

The
Oracle

or • a • cle (ôr'ə-kəl) *n.*

1) A student publication of the Webb School, Bell Buckle, Tennessee. 2) Both a newspaper and a creative publication (more the latter than the former). 3) Open to anyone and everyone who may wish to participate.



by Mythili Sanikommu

In the last issue of THE ORACLE we forgot to give some credit where credit was due. Shame on us! So, here's a big thank you to everyone who helped out, especially Gayle McClanahan and the Alumni and Development Office.

This page is dedicated to all those who have contributed in any way to this issue of THE ORACLE.

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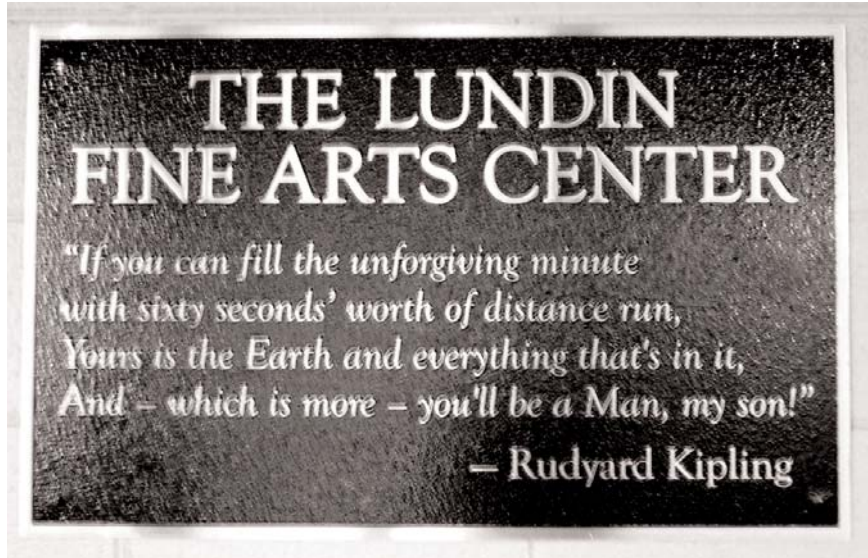
Faculty Advisor

Mr. Quinn

Issue #2, 2006-2007 Edition

Contest!

Question: Who thinks they can explain the significance *this quote*???



[AS SEEN ON THE WALL OF THE FINE ARTS CENTER
NEXT TO THE BATHROOMS]

Submit your speculations to
<theoracle@webbschool.com>

We surely appreciate the new Fine Arts Center,
but we don't know the correct answer,
so the most creative wins.

Winner gets something really cool.*

An Appeal for Truth

Neal Travis

Over the past two years I have spent my time trying to wake up. My time has been spent trying to find out why people act the way they do; what their motivations are, and a general understanding of what “truth” is. So on Friday, November 3rd I think I finally opened my eyes all the way, and people the world is a scary place.

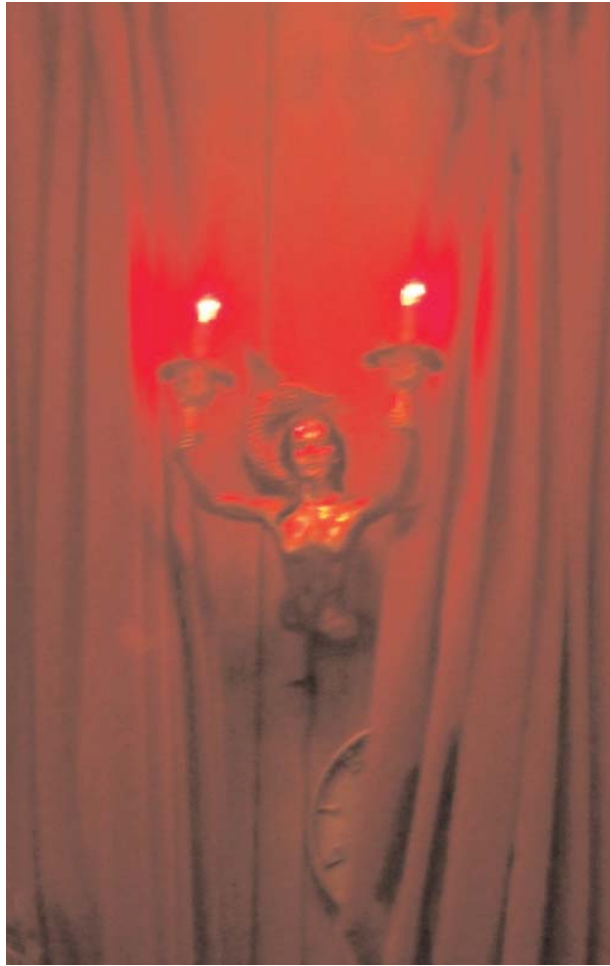
I look back on all the years I’ve spent at school, and I realize that it is all one big lie. Everything that they have “taught” us; everything that I have “learned” is not so. We are told that our politicians can be trusted, that they are looking out for America, for us. We are told that they are the best people for the job. Yet everyday all of them break their oath of office, they sell our country to the highest bidder, and therefore, they are guilty of treason. It is interesting to look into the backgrounds of the people that run our country, for you find only one common thread. All of them, George Bush, Bill Clinton, Dick Cheney, Donald

Rumsfeld, Al Gore, Bob Corker, Phil Bredeisen, Nancy Pelosi, and every other politician on Capitol Hill have traded multi million and billion dollar jobs for power. They are essentially saying that the power they now wield is worth millions and billions, and people, it is. Politics, both national and state has become just another lucrative industry for people to make money. It is these people that “run” our country that are so good at dividing us. Everyday we are told that there are only two political parties to choose from. Everyday people accept the “fact” that there are only two groups that represent millions of Americans. But there aren’t two political parties, there is only one, and that is the Green Party (and not the one that tried to get Ralph Nader elected president).

I understand that once we put aside the title of right, left, conservative, liberal, republican, democrat, fascist, communist, socialist, libertarian, etc. we can only begin to comprehend the truth of how things are and how they are going. It is these titles and labels that we put on ourselves that bind us from standing up to the people who routinely turn their backs on us.

It is with these titles and labels that we are lost, that we keep ourselves in the dark, that we cannot find truth. Once we begin to ask the right questions, then and only then will we begin to get the right answers. And that is how the search for truth begins.

Almost everyday I go to history class and I sit in my desk and I am told to swallow the lies that are spewed forth from the teacher and the text book. Never once have any of us been asked to question history as it is presented today. We are told that history is definitive, that the way we are taught it is the way it is/was. I say bull****! It is important to understand now that it is always the winner that writes history, never the loser. If you ever take the time to go through your history book and separate the truth from the prop-



Blue Bar 2 by Rachel

aganda, you will understand that the world is a very scary place. We can go back all the way to post-revolution America. Look at the political leaders of the day, and compare them to today's. Constantly George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Aaron Burr, Ben Franklin, all of them are put on pedestals. Yet

they are no better than today's politicians. All of them traded high paying jobs, established wealth, mansions, farms, families, and more for power. They didn't trust the people just like our politicians don't trust us. There is no greater evidence to this than the Electoral College. The politicians back then didn't trust the people so they appointed other people to vote for the people. What a sham! When you read these people's diaries and journals it becomes evident that all of them distrusted the "common man". Many of our "great leaders" have compared us to caged animals. That is why they don't trust us to elect our own representatives, they are afraid we will make the "wrong" decision.

Have you ever wondered about the Constitution?

Originally the framers saw no need for a Bill of Rights. They saw the regular people as inferior, without rights, who could be easily manipulated. It wasn't until the people rose up and threatened rebellion that the "leaders" included a Bill of Rights. But that is how it works; only when we stand up to those who are corrupted by power will they listen to us. During the

1960's and 1970's, it wasn't until people took to the streets that the politicians were willing to rethink what they were doing. It is a fact of life though that today people have taken to the streets, but our "leaders" will not listen. They no longer fear us and what we are capable of. But why should they? They have done a good job creating so many divisions among us, that we no longer threaten them. Our politicians understand that if they can keep us divided we will never stand up against them. They know that as one entity we can create change, but divided, each individual group can do nothing, and each group can be suppressed and crushed one by one.

Never in history has one individual ever done anything outstanding. It has always been with the help of others that things finally get accomplished. I say give yourself over to what is coming. Give selflessly to the events that are about to unfold on the world, because then you will be able to say that you took part in creating change. If the trends continue as they are, in the next few years a revolution will occur. America is coming to it. There will be rioting in the

streets, armed confrontations around the country, and a general dissolution of the United States as we know it. But this is what it has come to. Soon, very soon, people will begin to wake up en masse and realize everything they have been told is a lie. People will begin to understand that our politicians will not listen to us if we merely take to the streets and march peacefully with banners and signs. The catalysts have already been put in place. The Patriot Act has been renewed. An uncontrolled flooding of immigrants into America is allowed to occur. Our military is being stretched thinner and thinner. People are becoming weary of relying on overpriced foreign oil. Americans are losing their jobs to foreigners in China, Japan, Taiwan, and Africa. And our government does nothing about it. We are on a collision course with history. Will we allow ourselves to be defined by what happens, or will we define what happens? I

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end with one final thought: If ever a time for change has come, it is now. Ask questions, get answers, never settle for mediocrity. For it is when we compromise with ourselves that we fail.

The Oracle

loves to hear your opinion!

Write us at
<theoracle@webb-school.com>

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

OF THE WEBB SCHOOL, BELL BUCKLE

When he was called, the Student applying to Webb went to God and asked Him what he needed to know before going. God gave him these ten commandments, and reminded Student to keep them holy.

I: Student asked God, first of all, how he would get to and from Webb. God said these words: "That if your parents hate you, there will be no going from Webb, but rather to, and only to. The other people with which you share the existence will frighten you with threats of nude sleepwalking and playing Guitar Hero at all hours. However, you will become more like them quickly. You **WILL** swear against Me, but such is to be expected. You will take a genuine interest in other's love pursuits, even if it is none of your **** business. You will abandon all hopes of sneaking over to the dorm of the opposite sex, not because you mature, but because it is late, you are lazy, and you would rather be playing Guitar Hero."

II: Student became pale, and asked God what would happen if he did not wish to board. God said, "My child, what you expect is easier will be just as difficult. You will ride a bus exactly 1/2 the size necessary. You will pray to Me for a decent driver without defect, but in vain. You **WILL** be forced to share seats with middle schoolers. When the bus ride ends, your parents will show you the scrolls with the letters of the Beast: APR.

These APRs will destroy your weekend/vacation, and your parents will be crotchety for a week."

III: Student inquired of classes. God replied, "Your teachers will give you a weird vibe that you are sure animals feel before an earthquake. Your homework will be long to the point of difficulty, but not hard as to encourage you to get off your *** and get it over with. You will pretend to have your homework, admit at the end of class you don't, and promise to have it by 3. You will plan to do it during your free period, but only visit Facebook." Student was concerned, but God assured him his grade would not be hurt too badly.

IV: Next, Student wondered aloud about the faculty. God said, "Although you may feel the faculty is unfair and evil, they are truly My guardians of you and your future, so that they may cramp your style and stop you from completely destroying your life. They will be odd, as I said before, and you will wonder whether to treat them as friends or mentors. Treat them to the extent that you do not wish to have your sorry butt given hours."

V: Hearing this, Student was confused and asked about discipline. God said, "As you fail to follow various rules, be it dress code or drugs, you will be punished according to your deed. A small insurrection requires you to spend your time in the set quantity of 60 minutes,

referred to as hours (usually given in quantities of two) doing a service to the school. A larger offense requires a demerit, as bad now for the dizzying amount of hours one carries as later for the lack of colleges calling you back." "Remember," God told Student, "The strict policy of this school is eleven strikes and you are out."

VI: "How shall I spend my free time?" inquired Student. Ah, God replied, "An interesting question. If you are cool, you will spend time in the Student Center. Lockers exist here, although they will only serve as an area to 'lose' homework. Sofas will be spread liberally about, and you and your friends will talk of matters of the flesh and the last episode of Grey's Anatomy. However, if you are a nonconformist, you will exist in the library, usually on Facebook. You may play Frisbee, but only if Rage Against the Machine is on your iPod."

VII: Student asked more of God about iPods and music in general. God decreed, "First, you must destroy all Nickelback on your iPod." Student asked why, and God said, "My son, although you may treasure your copy of All the Right Reasons, everyone else will think it is disgusting. I know it is unfair, but you must possess much pop music, Sexyback by Justin Timberlake, Meant to Live by Switchfoot, and music like it." Student agreed begrudgingly. God then banned Def Leppard, Creed, and Linkin Park for similar reasons. Student was disgusted, but God told him that his patience would be rewarded.

VIII: Student was curious as to the nature of Webb food. God lamented, "My child, when you visit Webb, you will be given tasty Olive Garden food. Don't

believe it, 'tis a lie! The food you will be served is the leftovers of Cascade down the road. If you do not board, praise My name, for your fellow comrades that do must suffer the same reheated meals up to four times in a row until it is gone. The meals served will mainly complement rice and its friends. Learn the art of the sandwich and salad bar!"

IX: Student then asked about the relationships he would share with his fellow students. God smiled and said, "I believe I know what you mean. You see, although everyone else is hooking up with a significant other, your cross to bear will be that this shall never happen to you. You will be followed by a string of embarrassing events which will completely ruin this prospect for you." Student was horrified, but God said "Fear not, for although you walk the valley of awkward sexual maturity, you shall fear no evil, for the prospect of getting lucky always hangs over your head."

X: Finally, Student asked God about the platonic relationships. God commanded Student to remember the all important Guy Friend Principle, that is to say, to never ask out the girl with whom you are 'just friends', and to keep it holy. Once again, God said patience would be rewarded. God closed with saying, "You will meet many interesting people on your journey. You will be tricked into doing bad things. However, remember that these people are the best friends you could hope to have." God also said to remember to experience 'Man Moments', for "when a man shows his sensitive side, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than to ignore this expression and avoid bad karma."

– As Told by Darrell Winfree



by Janine Brown



Houston Says:

**“I’m NOT
leaving with-
out my Fudge
Ripple!!!”**

Sudoku!

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The Memory of Warmth and Chillness

By Jin Byoung Oh

We were always together. When we were born, when we learned how to speak, when we first met our baby sister, when we first went on an airplane, and when we lost our parents. We looked similar, we liked the same kind of food, we dressed in the same clothes, and we always stayed together. But there was one thing that was different within us.

“Christina! Come help Jessie with her breakfast.”

My twin sister Jessie couldn't use her arms when we were born. The doctors have been working hard to make her arms work, and it got a lot better when we became five. On our fifth birthday, Jessie, my parents, and I visited Disney World. It was the first time for us to get on an actual airplane. We had a great time for three days in a row. A month later, we were heading to our grandparents' farm in the night.

There was a drunk driver.

When I opened my eyes, we were in a hospital, lying in clean, white beds. My sights were still blurry, and I could feel two adults looking down on us.

“Are you alright?”

“.....”

No. Something had gone wrong. Maybe my ears got hurt in that car crash.

It wasn't the voice of my parents. Jessie and I cried together for about a week, day and night.

Today is our parents' death day, which is why we are so busy getting ready to go outside. We combed our hair and dressed up in clean clothes in as bright a color as we can find. We don't want to be so down and depressed on days like today.

Our parents were buried half way up a hill by a huge maple tree. Every time we visit them we have lunch and talk about our old memories and stories with our parents by the maple tree. When we were just kids, we usually fell sleep in three hours. However, we drink juices nowadays, watch the gold stripe of the setting sunlight shine on the glowing red maple

tree and go back home by the
middle of the night.

We returned to our
home, looked through the old
albums and laughed and cried
until we saw the sun coming up
through the forest of buildings,
and went to bed with big smiles
on our faces.

Questions.

By Lucas Johnson

Why?
Why are we here?
Why are we alive?
Why aren't we dead?
What is our purpose?

Why is there peace?
Why is there war?
Why do we love?
Why do we hate?
Why?

Why am I me?
Why are you you?
What are we?
What are we?
Are we human?
Or are we something else?
Nobody really knows.

How?
How are we here today?

And gone tomorrow?
Are we happy?
Or are we sad?

Why?
Why are some together?
When others are left alone?
Why are we different?
Why are we not the same?
Why?

Why do we sleep?
Why do we dream?
Why are some scared to dream?
Why are some not?

Why are some calm?
When others are stressed?

Why?
What?
When?
Where?
How?

They're all questions people ask
every day,
And our answers, our opinions,
make up who we are today.

Did you know . . .

*what lives in those holes outside the Science Building?**

Who at Webb can say they have never tripped over those holes in the ground surrounding the Science Building? Concealed in the grass, these little buggers are veritable death traps for any student hurrying to his or her class. I know I have cursed them many a time, especially during my freshman year when I was a young and inexperienced Webbie.



[LOOKS LIKE THIS]

So what *are* they? I've heard many things, one of the most popular being "holes for tent posts." Which I thought was weird, but whatever. I finally consulted Mr. Quinn, as it seemed like something he would know. And he did.

As it turns out, the holes are homes to little blue crayfish! I was able to see one (well, a dead one) personally the other day after a friend found it outside the science building. But

where do they come from? Mr. Quinn believes there might be an underground stream in that area. Cool, eh?

— Rachel F.
3/28/07

*[EDIT: 3/30/07]

THE HOLES HAVE JUST BEEN FILLED IN. YET, WE'VE DECIDED TO RUN THIS ARTICLE ANYWAY... JUST FOR THE HECK OF IT.

**[EDIT: 4/13/07]

I'VE NOTICED A COUPLE HOLES HAVE BEEN DUG OUT AGAIN.

This May Come As A Surprise To Some Of You, But . . .

Mr. Quinn is the hardest teacher in the entire world. He watches us like a hawk, always looming over us with his scowling expressions. Students recoil in fear as he barks out commands and jeers at the students when they make simple mistakes. He is constantly reminding us to never smile, and that life is horrible. We try to keep hope in his dark abyss of anger and spite we call his classroom, even though he recites dark poetry while strumming his ukulele, which we refer to as the horrible instrument of death.

I hope that the mere mention of that Musical-Instrument-That-Must-Not-Be-Named did not make you find the nearest corner to weep in, but I'm sure that the same three cords (the only chords he knows, by the way) are still repeating themselves in your

mind constantly, much like his horrible team of death-monkeys that sneer and clap their horrid little cymbals while staring at you with a glare so sharp that you feel your skin is being ripped right off.

Any of you students who have witnessed any accounts of Mr. Quinn's horrible teaching habits need help, right now. There is a nice lady named Dr. Chapman whom all of us at the Oracle* recommend you see.

*This was completely on Janine's word, as of yet the Oracle members have said nothing on the matter, as they were too much in shock of hearing the name of Mr. Quinn to reply on the subject.



Music In Your Heart

By Janine Brown

Plugged my headphones into
your heart a while ago,
I just wanted to see what
tunes you know.
Your heart beats fast,
Each beat a little stronger
than the last.
And your hearts beat slow,
I wanna see what makes the
music go.

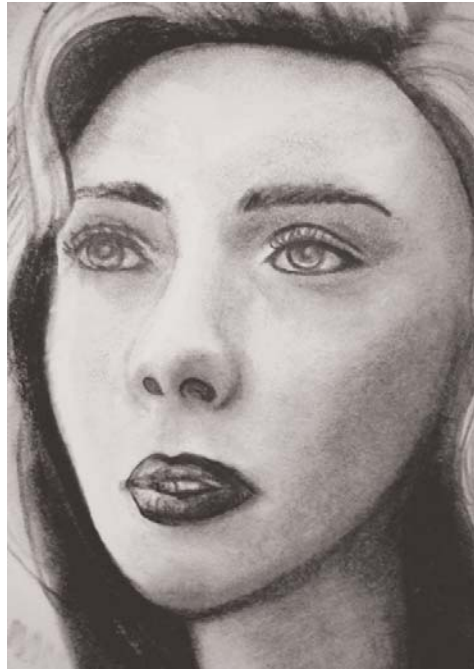
Why does it have to be
That your heart beats fast for
me?

I can't be with you,
I don't want to hurt you like I
know I'll do.
It's for fools, my dear.
Love is for fools.

But your heart is serenading me,
I've never heard a song so pretty.
It has no words,
But the beat moves in thirds.
And your blood moves in and
out,
Like music notes that ring with-
out a doubt.

I won't fall for this...
But your heartbeat will be some-
thing I'll miss.

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Scarlett by Rachel

Suddenly your heartbeat turns
evil,
Suddenly it's a heartbeast on the
prowl.
I can't take off the headphones
now.
Your conductor the brain takes
a bow.

I guess this is love?

To the Editor:

The previous issue of the Oracle began with an “Epic Apology” which I think creatively presented the myriad of obstacles that had to be overcome for its publication to occur. I believe the most oppressive of these obstacles are apathy and fear. We may not want to expose our work or opinion because we may fear the sting of judgment, disagreement and ridicule of our ideas; but apathy, which does not even allow the ideas to be exposed, is even more dangerous. I admit that this writing occurs due to a brush with a kind of fear, but mostly it occurs due to recent brushes with death and self awareness of my own fallibility. Such things tend to clarify what is really important in ones life.

This is a public apology for a private act. It concerns something I feel very strongly about, and that I may have momentarily betrayed, the Truth. The thing is, I think I told a lie, but I’m not sure, because I’m not sure of the question involved. One of my many faults is my shoddy memory.

A couple of friends asked me a question about the recent Oracle, and my answer was “No.” Now I can’t remember if the question was, “Are you happy with the Oracle?” or “Are you proud of the Oracle?” or something else along those lines.

If the question was the former, then I told the truth, because I am not happy with the most recent Oracle, Issue No. 1 of 2007. I am not happy that it took so long to publish, and I am not happy that we had such a limited number of submissions to work with, and I am not happy that it may not represent the full breadth and quality of the talents and activities of the entire student body, and I am not happy that it didn’t include a title page acknowledging the editor and all of contributors. But if the question was the latter, asking if I was proud of the Oracle, and I answered negatively, then that would be a lie, and I apologize, because I am very proud of the Oracle and especially the issue in question.

The Oracle has taken many forms during its existence at Webb, and I am proud that our first issue of the year has again

taken the form of a creative publication, reflecting the emphasis Webb is placing on the arts.

We have also begun publishing in-house with the assistance of the Alumni and Development Office, and we have fun collating it and stapling it together.

I am proud of the cover,
because it just looks cool.

I am proud of the epic apology,
because it is fun and expresses
the frustration of trying to gather
and organize student submissions
that are minimal with a staff
that does not exist and a faculty
sponsor who may be inept.

I am proud of the faculty contributors. In addition to everything else she has been doing at Webb, Mary Sessions has developed a terrific photography course. We are lucky to also have Michael Cimino-Hurt share his writing, which is just one of his many talents. I hope they continue to contribute, and I hope that other adult members of our community choose to share themselves through The Oracle, and that the students will choose to publish their submissions.

But mostly I am proud of the dedication, energy, creativity and courage of the students who did take the time and effort to contribute and share their ideas and interests. Some of them are so raw and dark that they make us uncomfortable, some of them may be full of purple prose, some of them may be so politically or idealistically biased that it makes us angry, and some of them are just plain silly and fun,

But what I am most proud of is that, while I have been the faculty sponsor, the Oracle has been a totally student driven publication.

I sometimes grow tired telling students what they could be, what they should aspire to be, what they should want to be and do. I sometimes want to celebrate who they are right here, and right now. I am proud that they are athletes. I am proud that they are scholars. I am proud that they are mathematicians, writers, scientists, explorers, actors, dancers, musicians, poets and artists. It is my hope that they are proud of themselves, and that they take advantage of every opportunity Webb offers to share themselves with

us. But to do this they must overcome, as we all must, the challenges of fear and apathy.

The Oracle is one of the many opportunities we have to share who we are, what we are doing and what we think with each other. It may at times bring to light words that are whispered in the shadows that we would rather not hear. Personally, I am happier when students choose topics of celebration over topics of social concern, but it is their choice.

It is my hope that the students will take pride in and advantage of the opportunity that is the Oracle, and the power of the voice that it provides to them.

P. Michael Quinn
Faculty Sponsor of The Oracle
2 March, 2007

Paramitsha (Faerie Tale)

John Michael Hurt

When we left off...

"What *is* she?" I asked breathlessly.

"She is a faerie."
Vashengo said, looking from the cage to me.

"But ...a faerie?" I spluttered. "There are no ..."

"What you see with your own eyes, raklo, is true." He nodded at the faerie.

Now, for the rest of Paramitsha!

"Why is she in the cage?" I asked. "Can't you let her out?"

"Oh, no!" He shook his head. "Faeries, they are very dangerous."

"Where did she come from?" I asked, still stunned and transfixed by the sight. I couldn't take my eyes away.

"She was passed to us from family, a *Sumadji*, a what? You might say an heirloom."

"But what does she eat?" I asked, suddenly concerned.

"She eats sunlight, like a plant, and of course water,"



By Darin Choi

Djidjo answered. “But in the sunlight she is nearly invisible, like a shimmer in the air. I think it is because she takes in the light. Only in the night can she be seen.”

“What is she saying?” I asked Djidjo.

She shook her head. “I don’t know. It is beyond our hearing”

I kept looking at the faerie. Something in her perfect beauty filled me with desire.

Something about her rang in powerful harmony with the strange empty feeling that my life had put into the pit of my stomach, my loins. My breath seemed to stop and I realized that my heart was pounding. The tiny sad, but beautiful, face was burned into my mind.

Suddenly, Vashengo threw the cover back over the cage. I jumped back with a jolt and realized it was later than I had thought. I excused myself,

thanking them for their hospitality and started back home. All that night and the next day, I couldn't get her out of my mind. The next evening I had promised to meet some friends in the village. We went to the usual places, talked and ate at a little shop. Afterwards, we went round to a pub and drank some toasts to the life we knew we would soon be leaving behind. But the whole evening I was restless. Kira was sitting across from me at the little table in the pub.

"Where are you Tolly? You've been so quiet all evening. We depend on you for intelligent conversation, you know," she said with a cross face. "Josh only wants to talk about ale and food." Josh made a face and threw a pretzel at her.

I didn't want to tell them about the faerie. I didn't want to tell anyone. I apologized for being so distant and said, "I've just got a lot on my mind, I guess." Soon, I excused myself and headed for home. That night I tossed and turned feeling every lump in the bed and hearing every sound, perspiring through long breaks between strange dreams. The round moon, almost full, made a back-

light in my room to the phantasms in my head.

The next day I went back to the camp. Vashengo was splitting wood and he paused to greet me as I came up. I helped him stack the wood he was splitting, and we had some cool juice he had brought. We sat under the awning and I told him about my confusion about the future. Talking to him about all this wasn't like talking to my family or friends, it was more like thinking out loud. I asked him what Djidjo would do in the future. He shrugged.

"We don't have as many choices as you," he said wistfully. "And I am a man. Her mother would be better to help her plan a life. A man, even a father, can't advise a young woman very well about things." He looked disconsolate for a moment, and I thought he might weep, but he recovered and looked at me in the strangest way. Just then, Djidjo appeared from across the way with a two big pails of water hanging on a staff across her shoulders. Of course, I ran right away to help her, and despite my good intentions I caused her to spill a lot of the water from one of the pails. This caused an exasperated expression from

Djidjo, which caused a contrite expression from me, which in turn caused laughter from Vashengo. In the end we were all laughing.

Vashengo asked me to stay for supper and since I had left a note saying I might not be home until late, I accepted. Vashengo did the cooking, with Djidjo helping. A couple of times over the dinner of lamb and vegetables, I caught Djidjo looking at me in a solemn wistful way, but she smiled and I smiled back.

After supper, we drank some sweet but fiery wine that Vashengo said was Hungarian. Then I asked them the question that had been in my heart for two days. "Vashengo, can I see the faerie again."

He stopped and sat back in his chair. "Listen to me Tolly, very carefully," he said with look in his eyes that demanded it. "She is dangerous, I have told you. If you want to see her once more, I will let you, but you must not ask again. No more can I say, and you have to accept it." I nodded. He looked at Djidjo. She looked upset and a little afraid. She shook her head slightly, but Vashengo only gave a little shrug. "Very well," he

said and he rose and went into the wagon.

He returned with the cage and looked at Djidjo for a few seconds before he pulled off the cover and there she was.

The sight of the faerie was like a knife thrust into my heart, but I welcomed the pain because it felt good to hurt like this. I lowered myself to the level of the faerie and gazed at her with tears forming in my eyes. Her beauty reached out like a beam and hit me full in the middle of my being. My hands moved to the cage and her features burned into my mind. A desire that didn't make sense swept me like a tidal wave. I felt Vashengo reach his powerful arm across and hold me back from the cage. Djidjo threw the cover back over it, and I collapsed back, the connection broken.

"You must not see her any more," Vashengo said with a lead gray voice. He looked at me cautiously as if to see what I would do. I simply sat back in my chair and nodded. He seemed relieved. We sat in silence for a few minutes and drank the rest of the wine. Finally I pushed myself to my feet and after thanking them for

the dinner, I walked home.

The next day I tried to act normal and to put the Romany, and everything that had happened out of my mind, and for a time I was successful. The chores, lunch with friends in the village, a stop at the library and the school and dinner with my family flowed together as a seamless whole. I went to bed thinking about colleges. A couple of hours later I was wide awake and sitting on the edge of my bed. I put on my clothes as though it was morning, as though in a trance. I went out of the cottage and made my way across the fields, silver in the light of the moon that was now completely full at zenith in the sky above me, so bright that most of the stars weren't visible. The fields smelt of the earth and the grass. The orchard wafted the perfume of its blossoms down on me as I moved quietly between the trees. I reached the wagon and saw that Djidjo and Vashengo were sleeping on cots under the awning.

I crept quietly up to the door and the chirping of the crickets covered the sound of the creaking steps. Inside, by the moonlight that followed me

through the door, I located the cage and set it out on the table in the middle of the wagon. I took two long deep breaths and pulled the cover off. My head rocked back with the force of her beauty as the glow from the faerie seemed to fill the room. I was transfixed. The sounds of the night swelled and blended together into a cacophony that swirled about me blocking out everything except me and the faerie. My hand reached out as if with a mind of its own and opened the twist lock in the door. I reached inside and the faerie backed against the other side of the cage. My hand stopped, and then reached out and touched her.

I cried out with a sound of a million heartaches that reached to the full moon and back. Light filled me and my arms were flung wide. In my mouth I tasted blood, earth, nectar, time, moonlight. I expanded balloon-like and then suddenly I collapsed, rushing down a tunnel of night like the only burning lamp in eternity. I felt a panic, not in my body, but in my very soul.

I lay on the floor of the cage, thinking no thought. After a time, I struggled to my feet.

a little off the floor. Dazed, I looked out through the bars. The world looked different, as though it were made of quicksilver and clouds, but I could see Djidjo and Vashengo tumbling through the door almost as if in slow motion. They came across the room and Vashengo slammed the cage door closed and locked it. Then they were picking someone up from the floor. For a minute, I thought it was going to be me, but they were raising a woman with dark straight hair from the floor, supporting her under her arms. Then they were all three crying and hugging. Vashengo repeating, "Dritta, Dritta, Dritta," and Djidjo crying "Daja! Daja!"

And then I understood it all. When Djidjo and Vashengo finally came to the cage, their eyes red and swollen from crying, and their hands still holding the hands of the beautiful woman sitting on the stool behind them. I knew what they had done. I felt a strange calm, listening to their tearful apologies. I tried to speak - to tell them that I understood, but they couldn't hear the voice that sounded even to me like the wind in a dream. Vashengo went out with Dritta, and Djidjo stood

by the cage crying and talking to me. "I really like you Tolly," she said, tears running down her face. "I didn't want this, but it was you or my mother. What else could I do? We'll find someone, I promise, and set you free again. Then it might even be you and me. Soon, I promise. I promise."

Tonight I could smell the sweet dusty incense of the full moon outside and I knew you would be back. Just like I came back. Only the wise and strong don't return. And now you're here with your face pressed close to the cage. And I know what you're feeling. And though I know you can't hear my voice, I have been telling you my story. You see my lips moving and I am telling you all this, but you can't hear me. Your beautiful young girl's face is pressed so close to the cage. Can I stop you from reaching inside to touch me? Do I really want to?



Questions? Comments? Email us at
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