

PREVIEW
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PREVIEW
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BLACKOUT

Poetry



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Blackout Poem

- A blackout poem is when you create your own poem through words and text that already exist.
- When you “black out” parts of a text, the words left to be seen form a new creation.
- Blackout poems are also called “erasure” poems or “redacted” poems.
- There are many variations of blackout poems.
- The example shown here is a traditional blackout poem where the poet used black marker to eliminate parts of the text and leave behind only the intended message.

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Materials Needed

- Black marker or crayon (any dark color will work)
- Crayons, markers, or colored pencils for illustrations
- Magazines, books, newspapers, or any text that can be repurposed (or destroyed)
- Pencil with an eraser



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Step 1

- Skim your page for eye-catching words.
- If you don't respond to any words that you see, simply choose a different page.
- Don't focus on reading the actual text, but instead scan the page to find words that you personally connect to.
- As words stand out to you, circle them lightly in pencil. You can always edit or erase words later.

will return unless you overcome those fears. So patients are advised to resume normal, unrestricted physical activity once the pain is gone, or nearly so, and when they feel confidence in the diagnosis. Patients have reported that becoming active may take months, which is not difficult to understand considering their years of exposure to misconceptions about the presumed fragility of the back.

Never do this or that, do it this way, we've told; be careful, you'll hurt yourself; your spine is out of line; the discs are degenerated and the spinal bones are rubbing together; one of your legs is shorter than the other; people weren't meant to walk upright; you've got flat feet; don't swim the crawl or the breast stroke; don't arch your back; never sleep on your stomach; always bend your knees when you bend at the waist or come back up; don't lift; don't do sit-ups, do crunches; and on and on.

All of these admonitions and prohibitions, enhanced by poor medical advice, keep your attention riveted on your body, which is your brain's intention.

The path to resumption of full physical activity, without fear, may be slow and uneven. Don't worry if you begin exercise too soon and experience some pain. You cannot hurt yourself; TMS is a benign process. Continuing pain with activity means the brain is still in the process of changing programming. You must bide your time, try and try again, and stay secure in the knowledge that you will prevail in the end. This has proven to be the case for thousands of patients. On the other hand, don't start the physical program too soon—not because of potential physical harm, but because your brain may still be programmed in the TMS mode. Instead, spend a few weeks after you accept the TMS diagnosis so the pain can diminish, confidence can be strengthened, and the brain will have had time to be reprogrammed.

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Step 2

- Review the words you circled by reading them OUT LOUD!
- Try to connect them in a way that makes your poem collective. To do this, add and remove words where needed.
- You should circle any additional words that make your poem sensical, like conjunctions and articles.
- Make the words come together, so a similar theme or message becomes clear.
- They can be single words or they can be presented like a story.

life in New England is either less rich and expressive or more fatiguing than it is in some other parts of the world? To what is the fact, if fact it be, due unless to the over-active conscience of the people, afraid of either saying something too trivial and obvious, or something insincere, or something unworthy of one's interlocutor, or something in some way or other not adequate to the occasion? How can conversation possibly steer itself through such a sea of responsibilities and inhibitions such as this? On the other hand, conversation does flourish and society is refreshing, and seems to dull on the one hand not exhausting from its effort on the other, wherever people forget their scruples and take the brakes off their hearts, and let their tongues wag as automatically and irresponsibly as they will.

"They talk much in pedagogic circles today about the duty of the teacher to prepare for every lesson in advance. To some extent this is useful. But we Yankees are assuredly not those to whom such a general doctrine should be preached. We are only too careful as it is. The advice I should give to most teachers would be in the words of one who is himself an admirable teacher. Prepare yourself in the subject so well that it shall always be on tap; then in the class-room trust your spontaneity and fling away all further care.

"My advice to students, especially to girl students, would be somewhat similar. Just as a bicycle chain may be too tight, so may one's carefulness and conscientiousness be so tense as to hinder the running of one's mind. Take, for example, periods when there are many successive days of examination impending. One ounce of good nervous tone in an examination is worth many pounds of anxious study for it in advance. If you want really to do your best in an examination, fling away the book the day before, say to yourself, 'I won't waste another minute on this miserable thing, and I don't care an iota whether I succeed or not.' Say this sincerely, and feel it, and go out and play, or go to bed and sleep, and I am sure the results the day will encourage you to use the method perma-

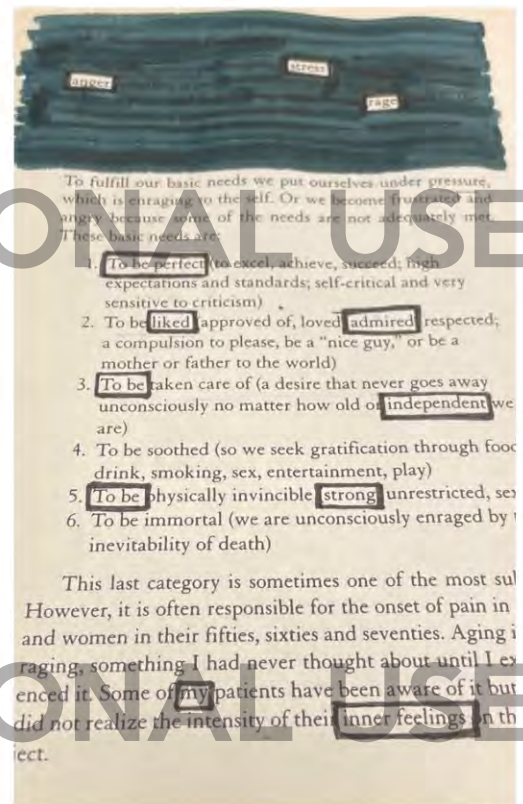
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Steps 3 and 4

- Go back through your poem and boldly box the words you are keeping with pen, sharpie, dark crayon, or something of the sort.
- Erase any pencil marks on the page.
- In a traditional blackout poem, you will take a black marker and “blackout” all the remaining text that you don’t want to be shown.
- Brainstorm what *you* want to do with any additional space.



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Step 5

- To make your work more interesting, use the extra space to draw a picture or create a background using different colors and shapes.
- You want to ensure your illustrations are symbolic to your poem or somehow represent the theme.

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One Line Through

- Instead of blackening all the text you don't want to see, you could choose to draw a single line instead. This method allows readers to still somewhat see the text underneath.
- You can choose any color to do this, it does not have to be black.



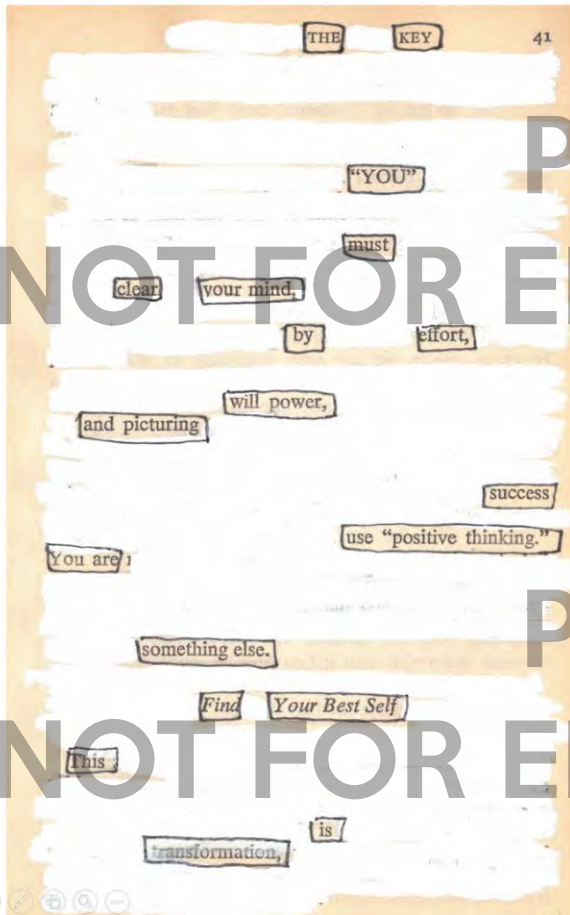
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Whiteout Poem

- Instead of black marker, use whiteout to redact the text you don't want shown.

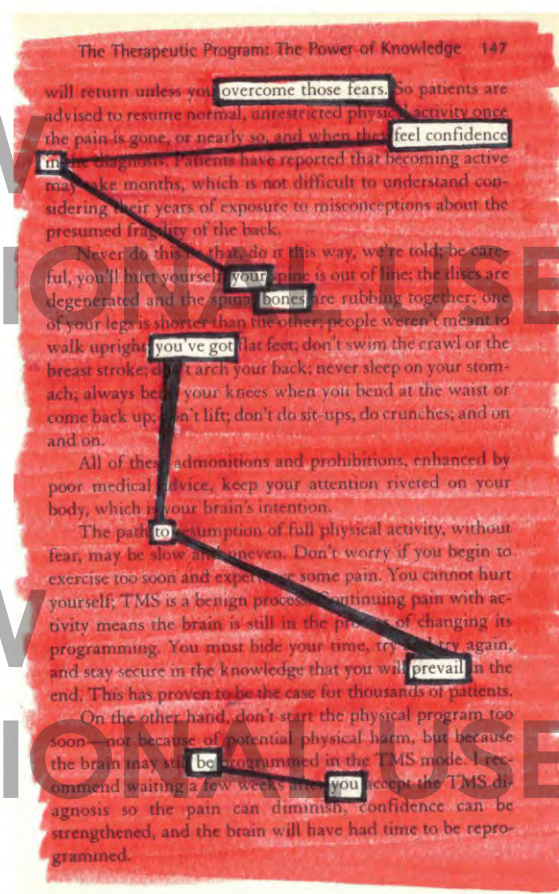


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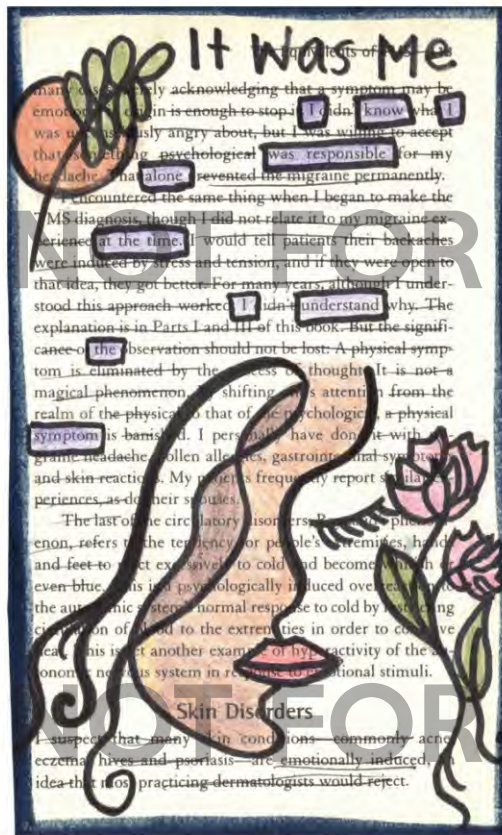
Mapping

- Connect the text with arrows, straight lines, dots, or squiggly lines.
- This strategy makes it easier for the reader to follow the correct order you want your poem to be read.



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Other Ideas

- Color in the boxes and leave the background blank.
- Add a border.
- Use line art which consists of distinct straight lines or curves creating powerful images with a minimalistic approach.
- Add a title! You can even write one in at the top of your page.
- Instead of boxes, use different shapes to highlight the words in your poem.
- Be creative!

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28 The Mindbody Prescription

Both positive and negative **stress** generate unconscious **anger**, whether or not one is consciously angry. Accumulated anger is rage, and frightening, unconscious **rage** leads to the development of physical symptoms.

Six Basic Needs

To fulfill our basic needs we put ourselves **under pressure**, which is enraging to the self. Or we become frustrated and angry because some of the needs are not adequately met. These basic needs are:

1. **To be perfect** (to excel, achieve, succeed; high expectations and standards; self-critical and very sensitive to criticism)
2. **To be liked** (approved of, loved, **admired**, respected; a compulsion to please, be a "nice guy," or be a mother or father to the world)
3. **To be taken care of** (a desire that never goes away unconsciously no matter how old or **independent** we are)
4. **To be soothed** (so we seek gratification through food, drink, smoking, sex, entertainment, play)
5. **To be** physically invincible, **strong** (unrestricted, sexy)
6. **To be immortal** (we are unconsciously enraged by the inevitability of death)

This last category is sometimes one of the most subtle, however, it is often responsible for the onset of pain in men and women in their fifties, sixties and seventies. Aging is enraging, something I had never thought about until I experienced it. Some of **my** patients have been aware of it but most did not realize the intensity of their **inner feelings** on the subject.

to others. He acts for their good, yet never violates the moral virtues or the principles of right conduct. The foolish man cannot adapt himself to others; he acts for himself only, and continually violates the moral virtues and the principles of right conduct. There is a degree of wisdom in every act of impartiality, and once a man has touched and entered the impartial zone, he can recover it again and again, until he finally establishes himself in it.

Every thought, word, or act of wisdom tells on the world, for it is fraught with greatness. Wisdom is a vast knowledge and a spring of power. It is profound and all-inclusive, and is so exact and all-inclusive as to embrace the smallest details. In its spacious greatness it does not overlook the small. The wise mind is like the world, which contains things in their proper place and order, and is free from the world, also, it is free, and free from all restrictions; yet it is never loose, never erring, never sinful, and never repentant. Wisdom is the steady, grown-up being of whom folly was the crying infant. It has outgrown the weakness and dependence, the errors and punishments of infantile ignorance, and is erect, poised, strong, and serene.

The understanding mind needs no external support. It stands of itself on the firm ground of knowledge; not

traught, she wondered why the therapeutic concept wasn't working.

He replied, "You're talking about forty years of repressed anger." This is what she wrote about what happened next:

"And then, in an instant, I started to cry. Not little tears, not sad, quiet oh-my-back-knits-so-much tears, but the deepest, hardest tears I've ever cried. Out of control tears, anger, rage, desperate tears. And I heard myself saying things like, Please take care of me, I don't ever want to have to come out from under the covers. I'm so afraid, please take care of me, don't hurt me, I want to cut my wrists, please let me die, I have to run away, I feel sick—and on and on, I couldn't stop and R—, bless him, just held me. And as I cried, and as I voiced these feelings, it was, literally, as if there was a channel, a pipeline, from my back and out through my eyes. I FELT the pain almost pour out as I cried. It was weird and strange and transfixing. I knew—really knew—that what I was feeling at that moment was what I felt as a child, when no one would or could take care of me, the scaredness, the grief, the loneliness, the shame, the horror. As I cried, I was that child again and I recognized the feelings I have felt all my life which I thought were crazy or at the very best, bizarre. Maybe I removed myself from my body and never even allowed myself to feel when I was young. But the feelings were there and they poured over me and out of me."

I am grateful to Helen (whose name has been changed) for allowing me to print parts of her letter; they illustrate perfectly the process behind TMS and equivalent physical reactions. Her story demonstrates these critical points:

- I. Feelings generated in infancy and childhood permanently reside in the unconscious and may be responsible for psychological and physical symptoms throughout life.

will return unless you overcome those fears. So patients are advised to resume normal, unrestricted physical activity once the pain is gone, or nearly so, and when they feel confidence in the diagnosis. Patients have reported that becoming active may take months, which is not difficult to understand considering their years of exposure to misconceptions about the presumed fragility of the back.

Never do this or that, do it this way, we're told; be careful, you'll hurt yourself; your spine is out of line; the discs are degenerated and the spinal bones are rubbing together; one of your legs is shorter than the other; people weren't meant to walk upright; you've got flat feet; don't swim the crawl or the breast stroke; don't arch your back; never sleep on your stomach; always bend your knees when you bend at the waist or come back up; don't lift; don't do sit-ups, do crunches; and on and on.

All of these admonitions and prohibitions, enhanced by poor medical advice, keep your attention riveted on your body, which is your brain's intention.

The path to resumption of full physical activity, without fear, may be slow and uneven. Don't worry if you begin to exercise too soon and experience some pain. You cannot hurt yourself; TMS is a benign process. Continuing pain with activity means the brain is still in the process of changing its programming. You must bide your time, try and try again, and stay secure in the knowledge that you will prevail in the end. This has proven to be the case for thousands of patients.

On the other hand, don't start the physical program too soon—not because of potential physical harm, but because the brain may still be programmed in the TMS mode. I recommend waiting a few weeks after you accept the TMS diagnosis so the pain can diminish, confidence can be strengthened, and the brain will have had time to be reprogrammed.

Don't give up.

slowly,

process

your

emotions

th... a greater or lesser degree per... Patients who deny it then go on to describe how they are... your... If they do not admit to being perfectionists, they acknowledge... emotions... are highly responsible... concerned and prone to worry. They are usually ambitious, hard-driving and self-critical; they set high standards of performance and behavior for themselves. An inner sense of inadequacy fuels perfectionism. A person's station in life or achievements are often deceiving. Feelings of inadequacy are deeply unconscious and, paradoxically, often drive us to be very successful.

Why does the drive to be perfect lead to rage? If the pressure superimposed by the mind-patient on the real child is enraging. Ben Sorotzkin, a practicing psychologist, suggests that perfectionists unconsciously set up standards for themselves they cannot possibly meet; their inevitable failure to live up to them results in unconscious shame and rage.

Perfectionism is the predominant personality character... of my patients. In others, however, a closely related compulsion—the need to be good—is primary. These people are driven to be helpful, often to the extent of sacrificing their own needs. They have a desire to ingratiate, to want everyone to like them. Cultural or religious influences can enhance this tendency. Society mandates that you be a good son or daughter, a good spouse, a good parent, a generous fellow worker. This powerful drive, like perfectionism, keeps to itself, with deep feelings of self-loathing.

there is hope.

have

blind faith.

... have... blind faith... and later per... orders pres...

EFFECT OF THOUGHT ON CIRCUMSTANCES

of virtuous aspirations, and man, therefore, as the lord and master of thought, is the maker of himself, the shaper and author of environment. Even at birth the soul comes to its own, and through every step of its earthly pilgrimage it attracts those combinations of conditions which reveal itself, which are the reflections of its own purity and impurity, its strength and weakness.

Men do not attract that which they want, but that which they are. Their whims, fancies, and ambitions are thwarted at every step, but their inmost thoughts and desires are fed with their own food, be it foul or clean. The "divinity that shapes our ends" is in ourselves; it is our very self. Man is manacled only by himself: thought and action are the jailers of Fate—they imprison, being base; they are also the angels of Freedom—they liberate, being noble. Not what he wishes and prays for does a man get, but what he justly earns. His wishes and prayers are only gratified and answered when they harmonize with his thoughts and actions.

In the light of this truth, what, then, is the meaning of "fighting against circumstances"? It means that a man is continually revolting against an effect without, while all the time he is nourishing and preserving its cause in his heart. That cause may take the form of a conscious vice or an unconscious weakness; but whatever it is, it

Reflection

will

prevent

the rage

The truth is that I did

understood

the pain

I had observed

that the pain

rather than

divert attention from frightening feelings.

Knowledge Is the Cure

I've seen people slowly shifting attention from the physical to the psychological. The brain's strategy works, and just before the pain disappears, in every case, knowledge is essential to the "cure." By making people aware of what's going on both physically and psychologically we frustrate the brain's strategy. (I'm enclosing the word *cure* in quotation marks to remind the reader that TMD is not a disease. A person gets better and banishes the pain—but there is really nothing to "cure.") By changing the focus of attention from the body to the psyche we render the pain useless, take away its purpose and reveal what it was trying to hide. In a small number of cases the person must actually experience the emotion, like rage or profound sadness, before the pain will cease. This always requires the help of a properly trained psychotherapist.

I recall a patient in his fifties who carried a lifelong anger at his mother, of which he was somewhat aware. However, his pain persisted until he was able, in the course of therapy with a psychologist, to experience his repressed rage.

It Was Me

many cases, merely acknowledging that a symptom may be emotionally induced is enough to stop it. I didn't know what I was unconsciously angry about, but I was willing to accept that something psychological was responsible for my headache. That alone prevented the migraine permanently.

I encountered the same thing when I began to make the TMS diagnosis, though I did not relate it to my migraine experience at the time. I would tell patients their backaches were induced by stress and tension, and if they were open to that idea, they got better. For many years, although I understood this approach worked, I didn't understand why. The explanation is in Parts I and III of this book. But the significance of the observation should not be lost: A physical symptom is eliminated by the success of thought. It is not a magical phenomenon. By shifting one's attention from the realm of the physical to that of the psychological, a physical symptom is banished. I personally have done it with migraine headache, pollen allergies, gastrointestinal symptoms, and skin reactions. My patients frequently report similar experiences, as do their spouses.

The last of the circulatory disorders, Raynaud's phenomenon, refers to the tendency for people's extremities, hands and feet to react excessively to cold and become white or even blue. This is a psychologically induced overreaction to the autonomic system's normal response to cold by restricting circulation of blood to the extremities in order to conserve heat. This is yet another example of hyperactivity of the autonomic nervous system in response to emotional stimuli.

Skin Disorders

I suspect that many skin conditions—commonly acne, eczema, hives and psoriasis—are emotionally induced, an idea that most practicing dermatologists would reject.

pressed feelings. My theories, therefore, are rooted in fundamental psychoanalytic concepts. I have no psychoanalytic training and had no preconceived idea of the psychological nature of these disorders when I began to study the problem. It soon became apparent, however, that the symptom complex under study was the result of a process that began in what psychologists call the unconscious, that part of the emotional domain of which we are totally unaware, and that physical symptoms were a reaction to unconscious feelings. There was as with much in the world of psychology and psychiatry, without mind or brain, we were searching for an explanation. If I had not adopted the idea of repression in the unconscious, I would have attributed the symptoms to "nerves" and have no idea how to proceed therapeutically.

Freud conceived of three components of the emotional mind that his translators called the superego, the ego and the id. Transactional psychoanalysis refers to these components as parent, adult and child. For the purpose of teaching my theories I prefer the latter.

The parent is that part of the mind that tells us what is right and wrong, how we must behave and act morally and ethically. This parent resides in both the conscious and unconscious minds and plays a crucial role in psychogenic physical disorders. It is synonymous with conscience; the parent makes us perfectionists and what I term "goodists." A goodist has a compulsion to please, to be a good person, to be nice. A goodist avoids confrontation, is the peacemaker, always on the alert to help someone, even if it means self-sacrifice. The goodist has a great need to be liked, coupled with the fear of being disliked.

The perfectionist is hardworking, conscientious, responsible, achievement- and success-oriented, a worrier. The ultra-perfectionist is not content to be preeminent in his or her field and compulsively searches for new challenges.

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"YOU"

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must

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your mind,

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by

effort,

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will power,

and picturing

success

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use "positive thinking."

You are

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something else.

Find

Your Best Self

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This

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is

transformation,

Teacher Guide Blackout Poetry

- 1) The first thing you want to do before teaching blackout poetry is gather the materials!
- 2) You will need: pencils, erasers, black markers, crayons, colored pencils. You will also need: old books, magazines, or newspapers (texts that you're willing to destroy).

If you need books for your students to rip pages from, here is what I suggest:

- Send out a building-wide email to your colleagues. Let them know you are doing a project with your students and you need donations of books that they do not want anymore or that they are willing to let be destroyed.
- Contact your school/district librarian. More likely than not, they will be familiar with blackout poetry and will be able to provide old books for you.
- If you don't mind spending a few bucks, visit local consignment shops or thrift stores. Buy the cheapest books you can find! I recommend self-help books or psychology books because there's a lot of emotional and self-reflective words in them that make blackout poetry easier.
- Print pages from novels that are in the public domain under free use. Anyone can use work in the public domain without permission according to the copyright limitation on the work. (I've included some printable pages in this product.)

- 3) Use the powerpoint lesson to teach students about blackout poetry! Give students a couple of days to build and perfect their personal creations. Have fun! :)

Blackout Poetry Rubric

A blackout poem is when you create your own poem through words and text that already exist. When you “black out” parts of a text, the words left to be seen form a new creation.

Directions: Create your own blackout poem using the materials provided.

Grading Rubric

Overall Appearance	Your page is detailed and neat. Your choice of colors or illustrations are creative and enhance the poem's meaning.	10 Points
Word Choice	You choose meaningful words that are precise, vivid, and which paint a clear and complete picture in the reader's mind.	10 Points
Effectiveness of Poem	Your poem is logical and sends a clear message. You effectively use poetic devices or figurative language to reinforce the theme. The tone and point of view is consistent throughout the poem.	10 Points
Effort	Your work demonstrates a complete understanding of the assignment and you meet all of the necessary requirements. Your work is creative and unique.	10 Points

PRINTABLE BOOK PAGES



PREVIEW

The Great Gatsby

“We don’t know each other very well, Nick,” she said suddenly. “Even if we are cousins. You didn’t come to my wedding.” “I wasn’t back from the war.” “That’s true.” She hesitated. “Well, I’ve had a very bad time, Nick, and I’m pretty cynical about everything.” Evidently she had reason to be. I waited but she didn’t say any more, and after a moment I returned rather feebly to the subject of her daughter. “I suppose she talks, and — eats, and everything.” “Oh, yes.” She looked at me absently. “Listen, Nick; let me tell you what I said when she was born. Would you like to hear?” “Very much.” “It’ll show you how I’ve gotten to feel about — things. Well, she was less than an hour old and Tom was God knows where. I woke up out of the ether with an utterly abandoned feeling, and asked the nurse right away if it was a boy or a girl. She told me it was a girl, and so I turned my head away and wept. ‘all right,’ I said, ‘I’m glad it’s a girl. And I hope she’ll be a fool — that’s the best thing a girl can be in this world, a beautiful little fool.’” “You see I think everything’s terrible anyhow,” she went on in a convinced way. “Everybody thinks so — the most advanced people. And I KNOW. I’ve been everywhere and seen everything and done everything.” Her eyes flashed around her in a defiant way, rather like Tom’s, and she laughed with thrilling scorn. “Sophisticated — God, I’m sophisticated!” The instant her voice broke off, ceasing to compel my attention, my belief, I felt the basic insincerity of what she had said. It made me uneasy, as though the whole evening had been a trick of some sort to exact a contributory emotion from me. I waited, and sure enough, in a moment she looked at me with an absolute smirk on her lovely face, as if she had asserted her membership in a rather distinguished secret society to which she and Tom belonged. Inside, the crimson room bloomed with light. Tom and Miss Baker sat at either end of the long couch and she read aloud to him from the SATURDAY EVENING POST.

The Great Gatsby

Chapter 2

A bout half way between West Egg and New York the motor road hastily joins the railroad and runs beside it for a quarter of a mile, so as to shrink away from a certain desolate area of land. This is a valley of ashes — a fantastic farm where ashes grow like wheat into ridges and hills and grotesque gardens; where ashes take the forms of houses and chimneys and rising smoke and, finally, with a transcendent effort, of men who move dimly and already crumbling through the powdery air. Occasionally a line of gray cars crawls along an invisible track, gives out a ghastly creak, and comes to rest, and immediately the ash-gray men swarm up with leaden spades and stir up an impenetrable cloud, which screens their obscure operations from your sight. But above the gray land and the spasms of bleak dust which drift endlessly over it, you perceive, after a moment, the eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg. The eyes of Doctor T. J. Eckleburg are blue and gigantic — their irises are one yard high. They look out of no face, but, instead, from a pair of enormous yellow spectacles which pass over a nonexistent nose. Evidently some wild wag of an oculist set them there to fatten his practice in the borough of Queens, and then sank down himself into eternal blindness, or forgot them and moved away. But his eyes, dimmed a little by many paintless days, under sun and rain, brood on over the solemn dumping ground. The valley of ashes is bounded on one side by a small foul river, and, when the drawbridge is up to let barges through, the passengers on waiting trains can stare at the dismal scene for as long as half an hour. There is always a halt there of at least a minute, and it was because of this that I first met Tom Buchanan's mistress. The fact that he had one was insisted upon wherever he was known. His acquaintances resented the fact that he turned up in popular restaurants with her and, leaving her at a table, sauntered about, chatting with whomsoever he knew.

The Great Gatsby

Though I was curious to see her, I had no desire to meet her — but I did. I went up to New York with Tom on the train one afternoon, and when we stopped by the ashheaps he jumped to his feet and, taking hold of my elbow, literally forced me from the car. “We’re getting off,” he insisted. “I want you to meet my girl.” I think he’d tanked up a good deal at luncheon, and his determination to have my company bordered on violence. The supercilious assumption was that on Sunday afternoon I had nothing better to do. I followed

him over a low whitewashed railroad fence, and we walked back a hundred yards along the road under Doctor Eckleburg’s persistent stare. The only building in sight was a small block of yellow brick sitting on the edge of the waste land, a sort of compact Main Street ministering to it, and contiguous to absolutely nothing. One of the three shops it contained was for rent and another was an all-night restaurant, approached by a trail of ashes; the third was a garage — Repairs. GEORGE B. WILSON. Cars bought and sold.— and I followed Tom inside. The interior was unprosperous and bare; the only car visible was the dust-covered wreck of a Ford which crouched in a dim corner. It had occurred to me that this shadow of a garage must be a blind, and that sumptuous and romantic apartments were concealed overhead, when the proprietor himself appeared in the door of an office, wiping his hands on a piece of waste. He was a blond, spiritless man, anaemic, and faintly handsome. When he saw us a damp gleam of hope sprang into his light blue eyes. “Hello, Wilson, old man,” said Tom, slapping him jovially on the shoulder. “How’s business?” “I can’t complain,” answered Wilson unconvincingly. “When are you going to sell me that car?” “Next week; I’ve got my man working on it now.” “Works pretty slow, don’t he?” “No, he doesn’t,” said Tom coldly. “And if you feel that way about it, maybe I’d better sell it somewhere else after all.” “I don’t mean that,” explained Wilson quickly. “I just meant — —”

The Great Gatsby

His voice faded off and Tom glanced impatiently around the garage. Then I heard footsteps on a stairs, and in a moment the thickish figure of a woman blocked out the light from the office door. She was in the middle thirties, and faintly stout, but she carried her surplus flesh sensuously as some women can. Her face, above a spotted dress of dark blue crepe-de-chine, contained no facet or gleam of beauty, but there was an immediately perceptible vitality about her as if the nerves of her body were continually smouldering. She smiled slowly and, walking through her husband as if he were a ghost, shook hands with Tom, looking him flush in the eye. Then she wet her lips, and without turning around spoke to her husband in a soft, coarse voice: "Get some chairs, why don't you, so somebody can sit down." "Oh, sure," agreed Wilson hurriedly, and went toward the little office, mingling immediately with the cement color of the walls. A white ashen dust veiled his dark suit and his pale hair as it veiled everything in the vicinity — except his wife, who moved close to Tom. "I want to see you," said Tom intently. "Get on the next train." "All right." "I'll meet you by the news-stand on the lower level." She nodded and moved away from him just as George Wilson emerged with two chairs from his office door. We waited for her down the road and out of sight. It was a few days before the Fourth of July, and a gray, scrawny Italian child was setting torpedoes in a row along the railroad track. "Terrible place, isn't it," said Tom, exchanging a frown with Doctor Eckleburg. "Awful." "It does her good to get away." "Doesn't her husband object?" "Wilson? He thinks she goes to see her sister in New York. He's so dumb he doesn't know he's alive." So Tom Buchanan and his girl and I went up together to New York — or not quite together, for Mrs. Wilson sat discreetly in another car. Tom deferred that much to the sensibilities of those East Eggers who might be on the train.

That was for the golf tournament. She had lost in the finals the week before. "You don't know who we are," said one of the girls in yellow, "but we met you here about a month ago." "You've dyed your hair since then," remarked Jordan, and I started, but the girls had moved casually on and her remark was addressed to the premature moon, produced like the supper, no doubt, out of a caterer's basket. With Jordan's slender golden arm resting in mine, we descended the steps and sauntered about the garden.

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us as Mr. Mumble. “Do you come to these parties often?” inquired Jordan of the girl beside her. “The last one was the one I met you at,” answered the girl, in an alert confident voice. She turned to her companion: “Wasn’t it for you, Lucille?” It was for Lucille, too. “I like to come,” Lucille said. “I never care what I do, so I always have a good time. When I was here last I tore my gown on a chair, and he asked me my name and address — inside of a week I got a package from Croirier’s with a new evening gown in it.” “Did you keep it?” asked Jordan. “Sure I did. I was going to wear it to-night, but it was too big in the bust and had to be altered. It was gas blue with lavender beads. Two hundred and sixty-five dollars.” “There’s something funny about a fellow that’ll do a thing like that,” said the other girl eagerly. “He doesn’t want any trouble with ANYbody.” “Who doesn’t?” I inquired. “Gatsby. Somebody told me — —” The two girls and Jordan leaned together confidentially. “Somebody told me they thought he killed a man once.” A thrill passed over all of us. The three Mr. Mumbles bent forward and listened eagerly. “I don’t think it’s so much THAT,” argued Lucille sceptically; “it’s more that he was a German spy during the war.” One of the men nodded in confirmation. “I heard that from a man who knew all about him, grew up with him in Germany,” he assured us positively. “Oh, no,” said the first girl, “it couldn’t be that, because he was in the American army during the war.” As our credulity switched back to her she leaned forward with enthusiasm. “You look at him sometimes when he thinks nobody’s looking at him. I’ll bet he killed a man.” She narrowed her eyes and shivered. Lucille shivered. We all turned and looked around for Gatsby. It was testimony to the romantic speculation he inspired that there were whispers about him from those who found little that it was necessary to whisper about in this world. The first supper — there would be another one after midnight — was now being served, and Jordan invited me to join her own party, who were spread around a table on the other side of the garden. There were three married couples and Jordan’s escort, a persistent undergraduate given to violent innuendo, and obviously under the impression that sooner or later Jordan was going to yield him up her person to a greater or lesser degree.

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Again at eight o'clock, when the dark lanes of the Forties were five deep with throbbing taxi-cabs, bound for the theatre district, I felt a sinking in my heart. Forms leaned together in the taxis as they waited, and voices sang, and there was laughter from unheard jokes, and lighted cigarettes outlined unintelligible gestures inside. Imagining that I, too, was hurrying toward gayety and sharing their intimate excitement, I wished them well. For a while I lost sight of Jordan Baker, and then in midsummer I found her again. At first I was flattered to go places with her, because she was a golf champion, and every one knew her name. Then it was something more. I wasn't actually in love, but I felt a sort of tender curiosity. The bored haughty face that she turned to the world concealed something — most affectations conceal something eventually, even though they don't in the beginning — and one day I found what it was. When we were on a house-party together up in Warwick, she left a borrowed car out in the rain with the top down, and then lied about it — and suddenly I remembered the story about her that had eluded me that night at Daisy's. At her first big golf tournament there was a row that nearly reached the newspapers — a suggestion that she had moved her ball from a bad lie in the semi-final round. The thing approached the proportions of a scandal — then died away. A caddy retracted his statement, and the only other witness admitted that he might have been mistaken. The incident and the name had remained together in my mind. Jordan Baker instinctively avoided clever, shrewd men, and now I saw that this was because she felt safer on a plane where any divergence from a code would be thought impossible. She was incurably dishonest. She wasn't able to endure being at a disadvantage and, given this unwillingness, I suppose she had begun dealing in subterfuges when she was very young in order to keep that cool, insolent smile turned to the world and yet satisfy the demands of her hard, jaunty body. It made no difference to me. Dishonesty in a woman is a thing you never blame deeply — I was casually sorry, and then I forgot. It was on that same house party that we had a curious conversation about driving a car.

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Chapter 5

When I came home to West Egg that night I was afraid for a moment that my house was on fire. Two o'clock and the whole corner of the peninsula was blazing with light, which fell unreal on the shrubbery and made thin elongating glints upon the roadside wires. Turning a corner, I saw that it was Gatsby's house, lit from tower to cellar. At first I thought it was another party, a wild rout that had resolved itself into "hide-and-go-seek." or "sardines-in-the-box." with all the house thrown open to the game. But there wasn't a sound. Only wind in the trees, which blew the wires and made the lights go off and on again as if the house had winked into the darkness. As my taxi groaned away I saw Gatsby walking toward me across his lawn. "Your place looks like the World's Fair," I said. "Does it?" He turned his eyes toward it absently. "I have been glancing into some of the rooms. Let's go to Coney Island, old sport. In my car." "It's too late." "Well, suppose we take a plunge in the swimming-pool? I haven't made use of it all summer." "I've got to go to bed." "All right." He waited, looking at me with suppressed eagerness. "I talked with Miss Baker," I said after a moment. "I'm going to call up Daisy to-morrow and invite her over here to tea." "Oh, that's all right," he said carelessly. "I don't want to put you to any trouble." "What day would suit you?" "What day would suit YOU?" he corrected me quickly. "I don't want to put you to any trouble, you see." "How about the day after to-morrow?" He considered for a moment. Then, with reluctance: "I want to get the grass cut," he said. We both looked at the grass — there was a sharp line where my ragged lawn ended and the darker, well-kept expanse of his began. I suspected that he meant my grass. "There's another little thing," he said uncertainly, and hesitated. "Would you rather put it off for a few days?" I asked. "Oh, it isn't about that. At least — —" He fumbled with a series of beginnings. "Why, I thought — why, look here, old sport, you don't make much money, do you?" "Not very much." This seemed to reassure him and he continued more confidently. "I thought you didn't, if you'll pardon my — You see, I carry on a little business on the side, a sort of side line, you understand. And I thought that if you don't make very much — You're selling bonds, aren't you, old sport?" "Trying to." "Well, this would interest you."

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It was this night that he told me the strange story of his youth with Dan Cody — told it to me because “Jay Gatsby,” had broken up like glass against Tom’s hard malice, and the long secret extravaganza was played out. I think that he would have acknowledged anything now, without reserve, but he wanted to talk about Daisy. She was the first “nice” girl he had ever known. In various unrevealed capacities he had come in contact with such people, but always with indiscernible barbed wire between. He found her excitingly desirable. He went to her house, at first with other officers from Camp Taylor, then alone. It amazed him — he had never been in such a beautiful house before. but what gave it an air of breathless intensity, was that Daisy lived there — it was as casual a thing to her as his tent out at camp was to him. There was a ripe mystery about it, a hint of bedrooms up-stairs more beautiful and cool than other bedrooms, of gay and radiant activities taking place through its corridors, and of romances that were not musty and laid away already in lavender but fresh and breathing and redolent of this year’s shining motor-cars and of dances whose flowers were scarcely withered. It excited him, too, that many men had already loved Daisy — it increased her value in his eyes. He felt their presence all about the house, pervading the air with the shades and echoes of still vibrant emotions. But he knew that he was in Daisy’s house by a colossal accident. However glorious might be his future as Jay Gatsby, he was at present a penniless young man without a past, and at any moment the invisible cloak of his uniform might slip from his shoulders. So he made the most of his time. He took what he could get, ravenously and unscrupulously — eventually he took Daisy one still October night, took her because he had no real right to touch her hand. He might have despised himself, for he had certainly taken her under false pretenses. I don’t mean that he had traded on his phantom millions, but he had deliberately given Daisy a sense of security; he let her believe that he was a person from much the same stratum as herself — that he was fully able to take care of her. As a matter of fact, he had no such facilities — he had no comfortable family standing behind him—

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The hard brown beetles kept thudding against the dull light, and whenever Michaelis heard a car go tearing along the road outside it sounded to him like the car that hadn't stopped a few hours before. He didn't like to go into the garage, because the work bench was stained where the body had been lying, so he moved uncomfortably around the office — he knew every object in it before morning — and from time to time sat down beside Wilson trying to keep him more quiet. "Have you got a church you go to sometimes, George? Maybe even if you haven't been there for a long time? Maybe I could call up the church and get a priest to come over and he could talk to you, see?" "Don't belong to any." "You ought to have a church, George, for times like this. You must have gone to church once. Didn't you get married in a church? Listen, George, listen to me. Didn't you get married in a church?" "That was a long time ago." The effort of answering broke the rhythm of his rocking — for a moment he was silent. Then the same half-knowing, halfbewildered look came back into his faded eyes. "Look in the drawer there," he said, pointing at the desk. "Which drawer?" "That drawer — that one." Michaelis opened the drawer nearest his hand. There was nothing in it but a small, expensive dog-leash, made of leather and braided silver. It was apparently new. "This?" he inquired, holding it up. Wilson stared and nodded. "I found it yesterday afternoon. She tried to tell me about it, but I knew it was something funny." "You mean your wife bought it?" "She had it wrapped in tissue paper on her bureau." Michaelis didn't see anything odd in that, and he gave Wilson a dozen reasons why his wife might have bought the dog-leash. But conceivably Wilson had heard some of these same explanations before, from Myrtle, because he began saying "Oh, my God!" again in a whisper — his comforter left several explanations in the air.

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Even when the East excited me most, even when I was most keenly aware of its superiority to the bored, sprawling, swollen towns beyond the Ohio, with their interminable inquisitions which spared only the children and the very old — even then it had always for me a quality of distortion. West Egg, especially, still figures in my more fantastic dreams. I see it as a night scene by El Greco: a hundred houses, at once conventional and grotesque, crouching under a sullen, overhanging sky and a lustreless moon. In the foreground four solemn men in dress suits are walking along the sidewalk with a stretcher on which lies a drunken woman in a white evening dress. Her hand, which dangles over the side, sparkles cold with jewels. Gravely the men turn in at a house — the wrong house. But no one knows the woman's name, and no one cares. After Gatsby's death the East was haunted for me like that, distorted beyond my eyes' power of correction. So when the blue smoke of brittle leaves was in the air and the wind blew the wet laundry stiff on the line I decided to come back home. There was one thing to be done before I left, an awkward, unpleasant thing that perhaps had better have been let alone. But I wanted to leave things in order and not just trust that obliging and indifferent sea to sweep my refuse away. I saw Jordan Baker and talked over and around what had happened to us together, and what had happened afterward to me, and she lay perfectly still, listening, in a big chair. She was dressed to play golf, and I remember thinking she looked like a good illustration, her chin raised a little jauntily, her hair the color of an autumn leaf, her face the same brown tint as the fingerless glove on her knee. When I had finished she told me without comment that she was engaged to another man. I doubted that, though there were several she could have married at a nod of her head, but I pretended to be surprised. For just a minute I wondered if I wasn't making a mistake, then I thought it all over again quickly and got up to say good-bye. "Nevertheless you did throw me over," said Jordan suddenly. "You threw me over on the telephone. I don't give a damn about you now, but it was a new experience for me, and I felt a little dizzy for a while." We shook hands.

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“You said a bad driver was only safe until she met another bad driver? Well, I met another bad driver, didn’t I? I mean it was careless of me to make such a wrong guess. I thought you were rather an honest, straightforward person. I thought it was your secret pride.” “I’m thirty,” I said. “I’m five years too old to lie to myself and call it honor.” She didn’t answer. Angry, and half in love with her, and tremendously sorry, I turned away. One afternoon late in October I saw Tom Buchanan. He was walking ahead of me along Fifth Avenue in his alert, aggressive way, his hands out a little from his body as if to fight off interference, his head moving sharply here and there, adapting itself to his restless eyes. Just as I slowed up to avoid overtaking him he stopped and began frowning into the windows of a jewelry store. Suddenly he saw me and walked back, holding out his hand. “What’s the matter, Nick? Do you object to shaking hands with me?” “Yes. You know what I think of you.” “You’re crazy, Nick,” he said quickly. “Crazy as hell. I don’t know what’s the matter with you.” “Tom,” I inquired, “what did you say to Wilson that afternoon?” He stared at me without a word, and I knew I had guessed right about those missing hours. I started to turn away, but he took a step after me and grabbed my arm. “I told him the truth,” he said. “He came to the door while we were getting ready to leave, and when I sent down word that we weren’t in he tried to force his way up-stairs. He was crazy enough to kill me if I hadn’t told him who owned the car. His hand was on a revolver in his pocket every minute he was in the house” He broke off defiantly. “What if I did tell him? That fellow had it coming to him. He threw dust into your eyes just like he did in Daisy’s, but he was a tough one. He ran over Myrtle like you’d run over a dog and never even stopped his car.” There was nothing I could say, except the one unutterable fact that it wasn’t true. “And if you think I didn’t have my share of suffering, look here, when I went to give up that flat and saw that damn box of dog biscuits sitting there on the sideboard, I sat down and cried like a baby. By God it was awful-” I couldn’t forgive him or like him, but I saw that what he had done was, to him, entirely justified. It was all very careless and confused. They were careless people, Tom and Daisy—they smashed up things and creatures and then retreated back into their money or their vast carelessness, or whatever it was that kept them together, and let other people clean up the mess they had made...

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I didn't want to hear it and I avoided him when I got off the train. I spent my Saturday nights in New York because those gleaming, dazzling parties of his were with me so vividly that I could still hear the music and the laughter, faint and incessant, from his garden, and the cars going up and down his drive. One night I did hear a material car there, and saw its lights stop at his front steps. But I didn't investigate. Probably it was some final guest who had been away at the ends of the earth and didn't know that the party was over. On the last night, with my trunk packed and my car sold to the grocer, I went over and looked at that huge incoherent failure of a house once more. On the white steps an obscene word, scrawled by some boy with a piece of brick, stood out clearly in the moonlight, and I erased it, drawing my shoe raspily along the stone. Then I wandered down to the beach and sprawled out on the sand. Most of the big shore places were closed now and there were hardly any lights except the shadowy, moving glow of a ferryboat across the Sound. And as the moon rose higher the inessential houses began to melt away until gradually I became aware of the old island here that flowered once for Dutch sailors' eyes — a fresh, green breast of the new world. Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder. And as I sat there brooding on the old, unknown world, I thought of Gatsby's wonder when he first picked out the green light at the end of Daisy's dock. He had come a long way to this blue lawn, and his dream must have seemed so close that he could hardly fail to grasp it. He did not know that it was already behind him, somewhere back in that vast obscurity beyond the city, where the dark fields of the republic rolled on under the night. Gatsby believed in the green light, the orgastic future that year by year recedes before us. It eluded us then, but that's no matter — to-morrow we will run faster, stretch out our arms farther... . And one fine morning — — So we beat on, boats against the current, borne back ceaselessly into the past.

Letter 1

To Mrs. Saville, England,

You will rejoice to hear that no disaster has accompanied the commencement of an enterprise which you have regarded with such evil forebodings. I arrived here yesterday, and my first task is to assure my dear sister of my welfare and increasing confidence in the success of my undertaking.

I am already far north of London, and as I walk in the streets of Petersburg, I feel a cold northern breeze play upon my cheeks, which braces my nerves and fills me with delight. Do you understand this feeling? This breeze, which has travelled from the regions towards which I am advancing, gives me a foretaste of those icy climes. Inspirited by this wind of promise, my daydreams become more fervent and vivid. I try in vain to be persuaded that the pole is the seat of frost and desolation; it ever presents itself to my imagination as the region of beauty and delight. There, Margaret, the sun is for ever visible, its broad disk just skirting the horizon and diffusing a perpetual splendour. There—for with your leave, my sister, I will put some trust in preceding navigators—there snow and frost are banished; and, sailing over a calm sea, we may be wafted to a land surpassing in wonders and in beauty every region hitherto discovered on the habitable globe. Its productions and features may be without example, as the phenomena of the heavenly bodies undoubtedly are in those undiscovered solitudes. What may not be expected in a country of eternal light? I may there discover the wondrous power which attracts the needle and may regulate a thousand celestial observations that require only this voyage to render their seeming eccentricities consistent for ever. I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited, and may tread a land never before imprinted by the foot of man. These are my enticements, and they are sufficient to conquer all fear of danger or death and to induce me to commence this laborious voyage with the joy a child feels when he embarks in a little boat, with his holiday mates, on an expedition of discovery up his native river. But supposing all these conjectures to be false, you cannot contest the inestimable benefit which I shall confer on all mankind, to the last generation, by discovering a passage near the pole to those countries, to reach which at present so many months

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are requisite; or by ascertaining the secret of the magnet, which, if at all possible, can only be effected by an undertaking such as mine.

These reflections have dispelled the agitation with which I began my letter, and I feel my heart glow with an enthusiasm which elevates me to heaven, for nothing contributes so much to tranquillise the mind as a steady purpose—a point on which the soul may fix its intellectual eye. This expedition has been the favourite dream of my early years. I have read with ardour the accounts of the various voyages which have been made in the prospect of arriving at the North Pacific Ocean through the seas which surround the pole. You may remember that a history of all the voyages made for purposes of discovery composed the whole of our good Uncle Thomas' library. My education was neglected, yet I was passionately fond of reading. These volumes were my study day and night, and my familiarity with them increased that regret which I had felt, as a child, on learning that my father's dying injunction had forbidden my uncle to allow me to embark in a seafaring life.

These visions faded when I perused, for the first time, those poets whose effusions entranced my soul and lifted it to heaven. I also became a poet and for one year lived in a paradise of my own creation; I imagined that I also might obtain a niche in the temple where the names of Homer and Shakespeare are consecrated. You are well acquainted with my failure and how heavily I bore the disappointment. But just at that time I inherited the fortune of my cousin, and my thoughts were turned into the channel of their earlier bent.

Six years have passed since I resolved on my present undertaking. I can, even now, remember the hour from which I dedicated myself to this great enterprise. I commenced by inuring my body to hardship. I accompanied the whale-fishers on several expeditions to the North Sea; I voluntarily endured cold, famine, thirst, and want of sleep; I often worked harder than the common sailors during the day and devoted my nights to the study of mathematics, the theory of medicine, and those branches of physical science from which a naval adventurer might derive the greatest practical advantage. Twice I actually hired myself as an under-mate in a Greenland whaler, and acquitted myself to admiration. I must own I felt a little proud when my captain offered me the second dignity in the vessel and entreated me to remain with the greatest earnestness, so valuable did he consider my services.

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And now, dear Margaret, do I not deserve to accomplish some great purpose? My life might have been passed in ease and luxury, but I preferred glory to every enticement that wealth placed in my path. Oh, that some encouraging voice would answer in the affirmative! My courage and my resolution is firm; but my hopes fluctuate, and my spirits are often depressed. I am about to proceed on a long and difficult voyage, the emergencies of which will demand all my fortitude: I am required not only to raise the spirits of others, but sometimes to sustain my own, when theirs are failing.

This is the most favourable period for travelling in Russia. They fly quickly over the snow in their sledges; the motion is pleasant, and, in my opinion, far more agreeable than that of an English stagecoach. The cold is not excessive, if you are wrapped in furs—a dress which I have already adopted, for there is a great difference between walking the deck and remaining seated motionless for hours, when no exercise prevents the blood from actually freezing in your veins. I have no ambition to lose my life on the post-road between St. Petersburg and Archangel.

I shall depart for the latter town in a fortnight or three weeks; and my intention is to hire a ship there, which can easily be done by paying the insurance for the owner, and to engage as many sailors as I think necessary among those who are accustomed to the whale-fishing. I do not intend to sail until the month of June; and when shall I return? Ah, dear sister, how can I answer this question? If I succeed, many, many months, perhaps years, will pass before you and I may meet. If I fail, you will see me again soon, or never.

Farewell, my dear, excellent Margaret. Heaven shower down blessings on you, and save me, that I may again and again testify my gratitude for all your love and kindness.

Your affectionate brother,

R. Walton

Chapter 2

We were brought up together; there was not quite a year difference in our ages. I need not say that we were strangers to any species of disunion or dispute. Harmony was the soul of our companionship, and the diversity and contrast that subsisted in our characters drew us nearer together. Elizabeth was of a calmer and more concentrated disposition; but, with all my ardour, I was capable of a more intense application and was more deeply smitten with the thirst for knowledge. She busied herself with following the aerial creations of the poets; and in the majestic and wondrous scenes which surrounded our Swiss home—the sublime shapes of the mountains, the changes of the seasons, tempest and calm, the silence of winter, and the life and turbulence of our Alpine summers—she found ample scope for admiration and delight. While my companion contemplated with a serious and satisfied spirit the magnificent appearances of things, I delighted in investigating their causes. The world was to me a secret which I desired to divine. Curiosity, earnest research to learn the hidden laws of nature, gladness akin to rapture, as they were unfolded to me, are among the earliest sensations I can remember.

On the birth of a second son, my junior by seven years, my parents gave up entirely their wandering life and fixed themselves in their native country. We possessed a house in Geneva, and a *campagne* on Belrive, the eastern shore of the lake, at the distance of rather more than a league from the city. We resided principally in the latter, and the lives of my parents were passed in considerable seclusion. It was my temper to avoid a crowd and to attach myself fervently to a few. I was indifferent, therefore, to my school-fellows in general; but I united myself in the bonds of the closest friendship to one among them. Henry Clerval was the son of a merchant of Geneva. He was a boy of singular talent and fancy. He loved enterprise, hardship, and even danger for its own sake. He was deeply read in books of chivalry and romance. He composed heroic songs and began to write many a tale of enchantment and knightly adventure. He tried to make us act plays and to enter into masquerades, in which the characters were drawn from the heroes of Roncesvalles, of the Round Table of King Arthur, and the chivalrous

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No human being could have passed a happier childhood than myself. My parents were possessed by the very spirit of kindness and indulgence. We felt that they were not the tyrants to rule our lot according to their caprice, but the agents and creators of all the many delights which we enjoyed. When I mingled with other families I distinctly discerned how peculiarly fortunate my lot was, and gratitude assisted the development of filial love.

My temper was sometimes violent, and my passions vehement; but by some law in my temperature they were turned not towards childish pursuits but to an eager desire to learn, and not to learn all things indiscriminately. I confess that neither the structure of languages, nor the code of governments, nor the politics of various states possessed attractions for me. It was the secrets of heaven and earth that I desired to learn; and whether it was the outward substance of things or the inner spirit of nature and the mysterious soul of man that occupied me, still my inquiries were directed to the metaphysical, or in its highest sense, the physical secrets of the world.

Meanwhile Clerval occupied himself, so to speak, with the moral relations of things. The busy stage of life, the virtues of heroes, and the actions of men were his theme; and his hope and his dream was to become one among those whose names are recorded in story as the gallant and adventurous benefactors of our species. The saintly soul of Elizabeth shone like a shrine-dedicated lamp in our peaceful home. Her sympathy was ours; her smile, her soft voice, the sweet glance of her celestial eyes, were ever there to bless and animate us. She was the living spirit of love to soften and attract; I might have become sullen in my study, rough through the ardour of my nature, but that she was there to subdue me to a semblance of her own gentleness. And Clerval—could aught ill entrench on the noble spirit of Clerval? Yet he might not have been so perfectly humane, so thoughtful in his generosity, so full of kindness and tenderness amidst his passion for adventurous exploit, had she not unfolded to him the real loveliness of beneficence and made the doing good the end and aim of his soaring ambition.

I feel exquisite pleasure in dwelling on the recollections of childhood, before misfortune had tainted my mind and changed its bright visions of extensive usefulness into gloomy and narrow reflections upon self. Besides, in drawing the picture of my early days, I also record those events which led, by insensible steps,

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to my after tale of misery, for when I would account to myself for the birth of that passion which afterwards ruled my destiny I find it arise, like a mountain river, from ignoble and almost forgotten sources; but, swelling as it proceeded, it became the torrent which, in its course, has swept away all my hopes and joys.

Natural philosophy is the genius that has regulated my fate; I desire, therefore, in this narration, to state those facts which led to my predilection for that science. When I was thirteen years of age we all went on a party of pleasure to the baths near Thonon; the inclemency of the weather obliged us to remain a day confined to the inn. In this house I chanced to find a volume of the works of Cornelius Agrippa. I opened it with apathy; the theory which he attempts to demonstrate and the wonderful facts which he relates soon changed this feeling into enthusiasm. A new light seemed to dawn upon my mind, and bounding with joy, I communicated my discovery to my father. My father looked carelessly at the title page of my book and said, "Ah! Cornelius Agrippa! My dear Victor, do not waste your time upon this; it is sad trash."

If, instead of this remark, my father had taken the pains to explain to me that the principles of Agrippa had been entirely exploded and that a modern system of science had been introduced which possessed much greater powers than the ancient, because the powers of the latter were chimerical, while those of the former were real and practical, under such circumstances I should certainly have thrown Agrippa aside and have contented my imagination, warmed as it was, by returning with greater ardour to my former studies. It is even possible that the train of my ideas would never have received the fatal impulse that led to my ruin. But the cursory glance my father had taken of my volume by no means assured me that he was acquainted with its contents, and I continued to read with the greatest avidity.

From this day natural philosophy, and particularly chemistry, in the most comprehensive sense of the term, became nearly my sole occupation. I read with ardour those works, so full of genius and discrimination, which modern inquirers have written on these subjects. I attended the lectures and cultivated the acquaintance of the men of science of the university, and I found even in M. Krempe a great deal of sound sense and real information, combined, it is true, with a repulsive physiognomy and manners, but not on that account the less valuable. In

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M. Waldman I found a true friend. His gentleness was never tinged by dogmatism, and his instructions were given with an air of frankness and good nature that banished every idea of pedantry. In a thousand ways he smoothed for me the path of knowledge and made the most abstruse inquiries clear and facile to my apprehension. My application was at first fluctuating and uncertain; it gained strength as I proceeded and soon became so ardent and eager that the stars often disappeared in the light of morning whilst I was yet engaged in my laboratory.

As I applied so closely, it may be easily conceived that my progress was rapid. My ardour was indeed the astonishment of the students, and my proficiency that of the masters. Professor Krempe often asked me, with a sly smile, how Cornelius Agrippa went on, whilst M. Waldman expressed the most heartfelt exultation in my progress. Two years passed in this manner, during which I paid no visit to Geneva, but was engaged, heart and soul, in the pursuit of some discoveries which I hoped to make. None but those who have experienced them can conceive of the enticements of science. In other studies you go as far as others have gone before you, and there is nothing more to know; but in a scientific pursuit there is continual food for discovery and wonder. A mind of moderate capacity which closely pursues one study must infallibly arrive at great proficiency in that study; and I, who continually sought the attainment of one object of pursuit and was solely wrapped up in this, improved so rapidly that at the end of two years I made some discoveries in the improvement of some chemical instruments, which procured me great esteem and admiration at the university. When I had arrived at this point and had become as well acquainted with the theory and practice of natural philosophy as depended on the lessons of any of the professors at Ingolstadt, my residence there being no longer conducive to my improvements, I thought of returning to my friends and my native town, when an incident happened that protracted my stay.

One of the phenomena which had peculiarly attracted my attention was the structure of the human frame, and, indeed, any animal endued with life. Whence, I often asked myself, did the principle of life proceed? It was a bold question, and one which has ever been considered as a mystery; yet with how many things are we upon the brink of becoming acquainted, if cowardice or carelessness did not restrain our inquiries. I revolved these circumstances in my mind and determined thenceforth to apply myself more particularly to those branches of natural

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philosophy which relate to physiology. Unless I had been animated by an almost supernatural enthusiasm, my application to this study would have been irksome and almost intolerable. To examine the causes of life, we must first have recourse to death. I became acquainted with the science of anatomy, but this was not sufficient; I must also observe the natural decay and corruption of the human body. In my education my father had taken the greatest precautions that my mind should be impressed with no supernatural horrors. I do not ever remember to have trembled at a tale of superstition or to have feared the apparition of a spirit. Darkness had no effect upon my fancy, and a churchyard was to me merely the receptacle of bodies deprived of life, which, from being the seat of beauty and strength, had become food for the worm. Now I was led to examine the cause and progress of this decay and forced to spend days and nights in vaults and charnel-houses. My attention was fixed upon every object the most insupportable to the delicacy of the human feelings. I saw how the fine form of man was degraded and wasted; I beheld the corruption of death succeed to the blooming cheek of life; I saw how the worm inherited the wonders of the eye and brain. I paused, examining and analysing all the minutiae of causation, as exemplified in the change from life to death, and death to life, until from the midst of this darkness a sudden light broke in upon me—a light so brilliant and wondrous, yet so simple, that while I became dizzy with the immensity of the prospect which it illustrated, I was surprised that among so many men of genius who had directed their inquiries towards the same science, that I alone should be reserved to discover so astonishing a secret.

Remember, I am not recording the vision of a madman. The sun does not more certainly shine in the heavens than that which I now affirm is true. Some miracle might have produced it, yet the stages of the discovery were distinct and probable. After days and nights of incredible labour and fatigue, I succeeded in discovering the cause of generation and life; nay, more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter.

The astonishment which I had at first experienced on this discovery soon gave place to delight and rapture. After so much time spent in painful labour, to arrive at once at the summit of my desires was the most gratifying consummation of my toils. But this discovery was so great and overwhelming that all the steps by which

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I had been progressively led to it were obliterated, and I beheld only the result. What had been the study and desire of the wisest men since the creation of the world was now within my grasp. Not that, like a magic scene, it all opened upon me at once: the information I had obtained was of a nature rather to direct my endeavours so soon as I should point them towards the object of my search than to exhibit that object already accomplished. I was like the Arabian who had been buried with the dead and found a passage to life, aided only by one glimmering and seemingly ineffectual light.

I see by your eagerness and the wonder and hope which your eyes express, my friend, that you expect to be informed of the secret with which I am acquainted; that cannot be; listen patiently until the end of my story, and you will easily perceive why I am reserved upon that subject. I will not lead you on, unguarded and ardent as I then was, to your destruction and infallible misery. Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example, how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge and how much happier that man is who believes his native town to be the world, than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will allow.

When I found so astonishing a power placed within my hands, I hesitated a long time concerning the manner in which I should employ it. Although I possessed the capacity of bestowing animation, yet to prepare a frame for the reception of it, with all its intricacies of fibres, muscles, and veins, still remained a work of inconceivable difficulty and labour. I doubted at first whether I should attempt the creation of a being like myself, or one of simpler organization; but my imagination was too much exalted by my first success to permit me to doubt of my ability to give life to an animal as complex and wonderful as man. The materials at present within my command hardly appeared adequate to so arduous an undertaking, but I doubted not that I should ultimately succeed. I prepared myself for a multitude of reverses; my operations might be incessantly baffled, and at last my work be imperfect, yet when I considered the improvement which every day takes place in science and mechanics, I was encouraged to hope my present attempts would at least lay the foundations of future success. Nor could I consider the magnitude and complexity of my plan as any argument of its impracticability. It was with these feelings that I began the creation of a human being. As the minuteness of the parts formed a great hindrance to my speed, I resolved, contrary to my first intention, to

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make the being of a gigantic stature, that is to say, about eight feet in height, and proportionably large. After having formed this determination and having spent some months in successfully collecting and arranging my materials, I began.

No one can conceive the variety of feelings which bore me onwards, like a hurricane, in the first enthusiasm of success. Life and death appeared to me ideal bounds, which I should first break through, and pour a torrent of light into our dark world. A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs. Pursuing these reflections, I thought that if I could bestow animation upon lifeless matter, I might in process of time (although I now found it impossible) renew life where death had apparently devoted the body to corruption.

These thoughts supported my spirits, while I pursued my undertaking with unremitting ardour. My cheek had grown pale with study, and my person had become emaciated with confinement. Sometimes, on the very brink of certainty, I failed; yet still I clung to the hope which the next day or the next hour might realise. One secret which I alone possessed was the hope to which I had dedicated myself; and the moon gazed on my midnight labours, while, with unrelaxed and breathless eagerness, I pursued nature to her hiding-places. Who shall conceive the horrors of my secret toil as I dabbled among the unhallowed damps of the grave or tortured the living animal to animate the lifeless clay? My limbs now tremble, and my eyes swim with the remembrance; but then a resistless and almost frantic impulse urged me forward; I seemed to have lost all soul or sensation but for this one pursuit. It was indeed but a passing trance, that only made me feel with renewed acuteness so soon as, the unnatural stimulus ceasing to operate, I had returned to my old habits. I collected bones from charnel-houses and disturbed, with profane fingers, the tremendous secrets of the human frame. In a solitary chamber, or rather cell, at the top of the house, and separated from all the other apartments by a gallery and staircase, I kept my workshop of filthy creation; my eyeballs were starting from their sockets in attending to the details of my employment. The dissecting room and the slaughter-house furnished many of my materials; and often did my human nature turn with loathing from my occupation,

Dracula

4 May.—I found that my landlord had got a letter from the Count, directing him to secure the best place on the coach for me; but on making inquiries as to details he seemed somewhat reticent, and pretended that he could not understand my German. This could not be true, because up to then he had understood it perfectly; at least, he answered my questions exactly as if he did. He and his wife, the old lady who had received me, looked at each other in a frightened sort of way. He mumbled out that the money had been sent in a letter, and that was all he knew. When I asked him if he knew Count Dracula, and could tell me anything of his castle, both he and his wife crossed themselves, and, saying that they knew nothing at all, simply refused to speak further. It was so near the time of starting that I had no time to ask any one else, for it was all very mysterious and not by any means comforting.

Just before I was leaving, the old lady came up to my room and said in a very hysterical way:

“Must you go? Oh! young Herr, must you go?” She was in such an excited state that she seemed to have lost her grip of what German she knew, and mixed it all up with some other language which I did not know at all. I was just able to follow her by asking many questions. When I told her that I must go at once, and that I was engaged on important business, she asked again:

“Do you know what day it is?” I answered that it was the fourth of May. She shook her head as she said again:

“Oh, yes! I know that! I know that, but do you know what day it is?” On my saying that I did not understand, she went on:

“It is the eve of St. George’s Day. Do you not know that to-night, when the clock strikes midnight, all the evil things in the world will have full sway? Do you know where you are going, and what you are going to?” She was in such evident distress that I tried to comfort her, but without effect. Finally she went down on her knees and implored me not to go; at least to wait a day or two before starting. It was all very ridiculous but I did not feel comfortable. However, there was business to be done, and I could allow nothing to interfere with it. I therefore tried to raise her up, and said, as gravely as I could, that I thanked her, but my duty was imperative, and that I must go. She then rose and dried her eyes, and taking a crucifix from her neck offered it to me. I did not know what to do, for, as an English Churchman, I

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have been taught to regard such things as in some measure idolatrous, and yet it seemed so ungracious to refuse an old lady meaning so well and in such a state of mind. She saw, I suppose, the doubt in my face, for she put the rosary round my neck, and said, "For your mother's sake," and went out of the room. I am writing up this part of the diary whilst I am waiting for the coach, which is, of course, late; and the crucifix is still round my neck. Whether it is the old lady's fear, or the many ghostly traditions of this place, or the crucifix itself, I do not know, but I am not feeling nearly as easy in my mind as usual. If this book should ever reach Mina before I do, let it bring my good-bye. Here comes the coach!

5 May. The Castle.—The grey of the morning has passed, and the sun is high over the distant horizon, which seems jagged, whether with trees or hills I know not, for it is so far off that big things and little are mixed. I am not sleepy, and, as I am not to be called till I awake, naturally I write till sleep comes. There are many odd things to put down, and, lest who reads them may fancy that I dined too well before I left Bistritz, let me put down my dinner exactly. I dined on what they called "robber steak"—bits of bacon, onion, and beef, seasoned with red pepper, and strung on sticks and roasted over the fire, in the simple style of the London cat's meat! The wine was Golden Mediasch, which produces a queer sting on the tongue, which is, however, not disagreeable. I had only a couple of glasses of this, and nothing else.

When I got on the coach the driver had not taken his seat, and I saw him talking with the landlady. They were evidently talking of me, for every now and then they looked at me, and some of the people who were sitting on the bench outside the door—which they call by a name meaning "word-bearer"—came and listened, and then looked at me, most of them pityingly. I could hear a lot of words often repeated, queer words, for there were many nationalities in the crowd; so I quietly got my polyglot dictionary from my bag and looked them out. I must say they were not cheering to me, for amongst them were "Ordog"—Satan, "pokol"—hell, "stregoica"—witch, "vrolok" and "vlkoslak"—both of which mean the same thing, one being Slovak and the other Servian for something that is either were-wolf or vampire. (*Mem.*, I must ask the Count about these superstitions)

Dracula

When we started, the crowd round the inn door, which had by this time swelled to a considerable size, all made the sign of the cross and pointed two fingers towards me. With some difficulty I got a fellow-passenger to tell me what they meant; he would not answer at first, but on learning that I was English, he explained that it was a charm or guard against the evil eye. This was not very pleasant for me, just starting for an unknown place to meet an unknown man; but every one seemed so kind-hearted, and so sorrowful, and so sympathetic that I could not but be touched. I shall never forget the last glimpse which I had of the inn-yard and its crowd of picturesque figures, all crossing themselves, as they stood round the wide archway, with its background of rich foliage of oleander and orange trees in green tubs clustered in the centre of the yard. Then our driver, whose wide linen drawers covered the whole front of the box-seat—"gotza" they call them—cracked his big whip over his four small horses, which ran abreast, and we set off on our journey.

I soon lost sight and recollection of ghostly fears in the beauty of the scene as we drove along, although had I known the language, or rather languages, which my fellow-passengers were speaking, I might not have been able to throw them off so easily. Before us lay a green sloping land full of forests and woods, with here and there steep hills, crowned with clumps of trees or with farmhouses, the blank gable end to the road. There was everywhere a bewildering mass of fruit blossom—apple, plum, pear, cherry; and as we drove by I could see the green grass under the trees spangled with the fallen petals. In and out amongst these green hills of what they call here the "Mittel Land" ran the road, losing itself as it swept round the grassy curve, or was shut out by the straggling ends of pine woods, which here and there ran down the hillsides like tongues of flame. The road was rugged, but still we seemed to fly over it with a feverish haste. I could not understand then what the haste meant, but the driver was evidently bent on losing no time in reaching Borgo Prund. I was told that this road is in summertime excellent, but that it had not yet been put in order after the winter snows. In this respect it is different from the general run of roads in the Carpathians, for it is an old tradition that they are not to be kept in too good order. Of old the Hospadars would not repair them, lest the Turk should think that they were preparing to bring in foreign troops, and so hasten the war which was always really at loading point.

Little Women

“I’ll try and be what he loves to call me, ‘a little woman’ and not be rough and wild, but do my duty here instead of wanting to be somewhere else,” said Jo, thinking that keeping her temper at home was a much harder task than facing a rebel or two down South.

Beth said nothing, but wiped away her tears with the blue army sock and began to knit with all her might, losing no time in doing the duty that lay nearest her, while she resolved in her quiet little soul to be all that Father hoped to find her when the year brought round the happy coming home.

Mrs. March broke the silence that followed Jo’s words, by saying in her cheery voice, “Do you remember how you used to play Pilgrims Progress when you were little things? Nothing delighted you more than to have me tie my piece bags on your backs for burdens, give you hats and sticks and rolls of paper, and let you travel through the house from the cellar, which was the City of Destruction, up, up, to the housetop, where you had all the lovely things you could collect to make a Celestial City.”

“What fun it was, especially going by the lions, fighting Apollyon, and passing through the valley where the hob-goblins were,” said Jo.

“I liked the place where the bundles fell off and tumbled downstairs,” said Meg.

“I don’t remember much about it, except that I was afraid of the cellar and the dark entry, and always liked the cake and milk we had up at the top. If I wasn’t too old for such things, I’d rather like to play it over again,” said Amy, who began to talk of renouncing childish things at the mature age of twelve.

“We never are too old for this, my dear, because it is a play we are playing all the time in one way or another. Our burdens are here, our road is before us, and the longing for goodness and happiness is the guide that leads us through many troubles and mistakes to the peace which is a true Celestial City. Now, my little pilgrims, suppose you begin again, not in play, but in earnest, and see how far on you can get before Father comes home.”

“Really, Mother? Where are our bundles?” asked Amy, who was a very literal young lady.

“Each of you told what your burden was just now, except Beth. I rather think she hasn’t got any,” said her mother.

Little Women

“Yes, I have. Mine is dishes and dusters, and envying girls with nice pianos, and being afraid of people.”

Beth’s bundle was such a funny one that everybody wanted to laugh, but nobody did, for it would have hurt her feelings very much.

“Let us do it,” said Meg thoughtfully. “It is only another name for trying to be good, and the story may help us, for though we do want to be good, it’s hard work and we forget, and don’t do our best.”

“We were in the Slough of Despond tonight, and Mother came and pulled us out as Help did in the book. We ought to have our roll of directions, like Christian. What shall we do about that?” asked Jo, delighted with the fancy which lent a little romance to the very dull task of doing her duty.

“Look under your pillows Christmas morning, and you will find your guidebook,” replied Mrs. March.

They talked over the new plan while old Hannah cleared the table, then out came the four little work baskets, and the needles flew as the girls made sheets for Aunt March. It was uninteresting sewing, but tonight no one grumbled. They adopted Jo’s plan of dividing the long seams into four parts, and calling the quarters Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, and in that way got on capitably, especially when they talked about the different countries as they stitched their way through them.

At nine they stopped work, and sang, as usual, before they went to bed. No one but Beth could get much music out of the old piano, but she had a way of softly touching the yellow keys and making a pleasant accompaniment to the simple songs they sang. Meg had a voice like a flute, and she and her mother led the little choir. Amy chirped like a cricket, and Jo wandered through the airs at her own sweet will, always coming out at the wrong place with a croak or a quaver that spoiled the most pensive tune. They had always done this from the time they could lisp...

Crinkle, crinkle, ’ittle ’tar,
and it had become a household custom, for the mother was a born singer. The first sound in the morning was her voice as she went about the house singing like a

Little Women

"I suppose you are going to college soon? I see you pegging away at your books, no, I mean studying hard." And Jo blushed at the dreadful 'pegging' which had escaped her.

Laurie smiled but didn't seem shocked, and answered with a shrug. "Not for a year or two. I won't go before seventeen, anyway."

"Aren't you but fifteen?" asked Jo, looking at the tall lad, whom she had imagined seventeen already.

"Sixteen, next month."

"How I wish I was going to college! You don't look as if you liked it."

"I hate it! Nothing but grinding or skylarking. And I don't like the way fellows do either, in this country."

"What do you like?"

"To live in Italy, and to enjoy myself in my own way."

Jo wanted very much to ask what his own way was, but his black brows looked rather threatening as he knit them, so she changed the subject by saying, as her foot kept time, "That's a splendid polka! Why don't you go and try it?"

"If you will come too," he answered, with a gallant little bow.

"I can't, for I told Meg I wouldn't, because..." There Jo stopped, and looked undecided whether to tell or to laugh.

"Because, what?"

"You won't tell?"

"Never!"

"Well, I have a bad trick of standing before the fire, and so I burn my frocks, and I scorched this one, and though it's nicely mended, it shows, and Meg told me to keep still so no one would see it. You may laugh, if you want to. It is funny, I know."

But Laurie didn't laugh. He only looked down a minute, and the expression of his face puzzled Jo when he said very gently, "Never mind that. I'll tell you how we can manage. There's a long hall out there, and we can dance grandly, and no one will see us. Please come."

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Jo thanked him and gladly went, wishing she had two neat gloves when she saw the nice, pearl-colored ones her partner wore. The hall was empty, and they had a grand polka, for Laurie danced well, and taught her the German step, which delighted Jo, being full of swing and spring. When the music stopped, they sat down on the stairs to get their breath, and Laurie was in the midst of an account of a students' festival at Heidelberg when Meg appeared in search of her sister. She beckoned, and Jo reluctantly followed her into a side room, where she found her on a sofa, holding her foot, and looking pale.

"I've sprained my ankle. That stupid high heel turned and gave me a sad wrench. It aches so, I can hardly stand, and I don't know how I'm ever going to get home," she said, rocking to and fro in pain.

"I knew you'd hurt your feet with those silly shoes. I'm sorry. But I don't see what you can do, except get a carriage, or stay here all night," answered Jo, softly rubbing the poor ankle as she spoke.

"I can't have a carriage without its costing ever so much. I dare say I can't get one at all, for most people come in their own, and it's a long way to the stable, and no one to send."

"I'll go."

"No, indeed! It's past nine, and dark as Egypt. I can't stop here, for the house is full. Sallie has some girls staying with her. I'll rest till Hannah comes, and then do the best I can."

"I'll ask Laurie. He will go," said Jo, looking relieved as the idea occurred to her.

"Mercy, no! Don't ask or tell anyone. Get me my rubbers, and put these slippers with our things. I can't dance anymore, but as soon as supper is over, watch for Hannah and tell me the minute she comes."

"They are going out to supper now. I'll stay with you. I'd rather."

"No, dear, run along, and bring me some coffee. I'm so tired I can't stir."

So Meg reclined, with rubbers well hidden, and Jo went blundering away to the dining room, which she found after going into a china closet, and opening the door of a room where old Mr. Gardiner was taking a little private refreshment. Making a dart at the table, she secured the coffee, which she immediately spilled, thereby making the front of her dress as bad as the back.

David Copperfield by Charles Dickens

The first objects that assume a distinct presence before me, as I look far back, into the blank of my infancy, are my mother with her pretty hair and youthful shape, and Peggotty with no shape at all, and eyes so dark that they seemed to darken their whole neighbourhood in her face, and cheeks and arms so hard and red that I wondered the birds didn't peck her in preference to apples.

I believe I can remember these two at a little distance apart, dwarfed to my sight by stooping down or kneeling on the floor, and I going unsteadily from the one to the other. I have an impression on my mind which I cannot distinguish from actual remembrance, of the touch of Peggotty's forefinger as she used to hold it out to me, and of its being roughened by needlework, like a pocket nutmeg-grater.

This may be fancy, though I think the memory of most of us can go farther back into such times than many of us suppose; just as I believe the power of observation in numbers of very young children to be quite wonderful for its closeness and accuracy. Indeed, I think that most grown men who are remarkable in this respect, may with greater propriety be said not to have lost the faculty, than to have acquired it; the rather, as I generally observe such men to retain a certain freshness, and gentleness, and capacity of being pleased, which are also an inheritance they have preserved from their childhood.

I might have a misgiving that I am 'meandering' in stopping to say this, but that it brings me to remark that I build these conclusions, in part upon my own experience of myself; and if it should appear from anything I may set down in this narrative that I was a child of close observation, or that as a man I have a strong memory of my childhood, I undoubtedly lay claim to both of these characteristics.

Looking back, as I was saying, into the blank of my infancy, the first objects I can remember as standing out by themselves from a confusion of things, are my mother and Peggotty. What else do I remember? Let me see.

There comes out of the cloud, our house—not new to me, but quite familiar, in its earliest remembrance. On the ground-floor is Peggotty's kitchen, opening into a back yard; with a pigeon-house on a pole, in the centre, without any pigeons in it; a great dog-kennel in a corner, without any dog; and a quantity of fowls that look terribly tall to me, walking about, in a menacing and ferocious manner. There is one cock who gets upon a post to crow, and seems to take particular notice of me

David Copperfield by Charles Dickens

as I look at him through the kitchen window, who makes me shiver, he is so fierce. Of the geese outside the side-gate who come waddling after me with their long necks stretched out when I go that way, I dream at night: as a man environed by wild beasts might dream of lions.

Here is a long passage—what an enormous perspective I make of it!—leading from Peggotty's kitchen to the front door. A dark store-room opens out of it, and that is a place to be run past at night; for I don't know what may be among those tubs and jars and old tea-chests, when there is nobody in there with a dimly-burning light, letting a mouldy air come out of the door, in which there is the smell of soap, pickles, pepper, candles, and coffee, all at one whiff. Then there are the two parlours: the parlour in which we sit of an evening, my mother and I and Peggotty—for Peggotty is quite our companion, when her work is done and we are alone—and the best parlour where we sit on a Sunday; grandly, but not so comfortably. There is something of a doleful air about that room to me, for Peggotty has told me—I don't know when, but apparently ages ago—about my father's funeral, and the company having their black cloaks put on. One Sunday night my mother reads to Peggotty and me in there, how Lazarus was raised up from the dead. And I am so frightened that they are afterwards obliged to take me out of bed, and show me the quiet churchyard out of the bedroom window, with the dead all lying in their graves at rest, below the solemn moon.

There is nothing half so green that I know anywhere, as the grass of that churchyard; nothing half so shady as its trees; nothing half so quiet as its tombstones. The sheep are feeding there, when I kneel up, early in the morning, in my little bed in a closet within my mother's room, to look out at it; and I see the red light shining on the sun-dial, and think within myself, 'Is the sun-dial glad, I wonder, that it can tell the time again?'

Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka

I

One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin. He lay on his armour-like back, and if he lifted his head a little he could see his brown belly, slightly domed and divided by arches into stiff sections. The bedding was hardly able to cover it and seemed ready to slide off any moment. His many legs, pitifully thin compared with the size of the rest of him, waved about helplessly as he looked.

“What’s happened to me?” he thought. It wasn’t a dream. His room, a proper human room although a little too small, lay peacefully between its four familiar walls. A collection of textile samples lay spread out on the table—Samsa was a travelling salesman—and above it there hung a picture that he had recently cut out of an illustrated magazine and housed in a nice, gilded frame. It showed a lady fitted out with a fur hat and fur boa who sat upright, raising a heavy fur muff that covered the whole of her lower arm towards the viewer.

Gregor then turned to look out the window at the dull weather. Drops of rain could be heard hitting the pane, which made him feel quite sad. “How about if I sleep a little bit longer and forget all this nonsense”, he thought, but that was something he was unable to do because he was used to sleeping on his right, and in his present state couldn’t get into that position. However hard he threw himself onto his right, he always rolled back to where he was. He must have tried it a hundred times, shut his eyes so that he wouldn’t have to look at the floundering legs, and only stopped when he began to feel a mild, dull pain there that he had never felt before.

“Oh, God”, he thought, “what a strenuous career it is that I’ve chosen! Travelling day in and day out. Doing business like this takes much more effort than doing your own business at home, and on top of that there’s the curse of travelling, worries about making train connections, bad and irregular food, contact with different people all the time so that you can never get to know anyone or become friendly with them. It can all go to Hell!” He felt a slight itch up on his belly; pushed himself slowly up on his back towards the headboard so that he could lift his head better; found where the itch was, and saw that it was covered with lots of little white spots which he didn’t know what to make of; and when he tried to feel

Metamorphosis by Franz Kafka

the place with one of his legs he drew it quickly back because as soon as he touched it he was overcome by a cold shudder.

He slid back into his former position. "Getting up early all the time", he thought, "it makes you stupid. You've got to get enough sleep. Other travelling salesmen live a life of luxury. For instance, whenever I go back to the guest house during the morning to copy out the contract, these gentlemen are always still sitting there eating their breakfasts. I ought to just try that with my boss; I'd get kicked out on the spot. But who knows, maybe that would be the best thing for me. If I didn't have my parents to think about I'd have given in my notice a long time ago, I'd have gone up to the boss and told him just what I think, tell him everything I would, let him know just what I feel. He'd fall right off his desk! And it's a funny sort of business to be sitting up there at your desk, talking down at your subordinates from up there, especially when you have to go right up close because the boss is hard of hearing. Well, there's still some hope; once I've got the money together to pay off my parents' debt to him—another five or six years I suppose—that's definitely what I'll do. That's when I'll make the big change. First of all though, I've got to get up, my train leaves at five."

And he looked over at the alarm clock, ticking on the chest of drawers. "God in Heaven!" he thought. It was half past six and the hands were quietly moving forwards, it was even later than half past, more like quarter to seven. Had the alarm clock not rung? He could see from the bed that it had been set for four o'clock as it should have been; it certainly must have rung. Yes, but was it possible to quietly sleep through that furniture-rattling noise? True, he had not slept peacefully, but probably all the more deeply because of that. What should he do now? The next train went at seven; if he were to catch that he would have to rush like mad and the collection of samples was still not packed, and he did not at all feel particularly fresh and lively. And even if he did catch the train he would not avoid his boss's anger as the office assistant would have been there to see the five o'clock train go, he would have put in his report about Gregor's not being there a long time ago. The office assistant was the boss's man, spineless, and with no understanding. What about if he reported sick? But that would be extremely strained and suspicious as in five years of service Gregor had never once yet been ill. His boss would certainly come round with the doctor from the medical insurance company, accuse

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his parents of having a lazy son, and accept the doctor's recommendation not to make any claim as the doctor believed that no-one was ever ill but that many were workshy. And what's more, would he have been entirely wrong in this case? Gregor did in fact, apart from excessive sleepiness after sleeping for so long, feel completely well and even felt much hungrier than usual.

He was still hurriedly thinking all this through, unable to decide to get out of the bed, when the clock struck quarter to seven. There was a cautious knock at the door near his head. "Gregor", somebody called—it was his mother—"it's quarter to seven. Didn't you want to go somewhere?" That gentle voice! Gregor was shocked when he heard his own voice answering, it could hardly be recognised as the voice he had had before. As if from deep inside him, there was a painful and uncontrollable squeaking mixed in with it, the words could be made out at first but then there was a sort of echo which made them unclear, leaving the hearer unsure whether he had heard properly or not. Gregor had wanted to give a full answer and explain everything, but in the circumstances contented himself with saying: "Yes, mother, yes, thank-you, I'm getting up now." The change in Gregor's voice probably could not be noticed outside through the wooden door, as his mother was satisfied with this explanation and shuffled away. But this short conversation made the other members of the family aware that Gregor, against their expectations was still at home, and soon his father came knocking at one of the side doors, gently, but with his fist. "Gregor, Gregor", he called, "what's wrong?" And after a short while he called again with a warning deepness in his voice: "Gregor! Gregor!" At the other side door his sister came plaintively: "Gregor? Aren't you well? Do you need anything?" Gregor answered to both sides: "I'm ready, now", making an effort to remove all the strangeness from his voice by enunciating very carefully and putting long pauses between each, individual word. His father went back to his breakfast, but his sister whispered: "Gregor, open the door, I beg of you." Gregor, however, had no thought of opening the door, and instead congratulated himself for his cautious habit, acquired from his travelling, of locking all doors at night even when he was at home.

The first thing he wanted to do was to get up in peace without being disturbed, to get dressed, and most of all to have his breakfast. Only then would he consider what to do next, as he was well aware that he would not bring his thoughts to any

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sensible conclusions by lying in bed. He remembered that he had often felt a slight pain in bed, perhaps caused by lying awkwardly, but that had always turned out to be pure imagination and he wondered how his imaginings would slowly resolve themselves today. He did not have the slightest doubt that the change in his voice was nothing more than the first sign of a serious cold, which was an occupational hazard for travelling salesmen.

It was a simple matter to throw off the covers; he only had to blow himself up a little and they fell off by themselves. But it became difficult after that, especially as he was so exceptionally broad. He would have used his arms and his hands to push himself up; but instead of them he only had all those little legs continuously moving in different directions, and which he was moreover unable to control. If he wanted to bend one of them, then that was the first one that would stretch itself out; and if he finally managed to do what he wanted with that leg, all the others seemed to be set free and would move about painfully. "This is something that can't be done in bed", Gregor said to himself, "so don't keep trying to do it".

The first thing he wanted to do was get the lower part of his body out of the bed, but he had never seen this lower part, and could not imagine what it looked like; it turned out to be too hard to move; it went so slowly; and finally, almost in a frenzy, when he carelessly shoved himself forwards with all the force he could gather, he chose the wrong direction, hit hard against the lower bedpost, and learned from the burning pain he felt that the lower part of his body might well, at present, be the most sensitive.

So then he tried to get the top part of his body out of the bed first, carefully turning his head to the side. This he managed quite easily, and despite its breadth and its weight, the bulk of his body eventually followed slowly in the direction of the head. But when he had at last got his head out of the bed and into the fresh air it occurred to him that if he let himself fall it would be a miracle if his head were not injured, so he became afraid to carry on pushing himself forward the same way. And he could not knock himself out now at any price; better to stay in bed than lose consciousness.

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II

It was not until it was getting dark that evening that Gregor awoke from his deep and coma-like sleep. He would have woken soon afterwards anyway even if he hadn't been disturbed, as he had had enough sleep and felt fully rested. But he had the impression that some hurried steps and the sound of the door leading into the front room being carefully shut had woken him. The light from the electric street lamps shone palely here and there onto the ceiling and tops of the furniture, but down below, where Gregor was, it was dark. He pushed himself over to the door, feeling his way clumsily with his antennae—of which he was now beginning to learn the value—in order to see what had been happening there. The whole of his left side seemed like one, painfully stretched scar, and he limped badly on his two rows of legs. One of the legs had been badly injured in the events of that morning—it was nearly a miracle that only one of them had been—and dragged along lifelessly.

It was only when he had reached the door that he realised what it actually was that had drawn him over to it; it was the smell of something to eat. By the door there was a dish filled with sweetened milk with little pieces of white bread floating in it. He was so pleased he almost laughed, as he was even hungrier than he had been that morning, and immediately dipped his head into the milk, nearly covering his eyes with it. But he soon drew his head back again in disappointment; not only did the pain in his tender left side make it difficult to eat the food—he was only able to eat if his whole body worked together as a snuffling whole—but the milk did not taste at all nice. Milk like this was normally his favourite drink, and his sister had certainly left it there for him because of that, but he turned, almost against his own will, away from the dish and crawled back into the centre of the room.

Through the crack in the door, Gregor could see that the gas had been lit in the living room. His father at this time would normally be sat with his evening paper, reading it out in a loud voice to Gregor's mother, and sometimes to his sister, but there was now not a sound to be heard. Gregor's sister would often write and tell him about this reading, but maybe his father had lost the habit in recent times. It was so quiet all around too, even though there must have been somebody in the flat. "What a quiet life it is the family lead", said Gregor to himself, and, gazing into the darkness, felt a great pride that he was able to provide a life like that in

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such a nice home for his sister and parents. But what now, if all this peace and wealth and comfort should come to a horrible and frightening end? That was something that Gregor did not want to think about too much, so he started to move about, crawling up and down the room.

Once during that long evening, the door on one side of the room was opened very slightly and hurriedly closed again; later on the door on the other side did the same; it seemed that someone needed to enter the room but thought better of it. Gregor went and waited immediately by the door, resolved either to bring the timorous visitor into the room in some way or at least to find out who it was; but the door was opened no more that night and Gregor waited in vain. The previous morning while the doors were locked everyone had wanted to get in there to him, but now, now that he had opened up one of the doors and the other had clearly been unlocked some time during the day, no-one came, and the keys were in the other sides. It was not until late at night that the gaslight in the living room was put out, and now it was easy to see that his parents and sister had stayed awake all that time, as they all could be distinctly heard as they went away together on tip-toe. It was clear that no-one would come into Gregor's room any more until morning; that gave him plenty of time to think undisturbed about how he would have to rearrange his life. For some reason, the tall, empty room where he was forced to remain made him feel uneasy as he lay there flat on the floor, even though he had been living in it for five years. Hardly aware of what he was doing other than a slight feeling of shame, he hurried under the couch. It pressed down on his back a little, and he was no longer able to lift his head, but he nonetheless felt immediately at ease and his only regret was that his body was too broad to get it all underneath.

He spent the whole night there. Some of the time he passed in a light sleep, although he frequently woke from it in alarm because of his hunger, and some of the time was spent in worries and vague hopes which, however, always led to the same conclusion: for the time being he must remain calm, he must show patience and the greatest consideration so that his family could bear the unpleasantness that he, in his present condition, was forced to impose on them. Gregor soon had the opportunity to test the strength of his decisions, as early the next morning, almost

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Chapter 3

Not all that Mrs. Bennet, however, with the assistance of her five daughters, could ask on the subject, was sufficient to draw from her husband any satisfactory description of Mr. Bingley. They attacked him in various ways; with barefaced questions, ingenious suppositions, and distant surmises; but he eluded the skill of them all; and they were at last obliged to accept the second-hand intelligence of their neighbour, Lady Lucas. Her report was highly favourable. Sir William had been delighted with him. He was quite young, wonderfully handsome, extremely agreeable, and, to crown the whole, he meant to be at the next assembly with a large party. Nothing could be more delightful! To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love; and very lively hopes of Mr. Bingley's heart were entertained.

"If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield," said Mrs. Bennet to her husband, "and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for."

In a few days Mr. Bingley returned Mr. Bennet's visit, and sat about ten minutes with him in his library. He had entertained hopes of being admitted to a sight of the young ladies, of whose beauty he had heard much; but he saw only the father. The ladies were somewhat more fortunate, for they had the advantage of ascertaining from an upper window, that he wore a blue coat and rode a black horse.

An invitation to dinner was soon afterwards dispatched; and already had Mrs. Bennet planned the courses that were to do credit to her housekeeping, when an answer arrived which deferred it all. Mr. Bingley was obliged to be in town the following day, and consequently unable to accept the honour of their invitation, etc. Mrs. Bennet was quite disconcerted. She could not imagine what business he could have in town so soon after his arrival in Hertfordshire; and she began to fear that he might be always flying about from one place to another, and never settled at Netherfield as he ought to be. Lady Lucas quieted her fears a little by starting the idea of his being gone to London only to get a large party for the ball; and a report soon followed that Mr. Bingley was to bring twelve ladies and seven gentlemen with him to the assembly. The girls grieved over such a number of ladies; but were comforted the day before the ball by hearing, that instead of twelve, he had brought only six with him from London, his five sisters and a cousin. And when the party

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entered the assembly room it consisted of only five altogether; Mr. Bingley, his two sisters, the husband of the eldest, and another young man.

Mr. Bingley was good-looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners. His sisters were fine women, with an air of decided fashion. His brother-in-law, Mr. Hurst, merely looked the gentleman; but his friend Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien, and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with his friend.

Mr. Bingley had soon made himself acquainted with all the principal people in the room; he was lively and unreserved, danced every dance, was angry that the ball closed so early, and talked of giving one himself at Netherfield. Such amiable qualities must speak for themselves. What a contrast between him and his friend! Mr. Darcy danced only once with Mrs. Hurst and once with Miss Bingley, declined being introduced to any other lady, and spent the rest of the evening in walking about the room, speaking occasionally to one of his own party. His character was decided. He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and everybody hoped that he would never come there again. Amongst the most violent against him was Mrs. Bennet, whose dislike of his general behaviour was sharpened into particular resentment by his having slighted one of her daughters.

Elizabeth Bennet had been obliged, by the scarcity of gentlemen, to sit down for two dances; and during part of that time, Mr. Darcy had been standing near enough for her to overhear a conversation between him and Mr. Bingley, who came from the dance for a few minutes, to press his friend to join it.

“Come, Darcy,” said he, “I must have you dance. I hate to see you standing about by yourself in this stupid manner. You had much better dance.”

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“I certainly shall not. You know how I detest it, unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. At such an assembly as this, it would be insupportable. Your sisters are engaged, and there is not another woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up with.”

“I would not be so fastidious as you are,” cried Bingley, “for a kingdom! Upon my honour, I never met with so many pleasant girls in my life as I have this evening; and there are several of them you see uncommonly pretty.”

“You are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room,” said Mr. Darcy, looking at the eldest Miss Bennet.

“Oh! she is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld! But there is one of her sisters sitting down just behind you, who is very pretty, and I dare say very agreeable. Do let me ask my partner to introduce you.”

“Which do you mean?” and turning round, he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said, “She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me.”

Mr. Bingley followed his advice. Mr. Darcy walked off; and Elizabeth remained with no very cordial feelings towards him. She told the story, however, with great spirit among her friends; for she had a lively, playful disposition, which delighted in anything ridiculous.

The evening altogether passed off pleasantly to the whole family. Mrs. Bennet had seen her eldest daughter much admired by the Netherfield party. Mr. Bingley had danced with her twice, and she had been distinguished by his sisters. Jane was as much gratified by this as her mother could be, though in a quieter way. Elizabeth felt Jane’s pleasure. Mary had heard herself mentioned to Miss Bingley as the most accomplished girl in the neighbourhood; and Catherine and Lydia had been fortunate enough to be never without partners, which was all that they had yet learnt to care for at a ball. They returned, therefore, in good spirits to Longbourn, the village where they lived, and of which they were the principal inhabitants. They found Mr. Bennet still up. With a book he was regardless of time; and on the present occasion he had a good deal of curiosity as to the event of an evening