



THE SCRIBLERIAN

Spring 2008 Edition

Sponsored by the English Department and the Braithwaite Writing Center, the *Scriblerian* is a publication for students by students. Revived during Fall Semester 2004 after a two-year hiatus, this on-line journal is the result of an essay competition organized by Writing Center tutors for ENGL 1010 and 2010 students. The Spring 2008 contest was planned and supervised by Chair Kellie Jensen with the help of Andria Amodt, Trent Gurney, Chelsea Oaks, and Whitnee Sorenson.

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Expressive- English 1010

1st Place Winner: Kylee Chalk, "The Boardwalk"
For Professor Alice Kane

There is a certain place that everyone can call his or her favorite. It is the place that makes current problems in life disappear and where the feeling of safety and serenity engulf the body. It may be a specific house or even a city thousands of miles away, but there is always a place. My place is hundreds of miles away. I have not been there in over five years, yet I can still see it and feel it in my mind as if I were standing there right now.

Closing my eyes I can feel and hear hundreds of things around me. The sun high above my head is beating down on my body with furious rays, but the heat is non-existent. There is a cool wind hitting the right side of my body, and with that breeze comes the smell of decaying fish and sunscreen. Circling around myself and other people, I can hear the call of seagulls begging for the smallest scrap of food. On either side of me the distant chatter of every day conversation is taking place between families and couples of all ages. The sand underneath my feet and between my toes is possibly the greatest feeling in the world, but the crashing wave of water cascades over my feet, and a new feeling of sensation is found. Over and over the pounding waves of water echo in my head as the cool water rises higher and higher up my legs.

Opening my eyes I see a variety of objects and people strewn about. Standing in the ocean waves looking down at my feet I can see my painted toenails half buried in white sand filled with seashells and tiny particles of gold. The waves come and go; each time leaving more moist sand and foam around my feet.

Looking out onto the horizon I see an endless ocean of blue. No islands or buildings in sight, just vast open sea for thousands of miles. This always gives me the feeling that anything is possible. Behind me is a shore of snow-white sand with thousands of pummeled seashells scattered all around. People young and old walk the shore to find the most beautiful for their collection. Along with the shells scattered along the beach, there are numerous shapes and colors of beach towels along with enough food coolers to feed a small army.

Leaving the water, the sand sticks to every part of me that is still wet, and after only a short moment, my feet are dry and the sand is warm to the touch. This feeling of warmth is only found here. There are many hills and dips of sand that await a curious child with a colorful imagination. Most of these hills are covered with plants that resemble weeds and sometimes seaweed. Inside the seaweed one can usually find a small crab or if one is lucky, a starfish that has washed up on the shore.

Leading up to this beautiful beach is a mile long boardwalk every person must walk along to reach the water. Walking back from the beach, I carry my towel and other various beach items on my back. I look down at my feet covered by black flip flops and white sand. The wooden panels beneath me are old and cracked, some of them on the brink of destruction. On either side of this boardwalk is something resembling a miniature jungle. There is no sand in sight, just masses of trees and other shrubbery along with the occasional "Beware of alligators" sign. I always knew when I was halfway to the car when I

looked up to see the lookout tower off to the side of the boardwalk. The stairs lead up to a spot where the whole beach can be seen and the sunset is always breathtaking.

Reaching the end of the boardwalk and looking back toward the beach, I feel somewhat empty. The sand that remains on my feet is all I have left of the ocean now. Standing under the cold shower outside the public restrooms in my pink and white swimsuit, the sand washes away from my feet and the ocean; my place is gone.

2nd Place Winner: Wendy Bullock, "It Was Death"
For Professor Charles Cuthbertson

The first time I saw someone die, I was surprised by my own reaction. I thought it would scare me or shake me up a little more than it did. I watched my friend cry and suffer for days, but in the end, I was relieved to see her go.

My job was great. I loved it. My co-workers were awesome, and the patients were wonderful. It was my dream job, at least for just being out of high school. The pay was good, and I had worked my way up to a supervisor position.

Since this was an assisted living home there wasn't as much 'dirty work' as there would have been at a rest home, which was a huge plus. The patients were more independent here; we had daily activities and exercise groups, and everyone was very social. At a rest home they seemed to be glued to their beds, and the patients mostly secluded themselves.

I became close friends with a patient named Ella. We were "bosom friends" as she called it. Ella was from the small town of Tropic. She was always so cheerful and kind. We could laugh and joke about anything. I don't know why Ella and I clicked; we just did. Who would have thought I'd make friends with an old lady? After only a week we knew each other inside and out. I told her everything, and she told me the same. After so long, I didn't even notice her wrinkles or grandma clothes anymore. I hung out in her room any time I had a chance. I would even go see her on my days off. I loved walking into her room. It smelt like the same cinnamon perfume my grandma used to wear. Ella and I would go shopping and take long walks together. I thought I knew what a real, true, honest friend was until I met Ella. I then realized I'd never really had one before. I could really trust Ella and completely just be myself with her. I knew she would keep all my secrets just like I would keep hers.

Ella became sick, but not too sick. She threw up a few times and stayed in bed. After a few days of staying in bed turned into a week, I took Ella to the doctor. The doctor said she was fine; there was nothing wrong. He prescribed some pain pills. Ella said not to worry; she just didn't seem to have as much energy right then. *That's fine*. I knew it took longer for older people to recover when they had been sick.

After a month, I could count on my hands the number of times Ella had been out of bed. I told her to stop being lazy. She laughed at me and said she wasn't trying to be. She was weak, and when she tried to walk around, she would get dizzy. She didn't want to fall. It's true that when older people fall, it can be pretty traumatic! I remembered the gentleman down the hall who had fallen and broken his hip. All he did was fall, and then he was stuck in a wheelchair for the rest of his life. I remember how bad that scared Ella. She didn't want to end up in a wheelchair. I completely understood.

At work I finished with my usual routine; then went up to see Ella. As I walked over to her bed, she looked terrible. Her face was whiter than usual, and her baby blue eyes looked gray. She smiled at me and took my hand. "Don't worry. I'm just having an off day," Ella told me. I stayed with her the rest of the day.

A few days went by. As I walked into work, the lady at the front desk looked at me with too much sympathy. It sent me running to Ella's room. I walked over to her bed like I had every day. She was crying. She suddenly looked small and frail to me. Ella, a usually large and happily plump woman, now was unrecognizable. She looked old, frail, and even a little mean. Her smile was gone, and she glared at everyone entering her room. She barely moved anymore. It's like she had been chained to that bed. I didn't even recognize her eyes. They were not glowing like they used to. They were watery and sad. I just stared at her. *Who is this person that had taken over Ella's body?* Ella cried in pain when she tried to reach for my hand. I sat by her and took her hand in mine. "Don't worry, Ella. You're just having an off day. It will be ok," I told her. She tried to smile back at me, "I know, I'm just being lazy." I forced a laugh. *This was it.* The other nurses told me this was how it started. I was hoping this wasn't it, but it was, and it was death. Ella was fading, and it was happening fast. That night I went home and just sat there. I'd never actually stared at a wall until that night. I think a year went by. I was numb. Was this really happening? Ella couldn't die! The thought had hit me like a brick wall. I knew she was old, but why?

The next day I called the doctor to come and see Ella. He said there was really not much he could do. It was just her age. Her body was slowly shutting down. He prescribed more pain medication. *Stupid doctor, is that all you do for the elderly? Here, just take more pills! I swear she was already taking 10 a day!* I glanced at Ella, she rolled her eyes, and I knew she was biting her tongue. She has never taken half those pills anyway. "It's all in your head" she used to say.

The following day will be engraved in my mind forever. When I walked up to Ella's room, I noticed the blue sticker by her name on the door. The blue sticker meant DNR (do not resuscitate). These stickers indicate that either the patient is terminal, or they have decided they don't want to be revived if they stop breathing. God! Was this really happening? I opened the door. I thought I was in the wrong room. The nurses had switched her fluffy queen-size bed for a sanitized hospital single. The rails were positioned up on both sides; now she was locked in. When did her room start to smell like a hospital? There were gloves, masks, and medical supplies covering the counter. A plastic catheter bag hung on the bed. IV and fluid tubes now surrounded Ella.

One of the nurses told me the pain medication had stopped working. Ella's body was not accepting it anymore. Ella screamed in pain. "It hurts all over. Everywhere!" she cried. All she could do was just lie there and soak in the pain. "God damn it! Wendy, I can't do this anymore! I thought I could handle this, but I can't! It hurts too badly. There are needles pushing through my skin, they're everywhere, make it stop! I don't want to die! I didn't want it to be like this. Damn it! Please make it stop hurting!"

The lump in my throat was so big; all I could do was look away from her. Why was she going through this? Ella would normally never talk like this. Why did someone so kind have to be tortured? *I don't understand God. What is the point of being tortured just for your life to end in death anyway?*

Ella pulled me towards her. "Wendy, just take my pillow and hold it over my face. Please. No one will know. You can save me from this. Please save me. Take my pain away." Was this really happening? She had just asked me to suffocate her? The blue sticker on Ella's door flashed through my mind. God, this was too much! I thought my heart was going to explode! I couldn't handle this! I walked into Ella's bathroom and closed the door. I stared at my reflection in the mirror. I saw a picture of Ella hanging on the wall behind me. She smiled so sweetly. Not a care in the world. I had forgotten how pretty she was. I wish that me and Ella could just leave all this and take a walk. I loved our walks. If there was ever peace

in the world it was while we were walking. I thought of Ella's life and everything she had learned. She loved her life; you could tell by the way her face would light up and glow when she talked. She didn't regret anything. "All the events in my life have made me the person I am today, and I love who I am." Ella once told me. *It was time for her to go. This was it. Why do I feel like this is ok? I hate that I had accepted this feeling; it was unwillingly.* I swallowed the lump in my throat and returned to Ella's bed side. "Ella, I'm not doing anything with that pillow, and I'm not going to leave you. I'll stay right here." Hours went by. She yelled at me. She yelled at everyone. She cursed under her breath. She cried and screamed in agony. I thought that day would never end. *If there was a God, could he just let this poor woman out of her misery?* I couldn't stand to see her like that. I didn't want to lose my friend but I just couldn't take it anymore. *Just let her die!*

I didn't leave Ella's room at all that day. It was a little after midnight and she had become very quiet. Her eyes were closed, and I just watched her. She clenched my hand in hers, in a surprisingly tight grasp. She didn't look that strong.

She opened her eyes and tried to speak, but no words came out. She just looked at me. She didn't have to say anything. "Love you Ella." I barely whispered. The tears swelled in my eyes, and the lump in my throat almost broke free. I just laid on the bed next to her, grasping her hand. I stared at the designs on the ceiling.

Hours crawled by. I couldn't take my eyes off Ella's chest. Her breathing was quiet and slow. Her chest rose up and down... up and down... and then it stopped. I held my breath. Her chest didn't rise anymore. Moments passed. I stared at her. I could almost smell the scent of cinnamon perfume.

She was beautiful. Her curly white hair was strung across the pillow. Her face was calm and relaxed, maybe even happy. She didn't hurt anymore. Her pain was gone, and so was mine. Minutes passed as I laid next to her. I couldn't describe the type of presence that surrounded the room. Maybe it was emptiness.

I didn't understand the struggle Ella had just gone through these past few weeks. It left me bitter towards death. Should I hate or welcome the feeling of relief I had now that Ella was gone? I tried to push my thoughts to the back of my mind. She had taught me so much about life and what real happiness could be. I will never forget that. I slowly released my grasp on her hand and moved off the bed. As I walked out of the room, I turned and looked at Ella once more. The sun was shining through the curtains. The rays landed on Ella perfectly. She was glowing. I let my tears fall, and for the last time, I closed the door behind me.

Argumentative- English 2010

1st Place Winner: Danielle Josephson, "Cell Phones and the American Culture"

For Dr. Bryce Christensen

It was a beautiful summer night. The sun was setting, causing the golden hues of yellow and orange to cover the red rock cliffs that surrounded me. The air was warm, motionless, without even the slightest breeze. The lake water was so still that I felt like I was floating on a glass mirror reflecting the scenery around me. As I sat on the back of the houseboat soaking in the beauty of Lake Powell, I felt a small shadow cast itself upon me. I looked up to the highest cliff to see the silhouette of a girl standing on a tall rock, her hand reaching toward the heavens. After taking a closer look, I noticed that it was my friend Darci, and she was holding something in her hand. Then I heard her excitedly yell, "I've got it." I ran to the edge of the houseboat and looked up. "What is it Darci?" I yelled. As I moved closer, practically peering into the sun, I realized that she was holding her cell phone in her hand. "I finally found service," she said, almost falling from her balanced position. It is moments like these that make certain the idea that cell phones have changed the American culture. Most cell phone owners will say that cell phones have made communication very easy and convenient, but the cell phone has taken away the quality of face-to-face conversations. Because cell phones and texting have become the center of a young person's world, it has put a sizeable dent in interpersonal communication.

In a world before cell phones and texting, the people of the American culture were not as entirely connected as we are today. But there was a type of interpersonal communication that took place that has almost gone extinct in today's society. Attending high school in the late sixties, my mother has seen the way the culture has changed because of cell phones. She told stories of her experiences in high school that one would never even imagine hearing about happening today. She told about a time when she was throwing a party. She couldn't just pull out her cell phone and send a mass text inviting everyone in the school to the party. She personally invited people to the party by talking to them in the halls at school or calling them on the landline phones. She feels like teenagers today are very impersonal when a party invitation is sent via text message. By doing this, the inviter is saying that he or she doesn't care who comes to the party, that the invitee was just another number stored in his or her cell phone's phonebook.

My mom also said that dating back then was so much more one-on-one than it is today. When she went on a date with a boy, she was on a date free from distraction. There were no cell phones ringing or text messages being sent in-between bits of small talk. She was able to have a nice conversation with the boy and get to know him. She was on the date with him and no one else. The dating scene in high school now has unquestionably changed.

There was a time in high school when I asked a boy to my high school's Sadie Hawkins dance. While we were at dinner, I was excited to converse with him and be able to get to know him a little bit better. As I started the conversation, I noticed him looking down at the table and answering my questions with just one-word answers, not looking very interested in our conversation. As the night went on, I realized that it was not the table he was looking at—he had his cell phone on his lap, and he had been texting another girl all through dinner. His texting didn't stop there. When we got to the dance, he put his left

had on my waist and then he had his phone in the other hand texting while we danced. Not only was my night ruined, his texting got in the way of us personally communicating and getting to know each other.

Just like my date, and just like my friend Darci at Lake Powell, teens today can't stand to put their phones down for just one day and enjoy the company of the people that surround them. They have to converse with others in cyberspace, and by doing so, they hurt the feelings of the ones they are with. By texting, instead of face-to-face communication, people can stay in their comfort zone without having to really reach out to communicate with one another, and by staying in their comfort zone, they become oblivious to the things that are happening around them.

There were so many times in high school when I would walk into a party and see a bunch of my friends sitting squished side by side on a couch, oblivious to the fact that no one was talking. They would all have their cell phones out texting. They would be communicating via text message to someone else rather than enjoying the company of the people around them. I can recall one specific instance when texting was used to try to solve a personal matter between girlfriend and boyfriend, and if anything, it just made the situation worse. My really good friend from high school had gotten into a fight with her boyfriend. He had lied to her about where he was; he had been participating in something that she felt was inappropriate, and this had made her really upset. One night, she and I went to a party, and her boyfriend just happened to show up. She had been texting him almost every day that week about the situation, and it seemed nothing was getting solved. While they were both at the party, instead of taking the time to sit down and personally talk to each other about it, they ended up sitting on the same couch, me stuck in the middle, and texting the whole night about their argument and how he was not the one to blame. The awkward silence that lingered between the sending of each text made the air so thick it felt like it could have been cut with a knife, and I was stuck in the middle. Once again, cell phones had ruined my night. As I talked to my friend about the conversation she had had with her boyfriend, she said that texting had just made the whole situation worse, and she was madder than before. By texting, they had taken a 15-minute conversation that would have helped their relationship and turned it into a 3-hour nightmare full of accusations and tears.

Because people have turned to cell phones to solve interpersonal problems, so they can avoid face-to-face confrontation, the communication department of a relationship is left with an empty hole that seems to just keep on growing. I have found that in the early stages of a relationship, boys use texting as a way to avoid rejection. There is no reason for a boy to pick up the phone and actually call a girl to ask her out on a date when he can text her and save himself from facing his fear, right? Wrong. This is the thinking of most teenage boys these days. It is tough to find a boy who will actually call a girl and ask her out on a date. A prime example of a boy not having the guts to call a girl happened to me just last week on Valentine's Day. I was sitting with my roommates trying to make some plans for the evening. It was about six thirty when I got a text message from a boy. The message said, "Would you want to come to a movie with me at 7?" First of all I was very disappointed in the way he was asking me on what I thought was a date. But to top it all off, when I looked at the message status I saw that I was not the only girl he had sent that message to. He had sent that message to five other girls. By doing this, he in essence said that he didn't care who he went on the date with as long as he had someone to take. Using his cell phone to ask multiple girls on a date at the same time allowed him to avoid actually having to pick up the phone and call me. This is why most young people nowadays are so attached to their cell phone. It brings them some sort of comfort, a type of security blanket.

As one walks through the halls of a high school, all that can be seen are teens texting or talking on their cell phones. Cell phones have become the center of young people's social lives, and they cannot imagine life without them. They cringe at the thought of how their parents lived in a time before cell phones and texting. But as I look at my mom, she has developed an immense ability to communicate and is able to understand other people so well. She attributes that quality to the absence of cell phones in her high school years. I do believe that cell phones can be used for good and are very convenient, but because students can't seem to go one day without their cell phones, they have become a distraction in both the school and work places. They have disrupted the interpersonal communication that is healthy for starting any kind of relationship.

Now, I do have to admit that I do have a cell phone, and I do text occasionally. Cell phones are a very convenient way to communicate, but it is when that electronic device gets in the way or replaces genuine face-to-face communication that it becomes a problem. Instead of relying on words written on a small screen sent back and forth between one another, as a society we need to rely on one another and the satisfaction that personal communication brings to relationships. We need to take the cell phone that has become the center of our world and push it to the side, replacing it with family, education, and work. We need to fix the dent that cell phones have put in interpersonal communication and take the time to enjoy face-to-face conversations with the ones we love.

2nd Place Winner: Rayla Gomez, "Kat Stratford: Playing Her Role?"
For Dr. Jessica Tvordi

Between the 1999 movie, *10 Things I Hate About You*, and William Shakespeare's play, *The Taming of the Shrew*, there are many conclusions one can draw concerning the different counterparts of the characters. The variations between Kat Stratford and Kate Minola influence how the audience interprets the play and its underlying themes. In the film, *10 Things I Hate About You*, Kat Stratford plays an opinionated and angry outcast in her last year of high school who just wants to be her own person. Others see her as a shrew because of her strong voice and how she constantly strives to be different from the other students. Kate Minola in *The Taming of the Shrew*, however, is angry and bitter because of her family and the low role a woman must play in society. People see Kate as a shrew because women in Shakespeare's time were not allowed to voice their opinions when any important decisions were made, even when they were right. When examining both versions of the same story, it becomes clear that Kat Stratford is a more developed character because of how she uses her stereotype as a shrew, her relationships with the other characters, and her deeply set motives.

The setting switch from old Padua to a modern American high school changes the characters' personalities dramatically, and since it is a teen movie, stereotypes are applied to everyone. Kat Stratford is portrayed as the loner who doesn't want to be a part of any clique. The first time she appears in the movie, she is seen glaring at a car full of girls and listening to Joan Jett's "Bad Reputation," which implies that she doesn't care about her popularity status at all. She also seems to think that girls who swoon because of a handsome and charming guy aren't very intelligent. In that way, she shares a common bond with the original Kate Minola from Shakespeare's play. When Kat finds Patrick waiting at her car after she buys a CD, Patrick believes that he can charm her by using cheap lines and winking at her. Her reply is less than amused by his attempt. "Am I that transparent? I want you, I need you. Oh, baby. Oh, baby" (*10 Things I Hate About You*). In the play, however, Kate's personality changes dramatically from a shrew to a faithful and loving wife. Her ending speech does not seem to completely fit her old clever, bitter self, and the audience is left wondering why. In Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*, Kate goes from "I see a woman may be made a fool / If she had not the spirit to resist" (3.2. 220-221) to "Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper" (5.2. 146) within a couple of days. Although it is possible, this abrupt change on the outlook of the role of a woman seems highly unlikely and very inhuman. In the 1999 movie, the audience is able to pick out certain moments to see why Kat acts the way that she does and how all that changes when Patrick comes into the picture, wanting to really know the girl behind the mask.

Because the relationships Kat has with the other characters in *10 Things I Hate About You* are better established than those shared between Kate and the others in *The Taming of the Shrew*, most people are able to take in the important themes of Shakespeare's play and appreciate the overall story more. The vague references as to why Kate is unhappy in *The Taming of the Shrew* don't leave as strong of an impression, or are as capturing, as the struggles that Kat faces and overcomes in *10 Things I Hate About You*. While Kate is starved and kept from sleep in the play by Petruchio in order to tame her wild ways, Patrick, in the movie, charms Kat and really likes her for who she is. Kat believes that she should disappoint everyone from the start so that she can live up to her own expectations without having to worry what people think. Patrick then surprises her by saying, "Then you screwed up...You never

disappointed me" (*10 Things I Hate About You*). He also shows that he cares more about Kat than his "bad boy" reputation when he sings a love song to her over the loudspeakers during her soccer practice. Patrick brings out Kat's good nature through kindness instead of being verbally abusive and physically controlling like Petruchio in the play.

Kat also has closer relationships in the movie with other characters such as her sister Bianca and her father. She loves her family, but at the same time she is frustrated by them, possibly because of their being so calm about their mother leaving. Because of Bianca's choice to be one of the popular girls at school, Kat seems to think that she is selling out and not being herself. Kat implies this when she tells Bianca, "You don't always have to be who they want you to be, you know" (*10 Things I Hate About You*). Also, she resents her father because of his assumptions about where she will go for college. Despite these feelings, she tries to protect Bianca from getting hurt by encouraging her not to date, and shows that she loves her father when he trusts her to go to college on the other side of the country. In *The Taming of the Shrew*, however, Kate's father Baptista hands Kate over to Petruchio after just meeting him, conveying to the reader that Baptista doesn't care much for his first daughter. "Well mayst thou woo, and happy be thy / Speed!" (2.1 136-137). When Kat's mother left, Kat lost her virginity to Joey because she was going through a tough time and wanting an outlet for the way she was feeling. After that, she promised herself that she wouldn't follow the crowd anymore or be the person everyone wanted her to be. She, in turn, doesn't want Bianca to have such a terrible time figuring out who she is and tries to steer her away from many general high school experiences. Later, when Kat's father tells Kat that he sent in a check for the college she wants to go to, she hugs him because she knows that he loves her enough to let her go out on her own. Because of these moments during the film, the audience is able to understand that she is human and does have human emotions and reactions.

Kat's motives in the movie are to get through high school with little social contact and to go to an east coast college after she graduates, but she is completely grounded in her thoughts and actions. She tends to be involved and opinionated when completing her schoolwork, and all throughout the scenes in her English class, (with the exception of when the Shakespeare sonnet is assigned), she bluntly tells everyone what is wrong with the authors and assignments that they are given. "Romantic? Hemingway? He was an abusive alcoholic misogynist who squandered half his life hanging around Picasso trying to nail his leftovers" (*10 Things I Hate About You*). She states her opinions clearly, revealing conviction rather than childish stubbornness. During an argument with her father, she states exactly what she wants after she graduates high school. "I wanna go to an east coast school. I want you to trust me to make my own choices and I want you to stop trying to control my life just because you can't control yours" (*10 Things I Hate About You*). When she says this, there is no question about what she wants, and the audience doesn't have to assume anything, as when they are reading the play they have to second-guess Kate's motives.

The movie clearly defines Kat's role in the high school world and points out one of the main themes in Shakespeare's *Taming of the Shrew*: Society's happiness depends on everyone playing their individual role. Kat realizes in the end that in order to be happy, she has to cooperate on some level with the people connected to her. By better establishing these relationships in the movie, this theme is able to cross from one generation to the next. The reason *10 Things I Hate About You* is such a great adaptation of the play is because role playing applies to both Shakespeare's time period and modern times, even though there are some differences. For example, women played the role of the obedient wife hundreds of years ago. Today, although most women are considered equal to men, they still have different roles

that they must play in order to function in society, such as a full-time worker, a single mother, or even a daughter. This theme transcends time periods and even reaches the audiences who may be losing the connection between classic literature and its useful themes.

Expressive- English 2010

1st Place Winner: Kaylin Roundy, "Gravity"

For Dr. Bryce Christensen

My fourth grade teacher had a very interesting theory. She favored art, stuffed our little brains full of reading and writing, taught only a smattering of long division, avoided P.E. like the plague, and believed that nearly anything else contained in the district mandated fourth grade curriculum for Panguitch Elementary could be effectively taught through music. It was compliments of her teaching theory that I learned about Promontory Point, dig-a-digging dinosaurs, and of the scientific law that has been prevalent in my life since I can remember. "G-R-A-V-I-T-Y, gravity's the thing!" My early childhood was abnormally burdened with this mysterious force known as gravity, so you can imagine my sheer delight when I discovered exactly what had been vexing me all this time!

Every person in the world has experienced gravity in one way or another on a daily basis, inevitably. I concur with Newton's gravity ideals; I believe gravity is a very solid scientific and natural law—at least no one I know of has managed to disprove it—and I am surely living proof of its existence. I am not deeply versed in all the disciplines of science, but I do stake claim to knowing just how gravity can bring things down, most often to my great despair. Allow me to illustrate my prowess with this particular topic.

If there was ever a wonder as to where I could be found when I was little, it was always safe to assume that I'd be plopped on the cream-and-brown-speckled linoleum floor of our kitchen staring intently at my reflection in the oven door. My narcissism grew exponentially. It wasn't long before I desired to enhance this enthralling experience, so I sought out a more comfortable seating arrangement. In my quest for compatible stools, I found that the canisters my mother kept flour and sugar in were just right, giving me a perfect view and allowing a prolonged stay. Besides, the sheer opulence was much more lady-like than just being plunked on the floor.

The first few times of lifting the canisters from a shelf that was slightly out of my reach proved successful, so I considered the task conquered. My caution lessened with each subsequent sitting. I was far beyond any admonition Mom had given about how the containers might be heavy, and I continued in my careless behavior.

On one particular day, I was feeling very cocksure but also unaware that the flour had been replenished. I listlessly grabbed the canister only to find out too late that it was—in perfect alignment with Mom's warnings—far too heavy for me to lift. Clumsily groping at it, I eventually lost my grip completely, and the container fell, landing with a deadening thud right on the big toe of my left foot. Afraid that Mom would be angry that I hadn't listened to her, I kept my little accident a secret. A black toenail was a telltale sign that something had happened, but no one was the wiser—until about a week later when Mom overheard me gently warn, "Watch out toesies" before I lifted down a canister. Back then, I was certain that it was the fault of my "toesies" for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, completely oblivious to the fact that a force beyond my control had overcome my physical strength and pulled the flour canister onto my foot.

I wasn't an overly adventurous child; in fact, I was quite cautious, and it wasn't until a few years later that I had another notable run-in with gravity. I was careful all right, but I did have a healthy dose of curiosity and imagination. So if there was any explicit snooping or exploring to be done, I crafted a flawless plan, and then persuaded my friend Emma to do the dirty work.

A light windstorm was tormenting our preconceived plans for the day, but we were determined to carry on, forgoing any misgivings that may have crossed our minds. After all, we had been scheming our latest escapade for more than two days and were anxious to get to work. Armed with a slat of plywood for the beginnings of a roof, I sent my friend to the soaring heights atop the wobbling, black trailer her family used to gather wood. Mustering all the strength I could, I handed up large planks of plywood, and she would balance them carefully across the top. Slowly but surely, our plywood panels turned into a rough roof swaying dangerously in the wind.

In all our single-digit-years experience we had never created anything more fantastic than that hut. In order to get the full effect, we thought it best to view our masterpiece from a distance. As we were heading toward that predetermined distance of exactly forty-two and one-half steps, the inevitable occurred. That vicious windstorm disrupted one of our beautiful plywood panels, but rather than floating in the air, it was pulled toward the ground. Once again the unknown force was harassing me. The panel hurled toward us and smashed right into the back of Emma's head. I turned around in horror at the sound of her spine-tingling scream to meet my fate right in the forehead.

My eyes crossed as I watched blood trickle from my eyebrow and drip onto my favorite, 'Panguitch Elementary Stars' t-shirt. In sheer agony we hugged and then went our separate ways. Running with all my might toward my house, I suddenly had the thought that this must be "the end." Worrying about living through the night, I bolted through the front door at mach speed and was reassured by my mom that I probably had a few good years left in me.

Gravity—that mysterious force—was constantly creating insecurity, ruining my plans, and even causing bodily injury. What a relief it was when I finally found out what had been the culprit of some of my most painful childhood experiences. But knowing exactly what gravity is does not entirely lessen its effects, especially if you are ever caught being anything less than sure-footed. Unfortunately, as I got older it seemed my experiences with gravity become increasingly unavoidable.

Throughout the next decade of my life I had some minor confrontations with gravity. I had an unusual affinity for turning my ankles, dropping things like pencils or paper rather haphazardly, and tripping on the stairs every once in a while. At times gravity even overcame the grip I had on my bow, causing it to drop entirely from my hand mid-song during weekly violin lessons. For the most part, though, I figured I had overcome being susceptible to any major predicaments with gravity. But then came that fateful day my sophomore year of high school when I realized I would probably never outgrow my gravitational challenges.

On that bright and sunny April morning, during fourth period, I was headed for the floral shop on errand from my Agriculture Science teacher to salvage flowers. Our class needed them to practice making corsages for our upcoming FFA floriculture competition. I felt that following the beaten trail would take too long, so I improvised with a shortcut by taking the route to the seminary building then cutting across the floral shop lawn. I set off at a light jog, focused on my goal—so focused in fact that I as I rounded the corner, I completely dismissed the four-inch-high, three-inch-thick barrier that surrounds the

luscious green grass of the floral shop. If I hadn't been well aware that the force acting against me was gravity, I would have sworn that the cement barrier had reached out and grabbed my ankles. Needless to say, I flew into the most spectacular Superman dive and skidded across the grass, picking up grass stains galore and sloughing off any shred of pride or dignity I had.

Mortified, I arose. Emerald green stains gleamed from my clothes and elbows mockingly. I looked hurriedly around me, and a sigh of relief escaped my lips as I observed no apparent onlookers. But then to my dismay, I heard laughter erupting from the nearby track. Horrified, I turned to see that the entire track team had witnessed my glorified stumble. Many were pointing at me, and some were even rolling on the ground crippled with laughter.

"G-R-A-V-I-T-Y, gravity's the thing": the thing that smashed my toe; the thing that gashed my forehead; the thing that pulled me headfirst into my most embarrassing moment ever. When contemplating the law of gravity, it is hard for me to look beyond the fact that it has plagued my life more than it has not. Sure, it is the force that keeps our solar system in orbit and helps sustain a certain level of organization on the earth, but it is also the force that has incessantly kept me on my toes, or off them, as the case may be. As I have matured and am currently attempting to morph into an adult, I have learned to coexist with gravity, although I must live a life of constant vigilance to avoid any surprise attacks from the arch nemesis of my youth.

I would exhort you to learn from my mistakes. Even if you are still skeptical about the existence of gravity, I would strongly discourage you from testing your hypothesis in ways that may cause bodily harm such as jumping from the top of the staircase in hope of flying, or leaping from an airplane sans parachute. Once again, I assure you that gravity is real, and is not a force to be reckoned with.

2nd Place Winner: Amanda Crittenden, “My Siren Song: Starbucks”

For Dr. Robin Callande

It was an ice-blanketed, painfully frigid Monday. Snow was jam-packed into every inch of earth possible, surrounding stop signs and blocking driveways. I’d just finished my day helping ridiculously rich customers decide which set of cooking pans to buy or perhaps which set of towels from a seemingly identical display of dozens. After scraping off what I deemed a sufficient amount of snow, I climbed into my Toyota Corolla and drove through the streets until I saw the beacon in the snowstorm. There it was – the cure to my mundane Monday. No, it wasn’t a pair of Lacroix black-jeweled stiletto heels. No, it wasn’t even a black Prada purse. It definitely wasn’t a Vera Wang designer dress. It was the happy green sign of Starbucks and the wonders that it held inside, mainly the Grande Vanilla Bean Crème Frappuccino with whip. It didn’t matter that it was 10 below because I was at Starbucks. The outside world is a dull memory when in the presence of comfortable couches, a sweet-sounding menu, and baristas who always seem to leave me with a giddy sense of delight. The siren song of the majority of the female world is supposedly shoes, but mine is the sweet aroma of Starbucks.

As do many Generation Y obsessions, my addiction to Starbucks began with an introduction from a few of my friends. Hannah and Emilee were already hooked on their own Starbucks siren songs and wanted me to enjoy life more fully as well. Alas, they recommended the *vanilla bean*. (Most Starbucks regulars shorten their drink names for their convenience). Four years later, it’s my cure for a mundane Monday, my celebration of a fantastic Friday, or the pick-me-up on a lackadaisical Tuesday.

Since Starbucks always seems to brighten my day, I have added “work at Starbucks” to my long list of random life goals. Perhaps I subconsciously believe that doing so will enhance my coolness factor. I’ve done this simply because I’ve talked to a few Starbucks baristas, and they have such great ideas about life and therefore, seem so intellectually in tune. Recently, while concocting my wonderful vanilla bean, the barista accidentally hit the whipped cream dispenser on the counter, spraying the floor with delicious goodness. Afterwards, she simply laughed and asked, “Did you see that?!” and continued to fix my delicious drink.

First and foremost, Starbucks is amazing because of its menu of delicious drinks. Bumper stickers proudly persuade folks to avoid Starbucks with phrases such as, “Friends don’t let friends go to Starbucks.” Such disdain is based on the fact that Starbucks is a corporation. One indie ideology is that independent thinkers should avoid such monopolies. However, the fact is: Starbucks makes amazing drinks. They taste great. When I purchase my corporate Vanilla Bean and sip that smooth creamy decadence with the fluffiest whip cream swirled throughout, I feel more like an independent thinker than when I down a sloppy “cup of joe” from the corner café. So I will take my business to Starbucks simply because of that fact. Or is it that simple? Are there other reasons that subconsciously influence my decision?

In a seemingly effortless fashion, Starbucks plays on the subconscious with its décor and design. Stepping into the chic coffeehouse, I almost always feel an immediate sense of calm and relief. The décor enhances de-stressification and may possibly be a factor (along with the aroma of coffee) in the instant relaxation my body experiences. With comfortable couches arranged in conversational circles,

the overall design of most Starbucks coffee houses enhances interaction with strangers. While sipping exotic sounding drinks, patrons can discuss politics, films, and beliefs.

The charm of Starbucks may simply be in its use of exotic drink names. Such names include: *frappuccino*, *macchiato*, or maybe the sizes: *tall*, *grande*, *venti*. Just ordering makes me feel like I'm somehow more sophisticated, but in an Indie New York sort of way. Perhaps what keeps me ordering is the allure of my order taking a longer time to say than my address. For example, I could order a tall light caramel macchiato on ice with soy and no whip. This is the message of Starbucks: personally designed drinks to fit a wide array of lifestyles.

Fitting in with its gift for customizing drinks to fit personal lifestyles, Starbucks' commercials portray a free-spirited way of life. In one, a guy named Roy wakes up and drinks a double shot Espresso and is instantly serenaded by the rock group Survivor singing a personalized theme song to him to the tune of "Eye of the Tiger." It ends with a close-up of the drink and the words "BRING ON THE DAY." This advertising portrays Starbucks as a means of not only getting through the day, but also having a wonderful time going to work or doing other mundane things. Since Starbucks promises a personalized theme song along with caffeine, why would anyone drink anything else?

I've tried other drinks and other coffee houses, but I always come back to the comfort of the Vanilla Bean Crème Frappuccino. Why? There are several reasons. It does have something to do with the corporation. I know that no matter where I go (within Starbucks' domain) my Vanilla Bean Crème Frappuccino will always have that vanilla bean with a hint of something extra amazing. I also know that a tall costs exactly \$3.01 at "my" Starbucks on the corner of World Market and Bajios in Redstone Center in Park City. The vanilla bean is the constant comfort I have in this ever-changing world. It's not just a drink. Starbucks is not merely a coffee house. The combination is not only the cure to my terrible day but is also this: the companion to my experience in this world and the accent to life's beautiful wonders.