

Spring 2009

Fresh Perspectives

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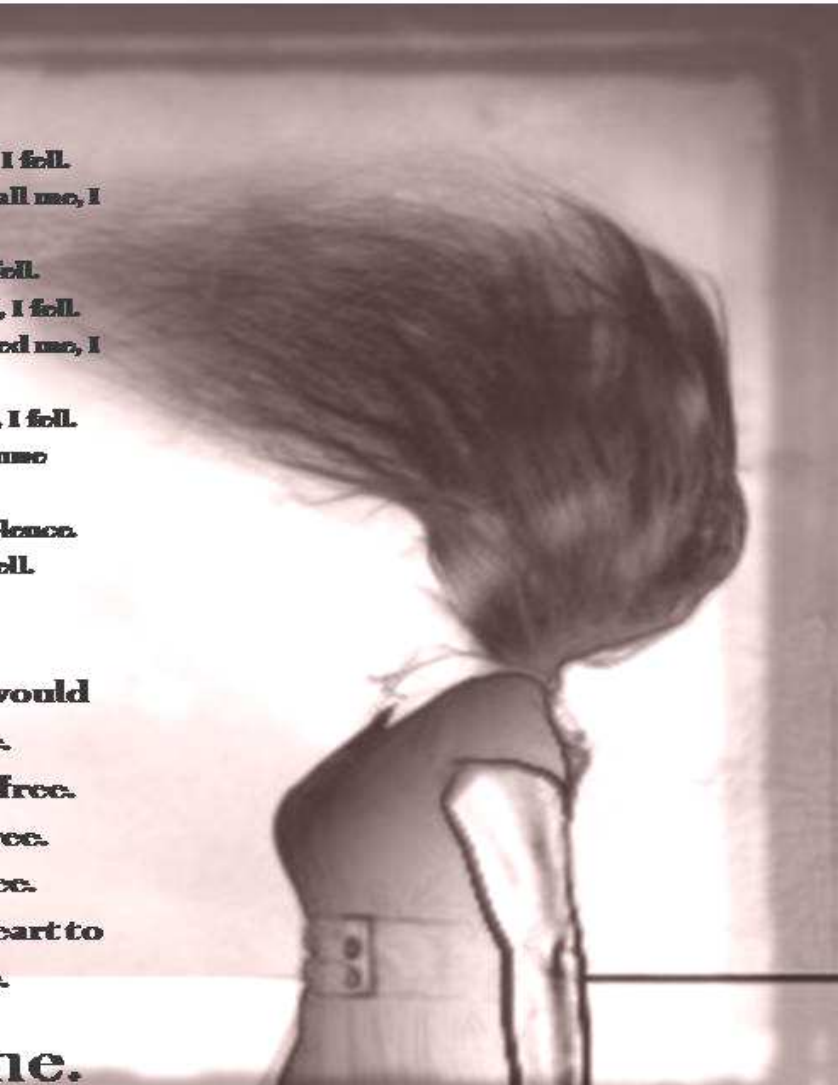
Editor: Rachel Rigolino

Spring 2009



Linger by Danielle Esposito

The thought of you lingers.
It lingers there along with the memories of the past.
All of this just floats over me,
It pushes down, keeping me from moving on, it lingers.
I close my eyes and I see nothing but us.
My mind travels back to those nights in my car.
You keep coming back to me, you haunt me.
Your laugh, your smile, your eyes they linger.
The times we have spent together play in my head.
I hear a song and you come to mind
I hear your voice it lingers.
The memories, those nights, your laugh, your smile, your eyes, your voice, it lingers.



I fell.
Harder and harder, I fell.
Into your trap and into your lies, I fell.
I believed when you told me it was all me, I
fell.
Every strike and every blow, I fell.
You said it wouldn't happen again, I fell.
You said you did it because you loved me, I
fell.
You swore that I was the only one, I fell.
You promised never again to cause
any more pain, I fell.
I fell a victim to you and your violence.
All because I loved you and I fell.

I'm free.
I never thought falling would
hurt so bad, I'm free.
Every single touch, I'm free.
Every single lie, I'm free.
No more scars, I'm free.
Only the bruises on my heart to
remind me, I'm free.

Free to be me.

Slice by Clarissa Baez and Christina Singh

(Two friends, Chris and Isha, are waiting at a bus stop. When Chris spots a deli, she gets up and goes inside.)

Isha

I thought you went inside to go to the bathroom.

Chris

What? Oh—on the way back this pie just screamed at me. (Takes a few bites)

Isha

It looks good, must have been expensive. (Licks lips)

Chris

(Pauses with spoon near mouth) No, only two-fifty.

Isha

Was it the last piece or something? (Gets up halfway)

Chris

Yes, you wanna bite?

Isha

No. (Staring at the pie)

Chris

Okay. Suit yourself. (Stuffs face)

Isha

I love apple pie.

Chris

I'll get you a piece.

Isha

No. You didn't consider me before. So forget it.

Chris

I didn't think... It's really no big deal. I'll go get you a piece.

Isha

(Gets irritated) You were only inside two minutes, and you couldn't remember that I'm sitting out here.

Chris

I remembered you were sitting here, but I didn't know if you would want any.

Isha

You're just like the rest of them. People just don't give a shit about other people anymore.

Chris

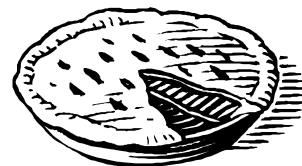
(Getting annoyed) It's just a piece of pie. I'll get you a piece.

Isha

It wasn't just a piece of pie. It was rude and selfish.

Chris

(Shaking head) You've lost it. You're blowing this out of proportion.



Isha

You always do this to me. You always think about yourself. You're so selfish.

Chris

How am I selfish? I offered to buy you a piece, and I asked if you wanted a bite. You said NO.

Isha

You should have considered me before. I shouldn't have to ask you to get me some.

Chris

(Rolls eyes and gets up to go into deli) Fine... I'll go get you a piece.

Isha

No. Not like that. You go if you want to, but don't go out of guilt.

Chris

I want to go. I'll be back with a fresh slice.

(While Chris is in the deli, the bus pulls up at the bus stop; Isha gets on and leaves Chris behind in the deli.)

Mommy v. Pre-teen by Charisma Wright and Emily Foster

(It is a beautiful morning. Christina decides to get up and do her usual duties as a mother and makes sure breakfast is done for Erica, while waiting for her daughter to get ready for school.)

Christina

(She screams) Erica you are going to be late for school! Hurry up and get dressed so you can eat breakfast.

Erica

I am coming, give me five more minutes mom.

(Erica runs down stairs wearing unacceptable clothes for a thirteen-year-old)

Christina

Good morning. (Christina's morning begins to change and so does her facial expression.)

So I see it is going to be one of these days. So which one do you want to do first, eat breakfast and then change? Or change and then eat breakfast? But I'll be damned if you do not do both, missy.

Erica

(Erica rolls her eyes and sighs). Mom, please, all the girls are wearing it. And mom what is this? I do not eat this. What is it anyway? This is not healthy for me; it's going to make me fat.

Christina

(She immediately stops washing dishes) Okay, first of all I have not birthed the three hundred and forty girls that go to your school. Second of all, how do you know you do not eat "this," if you are asking me what it is? And I know that Erica Anne Foster, the girl I birthed for nineteen hours, is not telling me that sunny side up eggs with toast is going to make her fat. Have you looked in the mirror today? You weigh like a hundred. You need the weight!

Erica

Mom, I refuse to eat this sunny side whatever that you have cooked. And I weigh 112lbs to be exact. I can't believe you do not even know your own daughter's weight. That is so wrong on so many levels just wrong (using a sad voice). Mom, and of course, you did not birth all of those girls in my school because they would

The Anniversary by Khallid Utley and Lwizahira Vasquez

(The setting of this play takes place in the kitchen; the light focuses on the table where a brother and sister are sitting discussing how they will celebrate their parents' wedding anniversary.)

Nicole

You know I was thinking, since Mom & Dad's anniversary is coming up we should throw a little something for them.

Adrian

You mean a surprise party?

Nicole

No, most definitely not. I know for a fact Mom hates those, but our family reunion is next month. Why not do it then?

Adrian

I have to say I'm a bit discouraged...how would we pull it off?? Wait...what are we even going to do? What is "it"?

Nicole

(Pause) I was thinking we invite all their closest friends, have food, play good music, nothing big, just to celebrate their being together for so long .

Adrian

With balloons and cake and flowers fancy desserts all during the family dinner?

Nicole

I think that sounds too done up, don't you agree? (Pause) How about we just have a have a theme?

Adrian

What cake do they like? What songs do they like? How many years do they have together? Think we can pull it off?

Nicole

You're so negative. I think we can pull it off. They're young and Dad is always listening to the music from the 80's. I'm thinking we should have an 80's party (small pause) nothing formal just to have fun.

Adrian

80's theme...hmm...I think we have something here....my next question: where to start?

Nicole

The aunts love to cook... so why not let them do that.

Adrian

We should talk to all of them....do a little homework before we make any actual moves. Who should we talk to and what do we want to find out?

Nicole

When we go to Grandma's this Sunday we can bring up the idea and see how they feel about it.

Adrian

Alright, so I'll make a list of the questions we'll bring up this Sunday and we can take it from there.

Nicole

I'll get started planning right away.

Children and Food Choice by Liana Gabel

The dinner table is the perfect place for a family to gather after a busy day, re-energize, and spend time together. In the past thirty-five to forty years, American culture has found it necessary to give children special treatment at the dinner table. Purple ketchup, cartoon shaped macaroni and cheese, and dinosaur chicken nuggets are some of the many fun foods that have colored our dining room tables. These foods teach our children that they do not have to eat the same foods as the rest of the family. Children should not be subject to special treatment at the dinner table. They should be eating the same foods as their parents. It is the responsibility of parents to expose their children to foods which will support their family's health. Healthy eating and exercise are becoming less of a priority in our country. What is the issue and where does it begin? It begins at the dinner table. Parents must properly nurture their children to healthy eating habits. When parents love food and express it, children will follow.

As far as I am concerned, it all begins at the kitchen table. Growing up in an Italian family has great benefits; delicious food is one of them. As soon as my siblings and I were able to, we ate the same foods as our parents. Together, we would eat a meal every night. My mother would, and still does, prepare for us a meal with carbohydrates (in the form of pasta of course), meat, vegetables, and fresh fruit for dessert. An ideal meal for me now contains just that. Arguments were rarely an issue at our dinner table. As far as we were concerned, all of the foods we ate were what was supposed to be eaten. Our parents set the example.

The University of Michigan Department of Psychology and the Department of Pediatrics researched the effect parents have on their children's food preferences. A series of experiments were held which involved children, adults, and food choices. The results showed that children were more likely to choose foods that a reliable adult tasted and expressed as delicious (Lumeng 3). Therefore, if parents enjoy certain foods and express that they enjoy them, their children will be more likely to try those foods and enjoy them also. [...] Unfortunately, many busy parents have not been eating well, while food marketing advertisements fill the ears and minds of children with the message, "Buy our food, it is fun."

The health issue is deeply rooted in a complete shift of the American food industry from around 1970. Before the boom of the fast food industry, an average children's meal contained such foods as "liver and potato pie, peas cooked in lettuce, raw cabbage with lemon juice, and baked custard with milk" (Herscher 53). Now in common American culture this meal is practically unheard of. Because of the rise of the fast food industry, the food market is a lot more competitive than it has ever been. There are more choices. Marketing advertisements are targeting children in any way they can. One of their tactics is to convince children that they deserve special food. Advertisements encourage parents to purchase children's food and purchase it in large amounts. Stores like Sam's Club, and BJ's provide parents with an array of bulk packaging deals.

If we cannot stand the taste of greens and thrive on fast food, we will be paying for it later in worry and medical bills.

One bulk package of pizza pockets and another of mac and cheese can provide a week of quick food for the family, a week of unhealthy eating. Much of this food lacks important nutritional value. In a survey of 60,000 people from 1977-1996, the average American's in-take of salty snacks doubled, and their intake of calories from unhealthy foods such as pizza, French fries, and candy has increased (54). These foods provide a family with little to no nutritional value compared to an old fashioned serving of peas, cabbage, liver and potato pie. As a whole, Americans' health has been depleted over the years; parents are on the forefront, and kids follow behind gobbling it up.

If children gripe over their vegetables, many parents argue it is better to eat in peace than eating amidst family conflict. They give in and allow their children to eat what they want. I understand their reasoning, but as an article by Anne Underwood and Anna Kuchment explains, preparing separate children's meals reinforces the child's distaste for "grown up food." It tells them that it is all right to eat "kids food" (3). Children may then keep that same diet which, in so many cases, directs them toward unhealthy habits. Rather than giving in, Leann Birch, a psychologist, urges parents to continue re-acquainting children with foods they dislike. It may take ten to fifteen samplings of that food for children to become fully comfortable with it (Kutchment 3). If children become accustomed to eating the healthy food their parents eat, they will grow to be healthy adults and the cycle will continue.

Special treatment at the table only leads children to bad eating habits. Fortunately, I have been raised on delicious and healthy meals. Others have not been as blessed as I. Because my parents have taught me to eat well, I am now a healthy young adult. If we care about our health and our children's health we must eat healthy foods. If we cannot stand the taste of greens and thrive on fast food, we will be paying for it later in worry and medical bills. It is imperative that we begin teaching our children at a young age to eat well balanced meals. We set the example for our children. If we care to be healthy, we must eat healthy. Our children will follow.

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Breakfast for Two/ Desayuno Para Dos

by Sindy Baldayaque and Alexandra M. Ramirez



Milagros is the youngest, the wild child of the family who doesn't attend school. She has a useless boyfriend and comes home late every night. She has no respect for anyone in her family. On the other hand, Maria is the oldest in the family. She goes to college and has a part time job to support herself. She tries to help her sister, but she comes across as a controlling person.

Milagros returns home at 5 a.m. after spending the night out partying. Her mother wakes up and starts yelling at her. Milagros pushes her mother out of the way. Her mother falls to the ground, which wakes Maria up. (The next morning Maria and Milagros are having breakfast at the table. Maria can't eat her food. She is looking at Milagros.)

Milagros:

What's wrong with you? Why are you looking at me that way?

Maria:

(Still looking at Milagros) You know what you did. And lower your tone; no one is deaf.

Milagros:

(In a sarcastic tone) No, I don't. Enlighten me.

Maria:

Well, "Miss, I Think I'm Better Than Anyone." I know. Tu sabes what you did, you ungrateful child.

Milagros:

(She starts to stand up) Listen I do not want to hear you. Right? I have to go to school. Adios !!!

Maria:

(Pushing Milagros back down) Who are you trying to play? You haven't been in school in the past two years. What the hell are you going to do with your life?

Milagros:

Oh please, shut up. I've been in school for the past two weeks. All I know is I won't be an old, boring person like you.

Maria:

Excuse yourself. I'm in my junior year in college, and I'm working, unlike you. You useless waste of a human being.

Milagros:

Listen, I have no time for your nonsense. Mi tengo que ir. So if you don't have anything good to say, then let me live my damn life and you live yours.

Maria:

(She takes a breath.) If you think you are living your life the best way—that's fine, but leave this house for good. The whole family is tired of your late nights, your dumb ass boyfriends, and your excuses for not working.

Milagros:

(She gets up from her chair) Don't worry. I will be out of your way. I will leave no later than 8:00!!! I'm not coming back. Watch!! My life will be fine.

Maria:

(Without looking at Milagros) Well, it's 8:03.

Milagros:

Adios. Bye (Shuts door behind her)

be dressing like they were born in the sixties still, even though it is 2009. (Erica runs upstairs after that statement)

Christina

Why could she not have been a boy; Lord must you give me such a girl that holds the same fresh lip that I used to have?

(Erica leaves to get on the bus. Christina leaves to go to work.)

(Christina arrives at the house at seven and she starts to cook dinner. Dinner consists of meat loaf, macaroni and cheese, broccoli, and homemade lemon squares.)

Erica

Mommy I am home. You would not believe the day I had, this boy, came and asked me out. I was so happy, so I said yes to go study with him. You have got to be kidding me – meat loaf, broccoli, macaroni and cheese, lemon squares! Do you want me to get fat? I am a vegetarian. I do not eat this artificial guck.

Christina

NO, NO, NO, NO! Erica Anne Foster I have had enough with your hot tamale antics. This is what you'll do, sit down and eat this food. You will just have to pretend this is vegetarian food. And are you sixteen or seventeen?

Erica

No mom I am not sixteen or seventeen. But...(Erica stops in her tracks as her mother gives her that look of death)

Christina

You are not sixteen or older (like I thought because I did birth you). In fact, you're only thirteen. You will not, and I repeat, you will not go on a study date with a boy. The only boy you will go study is one of the authors who is dead in your pretty little text book. (The room immediately gets quiet. Emily is stabbing the meatloaf as if her mother's words pressed against it.)

Erica

May I please be excused?

Christina

Sure, right after your plate is clean from all of those favorite vegetarian foods you like to eat.
(Erica rolls her eyes and sucks her teeth)

Erica

Mom you are making me fat on purpose? It's because I am smaller than you and much prettier than you are. Ha.

Christina

You know what, Erica fine, because you are being a PMS preteen. Go upstairs and starve yourself because I do not know if you want me to go to jail right now or not?

Erica

Why would you go to jail mom?

Christina

(Christina starts to laugh) My sweet, sweet baby I will go to jail because when I was younger your grandmother told this saying every time I gave her lip: I BROUGHT YOU IN THIS WORLD AND I CAN DAMN SURE TAKE YOU OUT.

Erica

Mom on that note, I will be leaving you, right now.

(Christina sits at the table drinking a glass of red wine, and hoping that once Erica turns sixteen she will get better.)

Foundations and Fascinations of Food by Katie Harman

Too many children are becoming overweight or even obese. Parents need to be careful of what their children are consuming on a daily basis. They should be encouraging them to start eating healthy foods as soon as possible, so they can receive the necessary vitamins and nutrients. Our nation has developed a trend of unhealthy eating habits due to the media and its influences. A large percentage of our country has succumbed to the pressures of society and has become greatly influenced by the advertising of fast foods and other unhealthy products. By disguising the foods, children can be enticed to get more variety in their diets. [...]

Statistically, more children are becoming overweight, even before their teenage years. Childhood obesity is very different from adult obesity. Adults can control what goes into their system, whereas children cannot. They do not know what is good or bad for their bodies, and they do not have sensible judgment. As stated in the Greenhaven Press by Mary Eberstadt, "Rising childhood obesity is due to a lack of parental care, particularly from mothers who often work outside the home and no longer monitor their children's eating habits as closely as they once did" (Nakaya). Often, parents feel that fast food is a quick and efficient solution for a hassle-free meal. They will go through the drive-through window on their way home from work or from picking their kids up from school. Parents are contributing to this problem. [...]

These statistics and facts aren't publicized as often as they should be. Parents should really consider that their child, as a toddler or even as a young adult, can develop detrimental health issues in the future if they are not at their "healthy" weight. Children should be given the foods that will help them develop and grow normally. [...]

The trends and patterns of overeating and unhealthy food choices are contributed in great part by the advertisements and the public displays children see every day. According to an article by Annie M. Ochsenhirt, "From a study of households with children aged between 2 and 6, Bolton (1983) found that exposure to food advertising was associated with a small but statistically significant increase in food snacking and caloric intake" (Ochsenhirt). Television has been shown to affect eating habits because of all the food advertisements and commercials. Children see items on the screen and immediately crave that food. [...] For example, if they see a commercial for a new candy or a new flavor of ice cream, they'll ask for it. Some parents tend to give into the situation and let their kids eat anything and everything they want, like sugars and other sweets. One bad habit that parents might often use on their kids is the rewards system. They will use phrases such as, "If you eat your vegetables tonight, you can have dessert." Sayings such as these can put a negative mindset into the child's head. Children will believe that every time they obey or respond to a command, they will receive something in return.

When toddlers are at a certain age, they develop a mindset from their peers and from the media that eating "green" foods or healthy foods is bad. People portray broccoli and spinach as foods that are highly disliked. As a result, some children may refuse to eat certain foods at home. The problem is that force-feeding children might change their eating habits for the worse. There are better ways to get a child to eat specific foods. For one, a parent can try multiple methods of disguising the healthy foods into a regular meal. They could try putting spinach in with pasta and the sauce so that the child can receive the nutrients and, at the same

There are better ways to get a child to eat specific foods. For one, a parent can try multiple methods of disguising the healthy foods into a regular meal.

time, it is not as noticeable. Vegetables can be disguised easily in pasta dishes, soups, or even casseroles. Fruits such as strawberries can be implemented as a dessert. [...] Now even more companies are using that method to attract both parents' and children's interests:

McDonald's sells sliced apples, but with a caramel sauce to enhance their appeal. Kraft Foods has run commercials for salad dressing that feature vegetables displayed prominently and attractively with the dressing poured over them. Nestlé has launched what it labels a better-tasting nutrition bar, something that tastes more like a candy bar. (Goldberg)

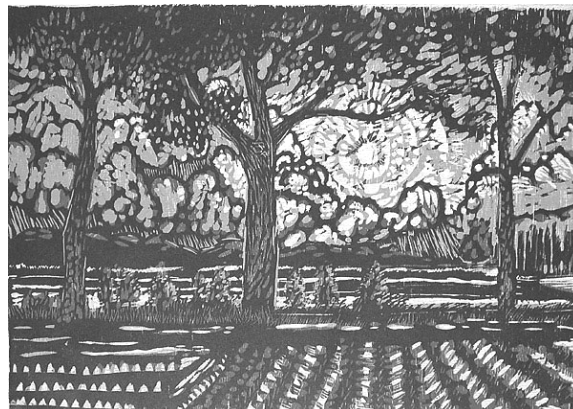
It may be the case that parents simply do not have the time to prepare a special meal every night after work. But a child's health is one of the most important aspects in life. [...] First and foremost, it is a parent's responsibility to feed their children well and make sure they can receive the necessary "fuel" in order to grow into a healthy adult. Obesity is an epidemic in today's society and it's continuing to grow with each and every generation. Families should be aware of their actions when preparing their child's meal. Negative outcomes will occur if we let our children eat whatever they want, whenever they want. There needs to be some structure in a child's life, and food is the best place to start. Only by making healthy lifestyle changes, can we prevent this issue from becoming a part of our daily lives.

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The Beginning Until the End by Felipe Olivo

You were my sunlight, you were my sunset.
You were my girl but now you're just my friend.
I thought of you for many hours on end.
Thinking that you may come in my arms again.
Hopeful that someday you will grasp that
you are more to me than just a friend.
You were my moonlight, you were my shining star.
When away I would miss you from afar.
You would aid me when I felt down.
You would help me out when I had a frown.
You were there for me when things were bad.
We would reminisce about the good times we had.
You were my first love but not my last.
I should move ahead and stop thinking about the past.



Dear Mrs. Freel by Jetmir Vakaj and Kathryn Wallace

31 March, 2009

Dear Mrs. Freel,

First, we want to start by hoping that you are good and everything is going well in your life. As usual, this time I want to tell you about what we had to do for our Freshman Composition class. Our teacher came up with a great idea where we had to collaborate in groups to write a one act play. Kathryn and I decided to work together on this assignment. The good thing about this was that we had an open topic. We were free to pick whatever we wanted to write about, and it was interesting that we had to act out our own play. It was the first time in our lives where we did not feel only like “little” actors, but we also felt like “little” scenario writers.

There was a little issue with the free topic because we did not know what to write about, where the act was going to take place, what topic we would choose, and what the characters were going to be like, and so on. We wrote one play that seemed more like a short part from a novel, and it was mostly a romantic drama. We liked that play, but because we wanted to write a comedy, we had to think about another idea, something that is more likely to happen in real life. We wanted to pick a setting that was easy to settle on and at the same time write something that sounds real, something that people do in real life. We simply “spiced” it up with some jokes so we would achieve our goal to write a short comedy. It was also difficult to decide what these characters would do except for talking, what positions they were going to take, what moves they were going to do, and facial expressions. It was a little bit confusing because the rules to write a play are different from writing an essay. We had to check that we were using the right punctuation and the little things that make the difference between good and bad writing.

Despite these difficulties when we finished writing this play, we were both satisfied with the results; we liked the fact that when we read it. While we were practicing, it really made us laugh, and we think that this is a great achievement.

Sincerely,

Jetmir Vakaj and Kathryn Wallace



The Killer Omelet by Breton Gross and Chris Nelson

Setting: The setting is a well stocked kitchen with the finest culinary devices. Phil cooks in the foreground.

Phil

(Enthusiastically with a smile) Good morning Brian!

Brian

(Grunt) Mornin. (Beat) (Holding his head) What's that good smell?

Phil

(Jovially) Oh I'm just making a small omelet and bacon.

Brian

(Holding his stomach) If I were to try and eat anything after last night I would just die.

Phil

Yeah... you were soooo hammered at the party last night. (Beat)

(Jokingly) I bet you don't even remember going for pizza last night after that epic party.

Brian

We got pizza? (Disbelief) No way, stop pulling my chain.

Phil

You stumbled in there, grabbed about three slices, and then sat down last night.

Brian

I guess I did, and now that you mention it, I will take some bacon and an omelet. (Beat)

Phil

(Flipping food off the stove) Mmmmmmmmmmmh... All done!

Brian

(Holding his head down & walking over) This omelet is delicious... I feel much better.

Phil

You should really watch how much you drink at parties because you blacked out like half the night.

Brian

(Talking with food in his mouth) Dude I ...

Phil

Stop...I can not be responsible for your train wreck nights... It's just that you looked like death last night.

Brian

(Slight pause and holding stomach) Whoa! Ughhhhhhhhhhh!

Phil

(Disbelief) If your gonna hurl don't do it in my kitchen.

Brian

(Runs out of the room in a hurry holding his mouth) I don't feel so gooooooooooooooooooooood!

It's Mine! by James Scott

The wedding ring is a very large part of a wedding. It symbolizes the love felt between a bride and a groom and shows everyone else that they are taken. Before the actual ceremony, the ring acts as a contract between the two. When a man proposes to a woman, he offers her an engagement ring as a symbol that they will be married and if she accepts the ring, she agrees to marry him. However, if the wedding is called off, for whatever reason, the ring should be returned to the man since the engagement did not go through to the end.

Engagement rings have been a part of marriages for hundreds of years. The tradition is thought to have started in Greece. The Greeks gave their “betrothal rings” before marriage. Later on, the Romans began their exchange of engagement rings. These rings would have a key engraved onto it, symbolizing either “the woman's right to access and own half of everything following marriage” or some like to think that “the key may have been a key to her husband's heart” (Charlton 3). When an engagement ring is given, it is given as a symbol of the man’s love for the woman and his intention to be with her forever. Since arranged marriages and betrothals have become less frequent, the ring now represents a contract between the fiancés. [...] If the engagement is broken, the promise is broken, so the ring should go back to the rightful owner, the one who gave the ring originally, and there are many laws nationwide that support this.

There have been many court cases that try to determine who rightfully owns an engagement ring after it has been given. In New Hampshire there cannot be an action, suit, or proceeding brought for such a matter because “a breach of contract to marry does not constitute an injury or wrong recognized by law” (Schrepfer 1). This means that in order to legally recover the ring, a man must “bring an action in equity for unjust enrichment” (1). The court will try to determine if it is fair for the man or the woman to keep the engagement ring. If the situation has it that the woman terminated the engagement, then the man gets the ring returned to him. However, the courts have yet to “specifically address the issue of what should happen if the donor terminates the engagement” (1). In most cases the ring will be returned to the man because he is the one who purchased it.

In some traditions, a family would collect and save money or objects of great value for their daughter’s wedding. This way, when the daughter was finally wed she would have financial backup in case something went wrong after the marriage, such as the death of the husband. This can be compared to the ring that a man purchases for the wedding. The cost of an engagement ring usually adds up to about three months salary, which is a lot of money (Mayntz 1). The purchase of this valuable object could be seen as a type of dowry, a kind of insurance for the married couple in case anything were to go wrong. They will always have the value of the ring if they ever need it. When a marriage does not go through, the woman gets to keep her dowry, so why should the man not be able to keep his ring? [...]

Yes, a man gives his ring to the woman he loves, but he is not really giving it to

Yes, a man gives his ring to the woman he loves, but he is not really giving it to her. It is more like an invitation into his life and for her to become a part of it.

her. It is more like an invitation into his life and for her to become a part of it, by holding onto a part of him forever. The ring is that part of him, and if either person wishes to end the marriage, she should be willing to give up the piece of him that he trusted her to hold. Many engagement rings are also family heirlooms that have been passed down through generations of a family. If this is the case, then the ring should be returned to the family that produced the ring. [...]

People are willing to argue that an engagement ring is a symbol of the man's possession over his bride, and by giving him full ownership of the ring he is really giving himself full ownership of a woman. However, the ring does not symbolize ownership, but it symbolizes their love for each other and the promise that was made between the two. [...]

There are many circumstances where the woman would get to keep the ring. In *The Marshall Case* a man gave another woman an engagement ring while he was still married (Grossman). In that case, it was the woman who was able to keep the ring. Many other conditions can determine if the woman gets to keep the ring, most of them being that the man was the cause of the breakup. New Hampshire's "Statute of Limitation" states that "a party must commence an action within a certain period of time or be barred from bringing an action." If the man does not commence an action during the statute of limitation, the woman will get to keep her ring (Schrepfer 2).

Engagement rings are supposed to be a part of tradition, not another source of an argument. When two people agree to marry, they agree to spend the rest of their lives together. If they cannot even last up to the point of marriage, then the proposal should have never been made. Things do happen though, and problems do surface, and the ring truly does belong to the one who originally bought it.

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Not so Much of a Gift by Joseph Nussbaum

The question of who the engagement ring goes to after a relationship collapses is one which has sparked much debate throughout America. This debate ignites so much tension that it is not easily solved. The problem lies in the interpretation of the word “gift.” According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a gift is “the transference of property by one person to another, voluntarily and without any valuable consideration” (“Gift”). “Valuable consideration” is the essence of an engagement ring; the ring confirms that the woman is accepting to be married. When the engagement ring is given to the fiancé, the ring is a binding agreement for the couple to be married. The engagement ring is not a gift but rather a symbol of marriage. Therefore, the ring should be returned because the proposal was nullified. The woman should be held accountable because, after all, she accepted to be married. Even if it was the soon-to-be groom who broke off the marriage, the ring should be returned because the idea was that the two “lovers” would enter a legal relationship.

The dilemma of the engagement ring is not uncommon in life today. Numerous cases have appeared in court over the dispute of who gets the ring after the engagement falters. One example of this comes in the case of *De Cicco v. Barker* where the court ruled that Barker had to give back the engagement ring because “the promise of marriage wasn't fulfilled, so the ring wasn't hers to keep”(Goldstein G38). Due to the failure of the engagement between the two, the ring was returned, rightfully, because the agreement was terminated. An engagement proposal and an engagement ring are both part of the prerequisites for marriage. Therefore, if the woman or man fails to uphold the agreement of marriage, then the ring must go back to its rightful owner. [...]

Recently, courts have stated that the ring almost always goes back to the buyer, no matter what the circumstances are. The idea is that an engagement ring is a conditional gift; stating that the condition of the agreement, symbolized by the ring, is marriage (Brozan 15). The courts “have ruled that it does not matter who broke the engagement, the donor or the recipient” (Goldstein G38). This shows us that, in most circumstances, courts will give the ring back to its rightful owner, whether it is a man or, uncommonly, a woman.

Engagements break down as a result of poor choices made on both sides of the relationship. The problem with engagements is that they become overly centered on one item, the engagement ring. In America, “when a woman becomes engaged, she will probably receive an engagement ring containing a semiprecious or precious stone” (Otnes & Pleck 61), which is more often than not a diamond. The problem is that the woman expects the engagement ring to be a symbol of love; love has no limits when it comes to spending money. [...]

Many people believe that the ring should stay with the woman, or recipient. Although this point of view is shared by many, it is, however, wrong. True, certain circumstances can render the ring as a gift. Always in court there are exceptions; “if you ask for your sweetie's hand on Christmas or his/her birthday, he/she might be able to



successfully argue in court that the engagement ring doubled as a gift” (Goldstein G38). Unfortunately, the ring is still up to the jurisdiction of the court or judge. The engagement ring can only be considered a gift depending on the day, such as birthdays, Valentine’s Day, or Christmas, when it was given to the recipient. Another argument of the opposing side touches on the word “conditional.” This argument is based on the ring being given to the recipient without anything in mind other than marriage; often the ring receiver considers it a gift. [...]

This argument has become a hot-topic issue in many courts; moreover, this issue has often been resolved with the court giving the ring back to its just owner. Although relationships should never fall to the level of court proceedings, we must accept that, in this day and age, money and possessions are very important. The man and woman both are accountable, in many different ways, for the marriage or relationship failure. Thus, courts are only doing what is in the interest of fairness. The engagement ring is a binding agreement for the couple to be married under most circumstances. [...] The ring should be returned because the proposal has become null and void. Regardless of the reasons, the woman should be held accountable because, after all, she accepted to be married. Even if it was the soon-to-be groom who broke off the marriage, the ring should be returned because the idea was that the two lovers would one day marry.

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Diamond Ring and Property Rights by Xiongwei Li

“But love is blind, and lovers cannot see the pretty follies that themselves commit.”

--William Shakespeare.

After lovers open their eyes, some decisions have to be made, not by them but by the courts. For example, in the article “Reasonable Doubt” (Spilbor), Rosen proposed successfully to Marcoccia when his diamond ring was put on her finger. Things changed; they broke up two months before their wedding. The problem emerged after their departure. Who does this engagement ring belong to when the wedding has been canceled? In this situation, I believe the Marcoccia can keep the ring because it is considered a gift from Rosen.

The crux of the matter here is whether the ring is a gift or not. A gift is defined as “something voluntarily transferred by one person to another without compensation” (“Gift”). In this case, did Marcoccia force Rosen to give her the ring? No. Did Rosen ask Marcoccia for anything such as money as reciproca- tion? No. Rosen asked Marcoccia if she would marry him. Marcoccia said yes, and the ring was put on her finger as a gift. Did they sign a contract or make a verbal commitment that defined the ring as conditional? No. The property of the ring here is the same as the flowers that Rosen gave to Marcoccia on Valentine’s Day. It is the embodiment of his love. Those flowers did wither, but they are still considered a gift. It does not matter how much this gift is worth because love cannot be evaluated by economic standards. If it can, I love my girlfriend more now just because of inflation. Not only me but also the courts have the same ideas. “Courts generally treat the engagement ring as a gift, from the donor (the person who gave the ring) to the donee (the person who received it) (“Returning”). In our case, Marcoc- cia did not cheat on Rosen, so it is a no-fault broken engagement. Also, the courts’ decisions are based on where the engagement takes place. Different states have different regulations and concepts of what constitutes a “gift.” For example, Montana and Kansas look at the engagement ring as an unconditional gift, and it does not need to be given back (Spilbor). Another factor that can affect the verdict is the date when the engagement happened. If it happens during a national holiday such as Labor Day, it is defined as a gift (Spilbor). Both factors are not mentioned in the document, so it is negligible in this case.

Some people argue that even though the ring is a gift, it is a conditional gift. It means it does not become a final gift until Rosen and Marcoccia are married in this case. However, Rosen did not mention about such a “rule” when he put the ring on Marcoccia’s finger. Some people might say it is implied. As a result, they think Rosen has the right to get the ring back because of the “implied” commitment.

Let us put it this way. I used my credit card to buy my ex-girlfriend a gold necklace three years ago. Based on Sigmund Freud, the primary purpose of any human activity is having sex with others (Freud). I assumed my asking for sexual intercourse was implied and accepted since the moment she took that necklace from me. Unfortunately, we broke up after several months because she was abstinent. Do I have the right to get the gold necklace back just as the man should get his diamond ring back? Besides, I am still paying for that gold necklace every month. The answer is no. I cannot have it back because it is considered a gift. There is no conditional gift between lovers if they do not point it out in the first place. People assume that Marcoccia understood what was behind that ring, but from a woman’s point of view, she might perceive the meaning of the ring as the acceptance of the proposal. It does not



have to be the completion of the marriage ceremony. Everyone has different concepts about engagement rings. It is essential to have an understanding between lovers, especially when this type of case takes place in the America, where people are from all over the world. There are culture differences between people. In my country, China, we do not even have the concept of engagement, and only cheapskates ask their ex-girlfriends to return gifts. Therefore, I believe that because Rosen did not reveal the meaning of this engagement ring, it is understandable that Marcoccia took it as a gift.

All in all, the diamond ring belongs to Marcoccia. It is a gift, which Rosen cannot get back. Even though Marcoccia and Rosen will not get married, this diamond ring is something Marcoccia can use to reminisce about her youth when she becomes a wrinkled old woman. This diamond ring episode is also a lesson Rosen has to learn in order to spend his life with the right one.

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For How Long Is It Going to be Your Secret? by Marleny Cabral and Stefanie Mignone

(Sofia and her adopted sister, Barbara, come from a wealthy family. They have just returned from the cemetery after bringing flowers to their mother's grave. Sofia is putting her coat in the closet, and Barbara is watching the big screen plasma television).

Sofia

Barbara you know mom was sick, but not so sick to die so soon.

Barbara

(Watching the TV) I know. But what's the big deal? She is dead, and there is nothing we can do about it.

Sofia

(Walking towards her) Why do you talk so calmly like you didn't care about her?

Barbara

People live and people die. That's how the world works.

Sofia

(Sitting next to her) I know you didn't love her as much as I did. You pretended to love her because of her money.

Barbara

(She gives a dirty look at Sofia) What are you talking about? Momma gave me all I needed to have a good life. How dare you say that?

Sofia

You know what I am talking about, so don't look at me like that. I know what happened the night before her death.

Barbara

(Not taking her eyes away from the TV) I know, too.

Sofia

(Giving her a look) I'm sure you do, and you know it perfectly. You know it even better than me.

Barbara

(Getting up from the sofa and raising her voice) Are you trying to insinuate that I have anything to do with her death? You knew she was very sick, and she was going to die anyway.

Sofia

(Getting up from the sofa) Don't talk to me with that tone. I haven't said anything. You said it all.

Barbara

(Pointing to herself and angry) Me!!!! I haven't said a word. I'm leaving. I hate to talk about this.

Sofia

(Barbara goes to the door and Sofia stops her. Sofia tries to smooth things over) Barbara, sister don't be so silly; let's not argue about her death because as you said she is not important anymore.

Barbara

(She smiles at her and goes back to the sofa) Agreed. (In a low voice so Sofia cannot hear) Finally, I'm going to get that money.

Sofia

(Sofia reaches for her coat) You know mom talked to me while I was sleeping, and she told me the whole truth.

Barbara

(Giving Sofia a suspicious look and attitude) What now? About what?

Sofia

(Going to the door) Don't worry about it. She just told me that her killer is going to suffer in hell.

Barbara

I don't mind the heat.

(Sofia leaves and Barbara stays watching TV with a concerned face).



Invasion of the Oreo Cookies by Estanler Aleman and Jessica Pazmino

(Oscar and Isabel both bump into each other while grocery shopping at the Western Beef Supermarket)

Isabel

(Hesitating, she taps Oscar on the shoulder) Hey! Oscar how are you doing?

Oscar

(Slowly turns and removes his headphones from his ears) Oh hey, I haven't seen you in so long. How have you been?

Isabel

(Surprised) I've been doing good, but it's a surprise to see you in the super market.

Oscar

(They both walk forward with their shopping carts) Well, I am surprised myself because it is crazy to see you. It's been 3 years now since the last time we chilled. When did you come back from Japan?

Isabel

Well to be honest, I got here yesterday, and I am leaving tomorrow again. I am here doing some last minute food shopping to take back with me to Japan. How about you? What are you doing here?

Oscar

(Laughing) Umm...well, I am just here to buy some Oreos.

Isabel

Have you tried the new Golden Oreos? They taste so delicious and they are better than the original Oreos.

Oscar

Wow! Hold up... What are you talking about? I know for a fact that you cannot be serious right now. The original Oreos are the best chocolate sandwich cookies created in the world.

Isabel

(Astonished) Hello, F.Y.I... The Golden Oreos are in the book of world records for the most requested Oreo flavor by cookie selling companies—

Oscar

(Interrupting Isabel and raising his voice) Wow! You need to relax because first off, those aren't even real Oreos, because Oreos are chocolate sandwich cookies and your golden Oreo cookies taste the same as any regular vanilla cookie.

Isabel

(Pulling Oscar by his sleeve, she takes him to the Oreo cookie section) Look at the package. Even the package looks better than yours. It's more eye catching than your common blue chocolate Oreo package.

Oscar

(Angry) Oh God! Are you serious? Your Oreo cookie package has the same color as all the other regular cookie packages.

Isabel

(Reaching for a Golden Oreo cookie package and ripping the package open, she stuffs one into Oscar's mouth) It doesn't matter the color of the package or cookie, just taste it.

Oscar

(Reaching for a Chocolate Oreo cookie package and ripping the package open to stuff a chocolate cookie into Isabel's mouth) Taste the chocolate cookie now, and think about it before you judge, dummy!

(Beat.)

(For a moment they both chew away)

Isabel

(Smiling) Oh I think I might just like this cookie. Umm... it is really good.

Oscar

(Stuffing his face) Oh My God, I think I found gold. I love it.

(Oscar and Isabel both leave the supermarket happy and highly satisfied. They leave with the opposite type of Oreo cookies that they originally went to buy at the Western Beef Supermarket)

The Story Behind the Soccer Ball

by Ovgu Ture & Julian de la Rua

(A man is sitting on a chair in the yard of a house and reading his newspaper. Suddenly his little daughter runs towards him with a soccer ball in her hands)

Kid

(With an excited voice) Daddy, Daddy let's play soccer! Daddy; please, please, please, please.....

Dad

(He takes down his newspaper and looks at his daughter with a smile on her face) Oh, kid slow down a little bit. You want to play soccer?

Kid

Yes Dad, why not? I already know how to play!

Dad

(Smiles very calmly) Well, if you say so, let's play then, but hmm (thinks) this is going to be our first time playing soccer together, what about... ?

Kid

What about you be the goalkeeper and I be the striker? (Giggles and puts the ball on the ground.

Dad

(Glances at his daughter) Ok, whatever you want, whatever you want...

Kid

(She kicks the ball and says) Here it comes Dad, be careful!

Dad

(Catches the ball) Seems like you could not make a goal your first time Kid, do you want to try one more time?

Kid

Of course Dad! I will beat you! (She kicks the ball again)

Dad

(He pretends he cannot catch the ball) Oh no!

Kid

(Laughs) Gooooooooaaaaallllllllllll! See Dad, I told you that I was good at it!

Dad

(Laughs) Yes, you are really good at it. Alright let me kick it now, so you try to catch.

Kid

Sure! Let's do it

Dad

(He kicks the ball) here it comes.

Kid

(Sadly) Oh no, you made the goal, so you beat me.

Dad

(Laughs and says) Well, Kid I am more experienced than you but when you reach my age I think you will be able to do that.

Empty to Fulfilled by Sharely Then and Liana Gabel

(Julia is a very famous super model, who has had a busy day traveling and arrives at the Trump Hotel in New York City. She enters the room alone, as she does every night, looking forward to, yet dreading, the ritual that is about to take place. She throws her suitcases on the floor and runs to the phone to call room service.)

Julia

Hello, is this room service? Yes? Perfect. I'm having a few visitors drop by. I'm not quite sure what they would prefer so I would like to order everything on the menu for tonight.

Ms. Sanchez

(Sounds of someone knocking on the door) Room service?! Hey Honey, here you go—the filet mignon is going to take a little while, but I'll be right up with that for you, ok?

Julia

(Frantically opens the door, and smiles a fake smile) Oh yea, that's fine. Thank you, my guests will be arriving soon, I expect someone's going to want that filet.

Ms. Sanchez

(Suspiciously) Alright honey, I'll see you soon.

Julia

(Julia rushes to close the door, and eagerly takes the cart of food to her bed and surrounds herself with every platter. Sitting in the middle of the bed.) Finally! (as she digs in)

Ms. Sanchez

(Knocks on the door three times and after no response, she comes in, sees Julia bingeing.)

Ay dios mio! Is this is the get together you were going to have? What are you doing?

Julia

(Wiping the sauce off her face, she grabs the plates from Ms. Sanchez.) Give me that! That will be all. Thank you.

Ms. Sanchez

You can have that but I'm not going anywhere. You are causing harm to yourself, and I'm not going to let you do this. You know it's my job to report this.

Julia

(Crying) You wouldn't dare! You don't care! It is none of your business! This is nobody's business! Go away!

Ms. Sanchez

I got a better idea, what I'm going to do is stay here with you. Since you don't want everybody to find out what you were planning on doing, I'm sure you won't be calling anyone soon. (Smiles)

Julia

(Frustrated and embarrassed) I need my privacy! Please, I just want to go to bed.

Ms. Sanchez

Sure... You know what I see? A beautiful girl who has fallen into such a horrible path; this is a disease and you need to get help honey. Are you going to live the rest of your life, sitting in an empty hotel room, bingeing and purging? I know that that was what you were going to do. You have so much to live for; you are young, beautiful and full of potential. Help yourself.

Julia

(Stands up) It is not that easy, I have lived my whole life having to please everybody, when I eat, I'm pleasing myself! I need it! It's the only thing in my life that I can control.

Ms. Sanchez

Do you please yourself when you have to throw up out of fear of what a few calories might do? No, please nina, tell me you will get some help. I know of a place you could go to. There are cameras all over this floor. I'll be looking all night and I'll meet you bright and early tomorrow. You are going to better your life; and you are going to start tomorrow. Get some sleep; I know you are going to need it. (starts to up all the food clean)

Julia

(Gives up and plops herself on the bed.) Fine.

Ms. Sanchez

Good night.

Julia

Umm, Ms. Sanchez right?

Ms. Sanchez

Yes.

Julia

Thank you.

Ms. Sanchez

(Smiles) You're welcome.

As I Stand Here by Winnie Leonardo-Pereira



As I stand in the quad between Old Main and College Hall awaiting the conferment of my college diploma, I think about where I am going and where I have been. The past five years have been full of ups and downs, but I am proud of what I have accomplished. Choosing a major wasn't easy, and it took a lot of thinking to learn more about myself and about what I wanted to pursue as a career. I did it though, and I am glad I chose to study international relations. I might have been skeptical at first, but after a while I was certain I had picked the right field of study for me. It will certainly allow me to find a job related to human rights and hopefully lead me to my dream job: working for

a major non- governmental organization or the UN.

Going to graduate school is also in my plans although I haven't decided if that is something I should do right away. Working to gain some experience before I start my studies again seems like the best idea. (Not to mention that it will look good on my resume once I apply to graduate schools.) Of course I dream of going to Harvard or Columbia, and I will apply there just in case, but I am a little more realistic than that. I see myself going to a good grad school, but probably not an Ivy League, and getting a master's in something to do with politics and human right. I always thought of myself as an academic person, so stopping at a master's is not in my plans. I hope to get a doctorate.

Being here makes me think I am finally becoming a full adult. Going away to college was a big step, and along with it came more responsibilities that I had to face. Now, however, I am being let into the world with an education and the responsibility of not only finding a job but starting a career that hopefully will be successful. Later will come the pressures to get married, have children ... it's a lot for a graduating student to worry about. For now, though, I will leave those worries for later and enjoy my graduation, my name is about to be called.

The Brightest Star by Levi Vergas



A natural magnet to many eyes, Ariel Theresa Sloan draws attention through her looks, elegant style, and uniqueness. She was born in the Bronx, but has moved to Brooklyn and Long Island as well throughout her life. She enjoyed the change in location because she is open to new experiences. Having three sisters and two brothers is a task on its own, yet Ariel maintains a good relationship with her siblings and is very close to her younger brother Christian. Ariel's best friend, who is also known as her mother, is very easy to talk to and get along with. Her father, on the other hand, is difficult to approach, tends to be overprotective, and demands to be respected. Both of her grandmothers had a great influence on her education since they made her watch educational children's programs when she was a child. Ariel claims, "My grandma and NaNa are the reason I got into AP classes." In her high school, she was in the orchestra and played the violin. She also performed in the musical *Aida* and was a great cheerleader back in her day. Many consider Ariel a natural superstar as she never shows any signs of being nervous and was also a key contributor to the group that

won the lip syncing contest during summer orientation at SUNY New Paltz. As anyone with eyes can see, Ariel is very unique and is very determined to make the best of her education here at New Paltz.

Who's That Boy? By Ariel Sloan

"Who is that?" "What is he mixed with?" These are the questions that usually boggle people's minds when they see this unfamiliar face walking around campus. He goes by the name of Levi Luis Vergas, and no one would ever guess that this 5'8 light-brown-eyed freshman was half Puerto Rican and half British. He's usually mistaken as being Italian. Originally from Queens, he was raised in a single parent home by his mother. It wasn't easy; however, the struggles and obstacles that he had to overcome helped shape him into the young man he is today. His strong morals and free spirit weren't just obtained from the home. Levi attended St. Agnes High School in Ozone Park, where he was an active member in the Habitat for Humanity Organization and the captain of his varsity volleyball team, two accomplishments of which he is very proud. These achievements were among of many reasons why Levi was accepted by SUNY New Paltz, which was one of his top college choices. Even though Levi is entering as undecided about his major, he is working very hard and staying focused and will choose a major in the near future.



Unfinished Business by Joseph Nussbaum and Danielle Ladson

(Danielle and Joe's mother have told them to clean the house before she comes home from work. Danielle enters the house after an exhausting dance practice half-an-hour before their mother is expected home. Joe is talking on the phone and eating out of the pizza box while watching the football game on television.)

Joe

(Talking excitedly on the phone to his friend Larry) Wow, did you see that play Larry!!!

Danielle

(Entering the house) Joe, WHY ISN'T THIS LIVING ROOM CLEAN?

Joe

(Startled) Huh?

Danielle

(Walking towards the kitchen while dropping her gear on the couch)

(Surprised) THE KITCHEN TOO?

Joe

(Hanging up the phone) Larry, I got to go, Mr. Miyagi's calling me. I'll call you back in like 10 minutes.

Danielle

(Arms Crossed, Stressing Voice) 10 MINUTES?! IN 10 MINUTES THIS LIVING ROOM BETTER BE CLEAN

Joe

Well I can't have this place clean in ten minutes. (Doubtful) That's impossible.

Danielle

YOU HAD ALL DAY TO CLEAN THIS HOUSE, WHAT WERE YOU DOING ALL DAY?

Joe

(Rises up from the couch) Well, what about your side of the house? I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU DO ANYTHING YET!

Danielle

(Arguing) That's because you were sleeping all day.

Joe

(Picking up the box and food remains on the couch) I wasn't sleeping all day; I had more important things to do today.

Danielle

And don't worry about what I have to do; I--

Joe

And why is that?

Danielle

(Pointing towards the bathroom) Because I already cleaned the bathroom and mopped the floors.

Joe

Well I'll have it done before Mom gets here.

Danielle

Well you know you're on your own...(Brief laugh) I'm going to laugh if Mom walks through that door--

(The door opens...)

The End

The Cost by Felice Bernabo

In an instant
Our lives were turned upside down
By one single mistake

One mistake that cost others
To turn their backs on us
And walk away

They didn't want to see us
They didn't want to hear us

One mistake that cost us
The trust and love
Of others

Who turned their backs
And walked away

One single mistake
That we never realized
Could cause this much pain
This much hurt

We never realized
That our one mistake

Would cost us our lives



To My Father by Dannilda Correa

“My lightest touch leaves blue prints bruises on your mind”

-Marge Pierge

Your words are spoken softly.
I miss you now.
I would like to have you beside me
Saying some sort of story.

I am thinking of you
And I want to cry so hard.
The distance has made a difference,
That I barely suffer, because for a long time
I don't see you.

I remember your face,
But I am curious at least,
To know if it is still exactly the same
But I have doubts.

I hear the sound of your voice inside my head
From the moment when you are in your house
With your wife
And your beautiful new born baby,
And I am here in bed,

Hearing your sweet voice on the phone,
Saying those beautiful words
That you don't know
That I love so much:
“Hello My Little Queen.”



Character Monologues by Roxana Ancher and Felice Bernabo

Note: This monologue is in the voice of the mothers in the short story “The Stolen Party” by Liliana Hecker. The first mother is the upper-class mother of Luciana, the girl who is having the birthday party. The second is in the voice of the family’s maid and the mother of Rosaura, the story’s protagonist.



Luciana's Mother:

This party has been such a great success. I am so glad that Rosaura is here to help since she is a child she doesn't even seem like an overbearing employee. She seems to get along with children. I think I will give her some money after the party; she truly deserves it for all the help she has been giving. Luciana was so smart for having her come help at the party. They always do get along. Ah, she can even manage the jug of juice, for being so helpful like that I will definitely give her an extra dollar for that. She was even helpful with the cake and the magician! I hope she appreciates the money. Oh, oh now what did I do wrong?

Rosaura's Mother:

Every day I cook and clean for these rich bastards. We have nothing in common with this family. Why does my daughter believe that we can be friends with them, she's retarded. And a monkey at a party, how can she believe that? Everyone knows that rich people are liars. If Rosaura must go to this party, I should make her dress up really nice. I don't want her to dress differently from the wealthy people. If anyone spots her out of the group and asks her who she is, she must respond by saying “the daughter of the employee and proud of it.” But these stupid little rich kids won't bother her with all their questions. While everyone is enjoying themselves at the party, I have to be upstairs tidying up the place. At the end of it all Rosaura explains to me about how much fun she had at the party with the ugly monkey. While all the kids receive yoyos and bows, Rosaura

Journal: Character Analysis

by Alex Cruz, Dannilda Correa, and Tom Brown

Characters: Wangero/Dee (the older daughter from “Everyday Use” by Alice Walker) and Sam (from “The Son from America” by Isaac Bashevis Singer Note: Their mothers appear in the next play on pages 35 and 36.

It is 7:45 p.m. and Wangero’s and Sam's planes have landed.

Sam exits the airplane, retrieves his luggage at baggage claim, and makes his way to the train station. He had just finish visiting his parents in Lentshin. Tired and hungry from his flight, he takes a quick stop at one of the stores at the airport. He removes his hat and coat and places them on the empty chair next to the one he was occupying. Looking at the menu, he decided to order a medium sized cup of latte with some coffee cake.

Finishing his last piece of coffee cake, he gets up, puts on his coat and hat and starts walking towards the train station. While walking, he sees a woman with fine curly hair streaming down her back, a nice dress showing her beautiful shiny legs beneath her pea coat that looks entirely new. She is not alone though. A man is next to her, but it seems they are saying their goodbyes. "How cute," Sam thinks as he walks past them.

20 Minutes Before

Wangero exits the plane still frustrated, "Maggie can't appreciate those quilts!" Wangero storms her way to the baggage claim, retrieves her luggage, and storms towards the train station. Asalamalakim grabs Wangero to slow her down.

"Stop making a scene here! I understand you wanted those quilts. Just calm down. I'll buy you better ones!" Asalamalakim pleads.

"Fine! And do you mind getting me a slice of pizza?" Wangero asks.

Asalamalakim rolls his eyes, but smiles at her at the same time. They both eat pizza together and walk closer to the train station. They stop to say their goodbyes. Asalamalakim points at a man who is walking by, tall with a hat and coat covered in fur.

"Imagine your mother seeing someone like that!" Asalamalakim says giggling.

Wangero smiles, says her final goodbyes, and heads towards the train station.

Getting on the Train to New York

Sam enters the train and starts looking for a seat while standing near the door. "Please stand clear of the doors." The train is ready to leave. Before Sam moves to grab a seat, Wangero runs into the train before the door close, causing her to collide with Sam and making them fall to the other side of the train.

Sam: (Getting up from the incident) Are you alright? (The doors of the train closes).

Wangero: (smiling, raising her face to look at the stranger) Yes, I'm alright. Thank You. Sorry! I was rushing to catch this train (now nervous).

Sam: Don't worry! No one is hurt (smiling back), but you have to be careful.

Wangero: I know. I was just saying goodbye to someone and lost track of time.

Sam: Ah I see. Excuse my manners, I didn't introduce myself. My name is Sam. What's your name?

Wangero: Wangero. (They both start walking from the front of the door to the empty seats.)

Sam: Nice to meet you. You know Wangero (struggling a little to pronounce the name), I've never heard of your name.

Wangero: (smiling) Well yes. "It may sound a little awkward at first," but you can get used to it. To be honest, I changed my name from Dee to Wangero a few months ago.

Sam: That's interesting! May I ask why?

Wangero: It's a long story.

Sam: Are you getting off soon?

Wangero: I have a few more stops to go. Are you from around here?

Sam: Yes, but I am originally from Lentchin, Poland. I moved to America when I was fifteen years old, and I have been living here since then. What about you? Are you from the city?

Wangero: Not really. I grew up in the country side, but then moved to a more suburban area. I live close to the city.

Sam: That's interesting. Why did you decide to move?

Wangero: Well, my mother was raised in the country and raised us there. I have always wanted to go explore and see what was outside of the country. I really wanted to get an education, you know? My mother continues to live in the country, and I now I know that I'm not really a country person.

Sam: I understand. Education is important.

Wangero: I go to visit her once in a while. She doesn't mind living there because she's used to it. (Thinking deeply while speaking, and raising her tone a little) But I think if she had gotten an education, and also learned about her roots, maybe she would have wanted to move out.

Sam: I understand. I lived in a small village with my parents, but then I decided to move to the United States. I didn't want to grow up in a small town filled with chickens and cows.

Wangero: Have you gone back?

Sam: Yes. I just came from there visiting my parents. I went to shower my parents and the village with money and gifts. In addition to my gifts, I brought money and various gifts to the village from the Lentshin Jewish Society in New York that I am a part of. (As if he was almost amazed) But they did not seem interested in it at all. I don't understand! They think that they have everything that they will ever need. It is not like us, here in America. They don't care about money, fancy houses, traveling or eating fancy foods. They want nothing (looking out the window).

Wangero: That sounds like my mother, but it seems you're dealing with more than just one person. I just don't get it! (getting frustrated now). Why don't parents just open their eyes and see that there's more to life than just the "average" living that they are use to.

Sam: I wish I could understand also. I tried! (agreeing with Wangero) I send the money all the time and they just gave it back to me. I offered to rebuild their synagogue and they say, "It's big enough."

Wangero: At least someone understands! (all excited)

Stranger: (laughs out loud)

Sam: Excuse me. What's the meaning behind your laughter?

Stranger: You both blame your parents for staying accustomed to their way of living? How pathetic.

Sam & Wangero: (at the same time) What do you mean?

Stranger: Your parents are already accustomed to living the way they do. They don't need money or need to go exploring. They just want to enjoy life how it used to be, without the need of money, items, and luxury. They want peace and to keep their memories. They love their simple ways of life. Maybe it is you two who need to open your eyes.

Sam and Wangero are astonished by what the stranger has said.

Stranger: Well you two. This is my stop. May we meet again one day. (The stranger leaves.)

Wangero: Well that was shocking.

Sam: This world is full of surprises, but perhaps he was right.

Wangero: I know, that's why it's so shocking.

Sam: I guess we got our answer.

Journal: Character Analysis

by Stephanie Brauchler, Vinny Cucolo, & Dan Blyskal

Characters: Mama (the mother from “Everyday Use” by Alice Walker) and Berlcha (the mother from “The Son from America” by Isaac Bashevis Singer.) Note: Their children appear in the previous play on pages 33 and 34.

Berlcha and Mama are standing in line waiting to purchase a computer. Berlcha turns to Mama and the following conversation happens:

Berlcha: I am from a very poor town with little internet access. I am going to purchase a computer for my whole town to use. Do you have any suggestions?

Mama: Why are you buying a computer if you're not going to use it?

Berlcha: I am buying a computer to e-mail my son because he lives in America while I live in Russia.

Mama: I suggest something along the lines that I am getting my daughter, since she is in college and I always wanted to give her something she would appreciate. I knew she was grateful when, "we raised the money...to send her to Augusta to school" (Walker 117), and she would be as grateful for her new computer.

Berlcha: If you don't mind me asking, what is your daughter like?

Mama: She has always been the daughter of mine to go out and has never really appreciated our family values. However, since she has come back from college, she has changed. She talks down to me and the rest of my family as if we don't know our own family history, and she knows everything. For example, she came back from school and changed her name from “Dee” to “Wangero.” Her reasoning was, "I couldn't bear it any longer being named after the people who oppress me" (Walker 118).

Berlcha: My son is kind of like your daughter. We haven't seen him in forty years. He came back from America a millionaire and talks of nothing but how America is. It is as if he has no idea what our family has been through; being driven out of Russia into Poland.

Mama: When my daughter came back from college, all she talked about were her African roots. She was completely clueless that most of our family history was actually in the United States, unlike my other daughter Maggie who knows our family values.

Berlcha: I am glad at least one of your daughters understands the value of family; sometimes I feel as if my son has no concept of how we live. He is completely Americanized.

Mama: Yes, it is nice; however, it is not enough. Maggie is so involved and she cares about our family's past history. Dee, however, is difficult. She doesn't understand the historical context behind the quilts or the butter churner. All she sees are decorations rather than history.

As these two women walk out of the computer store, computers in hand, they realize how much they have in common and walk towards the coffee shop where they sit and talk about their families. Sitting in the coffee shop the following conversation happens:

Berlcha: My son talks about how he is now a millionaire. He doesn't realize that money isn't an issue where we live.

Mama: Dee came home and talked about, "the fact that we still used the benches her daddy made for the table when we couldn't afford to buy chairs" (Walker 119). She doesn't realize that the benches hold sentimental value to our family.

Berlcha: I wish Sam would not send us anymore money and just come home. As a family we do not need the money; we just want Sam back to be a family again. I do not understand why he thinks it's not ok to come home and be with his family.

Mama: Maggie and Dee are opposites when it comes to how they think about their heritage. Maggie loves her family and her family's history while Dee only cares about the materialistic side of it. She has no concept of her family's history and why they are the way they are.

Berlcha: I do not understand why our kids try to make it seem that we have nothing and they have everything. I wish Sam could get it through his head that all we want is him back at home. We all know that he is rich and that is good for him, but the family would rather he be at home with the family rather than making millions of dollars.

After the two women drank their coffee they had the following conversation:

Mama: I just wanted to let you know that it has been a great pleasure meeting you this evening. I was glad that we could discuss about how we want our children to just be with us.

Berlcha: It was a pleasure to meet you also. I am glad that we had this conversation about our kids. I now realize that I am not the only person dealing with a child who forgot where they came from. I hope we will see each other sometime soon.

Mama: OK then I will see you later. Bye

The Soccer Tutor by Damion Herring

“Number five, Stephen Harris, scores a goal early in the first half for the University of Miami,” the announcer yelled. I could not believe my eyes; I was watching my best friend play soccer on national television. There he was on ESPN running around the huge field in his red cleats that he had brought from back home. Although he was the shortest player on the field, I could recognize him from the way he danced around the field so vividly. I had spent my whole senior year of high school with Stephen, both as a friend and a tutor, helping him accomplish his dream of playing Division One soccer and maybe one day making it to the big leagues. I had done a good deed, and I was proud of both of our accomplishments. Stephen wanted to achieve his goal of a better life, and once I had helped him achieve the first step toward his goal, it felt so good.

Stephen grew up in Trinidad and moved to America when he was seventeen years old. He was only about five foot tall and had a slightly dark complexion. Always wearing bright colors and a Trinidadian flag around his neck made him stand out in a crowd. We first met in our senior year through some of my other friends. [...] He would tell me stories about his past life in Trinidad, which had been filled with hardship. During his youth in Trinidad, all he had engaged in involved drugs and violence. Not only was his hometown very poor, but it also had one of the top murder rates in the world. [...] Glad to be in America, he wanted to change from his old ways and to be successful. He would tell me about his dreams of making it to the big leagues and how he wanted to represent his country playing soccer in the Olympics. I believed in Stephen and always encouraged him. [...]

But Stephen’s patois was stronger than his English, and it made his writing skills horrible. Not only was English class hard for him, the fact that he was from Trinidad stopped him from doing well in other subjects. In Trinidad he had hardly gone to school because education was a choice rather than an obligation. Not only was he having a hard time adapting to American school work, but he also had a hard time adapting to his new way of living, which involved discipline. When it came to school he just couldn’t cut it, and it looked like his grades would be the only thing stopping him from accomplishing his goals.

As his friend, I felt it was my duty to help Stephen graduate. I could not graduate without him. He wanted to succeed and move on, forgetting about his rough past back home. I had been through a similar situation, and I had known how academic failure felt. I was making my way out of my situation, and I wanted to make sure that Stephen would too. I soon began to work with Stephen on his writing skills. [...]

By mid May, Stephen was comfortably passing all his classes. With three quarters of his grades in the eighties or higher, he was guaranteed to graduate in June, and his dreams looked much closer. There was just one more obstacle that was in our way. Stephen was told by a coach that that he had to receive at least a 750 on his SAT’s to play a Division One sport. [...] I began to stay up all night finding different ways of helping him better understand the question format on the SAT’s. I was even fired from my job because I took off the entire week to make sure he was ready for the test. After the test, Stephen was very bummed out. He felt that the test had been hard and he thought that he had failed. A month later the results were in. Not only did he pass with the 750 needed, but his score had jumped one thousand points from the last time he had taken the test.

When I think about how far Stephen came, it brings much happiness to me. Now, seeing him play on television is so amazing. Not only did I help change his life, but I set down a foundation. [...] I taught him many things and he also taught me new things as well. He taught me that I am a good teacher, and I have so much to offer others. Through this experience I have learned that I am always committed to a project and I will never let anything get in my way. Helping others accomplish their goals feels better than when I do something myself. In the future I want to continue helping others in similar situations, as both a teacher and as a friend.

More than 0 Degrees by Jinnele Manohar

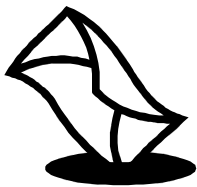
“You can yoga it out. You can yoga it out”
 I tell myself and repeat it in my mind
 For two times, on each side
 Ten to the right, ten to the left, ten to the right and then another to the left
 Standing in my tree pose, while counting my seconds
 I inhale big gulps of breath and feel myself lengthening
 But then I exhale, resting my chest, to feel my body shortening again
 It brings back my memories of the accident when I was seven
 I had no complaints to the paramedic
 Heavy textbooks made the situation worse



Now I'm weak, tired, heavy, and mush
 This feeling I got is not good nor is it normal
 But neither is it unique or one of a kind
 3 out of 100 is what my research told me
 But back in 2006, it took two doctors to figure out that I wasn't lying
 And it took several complaints to get some attention
 I felt so imperfect while searching for answers
 So, I took two in-depth scans under a machine for an hour for each of them,
 I was left to wonder and think about what my life was coming to
 I was dying from radiation and annoyance from the sounds of the machine
 I would picture myself under that machine for many days until my results
 Such an imperfect life and body I would think to myself
 Till the results showed the truth
 “A knot,” that's what the pediatric doctor said.
 Two in-depth scan, under a machine for an hour each
 It showed a knot, a bulge between my plate disks

I started my research to find out about the 3 out of 100 population
 In my findings, I found I was twisted up in a knot
 I was observed by a naked eye,
 To find that my spinal cord was twisted up in a knot
 Back to the pediatric doctor I went
 “Oooh” and “aaah” they felt my pain
 I was put back in radiation
 Naked under a polka dotted Doshi Diagnostic robe
 Second sets of scans, an X-ray while standing up and holding in my deep breaths
 This time the results showed a “C” curve
 I was braced immediately, but not cured
 The years of attention I needed happened in less than a month
 My soon to be obvious deformity caused pain and loss of physical strength
 And now I am amongst the people
 I am diagnosed with the common sideways curve
 Scoliosis

Letter 6 by Michelle Sosa



Dear Mrs. Freel,

My parents are the type of parents who never offered a reason as to why it was I had to do anything they demanded. It was never okay for me to question their authority; instead, that would call for a punishment. If I was asked to lower my music, I was not given a reason why. This is something that I plan on changing in my household if I ever decide to bless my life with children.

I do not want to be that parent. I want to seem more approachable to my children rather than seem like this God-like figure who could never be questioned. I actually want to spark curiosity in my kids, so much that all they would do is ask questions all day long. And why wouldn't I? This world is in need of curious minds.

Another thing that I did not like much about my parents was the fact that they were too strict with me. I was never allowed outside my apartment without one of my parents nagging in my ear. What happens with children like these is that once given a little freedom they run loose; my parents can vouch for that. I want my children to have enough freedom to not feel overprotected, like I did, but not so much so that they run wild in the streets at all times. There are some considerations that need to be taken into account but the child needs to feel like s/he has enough space to be her/his own person.

I believe meals are the perfect time to start up conversations. In my family, meal times were equivalent to television watching time. We would all go into the kitchen, get out plates, and walk right back out and into the living room where each would sit on a couch and eat while watching television. We were too busy watching T.V. to acknowledge each other's presence and, therefore, never spoke. I want meal times to be sharing time, a time when family members can talk about their day with one another. These, I believe are the things that I would change a bit. I mean, I believe I turned out to be a good person, so my parents must have done things right.

Sincerely,

Michelle Sosa

High School Bus Bullies by Kelsey Russell

“It’s not enough to be our best selves; we have to be Gandhi. And yet when we study the biographies of our heroes, we learn that they spent years in preparation doing tiny, decent things before one historical moment propelled them to center stage” (Goska 3). As Goska would say, all it takes is one person to do the one small act. [...]

In my high school, it seemed that a student was either the cool kid or the kid being picked on by the cooler kids. I grew up in a rural town where many of the students took the bus until they were sophomores and maybe even juniors. Therefore, it seemed that the main place where kids got picked on was the bus. The bus was segregated, with its students on it ranging from the coolest and oldest students in the back, to the youngest and most unpopular in the front. At Mattituck High School, the older students loved nothing more than to spend their hour-long bus ride picking on the helpless younger students in the front of the bus. [...] I sat in the back with the bullies listening to my Ipod, just ignoring them.

One of the freshmen on the bus who always got picked on was a boy named Dan. I had never really talked to him, but I watched him get picked on every day. Dan was kind of short with blonde hair and glasses. He was a nice kid, but he had a small learning disability that made him a little slower than most kids his age. Although Dan was still smart enough to be in his age-group’s grade, it was difficult for him to come up with snappy comebacks to the bullies. Therefore, the bullies loved to attack him.

One day, I was sitting in the back seat surrounded by the older bullies listing to them pick on kids. [...] On this particular day, the bullies decided to take Dan’s glasses. They were waving them around and calling him four eyes in front of the whole bus. Dan was hurt, but of course he would never show it in front of the bullies. Unfortunately for Dan, he was hopelessly blind with out his glasses. I saw the look on Dan’s face and something just snapped inside of me. I stood up and told the boys in my grade who where making fun of him to stop and give him his glasses back right away. I told them what they were doing was extremely immature, and it was unimpressive to pick on someone like Dan. They listened, and gave Dan his glasses back because we were in the same grade, and I knew them. Dan never said thank you to me because it’s all about image on the bus, but I know what I did for him really helped him out. Even though some kids on the bus booed me because they enjoyed watching the tormenting that was occurring, I didn’t care. I just sat back in my seat and felt great about myself and what I had done.

I will never forget the look on Dan’s face when he put his glasses back on. Dan didn’t thank me out loud because the bullies would probably have picked on him more, but I didn’t mind. This is because the look he gave me was just as good. He looked up at me and smiled, saying thank you with his eyes. I knew that what I had done really meant something to him. I never talked to Dan after that or we never became friends, because of our age difference and because I stopped taking the bus soon after that. He just wanted to ride the bus two times a day like a normal kid, but no one would help him out. I’m disappointed that I let him get picked on for so long with out helping, but glad I finally did do something. Not only did I help Dan that day, but I helped myself because it felt so good to help someone. It taught me a lesson to try and help people whenever I can. As Goska would say I didn’t have to close down a sweatshop in Malaysia to help someone; I just had to open my eyes and take a minute of my time.

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First Time Helping Someone by Juan Carlos Urena

One afternoon, my friends and I were standing in front of my sister's school talking about the baseball game from the night before. My best friend Jay is a Yankees fan, and I am a Mets fan, so we often would have these friendly arguments about which is the better team. As we were arguing outside of my sister's school, I saw an elderly woman carrying a lot of shopping bags. She seemed as if she was struggling. Most of my friends just kept speaking, but for a minute I blanked out and thought, "What if that was my grandma struggling? I would like someone to help her." I told my friends that I would be back in a few minutes.

I asked the lady if she needed any help. With a sigh of relief, she looked up and said, "That would be really nice of you young men." I took her shopping bags, and we began to walk to her house. As we walked, she asked a series of questions: "What is your name? How old are you? Are you thinking about going to college? Do you play any sports?" I answered everything straight forwardly with no details. For some reason, I felt nervous and shy because I had never helped anyone whom I had randomly seen on the streets before.

It was quite a walk, and half way to her house we found out we actually had something in common. We were both Mets fans. She spoke to me about the '69 and '86 Mets which were the only two times in the Mets won the World Series. She gave me a lot of history I did not know about my favorite team and players from that era. From there on, our conversation went smoothly. I became overwhelmed with information and facts. It seemed as if she could answer any question I had about any baseball team in general. After speaking for a while, it did not feel awkward anymore to be helping a stranger with her bags.

Eventually, we got to her house. When I asked if she wanted me to put the bags in her kitchen table, she said, "That would be delightful." The woman wanted to give me money for helping her, but I declined. My mom always told me, "When someone does a favor, they should do it out of their heart, not expecting a reward." The woman insisted, but I refused to accept the money. Eventually, she gave up and said, "God Bless you son."

After reading the Goska's essay I realize the at one point in life I was one of those person she was describing, a person who had the ability to do things in life and help others but never did. If it was not for this one experience, maybe I would have been like that my whole life. Many feel that if they are not wealthy or famous they cannot help others, but that is not true. We can all help someone in even the smallest ways—even if that means only helping an elderly lady with her bags all the way to her house.



“Little Weapon” by Lupe Fiasco: An Analysis

by John C. Vollmer

Today, the world is a chaotic place. All over the world there are men, women and children, fighting and dying each day. In some areas of the world, for example, third world countries, children are at the forefront of military organizations. Children at the ages of five and up are carrying weapons and murdering fellow humans. On the other hand, in more developed countries like America, for example, children are virtually shooting people through video games. Lupe Fiasco’s song “Little Weapon” tries to show the life of child soldiers and the violence created by them, as well as how desensitized modern society is today.

[...] In the very beginning of the song, listeners notice a fast pace drum roll. This drum roll in connection with the reference to a “Little Weapon” (Lupe Fiasco 27) implies that these children constantly have to participate in war and the violence created by it. Because of this, Lupe Fiasco is trying to show desensitized modern society the violence associated with child soldiers. The fast paced drum roll can remind the listener of the fast paced lifestyle of a child soldier. [...]

Lupe Fiasco’s lyrics play a big part in depicting the life of a child soldier. He puts us in the mind of a child soldier when he sings, “Just five more dogs and we can get a soccer ball/that’s what my commander say” (Lupe Fiasco 19). When he sings this, he shows how simple minded a child is. By killing five more people, the children can receive and play with a soccer ball. Children are so simplistic because they can run around and kill people without a second thought but be easily amused by a simple object like a soccer ball. [...]

A strong message of this song is how modern society has become desensitized to acts of violence like the ones shown in this song. This song starts out with an introduction of three separate accounts of children possessing guns. One example of the introductory piece is “Lil Terry gotta gun he got from the store/He bought it with the money he got from his chores/He robbed the candy shop told her lay down on the floor/Put the cookies in the bag take the pennies out the drawer” (Lupe Fiasco 1-4). The way this is sung plays a big part in the overall message. Lupe Fiasco is just saying the words instead of singing them with emotion. This is done to suggest the idea of these events being relayed on a news broadcast. This reminds the listeners of the everyday news broadcasts they hear. By doing this, Lupe Fiasco implies that people are no longer affected by these situations because they are heard all over the news everyday and people do not react to them because they hear this constantly.

Another instance where Lupe Fiasco shows how modern society is desensitized to this type of violence is where he sings about the video games of today. This is shown in the line, “I hold a controller, connected to the soldier/With weapons on his shoulder he’s only seconds older than me” (Lupe Fiasco 67-68). Lupe Fiasco shows the listeners a relationship between the video game player and the digital person on the video game. He shows that children are playing violent video games with the characters of those video games being just as old as the children playing them. It also shows how modern society has made these violent video games acceptable to play as children. [...]

Lupe Fiasco wrote this song in order to try and inform listeners about the children in third world countries who are fighting, killing, and dying not knowing any better because they were raised this way. He wants the more fortunate to learn of these tragedies and try to do something about it. [...]

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Journal: Character Analysis

by Teresa Medrano, Felipe Olivo & Zafir Mawla

Characters: Miss Moore from “The Lesson” by Toni Cade Bambara and Berl, Berlcha, and Sam from “The Son from America” by Isaac Bashevis Singer.

Act 1

On a dreary, gloomy night, Miss Moore stays up all night, in her one room apartment, thinking about her trip to the toy store with the children from her neighborhood. The draft from outside made her shiver, so she pulls a blanket over herself. The rain outside seems as if it will never end. She asks herself whether the children have understood the message that she was trying to communicate to them. She allows her mind to drift off.

Miss. Moore: (Speaking to herself) How can I help the children understand how unfair America is? They don't understand that some people can waste money on toys and unnecessary things, while families need money for food. I want them to understand how unfair America can be!

Act 2

In a small hut in Lentshin, Berlcha stands awake in the middle of the evening as the warm breeze from outside comes into the little hut. She is busy making supper and is thinking, as she stares at the meat roasting over the fire, about how a visit to America would be. She wonders whether the people look the same or whether they are dressed in weird robes as her son does. She also wonders if she would meet other Jews like herself. Her thoughts are interrupted by the door slamming shut. Her son Samuel walks in.

Samuel: Hello Mother, did I startle you?

Berlcha: No son, I was thinking about taking a trip to America

Samuel: There is nothing to be worried about, everything will be fine

Berlcha (With a worried look): How will we celebrate the Sabbath?

Samuel: There are synagogues in America. In America you are able to celebrate any religion.

Berlcha: America seems very interesting, maybe I will see for myself.

Samuel: Well mother, it just so happens that I have 2 tickets to America! You and father can come back with me.

Berlcha: Oh, I don't know, I don't know if your father would want to come to America, but your father cannot cook and clean without me so I guess he will come after all.

Act 3

Samuel brings back his mother and father from Lentshin, and they are both astounded to see the many different cultures of America. In New York, Samuel takes them to his apartment building. Amazed by the cars in the streets and by the high buildings, Berl and Berlcha look out the sixth story window and watch.

Berl: Samuel, why are we so high up the ground for? I can barely see the street signs!

Samuel: Father that is because there are many people who reside here in New York City. There are a lot of people and there is very little space, so in order to live they build buildings that go upward into the sky.

Berlcha: Are there many food markets around here.

Samuel: Yes mother, there are plenty.

Berlcha: Why don't I make dinner? Samuel, will you show me around?

Samuel: Yes mother, and father there is T.V in the living room, Make yourself comfortable while we go fetch dinner.

Berl: Sure, But can I ask you a question?

Samuel: Yes?

Berl: What is a T.V? (Samuel gets father situated, after a few minutes he and Berlcha run to the nearest grocery store)

(At the grocery store)

Berlcha: So what should I make tonight? Beef stew with bread?

Samuel: That will be fine. Umm mother, I have seem to forget something at the apartment, I will be right back. Will you wait for me until I come back?

Berlcha: Yes son. Just don't forget about me now!

Samuel: I will not.

Samuel runs back to the apartment. In the meanwhile, Berlcha looks around the store)

Berlcha: Wow, so many different types of vegetables! I have never seen these many different varieties back home. But look at the prices!! So expensive!

(Miss Moore stands right beside her in the vegetable isle; she can't help but overhear Berlcha.)

Miss Moore: Well that's how it is in America.

Berlcha: Really now? Back in Lenshin, we did not have to worry about food being expensive; we made our own from scratch! We grew them from the ground and we prepared them by hand.

Miss Moore: So you are not from America I see.

Berlcha: Yes, You don't look like you are American yourself.

Miss Moore: I'm full blown African American and proud of it. I'm just not proud of American standards.

Berlcha: Why if I might ask?

Miss Moore: Americans sometimes take advantage of the money here. There are two sides to Americans, the rich and the poor. The rich can buy a lot of expensive stuff, such as cars, boats, and anything tangible. But that the rich don't realize is that there are poor people who can use that money for food and shelter. In America, there are very unjust people who commit crimes and there is civil unrest between the two social classes. Because of this the poor steal from the poor in order to survive and the rich play around in a bathtub full of money with no care for only themselves.

[Berlcha stares in amazement, pondering Miss Moore's words, as the younger woman walks off down the store aisle.]