

Clint has a wonderful command of the English language. The ease with which the words flow evoke descriptive, creative images. Although the stories Clint has written may not be your typical short story, the characters he creates have such a raw, human quality about them, you can't help but feel an emotional attachment to these people and understand the choices they make, no matter how surprising. Clint's ability as a writer to solicit these emotions in the reader speaks to how well of a writer he really is, and how enjoyable it is to read his stories.

~Anne Linder, Tutor

The Cynic

By Clint DrewsKolb

I'm failing out of college and I've never failed an exam. How can this be then, how can one who succeeds at the devices intended to test the attainment of knowledge fail at in institution open to all who can attain knowledge? Bullshit. That's why I received a letter from the dean. It told me that I will have to clean out my dorm room within the week. Heaping piles of bullshit. I did the readings, studied what was needed and avoided failing every exam and quiz. But I guess scholars are no longer wanted only those who deal with bullshit. Cursed assignments, online discussions and bullshit papers is what wrought my fall from grace. I decided to keep my hands clean and not do such bullshit.

It's true that my soft spoken mother will ask what shall I do now that I've undone myself? My quiet father will say nothing. He never agreed or disagreed with my going to college. Woe is me, boo hoo and all that junk. Feel no sympathy for me because it would really be a waste of your emotions since I alone am responsible. And to tell you the truth, I don't care.

In the spirit of the mood at hand I decided for a walk. It being a sudden spring after a long slow winter, I couldn't see any reason to not go. There would be time later for such mundane things as packing. I brought little and unpacked less.

In the hall on this early morning which would be 9 AM college time, I saw a couple kissing each other in the hallway. The man wearing a backpack and still prepared for the recently gone winter. His blanketed body a contrast to his girlfriend. Shorts that only reached inches below the crotch revealed long, smooth legs of the color bronze. Her shirt clung close upon her breasts displaying its bountiful and full glory while being baggy around the waist giving vague ideas about her size. It was obvious that they had been within each other's arms last night. For she stood within his doorway and shared a kiss of intimate relations. I found the whole scene cruel at first for it only emphasized how utterly alone I was. My heart strings tugged upon me like ropes on a rack. But my mind forever clever knew how to escape.

They may grasp tightly today but I knew it would not last. Kisses would become hisses, and love become hate. For it is those that we hate most that we had first loved. Now all that saddened me was how I wouldn't be around for the yelling that always filled my heart with glee. Nothing is more amusing than the irrational things said in the throes of passion. I wish I could hear the things said while in love but while in hate is always loud enough for me to hear.

The ill conceived big trucks and SUV's thundered down the 'main' street (these noisy machines being the only music). I bring attention to the idea of there being a 'main' street since it was more or less the only street in town. The other paved ways are too small and in too much disrepair to be properly called streets. Nor did these other ways hold anything of interest (I know, I checked). The street though was a shining example of a cleanly street with businesses lining its glory. It was as black as space with bright streaks of white and yellow. Almost a work of art in its own right. But what can one expect from a street so new? In time its glory will fade, thanks to budget cuts and misspending. In one year's time the colors will dull like the buildings along the street and in two more it will carry potholes from bad original construction. But for now two bloated old women ahead of me would marvel at this 'wonder of our times'.

These two women of bad physique and even worse smell would prattle on from one useless thing to the next in infuriating innocence. One would go on and on about her pretty granddaughter who is in high school. The old women marveled at how pretty she was in her mini skirt and tank top. To myself I thought of how this 'pretty' granddaughter was probably quite adept at moving these accessories to relieve her itch. She would be quite 'pretty' indeed when she would have to change those 'pretty' cloths for a rapidly filling belly. I myself avoided such activities with 'pretty' things in my time in High School.

They would go into gossip, a thing as an outsider I care naught for. I left them to get onto the bridge over the river.

The wide river calmly drifted past as cumbersome automobiles sputtered gas as they went by. The sky contained only the lightest of clouds sitting softly upon a rich blue blanket. Gracing the banks of the river were trees barren but still gleeful in the long forsaken warmth. The river itself had minute wrinkles running its surface from a couple of ducks swimming peacefully above the darkness lurking below the surface. The bridge's concrete gave me sound footing as I stood atop the railing. I thought of plunging myself into the still icy depths below. Maybe it would bring some relief with its cold grasp. I felt a little warm and wanted to see how cold I could get. No one can know until they try.

I though would never know. I never heard the car screech to a stop or feet racing in concern but I would feel myself torn to the cold concrete ground by hands empowered. I hit it soundly.

I must of blacked out for a second for when I came to, a women was over me. She was not sexy, beautiful or pretty, she shared my age and looked normal though a little on the pudgy side. She wore a dark black hoodie and a body that heaved from heavy breathing from effort, tension and adrenaline still running its course. She was not in the peak of attraction but for some crazy idea (maybe it was the clunk on the head) I kissed her soundly. Her warmth, feminine scent and sweat temporarily mingling with mine. She tore away blushing not knowing what to do. Luckily for her, others coming would excuse her from such things. Behind others would she disappear while I smiled at the quick thing I had done.

They sent me to where people who stand on railings go. It was a terribly boring place with the women there being distraught. And without any books or walks to distract me I constantly thought on the bestial. The women there seemed to be of weak quality and would often break down at my conversations. The attendees would constantly remind me that conversations on death were off limits. I ignored them because death is too important of a subject to ignore, of course then again I did talk about ways to die. I would eventually grow bored of this as well and the attendees were starting to think they were winning. I was contemplating on going mental to break the boredom and piss everyone off when she arrived.

Since I was such a good little doll during my stay they allowed for me to be with her alone. I won't bore you with specifics but she told me how I left her in great confusion. Her life she thought set until I came along and threw it all into the air. How the opinions of her parents about my condition delayed her coming. She went on about other excuses, she was obviously confusing me with a person who cares about such things. I let her go on as I drank her in, she dressed respectfully in an attire that said 'I'm not devoid but I don't give easily'. I think she noticed my ogling so I let her have no misconceptions. Again we kissed; less hurried than the last. Deeper and longer this time. I would of tried for more, but I didn't. It wasn't out of any moral reason (that would be stupid of me). I didn't for I disliked the idea of doing such a thing in a place like this. I forgot to mention, it smells terrible here.

She fresh from my kiss proclaimed that she would wait for me to get out. And not long did she have to wait, I had motivation. As her sweet scent of lavender faded from the room I wished deeply to smell it once again.

It would be over the border the next time we kissed. We ran from our parent's disapproving gazes and sealed our relationship. The wedding was tacky and gaudy for my tastes but I didn't complain because I didn't care about such aesthetics. I let her do all the planning and she was happier for it. I was not what she had expected to be married to, but in her eyes I saw happiness. I on the other hand was only pleased. I wore the tuxedo. Our friends were gleeful, our families not so much.

We moved into a large city where no streets carried the name 'main'. There was many and varied names for the legion of streets. The people were friendly, dumb or loners (I preferred the loners but I was amused by the other two). The buildings rose into the clouds, the mass transit was always crowded and smelly. When I strolled those streets I came to the closest thing to love. I was smiling ear to ear when we walked those streets to many interesting place. Heavy music of rock and roll roared from every bar doorway. I was so utterly jubilant and she laughed at how active and happy I was compared to normal. For the first time I felt happy to have her at my side, even though she wore a flowery skirt.

Years went by and we opened a bookstore. The store was simple and we would spend our days together, she liked to talk with people so she got the front end. I would deal more with the stacking and organizing. The bookstore attracted all sorts of amusing people. They tried to appear greatly intelligent and academic. They talked about obvious conclusions from books they had read. I would laugh within when they talked like these conclusions were earth shattering. The rare times that I came out to talk to them they would be left either baffled or awe struck.

It was my idea to serve coffee and her's to serve sandwiches to these bookstore dwellers. We used both but if I had to choose, I would of chosen her idea.

The bookstore made enough to be financially sound and made her happy and me content. I realized that we could do this for the rest of our lives, I was shocked when I first realized this. I even considered running away from it all. And I think hard upon at least once a year, but she prevents me every time.

I can't say I love her, but I would miss her presence. When I'm with her I can somehow deal with bullshit. I know I attracted her with attempted suicide and kept her with the following phrase that I would slip every once in a while, 'Don't die tonight, for if you die, I die tomorrow'. But I never or ever will plan to commit suicide. I was thinking of an impulsive swim when I stood on that bridge. It was simply misconceptions that she and the state thought I intended to do the worst.

Cruel you may call me, but that's how it is. She might not be different from any other women, and I know smarter and better looking women but I wouldn't want to lose her for everything in the world. I don't love her but I have grown accustomed to her ways. And she had grown accustomed to my ways as well, I think she even enjoys my bitterness.

For this I'll resolve the current stress in our relationship. She wishes for a child ever so deeply. I know I won't enjoy all the pains and tribulations that goes along with the process but she deserves it out of all people. Tonight I tell her that I'll bear the child. I don't want to see her face in pain, I don't think I could withstand seeing her so weak.

“And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
As any she belied with false compare.”

-William Shakespeare, Sonnet 130

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