

VOICES

2018-2019



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Making of a Ballerina

Eva Bowles

She was sitting on her freshly laundered twin bed which was in the far-right corner of her room. In her right hand was a crisp white envelope, sealed with red wax, and in her left hand was her phone. Her room was located in the building that housed all the students who attended The School of American Ballet, only her room overlooked the back-street entrance to the Lincoln Center. And why might this door serve a purpose in the story I'm about to tell? Because this door was the door that the company members of the New York City Ballet used during performance nights. Eva desperately wanted to open that door herself one day.

The white envelope in Eva's right hand contained a letter from her school—her home away from home for the past 10 years—and on her phone screen was her mother, patiently waiting to hear the news the envelope contained. The deep lines in her mother's forehead and around her green eyes reflected the same stress as the scar on Eva's right forefinger. Eva had been ripping at it constantly, anxiously anticipating if she had been accepted into the NYCB's apprentice program.

Eva placed the phone on the windowsill and tore open the letter in a panic. She read the first line and then collapsed onto

her bed. The glare on the phone made her mother's reaction always and forever remain a mystery, but I can continue to tell Eva's story. After sitting silently on her bed for a few minutes, she was finally able to speak and she told her mom that she had been accepted into the NYCB apprentice program.

Eva's ballet journey started in the small town of Morristown, New Jersey when she was only three. Her Pre-K gymnastics coach had recommended she take ballet to help with her gymnastics. Little did she know that she would find no love stronger than her love of ballet.

After a long day of jetéing and pirouetting, Eva, now six, walked from the white porch of her house into her kitchen to eat the dinner she and her mom had picked up on the way home from the studio. This was a typical Sunday night routine. Her mom followed her into the kitchen and they both sat down at the grey granite-top island. Earlier that day, Eva's dance instructor had pulled her mother aside to discuss the potential he saw in Eva. He had never seen anyone with such a love of performing at such a young age, with naturally turned out hips, long legs, an equally long torso, and an unusually high instep which made her pointed foot so curved

she could pick up an apple. He told her mom to take her to The School of American Ballet so that Eva could audition. At first, her mom was hesitant about the idea of her daughter having a life and career planned out for her so early in life, but she knew she had to give her daughter the chance.

By the age of 10, Eva had already been training on pointe for two years. She had developed the feet of a 90-year-old woman, the legs stronger than a football player's and she had become a master at breaking in new ballet shoes. Her mother, who had moved them into a one-bedroom apartment on the lower west side of the New York City, taught Eva how to break in new pointe shoes while they watched Eva's favorite movie, *The Turning Pointe*, on the living room floor. Eva's mother had been a dancer in her youth too, but not anywhere near her daughter's level.

Six years later, Eva received the letter of acceptance into the apprenticeship program. The apprenticeship lasted one year, which was the typical duration, and it ended with the most important meeting of Eva's entire life.

The day of the meeting, Eva wore a beautiful navy-blue wool skirt that came down at the perfect length to show the muscles in her legs from the knee down. Her legs looked as if they had been chiseled out of stone and the red suede pumps she wore accentuated her muscles even further. She wore a grey sleeveless blouse the color of New York sidewalks after they've been stained by the rain. The edges of the shirt hit in the middle of her shoulder cap and highlighted her skinny-yet-muscular arms that led down to long and delicate fingers that made any slight movement pleasing than that of the average person. The meeting left her speechless, which was Eva's common reaction after receiving good news. She walked silently until she was at the edge of Central Park and then it had hit her that she was now a company dancer in the New York City Ballet. She called her mom, her old instructor, and her friends back home to tell them the outcome of the meeting.

Eva moved out of her dorm room and into a studio apartment a few blocks south of the Lincoln Center and began her life as a professional ballerina. Her days revolved around ballet and her American bulldog, Tootsie. During the season, Eva woke up at 7:30 each morning to prepare for long days consisting of rehearsals and performances. She would eat breakfast, walk Tootsie to doggy daycare, come back and then pack her bag for the morning dress rehearsals and matinee shows. She would walk down the street past Columbus Circle to the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, and then through the front door into the dressing room

in the back of the building, which was behind the stage. Then Eva started to get ready for rehearsal. She took out her fresh new pointe shoes and got to work. Using a box cutter first, she scored the bottom rubber of the shoes to add friction, and then cut a deep line where the arch of her foot would hit the sole of the shoe. She cracked the shoe in half so that it would bend as sharply as her pointe did. She scraped the satin fabric off the box so that she wouldn't slip and then began to sew. She measured each elastic and satin ribbon twice to ensure no gapping would occur when she transitioned from each position. Then Eva slipped the shoes onto her beautifully worn feet.

After a day of rehearsals and shows, she would pick up Tootsie from across the park and they would go home to eat dinner. If there was an evening performance, which was Eva's personal favorite, she would then make her way back to Lincoln. Those were the only times she would enter through the back door, and every time she grabbed the cold steel handle, she looked back up to the window where she had spent her younger years.

On one cold December night, after breaking in another new pair of pointe shoes, Eva made her way to the side of the stage and stood behind the thick black velvet wing. She was the most coveted tutu in ballet: that of the Sugar Plum Fairy. As a young girl, Eva was always cast as the "pink dress girl" in the opening act of the *Nutcracker* and would fantasize about the day she would dance as the Sugar Plum Fairy. Now, as she ran onto the stage, the bright light illuminated her face and lit up her glittered pink tutu. Her feet made the sound of a knock on a thick oak door as they hit the black Marley stage, but no one in the audience heard it through the beautiful live music and their appreciative "Awws."

At the end of the show, she walked out to the main lobby to greet some of the people who had come to watch her dance. To her surprise, Eva saw Riley, a guy she met while touring with the company. When they first met, they formed a connection so strong that it devastated both of them when Eva had to leave Connecticut and return home to New York. They kept in contact, and Riley would often come watch her dance, but on this night he had come without warning. Riley told her that he wanted to surprise her with the news that he had recently moved to New York. From that night on, they found a love that rivaled Eva's love for dance all those years ago.

Eva danced professionally for as long as she could, but her body eventually began to break down, and it couldn't withstand the constant stress and abuse. The first thing to go



was her hips. They would crack every time she kicked her leg above her knee. Her hip flexors became so inflamed that she needed to keep a plastic baggie filled with crushed ice, which she wrapped in a white dish towel on the side of the stage for in between dances. Her feet, the most abused part of a ballerina's body, were the last to go. She was used to blisters and calluses, but the pain from bunions the size of large grapes protruding from both of her feet which caused her to make the difficult decision to leave the company.

During her time off, Eva started a family with identical twin girls. Eva, Riley, and the girls moved into a 3-story red brick townhouse, surrounded by a black iron fence on the Upper East Side of Manhattan. She stayed home with the girls

for the next five years, spending her days around each of the rooms in the house with them, and occasionally going to the Lincoln Center to watch the ballet. It had almost seemed as if both of the girls began dancing from the moment they started walking.

When the girls became older and spent their days in school, Eva found herself longing to be involved with the ballet again. She knew her career as a professional ballerina was over—her body had never fully recovered—so she began teaching at The School of American. She retired when she was 65 years old, and she and Riley spent all of their time together watching their daughters evolve into prima ballerinas, just as their mother had.

Water Girl

Amanda Barrett

What a strange sensation to be weighed down
To feel someone or something or somewhat pushing on your shoulders
Yet to turn and see nothing
To convince yourself it's nothing
But an inexorable burden that you can't remove
I scream at it
I tell it to just take away my shoulders
I don't need them if they will always feel this way
Please, I beg
I can live without shoulders
But I cannot live with heaviness
Not when my legs are made of candle wicks
The match begins
The fighters burn into oblivion
But what am I even fighting?
The weight?
This life?
Myself?
I'm not an angry person
But there is so much that I wish I had said
That I wish I would say
Because there are people made of fire
And there are people made of water
I am made of the ocean
The seas, the rivers, the streams
So when my blood boils
I know that inferno is nearby
Water is powerful
It is beautiful yet unforgiving
Malleable yet stubborn
So why does the sidewalk sizzle with every step I take
Why do I fall down the throats of the fire people?
I am meant to climb the roots of trees
And wash away impurities
But it can be lonely to be water
To always feel like you need to wash people
That the dirt within your currents
Is simply obligation
You compensate for this by letting fire burn it away
But you can't only burn the soil
You must disintegrate as well
Is it better to be murky or nonexistent?

Reflex Test

Calli Tilson

Someone stops your adoptive mother in Hy-Vee, cooing over how cute you are, little Asian baby in a white mother's grocery cart, planted there between iceberg lettuce and red potatoes.

Stranger: "How old?"

Mother "Eight months."

Stranger: "Does she eat American food like hotdogs and stuff? Or just Chinese food?"

Mother: "She's a baby...she eats baby food."

You and your mother laugh about it eighteen years later at the dining table, hysterical. You can't believe someone would ask that, would even think of that. How ignorant, how funny. It becomes one of your favorite anecdotes, tucked between your ribs, left side.

In kindergarten, a classmate asks you what you are. This question will resurface ten thousand times before you are nineteen, sometimes phrased politely and sometimes bluntly, but still the same. What are you? You have black hair, tan skin, eyelids that are flat. In the library, the picture books about race indicate you are Asian, so this is what you tell your classmate. He asks you where you were born, but you don't know. You tell him you are Chinese. Then in sixth grade, you do a project about China because you want yourself to be Chinese instead of just "Asian." You know a lot about China after that. There are long noodles and the Lunar New Year.

There are mooncakes and quipao dresses. You feel connected to the people of China, closely studying the pictures of packed streets and people wearing surgical masks you find in thin hardcover books with titles like "China" or "Insights into Chinese Culture."

What are you? In seventh grade, you finally ask. Your mother pulls down a big blue binder, heavy and wide. It's dusty. You learn lots of things about yourself that night, slotting together puzzle pieces you didn't even know were missing. You are Korean. You were born in Busan. Your name is Lee Seung-Mee. Your biological father was a student in college. Your biological mother was nineteen. Now when people ask what you are, you tell them you are Korean. You are a little disappointed you are not Chinese, but mostly it feels nice to have answers, even though no one knows where Korea is. They still called you Chinese some days, Japanese on others. Once, you get called Vietnamese. You correct them until everyone knows you are Korean, and you are proud.

You meet others like you, a girl and a boy who are Asian and adopted. A miracle of sorts, to not be the only Asian in the entire school district. The three of you bond by trading the worst things that have been said about your eyes, your skin, your face, your mothers. You are the oldest by a couple years; it doesn't take them long to start calling you mother too. The title feels nice, like it fits, if only because you want



to be the person you wish you would have had, to teach them to be proud about their heritage and protect them from cruel words. But even then you can only do so much.

When the workers at the local Asian market start to stare at your little group like the people at school, you don't know what to do. Here they're unbothered until you open your mouth to betray how flawlessly American you are. Their eyes look either bitter or disgusted, bodies skirting around you in big arcs. It happens every time, in every Asian store and market; each trip making you feel increasingly embarrassed and then angry. You thought you were over the not-belonging. Or rather the half-belonging, stuck in a limbo where either your skin is wrong, or your upbringing is wrong. No matter what you do, you can't seem to fit in anywhere. You want to scream at them that you belong here just as much as they do, that you are one of them, but that isn't quite right either. There isn't much you can do about the culture you were raised up in, but you can't even say hello in Korean.

In eighth grade some kid named Dieter says, "Your

parents got eaten by dogs in the mountains." He's joking, so you laugh even though it isn't funny. Dieter is well-liked and seems nice, though, so you add on to the joke, something about eating dogs. This is when you discover that if you make jokes at the expense of your appearance, people will think you are funny. It's easy to regurgitate the stereotypes you've already heard, even if it leaves a sour taste in your mouth. You are still proud of your heritage, but you learn to ignore that pride.

When your mother introduces you to new people this is how it goes, eight times out of ten:

Mother: "This is my daughter."

You: "Hello. Nice to meet you."

Mother, an arm around your neck, half-choking you with her elbow: "Can't you tell she's my daughter? Don't we look alike?"

And then the new acquaintance will either glance away or laugh and play along. Part of you finds it amusing, the way they can't help but stare at your black hair, your tan skin, your Asian eyes. Comparing each to your mother's fair features. Mostly you want to apologize to them. You are embarrassed, partially for yourself, partially on behalf of your mother. The gag routine is not that good. Everyone ends up laughing anyway. Here is the doctor poised with his hammer. Here is the joke. Here is the hammer swinging down to connect with the knee, which jerks, helpless. There, the punchline! Somewhere, the patient is laughing. Isn't it funny?

Spoiler: it's not, really.

But it's too much to expect people to think with their brains and their bodies and besides, it wouldn't be as effective if they did. Things like jokes and nerve tests rely on automatic response, not thought. The brain just gets in the way.

The catalyst is junior year of high school. This is when Nathan from band calls you a Chink, his cherry red Trump hat sitting high on his thin, mousy hair. Everyone in the room knows what will happen before it does: chubby fingers on the temple, skin pulled back, look, I'm you! He is drum major; people like him. You thought you liked him, too. Now, everyone is expecting you to laugh, because that is what you do. Instead, you slap him in the face before you can think twice. You have rings on, both of them fire-burst-cut and bright blue, fogged with the same red that is smearing down his cheek. Earlier that year your best friend Shannon had said your jokes weren't that funny. You were relieved. You wanted to scream I know, I know, and take them all back.

The Power of Images — “America”

Junqiu Shi

Right before the 2016 Democratic Caucus, Bernie Sanders released a powerful political advertisement named “America,” that reminded his followers how much he had achieved with their strong support. The ad is simply a composition of images meant to represent the American people’s daily lives, and there is no written script apart from Simon and Garfunkel’s song “America” as background music. By showing the power of images and music instead of relying on a prewritten script, Bernie Sanders effectively aroused a hope that if people voted for him, their own dreams will finally be achieved.

The ad starts with a few images of Anytown, USA, successfully triggering viewers’ idealized memories of peace and stimulating their eagerness to continue living this harmoni-

ously in the future. The first few seconds of the ad are a montage of snowy houses, cows, haystacks, and a bird’s-eye view of a small town. These images vividly paint an agreeable portrait of a slow-paced and bucolic life, free from conflicts and turmoil.

People begin appearing intermittently on the screen, usually in groups of two, smiling and pleasantly interacting with each other. The ad’s soft background music also helps the audience to associate these images with happy feelings and a sense of harmony.

These moments trigger viewers’ memories of related positive experiences, in order to further confirm to the audience

that this kind of desirable life is possible and is still happening somewhere in America. In doing so, the images of peace successfully evoke a sense of yearning for the televised ver-



sion of America, causing viewers to feel motivated to safeguard any current source of their own happiness. These images also provide viewers with the fantasy that similar happy moments are on the horizon. By showing scenes of people in relaxed interactions, the ad arouses audience’s willingness to seek environments where these sorts of joyful encounters occur. Hence, it further inspires the audience to start looking for possible ways that they can start or continue living such a desirable life. The ad effectively appeals to viewers’ emotions from the start, and persuades them to be more attentive to Bernie Sanders’s subsequent appearance and amenable to the belief that he will help them achieve their dreams.

As the ad transitions from life moments to the first appearance of Bernie Sanders, it also singles out images of prospective leaders, in sync with Simon and Garfunkel singing “let us be lovers, we’ll marry our fortunes together.” This line suggests that cooperation is the only method to achieve ultimate success, and that Bernie Sanders is the person who will cooperate best with the majority. Additionally, the words “lovers” and “marry” implicitly reflect Bernie’s promises and reinforce the audience’s expectations of the attitude and actions he will take while cooperating. By showing Bernie smiling and talking kindly to his supporters, the ad provides strong evidence to support Bernie’s promises, as well as implying Bernie’s ability to achieve his goals. By appearing on-screen in equal or even less time than his supporters do, Bernie is sending a message of equality, which further highlights the importance of cooperation and also implies a sincere request for voter support. Though the ad, Bernie is portrayed as a representative of the people rather than a leader of the majority. He symbolizes the voice of the people and suggests that the voice can only be heard if everyone sticks together and gives their support to him. Through the ad’s lyrics and scenes of Bernie and voters, Bernie sends a signal about his current beliefs, cooperation, and successfully suggests that viewers should vote for him to win the caucus.

The ad gradually shifts the focus from the collaboration between Bernie Sanders and his supporters to the strength of the bond between voters. The importance of collaboration between supporters is further accentuated by an expanding grid with the faces of thousands of Bernie’s supporters, together with the lyrics “they’ve all come to look for America.” The word “they” in the lyrics embellishes the number of participants and generates a feeling of limitlessness. By crafting an impression of popularity, the ad successfully appeals to the audience’s communal feelings and a sense of responsibility. Additionally, when the number of people gradually develops

from smaller groups to a strikingly huge rally, it is still easy to spot the small groups and families in the overwhelming crowds, suggesting that a large group is composed of small, individual groups, not merely a collection of separated entities. The compositions of small groups play on possible fears of feeling separate and isolated, and assure the audience, especially those unsure about their future choices, that they will be involved and welcomed by the large group. The interactions within the small groups underscores the close relationships among individuals and generates a sense of reward and achievement apart from encouraging voters to contribute to and support Bernie’s campaign.

The idea of connection and inclusiveness is also developed through the images of people’s physical interactions; they are hugging, handshaking, high five-ing, and Bernie is even taking selfies with supporters. These onscreen interactions effectively attenuate feelings of separateness and alienation for viewers, and at the same time, foster viewers’ optimism in pursuing better lives through their willingness to vote. As the number of people in the ad increases, the sound of cheers and applause successfully builds to a crescendo. This overwhelming vocal praise communicates an infectious enthusiasm in the voters and this dramatic emotional transformation indicates a sign of the coming success, which promotes an eagerness to join in from the audience. The strong emotion in the ad encourages individuals who are unsure about their choices that they will feel supported when making a decision that millions of other people agree with. It also affirms the supporters’ decision, confirming that choosing Bernie Sanders is a correct and urgent universal wish.

The Bernie Sanders “America” ad was rated SpotCheck’s happiest and the most hopeful ad from 2016. Its positive and powerful images and song together significantly influence the audience and make them eager to vote, rather than feel threatened. Though the ad failed to help Bernie become the Democratic nominee or President, the ad’s positive reception suggests people’s expectations for political ads in the future. The ad also indicates the attitudes voters want from future candidates to really lead and represent the majority.

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Jess

Alyssa Bear

I met you when we were kindergarteners, only 3-foot-tall. We got stuck in the same class, where the only fun we could have was watching baby chickens hatch for three weeks out of the year. We were both lucky enough to be raised well. Academics came easily to us, which was a blessing because we never had to try to do well in school. Sports is a different story. We weren't good at sports. Being good at

sports was the only way to be a cool kid in school, so we were bound to play any sport they allowed us to. I took up volleyball. You took up cheer. We both became popular.

May fifteenth arrived and 136 other high schoolers, including you and I, walked across a roll-away stage in our small gymnasium, threw our caps in the air, and acted like we were sad to leave high school.

"You aren't gonna miss high school?" you asked me.

"You are?" I said.

You laughed and said, "I guess you've got a point."

The day before we both left for college was sad, almost sad enough that I wondered if I should even leave my hometown. You and I got together with friends that night and we just drove around town for hours, blaring country music with the windows rolled down.

"Hey, do you guys think we'll be those friends that lose touch?" you asked.

"What do you mean?" our friend, Maddy, responded.

"Like... do you think we'll all make new friends and our high school friendships will kind of fade out?" you said.

We all grew silent after you asked that question, not because we thought we were going to lose touch, but because everything started to feel so real. Realizing you're not going to see the people you grew up with every day is a weird feeling.

"I'm gonna miss you guys," I said.

Everyone cried when I said that, but they also laughed. We were all laughing at the fact that we were crying. We drove around for about another hour and then I started to drive people home, one-by-one. We said our goodbyes, hugged, and wished each other good luck at college.

When the day came to leave for college, I was scared. I was going to a college four hours away from my hometown, but the drive felt like twenty minutes. Moving in was long process because it felt like 100 degrees outside. My parents weren't too happy that we had to make about ten trips up five flights of stairs to get to my dorm room, but it ended up being okay in the end.

My parents left. I cried.

You had just settled into your dorm too. We faceted about our new roommates, about how we were scared to start classes tomorrow, and about how we already missed home. I remember you saying, "I'm nervous I'm not going to make any friends," because I was thinking the same thing. You joined a sorority on your campus and became friends with lots of girls. I didn't join a sorority, but sometimes I wish I had. We both made plenty of friends though. We joined organizations, and after a while, we were both doing pretty well in school. Life was good.

We faceted each other every day while walking to class, or if we were bored, or if we had exciting news. We faceted when we were drunk, or out with our friends, or eating. We

faceted about everything, not because we had to, but we were best friends.

We were both having memorable times at college.

Before we knew it, we were sitting in crammed lecture halls taking our final exams. We didn't talk much that week because we both had to a lot of studying to do. You had a final on Friday, but I was lucky enough to have my last final on Wednesday.

"Hey!" you said.

"Hey, how was your last final?" I responded.

"Not gonna lie, I think I failed, but that's okay. It's over with," you said, laughing.

"I'm sure it went better than you think" I said, trying to reassure you. "So, when are you coming home?"

"Tonight. I'm just gonna run home, grab my stuff, and head out." you said.

I remember getting the call like it was yesterday. I was sitting at the dinner table with my parents, and my phone rang. We weren't allowed to have phones at the table, so I went over to turn the obnoxious ring tone off when I saw that your mom was calling me. I thought it was a little unusual, so I asked to be excused from dinner and took the call. When I heard your mom crying, I wanted to hang the phone up. I didn't want to hear what she had to say because I knew it had something to do with you. Otherwise why wouldn't you be the one calling me? Your mom's words made my stomach drop.

"Jess was in an accident, honey."

Tears began streaming down my face. My palms started sweating. I couldn't breathe.

I can tell the difference between your mom's worried voice and her sad voice, and all I could hear was sadness in her voice. This was how I knew that you were gone.

It didn't seem fair to me that you had been taken by someone who was simply being dumb. When I heard you were killed by a drunk driver, all I wanted to do was scream in the guy's face and tell him it should have been him. But I knew you wouldn't have wanted me to, so I didn't.

Your funeral was beautiful. A lot of people shared their memories of you. A lot of people gave their condolences. A lot of people brought flowers. A lot of people were crying.

There won't be a day I don't miss you, but I know you're in a much better place.



Overcoming Silence in Pursuit of Strength: An Autoethnography on Sibling Abuse

April Bannister

“Siblings are the people we practice on, the people who teach us about fairness and cooperation and kindness and caring—quite often the hard way.” —Pamela Dugdale

My brother is fantastically successful. I have never known anyone to be so admired, so appreciated, so talented. Google his name and you would find him in the national rankings of policy debate, in the top ten of the entire country, a position he has held since his early high school days. My brother is brilliant. My brother is the person we all wish we could be.

I do not remember the first time he hit me. I do not remember the first time he called me ugly, or said I deserved to be hurt, or told me I should kill myself. It happened often enough that the many times afterward are already too much to recall.

It was estimated in 1988 that every three out of 100 children are violent toward a sibling, culminating in over 36 million cases of sibling aggression a year and indicating sibling abuse may be more common than child abuse by parents or spousal abuse (Frazier, Hayes). In 2005, a study published by sociologists in the journal *Child Maltreatment* found 35 percent of children were “hit or attacked” by a sibling in the span of a year prior (Butler). Given the data available thirty years ago and even thirteen years ago, it should be safe to assume that we acknowledge sibling abuse

as a problem. In turn, it should be safe to assume that we have continued studying the subject to try and rectify such a problem. Instead, there is a notable absence of information on sibling abuse, especially information that is easily accessible.

There are a myriad of statistics regarding domestic abuse, but sibling abuse is treated entirely differently. “If I were to hit my wife, no one would have trouble seeing that as an assault or a criminal act. When a child does the same thing to a sibling, the exact same act will be construed as a squabble, a fight or an altercation,” says Dr. David Finkelhor, a sociologist at the University of New Hampshire’s Family Research Laboratory (Butler). Awareness and understanding are not guaranteed solutions to abuse by any means, but these factors do have an incredibly significant impact on the feasibility of a victim’s recovery. There is no shortage of information, hotlines, or treatment centers for domestic abuse victims. In terms of sibling abuse, though, these resources are nowhere to be found.

For the longest time, I had no idea I was being abused. The first time I even mentioned the word was when I was a freshman in high school, confiding in someone I considered a close friend. Her immediate response was that I was

overreacting, putting the word in quotes in the text she sent: “What do you mean he ‘abuses’ you? My sister and I fight all the time. ...” It was at least another year before I said it aloud again, before I began to consider that she was wrong and had manipulated me into lying to myself. It was a year before I realized I had been the victim of something serious that everyone around me had overlooked. Now, I have accumulated years of memories that my fear and lack of validation caused me to keep to myself. Sometimes, a revelation will resurface and hit me with the force of a train, and I keep these to myself as well because I cannot fathom how to explain them. Through educating myself—because no one else did it for me—I have learned that these are repressed memories, common in victims of abuse and trauma.

I had no idea.

My brother used to throw me against the walls of our home when he was angry with me. He incited screaming matches at any given time and rotated through an ever-expanding list of insults, and I was raised to believe all of it was normal. I trusted that my parents had my best intentions at heart and would avoid ever truly putting me in harm’s way, even if it came to protecting me against their own son. I was a good girl, obedient; I took their promises that he loved me at face value, and I learned to absorb the blows and stinging insults without protest. The word abuse never crossed my mind because my parents constantly said, “He’s just playing with you, April” or “It’s a brother’s job to bother his little sister” or “Why are you so sensitive?” Abuse must never have crossed their minds, either, but they were the adults and I was the child. They should have known better. I should have been able to trust them to protect me.

The concept of sibling rivalry overshadowing abuse is far too common and far more dangerous than anyone seems to realize. For one, there are those who believe victims cry abuse when the reality is nothing more than sibling rivalry, and parents are often the greatest perpetrators of this disbelief. When it comes to sexual abuse, this can be especially prevalent. “A negative response to a disclosure, such as being disbelieved, may exacerbate feelings of trauma,” says Mary Stathopoulos, author of the study *Sibling Sexual Abuse* (Neal). I was not sexually abused, but my parents were the first ones in my life to normalize the abuse I was facing. I thought it was my fault when my brother became so upset that he shattered doors and broke windows, and when he screamed and cried and cursed me for what I made him do, my parents comforted him. They told me, “If you don’t stand up for yourself, we aren’t going to do it for you.”

The United States is notorious for a culture of victim blaming. Perhaps the most relevant example from recent times is the treatment of Dr. Christine Blasey Ford in the wake of her allegations of sexual abuse against Brett Kavanaugh, the then-candidate for the position of Supreme Court justice. Despite 24 pages of evidence and a hearing lasting five days, Kavanaugh was successfully appointed to the Supreme Court (Rossi). Dr. Ford, meanwhile, has faced countless acts of anger and retaliation since the hearing, including harassment and death threats that forced her to move four times in a month (Mak). It is as though the justice system is turned on its head when it comes to abuse: Victims are guilty of dishonesty, dramatics, overreactions and the like until proven innocent.

I am not the only one who grew up with an abusive sibling, and I am not the only one who has experienced severe repercussions. In some cases, I would be considered privileged to even still have a relationship with my brother; another survivor, abused as a child by her “bigger, stronger” older brother, now says she is “happy for other people to think I’m an only child” (Neal). 64 percent of sibling abuse survivors never marry, too emotionally damaged to trust others in a domestic position. In extreme situations, sibling abuse can be a warning sign of violence later in life (Webster), and children can lose their lives to their siblings themselves (Apple). There were certainly times that I feared for my own life. I will never forget how the knives felt against my throat when my brother took them from the block in the kitchen and told me casually, “You know, I could kill you with this if I wanted to.” I will never forget my mother watching, seeing everything and saying nothing.

I cannot imagine how my life would have turned out if someone had acknowledged the issue when it all began—while I believe in the power of my advocacy, I have to admit I would sacrifice my knowledge for an abuse-free childhood in a second. I cannot imagine how much pain I could have avoided if my parents stood up for me and disciplined my brother the first time he acted aggressively, the first time he shamed my clothing and my body, the first time he called me insufferable. I still worry that using the word abuse and speaking up will result in being shut down, that someone will come out of the shadows and tell me I am being dramatic or that my brother initiated a sibling rivalry and nothing else. Fortunately, I found people in high school who helped me understand that my pain was valid, and I began using my voice to talk about what I went through.

My college experiences with breaking my silence have not been entirely painless. A few of my friends regularly use the

word “psycho” to tease me and each other, and I find it difficult to tell them it cuts me to my core because my brother used to say it to me. Hearing it takes me back to a different time, when it was said in a different voice and in a much different tone, and I feel the old fear creeping into my chest whenever they use it in conversation. A few times, I have summoned the bravery to ask them to use other words, but they think I am being dramatic and only poke fun at me more. That, too, takes me back.

In other efforts to become braver, to begin sharing my experiences and healing from them, I turned in poetry about my brother to be workshopped in a writing class. Split into four parts, the last focused on working toward forgiveness of my brother, and explicitly stated that I still love him and that I always will. My classmates, however, did not understand my intentions. They said they liked the first few poems, angry and bitter and entirely unforgiving, and found the last to be a shameful declaration of defeat. I suppose I cannot blame them—if people understand abuse at all, they generally adopt the principle that one must escape an abuser in order to recover. No one talks about what to do when the abuser is a family member, when they lived in your house until you were 16, when you still see them on school breaks and holidays. No one talks about the abuser whose bedroom at home is connected to yours, the abuser who has access to you whenever they please. I have been forced to find my own courage. If I am the only one who sees it as courage and not cowardice, then so be it.

Finally, it was just recently that my friends were talking about their siblings at dinner, joking casually about the fights they used to have. When one friend said that her brothers used to throw her into walls, I felt my breath catch in my throat and my heart begin to race. She was laughing and meant it lightly, but it was the exact phrasing that constantly runs through my head in a circuit of pain. I ran out of the dining hall and back to my dorm, collapsed inside my door, and cried. In the moment, I did not have the words to say that I would be seeing my brother over Thanksgiving break for the first time in half a year and it would still be too soon. I told myself that none of them could possibly understand.

There was a time my self-awareness would have ended there, that I would have chosen to remain in miserable silence and allow the panic to consume me because I saw no other

options. By now, though, I have been given too much love and support from too many incredible people to ever let myself fall so low. I made a promise to renounce my silence throughout the coming years, and I am fiercely committed to keeping it. It was a massive accomplishment to realize that thinking I was alone and no one would understand was only the abuse talking, and with this realization, I was finally able to fight back. I confided in another friend as soon as I could. Sometimes, talking is all I can do, and that night, it was enough.

Call me dramatic. Call me oversensitive. Tell me I’m overreacting and that my brother is the greatest person you could ever meet. I have heard it all before.

What matters is that I no longer believe it.

I will no longer be silenced.

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Pressure

Brianna Deason

Bright.

Too bright.

The light above my head glares down on me.

I open my eyes.

I try to shake my head

But I can’t.

My head is fuzzy.

My chest is tight?

Why is it so tight?

It hurts.

Surgery.

Is it supposed to hurt?

Like this?

Hot tears stream down my face.

I plead with the nurse.

The nurse walks next to me.

She fiddles with something

and world fades to black.

But the pressure is there.

Wrapping itself around me

Like a swaddle.

Filling my body.

I have to scream.

I’m screaming

in the doorway.

Stop.

Let my mom go.

My sisters are panicking.

Their cries

make it hard to hear.

Wait.

Mom.

What’s she saying?

Hop?

Cop.

My heart is pounding.

I fumble for her phone.

I flip it open.

I push my sisters back.

I beg the operator.

Help.

What’s the address?

Crap.

What’s the address honey?

Mom, what’s the address?

He has his hands around her throat.

Mail.

It’s on the mail.

Everyone is screaming.

The pressure is building.

I wheeze the address.

She’s telling me to stay calm.

How old are you?

I’m five.

What’s happening?

He’s hurting my mom.

She’s yelling at me.

My sisters are screaming.

The pressure is tightening my chest.

What is happening?

The world is fading black.

My chest is tight.

Too tight.

Pressure.

Recycling: Decision or Requirement?

Kayla Miller

If you would have asked me back in July whether recycling should be mandated throughout the entire state of Iowa, I probably would have said no. Back home, my family never had a recycling bin much less a service that would come pick it up even if we wanted to sort our trash. We were using thousands of water bottles every year, and yet, it didn't faze us one bit. All six of us would go through a 36-pack of water within a week or two. All of that plastic would never be used again due to the fact that we couldn't be bothered to take the bottles to a recycling plant outside of town. It almost seemed pointless to collect that useless plastic, which takes up ample amounts of space, and drive out of our way to throw something out that could have gone in the trash to begin with. This is how I was raised—drink the water, toss the bottle in the trash, walk away, and don't think twice on what it could do. For 18 years, I thought this way, but finally my eyes have been opened to preserving the environment and doing my part to help the earth, causing me to strongly believe that recycling shouldn't be a choice, rather a requirement that the state of Iowa should enforce.

The place that I call home sits along Wolf Road, one of the busiest highways in Geneseo, Illinois. It's the perfect distance from Geneseo and the Quad Cities: 15 minutes each way. The 2-story house contains enough room for six people to live comfortably in and is filled with pictures that mark happy memories throughout our lives. From 5:00 AM to 11:00 PM, you can always hear cars rushing by in hopes of making it to work on time. In the distance, you can see rows upon rows of soy bean and corn fields that mark the territory of the farmers nearby, but most importantly, my family is there, always supporting me in everything that I do. The house that I can call home is perfectly imperfect in every aspect. Since we live

on the outskirts of town, the row of houses that are lined along the highway are all attached to a local well. When the water is streamed to our house, it has a slight cloudy appearance to it and has a very distinct taste. To me, the water isn't purified to the best of its ability but my step-dad insists that it is. My mom being a little skeptical as well always buys water bottles from our local grocery store for us to drink. Studies have shown that lead is appearing in different places all throughout Illinois, which is referenced in the article "Water Testing Finds High Lead Levels in Communities across Illinois". This led us to believe that the water may not have been as good for us as we had hoped. Although it is slightly expensive to always be buying individual water bottles, it is worth having water that is enjoyable and good for our health. For three years, we have been spending \$5.00 every week just to upkeep our needs of hydration and it has become a norm for us.

When I first came to the University of Iowa in August, I was a little shocked to see a recycling bin in my dorm room. This was because I normally wouldn't use a recycling bin—everything just went into the trash. They even provided a "How-To" guide in each room in case others, like myself, needed extra knowledge on the subject. Of course, I went about everything like I normally had for the past decade and a half, until my roommate finally turned to me in bewilderment after she witnessed me throwing away my nth bottle in the waste basket.

"What are you doing?" she asked timidly.

I glanced at the tan waste basket that was located in the corner of the room. "What do you mean?" I replied.

"Do you know that you can recycle those water bottles?" she asked curiously.

I stared at her for a while, not knowing what to say. I



finally broke out of my moment of silence and said, “Yeah, I do. Back home we never recycled, so I guess I’m not used to doing it. It didn’t even pass through my brain that it was an option to be honest.”

“Oh, okay,” she paused for a moment deliberating about whether or not she should continue her speech. She finally made her decision and said, “Well, recycling is actually something that my parents always thought was important. I kind of learned from them what it can do. For instance, the plastic that is being tossed in the waste basket instead of the recycling bin is tossed into the landfill and is never used again, which is the source of global warming problems. This causes the temperature ranges to expand, thus making the earth too hot or too cold. If we recycle, then we can stop that process from happening.”

I slowly processed what she said and then it finally hit me. In the grand scheme of things, I was damaging the earth every time I cracked open the seal of a brand-new plastic bottle.

I replied with, “I guess I had forgotten what all that plastic could do.”

“Yeah, It’s pretty interesting. I think that we should try to start recycling in our room so we can try to prevent that from happening.”

I nodded in agreement, still reeling from the first real conversation I just had with her. From then on, I tried my best to always be aware of my actions and started to head towards the blue bin rather than the tan one.

About a week later, my roommates and I attended the president’s block party. There we ate food, listened to music, and walked around to see different clubs that were in attendance as well. The event was so packed that it was inevitable to bump into someone every so often. The place had everything that you could ever think of happening all at once. It was a bit overwhelming but perfect nonetheless. What stuck out to me the most was that there were individuals from the sustainability program to sort our trash from the food that was provided at the event. This stood out to me because most places that provided any type of food would just set out giant trash cans that the public would toss everything into. Keaton was very pleased to see that they were going the extra mile in order to be a more sustainable place. She talked about how she loved the fact that they are being conscious about their surrounding and actions and wanted to find out more. This was the first time I really experienced how recycling works in a big setting, and it really opened my eyes to the amount of people who believe this is an important act to do. Just like Keaton, I wanted to look into Iowa’s sustainability a bit more.

About a month later, my roommates and I were glancing around the Old Capitol Mall located on the edge of campus. There, we ran into the Office of Sustainability and found that they were having an open house where everyone could come in, learn about their recycling and composting programs, and pot a plant that they provided. Since Keaton was an avid plant lover, she was pulled to go inside and investigate. My curiosity of sustainability tugged me inside as well. We went in, talked to all the tables that they had set up and even discussed putting a compost bin in our room. At the end, we potted our plants and were on our way with our pamphlets in hand about the many acts of sustainability that we could do around campus. This moment was very memorable for me because it introduced me to resources on campus that would help me in my recycling journey. To this day, I have the plant that I potted that month on my desk, and every time that I look at it, it reminds me of the changes that I made and how much of a difference I am making.

After that day at the Office of Sustainability, I was burning with curiosity on ways that I could get involved with recycling even more. Conveniently, I had just started working at the store across the hall from the Office of Sustainability. In my down time at work, I would peer into the windows across the way to see what they were up to every now and then. Every so often, I would see clusters of people popping in and out of the clear double doors that led the way into the Office of Sustainability. I was still a little nervous to take that extra step by myself and so I devoted my downtime at work to learn from afar. Coming and going to work every day got me a little closer to seeing the inside of the office without actually having to go in. By doing this, I kind of kept up with events that they were holding and saw what they did on a regular basis. Shortly after, I ran across an article that really shocked me. The article “Plastic Pollution” written by Jane Lemons, claims that “If production trends continue, by 2050 Earth’s oceans could contain more plastic, by weight, than fish” (par. 5). When I first read over this article, I couldn’t believe what I was reading. I then realized that if others, like how I was myself, didn’t become educated then this statement of theory would become a reality.

As the end of the semester approached, I was becoming busier and busier. There was less time to do the things that I enjoyed and more time that I needed to spend on studying my class material. Luckily, Fall Break was placed in a spot where I needed it the most. As I travel home with my newfound knowledge of recycling, I begin to ponder about if things have changed while I was away. Would my family start realizing

that the amount of plastic we go through is starting to be more harmful than helpful? Would I be able to persuade them into changing their ways? As we roll up the drive way, I could already see the plastic bottles heaping out of the oversized trashcan in the garage. Disappointment filled me as I peered over the edge. Clear bottles greet me from the bottom to the top. Eventually, I enter the house where my mom had gone minutes before. I stand in the doorway that leads into the living room for a couple minutes trying to decide how I want to start this conversation. Eventually I begin by saying, “Hey Mom, have you ever thought about recycling all of those water bottles that are sitting in the garage right now?”

Without glancing up from her phone, she gives me a short and brief answer, “No.”

“Why not?” I replied.

As she finally looks up from her phone, she asks, “Why are you asking me about this?”

I was a little taken back by this, but then I finally responded, “I think we should start recycling. This is something that is really important to me.”

“It wasn’t important to you before,” was all she said to me.

“Well that’s because I am more educated about the topic now,” I tried to tell her about everything that Keaton had explained to me, but she continued to brush me off. When she wasn’t laughing in my face, she would make comments about how she didn’t even recognize me anymore. A couple days into break, I realized this was a lost cause. As I watched the trash can fill with endless amounts of bottles, I thought about an article I read before coming home for break. “Future of Recycling”, claims that “Although U.S. recycling rates have climbed steadily since the 1970’s, advocates say that the nation can do more” (par. 6). Even though we are recycling more as a country, I knew we could still be more sustainable, my family included. If recycling were mandated throughout the state, I thought, and maybe even throughout the entire country, we could turn things around and reform the way we live. It only takes a second to look at the product and identify the recycling logo. That second that you take could help save yourself, and others, for a lifetime.

When Fall Break ended, I was a little relieved that I would be able to go about my life without the judgmental stare of my family. All the plastic bottles that I personally used were stowed away in my bag to be taken back to campus and recycled properly. As I placed all the bottles in their proper place located in the blue bin with 3 arrows printed on it, I sighed in relief. I knew I would have to formulate a plan for winter break because I wouldn’t be able to take an

entire month of guilt and sadness. As I began to brainstorm, I remembered that my dad, who lived in town, had a recycling bin that was kept in the back of the house. I figured that he wouldn’t mind if I put a few extra bottles in the bin every now and then. When I came home for Winter Break, I obtained a large cardboard box that would hold the hundreds of bottles that we went through that entire month. Overtime, I was very proud of all the plastic that I was able to save; I had to empty the box once or twice a week. This continued for the four-week span that I was home. As break began to come to a close, my mom came in my room one day and glanced at the once again overflowing box. As she started at it a bit longer, she finally said, “Wow. That is a lot of water bottles”.

I looked at her for a second and replied, “yeah, and that is a lot of plastic that we were going to waste.”

This was the start of a conversation I wish I had with my mom while I was on Fall Break. We talked about Brita filters rather than always buying water bottles, and although she didn’t change her mind, she is still mulling over the thought about switching over and being more sustainable. This is all that I ask from her right now because I know it takes a while to switch gears, but I am hoping one day I can change her mind indefinitely.

There are so many things that have happened throughout the last couple of months. As I reflect back to the very beginning, I am thankful that I have Keaton in my life to show me how to look at the world through a different lens. We have come so far in this journey together and I couldn’t imagine what it would be like if that quiet yet spunky girl never spoke up for something she believes in. Currently, I am still looking for events and programs to get involved with here at the University in order to help others believe in the power of recycling. The perfect opportunity hasn’t jumped out at me yet, but that doesn’t mean it won’t in the future. It has been a long road to get here, but this is why I believe we should educate the public and regulate recycling.

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The Irony

Brianna Deason

I always knew I was an unwanted child
and truly that has never bothered me
until the day those words spilled out of my mouth
and I saw the horror on everyone's faces
that I realized that maybe that is a bad thing
but really
who would think I was wanted
after everything I went through,
as if I wasn't broken down
from the moment I took my first breath
which is very ironic
if you think about how easily
my life could have been ended
before it even started
but instead my mother beat me
until I was almost dead
and that is pure irony
because she could have ended me,
like she threatened so many times,
but never doing so
because ending my pain
would leave her broke
and without a purpose
because she didn't know how to do anything
except be a poster mother
whose kids are dressed to the nines
but are literally dying inside
because what happened behind closed doors
was almost something I didn't survive
Because my mothers' priorities
Were my hundred-dollar Jordan's
With pink laces tightened on my tiny feet
While we didn't even have electricity
And were taking baths in buckets
Because being the poster mother
Was always more important
And that's how I knew
That I was never wanted
And I understand
And im not angry about it
Because I know

That being a young mother
With almost no money
And support
Is very difficult
And I can't blame her
For not knowing what to do
While all alone
Because being alone is the worst
Especially when your surrounded
By people who are supposed to help,
So I completely understand
And I don't blame her
But I do wish things could be different
But that's the irony.

Pema Chödrön's Interpretation of Fear and Death

Siau-Tong Ding

What is fear and how should we cope with it? How should we deal with our negative emotions when things fall apart? How can we see a true reality that includes both the beautiful and ugly parts of life? How should we see death?

Pema Chödrön, the first American nun to be fully ordained in the Buddhist Vajrayāna tradition, addresses these questions in her book, *The Places that Scare You: A Guide to Fearlessness in Difficult Times*. She claims that fear is our natural reaction to truth, which involves both the ugly and the beautiful parts of life. She also says that we can learn from fear, therefore suggesting that fear is not something to avoid.

Chödrön believes that the reason we cannot relax and face truth is because we keep clinging onto hope and using it as a distraction from true reality, which is the knowledge that everything is impermanent and that ultimately all things die, including us. She recommends abandoning hope in order to be in the present moment and coexist with the good and bad parts of life. In this way, Chödrön's interpretations of fear illustrate the Buddhist understanding that negative emotions should be acknowledged and accepted instead of brushed aside.

In the chapter "Intimacy with Fear," Chödrön states that fear is a universal feeling and everyone experiences it at some

time in their life. "Fear is a natural reaction to moving closer to the truth" (Chödrön 2). Chödrön believes we can't conquer fear, but we can work toward peacefully coexisting with it. She states that we need to become intimate with, and make friends with fear, and only then will we be truly at peace and recognize the reality around us, be truly in the present. But before we can become intimate with fear, we first have to get to know become familiar with it. This is not to say that getting to know fear is a way to solve problems, but it is instead a way to be continually humbled by the truths surrounding us.

Chödrön uses an example of a man who wanted to rid himself of fear to better illustrate her point. The man struggled with many negative emotions and was determined to get rid of them. His meditation master told him to stop struggling because we cannot get rid of fear, but the man interpreted this as an explanation of how to overcome his problems. His master sent him to meditate in a small hut somewhere in the hills. In the middle of the night, he noticed a very large snake in the corner of the room, which was swaying and looking right at him. For the rest of the night, the man stayed totally alert and kept his eyes on the snake, afraid that it might attack him when he was not aware. After the last candle went out and just before the sun rose, the man began to cry. He realized that all his meditations had been nothing but separation and

struggle, instead of a means of overcoming his obstacles. He finally truly accepted in that moment that he was simply angry and afraid. At the same time, the man recognized that he was also precious beyond words. He bowed to the snake and then fell asleep on the floor. When he awoke, the snake was gone. He never knew if the snake was real or not but being so intimate with his own fear changed him.

Chödrön used this story to show that fear can teach us things we have never heard or read about before. By confronting our fears, we can learn to not run away from our true emotions, but instead we can acknowledge them. Acknowledging our true emotions instead of burying them

inside ourselves can help a person become more relaxed and calmer. In this acknowledgement, we learn to see and accept ourselves as we are, with all of our flaws and quirks. The man's story conveys that it is only after we face our fear and become intimate with it, we can truly coexist with fear and not let it control us. Brave people have fears too, but they are intimate with their fears so they do not try to escape them. By rooting ourselves in the present moment and examining our inner natures instead of turning away from unfortunate events, we become intimate with fear. Instead of flight, fight.

Chödrön talks about how we should cope with our emotions when things are not going our way in the chapter

“When Things Fall Apart.” She suggests that things falling apart is a kind of testing but it is also a kind of healing. The point is not to pass the test or overcome a challenge. The true reality is that things don't always get solved. There is no test or challenge or problem in this world that is really solved and that stays solved. Things come together and then they fall apart, and this cycle repeats itself over and over again. The Indus Valley civilization flourished thousands of years ago, but now all that is left is the remains of burials and architecture. Tokyo was nothing but grassland thousands of years ago, with no human inhabitants, but it's now one of the biggest metropolises in the world. Cities flourish and then they become deserted. Our lives are also like this. Life has ups and downs and it is unrealistic to think we can somehow permanently rid ourselves of its ugly side. This relates to the Buddhist concept of Pratityasamutpada which asserts that all things are interdependent and everything is constantly changing, rising, and falling. Nothing is permanent or separate. It is only when we experience sadness that we know what happiness feels like. If we only ever experience happiness, we wouldn't understand it because we would have nothing to compare it to, and so happiness and sadness are

interconnected. Acknowledging that reality is uncertain, being able to relax in the midst of chaos, and learning not to panic when things fall apart is the spiritual path and the way to deal with negative emotions.

In the chapter “Hopelessness and Death,” Chödrön talks about her interpretations of hopelessness and indicates that the fear we feel is predominantly grounded in our fear of death. We know deep in our consciousness that everyone is going to die one day. Yet despite this knowledge, we still fear death. We cling to hope because we think that by clinging to it we can somehow prevent our death or prolong it so that it does not happen so soon. Chödrön likens death to experiencing things we dislike in our everyday lives, like broken marriages or losing a job. We associate negative emotions with our fear of death and, as she says, experiencing difficult things in our daily lives is experiencing a part of death. We rely on hope to cope with our fear and dislike of negative emotions. Having hope is having expectations about things which turn uncertainty into certainty. We don't like uncertainty because if things are uncertain we don't know what to expect and think things might go wrong. This in turn, might lead to death. We use hope as a distraction so that we don't need to face the reality that we are experiencing negative emotions, experiencing death. Chödrön believes we should abandon hope; we should abandon expectations. She believes that expectations are the reason why we develop fear, because we think something is wrong when circumstances don't meet our expectations. When something turns out differently from what we expect, it throws us into a state of uncertainty and we hate that. Chödrön believes hope is an addiction. As long as we are addicted to hope, we will feel the need to minimize suffering in our lives. However, suffering is part of life, so grasping onto hope and avoiding difficult, we will not feel like suffering is inevitable. Chödrön thinks we should start out with hopelessness instead. Starting out with hopelessness will eliminate our expectations, which is the first step to breaking the walls we build to hide ourselves from reality. After we eliminate expectation, we should take off the “hope” glasses and try to see things without the “hope” filter; try to see life as it is, no matter how ugly or beautiful. When we can see reality as it is, we are able to face the ultimate truth, which is death. We are able to face death as it is and not through the filter

from “hope” glasses or through a hole in the “expectations” wall. We will then finally be at peace, even in the face of death. Although this is only the beginning of the spiritual path, being able to acknowledge and see the reality is the ultimate goal of enlightenment. As Chödrön states, “Enlightenment, being completely awake, is just the beginning of fully entering into we know not what” (104).

In conclusion, Chödrön's interpretations of fear and death and her suggestions about how to deal with difficult situations reflects the Buddhist understanding of negative thoughts and emotions. Chödrön believes fear is our reaction because of our reluctance to face the truth. To deal with negativity fear evokes, we should acknowledge that reality is uncertain and not everything will always go our way. The Buddhism precept of Pratityasamutpada relates to this in that it acknowledges that all things are interdependent, everything is always changing, and thus reality is uncertain. Coming to terms with this uncertainty, staying calm in the face of an ever-changing reality is how to cope with our fear of things falling apart. Death is the ultimate truth and the hardest for us to accept, so we use hope as a distraction to convince ourselves that death isn't inevitable. It is only when we choose to abandon hope that we can truly see that everything is impermanent, and that all living beings eventually die. Everything is impermanent, nothing in this world can live forever, and nothing stays the same. We all die in the end. Abandoning hope and accepting this reality is the way to spiritual enlightenment.

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Out Loud

Suzanne Osterheld

Ok. Here you go, you think. Surely, this won't be too hard. All you have to do is stand up and introduce yourself without messing up.

Don't mess up, you repeat in your head.

You hear your name called and everything begins to feel tight. You slowly stand up and smooth out your green butterfly t-shirt.

Deep breath.

In... and out.

"Hi, my name is Thuz."

Crap.

"Suzanne." Everyone is looking at you. Some are snickering and others are just blatantly staring. You sit down and sink lower into your chair, which is only a foot off the ground.

Second grade is going to be rough.

Okay, can I get a reader for this next page?" Your teacher asks.

You look around as your fellow students all raise their hands in an effort to impress the teacher and each other with their ability to read all the big words in the paragraph with the best diction possible. Something you can only do in your head.

Your eyes wander around the motivational posters all over the walls. You spot a neon blue one that reads "*In the middle of every difficulty lies opportunity*." The superficial optimism coming off of these suffocating walls makes you roll your eyes.

But, as you do, you catch Mrs. Garfalo's gaze. She asks you to read the paragraph.

Pure panic takes over. You look down at the words on the page which seem to stare back at you with a devilish grin.

You begin to read as slowly as possible, pronouncing every word with the letter "s" in it with as much dignity as you can. You know by the stale awkwardness in the air that it isn't going well. You finish reading with a sigh of relief, and plan on going back to hiding until Tommy Tucker, the freckled kid

behind you whispers, "Thhhuper job Thuzanne" in your ear.

By the third month of second grade Mrs. Garfalo sends a letter home for your mother to read, explaining your new enrollment in the speech therapy class. You know this is your shot at improvement.

You also know your mom is going to say no.

She has already told you that being taken out of core classes, like math and science, to work on breaking your impediment isn't an option. Core classes like *those* are a priority.

You gather just enough courage to give your mom the letter after you can tell she is in a good mood from watching the new episode of *Desperate Housewives*. Her face softens as she reads through the note and attached pamphlet.

"Sweetie, you know what would happen if you were in this class right?"

You think about all of your peers knowing about it, because class would be interrupted so that your other instructor can pull you out. And then there is the "special" photo which will be taken and placed in the yearbook; serving as an even more permanent reminder of your status.

She has a point.

"I know what would happen, Mom."

"Right, so really it doesn't seem like a good idea. I think this is something you'll grow out of one day." She smiles at you. Her attempt at reassurance doesn't work.

Going back to staying silent in class all the time is not a stable solution.

But it's all you have.

You want to scream. You want to tell your mother how embarrassing it is when kids laugh at your lisp. You want to fight her about the fact that it's important to fix your "Th" problem than be in other classes.

But, you don't.

"She really only wants what is best for you," your dad

reminds you, after your mom leaves the room.

But that concept is too much to grasp at the moment. So instead, you pick resentment to focus on.

You resent the fact that you have an impediment. That your mom doesn't want you to leave math class to work with a language therapist, and even if she did, it would be extremely embarrassing. That kids like Tommy bring up your lisp to you so often.

Mostly you resent how powerless you feel about the whole situation.

Recess presents a very complicated thirty-minute period. The layout of the playground is constructed perfectly for different cliques to each have their own designated area.

But you don't have anywhere to go.

From the rusty monkey bars to the trio of red plastic slides, kids everywhere are having fun. You watch them laughing and talking with one another. You wish you were too. Simply gathering up the courage to approach three seemingly nice girls who are hanging out by the swings takes up half of the free period. You stuff your hands in the pockets of your embroidered jean jacket. You slowly make your way over to them, kicking rocks and gravel with every step.

As you get closer you begin to rehearse ways to ask if you can hang out with them.

Hi, can I swing with you guys? No. Too direct. *Hey, is this swing open?* Better.

You wipe your sweaty palms on your pants and adjust your pigtails. You feel ready. Just speak slow. Don't mess up, again.

"Hey, is it ... uhm ... ok if I swing here?" *Not your best.*

"Oh, sure Thhhuzanne. You can totally thwing with us," Jenna, the girl in the center, replies.

The other two girls giggle. Jenna smirks at you.

You feel hot. Your mouth is suddenly dry and the words seem to have an even harder time formulating.

"S-stop that," you barely squeak out.

Jenna turns to the other girls still laughing, "C'mon, you guys she said thhtop." All three of them burst into fresh peals of laughter.

You turn and run. You find a spot against the brick wall where they can no longer see you. Where *no one* can see you. The sound of their laughter is ringing in your ears. You crouch down with your head tucked down over your knees. Your red cheeks are damp with tears. You shut your eyes and wait until the chimes of the recess bell can save you.

During the second semester, your interest in going to school itself has diminished. Your grades are fine. You understand the material being taught. You were even beginning to become friends with a girl named Nikki in your class. But going to school every day with the fear of being called on has become problematic.

At this point in the school year, your teacher is fully aware of your situation.

As if you two have made an unspoken mutual agreement, she starts to call on you less and less. One day, as you are pulling on your "The Children's Place" cheetah print hat to go home, she asks you to stay after class with her.

You slowly walk to her desk. Your head begins to spin. You start to run through everything that went on in class today. *What did you do wrong?*

You feel too nervous to make eye contact, so you look at the pictures. At the Disney figurines, papers, and the fresh shiny purple notebook that are lying on her desk.

In attempt to calm down, you count the specks of paint on her glass apple-shaped paper clip holder.

It doesn't help.

"Suzanne. I have your book reflection paper right here. It's very well done." You relax. But only slightly.

"Thank you."

She continues, asking you why you don't speak up more in class. As if she doesn't already know.

You have a brief conversation with her about your participation. About how your ideas aren't being heard. About how you need to speak up and answer questions.

She doesn't seem to accept your answers about why you don't speak out more.

Your face must be showing the lack of enthusiasm you have for her encouragement.

Mrs. Garfalo slides the purple journal towards you.

"Suzanne, I've been speaking to your mother about your speech. We've made a plan for her to work on it with you at home, and to start seeing a speech therapist after school so you won't miss any class time when you're here. No will know besides us."

Those words circle in your head. *No one will know...*

You begin to smile, ever so slightly.

Mrs. Garfalo smiles a much bigger one.

"Until you feel more comfortable speaking, I want to read your thoughts," she continues. "Write them down in this notebook. Write down anything you need to."

So, you write.

Mental Health Services for Adolescents

Jade Irish

The Alliance on Mental Illness reports that one in five children between the ages of 13-18 have or will have a mental illness.¹ Mental health in adolescents is critical, yet there are barriers preventing children in this age range from receiving mental health services. My work at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics (UIHC) gave me the opportunity to see firsthand what services are available for persons with mental illness, and I found that the Adult Psychiatry Clinic does offer more services to patients than the Adolescent Psychiatry Clinic. The former offers two additional mental health programs which are not available in the Child and Adolescent Clinic, which potential deprives patients under the age of 18 from learning many additional skills that could significantly improve their lives.

Mental Health and Adolescence

“Adolescence is a period of life with specific health and developmental needs and rights. It is also a time to develop knowledge and skills, learn to manage emotions and relationships, and acquire attributes and abilities that will be important for enjoying the adolescent years and assuming adult roles,” claims the World Health Organization. In other words, adolescence is a critical time in human development because it the time when many physiological and behavioral habits are being formed, making mental health an extremely important discussion.

According to the Mayo Clinic, “Mental illness refers to a wide range of mental health conditions — disorders that affect your mood, thinking and behavior.” There is not one known specific cause to mental illness, but instead it can be caused by genetic or environmental factors, or a combination of both. The Mayo Clinic suggests two genetic factors contribute to mental illness: inherited traits and brain chemistry.² Another factor which may lead to mental illness is environmental exposure, particularly during prenatal development: “Exposure to environmental stressors, inflammatory conditions, toxins, alcohol or drugs while in the womb can sometimes be linked to mental illness.” Environmental stressors after you are born include family conflict or instability and the role models in your life and their risk behaviors and social patterns. All of these factors have some sort of impact on an adolescent, which may unfortunately lead to or factor into developing mental health issues.³

Services for Mental Illness

Almost all cases of mental illness can be managed with medication, psychotherapy, or a combination of both.⁴ In cases involving suicidal ideations or eating disorders, hospitalization may be necessary. Treatment is an important step in recovering from any illness, yet when it comes to mental illness, there are far fewer services available to adolescents than adults. In 2017 there were 11,582 mental health treatment facilities in the United States.⁵ Statista.com reports that only 42.9% of all mental health facilities in the U.S. treat patients of all ages; between 80-85% of facilities treat patients 17 and older, but only 63.5% off all mental health treatment facilities serve adolescents.⁶

Barriers to Mental Health Services

There are three common barriers which prevent mental health patients from receiving the services that they need. For the purpose of my advocacy, I am focusing on adolescents, specifically between the ages of 13 to 18 years-old. The first barrier that often hinders adolescents from receiving help is that they either don't know how, or don't want to ask for help. Confidentiality is a very important concept for adolescents. “Teens are sensitive to the issues of confidentiality and often are reluctant to ask health providers even general health questions due to confidentiality concerns.⁷ Adolescents may not know of or understand the patient-doctor confidentiality rule, which may explain why they are afraid to ask for help. Another factor preventing adolescents from seeking help is that they likely don't know where to go, especially if they don't want to tell their parents. Additionally, adolescence is the age when we begin to establish a sense of independence, making it difficult to ask for help, as it would be contradictory to this establishment.⁸

The last two barriers have to do with mental health services themselves. The shortage of mental health services in America, which limits geographically accessible services available for adolescents. The other obstacle is price. Statista.com reported that there were around 12,000 mental health facilities in the United States in 2017.⁹ One in five children suffers from mental illness,¹⁰ yet only 63.5% of the reported 12,000 mental health facilities in the United States (~7,800 facilities) serve adolescents. In other words, a huge portion of patients are not receiving care.

If adolescents can get to a facility where mental health services are offered, there are still difficulties which may prevent them from receiving service. The first is that there is often a waitlist to get treatment. Providers who do individual

therapy have a maximum number of patients their case load allows and often have very low turn-over rates for new patients as many of the patients continue individual therapy for several months. Similarly, psychotherapy group programs have long waitlists and are often six-month programs. Patients may be waiting a few weeks or months to begin treatment.

Coupled with prohibitive wait times, a large problem with mental health services is the cost. Most insurance companies cover mental health services, but depending on your insurance plan, some services may not be covered. If your insurance does not cover the cost of your services, you are likely asked to pay over \$100 out of pocket at the time of service.¹¹ One appointment at the Adolescent Psychiatry Clinic at the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics, can easily cost \$100 or more and many patients come once per week or biweekly. When patients do not have insurance they are asked to pay at the time of their service. Families with no insurance often are not able to pay the out-of-pocket prices and therefore their kids may not receive the help they need simply because they are too expensive.

Cumulatively, these barriers illustrate how mental health issues have a stigma which can exacerbate young people's difficulties when it comes to seeking and receiving help.

School Psychologists

Due to the lack of mental health services for adolescents, school psychologists are one solution which might potentially offer adolescents with the services they need. Almost all schools K-12 in the U.S. have a counselor or guidance counselor. However, there are only an estimated 32,300 school psychologists in the United States for the 98,000 public schools.¹² A guidance counselor focuses mainly on the academic aspects of a student's performance at school and is not likely a licensed therapist. A school psychologist focuses on mental health rather than the logistics of school. Therefore, a school psychologist would be more beneficial if schools are really trying to make mental health a priority.

While there are challenges schools face in staffing psychologists in every high school, I believe the benefits are worth the resource investment. Since guidance counselors and school psychologists have different functions, it would be beneficial for schools to have both on staff. However, school funding is a large issue and that may not be feasible. I would suggest that schools hire someone who is qualified for both positions if they cannot afford to hire the additional staff member.

Having this person at school may increase the likelihood

of the adolescent seeking help. If the psychologist is someone they can trust, they may be willing to ask them for help if they don't want to ask a parent first. This is often the first barrier when it comes to an adolescent seeking help for mental health issues, and it is often the most difficult, because it is solely dependent on the adolescent's willingness to seek help. I believe having a psychologist at school could provide students with a resource for mental health and information about where to go if they were having any issues or feelings that they wanted to talk through.

Additional Tools for Schools

It takes time to put any new policy into action and unfortunately the school psychologist policy may not be feasible for every school in America. There are a few additional ways in which schools can also be proactive in mental health assistance. Schools could integrate mental health awareness into general curriculum, thus working to break down stigmas, emphasize long-term benefits of treatment, and normalizing conversations about mental health struggles. This would increase the likelihood of students to seeking out help before symptoms are overwhelming, and hopefully decrease feelings of embarrassment or shame. Students should be educated on the cultural attitude and negative impact of stigma around mental illness.¹³ A further understanding of the seriousness and commonality of mental illness should decrease the stigma and negative cultural attitude.

School faculty and staff must also be provided with proper training and education about mental health. An important component of this training should be knowledge of mental health warning signs. These educational skills will allow teachers the ability to change lives.

As a society, our understanding of mental illness is still evolving. We have better treatments and combinations of medication and therapy, but there is a stigma and negative connotations attached to persons with mental illness which can be addressed through education and better access to services. To combat the social, financial,

and logistical barriers adolescents face about mental health, further research should be done in terms of funding accessible resources such as school psychologists and better education.

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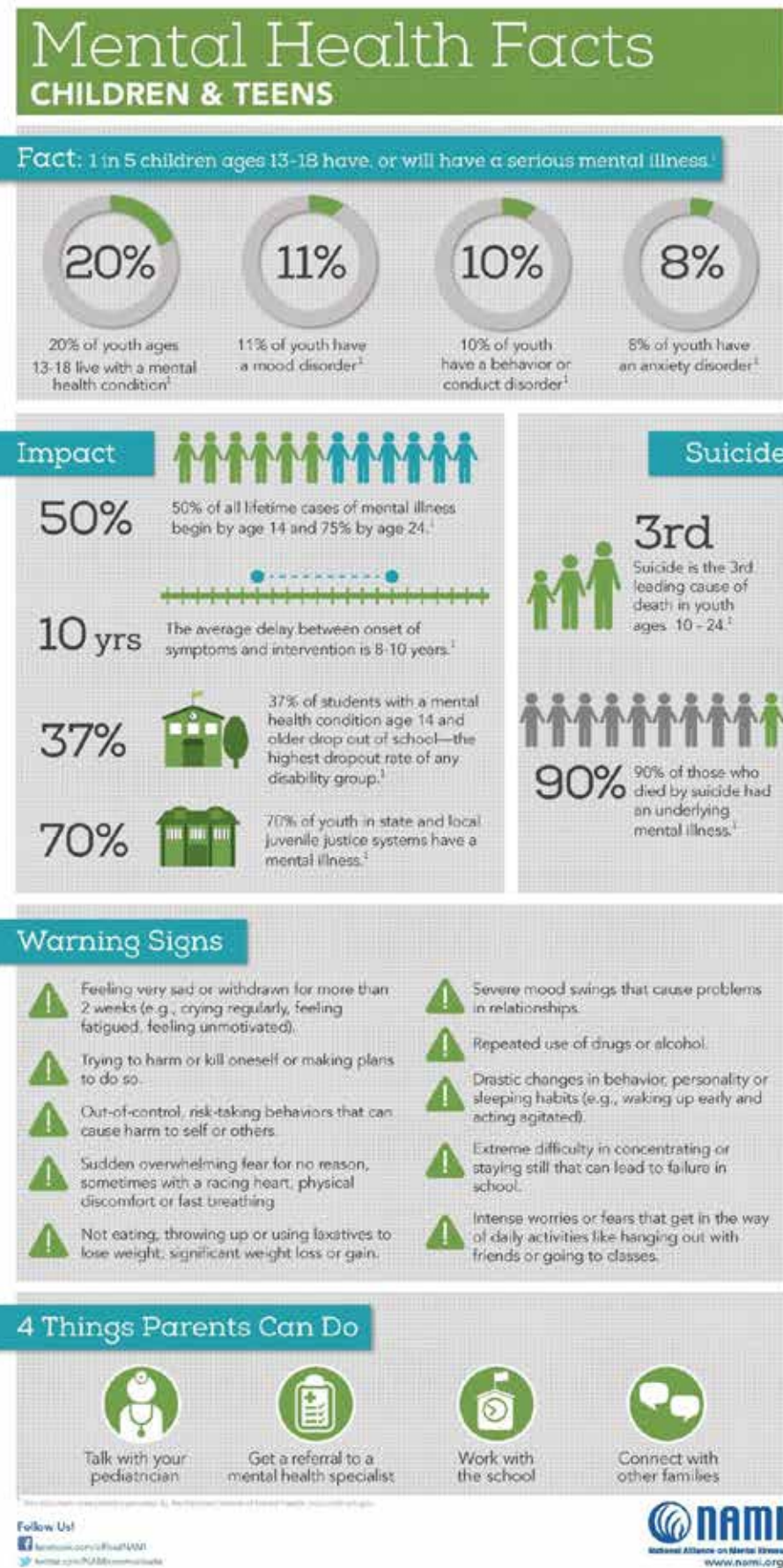
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Notes

1. See Figure 1, or "NAMI"
2. Mayo
3. Institute of Medicine
4. Mayo
5. "Number by Service"
6. "Specific Age Groups"
7. Wisdom, Clarke, Green, page 2
8. Wisdom, Clarke & Green, page 12
9. "Mental Health Facilities Number by Facility Type U.S. 2017 | Survey"
10. See Figure 1 or "NAMI"
11. Susan Schwarz estimated 8.3 million uninsured children in 2005 (2).
12. Jimerson, page 559
13. "The Importance of Mental Health Awareness in Schools." *Hey Teach!*



Learning to Sew

April Bannister

I.
you are still the same
little boy of malice

it's just not a nice thing to say to a person I am reduced
to the match of your set
small and smaller
children who still fight but as far
as our parents are concerned
it's only because we love
each other

(even though our parents' marriage
should have taught them otherwise)

I am afraid of your grasping hands that left
trails of burning rings
when I trace my wrists with my fingers sometimes *I am
thin I am thin I am okay* but sometimes
I need you I need you I need you and

I have always known the rings are nothing
more than ghosts
but that does not stop
the haunting

I'm sorry I forgot I love you there is change
in your words as you type them
but your voice
gives you away

you are not sorry because you did not forget
and you have never loved me

the door slams and I hear
your laugh and now my wrists
are not all that is haunted

II.
depth perception
offers a limited view of
how far we can fall.
rock bottom
does not exist.
there is always another step down,
another ledge to hit flat
on our backs, the familiar ache setting in
and settling down —
a breath.
a hush falls.
alone, we slide again
toward the edge,
framed under a twisted sky of
silk spiderwebs that
refuse to catch us.

you are a chain around my neck.
I feel you bite into my skin.
I feel the ice of you surge into my veins.

the human view of humanity
shows only a fragment
of the world we built.
the things we forget and try to leave behind
are the unchecked infections that
morph into fatalities,
the sores that blister until they form
raging wounds and
slashing rivers of scars.
but it's not the first time —
and it won't be the last —
that we forget them,
that we leave them behind.
we can do nothing
but kneel in submission.

they are not our first scars.
they will not be our last.

your work is beautiful justice
and the deepest devastation.
after everything,
I still see what the world sees in you.

every day we are thrown
from one extreme to another,
from pain that eats us alive
and forgiveness that reveals
a different pain entirely.
every day we forgo others
only to turn around and beg
for all the help there is to offer.
but to become less selfish —
to create your own scars, to
wage your own wars and
rage your own infections —
is perceived in depth as the
most selfish act of all.
to remove yourself from the grand equation
and lay the groundwork for
another try, an improvement —
it is the deepest well of selfishness.
and it is the depth that leads us there.

I touch your hands
and I meet your eyes.
in them, the dawn goes only
to darkness.
the dawn goes only to dust.

III.
I did not believe in reconciliation,
and the choice to forgive you was suffocating
at first.
You have not laid a hand on me in years
and your words
have become more kind.
But even now,
my skin cannot remember how to feel.
My lungs cannot remember how to expand.
My hands have not stopped shaking.

The knife you once held to my throat

remains on your desk.
The wall still hugs the knob too tightly
in the place your anger
created a crushing dent.
Our family never repaired the broken windows
or replaced the shattered plates
or learned how to stop hearing the
screams that echoed around the
rooms of our house.
Our family never
formed a home.

In the days before you return,
the signs of you reappear.
The cupboards are full and your bed is made.
My legs still threaten
to lose the ability to hold me.

I did not believe in reconciliation
and I told you as much —
I have no interest in a relationship with you.
For the first time,
I saw pain register in your face,
in the recesses behind your eyes
and in the hollow of your cheek you used to bite
before you hit me.

But there was glass in my words
and you did not retaliate with bullets.
You let yourself be cut.
A part of me whispered
I didn't mean it.
And it is what
you always said to me.

You hurt me over and
over. I did not like
hurting you.
I do not
want to do
it again.

And over time I have come to consider
that maybe I can believe in
reconciliation after all.

IV.
If I get married
Chances are you will walk me down the aisle.
I don't mean to be morbid
But our father is nearly seventy.
I am a realist.
You will
Most likely
Be all I have.

It takes me hours to reply to your texts
Because hearing from you
Causes me to lose my breath.
It is entire and complete,
The control you still have.
I hope you no longer want it.
Regardless
It's yours.
I have saved it for you
All these years.

You were so very careful
And you were never caught
In the same way you never caught me
Teaching my body to fear my hands
As much as I feared yours.
You conditioned me a certain way
Sewing me together after you tore me in two
And teaching me to love you
In the moments after I fled in terror.
In an effort to forget your lessons
I taught myself.
I learned to rip myself apart
And when my body healed
I did it again and again.

You never caught me in the act.
Or maybe you did
And didn't say anything.
I don't know why you would.
I was doing your job for you.

I used to think there was strength
In hating you,
In my desperate wanting
To trim you
Out of my life.

But true strength is admitting that
I have always loved you
And I still love you.
And that is my fault entirely
And I do not regret it.
I am so very accustomed to pain.

If I have children
I will trust you with them.
If I find myself in trouble
I will turn to you.
Most likely you will be
All I have.

You taught me lessons
And I taught me lessons.
They were enough
Until they weren't
And until they hurt too much
For me to go on.
I am still learning.
I am still trying
To find new material
And not to undo the stitches of my life
But to redo them more neatly.

I forgive you
Again and again.
I miss you in the months we spend apart.

I may never tell you this.
I may never escape the hurt.
I may never learn that safety can exist alone
And not only as relief from danger.

You are not dangerous anymore.

I understand you and I will forgive you.

I have waited for you
All these years.

International relations is a social science whose practitioners have long pondered the factors that create or influence conflict and its likelihood of occurring across all levels of society. While many people believe that conflict comes from reasons such as territory, public access to resources is another reason, though not traditionally considered. In an attempt to answer the question of how a resource influences conflict and violence, this study will use the 1903 water riots in the Port of Spain to examine how access to a resource such as water affects the likelihood of violent incidents and the subsequent changes in government afterward. The case of the 1903 water riots paints a unique picture of the how access to a resource influences a region's stability and, consequently, the related dangers to state infrastructure and government.

The 1903 water riots occurred in the nation of Trinidad and Tobago. To understand what caused the riots, one must also understand the context of the issue. Two different accounts on the history of the riots offer details as to the causes and facts—Michael Mahoney's article on the United Kingdom's National Archives website and Angelo Bissessarsingh's article in the *Trinidad and Tobago Guardian Online*. Both accounts are secondary sources; one is from a colonial government's archives and the other is from a newspaper run by the colonized, and each aim to provide an explanation and summary of the water riots. The differences between the two sources are critical in understanding how access to water influences unrest, because one provides the perspective of the people who may go without water and the other emphasizes the perspective of people who sought to maintain control of the colony. Those who sought to maintain control seem to offer a more defensive take on the issue.

Michael Mahoney writes in his post "The Trinidad Water Riots of 1903" for the National Archives' blog on November 1st, 2013, how "a characteristic of Trinidad life in the late 19th century was an enormous waste of water. In 1874 with a population of 25,000 people, the delivery of water in Port-of-Spain was 1 ¾ million gallons—averaging 65 to 71 gallons per head, more than twice the allowance of London" (Mahoney 2013). Mahoney elaborates, explaining that a significant portion of misuse had been because of the wealthy, "mainly [from] the large houses around the Queen's Park Savannah. One example cited in a report of 1893 was a house where 8,000 gallons were consumed daily" (Mahoney 2013). This account places principal blame on the area's citizenry of the area for something that, in Mahoney's depiction, is without reasonable cause.

This appears to be true, as it is supported by someone who had witnessed the events. In "The Trinidad Riots of 1903: Reflections of an Eyewitness" edited by K.O. Lawrence, a medical practitioner gives an account of what occurred via a manuscript, along with a reflection on what the colonial government had been doing and what could change (Lawrence 5). In what appears to be the manuscript's introduction, the practitioner states that "In the nineteenth century, and indeed much later, the population of Port of Spain, especially its

Resources in Relation to Riots, Revolution, and Rivalry

Thomas Dainty

wealthier sections, was notoriously inclined to waste water" (Lawrence 5). This account can be considered to be close to a primary source, if not accurately defined as one because it has been edited. However, it was initially written by an eyewitness and it asserts that "This manuscript is now presented to the public in the hope that it may contribute something towards the continuing investigation of the operation of Crown Colony Government" (Lawrence 5). While wasting water is an obvious misstep in management, Mahoney finds that it was not until government pushed for reformation in the 1890s that the great public unrest occurred. At that time, a policy had been proposed to implement water meters, but "the Port-of-Spain municipality took the lead in this agitation and the Crown Colony Government (controlled by Britain) backed down" (Mahoney, 2013). Later, the Governor abolished the Borough of Port-of-Spain as well as its council, declaring that they were inefficient and placing management under the central government. Later an ordinance was introduced for the meter system. Again, the attempts to implement policy failed. The main difference this time was that people were, according to Mahoney, "prosecuted for wasting water" (Mahoney, 2013). It is important to note that this account establishes a link between access to resources and democratic accountability. This correlation can be seen through the fact that the Port-of-Spain municipality was on the public's side when it came to these measures. Because local government had been abolished, water management had been placed in the hands of a colonial government, which was likely less accountable as compared to the Borough.

Mahoney takes note of this link through his analysis of a series of letters between a supporter of the colonial Governor

and one of his dissenters. In these letters, they argue over whether the Governor was attempting to force a bill through or not—Mahoney briefly describes their conflicting opinions on the issue and then summarizes it by stating how “. . . the Governor was widely disliked for his actions” (Mahoney 2013). Some of his summary is about the very link between resources and accountability—the dissenter’s main responses to the supporter’s claim that the government would not delay the bill nor where those upset a mob, but rather members of their Chamber of Commerce and the Ratepayers Association (Mahoney 2013). This demonstrates how a particular version of a narrative can be twisted or can misrepresent events in certain discussions, especially in a narrative of historical events. While an event may be recorded with each side’s position clearly stated, later retellings may not include the logic or links connecting issues together, thus making later analyses or conclusions about how to improve in similar circumstances incomplete or flawed at best, and dangerous at worst.

On March 5th, 1903, another ordinance that provoked enormous amounts of community disapproval was made public (Mahoney 2013). An important thing to note about the opposition is that, “The Ratepayers Association was led by the disenfranchised Mayor of Port-of-Spain, John Cox Newbold, who led ratepayers in the belief that water was a right of existence and not a scarce commodity to be bought and sold” (Mahoney 2013), establishing the widely held opinion that access to water was more than a business transaction, but rather a matter of how humans should be treated versus what should be monetized. Locals argued that water was a necessity for survival, not a commercial enterprise. This mass dissatisfaction with government and a cause centering around human mortality—blanket factors for violence—interestingly coincides with the American Revolution which stemmed from a group of colonists who were collectively dissatisfied with British rule and who fought for a cause relating to life and death (liberty and freedom from tyrannical government).

The conclusions made about this bill in the piece, “Reflections of an Eyewitness” argue the same, stating “Obviously therefore, the new Bill should have been brought forward with the greatest care and tact, and most carefully explained. Ample time should have been allowed for discussion and possible amendment” (Lawrence 7). The consequences for not allowing that “ample time for discussion” are plentiful. On the day of the riots “the Red House, the seat of colonial government” (Mahoney 2013) was pelted with stones by a large gathering because of a requirement that only allowed access through government-issued tickets. Eventually the building was burned down (Mahoney 2013). People died and many were injured (Mahoney 2013, Bissessarsingh 2017). There are many reasons why historical analyses and historical retellings matter; one common reason is that they allow for people to prevent the errors of the past from occurring again. Mahoney’s interpretation does not appear to be the principle source on the riots, nor a major influence on his country’s

views of the matter, but Mahoney also brings in several other sources. Even so, his mix of primary and secondary sources may still not give the whole picture—not just because of the lack of analysis, but even in basic facts and context.

Another account of the water riots, from the *Trinidad and Tobago Guardian Online*, provides greater details as well as conflicting statements compared to the narrative from the United Kingdom’s National Archives. Angelo Bissessarsingh portrays the events during the riots as largely the same. However, he argues that one critical precursor is that pipe-borne water had been put in Port-of-Spain because of a “devastating cholera epidemic” in 1854 and that the colonial government had taken decades to finish placing pipes and determining where the reservoir would go (Bissessarsingh 2017). This is similar to the statements from John Cox Newbold about how water is a right of existence; water coming from pipes was not just a matter of life and death in principle, but in actuality. Bissessarsingh continues, stating, “Thus, the burgesses of the municipality of Port-of-Spain not only had access to public fountains and pumps spewing an endless supply of cold, sweet water, but many also had the luxury of precious liquid running from pipes in their homes” (Bissessarsingh 2017). This can explain why so much water was being used, as “in the noisome barrack-yards of the city, the denizens of the town’s ‘Jamette’ society, reveled in the new utility and frolicked under open taps in their yards and wash-houses all day and night” (Bissessarsingh 2017). This account paints a different picture than that of Mahoney; one where water usage was not purely wasteful, but celebratory in face of an inefficient and slow government in response to a deadly disease outbreak.

In answering the larger question at hand, one can conclude that water is already deemed to be incredibly precious, not just because it is a necessary resource for survival, but also because a lack of access to water through certain methods (such as pipes) can result in the spread of fatal diseases. Taking the belief of unlimited access away from the public through meters or other regulating measures can make the possibility of community unrest that much greater if there is little effort to provide the public with accountability, inclusion, and transparency from those in power. This idea is bolstered by “The Reports of an Eyewitness” once more when it states “The new attempt to control the use of water, the Waterworks Bill of 1902, was at once greeted with a public protest meeting at which objection was taken both to the form of the Bill, which was thought to give the Government too much power to arrange details by executive action, and to the general principle of restrictions on the use of water” (Lawrence 6). What can thus be established is that restrictions to a resource after a lack of access resulting in fatalities, and which correspond with a repressive government regime, will only further hostilities towards that government and increase public demands for accountability and reparations.

One other conflicting detail is found between these accounts when it comes to determining the precise moment



that started the riots. Mahoney argues that it is admission by ticket that started the riots, but Bissessarsingh argues that while the implementation of tickets did create great unrest, “the violence was [initially] incited when a constable outside the Red House attempted to arrest a woman and immediately came under a hail of stones, forcing him to liberate his captive” (Bissessarsingh 2017). Neither source denies that the principle cause of the riots was about water, but simply whether the spark was about access to the meeting or about an attempt to arrest and prosecute protestors—to simplify, accountability versus freedom of speech. Furthermore, Jeffrey Kerr and Leslie McPeane write in the thesis “Dependency as the Basis for Political Control in Trinidad” how “opposition to the Crown Colony’s political rule helped to change the political structure in Trinidad from one of token representation to one of elected representation. But it took the Water Riots of 1903 to create an atmosphere of active politics whereby the lower classes seized upon an issue to fight for changes” (Kerr and McPeane 68). This reasserts that while access to water is a cause for dissatisfaction, it also magnifies the underlying issues and causes; in this case, that of freedom of a colonized society.

While that response to crisis is from the peoples’ perspective, it is also critical to briefly mention the response from the colonial government—not just in terms of restoring basic democratic accountability, but also because of increased repressive practices. Nathan Pino writes in “Developing Democratic Policing In The Caribbean: The Case Of Trinidad And Tobago” how “the water riots of 1903 led to more protests of police brutality, but only one officer was put on trial and he was acquitted.” He adds that after the riots, “The Constabulary Ordinance of 1905 changed the police into an armed constabulary charged with paramilitary duties” (Pino 227-228). This demonstrates that as much as colonial governments had given in terms of liberties, they had also taken away.

In conclusion, the 1903 water riots in Trinidad and

Tobago exemplify how a resource like water can influence violence and unrest within a state. Regarding the question of how much water might influence conflict and violence, there is no single answer. Through various accounts about the water riots, we can conclude the influence triggers conflict in multiple ways: whether that be through the nature of water as a human necessity, determining how much access people should have and whether that access should be commercialized, or how a resource like water can simply increase tensions stemming other areas of dispute. In the case of the water riots in Trinidad and Tobago in 1903, those issues might include democratic accountability, transparency, and even freedom of speech. One thing is clear, however: historical accounts may never truly encapsulate an issue, but the level of depth and time spent analyzing and researching those accounts has the potential to help us avoid the mistakes of the past.

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A Literature Review: What are Authentic Texts in Second Language Instruction?

Runqing Qi

Authentic texts and pedagogical texts

Originating in the 1970s, the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach gradually became a prevalent second language (L2) teaching pedagogy, within which teaching authentic language use is emphasized. In order to define the term “authentic language use” and answer the question of whether the language introduced to L2 learners via textbooks can be considered authentic, the content in L2 textbooks went through examination and critique. Traditionally, texts in the book that were specially developed for L2 learners had been named as “contrived texts” (e.g., Breen 1985), “invented texts” (e.g., Little et al., 1988), “doctored texts” (Kramsch, A’Ness, & Lam, 2000), and “pedagogical texts” (Richards & Schmidt, 2013). For the purposes of this article, I will adopt the last term: “pedagogical texts.”

It has long been recognized that language presented in pedagogical texts is a poor representation of real-life language use (e.g., Gilmore, 2007; Maley & Tomlinson, 2017; Widdowson, 1978). The main difference between the language in pedagogical texts and the language in authentic texts (hereafter ATs) can be characterized by a distinction between “language usage” and “language use”; a dichotomy originally proposed by Widdowson (1978) in his book *Language as Communication*. “Language usage” refers to a learner’s knowledge of a target language system’s formal properties while the term “language use” refers to “the way the language system is realized for normal communicative purposes” (Widdowson, 1978, p. 18), which calls upon a learner’s ability to use his knowledge of language usage to realize communicative intentions. From this point of view,

it can be concluded that pedagogical texts mainly serve as a dependent exemplification of language usage, whereas ATs are realizations of language use (Mishan, 2005; Swaffar, 1985; Widdowson, 1978).

To illustrate, pedagogical texts usually serve as a display of target linguistic properties. Consequently, it is easy to encounter an abnormally high frequency of particular lexical items and grammatical structures in them (Widdowson, 1978), especially in structurally graded L2 textbooks. To compose a text, the writer needs to take both the to-be-learned linguistic elements and the learned ones into account in order to introduce the new linguistic properties and to facilitate the consolidation of the learned ones. As a result, the composition of the pedagogical texts is largely built on, and confined to, a limited set of linguistic structures at the expense of using language communicatively to express coherent meanings. Moreover, many pedagogical texts are composed in the form of contrived dialogues that usually bear little resemblance to real-life daily conversations. This situation happens not only because these texts were used as a device for demonstrating language usage, but also due to a lack of the typical features found in real-life conversations, such as incompleteness, repetition, redundancy and pragmatic implications (e.g., Bouton, 1996; Gilmore, 2007; Swaffar, 1985; Tannen, 1989).

Conversely, ATs are essentially written to communicate meanings. The most important thing writers consider when creating ATs is how to convey messages clearly and efficiently. Based on this purpose they will select appropriate linguistic devices, organize the discourse, and take the target audience’s characteristics into consideration.

Table 1 demonstrates the main differences between ATs and pedagogical texts with regard to three aspects:

Table 1. Differences Between Authentic Texts and Pedagogical Texts

	Authentic texts	Pedagogical texts
Language and Content	Real language use; meaning-centeredness.	Graded language usage; form-centeredness.
Intention	To realize social communicative purposes	For L2 pedagogical purposes
Target audience	Native speakers	L2 learners

Built on this analysis of the differences between pedagogical texts and ATs, it is not surprising to find a similar distinction in some attempts of defining ATs:

“In language teaching, the use of materials that were not originally developed for pedagogical purposes, such as the use of magazines, newspapers, advertisements, news reports, or songs. Such materials are often thought to contain more realistic and natural examples of language use than those found in textbooks and other specially developed teaching materials.” (Richards & Schmidt, 2013, p. 43)

“Authentic materials...were designed not to transmit declarative knowledge about the target language but rather to provide an experience of the language in use.” (Tomlinson & Masuhara, 2010, p. 400)

Although not explicitly indicated, the expressions “language use” and “language in use” applied in these two definitions infer that they were largely framed by the aforementioned distinction between language usage and language use.

Communicative Intentions and Social Context

In Morrow’s (1977) definition, the notion of language use was more clearly elaborate “an authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort” (Morrow, 1977, p. 13). Morrow’s (1977) definition of ATs was the most widely accepted and cited within related literature, which to a large extent has also characterized the methods defining ATs afterward. However, as Pinner (2014) pointed out, although Morrow’s definition is agreeable, the word

“real” also needs to be defined. From the perspective of the CLT approach, “a real message,” usually refers to a message that carries a communicative purpose (e.g., Lee, 1995) and “real” speakers, writers, and audiences usually refer to native speakers (Pinner, 2014; Mishan, 2005). However, the viewpoint that only texts produced by native speakers can be considered authentic has been challenged by some researchers (e.g., Pinner 2014; Tan 2005).

This very discussion about the relationship between textual authenticity and native-speakerism has occurred under the global view of regarding English as a lingua franca and has largely been restricted to the field of L2 speaking rather than L2 reading, so hence I will not dig deeper into it here (e.g., McKay 2002; Jenkins 2000; Crystal 2012).

Within the CLT framework, some following definitions have accentuated the communicative essence of ATs in a more obvious way:

“For purposes of the foreign language classroom, an authentic text ... is one whose primary intent is to communicate meaning. In other words, such a text can be one which is written for native speakers of the language to be read by other native speakers (with the intent to inform, persuade, thank, etc.) or it may be a text intended for language learner group. The relevant consideration here is not for whom it is written, but there has been an authentic communicative objective in mind.” (Swaffar, 1985, p. 17)

“An authentic text is a text that was created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced.” (Little et al., 1988, p. 21)

In addition to emphasizing the communicative purpose carried by ATs within these definitions, it is worth noting that Swaffar’s (1985) definition expanded AT’s target audience to both native speakers and L2 learners, as long as the communicative function of ATs is fulfilled. This viewpoint is distinguishable from the traditional account of regarding authenticity as exclusively a native speaker’s language use.

Another account also worth noting resides in Little et al. (1988)’s definition, in which they accentuated the social function of ATs and the target language community ATs originated from. A similar consideration can also be found in Kramsch, A’Ness, and Lam’s (2000) definition: “authentic texts [are texts] used by native speakers in culturally authentic contexts of use” (Kramsch et al., 2000, p.72). As highlighted by Mishan (2005), these definitions reflect a “sensitivity afforded [to] the socio-cultural aspects” (Mishan, 2005, p. 12)

of L2 teaching and learning beginning in the 1980s. Under this perspective, the socio-cultural community and context within which communications took place have come under the spotlight. On the following page is a summary table of the definitions of ATs that have just been discussed.

Based on this literature review, we can define ATs in more focused and manageable way as texts that are written to realize certain communicative intentions in a local community context and are not merely composed specifically for L2 learning and teaching purposes.

Table 2. Definitions of Authentic Texts

Theme	Definition	Reference
Contrived text versus authentic text; language usage versus language use	“in language teaching, the use of materials that were not originally developed for pedagogical purposes, such as the use of magazines, newspapers, advertisements, news reports, or songs. Such materials are often thought to contain more realistic and natural examples of language use than those found in textbooks and other specially developed teaching materials.”	Richards & Schmidt (2013, p. 43)
	“authentic materials...were designed not to transmit declarative knowledge about the target language but rather to provide an experience of the language in use”	Tomlinson & Masuhara, (2010, p. 400)
Communicative intentions	“An authentic text is a stretch of real language, produced by a real speaker or writer for a real audience and designed to convey a real message of some sort.”	Morrow (1977, p. 13)
	“For purposes of the foreign language classroom, an authentic text ... is one whose primary intent is to communicate meaning. In other words, such a text can be one which is written for native speakers of the language to be read by other native speakers (with the intent to inform, persuade, thank, etc.) or it may be a text intended for language learner group. The relevant consideration here is not for whom it is written, but there has been an authentic communicative objective in mind.”	Swaffar, (1985, p. 17)
The socio-cultural context within which communications took place	“an authentic text is a text that was created to fulfill some social purpose in the language community in which it was produced.”	Little et al. (1988, p. 21)
	“authentic texts [are texts] used by native speakers in culturally authentic contexts of use.”	Kramersch et al. (2000, p. 78)

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The Ghost

Liheng Xu

A creative revision of “The Painted Ski” by Pu Songling (1640-1715), *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, Liaozhai Zhiyi. Trans. by John Minford (New York: Penguin, 2006).

Before I drink the soup of forgetting to leave my old life behind, I want to tell my story.

I am a ghost, an ugly ghost. My face is covered with scars and crawling with maggots now, but I used to be a living person with a pretty face. Decades ago, I was a beautiful bride, fifteen years old, shy and filled with joy to be marrying my husband Li Lang, who was a student of my father. But while I was immersed in the happiness of my wedding, I didn't realize that my husband already hated my father. Their political positions were too different, and my father repeatedly intercepted Li Lang's attempt to communicate with the emperor and interfered with his career, keeping him at a lower position for years.

My father was old and worried about me since I was the only child in my family. I didn't marry an honorable person. Li used my homesickness as an excuse to visit my father's mansion repeatedly so he could hide forged letters; fake messages to an enemy country which he placed in my father's study. But all I remembered was spending time with the two men I loved, since I was ignorant of my husband's betrayal.

My good days ended after my husband accused my father of conspiring with the enemy when they went to court. Li Lang faked righteousness to remove my father from his position and brought people to my father's house to search for the letters, Li Lang needed as evidence to accuse my father of communicating with the enemy.

Every time I think about that moment, regret and pain tear me apart. My father, pointing at Li Lang, with his eyes full of fury and shock. The stress caused him to have a stroke, which left him paralyzed in bed, unable to talk. This happened when I was taking a nap, and when the servants came and informed me I almost fainted, but the maid held me up and took me

to see my father. He had been brought back to his bed by servants. His eyes were skewed, and he mumbled husband's name “Li ... Li.” I knelt down and held his hand to feel the tears streaming down my face. “Oh Father, please don't leave me...”

I was confused and furious and I wanted to ask Li Lang how he could do this to me and my father. How could he be such an ingrate? But when I reached the door to my father's room, a eunuch appeared and gave me an imperial edict. He spoke loudly of the emperor's intention to execute my father for treason at noon the following day, and that all his property would now belong to the Emperor's treasurer. Since I was already married to Li, I was no longer in my father's family would not be executed with my father, but emperor demoted me to the level of servant and I became a concubine. I was hurt and humiliated.

When I finally saw Li Lang again, he had decided to marry his cousin. I'd never seen him so happy. I felt heart broken and asked him how he could do this to my family. He sneered and told me had been in love with his cousin for a long time and it was I who kept him from his true love. He said that my father had been hindering his career and that he had planned revenge for a long time. Now his plan had succeeded and my family's reputation was destroyed.

I looked at Li Lang for a long time, seeing an entirely different person. He yelled at me for being ungrateful and that I would have been executed too, if it wasn't for his pleading. I would have rather died with my father than find out that my husband was a monster. The pain made me numb. I felt like I was dreaming except my tears couldn't stop. In just a few days, I aged decades.

When Li married his cousin, I saw how she was a young

and beautiful flower bud and thought she was destined for the same fate as I. The happy couple stood in front of me, and she berated me, "How dare you not show your respect to me?"

I knelt down and bowed to the ground, while she continued, "Who do you think you are? You are no longer the main wife, but a lowly servant. And you don't need a pretty face any more."

Before she had finished the sentence, two people rushed over and held me. The bride held my chin and cut my face with a knife. I glared at her as I bled and the pain made me bite my lips so hard that they bled too. I was disfigured. I lost the beauty that I was once proud of. The bride laughed at me and embraced her husband.

As I curled up on the ground in pain, she stepped on my head and said, "You, don't forget to burn some wood to boil my bath water!" I don't remember when they left or how I made my way back to my room.

I couldn't stand it anymore and I poisoned the food they were to eat the next morning. I enjoyed watching while they screamed and died. I felt a great pleasure and began my own last meal. I tore out Li's heart and ate it, though it was bloody and had foul stench. I didn't like it but it was the only warmth I could feel after the death of my father. I peeled off his cousin's skin to pay her back for destroying my beauty. After this vengeance, I felt satisfied and very tired. I took some sleeping pills and fell into a deep slumber.

When I woke up, I was in a black place, covered with a suit of skin. I tried to move but was surprised to find that my body had turned into dirt. I had become a ghost, though the skin suit gave me the shape of a young lady. I was confused and wondered whether I was in the underworld. I came out of the dark tomb and found a river where I washed my face. When I saw my reflection in the water, I saw that I was wearing the skin of Li's cousin, that heartless but beautiful bride.

I started walking aimlessly, trying to find someone to tell me where I was and what day it was. I saw a man passing by me on the road and stopped to ask him. When he turned around, both of us were stunned. I could never forget that face; it was my ungrateful husband, Li Lang. I panicked. Hadn't I just killed him?

The man gasped, surprised by my beauty. He flirted with me and told me his name was Wang Sheng. I felt disgusted and became furious. But he didn't recognize me and I didn't know what to do or where to go, so I decided to accompany him. I manipulated him into talking and he revealed that it was a different dynasty. He wanted to take me to his mansion

make me his secret lover.

As we reached his study, he couldn't wait to make love with me. I felt disgusted once more but convinced him that I needed a shower to prepare. He looked hungry and ugly. I didn't want to look at him again, so I hurried off to another room.

We shared the bed that night and for the next several days. The more frequently I slept with him, the more energy I felt. I didn't know why, but it made me feel good. The skin covering me became fairer and more lustrous.

I started to take care of the skin and for many years it kept me alive and fresh. It looked evil to me; when my body was dirt, the skin had kept itself whole. I was confused; why had I become a ghost? Was it because of the skin? Maybe it had absorbed my body as nutrition and now it had become a parasite, using me to attract more offerings. The skin wanted to be fed. I felt scared and helpless and hugged myself.

When Wang Sheng came and saw me sitting in the corner hugging myself, he misunderstood my intentions. He held me tightly and promised he would bring me to his mansion. The next day, he took me to confide in his wife, Lady Chen. When I told her I was not a runaway, but homeless, she allowed me to stay. Instead of being angry or jealous, she really welcomed me into the family, which made me feel awkward and bad.

She knew Wang was a womanizer, and she had no way to stop it. Since she had not conceived a son or a daughter after two years of marriage, she felt guilty and decided to place no more constraints on her husband. I felt bad for her, since she was so nice. She really hoped that I would have a baby to continue Wang's family, and only I knew that I was a ghost and I couldn't give birth to a human baby.

Shortly after I moved in, I found that Wang was becoming weaker and weaker as the skin was becoming more and more vivid, making me beautiful as a fairy or fox spirit. I was worried that they would discover I was a ghost, but Lady Chen explained to me that he was only weak because of the frequent sex.

I knew that couldn't be a reason, but I was afraid to tell her the truth. Meanwhile, I found that my body was getting out of control, which made me more uncertain. I wanted to kill Wang Sheng because he looked like my ungrateful husband Li Lang's reincarnation, but I felt guilty about lady Chen. She was such a nice woman and loved Wang so deeply.

I locked my door decided it was time to make a decision. As I took off my skin, I heard strange sounds under window, and I looked down to see that Wang Sheng had seen me. He ran out of the courtyard in a panic. I knew my secret would



come out eventually, but I didn't expect it to come out so soon. The only thing I could do was pretend to be calm.

Later that night Wang Sheng returned home and hung a fly-whisk over the bedroom where he slept with his wife. "He must have told her the truth," I thought sadly. I decided to visit with Lady Chen one last time and then leave. But when I reached the door, the fly-whisk broke my skin and revealed my true shape. I stood there shocked and angry as Lady Chen screamed. Wang attacked me, so she could escape. I thought Wang might have loved his wife but just didn't show it and if it hadn't been for my interruption, they might have lived in happily.

I decided that I should help them discover their true love for one other to compensate for my sin. Death is always the best chance to see things clearly.

I knew how to keep him alive, so I tore open Wang's chest and plucked out his heart and swallowed it. I didn't mean to eat it, but the heart can only be preserved in throat or chest. When they brought the priest, I knew he was no match for me, so I pretended to do as they wished but secretly possessed the priest. I couldn't stay too long in a living person and I needed to find another parasitic body. People who are dirty and delirious are the easiest to possess, so I made Lady Chen find a beggar to ask for help. I left my old skin with the priest, hoping he could destroy that evil thing. But just as I gave up my skin a strange force began to pull me toward the underworld.

I quickly possessed the beggar's body and spoke with Lady Chen. She cried and knelt down and kowtowed to me, begging

me to save Wang Sheng. I couldn't bear to see her begging. I told Lady Chen if she could eat my phlegm, then I would save her husband. I spat out his heart, which looked like a great gob of phlegm, into her mouth. I couldn't stay in the body of the beggar for one more because his consciousness was too strong. When the beggar came back to his body, he became mad and saw the beautiful lady eating his phlegm. The beggar laughed crazily, "You do love me, my pretty!"

Lady Chen was humiliated and covered her mouth as she ran back home. It wasn't long before I felt a force pulling me down again and when I stood up, I was in hell. The King of Hell told me I would pay for my sins; for killing Li Lang and his wife. But since I gave up the evil skin and helped Wang Sheng and his wife rebuild their relationship, my punishment was reduced and I only need to spend two years in the Avichi Hell. I could find relief in the opportunity to reincarnate, but it depended on my behavior in Hell.

Here my story has ended. As I drink the soup, I say to myself, in my next life, I will not become a girl again. It is too hard for a girl to live in this world.

Two years later, the people who live in Tai Yuan city still talk about the strange tales of Wang Sheng and how he came back to life again with his wife's help. But Wang Sheng didn't care; he was waiting anxiously outside the delivery room, with his wife screaming loudly with pain inside. In a few moments, the maid came to him with joy on her face, "It's a boy, master." Wang Sheng was happy that he burst in to see his wife. Lady Chen lay hugging their new baby, who looked so delicate and beautiful that it didn't even look like a boy.

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