

IJCschool02@gmail.com

Easy Peasy All-in-One High School Literature and Composition

27 June 2018

### Venti Phantasmagoria

Thursday afternoons were some of the happiest times for Andrew because they meant a coffee date with Charlotte. Two logophile high school graduates, having a date at a Starbucks on a rainy day. Fitting. Andrew pulled his 2003 silver stick-shift Honda Pilot (aka Old Reliable) into the parking lot, and set 'er down on the farthest of two empty parking spaces. It was 4:33 EST. She should be here in a few minutes.

After placing his order for the bibliophilic twosome, he went to find a high window seat for the wait. Earbuds went in, the world went out. Rainy days were quite romantic, he thought. The wetness of everything dramatizes the world. He felt around in his pockets for the small notebook he carried everywhere and began to write while he waited.

A couple minutes crept slowly by, and then his chair was suddenly jerked back, very far back, and kept leaning until his skull smacked the tile. The world around him went black.

He quickly (by his estimations) woke up to a scene exactly like the one he left before the sudden tipping of the chair. He left the high stool and went down to a cushioned bench against a wall, where no one could tip him back.

Who would do that? Was it the businessman sitting at his laptop over there, or the teenaged gamer over there? Maybe the college student now sitting on the stool next to his previous occupation?

Whoever it was, they wouldn't get him this time.

His head didn't hurt. He didn't even think about the bodily damage he most likely had obtained through the tile-smacking. There was no blood on the back of his head, and he didn't have even a minor headache.

He was just really scared. Sincerely afraid.

He was afraid of why he didn't feel anything. He was afraid of why the 17-year-old, ginger-headed girlfriend Charlotte hadn't arrived yet. He was afraid of whoever it was who had pulled him backward.

Or whatever it was.

At this point, his mind was susceptible to every 'fiery dart', every fear or anxiety. Perhaps Charlie (for that is what he called Charlotte) had been killed in an accident. Perhaps she hated him and never wanted to see him again. She was probably standing him up. She must not love him the way he did her.

He started to tense up and feel nauseous. Why did this always have to happen at the worst times? He saw more shadows than he had noticed before, and they all seemed to slowly creep towards him, closer, closer, and closer still until they swallowed him while the world around him faded.

With an abrupt jerk, Andrew awoke from the nightmare. It was all a dream. He probably hadn't even fallen backward in the first place; he was back on the high window seat now. Charlie would still come in and they would have a wonderful time.

With a small pop and the exaggerated sound of a computer powering down, all the lights went out, not 5 minutes later. In a Starbucks full of Generations X & Y, when the internet goes out, so do the customers. Today was no different. Presently the adolescents and post-adolescents

crowded the doorway on their escape. Andrew observed the exodus with a modest degree of frustration, for his engagement must be transferred or postponed if there was to be no coffee. He drew forth his phone to call her at the moment it commenced slightly too quiet ringing.

It was Charlie's dad.

"Hello? Hello? Is this Billy?"

"Uhh...Yes, sir. What's wrong?"

"She...(low sobbing)..."

"Yes, sir? What's wrong?"

"She's...(With a quivering voice) Two or three minutes ago...She hydroplaned into a utility pole on her way to meet you."

"Who?"

"Charlie, son!"

"..."

"Hello? ...Billy?"

"...I...I'm sorry...I..."

"I...146th and Main."

"...I'll be right over..."

Charlie, his only lover, dead. This can't be happening. He tried to stand up, but could only go a few steps before passing out and crumpling on the floor.

"Andrew, one venti iced caramel macchiato and one venti berry hibiscus refresher with lemonade."

He woke up. Another disturbing dream. He was back on the same high stool, looking out the same window.

He didn't ache. He didn't hurt.

What was going on? He had never daydreamed on this level of intensity before. Anyhow, the shadows were stationary, the lights were still on, and the drinks were done. That's what mattered, that's what occurred. He got up to retrieve his order and came back to his seat. She had told him how she loved window seats.

"Hello?"

"Hey, Billy."

"Oh, hey, Charlie! Are you almost here?"

"...No...look, Billy, there's not really any easy way to say this..."

"What?"

"I don't think this, we, are going to work anymore."

"...What?"

"I'm really sorry for the timing and everything, Billy, I just, I just..."

"...Just what?!"

"(gentle crying) Goodbye, Billy."

"Wait, Charlie, please—"

Just then, the world had lost its shine. Darkneses looked as if they had regained their previous eerie stirrings and creepings. The café, along with everything else, turned dark and lifeless. The shadows closed in, embracing, enveloping him...

"Andy!"

"What? What? Oh, I'm sorry Charlie. Keep going. What happens after that?"

With an accompanying beautiful smile, she answered: "You were telling me, silly!"

"Oh...I lost myself again. I'm not sure yet, I'm still working on the ending."

"I love it."