense emotions, as he is struggling not only with his mother’s illness but also with the general problems that come with growing up, such as friendship—or in his case, lack thereof—and trying to discover who he wants to be. However, he is old enough to understand that damaging others’ property is wrong, and for that his actions are atrocious and immature.

Part of the reason why Conor is so destructive is because he is stressed. Conor is staying with his grandmother for a few days while his mother is being treated in the hospital. The pair already have a strained relationship—Conor “didn’t like the way she *talked* to him, like he was an employee under evaluation. An evaluation he was going to fail”—so the tension he felt with his grandmother combined with the stress of his mother’s hospitalization led him to destroy his grandmother’s sitting room (Ness 16). The sitting room was full of antiques and family heirlooms, and Conor’s grandmother was very clear about the room’s intentions; it should be used only for adult to have important conversations, nothing more, nothing less. One of the focal points of the room is a grandfather clock that has been in their family for generations; the item holds a lot of sentimental value for Conor’s grandmother. Yet, even the clock is ruined by Conor’s actions.

Though Conor’s anger often manifests itself in the destruction of inanimate objects, he takes his anger out on humans as well. Conor is constantly bullied by Harry and his sidekicks, Anton and Sully. One day, Harry decides to begin the cruelest torment he had yet to take against Conor; he chooses to start ignoring Conor completely. During that time in Conor’s life, he just wanted to be treated like any other thirteen-year-old, but by having the last person to acknowledge him—even though he was a bully—deciding to ignore him was the final straw for Conor. For Harry to “see” him again, the monster encourages Conor to make himself unable to be ignored through use of physical violence. As a result, he fights Harry; well, more accurately, he brutalizes the young boy. Ness explains Conor’s passion for this merciless mauling:

Conor had felt what the monster was doing to Harry, felt it in his own hands. When the monster gripped Harry’s shirt, Conor felt the material against his own palms. When the

monster struck a blow, Conor felt the sting of it in his own fist. When the monster held Harry's arm behind his back, Conor had felt Harry's muscles resisting (154).

When the one-sided fight initially happens, Conor believes that the violence is all the monster's doing. However, once he is confronted with his headmistress and his own memory, he soon realizes that he was, in fact, the one to brawl with Harry. The headmistress recounts the damage Conor has inflicted on Harry's body, telling Conor that "You broke his arm, his nose, and I'll bet his teeth are never going to look that pretty again" (Ness 153). Conor practically mutilated another student because he was unable to deal with his anger. Because of Conor's actions, Harry will never be quite the same as he was; Conor inflicted permanent damage on Harry's body rather than try to deal with his emotions in a more productive way.

Barbara's inner monologue was not expressed to the audience like Conor's was, and although she is normally not as strong as the people she fights, she was still able to inflict some degree of damage. After Mrs. Molle attempts to discuss her home life with her, Barbara becomes so upset that she slaps Mrs. Molle across the face. Barbara's older sister and guardian, Karen, confronts her about the incident, which sparks another moment of denial for Barbara:

"*You hit a freaking teacher?!? Are you completely mental?*"

"...I'd never hit a teacher. They don't get paid enough for that nonsense. She's a psychologist."

...

"I can *not* deal with you going *psycho*, Barbara, while upstairs, *our—* [REDACTED] [REDACTED]" (Kelly np).⁶

Barbara's blasé attitude about her committing assault against an employee of her school implies that she is not affected by her acts of violence. In her eyes, the injury is justified; Mrs. Molle was

⁶ Again, typically it would be "cannot" and not "can not," but the sentence reflects the original text.

making her uncomfortable and Barbara believed that hitting her was the only way to stop her. However, this line of thinking is both highly flawed and indicates a much more broken psyche. She never truly communicates her feelings of discomfort with Mrs. Molle; rather, she makes excuses to try and leave but immediately resorts to physical force when she does not succeed. This shows how easily she can be aggressive with others.

Barbara is also aggressive toward her school bully, Taylor. The two fight multiple times during the graphic novel, but one of the most pivotal fights occurs after both girls get into trouble for fighting in school. Taylor confronts Barbara away from school grounds, and the two begin to have yet another physical altercation. However, once Taylor tries to steal Barbara's precious Covaleski, Barbara's aggression spikes even higher. Barbara gains the upper hand in their fight, and as she is beating Taylor, she says, "N-never touch m-my--nngh!" (Kelly np). The piece of onomatopoeia is Barbara's grunt of effort, but the rest of the sentence shows her defensiveness of Covaleski. To her, Covaleski is so important that she is willing to hurt someone in order to make sure her privacy—the pocketbook's contents—are not violated, especially by her school bully. Barbara is so violent that Taylor, who is physically much bigger than Barbara, begs her to stop. A hand grabs Barbara's shoulder and also tells her to stop, but she instinctively turns and punches the person who touched her square in the face. That person turns out to be Sophia, her only friend, and she runs off. Barbara tries to apologize, but the damage is already done. This scene demonstrates how Barbara was blinded by her fury and rage to the point where she attacked a friend without even realizing it. She is also able to defeat an enemy that is about twice her size, a feat that should be close to impossible for someone as small, young, and inexperienced with fighting as Barbara most likely is. Though there is a chance that she was

fueled by her adrenaline, it still would have been difficult for her to physically overpower Taylor. Her anger must have been powerful for her to succeed in such an endeavor.

Finally, there is the scene in which she encounters the titan. In Barbara's universe, titans are the most difficult type of giant to kill. Barbara herself describes them as having "Hearts of the blackest opal. A laugh that can boil your blood in your body. Eyes that make the *sun go out*" (Kelly np). This description is both vivid and dark, which implies her sense of creativity. It shows how truly evil the titans are; they are so awful that their mere presence possesses the ability to extinguish the sun, a feat that is physically impossible to accomplish. These monsters are so ferocious that Barbara explains that is nearly impossible to kill one. With the help of Covaleski, though, Barbara is able to kill the giant. While this success is significant in that it helps raise Barbara's self-esteem, its downfall lies in its amount of violence. Though in Barbara's world, the only way to dispose of a titan is by killing it, it is still a very violent act. Barbara is not negatively emotionally affected by the thought of killing a giant, but most eleven-year-old girls would be horrified to commit such a task. By demonstrating her willingness to commit murder—although it is for the valiant reason of protecting her town and those she loves—she is also expressing her willingness to commit an act of violence.

V. Stages Three and Four: Bargaining and Depression⁷

Bargaining and depression, while valuable elements of the grieving process, do not apply to Conor or Barbara. However, it is important to understand what both of these terms mean, especially in the context of the grieving process. Alexis Aigler, author of the article "The Bargaining Stage of Grief," explains how people may possibly feel during the bargaining stage. She writes:

⁷ These stages are combined because they do not impact the characters in the ways that the other stages do.

In the bargaining stage you may find yourself intensely focused on what you or others could have done differently in order to prevent the loss or change. You may also think about all the things that could have been and how wonderful life would have been if not for this unpleasant situation. While these thoughts may help you begin to accept the loss or change by revealing the impact of the situation...these feelings can also lead to remorse and guilt that interfere with healing.

Essentially, when one is in the bargaining stage, they are wishing that what they are experiencing was not happening to them. They are frustrated with their situation and wish that there was something they could do to change it. However, this stage does not manifest itself in the behaviors of Conor and Barbara, as there is no moment in either story in which they bargain for their mothers' situations to be changed. Of course the wish for their mothers to be healed from their illnesses, but they do not truly attempt to remedy it themselves.

Depression, on the other hand, is a more emotionally intense stage to experience. It is the stage in which the reality of the situation has fully set in and when the emotions attached to the situation finally hit the affected person. Depression is characterized by a deep sadness that is hard to free oneself of. However, as the article "The 5 Stages of Grief" explains that the depression stage is normal. The article defines depression as:

This depressive stage feels as though it will last forever...Depression after a loss is too often seen as unnatural: a state to be fixed, something to snap out of...The loss of a loved one is a very depressing situation, and depression is a normal and appropriate response. To not experience depression after a loved one dies would be unusual. When a loss fully settles in your soul, the realization that your loved one didn't get better this time and is not coming back is understandably depressing.

Though Conor and Barbara are sad at their mothers' conditions and eventual deaths, there are no signs that they felt depressed about it. They felt sadness at their loss, but it was not so extreme as to be considered depression. This is significant because although the two are not fully emotionally well-adjusted, they are still able to bypass the depression stage and launch themselves straight into the acceptance stage.

VI. Stage Five: Acceptance

Acceptance is the final stage of the official Kübler-Ross model. Grief.com explains that although many people believe that acceptance is emotionally feeling comfortable with the events that have transpired, this is not accurate. It explains:

Acceptance is often confused with the notion of being "all right" or "OK" with what has happened. This is not the case. Most people don't ever feel OK or all right about the loss of a loved one. This stage is about accepting the reality that our loved one is physically gone and recognizing that this new reality is the permanent reality. We will never like this reality or make it OK, but eventually we accept it. We learn to live with it. It is the new norm with which we must learn to live ("The Five Stages of Grief").

It is not possible to gauge exactly how Conor and Barbara feel after losing their mothers; however, based on their reactions to their mother's deaths, they are more accepting than anything.

Conor is able to spend his mother's last few minutes with her. As she is nearing the end of her life, Ness writes that "Conor held tightly onto his mother. And by doing so, he could finally let her go" (205). These sentences end the novel. By being able to "let her go," Conor is not happy or satisfied with the fact that his mother is about to die; he is, however, accepting that her death is something that he cannot control. He has also accepted his feelings about his

mother's illness. For the majority of the novel, Conor is unable to admit to himself that he wants the suffering—both his and his mother's—to end. However, it is not until the monster places them inside of the nightmare that Conor refuses to acknowledge that he is finally able to confess the truth to both the monster and himself. He feels immensely guilty for essentially admitting that his mother dying would be easier than dealing with his mother's suffering for another day. Yet, confessing these feelings lifted a weight from Conor's shoulders. By admitting his feelings, he was able to move one step closer to acceptance. When he was confronted with his mother's passing, he was able to be fully present in the moment without any guilt or regret over how he feels.

Barbara too has been able to accept her mother's fate. At her mother's funeral, she and Mrs. Molle has another conversation, but this one goes very differently than the one that was previously mentioned. It goes as follows, with Mrs. Molle initiating the conversation:

“You holding up all right?”

“Yeah. For real...I'm not going to slap anyone. I'm sad...really really sad...but we knew. It was coming, and...we enjoyed the time we had. You did a lot for me. Thank you. Mom thanks you too” (Kelly np).

In this scene, Barbara addresses both how she feels and the reality of her situation. She is “really really sad,” which is an understandable reaction to losing one's mother at such a young age. However, what is most notable about this passage is both her appreciation for Mrs. Molle's efforts in helping her and the fact that there was nothing Barbara could do to stop her mother from dying, no matter how hard she tried. Barbara only speaks a few sentences here, but they communicate so much. She has grown significantly; what once was a girl who used her passion for giants as a way to separate herself from her reality is now a girl who—although she still

believes in giants—has the emotional maturity to address her mother’s situation and can admit that everyone did the best they could with it. Barbara’s acceptance of her mother’s death in this scene shows her development as a character as well as a positive indication of how she will handle future tragedies.

VII. Stage Six: Imagination

Both *A Monster Calls* and *I Kill Giants* include an additional stage of grief, which is not included in the Kübler-Ross model. Conor and Barbara, in order to deal with their situations, utilize a part of their brains that is unique to their ages: imagination. According to Merriam-Webster, imagination can be defined as “the act or power of forming a mental image of something not present to the senses or never before wholly perceived in reality” (“Imagination”). Both children create their own realities, which are the focal point of their respective stories. Patrick Ness and Joe Kelly frame Conor and Barbara’s narratives around these imagined worlds, and only by the stories’ ends do the audiences realize that they are using these worlds as a way to escape and cope with their true realities. Conor and Barbara are each dealing with the impending loss of a parent, which is a painful experience. This is especially true in Conor and Barbara’s cases, given that their mothers were their primary caretakers prior to their illnesses. Through Conor’s invention of the monster and Barbara’s fantastical world of giants, the children use imagination to interpret and revisualize their reality, whether they consciously realize it or not.

Conor’s monster is, at first glance, a horrible beast. The monster’s description contributes to an image of a creature that is both natural and foreboding. It is made of trees, giving it its natural component, but through Conor’s creation of its enormity does it seem more terrifying than it truly is. The monster is first introduced and described as if it were going to hurt him. The text says:

As Conor watched, the uppermost branches of the tree gathered themselves into a great and terrible face, shimming into a mouth and nose and even eyes, peering back at him. Other branches twisted around one another, always creaking, always groaning, until they formed two long arms and a second leg to set down beside the main trunk. The rest of the tree gathered itself into a spine and then a torso, the thin, needle-like leaves weaving together to make a green, furry skin that moved and breathed as if there were muscles and lungs underneath. Already taller than Conor's window, the monster grew wider as it brought itself together, filling out to a powerful shape, one that looked somehow strong, somehow *mighty*. It stared at Conor the whole time, and he could hear the loud, windy breathing from its mouth (Ness 4-5).

Phrases such as “a great and terrible face” make the monster seem as if it exists only to hurt Conor rather than to help him (Ness 4). However, this is Conor's first encounter with his creation; as his mind has not allowed him to realize what he has created, so this experience, to some extent, is terrifying for him. His mind has created a monster that has “a head and teeth that could chomp him down in one bite,” an image that would be horrifying for anyone to confront (Ness 31). Despite these descriptions, Conor is not afraid of the monster; his subconscious mind is hinting that he should not be afraid of what he himself has created. Furthermore, as Conor explores his relationship with his monster, he soon realizes the monster's intentions, which decreases the monster's intimidating image even further. Making the monster seem scary is a way to throw the audience off of the true story's scent; it is meant to distract them so they do not so quickly realize that Conor is coming up with the monster and their interactions all within the safety of his own mind.

Barbara creates not just one monster, but an entire horde of them. Though her world is

based on extensive “research” from the books she has accumulated on the subject, it is still not a part of her true reality. For Barbara, there are multiple types of giants: swamp giants, frost giants, and mountain giants are just a few. However, the worst type of giant of them all is the titan, which is the one she fights by story’s end. Barbara never describes what a titan truly looks like, J.M. Ken Niimura provides multiple drawings. The titan is tall, seemingly unintelligent due to its lack of proper speech, and has horns. It is obvious that the titan is a manifestation of the cancer that plagues Barbara’s mother when she screams at the titan, saying, “You will *not* take her!! Do you hear me!? You will *not* take *my mother*” (Kelly np). Normally this scene would imply that the titan has kidnapped her mother somehow, but the truth is quite the opposite: her mother is safely inside of their home, most likely unaware that Barbara’s confrontation with the beast is happening. Because she sees the titan to some extent as her mother’s cancer, by defeating it, Barbara believes that she can help to heal her mother. She does not want the cancer to take her mother away from her, so she fights as hard as she can to prevent that from occurring. To do this, she creates a beast that she sees as horrible that she can pin the cancer on. Additionally, this scenario gives Barbara something that her mother’s illness cannot: power. Her research and skill has enabled her to learn about her enemy and therefore helps her to drive the titan away; she cannot do the same with cancer.

Though Barbara does succeed in her endeavor and the titan is defeated, her mother’s life still ends. This helps Barbara to realize that in truth, defeating the titan was not a way of expelling the cancer, like she believed, but was a method of coping. She was able to channel all of her pent-up anger and aggression on a monster she thought was going to destroy everything she loved; by vanquishing it, she was able to prove herself. Not only was this event indicative of her ability to take care of herself, it also proves her physical, emotional, and mental strength. To

be brave enough to challenge a monster at eleven years old—and succeed to boot—is a feat that most other children her age would never have dared dream to do. Accomplishing this task gave Barbara a reason to believe that she could achieve anything she set out to do...after all, there is not much in the world that is more difficult than defeating a titan.

VIII. Conclusion

Throughout Patrick Ness's *A Monster Calls* and author Joe Kelly and artist J.M. Ken Niimura's *I Kill Giants*, two children, Conor and Barbara, respectively, learn to deal with grief. Both adolescents have very similar lives, from bullying to mothers dying of cancer to absent fathers. Yet, the similarities do not end there; for the most part, they use the Kübler-Ross model that documents the five stages of grief: denial, anger through aggression, bargaining, depression, and acceptance. Denial is employed when Conor and Barbara verbally—or in Barbara's case, both verbally and physically—push those away that try and have them acknowledge their situations; fighting with other students, destruction, and general aggression are how they deal with anger; bargaining and depression are not used by either Conor or Barbara as a way to cope with their grief; and finally, both learn to accept the situations they have found themselves in, and through that, emotionally grow. However, despite their partial adherence to these stages, Conor and Barbara experience a new stage of grieving in order to cope with their mothers' illnesses: imagination. Using this new stage, Conor and Barbara are able to understand as well as heal from the eventual loss of their mothers. Using denial, anger, and acceptance as well as their imaginations, Conor and Barbara are able to deal with their trauma and grief in both *A Monster Calls* by Patrick Ness and *I Kill Giants*, written by Joe Kelly and illustrated by J. M. Ken Niimura.

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Elizabeth Holland
Snow White to Frozen:
The Evolution of Gender in Disney Characters

The Golden Age (1937-1942)

[1937]

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs



"Prince 17." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., July 2012, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Snow_White.

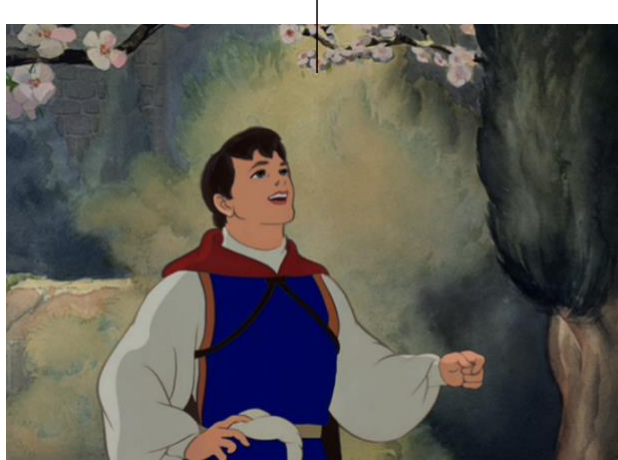


"Snow-white-disneyscreencaps.com-6725." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., July 2013, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Snow_White.

Snow White

Snow White, as the first Disney princess, set the precedent of what it means to be a Disney princess. She is so beautiful that her beauty is a main driving force of the story, as also seen with later princesses. She also is very good at domestic work. In the castle, she has "womanly chores," such as drawing water from the well and washing the steps. After running away, she again is doing housework for the dwarfs that she lives with. Snow White also starts the trend of being a "damsel in distress." She first must be saved from the hunter, by the hunter himself no less, and

then saved by her prince after falling into the Evil Queen's trap. She shows no signs of being able to take care of herself and spends most.



"Prince 12." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., July 2012, disney.wikia.com/wiki/The_Prince.

The Prince

The Prince from Snow White shows very little in the manner of personality and establishing characteristics of a Disney prince. Even though he is Snow White's love interest, the Prince only shows up in two scenes throughout the entire movie: at the wishing well and when he wakes Snow White with a kiss. As the first Disney prince, it seems the only characteristics that is required is to be a prince, to be enamored by the princess's beauty, and to save the princess from the threat. Outside of those qualities, the Prince has no real personality in the film (or even a name).

The Silver Age (1950-1967)

[1950]

Cinderella



"Cinderella4." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., June 2018, disney.wikia.com/wiki/The_Grand_Duke.



"Cinderella-disneyscreencaps.com-5422." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., July 2014, [disney.wikia.com/wiki/Cinderella_\(character\)](http://disney.wikia.com/wiki/Cinderella_(character)).

Cinderella

Cinderella begins the Silver Age for Disney princesses. She still shares some similarities of the original princess standards set by Snow White. For instance, her beauty is still an important detail in the storyline because it gets Prince Charming to fall in love with her at the ball. In addition, Cinderella is like Snow White in that she is still doing domestic housework, like cooking and cleaning for her stepmother and stepsisters. While Cinderella does have a kind relationship with animals like Snow White, Cinderella develops more of a relationship with them. Cinderella's interaction with her animal friends throughout the film develops more of her personality. While Snow White interacts with animals a few times, Cinderella spends a lot of time with them while doing her chores. She saves the mice from her stepmother's cat, Lucifer, and in turn, they help her with her dress. While animals do seem to be drawn to Snow White, it is clear that relationship Cinderella develops with her animals is because she takes the time to care about them as true friends. This extra development in her personality marks the continual change in how each princess represents what it means to be a princess.



"Cinderella-disneyscreencaps.com-6140." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., April 2012, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Prince_Charming.

Prince Charming

Prince Charming from *Cinderella* is little improvement from the Prince in *Snow White*. As in *Snow White*, Cinderella's Prince Charming is nameless in the original film. However, he does have a bit more character development. Though he still has only two appearances in the film, we learn from his father that he has been "**avoiding his princely duties**" and refusing to marry because he is not in love. This goes directly against his father, who is shown being very upset about his son's stubbornness. This rebellion against his father is what sets Prince Charming apart from the Prince in *Snow White*.

|
[1959]

Sleeping Beauty



"14dvd600." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., June 2013, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Prince_Phillip.



"Sleeping-beauty-disneyscreencaps.com-1992." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., May 2013, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Aurora.

Aurora

Aurora is similar to her two predecessors. She is marveled out for her beauty, though she was blessed by a fairy, and she does have a kind relationship with her woodland animals. However, Aurora's most significant strait seems to be that she's sheltered and naive. After she is cursed as an infant, she is hidden away from the world until her sixteenth birthday. As soon as she returns to the castle, she is fooled by Maleficent into pricking her finger on the spinning wheel and fulfilling her prophesied curse. She then has to be rescued from her death-like slumber by her

true love. While this story is rather simple and sweet, Aurora does not have much in the way of personality or defining characteristics. Aurora actually takes a step back from Cinderella in terms of being developed as a person.



"Prince Phillip." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., January 2012, sleepingbeauty.wikia.com/wiki/Prince_Phillip.

Phillip

While Aurora is a step backwards for Disney princesses, Prince Phillip is a much bigger improvement in character development than Prince Charming. While both the Prince and Prince Charming only appear in two scenes, Phillip is seen in multiple moments throughout the movie, especially after Aurora is put to sleep. He is given a lot more screen time and therefore, has a better developed personality. Phillip still portrays a princely demeanor with such male-gender specific characteristics of the time, such as being brave, strong, faithful, and handsome. However, he goes a little beyond that to having a kind of sassy and persuasive personality. When fighting with his father about marrying the "peasant girl in the woods" rather than his betrothed, Phillip tells his father "You're living in the past. This is the 14th century!" Rather than giving in to his father's wishes, he teases him about being old fashioned and then goes on to trick him into agreeing with him and, then, he rides off before the king can protest what happened.

Characteristics in the Golden Age and Silver Age

In the Golden and Silver Ages, there are very small changes in defining characteristics in each movie. This is particularly true of the princes, since both the Prince and Prince Charming have very little screen time and no name. The main characteristics of the princesses in these eras follow stereotypical gender behaviors, such as housekeeping and nurturing (Stover 2). In the same fashion, the princes' characteristics are stereotypically male attributes, such as bravery and heroism. In the beginning, princess films, like *Snow White*, featured a "female protagonist who fit the domestic expectations of pre-World War II women, and appealed to Depression-era escapism" (Stover 2). However, the small changes Disney made to the gender portrayals over these three films were not enough to keep up with trends. Though there are differences in character portrayal, the gender stereotypes are just as persistent in *Sleeping Beauty* as they were

in *Snow White*. This greatly contributed to the “film’s critical and popular failure [that] suggests that these new filmgoers found the rigidly defined gender roles of Disney princesses less desirable and irrelevant to their experiences” (Stover 3). The lack of changing traditional gender roles to modern ones in these Disney eras resulted in a thirty-year break from the Disney princesses.

The Disney Renaissance (1989-1999)

[1989]

The Little Mermaid



“Happy ending.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., May 2014, disney.wikia.com/wiki/King_Triton%27s_Daughters.



“Little_mermaid_movie_disney_lin_manuel_miranda.” *Disney’s The Little Mermaid Eyes Rob Marshall For Director*, Den of Geek., December 2017, denofgeek.com/us/movies/the-little-mermaid/257849/disneys-the-little-mermaid-eyes-rob-marshall-for-director

Ariel

While there is some rebellious nature in the Silver Age, it is mainly done in the name of love. In *The Little Mermaid*, Ariel is different in her rebelliousness because it is based on her curiosity when it comes to all things in the human world. She actively pursues these interests even against her father's wishes. Rather than having her main characteristics be stereotypical gender attributes, Ariel's personality is based mainly out of her curious and rebellious nature. While this film is still primarily a love story between Ariel and Eric, there is an subplot of Ariel following her passions that is introduced. This significantly changes the standard gender portrayal going into the Disney Renaissance Era. Instead of simply the standard female stereotype that is portrayed in the Golden and Silver Eras, Ariel keeps some of the stereotypical characteristics, like beauty and kindness, while also adding in new ones to give her much more personality, such as curiosity and rebelliousness.



"Mermaid-1080-disneyscreencaps.com-2334." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., August 2014, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Prince_Eric.

Eric

Because he has more personality and screen time than earlier princes, Eric is a major game changer for the portrayal of males in these Disney films. While earlier princes stuck to the same "princely" characteristics, Eric rejects his princely title in favor of his passion. Though Prince Charming does have some rejection of his "princely duties" as stated by his father, this largely revolves around getting married. In contrast, Eric rejects his title by not engaging in activities that are fitting of his status. Instead, Eric focuses on what he loves, which is sailing, and balks at the high society part of his life, just like he balked at the princely statue as his birthday gift. While Eric continues certain gender attributes of previous princes, such as bravery, his main characteristics are his adventurous nature and his down to earth personality.

[1991]

Beauty and the Beast



“Beauty-and-the-beast-disneyscreencaps.com-5197.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., June 2014, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Belle.



“Beauty-and-the-beast-disneyscreencaps.com-356.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., May 2018, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Belle.

Belle

Belle follows in Ariel's footsteps in the sense that they both are full of passion. While Ariel's passion is the human world, Belle's is her books. While her love of reading alienates her from the rest of the village, she continues to rebel against her society's expectations and continues to feed her passion. One of Belle's characteristics that fits in best with the formerly discussed princesses is her selflessness. Not only is Belle a kind soul, but she is willing to sacrifice her freedom her that of her fathers and essentially gave her life for his. She recognized that if her father stayed locked up, he would get so sick that he would die. Instead of letting that happen and in spite of his protests, Belle switched places with him to live what she thought would be a life of a prisoner. On the other hand, Belle is distinct from the previous princesses with her stubbornness. She is especially stubborn in her initial dealings with Beast. Though they fall in love later, this is not a “love at first” sight situation like all of the other princesses. Instead, Belle refuses to cooperate with Beast while he is still treating her poorly. Though she agrees to be his prisoner forever, she does not listen to his threats and anger. This really sets Belle and Beast's relationship far apart from any princess film before them.



“Beauty-and-the-beast-disneyscreencaps.com-7457.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., September 2015, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Belle.

Beast

Beast is entirely different from any of the princes before him. Because of his unique situation with being cursed, Beast is not simply there to fall in love with the princess and live happily ever after. Throughout the film, we see Beast go through a transformation. While this process is mostly due to the love that grows between him and Belle, Beast is also learning to come to terms with who he is and be a better person. In the beginning of the film, Beast has some major anger issues and has isolated himself from society because of his cursed appearance. However, as he is learning what it is to be human again, Beast embraces his childlike wonder. Belle helps him see the beauty in the world with a new hope. While this film does follow the typical Disney trope of a prince saving the princess, *Beauty and the Beast* is unique in that Belle also saves Beast from himself.

[1992]

Aladdin



“Aladdin-disneyscreencaps.com-6855.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., May 2013, [disney.wikia.com/wiki/Aladdin_\(character\)](https://disney.wikia.com/wiki/Aladdin_(character)).



“Aladdin-disneyscreencaps.com-1510.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., May 2014, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Jasmine.

Jasmine

Jasmine is well known for being stubborn and independent. She famously tells Aladdin and her father that "I am not a prize to be won." Jasmine combines some of the characteristics in the Silver Age with those of the Disney Renaissance. While she is stubborn and independent, like all the Disney Renaissance princesses, she is also sheltered and trapped, like Cinderella and Sleeping Beauty. While Ariel and Belle could go out and follow their passions, Jasmine is kept locked up in the palace. Jasmine's main wish in the film is to be free. Originally she wants to be free to leave the palace, but after meeting Aladdin, she wishes to be free to marry whoever she wants.



“Aladdin-disneyscreencaps.com-3602.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., May 2014, [disney.wikia.com/wiki/Aladdin_\(character\)](https://disney.wikia.com/wiki/Aladdin_(character)).

Aladdin

Aladdin's film is unique in the Disney princess franchise simply because Aladdin is the main character rather than Jasmine. In all other princess films, the females are the focus of the story. However, this means that Aladdin has a lot more in terms of personality shown on screen than other princes. The first thing to note about Aladdin is he is the first non-royal so far to become a Disney prince. This actually continues onto the rest of the films, with only a few born royals holding the Disney prince status. Because Aladdin is just a “street rat”, he is also very self-conscious about himself. In fact, the main reason that Jasmine is upset with him the first time that she meets "Prince Ali" is because he is pretending to be good enough for her. After meeting her in the marketplace, Aladdin is in love but believes that Jasmine must marry a prince. This is not only because of the law, but also because Aladdin believes she is worthy of only a prince. In his mind, he could never be worthy of her because he is only a commoner. The transformation that Aladdin must go through is accepting that he does not have to magically transform himself into a prince for Jasmine to love, but that he is worthy of love the way that he is.

[1995]

Pocahontas



“Pocahontas-disneyscreencaps.com-3600.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., April 2014, [disney.wikia.com/wiki/Pocahontas_\(character\)](https://disney.wikia.com/wiki/Pocahontas_(character)).



“Pocahontas-disneyscreencaps.com-1536.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., May 2014, [disney.wikia.com/wiki/Pocahontas_\(character\)](https://disney.wikia.com/wiki/Pocahontas_(character)).

Pocahontas

Pocahontas is a great combination of some of the characteristics that have defined the Disney Renaissance. Like most of the princesses in this era, she is very strong-willed and argues against her father's choice in who she should marry. Also, like other princesses, Pocahontas is very curious. This is especially true when John Smith first arrives to the New World and Pocahontas intently watches him. Unlike other princesses, Pocahontas is obviously very in tuned with nature, especially being a Native American. This is a key part of her personality and culture. Though Jasmine is the first non-white princess, Pocahontas is the first one to really intertwine her culture with herself and the plot. This really redefines what being a Disney princess can mean, as she not of royal status by the English standards nor does she marry into royalty. This really makes her personality, as well as being the chief's daughter, define her princess status.



“John Smith 17.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., July 2012, disney.wikia.com/wiki/John_Smith.

John Smith

John Smith has many of the same qualities that the previous Disney princes have, such as bravery, adventurous, and kindness. However, his character arc is different. When John Smith first arrives to the New World, he portrays a lot of stereotypical male traits. He is brave, looking for adventure, and ready to kill any "savages" he comes across. While other princes are portrayed as brave and adventurous, John Smith is the only one that we know has killed people. John Smith is even known among the other sailors for "killing Indians" and refers to it as "fun." This would not seem to fit within a Disney prince's character. However, the film fulfills a recurring theme in the Disney Renaissance: the princess saving or teaching the prince. As John Smith learns from Pocahontas how to respect nature and all beings, he moves away from the killer he is in the beginning of the movie and even throws himself in front of Chief Powhatan to protect him from getting shot.

[1998]

Mulan



"Mulan-disneyscreencaps.com-4832." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., July 2013, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Fa_Mulan.



"Mulan-disneyscreencaps.com-1528." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., January 2012, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Fa_Mulan.

Mulan

Mulan is an especially unique princess because, she is not actually a princess. Mulan is a warrior. While she starts off the movie as a very feminine person, it is clear that she cannot fulfill the expectations of a woman in her society. Instead, she tries to save her father by going to war in his place. Despite knowing that she could be put to death if she is discovered, she risks her life for her father's (much like Belle). In doing so, she shows some traits that have a part of the princess characteristics, such as courage. While Mulan has a hand in saving China, she is really the brains behind it and proves herself as a warrior despite being a woman. Mulan fighting for her family and country is a much different storyline than the rest of the princesses so far. While all of them had love as the main plot and other issues as subplots, Mulan hardly focuses on the love subplot at all. In fact, Mulan and Shang's romantic relationship does not come into play until two-thirds into the movie when Mulan is revealed to be a woman. This makes Shang and Mulan's relationship much different than those who fall in love at first sight. Because of Mulan's hidden

gender, Shang learns to respect her as a person and as a warrior instead of simply falling in love with her looks.



"Shang 3." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., May 2014, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Li_Shang.

Shang

Shang embodies a lot of the same characteristics in Disney males so far, such as bravery and honor. He is also a warrior, like many of the other Disney princes. However, Shang melds these previously established "princely" characteristics with learning from Mulan. In this film, much like Pocahontas, neither Mulan or Shang are members of royalty and Mulan teaches Shang a lesson throughout the film. In the beginning, Shang is very "by the book" because he is eager to prove himself as a capable leader and follow in his father's footsteps. However, Mulan follows her heart rather than the law (as shown with her going to war instead of her father). While they both have good intentions at heart, Shang initially rejects Mulan after finding out she is a woman and by the end of the movie must learn to accept and respect Mulan as a woman just as he did when he thought Mulan was a man.

The Post-Renaissance Era (2000-2009)

[2009]

The Princess and The Frog



"Princess-disneyscreencaps.com-6810." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., February 2015, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Tiana.



"Princess-and-the-frog-disneyscreencaps.com-815." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., June 2016, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Tiana.

Tiana

Tiana is the first princess to have a job (multiple jobs even). She shows throughout the film that in order to get to where you want to be, you need to work hard. While in the beginning of the film, Tiana is portrayed as working too hard and not enjoying her life enough, she learns to let herself live a little throughout the journey of the film. Tiana still possesses certain characteristics that previous princesses have portrayed, such as kindness and beauty, but she does not evoke the typical mental image of a princess who never worked a day in her life. Despite the advancements of having a princess in the workplace, the two jobs Tiana has revolves around cooking and cleaning. Her jobs at Cal's Diner and Duke's Diner involves her waitressing, busing, and **occasionally cooking**. While these jobs make sense given that Tiana has a natural talent and passion for cooking and the restaurant business, they still fall into the categories of "women's work" that past princesses have stuck to.



"Princess-and-the-frog-disneyscreencaps.com-903." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., November 2013, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Prince_Naveen.

Naveen

Naveen still carries some characteristics that past princes had, such as his carefree attitude. However, Naveen's love for music and a carefree lifestyle comes off as much more privileged and irresponsible. Furthermore, his attitude directly contrasts Tiana's workaholic nature in the beginning of the film and they both learn the importance of balancing work and play appropriately. Right from the start, the film shows how privileged Naveen has been because he is a prince. After spending time with Tiana, Naveen admires Tiana's passion and willingness to work for her dream. The genders in this film are much more equal in the sense that both Tiana and Naveen have something essential to learn from each other. While movies such as *Beauty and the Beast* have had couples learn from each other in the past, they typically have the female teaching the male an important lesson. *The Princess and the Frog* is different because not only does Tiana show Naveen the importance of working hard for your dreams, Naveen teaches Tiana how to stop and enjoy life sometimes.

Characteristics of the Disney Renaissance and Post-Renaissance

The Disney Renaissance clearly marks a new age in Disney's princess films. The Renaissance and Post-Renaissance princesses stand apart from the Gold and Silver Age with their curious and adventurous spirits. This category of films "transformed the damsel into a heroine of sorts, with both a voice and a desire for adventure" (Stover 3). While the earlier eras represents more stereotypical female gender roles, the Renaissance princesses are ambitious and focused (in fact, Pocahontas and Mulan actually perform the traditional princely act of saving the day). These new traits "corresponded completely to the increasingly acceptable gender roles in a society where women hold the same jobs as men" (Stover 3). Without a direct need to find and save their princesses, the Disney prince is also forced to evolve. They become much more involved in the plot and usually have their own subplots with personal lessons (often taught to them by the princess). There is also a change in the prince and princess relationship. Instead of falling in love at first sight, many Renaissance princess (including Tiana) "reject, initially at least, suitors who

would come into conflict with their goals” and a few princes do this as well, such as Beast (Stover 4). In the end, each princess still chooses her prince as “Disney’s rhetoric [of what constitutes a happy ending] shifted from any prince to the right prince” (Stover 4). There is also a search for the father’s approval, despite tons of rebellion against their parental wishes. While the princess might initially rebel in order to be with their prince, “each film’s happily-ever-after occurs when the father is pleased with the arrangement” (Stover 5). Although the princesses have developed to have more personality and be more independent, the reliance on male approval still holds true.

The Revival Era (2010-Present)

[2010]

Tangled



“ScreenHunter 01 Mar. 14 20.07.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., March 2014, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Rapunzel.



“Tangled-disneyscreencaps.com-4824.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., September 2015, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Rapunzel.

Rapunzel

Rapunzel follows a lot of the same character traits that have been previously mentioned. She is extremely sheltered and, prior to her leaving the tower, a lot of her time is spent cleaning. However, she does have a unique hobby that other princesses have not had: painting. Rapunzel has filled her walls with painting not only to pass the time, but because she thoroughly enjoys creating art. While Rapunzel begins the film as a naive young woman, her nativity fuels her curiosity and excitement about the world outside of her tower. She has spent eighteen years in the tower waiting to explore the world and fearing the worst because of Mother Gothel's lies. Though she is fearful, she sees the beauty and value of everything she encounters. Like many other princesses before her, Rapunzel is highly strong-willed. She does have some catching up to do on social skills and real-world experience, but she can be very determined once she has made up her mind. This is an important part of her personality because, as a victim who has been kidnapped as a infant, she could just as easily become crippled by the years of abuse and isolation.



"Tangled-movie-photo-25-550x290." *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., March 2014, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Flynn_Rider.

Eugene (Flynn Rider)

Eugene is expressly different from other princes in that he is immoral in the beginning of the film since he is a thief. While other character, like Aladdin, stayed in a morally gray area by breaking the law but for good reasons, Eugene steals solely because it is his dream to be rich. While later on Eugene tells Rapunzel the real reason he steals is because he believes he will finally be happy because free to do whatever he wants, just like his hero Flynnigan Rider. Despite his moral failures, Eugene is revealed to be rather kind and selfless. Once he spends time with Rapunzel, he sees how open she is about her emotions (like crying when they nearly drowned) and how passionate she is about her dream. This not only prompts him to fall in love with her throughout the rest of the film, but also encourages him to reveal his true self (by sharing his real name and backstory) rather than the mask of "Flynn Ryder." By hiding his true self, Eugene shows that even if someone does not seem like a prince at first, they might have princely qualities underneath. This is similarly true for princes like Beast and Naveen. Although this attribute is used in some other films, this characteristic is largely used in the Post-Renaissance and Revival Eras.

[2013]
Frozen



“Kristoff.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., May 2018, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Elsa.



“Frozen-disneyscreencaps.com-3939.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., April 2014, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Elsa.

Elsa

Although Elsa is technically not a princess as she becomes a queen through her coronation early on in the film, she is a major figure in changing the characteristic of Disney females. Elsa not only has greater political power (since she is a queen) than any other female protagonist portrayed, she is also magically powerful. Her main storyline involves her embracing her power and true self instead of hiding it away at the insistence of those around her. Like other princesses, Elsa goes through emotional rollercoasters throughout the film but she is able to persevere and stay strong. Her internal struggle is the main storyline in *Frozen*. While the most previous movies have focused their primary or secondary plots on a romantic love interest, *Frozen* is different because it primarily focuses on Elsa’s inner struggle and secondarily on Elsa and Anna’s sisterly love. In fact, Elsa has no love interest at all. This is vastly different from the other characters because everyone else has love interests that develop. In contrast, Elsa is so focused on her personal growth that there is no room for love interests in her story.



“Frozen-disneyscreencaps.com-792.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., November 2015, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Anna.

Anna

Much like Rapunzel, Anna is severely sheltered for most of her life that causes her to be utterly amazed by the world. Although she does have a love interest in the film, *Frozen* expressly shows the dangers of the “love at first sight” trope that is prevalent in many previous Disney films. Anna’s willingness to fall in love immediately leads her to be an easy victim for Hans to steal the kingdom. Though her true love for Elsa defeats him in the end, Anna shows how dangerous it could be to fall in love with someone that has not revealed their true selves. While Anna is in love with the first man she meets after being allowed to leave the castle, she also comes to love Kristoff despite the flaws she sees at first.



“Svenconvinced.” *Disney Wikia*, Wikia Inc., March 2014, disney.wikia.com/wiki/Kristoff.

Kristoff

Kristoff is similar to Eugene in the sense that he hides his true self in the beginning of the film. Though Kristoff portrays himself as a jerk who does not care about anything but Sven (his reindeer) and his ice selling business, he reveals later that he isolates himself from society because he to shield himself from other people. As an orphan, Kristoff is only seen accepted into

society by the trolls, who adopt and raise him. Because Sven and the trolls are the only ones to actually accept Kristoff, he is left with the life philosophy that trolls and reindeer are better than people. As a result of Kristoff hardships in life, he is very realistic in his expectations of the world. While this attitude can come off as negative, it is a helpful contrast to Ana's optimism when they are working together. Kristoff is the most quirky prince that has been shown so far. This is especially pointed out by the trolls in the song "Fixer Upper." They mentioned human imperfections, like him smelling, that have never been addressed in the Disney Princess Franchise before. By showing these character flaws so blatantly, the criteria for Disney princes no longer requires perfection. While Kristoff has his flaws, a major part of his personality is his kindness. This kindness seems to redeem him from not possessing most of the other established qualifications for Disney princes.

Changes Throughout the Eras

Throughout the eras of Disney movies, each princess evolves to have more personal interests, power, and to be less willing to fall in love at first sight. Princesses such as Ariel and Tiana have interests from the beginning of the film that they are passionate about (collecting and cooking respectively). These interests show a large development in personality from the Golden and Silver Eras. In this same manner, the princesses develop to be more powerful and resilient than those in previous eras. Jasmine especially marks a change in princesses. She is stubborn in commanding independence over her own life and choices. In the same era, Belle starts a trend of not falling in love at first sight. While not all the princesses that follow her do this, Belle gets to know Beast as a person before actually loving him. Though these changes all start in the Disney Renaissance, they grow in intensity throughout the rest of the eras. As the Disney princesses evolve, so do the princes. While the first two eras set up many stereotypically "princely" traits, like regality and heroism, the eras that follow show their princes as much more complete people. Just like the princesses, the princes evolve to have more personal interests, such as sailing for Eric and music for Naveen. Along with this, the princes' have evolved to be more realistically flawed. Rather than characterizing princes as heroic, regal, and brave, Disney starts to characterize them as kind and selfless. Overall, the evolutions that both the princesses and princes go through shows how society has changed in its expectations of each gender.

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- The Little Mermaid*. Directed by Ron Clements and John Musker, Walt Disney Productions, 1989.
- The Princess and the Frog*. Directed by John Musker and Ron Clements, Walt Disney Productions, 2009.
- Frozen*. Directed by Jennifer Lee and Chris Buck, Walt Disney Productions, 2013.

A crow is perched on a dark, gnarled branch that extends across the lower half of the image. The crow is facing left, with its head turned slightly towards the viewer. The background is a vibrant, textured wash of orange and yellow, resembling a sunset or a fire. The overall mood is somber yet dramatic.

FEATURING:

Edgar Allan Poe

Walnut St. Inn

Pythian Castle

Hartman Rock Garden

George Rogers Clark Park

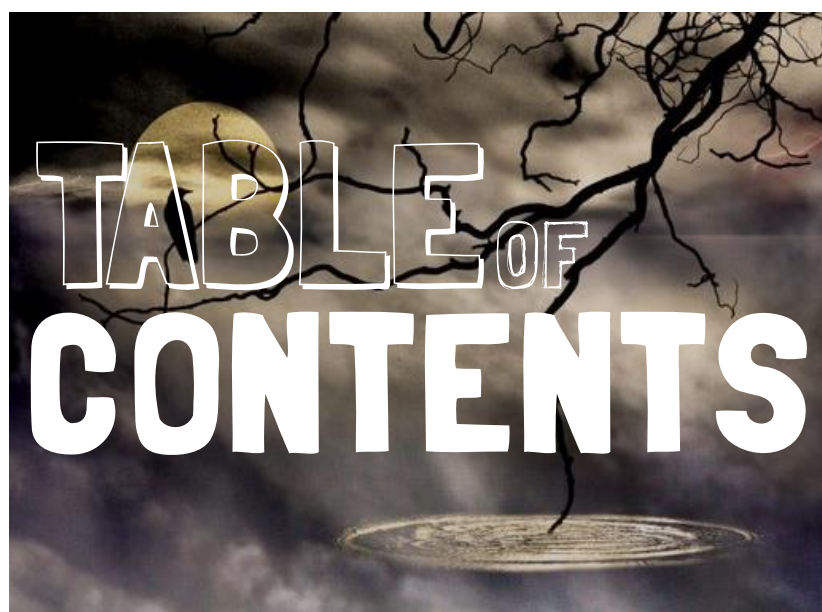
A SOUNDLESS DAY IN THE AUTUMN OF THE YEAR

By: Ericka Kaimer



TOLEDO, OH

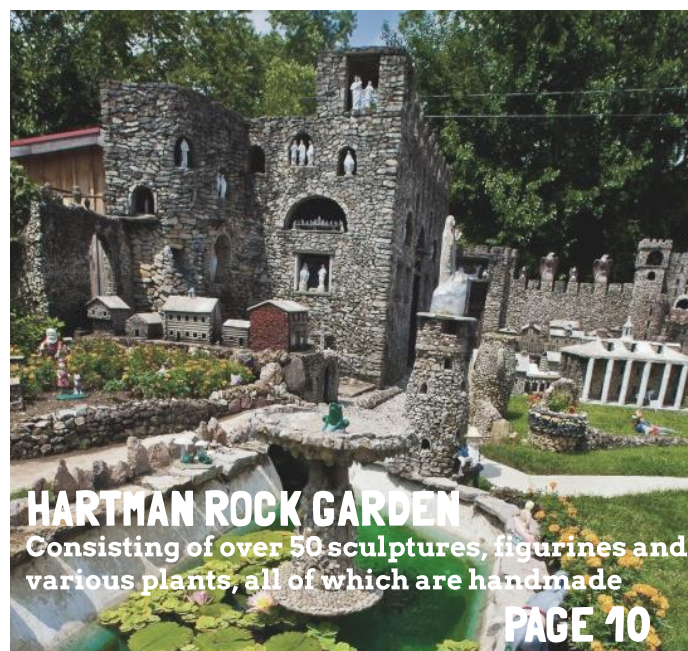




WALNUT ST. INN

A quaint Inn built in the mid 1890s that is Bed and Breakfast style

PAGE 5



HARTMAN ROCK GARDEN

Consisting of over 50 sculptures, figurines and various plants, all of which are handmade

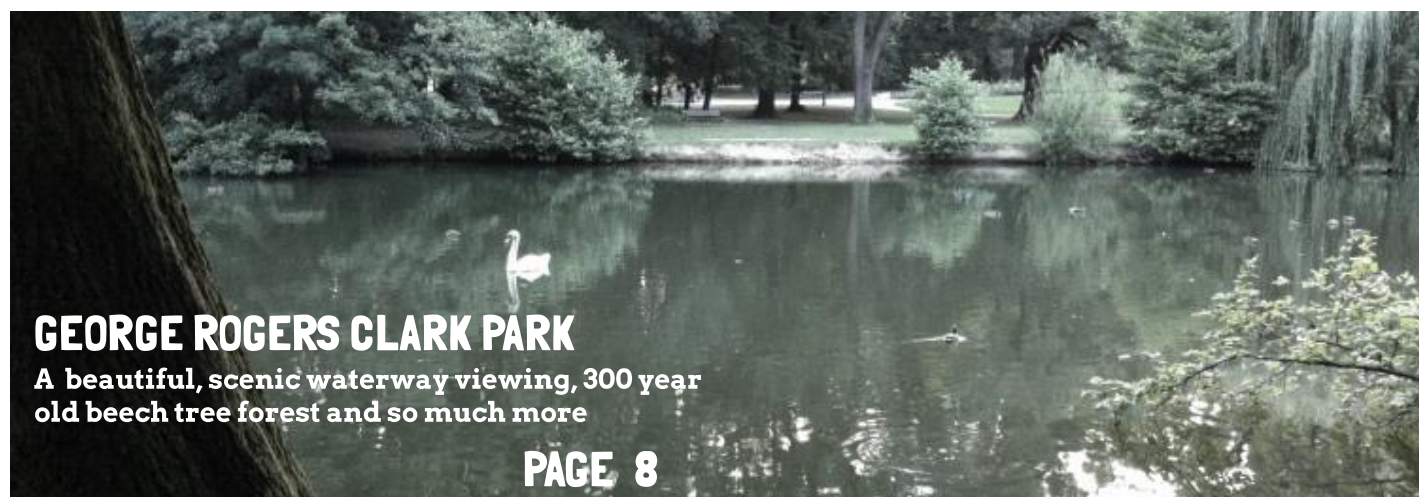
PAGE 10



PYTHIAN CASTLE

A medieval, haunted castle where residents cannot escape, no matter their fuss.

PAGE 14



GEORGE ROGERS CLARK PARK

A beautiful, scenic waterway viewing, 300 year old beech tree forest and so much more

PAGE 8

THE TELL TALE INN



True! nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am; this Uber in a place called Toledo seems rather peculiar. And, upon entering my place of rest for the next fortnight, a one Walnut Street Inn. I will tell you I felt myself hearing things. But I will say that I am not mad. Above all was my sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? How calmly I can tell

you the whole story.

It is simple to see how I encountered this Inn. Presently, I find it tingling to the senses, yet, passion there was none to the choosing of such a place. The noise, bustling outside found me hating my senses. And, greeted

once I entered the Inn, I instinctively loved the old man, stature small, hair none, glasses sliding down the nose, yet a peculiarity of the eye. His intentions grand, therefore, it is impossible to say how the first idea entered my brain; but once conceived

it haunted me day and night. The peculiar eye followed me as I ascended the stairs, frigid chills flowing down my spine, ghost-like in nature. Thus, whenever it fell upon me, thereafter, my blood ran cold; and so, by degrees very gradually—I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.



I'm sure you find me mad, but I was wise in my endeavors. None could hear me, I was cautious in step. Other guests of his Inn felt compelled not to suspect me, but to befriend me. Henceforth, in the duration of the time at the Inn, I was never kinder to the man in the week before I killed him. In each night of his slumber, I descended the stairs, quietly and with precaution, and looked upon him while he slept. Entering his room on the seventh and, final night, head first, my body following, I presently saw his chest, heaving up and down.

The blackness of the room frightened me, for in that darkness, the eye could be watching. As I was fully in the room, cautiously—oh, so cautiously—cautiously, I struck a match, lighting his small room, and resting on his motionless face, the eye, presently closed. Letting a small shriek breathe from my lips as the match's flame burned out, he yelled, "Who's there!" And, sitting up in bed, I could feel his body turn in my direction. Freezing, I held the burnt-out match as its remaining embers singed my fingertips. Seeing his erect shadow lie down once more, I stayed there, until I felt his slumber had begun again. Striking a second match, you cannot imagine how

stealthily, stealthily—until at length I had gotten close enough to his bedside to see that eye. In its perfect distinctness, I saw its iris, filmed over by age, evil, staring back at me, yet the old man stirred not. For a moment, the eye watched, yet fluttered closed, its power diminished as the old man slept. Yet, now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound. I knew that sound well too.

The old man's heart, beating furiously, produced a low drum noise, one I wished to extinguish more than the eye. Yet, I stood, presently, stiller than a corpse, for I knew his mind—his mind was alert for the creak of a floorboard. When I could hold no longer, the thumping of his heart growing louder, louder! I struck a third match; the noise excited the old man. Blowing it, I jumped onto the old man, thrusting and pillow over his face. After some exertion, the old man ceased moving, his eye—extinguished, the heart—ceased beating.

If you still think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the

concealment of the body. The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence. Unable to dismember the corpse, I went to the closet, finding a second set of drapery, I wrapped the old man in it. I then took to undoing the floor boards, one at a time, stealthily as I could, wide enough for the man. And, when I had removed enough, stirring none of the others, I drug his body and placed him in the spot. I then placed the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye—not even his—could have detected anything wrong. There was no trace of him left. Making his minuscule bed, as if it was unslept, my deed done. Slinking out of his room, I met the eyes of a guest, one I hadn't seen, staring at me. Without saying a word, I ascended the stairs and re-entered my room.

Presently, as morning has begun, and I, in transit to my next stop, found myself greeted by officers in blue.

Confused by their nature, I inquire about their stay. An anonymous tip has been given about the old man's whereabouts. I say, "I do not know of where he's off to. I only saw him a few days ago."

The officers seemed satisfied by my manner, which had convinced them despite my peculiar dress. And so we chatted, I, a suspect no longer. Until I began to hear the faint ringing in my ears, yet still they chatted. The ringing became more distinct: —it continued and became more distinct. At length, I found that the noise was not within my ears.

This sound was a low, dull, quick sound—like that of a beating, heart. And, presently, I understood the nature of the sound was of the old man's heart. It grew louder—louder—louder! Still the officers chatted as if they didn't hear a sound. Screeching, "You fools! It is I—!" running into the old man's room, I threw up the rug, ripped the floorboards, revealing the limp, covered corpse. Springing at me, the officers tried to hand me, but I fled, escaping their grasp, vanishing. I galloped to their parked automobile, dragging my belongings behind. And, with great fervor, I lurched forward, a contraption of mirror showed men of blue far

behind.

As I entered a new place, a one, George Rogers Clark Park signage appeared. *Peculiar to name a park after such an ordinary fellow.* I was baffled by my automobile expertise, yet, I must remove myself at once from this beacon. Jumping a small curb, presently, I grabbed my belongings and scampered away.

Henceforth:

This story has occurred before, yet, as I ponder, this was a far graver deed done than the first of the "Tell Tale Heart."





BE IT THAT I ESCAPED

In my trotting, the confusion and bustle in the streets were terrible. Men were talking. Women were screaming. Children were choking. Cars they bellowed. Lights they flickered. Cats they caterwauled. Dogs they danced. *Danced!* Could it then be possible? This mysterious city that was Toledo. For it made me question—question if I would be found. Thus it is ever.

I feel most enviably sane, however, despite my recent troubles, most might say I am mad, but, there is not one drop of madness on my tongue. Outside this gore-ish Toledo city, lies a beauty, a wonder, *truly* enviable—nay! the most benignly beautiful, the most deliciously ethereal, and, as it were, the most *pretty* (if I may use so bold an expression) *thing* (pardon me, gentle reader!) in the world—but I am always led away by my feelings. In *such* a mind, I repeat, what a host of recollections are stirred up by a trifle! Stressing not the deeds therefore done, rather the feelings I do feel for the man's saddened state. In my now solitary walk through this Clark Park of sorts, the air gave an injured sigh, as if he knew that what I had done was unforgivable.


I paused for a

breath resting myself upon a tree; and, in the meantime, an accident occurred of too momentous a nature in a moral, and also in a metaphysical point of view, to be passed over without notice. It appeared to me—indeed I was quiet confident of the fact—I could not be mistaken—no! For, the tree which I had rested, began, with a gentle pressure on the back of my neck a scimitar-like branch. I pulled back at once—but it was too late. I was beneath a terrible trap. My transgressions, from the madness I have not, that I have told you, reader, have reached this forest, plaguing me with this fearful sensation. The finger-like sprigs of branch buried its sharp edge a full inch in my flesh, and my sensations grew indistinct and confused. I prayed for death, at the height of my sanity, and the agony of the moment. I writhed

and broke from the scoundrel, prying its fingers from my flesh with a menacing groan, galloping away for life.

It came about, that popping from the forest, I began a journey to my next destination. For where was I going, I was not aware. Presently, I have been wandering around this strange city. There are very a many peculiar people, for they stare at me, but it is not for my madness, I can assure. For the miles that I did walk, I found myself amongst otherworldly creatures, block like in nature, but also rather lifelike. This place, you wonder, my dear reader, is this Hartman Rock Garden, *strange, this city must love to name things after people.*

For this story reminds me of a time when I, myself, had found but "A Predicament" where this story follows along. While the scars do remain, thus the clocks are what make me tick, those hands, menacing. Never-mind, it's the trees which make me shiver.



A CONVERSATION

I SWEAR THEY'RE TALKING

I tell you that I am not mad, although, presently it might seem as such. But, I will tell you why I am not mad, for the statues at my current place, are in fact—talking. Just listen:

Ethos: "Why do you call me Ethos?"

Logos: "So henceforth you will always be called. You must forget, too *my* earthly name, and speak to me as Logos"

Ethos: "This indeed is no dream."

Logos: "Dreams are with us no more; but of these mysteries anon."

Ethos: "I rejoice to see you looking so life-like and rational, Logos. The film of the shadow has already passed from your eyes. Be of heart, and fear nothing."

Logos: "Your allotted days of stupor have expired; and, to-morrow, I will myself induct you into the full joys and wonders of your novel existence."

Ethos: "True, I feel no stupor, none at all. The wild sickness and the terrible darkness have left me, and I hear no longer that mad, rushing, horrible sound, like the "voice of many waters." Yet my senses are bewildered, Logos, with the keenness of their perception of *the new*."



You see, dear reader, *you* hear them too, therefore I am not mad, I am rather sane in my assumptions. Evil has not altogether been upon me, although, the pain in my neck has not ceased. I feel I—well *we* are in a rather peculiar predicament. For *you* witnessed my misfortune, and that of the old man. Yet, presently, I feel no remorse. I continue, listening—

Ethos: “A few days will remove all this; but I fully understand you, and feel for you. It is now ten earthly years since I underwent what you undergo,

yet the remembrance of it hangs by me still. I am immovable, yet I sway, drifting in the silent breezes passing.”

Logos: “*You* have suffered this same fate? Then I shall know, have I but suffered all pain there is to be?”

Ethos: “Grapple not now with such thoughts. To-morrow we will speak of this. Your mind wavers, and its agitation will find relief in the exercise of simple memories. Look not around, nor forward—but back. I am burning with anxiety to hear the details of that stupendous event which threw you among us. Tell me of it. Let us converse of familiar things, in the old familiar language of the world which has so fearfully

perished.

Upon my conclusion, the one of remorse and anxiousness—sank deep, as if much overcome, letting his stationary arms, fall resolutely by his side, but keeping his mouth still rigorously open. While I remained in speechless astonishment at his behaviour, he suddenly leaped to his feet, and made a rush at me, knocking his companion astray. And I—I made a scuttle myself, barely escaping his grasp. But, reader, I am not mad, I am most assuredly not—mad. As I exited, rather quickly this talking rock garden, I began a treacherous walk once more. My belongings becoming heavier, my eyelids, rather parched, was in great need of some

rest. In my stupor, I happened upon a Castle, one of grand nature. It reminded me of my dear Raven, one of which I greatly missed. Happy to be upon a place of rest, there was not but a breath besides my own in these halls, from my observations.

I have heard but a similar conversation between a one Eiros and Charmion, but anon, this one conversation is much different. For these statues are far beyond the nature of one my earlier acquaintances.



nce upon a
midnight dreary,
While I pondered
weak and weary,

Over many a quaint and curious volume Of forgotten lore, while I nodded
Napping, suddenly came a tapping,
As of some one rapping, rapping, upon my chamber door.
'Tis some visitor, I muttered, tapping at my chamber door -
Only a field-farmer!

Ah, my dear friend,
What a night to borrow books from
Mr. E. I. I
vainly
to borrow
books surcease
Sorrow for the
rare and
maiden whom
angels named Lenore -
Nameless here for evermore.
And the silken sad uncertain
tapping of a weak dream

curtain - thrilled me - filled
me with fantastic terrors
never felt before;

So that now, to still the beating -
of my heart,
I repeat what I have said before -

One, never entering my chamber
at some late visitor's
tapping Entrance at my
chamber door;
And nothing more.

And my soul's
hesitating
no longer
said I, 'Oh, truly
your forgiveness I implore;

the Fact I was napping,
and so faintly you came
tapping, And so faintly you
came Tapping, tapping at my
chamber door, that I Scarce
was sure I heard you' - here
I opened Wide the door;
darkness there,
and nothing more.

Deep into that darkness
peering, long I stood there
wondering, fearing, doubting,
dreaming dreams no mortal
ever dared to dream before;



Eulalie.

"Annabelle Lee"

I dwelt alone
In a world of moan,
And my soul was a stagnant tide
Till the fair and gentle Eulalie became my blushing
Till the yellow-haired young Eulalie became my son

Ah, less, less bright
The stars of the night
Than the eyes of the radiant girl,
And never a flake
That the vapor can make
With the moon-tints of purple and pearl
Can vie with the modest Eulalie's most unregarded
Can compare with the bright-eyed Eulalie's most humble

Now Doubt - now Pain
Come never again,
For her soul gives me sigh for sigh
And all day long
Shines bright and strong
Astarte within the sky,
While even to her dear Eulalie upturns her matron
While even to her young Eulalie upturns her violet



You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that I gave utterance to a threat. At *length* I will be avenged; this was a point definitely settled—but the very definitiveness with which it was

resolved, precluded the idea of risk. After my brief, but needed rest. I began packing my possessions, I pulled, furiously on the handle of the door. But, to no avail, I could not make it budge. It was a fearful sight, understanding my entrapment. I have

been but trapped in these quarters far too long, it feels. Without a morsel around, I was alone. Presently, though, as I sit in my silence, footsteps have been heard. I have met a body, a one, whose name I am unaware, that has sauntered

into my company. I said to him: "My dear man, what is your name?"

"Fortuitous," said he, "And you, my friend?"

"Ah, you are luckily met. For I am Edgar, I inquire,

"What are you doing dear friend," he said, "For I am mighty fine in my drink. Unhand me!"

"I am aiding you," said I, "In movement through this hall."

We passed through a range of low arches, ascended, passed on, and ascending again, arrived a deep crypt on the highest floor, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to flow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared the perfect archway for the body. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead. I lunged once more and pushed him to the ground. In its surface were two iron staples, distance from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock.

Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back.

With this, he understood, almost immediately, the fate that he gave himself. As he stared back, I busied myself among the pile of bones which I had before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. These materials were to aid me in my deed. Vigorously, I walled up the space with which I imprisoned Fortuitous.

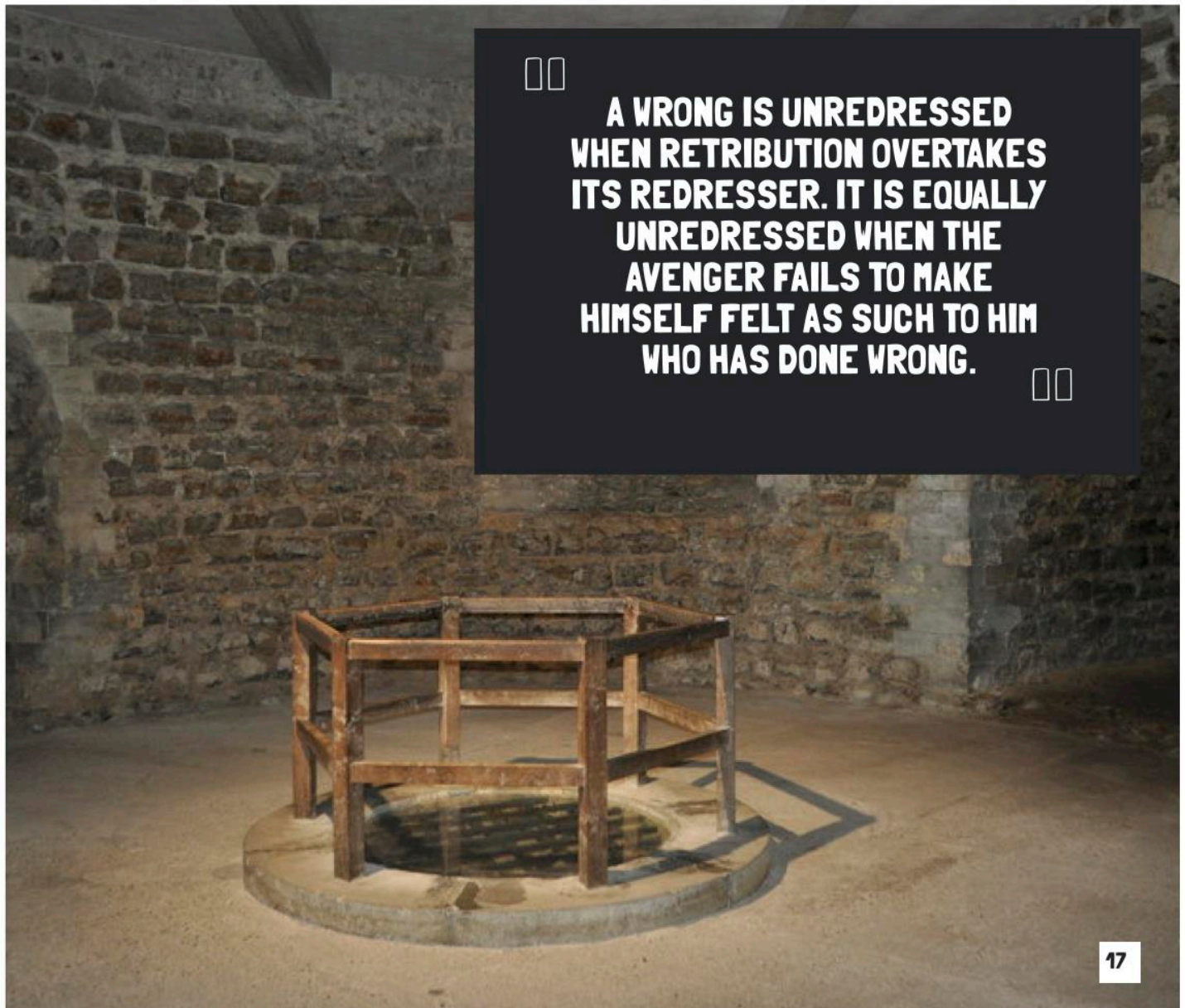
A succession of loud and shrill screams bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form. For he knew his fate, Fortuitous. It was nearly morning when I completed my work.

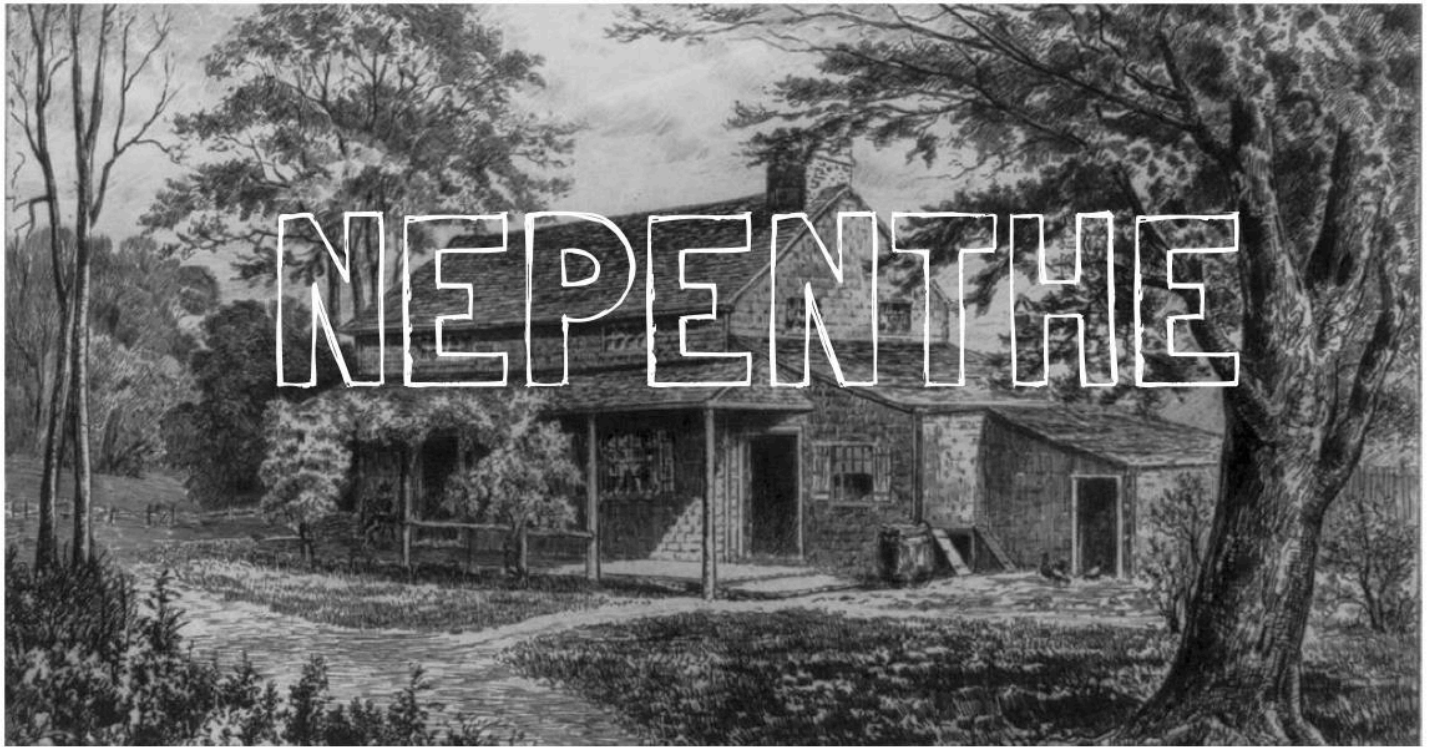
I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry, I re-erected the only rampart bones. For over a century no mortal has disturbed them. *In pace re quiescat!* For I have never returned to Castle Pythian after that night, where no keeper, but me, can ever become.

If this reminds, you reader, of a rather Montessor and Fortunado, then you are correct. For it is in fact that from a similar "Cask of Amontillado" with which my very good friend Montessor boarded up his transgressor Fortunado. He was a rather prickly fellow, and Montessor, I take from his book, it is rather that *he* gave me this wondrous idea for our dear transgressor and hated fellow, Fortuitous.



Photo Caption





RESPITE--RESPITE AND NEPENTHE FROM THY MEMORIES



LEST WE FORGET

Let us suppose, gentle reader, that it is now the year of the world three thousand eight hundred forty-nine, and presently I have but escaped all treacherous encounters. The very city that I encountered was of the most grotesque habitation of man and wish not to enter it ever again. Toledo, as it were, is not the city for me. As the continued keeper of the Castle Pythian, I amount it is

despicable in manner, more so than before, thus I bade it goodbye, boarded it up and abandoned. It was certainly a strange place! I, a much older man than I was, find it strenuous to keep this going. I have been in the place of safety, Nepenthe, concealing myself from the commotion. I have thus lost my dear love during my adventitious encounters with evil and thus changed for the worst. It seemed in this night that the peculiar wind came out of the cloud by night, the same

chilling wind, killing my poor Virginia Eliza. In silent watches of the night, I dream of her. Alas, in this future day, I am in such an unavoidable predicament of hoping to leave this place of safety some day. Drink has caressed my lips. Presently, though, the truth of this houl matter is as such, horror and fatality have been stalking my breathing corpse, and in this drunken state—I...

Other friends have flown
before -- On the morrow he will
leave me, as my hopes have
flown before. Quoth the Raven,
Nevermore.

Edgar Allan Poe



EDGAR ALLAN POE
Boston, MA

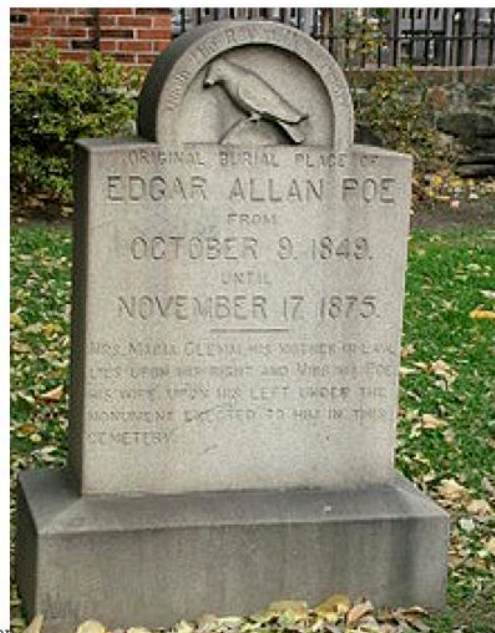


Photo Caption

I grew up in a one small fashion in Boston, Massachusetts.

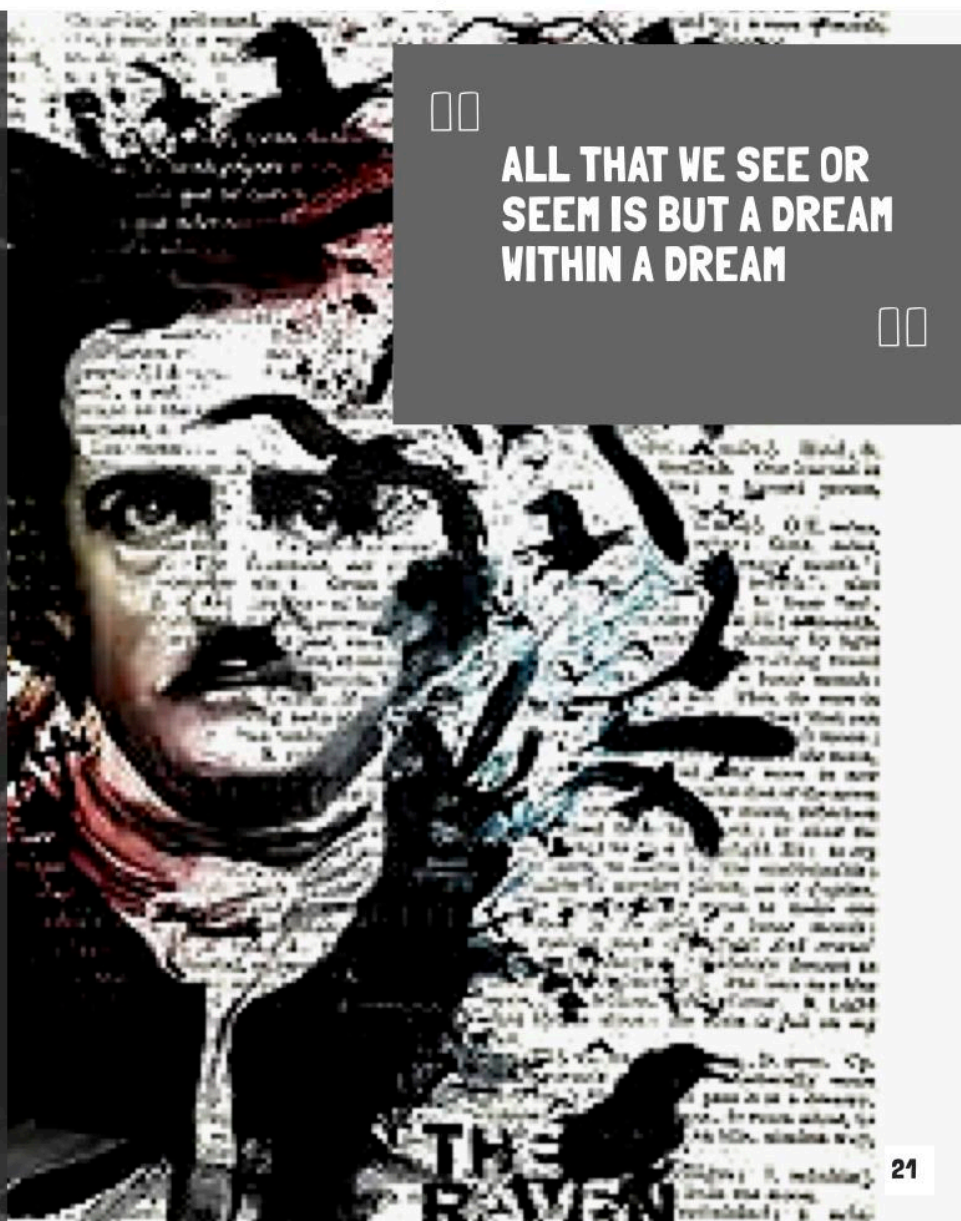
I never knew my dreadful parents, they were not ones for my taste, although, I never quite met them, they died far before I knew.

After my life in boarding school, well I married a lovely Virginia Eliza. Alas, I lost my dear love to a dreadful cough of the most disgraceful red. I wish to forget this.

I'm very influential, don't you see? In good time, I shall become immortal to thee, spoken of fondly.

Nevermore, I suppose.

I began insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity



ALL THAT WE SEE OR SEEM IS BUT A DREAM WITHIN A DREAM



Death of Edgar A. Poe.

EDGAR ALLAN POE is dead. He died in Baltimore the day before yesterday. This announcement will startle many, but few will be grieved by it. The poet was known, personally or by reputation, in all this country; he had readers in England, and in several of the states of Continental Europe; but he had few or no friends, and the regrets for his death will be suggested principally by the consideration that in him literary art has lost one of its most brilliant but erratic stars.

The family of Mr. Poe—we learn from Griswold's "Poets and Poetry of America," from which a considerable portion of the facts in this notice are derived—was one of the oldest and most respectable in Baltimore. David Poe, his paternal grandfather, was a Quartermaster-General in the Maryland line during the Revolution, and the intimate friend of Lafayette, who, during his last visit to the United States, called personally upon the General's widow, and tendered her acknowledgments for the services rendered to him by her husband. His great-grandfather, John Poe, mar-

died in England, Jane, a daughter of Admiral James McBride, noted in British naval history, and claiming kindred with some of the most illustrious English families. His father and mother,—both of whom were in some way connected with the theater, and lived as precariously as their more gifted and more eminent son—died within a few weeks of each other, of consumption, leaving him an orphan, at two years of age. Mr. John Allan, a wealthy gentleman of Richmond, Virginia, took a fancy to him, and persuaded his grandfather to suffer him to adopt him. He was brought up in Mr. Allan's family; and as that gentleman had no other children, he was regarded as his son and heir. In 1816 he accompanied Mr. and Mrs. Allen to Great Britain, visited every portion of it, and afterward passed four or five years in a school kept at Stoke Newington, near London, by Rev. Dr. Bransby. He returned to America in 1822, and in 1825 went to the Jefferson University, at Charlottesville, in Virginia, where he led a very dissipated life, the manners of the college being at that time extremely dissolute. He took the first honors, however, and went home greatly in debt. Mr. Allan refused to pay some of his debts of honor, and he hastily quitted the country on a Quixotic expedition to join the Greeks then struggling for lib-

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Google photos for the art

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Chloe Rieder

Virginia Woolf: Howling in the Face of the Patriarchy

Virginia Woolf, whose birth name is Adeline Virginia Stephen, is a feminist icon of the twentieth century who offered a voice for oppressed women of a male-dominated society; she incorporated herself into the Women's Suffrage Movement. Woolf's feminist tone was authentic, as she experienced the patriarchal reign first-hand; she overcame sexual assault at the hands of her half-brothers. Though the author did not explicitly write about the trauma in published works, she disclosed within her private correspondence. Woolf is a stellar example to women of all generations because she does not allow the male to silence her voice; men did not intimidate Woolf in the slightest. Her beliefs are eminent in *A Room of One's Own*, *Between the Acts*, and "Professions for Women," which, due to their popularity, inspired generations of feminist authorship. Virginia Woolf is representative of a feminist who is dauntless and courageous in the face of supposedly unbeatable odds. In the end, she lost her life to mental illness and battled the foe her entire life. Truly, Virginia Woolf eminently radiates the values of feminism.

Woolf's "Professions for Women," included in *The Death of the Moth and Other Essays* (1942), was presented orally to the Women's Service League, in which Woolf expands upon the Angel of the House, the "Victorian ideal of subservient femininity" (*Congenial Spirits* xi). The use of "subservient" exemplifies the inferior role of women especially present during the lifespan of Virginia Woolf. Personified as the Victorian ideal of womanhood, women were forced into

the strict role of caretaker and homemaker for the family unit. Woolf became acquainted with the Angel when writing a book review of an unnamed male author's work.

... I discovered that if I were to going to review books I should need to do battle with a certain phantom. And the phantom was a woman... I called her after the heroine of a famous poem... It was she who bothered me and wasted my time, and so tormented me that at last I killed her. You who come of a younger and happier generation may not have heard of her - you may not know who I mean by the Angel in the House

Woolf presented to the employed women (243). The author references Coventry Patmore's extensive poem titled "Angel in the House." To clarify, the Angel in the House is not the woman herself; it is the mold of a obedient, domesticated woman idealized by mankind. The Angel is an ever-present figure in one's life that dictates "womanly" behavior. The patriarchal structure is intangible; it serves as an ideology. One cannot place blame upon a single individual, as ideologies travel quicker than wildfire in society; it is quite difficult to track its true progression. When Woolf defines the Angel's presence, she advocates for women to defeat the patriarchy that limits creative license of womankind. Expanding upon the qualities of the Angel, Woolf states:

She was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily... in short she was constituted that she never had a mind of her own, but preferred to sympathize with the minds and wishes of others... Her purity was supposed to be her chief beauty - her blushes, her great grace. In those days - the last of Queen Victoria - every house had its Angel (243).

Overall, women were denied free will. Although Woolf does not agree with the limited employment of women, she offers credit where it is due, defining the role of homemaker as “the difficult arts of family life.” She believes that women hold capabilities far beyond the limitations forced upon womankind. Woolf is deemed “one of the foremothers of feminist theories of writing,” one of the first women to advocate for employment beyond the household (Woolf 241). Woolf’s observation is relatable to women of the twenty-first century as well, emphasizing that, though women occupy further power within society, the female still resides under the oppressive rule of man. The Angel is further described as “the ‘phantom’ who lures womankind into the cult of true womanhood; into self-sacrifice, self-deprecation; and above all, hiding the fact that she has her own mind” (Woolf 241). Essentially, the phantom Angel dictates that the female is not allowed to know herself; the woman solely exists in relation to serve the patriarchy. Simply put, women were slave to mankind. From the male perspective, women solely exist to bear children. The correlation of the Angel as a phantom figure emphasizes the control of the patriarchy; the woman can never truly escape its reign until the Angel, the patriarchal mold, is demolished.

Woolf expands upon a characteristic of the phantom: “It is far harder to kill a phantom than a reality” (244). Relating the phantom Angel to the patriarchy, Woolf states that the latter is immortal, but it does not define the patriarchy as untouchable. The hierarchy is difficult to overthrow, but it is a doable act. Women will outlast, which is emphasized by Woolf. Her struggle, even as an accomplished, seemingly privileged female author, to write freely within the tight constraints of a male-dominated field, emphasized the plight of womankind, no matter her profession. The placement of women in the workforce enters the conversation of the definition of a woman, so to speak. In lieu of the topic, Woolf offers the following thought:

... now that she had rid herself of falsehood, that young woman had only to be herself.... but what is 'herself'? ... what is a woman? I assure you, I do not know. I do not believe that you know. I do not believe that anybody can know until she has expressed herself in all the arts and professions open to human skill" (244).

Woolf fought the male rule with "her rising feminist anger" (*Congenial* 109). With the rage that fueled her feminist fire, Woolf sheds light upon the the uncertainty of one's identity that women constantly battle. The Angel in the House is an unrealistic ideal forced upon the female. Until a woman is allowed the same opportunities as a male, which, in this case, constitute employment prospects, she is unable to explore the world and, in the same vein, her true identity. Writing is viewed as a form of creative expression in which women were not allowed to express their true selves. Rather, she must contort her beliefs to avoid repercussions from the dominant male.

Woolf spoke upon the oppression:

...the passions which it was unfitting for her as a woman to say. Men, her reason told her, would be shocked. The consciousness of what men will say of a woman who speaks the truth about her passions had roused her from her artist's state of unconsciousness (245).

Ideally, a writer is allowed creative freedom that offers little restriction to their art. However, in the case of female authorship, the subjects to expand upon were quite limited. Authors were limited to "feminine" areas of knowledge. Fortunately, Virginia Woolf was, and still is, an empowered female presence that inspired womankind to overcome the seemingly impossible hurdles. Truly, Woolf is a feminist figure that will withstand the test of time.

Woolf often battled the Angel when she honed her craft.

The shadow of her wings fell on my page; I heard the rustlings of her skirts in the room...

'My dear, you are a young woman. You are writing about a book that has been written by a man. Be sympathetic; be tender; flatter; deceive; use all the arts and wiles of our sex.

Never let anybody guess that you have a mind of your own. Above all, be pure.' And she made it to guide my pen

Woolf disclosed to the Women's Service League (243). The author distinctly personifies the Angel who attempts to stifle female authorship, unless, of course, it benefits mankind. Women rank second to men, the Angel emphasizes, especially in the written word. The voice of women must not be documented, according to the patriarchy. Woolf directly refutes the belief in *A Room of One's Own*, stating "A thousand pens are ready to suggest what you should do and what effect you will have" (113). In this case, the pen represents mankind that attempts to determine the role of women. However, men are not capable of deeming the value of women; women are powerful beings that control their own destiny, Woolf suggests.

Woolf possesses an intellectual understanding of her writing. She wrote to Madge Vaughn, her mentor, who often read through Woolf's early drafts. The author emphasizes that she does not delve into the emotional element of literature; she believes in authenticity:

Only it seems to me better to write of the things I do feel, than to dabble in things I frankly don't¹ understand in the least. That is the kind of blunder - in literature - which seems to me ghastly and unpardonable: people, I mean, who wallow in emotions without understanding them. Then they are merely animal and hideous (*Congenial Spirits* 26).

¹ The absence of an apostrophe is the wording of Virginia Woolf.

In the above passage, Woolf possibly references Gertrude Stein; the younger writer's work is distinguishable from Stein, and the women most certainly held creative differences. Virginia Woolf stands up for her writing style against Vaughn, refusing to apologize for her skill set. In fact, she does not hold back her opinion of certain writing techniques as "merely animal and hideous." Woolf's writing expands upon mundane, everyday life and focuses on small, relevant details that are essential to recall as the novel progresses; her reader remains engaged with the text. In short, Woolf does not elaborate in order to confuse her reader; she desires one to comprehend and gain knowledge from the content. The addition of unneeded emotion takes away from the novel itself, she believes.

She does not allow the patriarchy to stifle her voice. Woolf overcomes the patriarchal beliefs as she metaphorically murders the Angel in the House. Ericka Kaimer, a senior English major at Heidelberg University, offers supplemental research upon the Angel's death. "Angel of the House? More Like Maid of the House," a title that derails the patriarchy, discusses the Angel in the House and its relation to Patmore's poem. The poet's wife, Emily, the ideal Victorian woman, is the original Angel of the House; she is forced into the oppressed position of wife and servant at Patmore's will. The wife "is one of utter obedience to her husband. She is the ideal Victorian Era woman, dressing the way Patmore wants and most importantly, pleasing him" Kaimer elaborates (1). Victorian women were not allowed free reign of their chosen identity, even in a choice as simple as the clothing on their body. However, it is possible that Patmore fictionalized his wife's behavior because males are able to manipulate the truth in literature, unlike women who must write in a straightforward, bland manner. "The typical wife was supposed to act like Emily, but many women sought to rebel this persecution against their sex,"

Kainer writes in opposition to the patriarchy (2). Possibly, Patmore wrote about the minority of women, rather than the majority of free thinking women. The murder is representative of the female rebellion that has evolved into modern-day society as well. In 2018, women *still* fight for equal employment, pay, and treatment. Discrimination is ever-present in society.

Murdering the Angel in the House was simply the beginning. Woolf describes the physical act of the murder:

I turned upon her and caught her by the throat... My excuse, if I were to be had up in a court of law, would be that I acted in self-defence. Had I not killed her she would have killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing... Thus, whenever I felt the shadow of her wing or the radiance of her halo upon page, I took up the inkpot and flung it at her. She died hard... She was always creeping back when I thought I had despatched her (243-244).

In this passage, Virginia Woolf advocates for the feminist sisterhood in the assassination of the Angel, whose “radiance of her halo” is considerably ironic, due to the Angel’s lack of concern for the women’s suffrage. Woolf strongly states that the Angel “died hard,” but the initial kill was not successful, as the Angel returns to haunt womankind once again. Woolf emphasizes the constant battle that women face, which is relevant to the past and present status of women. Women also murder the Angel in other forms to voice their struggle, such as women’s marches of the past and present. Though Woolf is one of many feminists, her voice rings true throughout the history of women’s suffrage; her impact upon the movement remains.

Contrary to male belief, women are not susceptible to the patriarchal whims of men; women possess free will and strength that men refuse to acknowledge. The patriarchy greatly

doubts female capabilities. Marcus observes “the hostile and threatening assertion made by men to feminists of Woolf’s generation that women have produced no geniuses, no Shakespeares, no Beethovens, no Rembrandts” (75). The observation directly ties into Woolf’s argument of William Shakespeare’s potential sister that she debates in *A Room of One’s Own*. Woolf elaborates upon the possibility:

She died young - alas, she never wrote a word. She lies buried... my belief is that this poet who never wrote a word and was buried at the crossroad still lives. She lives in you and in me, and in many other women... for they are washing up the dishes and putting the children to bed. But she lives; for great poets do not die; they are continuing presences; they need only the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh (111).

William Shakespeare’s sister most likely did not exist. Rather, the nonexistent female serves as a metaphor for oppressed women, writers and non-writers included, silenced by the controlling male. Woolf’s passionate statement is a direct call for womankind to forgo the status-quo and overthrow the patriarchal norms. If the lost sister resides within each and every woman, she is unable to vanish. Women must overcome the obstacles for Shakespeare’s sister, who is also the sister for all womankind, because each and every woman, no matter the circumstances, has been in the sister’s footsteps. Women have been silenced and forced into the background for too long.

Men of Woolf’s lifespan believed that women were not worthy of recognition in society. Marcus further describes the cause and effect nature: “Women could not be the producers of culture while reproducing humankind, she felt, and history bore her out” (76). Women are vital to society, as they create the next generation of humankind, but men twist childbirth to their benefit and force women into an inferior position. Women who are vital to history are often

neglected, while men outshine women with their accomplishments. Woolf's argument for William Shakespeare's sister is a stellar example. Because Woolf understood the struggle of her feminist sisters, she advocates for womankind.

While women are molded by the patriarchy, men are trained to act in a certain manner as well. Woolf, in *Moments of Being*, states,

All our male relations were adepts at the game. They knew the rules and attached immense importance to them... *What would have been his shape had he not been stamped and moulded by the patriarchal machinery?*² Every one of our male relations was shot into that machine and came out the other end (Marcus 198).

Men are forced into specific roles as well, which Woolf understood; she spoke in favor of the seemingly dominant gender and infantilized the male population. Males are also shaped by their environment, she emphasizes. Despite the horror Woolf experienced at the hands of her half-brothers, the author was an advocate for the oppression of humankind. She witnessed the overarching oppression first-hand from her male family members. Jane Marcus, the author of *Virginia Woolf and the Languages of the Patriarchy*, further researched the subject: "It is in the history of her family that we may find the source of her philosophy. The Stephen men and the men of her circle were shaped by institutions" (75). However, the institutional oppression will never excuse Woolf's assaults at the hands of her half-brothers. Woolf fought through the trauma, though, and further advocated for women. Virginia Woolf's perspective on men and women is essential knowledge to appreciate the feminist aura she possessed. In "Professions for Women," she believes that men "doubt that they realize or can control the extreme severity with

² The emphasis is mine.

which they condemn such freedom in women” (Woolf 245). The patriarchy is ingrained deep within society, to the extent that men oppress women unconsciously. Men are almost infantile in nature because they act dependent to their environment, according to Woolf. In a letter to Clive Bell, her brother-in-law, Woolf argues “... for psychological reasons which seem to me very interesting, a man, in the present state of the world, is not a very good judge of his sex” (*Congenial* 50). Men follow the status-quo, because, if men maintain power, restructuring society is unnecessary. Men are mentally content with their status and do not experience unrest, which could not be further from the truth for women.

Woolf greatly believes in the strength and will that women possess. For example, she especially admired Octavia Wilberforce, the female doctor that cared for the author in the short time before her death. “That’s the sort of woman I most admire - the reticence, the quiet, the power... she’s healing the sick by day, and controlling the fires by night” (*Congenial Spirits* 441). Wilberforce represents the empowered female that defeats the patriarchy by entering a male-dominated career. A case may be made for the usage of “reticence,” as the word somewhat deters the feminist classification due to its definition of reserved speech or silence. However, consider the demeanour of Wilberforce; she strategically interjects her beliefs and acts as a professional within her field. Men, on the other hand, tend to speak without the proper thought process. Entering the doctoral field, Wilberforce battled the prehistoric beliefs that men possess women, continuing to prove herself and furthering Woolf’s admiration of her doctoral companion. The physician’s career and demeanour distinctly correlate to Woolf’s belief that women are qualified for employment in the same field as a man. Woolf was a passionate

advocate for women's equality in the workforce, as witnessed in "Professions of Women." In the speech, she states,

You have won rooms of your own in the house hitherto exclusively owned by men... But this freedom is only a beginning; the room is your own, but it is still bare... for the first time you are able to decide for yourselves what the answers should be (246).

Woolf's speech connects her two works, "Professions" and *A Room of One's Own*, which occupy a portion of her feminist stance. Once again, Woolf emphasizes that, even though the Angel in the House is no longer haunting womankind, women must battle her ingrained presence upon society.

Virginia Woolf was an active participant in the Women's Suffrage Movement; she stamped envelopes for the cause, which Woolf cites in her personal letters to Violet Dickinson, a family friend of her half-brother. In a letter dated February 1910, Woolf writes, "I would spend hours writing names like Cowgill on envelopes. People say that Adult Suffrage is a bad thing; but they will never get it owing to my efforts" (*Congenial* 58). Some may assume that Woolf's responsibility for the envelopes is a minute task, but, in fact, the small deed further advanced the movement. Secondly, Woolf combated the patriarchal perspectives of Arnold Bennett, author of *Our Women*, who directly stated women were inferior in mind and body to men, and Desmond MacCarthy, a male acquaintance, the author of *The Good Englishwoman* (*Congenial* 122-123). The latter work greatly relates to the Victorian ideal of the Angel of the House, due to the outdated perceptions of women. Woolf debunks the patriarchal beliefs:

Like most women, I am unable to face the depression and the loss of self respect... which would certainly cause me if I read their books in the bulk... the comparison with men not

in the least one that inclines me to suicide... Thus, though women have every reason to hope that the intellect of the male sex is slowly diminishing, it would be unwise... to announce it as fact" (*Congenial* 123).

The author evolved from her writing as a young woman, when she was hesitant to write a critical book review for a male author. Now, she is unafraid to state her case and properly analyze the situation. The author emphasizes "the loss of self respect" associated with falling victim to the demands of the patriarchy. The female author is a passionate, dedicated advocate for women, but she understood that patriarchal values are deeply ingrained in society; small battles must be claimed to win the war, emphasized by the inclusion of the "slowly diminishing" patriarchy. Women withstand the oppressive forces and will conquer all obstacles.

Impressive progress occurred between the waves of feminism from Woolf's lifespan to the present day. Katha Pollitt, a staff writer for *Nation*, furthered the discourse in "When Women Get Mad." She passionately wrote, "... we now hold the majority of bachelors' degrees, half the seats in medical schools and law schools, run businesses and universities, and sit in Congress. There are even three of us on Supreme Court" (3). The listing of high-level educational and governmental positions exemplifies the evolved role of women. In contrast, Woolf expands upon the limited opportunities for women during her lifetime. "Even when the path is nominally open - when there is nothing to prevent a woman from being a doctor, a lawyer, a civil servant - there are many phantoms and obstacles... looming in their way," Woolf states (246). The "phantoms and obstacles" further alludes to the Angel in the House, paramount to the comprehension of the patriarchal structure. Identifying the integral issues allows women to defeat the phantoms head-on.

Woolf faced her own demons, which fueled the fire for her contributions to the movement. Writing to Vanessa Bell, her full-blood older sister, Woolf disclosed her sexual assaults, which Vanessa also endured by the same male family members. Woolf also opened up to Janet Case, her Greek teacher during her youth, that George Duckworth, her half-brother, forced himself upon her (*Congenial* 58). Interestingly, the assaults occurred under the watch of Case during the Greek lessons. The unlawful act was not intervened by the older woman. During the assaults, the tutor stated, ““Whew - you nasty creature,”” lightly reprimanding the young man as if the forceful act was acceptable (*Congenial* 65). Because Woolf was unable to control the ill act inflicted upon her, she felt it necessary to offer a voice for womankind. The use of “nasty creature” encouraged Duckworth’s behavior, relating to the timeless notion that “Boys will be boys.” Due to his gender, and the power that it possesses, his actions were perfectly acceptable. Woolf further describes Case’s reaction to the assault: “When I got to the bedroom scenes, she dropped her lace, and gasped like a benevolent gudgeon. By bedtime she said she was feeling quite sick...” (*Congenial* 65-66). Janet Case was a silent bystander of sexual assault and felt that the man’s actions were not amiss; the older woman’s intense reaction emphasizes the self-blame for not intervening and saving Woolf as a young girl. Case should have intervened and prevented further assault, but, because the assailant was male, she felt it was not her place, so to speak. Woolf’s disconnection, as witnessed in the tone of the letter, is characteristic of a victim’s denial to accept that she was assaulted. She refused to truly place herself in the situation, even though she disclosed to her former tutor. Woolf was shameful about her assault. She writes, “I still shiver with shame at the memory of my half-brother, standing me on a ledge, aged about 6, and so exploring my private parts. Why should I have felt shame then?” (*Congenial* 438-439). The

author was not, in this case, referring to George Duckworth; rather, she referenced his brother, Gerald Duckworth. Woolf was a young child during the molestations of the Duckworth brothers, and the weight of the trauma was ever-present in her psyche.

Virginia Woolf is truly a force to be reckoned with; she overcame her trauma to defeat the patriarchy in written form. *Between the Acts* operates in this manner; she revises the patriarchal perspective of Algernon Swinburne's poem "Itylus," in which the speaker is a rape victim who does not remember her attack. "She has forgotten her own rape and the cutting out of her tongue by her brother-in-law," Marcus observes (76). The incident of the female in "Itylus" directly connects to the forceful acts of her half-brothers, George and Gerald. Unlike the female subject, however, Woolf does not allow herself to be silenced; her tongue remains intact. She did not fall victim to the man's control. Marcus further analyzes *Between the Acts*, summarizing "'what we must remember' is the rape; 'what we must forget' is the rewriting of women's history" (76). Woolf combats the male-dominated canon prejudiced against women, taking a stand for herself and fellow womankind. She urges women of the past, present, and future to not be shameful of their sexual assault, encouraging women to report the assault. Woolf is truly an advocate for women of all generations.

Woolf was also supported by strong, independent women. She confided with Violet Dickinson; their relationship was simultaneously platonic and romantic with the inclusion of Dickinson's "outgoing and sympathetic maternal nature." Dickinson was twenty years older than Woolf and served as a mentor, of sorts, for the younger woman. In fact, the older woman was one of the first individuals to spark Woolf's desire to become a writer, a true supporter of Woolf and her capabilities (*Congenial* 9).

Additionally, Virginia Woolf met Gertrude Stein at a party in Woolf's honor. She observed that Stein "was throned on a broken settee... This resolute old lady inflicted great damage on all the youth... she contradicts all you say; insists that she is not only the most intelligible, but also the most popular of living writers; and in particular despises all of English birth" (*Congenial* 212). Despite the seemingly negative commentary against the older woman, Woolf respected Stein as a fellow woman and author. Stein is literary royalty in the eyes of Woolf, as she states that Stein is "throned." However, Woolf also comments that Stein's perspective is diminishing from society as the older woman rests on a damaged settee. On the other hand, though, Woolf emphasizes the timelessness of Gertrude Stein's ideals that regenerate as society evolves. The values of feminism evolved between the prime years of Stein and Woolf. More than once, Woolf references the older feminist in her correspondence. Writing to T.S. Eliot, she states, "Whichever Woolf it was, it wasn't³ this Woolf; but now it is this Woolf - which sounds like a passage from the works of the inspired Miss [Gertrude] Stein" (*Congenial* 401). Woolf comments upon the abstractness of Gertrude Stein, a staple of the woman's writing. Despite the blunt criticism, Woolf acknowledges Stein's technique into her personal writing. "I think her dodge is to repeat the same word 100 times over in different connections, until at last you feel the force of it," Woolf wrote in the epistolary correspondence of 1925 (Porter). Woolf and Stein are equally respected individuals with artistic differences that impact their perspectives on feminism and authorship.

³ The absence of an apostrophe is the wording of Virginia Woolf.

She further critiqued Stein's writing in a correspondence with Roger Fry, her sister's lover and a recognized art critic. Woolf's self-made publishing company, Hogarth Press, printed Stein's *Composition as Explanation* in 1926. In discussion, she disclosed the following:

We are lying crushed under an immense manuscript of Gertrude Stein's. I cannot brisk myself to deal with it - whether her contortions are genuine and fruitful, or only such spasms... she's gigantic, (meaning not the flesh but the spirit). For my own part I wish we could skip a generation - skip Edith and Gertrude and Tom and Joyce and Virginia.... instead of trickling and teasing in this irritating way (*Congenial* 197).

Woolf does not deny that Stein's work is one of genius and worthy of praise; however, the younger woman emphasizes the stylistic variations among the two authors. Woolf longs for a literary trend of timely and effectively reaching one's literary intent. Woolf, like civilian readers found herself lost within difficult prose as well, as she is "crushed under an immense manuscript;" she elaborates upon Stein's vague yet powerful writing. Woolf alludes to Edith Sitwell, T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, and herself, respectively. The reference to Eliot's first name, Tom, is representative of Woolf's close connections and reign within the literary community; Hogarth Press attempted to publish Eliot's *Wasteland*, but the male author diverted the inquiry. Then, shortly following their communication, the work was published by Faber, a fellow publishing company. In response to the swerve, Woolf complained of the "consort with eccentricities - witness our poor Tom, who is behaving... more like an infuriated hen..." (*Congenial* 197-198). Eliot chose to not associate with a publishing company run by an accomplished woman.

On another note, Gertrude Stein's "ginormous" spirit is a grand compliment to the older woman; she applauds Stein for following her passion and writing in a style fitting for the older writer. Stein did not conform because her techniques varied from the norm. Thus, Gertrude Stein greatly represents the feminist belief of sticking to one's guns and owning one's identity without shame. The women's differences distinguish the welcoming plethora of feminist beliefs. Women derive from a variance of circumstances and experiences, allowing feminism to encompass all of womankind. Unlike the patriarchal hierarchy, prejudice is not present within the realm of feminism.

In conclusion, Virginia Woolf greatly advanced the presence of women in the literary field due to her immense advocacy for womankind. Though Coventry Patmore termed the Angel in the House, Woolf further personified the intangible phantom, so she could be defeated, as seen in "Professions for Women" (1942) in address to the Women's Service League. Though Woolf was a recognized, accomplished author, she was not exempt from patriarchal control; she did not falsify her writing. The writer dealt with the ideology within her family hierarchy, where the male over ranked the female. Though Woolf advocated for the advancement of women in the workforce, she acknowledges that the task of maintaining the home is not a simple feat. Stein positively impacted the Women's Suffrage Movement within her feminist writing and battled her personal troubles in the process; she worked through the lasting impact of sexual assault by her half-brothers and overcame the violence of the patriarchy. Gertrude Stein and Woolf fought a silent battle for dominance within the literary field, but the battle was rather one-sided for Woolf. In fact, the younger woman found Stein's writing rather off putting and criticized the older woman. However, competition is healthy among rivals, as it urges one to constantly improve

their craft and better their inner self. Woolf furthered herself as a scholar and businesswoman by building Hogarth Press from the ground up. Virginia Woolf is a canonized author in the twenty-first century and is relevant to modern-day conversations about gender; she is ever-present within the feminist conversation.

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