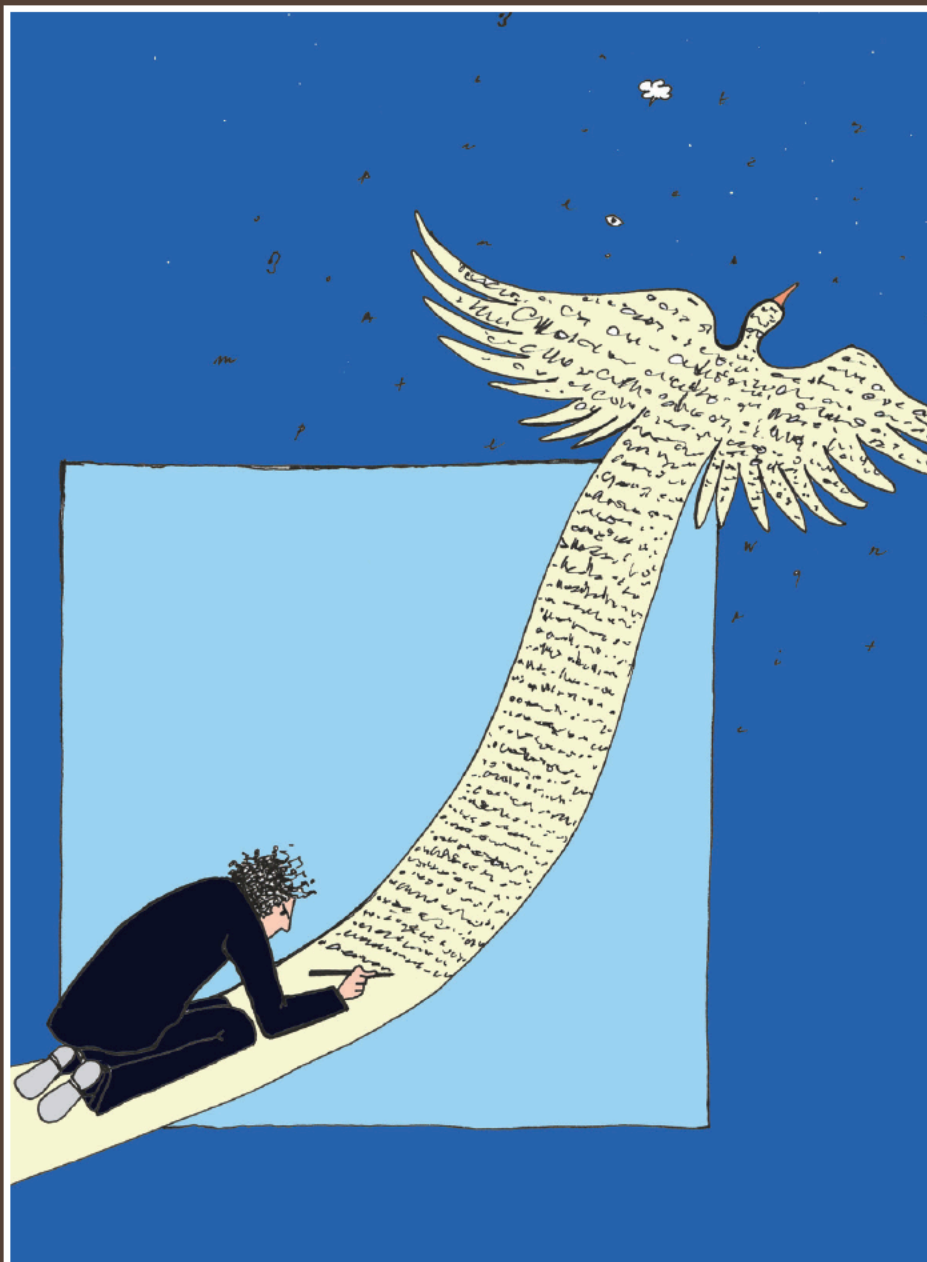


INTRODUCTION TO INTERPRETIVE WORK

STUDENT READER



GRADE 6

Introduction to Argument:
Writing About Literature

Grade 6

Introduction to Interpretive Work



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STUDENT READER

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Biographical Sketch

Toni Cade Bambara

(1939-1995)

Born in 1939, Toni Cade Bambara grew up in Harlem, New York. Bambara graduated with a degree in English from Queens College where she was one of the few Black students at the time.

Although she is most well-known for her writing, Bambara was passionate about all of the arts, including dance, theater, jazz, and folk music.

Much of her writing reflects her immersion and close observation of New York City street culture. Bambara's work was also influenced by the Civil Rights and Black Nationalist movements of the 1960s, as well as the emergence of black feminism. Bambara moved to Atlanta, Georgia, in the late 1970s, where she co-founded the Southern Collective of African American Writers.

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She is perhaps most famous for her collection of short stories, *Gorilla, My Love*. "Raymond's Run," the first story you will read in this unit, is featured in this collection.

Raymond's Run

Toni Cade Bambara

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1 I DON'T HAVE MUCH WORK to do around the
house like some girls. My mother does that. And I
don't have to earn my pocket money by hustling;
George runs errands for the big boys and sells
5 Christmas cards. And anything else that's got to
get done, my father does. All I have to do in life is
mind my brother Raymond, which is enough.

Sometimes I slip and say my little brother Ray-
mond. But as any fool can see he's much bigger and
10 he's older too. But a lot of people call him my little
brother cause he needs looking after cause he's
not quite right. And a lot of smart mouths got lots
to say about that too, especially when George was

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15 minding him. But now, if anybody has anything to
say to Raymond, anything to say about his big head,
they have to come by me. And I don't play the
dozens or believe in standing around with some-
body in my face doing a lot of talking. I much rather
just knock you down and take my chances even if I
20 am a little girl with skinny arms and a squeaky voice,
which is how I got the name Squeaky. And if things
get too rough, I run. And as anybody can tell you,
I'm the fastest thing on two feet.

25 There is no track meet that I don't win the first-
place medal. I used to win the twenty-yard dash
when I was a little kid in kindergarten. Nowadays,
it's the fifty-yard dash. And tomorrow I'm subject
to run the quarter-meter relay all by myself and
come in first, second, and third. The big kids call
30 me Mercury cause I'm the swiftest thing in the
neighborhood. Everybody knows that—except two
people who know better, my father and me. He can
beat me to Amsterdam Avenue with me having a
two fire-hydrant headstart and him running with
35 his hands in his pockets and whistling. But that's
private information. Cause can you imagine some
thirty-five-year-old man stuffing himself into PAL
shorts to race little kids? So as far as everyone's
concerned, I'm the fastest and that goes for
40 Gretchen, too, who has put out the tale that she is
going to win the first-place medal this year. Ridicu-

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lous. In the second place, she's got short legs. In the third place, she's got freckles. In the first place, no one can beat me and that's all there is to it.

45 I'm standing on the corner admiring the weather and about to take a stroll down Broadway so I can practice my breathing exercises, and I've got Raymond walking on the inside close to the buildings, cause he's subject to fits of fantasy
50 and starts thinking he's a circus performer and that the curb is a tightrope strung high in the air. And sometimes after a rain he likes to step down off his tightrope right into the gutter and slosh around getting his shoes and cuffs wet. Then I get
55 hit when I get home. Or sometimes if you don't watch him he'll dash across traffic to the island in the middle of Broadway and give the pigeons a fit. Then I have to go behind him apologizing to all the old people sitting around trying to get some
60 sun and getting all upset with the pigeons fluttering around them, scattering their newspapers and upsetting the waxpaper lunches in their laps. So I keep Raymond on the inside of me, and he plays like he's driving a stage coach which is O.K. by me
65 so long as he doesn't run me over or interrupt my breathing exercises, which I have to do on account of I'm serious about my running, and I don't care who knows it.

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Now some people like to act like things come
70 easy to them, won't let on that they practice. Not
me. I'll highprance down 34th Street like a rodeo
pony to keep my knees strong even if it does get
my mother uptight so that she walks ahead like
she's not with me, don't know me, is all by herself
75 on a shopping trip, and I am somebody else's crazy
child. Now you take Cynthia Procter for instance.
She's just the opposite. If there's a test tomorrow,
she'll say something like, "Oh, I guess I'll play hand-
ball this afternoon and watch television tonight,"
80 just to let you know she ain't thinking about the
test. Or like last week when she won the spelling
bee for the millionth time, "A good thing you got
'receive,' Squeaky, cause I would have got it wrong.
I completely forgot about the spelling bee." And
85 she'll clutch the lace on her blouse like it was a
narrow escape. Oh, brother. But of course when I
pass her house on my early morning trots around
the block, she is practicing the scales on the piano
over and over and over and over. Then in music
90 class she always lets herself get bumped around
so she falls accidentally on purpose onto the piano
stool and is so surprised to find herself sitting there
that she decides just for fun to try out the ole keys.
And what do you know—Chopin's waltzes just
95 spring out of her fingertips and she's the most sur-
prised thing in the world. A regular prodigy. I could

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kill people like that. I stay up all night studying the words for the spelling bee. And you can see me any time of day practicing running. I never walk if I
100 can trot, and shame on Raymond if he can't keep up. But of course he does, cause if he hangs back someone's liable to walk up to him and get smart, or take his allowance from him, or ask him where he got that great big pumpkin head. People are so
105 stupid sometimes.

So I'm strolling down Broadway breathing out and breathing in on counts of seven, which is my lucky number, and here comes Gretchen and her sidekicks: Mary Louise, who used to be a friend of
110 mine when she first moved to Harlem from Baltimore and got beat up by everybody till I took up for her on account of her mother and my mother used to sing in the same choir when they were young girls, but people ain't grateful, so now she
115 hangs out with the new girl Gretchen and talks about me like a dog; and Rosie, who is as fat as I am skinny and has a big mouth where Raymond is concerned and is too stupid to know that there is not a big deal of difference between herself and
120 Raymond and that she can't afford to throw stones. So they are steady coming up Broadway and I see right away that it's going to be one of those Dodge City scenes cause the street ain't that big and they're close to the buildings just as we are.

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125 First I think I'll step into the candy store and look
over the new comics and let them pass. But that's
chicken and I've got a reputation to consider. So
then I think I'll just walk straight on through them
or even over them if necessary. But as they get to
130 me, they slow down. I'm ready to fight, cause like I
said I don't feature a whole lot of chit-chat, I much
prefer to just knock you down right from the jump
and save everybody a lotta precious time.

"You signing up for the May Day races?" smiles
135 Mary Louise, only it's not a smile at all. A dumb
question like that doesn't deserve an answer.
Besides, there's just me and Gretchen standing
there really, so no use wasting my breath talking to
shadows.

140 "I don't think you're going to win this time," says
Rosie, trying to signify with her hands on her hips all
salty, completely forgetting that I have whupped her
behind many times for less salt than that.

"I always win cause I'm the best," I say straight
145 at Gretchen who is, as far as I'm concerned, the
only one talking in this ventriloquist-dummy rou-
tine. Gretchen smiles, but it's not a smile, and I'm
thinking that girls never really smile at each other
because they don't know how and don't want to
150 know how and there's probably no one to teach us
how, cause grown-up girls don't know either. Then
they all look at Raymond who has just brought his

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mule team to a standstill. And they're about to see what trouble they can get into through him.

155 "What grade you in now, Raymond?"

"You got anything to say to my brother, you say it to me, Mary Louise Williams of Raggedy Town, Baltimore."

"What are you, his mother?" sasses Rosie.

160 "That's right, Fatso. And the next word out of anybody and I'll be *their* mother too." So they just stand there and Gretchen shifts from one leg to the other and so do they. Then Gretchen puts her hands on her hips and is about to say something with her freckle-face self but doesn't. Then she walks around me looking me up and down but keeps walking up Broadway, and her sidekicks follow her. So me and Raymond smile at each other and he says, "Gidyap" to his team and I continue
165
170 with my breathing exercises, strolling down Broadway toward the ice man on 145th with not a care in the world cause I am Miss Quicksilver herself.

I take my time getting to the park on May Day because the track meet is the last thing on the
175 program. The biggest thing on the program is the May Pole dancing, which I can do without, thank you, even if my mother thinks it's a shame I don't take part and act like a girl for a change. You'd think my mother'd be grateful not to have to make
180 me a white organdy dress with a big satin sash

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and buy me new white baby-doll shoes that can't be taken out of the box till the big day. You'd think she'd be glad her daughter ain't out there prancing around a May Pole getting the new clothes all
185 dirty and sweaty and trying to act like a fairy or a flower or whatever you're supposed to be when you should be trying to be yourself, whatever that is, which is, as far as I am concerned, a poor Black girl who really can't afford to buy shoes and a new
190 dress you only wear once a lifetime cause it won't fit next year.

I was once a strawberry in a Hansel and Gretel pageant when I was in nursery school and didn't have no better sense than to dance on tiptoe with
195 my arms in a circle over my head doing umbrella steps and being a perfect fool just so my mother and father could come dressed up and clap. You'd think they'd know better than to encourage that kind of nonsense. I am not a strawberry. I do not
200 dance on my toes. I run. That is what I am all about. So I always come late to the May Day program, just in time to get my number pinned on and lay in the grass till they announce the fifty-yard dash.

I put Raymond in the little swings, which is a
205 tight squeeze this year and will be impossible next year. Then I look around for Mr. Pearson, who pins the numbers on. I'm really looking for Gretchen if you want to know the truth, but she's not around.

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210 The park is jam-packed. Parents in hats and cor-
sages and breast-pocket handkerchiefs peeking
up. Kids in white dresses and light-blue suits. The
parkees unfolding chairs and chasing the rowdy
kids from Lenox as if they had no right to be there.
The big guys with their caps on backwards, lean-
215 ing against the fence swirling the basketballs on
the tips of their fingers, waiting for all these crazy
people to clear out the park so they can play. Most
of the kids in my class are carrying bass drums and
glockenspiels and flutes. You'd think they'd put in
220 a few bongos or something for real like that.

Then here comes Mr. Pearson with his clip-
board and his cards and pencils and whistles and
safety pins and fifty million other things he's always
dropping all over the place with his clumsy self.
225 He sticks out in a crowd because he's on stilts. We
used to call him Jack and the Beanstalk to get him
mad. But I'm the only one that can outrun him and
get away, and I'm too grown for that silliness now.

"Well, Squeaky," he says, checking my name
230 off the list and handing me number seven and two
pins. And I'm thinking he's got no right to call me
Squeaky, if I can't call him Beanstalk.

"Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker," I correct him
and tell him to write it down on his board.

235 "Well, Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker, going
to give someone else a break this year?" I squint

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at him real hard to see if he is seriously thinking
I should lose the race on purpose just to give
someone else a break. "Only six girls running this
240 time," he continues, shaking his head sadly like it's
my fault all of New York didn't turn out in sneak-
ers. "That new girl should give you a run for your
money." He looks around the park for Gretchen like
a periscope in a submarine movie. "Wouldn't it be
245 a nice gesture if you were . . . to ahhh. . ."

I give him such a look he couldn't finish put-
ting that idea into words. Grown-ups got a lot of
nerve sometimes. I pin number seven to myself
and stomp away, I'm so burnt. And I go straight
250 for the track and stretch out on the grass while the
band winds up with "Oh, the Monkey Wrapped His
Tail Around the Flag Pole," which my teacher calls
by some other name. The man on the loudspeaker
is calling everyone over to the track and I'm on my
255 back looking at the sky, trying to pretend I'm in the
country, but I can't, because even grass in the city
feels hard as sidewalk, and there's just no pretend-
ing you are anywhere but in a "concrete jungle" as
my grandfather says.

260 The twenty-yard dash takes all of two minutes
cause most of the little kids don't know no better
than to run off the track or run the wrong way or
run smack into the fence and fall down and cry.
One little kid, though, has got the good sense
265 to run straight for the white ribbon up ahead so

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he wins. Then the second-graders line up for the thirty-yard dash and I don't even bother to turn my head to watch cause Raphael Perez always wins. He wins before he even begins by psyching the

270 runners, telling them they're going to trip on their shoelaces and fall on their faces or lose their shorts or something, which he doesn't really have to do since he is very fast, almost as fast as I am. After that is the forty-yard dash which I use to run when

275 I was in first grade. Raymond is hollering from the swings cause he knows I'm about to do my thing cause the man on the loudspeaker has just announced the fifty-yard dash, although he might just as well be giving a recipe for angel food cake

280 cause you can hardly make out what he's sayin for the static. I get up and slip off my sweat pants and then I see Gretchen standing at the starting line, kicking her legs out like a pro. Then as I get into place I see that ole Raymond is on line on the other

285 side of the fence, bending down with his fingers on the ground just like he knew what he was doing. I was going to yell at him but then I didn't. It burns up your energy to holler. Every time, just before I take off in a race, I always feel like I'm in a dream, the kind of dream you have when you're sick with

290 fever and feel all hot and weightless. I dream I'm flying over a sandy beach in the early morning sun, kissing the leaves of the trees as I fly by. And

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there's always the smell of apples, just like in the
295 country when I was little and used to think I was a
choo-choo train, running through the fields of corn
and chugging up the hill to the orchard. And all
the time I'm dreaming this, I get lighter and lighter
until I'm flying over the beach again, getting blown
300 through the sky like a feather that weighs nothing
at all. But once I spread my fingers in the dirt and
crouch over the Get on your Mark, the dream goes
and I am solid again and am telling myself, Squeaky
you must win, you must win, you are the fastest
305 thing in the world, you can even beat your father
up Amsterdam if you really try. And then I feel my
weight coming back just behind my knees then
down to my feet then into the earth and the pistol
shot explodes in my blood and I am off and weight-
310 less again, flying past the other runners, my arms
pumping up and down and the whole world is quiet
except for the crunch as I zoom over the gravel in
the track. I glance to my left and there is no one.
To the right, a blurred Gretchen, who's got her chin
315 jutting out as if it would win the race all by itself.
And on the other side of the fence is Raymond with
his arms down to his side and the palms tucked
up behind him, running in his very own style, and
it's the first time I ever saw that and I almost stop
320 to watch my brother Raymond on his first run. But
the white ribbon is bouncing toward me and I tear

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past it, racing into the distance till my feet with a
mind of their own start digging up footfuls of dirt
and brake me short. Then all the kids standing on
325 the side pile on me, banging me on the back and
slapping my head with their May Day programs, for
I have won again and everybody on 151st Street can
walk tall for another year.

“In first place. . .” the man on the loudspeaker
330 is clear as a bell now. But then he pauses and the
loudspeaker starts to whine. Then static. And I lean
down to catch my breath and here comes Gretchen
walking back, for she’s overshot the finish line too,
huffing and puffing with her hands on her hips
335 taking it slow, breathing in steady time like a real
pro and I sort of like her a little for the first time.
“In first place. . .” and then three or four voices
get all mixed up on the loudspeaker and I dig
my sneaker into the grass and stare at Gretchen
340 who’s staring back, we both wondering just who
did win. I can hear old Beanstalk arguing with the
man on the loudspeaker and then a few others
running their mouths about what the stopwatches
say. Then I hear Raymond yanking at the fence to
345 call me and I wave to shush him, but he keeps rat-
tling the fence like a gorilla in a cage like in them
gorilla movies, but then like a dancer or something
he starts climbing up nice and easy but very fast.
And it occurs to me, watching how smoothly he

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350 climbs hand over hand and remembering how he
looked running with his arms down to his side and
with the wind pulling his mouth back and his teeth
showing and all, it occurred to me that Raymond
would make a very fine runner. Doesn't he always
355 keep up with me in my trots? And he surely knows
how to breathe in counts of seven cause he's
always doing it at the dinner table, which drives
my brother George up the wall. And I'm smiling to
beat the band cause if I've lost this race, or if me
360 and Gretchen tied, or even if I've won, I can always
retire as a runner and begin a whole new career
as a coach with Raymond as my champion. After
all, with a little more study I can beat Cynthia and
her phony self at the spelling bee. And if I bugged
365 my mother, I could get piano lessons and become
a star. And I have a big rep as the baddest thing
around. And I've got a roomful of ribbons and
medals and awards. But what has Raymond got to
call his own?

370 So I stand there with my new plans, laughing
out loud by this time as Raymond jumps down
from the fence and runs over with his teeth show-
ing and his arms down to the side, which no one
before him has quite mastered as a running style.
375 And by the time he comes over I'm jumping up
and down so glad to see him—my brother Ray-
mond, a great runner in the family tradition. But of

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course everyone thinks I'm jumping up and down because the men on the loudspeaker have finally
380 gotten themselves together and compared notes and are announcing "In first place—Miss Hazel Elizabeth Deborah Parker." (Dig that.) "In second place Miss Gretchen P. Lewis." And I look over at Gretchen wondering what the "P" stands for.
385 And I smile. Cause she's good, no doubt about it. Maybe she'd like to help me coach Raymond; she obviously is serious about running, as any fool can see. And she nods to congratulate me and then she smiles. And I smile. We stand there with this
390 big smile of respect between us. It's about as real a smile as girls can do for each other, considering we don't practice real smiling every day, you know, cause maybe we too busy being flowers or fairies or strawberries instead of something honest
395 and worthy of respect . . . you know . . . like being people.

Biographical Sketch

Charles Baxter

Charles Baxter learned the power of reading and writing at an early age. He grew up on an isolated farm outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota, and had little else with which to keep himself entertained. His stories and novels are still often set in places in the Midwest.

Baxter studied English while attending Macalester College in St. Paul and then went on to receive a Ph.D. in English from the University of Buffalo. Baxter started his professional career teaching high school English and later landed a position at the University of Michigan as both a professor and director of the creative writing program.

Baxter finds writing short stories to be the most rewarding, but he has also published a variety of novels, poetry, and essays. He has received a

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number of literary awards for his work including fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation and the National Endowment for the Arts. Baxter continues to teach aspiring writers at the University of Minnesota where many of his students have gone on to their own creative success.

Gryphon

Charles Baxter

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1 On Wednesday afternoon, between the geog-
raphy lesson on ancient Egypt's hand-operated
irrigation system and an art project that involved
drawing a model city next to a mountain, our
5 fourth-grade teacher, Mr. Hibler, developed a
cough. This cough began with a series of muffled
throat-clearings and progressed to propulsive
noises contained within Mr. Hibler's closed mouth.
"Listen to him," Carol Peterson whispered to me.
10 "He's gonna blow up." Mr. Hibler's laughter—
dazed and infrequent—sounded a bit like his
cough, but as we worked on our model cities we
would look up, thinking he was enjoying a joke, and

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15 see Mr. Hibler's face turning red, his cheeks puffed
out. This was not laughter. Twice he bent over,
and his loose tie, like a plumb line, hung down
straight from his neck as he exploded himself into
a Kleenex. He would excuse himself, then go on
coughing. "I'll bet you a dime," Carol Peterson
20 whispered, "we get a substitute tomorrow."

Carol sat at the desk in front of mine and was a
bad person—when she thought no one was look-
ing she would blow her nose on notebook paper,
then crumple it up and throw it into the wastebas-
25 ket—but at times of crisis she spoke the truth. I
knew I'd lose the dime.

"No deal," I said.

When Mr. Hibler stood us in formation at the
door just prior to the final bell, he was almost
30 incapable of speech. "I'm sorry, boys and girls," he
said. "I seem to be coming down with something."

"I hope you feel better tomorrow, Mr. Hibler,"
Bobby Kryzanowicz, the faultless brown-noser,
said, and I heard Carol Peterson's evil giggle. Then
35 Mr. Hibler opened the door and we walked out to
the buses, a clique of us starting noisily to hawk
and laugh as soon as we thought we were a few
feet beyond Mr. Hibler's earshot.

40 Since Five Oaks was a rural community, and
in Michigan, the supply of substitute teachers

was limited to the town's unemployed community college graduates, a pool of about four mothers. These ladies fluttered, provided easeful class days, and nervously covered material we had mastered
45 weeks earlier. Therefore it was a surprise when a woman we had never seen came into the class the next day, carrying a purple purse, a checkerboard lunchbox, and a few books. She put the books on one side of Mr. Hibler's desk and the lunchbox on
50 the other, next to the Voice of Music phonograph. Three of us in the back of the room were playing with Heever, the chameleon that lived in a terrarium and on one of the plastic drapes, when she walked in.

55 She clapped her hands at us. "Little boys," she said, "why are you bent over together like that?" She didn't wait for us to answer. "Are you tormenting an animal? Put it back. Please sit down at your desks. I want no cabals this time of the day." We
60 just stared at her. "Boys," she repeated, "I asked you to sit down."

I put the chameleon in his terrarium and felt my way to my desk, never taking my eyes off the woman. With white and green chalk, she had
65 started to draw a tree on the left side of the blackboard. She didn't look usual. Furthermore, her tree was outsized, disproportionate, for some reason.

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70 “This room needs a tree,” she said, with one
line drawing the suggestion of a leaf. “A large,
leafy, shady, deciduous. . . oak.”

 Her fine, light hair had been done up in what
I would learn years later was called a chignon,
and she wore gold-rimmed glasses whose lenses
seemed to have the faintest blue tint. Harold Knar-
75 dahl, who sat across from me, whispered “Mars,”
and I nodded slowly, savoring the imminent
weirdness of the day. The substitute drew another
branch with an extravagant arm gesture, then
turned around and said, “Good morning. I don’t
80 believe I said good morning to all of you yet.”

 Facing us, she was no special age—an adult
is an adult—but her face had two prominent lines,
descending vertically from the sides of her mouth
to her chin. I knew where I had seen those lines
85 before: Pinocchio. They were marionette lines.
“You may stare at me,” she said to us, as a few
more kids from the last bus came into the room,
their eyes fixed on her, “for a few more seconds,
until the bell rings. Then I will permit no more star-
90 ing. Looking I will permit. Staring, no. It is impolite
to stare, and a sign of bad breeding. You cannot
make a social effort while staring.”

 Harold Knardahl did not glance at me, or
nudge, but I heard him whisper “Mars” again,

95 trying to get more mileage out of his single joke
with the kids who had just come in.

When everyone was seated, the substitute
teacher finished her tree, put down her chalk fas-
tidiously on the phonograph, brushed her hands,
100 and faced us. "Good morning," she said. "I am
Miss Ferenczi, your teacher for the day. I am fairly
new to your community, and I don't believe any of
you know me. I will therefore start by telling you a
story about myself."

105 While we settled back, she launched into her
tale. She said her grandfather had been a Hungar-
ian prince; her mother had been born in some
place called Flanders, had been a pianist, and had
played concerts for people Miss Ferenczi referred
110 to as "crowned heads." She gave us a knowing
look. "Grieg," she said, "the Norwegian master,
wrote a concerto for piano that was . . ."—she
paused—"my mother's triumph at her debut con-
cert in London." Her eyes searched the ceiling. Our
115 eyes followed. Nothing up there but ceiling tile.
"For reasons that I shall not go into, my family's
fortunes took us to Detroit, then north to dreadful
Saginaw, and now here I am in Five Oaks, as your
substitute teacher, for today, Thursday, October
120 the eleventh. I believe it will be a good day: all the
forecasts coincide. We shall start with your reading
lesson. Take out your reading book. I believe it is

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called *Broad Horizons*, or something along those lines.”

125 Jeannie Vermeesch raised her hand. Miss Ferenczi nodded at her. “Mr. Hibler always starts the day with the Pledge of Allegiance,” Jeannie whined.

130 “Oh, does he? In that case,” Miss Ferenczi said, “you must know it very well by now, and we certainly need not spend our time on it. No, no allegiance pledging on the premises today, by my reckoning. Not with so much sunlight coming into the room. A pledge does not suit my mood.” She
135 glanced at her watch. “Time is flying. Take out *Broad Horizons*.”

140 She disappointed us by giving us an ordinary lesson, complete with vocabulary and drills, comprehension questions, and recitation. She didn’t seem to care for the material, however. She sighed every few minutes and rubbed her glasses with a frilly handkerchief that she withdrew, magician-style, from her left sleeve.

145 After reading we moved on to arithmetic. It was my favorite time of the morning, when the lazy autumn sunlight dazzled its way through ribbons of clouds past the windows on the east side of the classroom and crept across the linoleum floor. On the playground the first group of children, the

150 kindergartners, were running on the quack grass
just beyond the monkey bars. We were doing mul-
tiplication tables. Miss Ferenczi had made John
Wazny stand up at his desk in the front row. He was
supposed to go through the tables of six. From
155 where I was sitting, I could smell the Vitalis soaked
into John's plastered hair. He was doing fine until
he came to six times eleven and six times twelve.
"Six times eleven," he said, "is sixty-eight. Six
times twelve is. . ." He put his fingers to his head,
160 quickly and secretly sniffed his fingertips, and said,
"seventy-two." Then he sat down.

"Fine," Miss Ferenczi said. "Well now. That was
very good."

"Miss Ferenczi!" One of the Eddy twins was
165 waving her hand desperately in the air. "Miss
Ferenczi! Miss Ferenczi!"

"Yes?"

"John said that six times eleven is sixty-eight
and you said he was right!"

170 "Did I?" She gazed at the class with a jolly look
breaking across her marionette's face. "Did I say
that? Well, what *is* six times eleven?"

"It's sixty-six!"

She nodded. "Yes. So it is. But, and I know
175 some people will not entirely agree with me, at
some times it is sixty-eight."

"When? When is it sixty-eight?"

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We were all waiting.

180 "In higher mathematics, which you children do not yet understand, six times eleven can be considered to be sixty-eight." She laughed through her nose. "In higher mathematics numbers are. . . more fluid. The only thing a number does is contain a certain amount of something. Think of water. A cup
185 is not the only way to measure a certain amount of water, is it?" We were staring, shaking our heads. "You could use saucepans or thimbles. In either case, the water would be the same. Perhaps," she started again, "it would be better for you to think
190 that six times eleven is sixty-eight only when I am in the room."

"Why is it sixty-eight," Mark Poole asked, "when you're in the room?"

195 "Because it's more interesting that way," she said, smiling very rapidly behind her blue-tinted glasses. "Besides, I'm your substitute teacher, am I not?" We all nodded. "Well, then, think of six times eleven equals sixty-eight as a substitute fact."

"A substitute fact?"

200 "Yes." Then she looked at us carefully. "Do you think," she asked, "that anyone is going to be hurt by a substitute fact?"

We looked back at her.

"Will the plants on the windowsill be hurt?"

205 We glanced at them. There were sensitive plants

thriving in a green plastic tray, and several wilted ferns in small clay pots. "Your dogs and cats, or your moms and dads?" She waited. "So," she concluded, "what's the problem?"

210 "But it's wrong," Janice Weber said, "isn't it?"

"What's your name, young lady?"

"Janice Weber."

"And you think it's wrong, Janice?"

"I was just asking."

215 "Well, all right. You were just asking. I think we've spent enough time on this matter by now, don't you, class? You are free to think what you like. When your teacher, Mr. Hibler, returns, six times eleven will be sixty-six again, you can rest assured.

220 And it will be that for the rest of your lives in Five Oaks. Too bad, eh?" She raised her eyebrows and glinted herself at us. "But for now, it wasn't.

225 So much for that. Let us go on to your assigned problems for today, as painstakingly outlined, I see, in Mr. Hibler's lesson plan. Take out a sheet of paper and write your names in the upper left-hand corner."

For the next half hour we did the rest of our arithmetic problems. We handed them in and then
230 went on to spelling, my worst subject. Spelling always came before lunch. We were taking spelling dictation and looking at the clock. "Thorough," Miss Ferenczi said. "Boundary." She walked in

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the aisles between the desks, holding the spelling book open and looking down at our papers. 235
"Balcony." I clutched my pencil. Somehow, the way she said those words, they seemed foreign, mis-voweled and mis-consonanted. I stared down at what I had spelled. *Balconie*. I turned the pencil 240
upside down and erased my mistake. *Balconey*. That looked better, but still incorrect. I cursed the world of spelling and tried erasing it again and saw the paper beginning to wear away. *Balkony*. Suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder.

245 "I don't like that word either," Miss Ferenczi whispered, bent over, her mouth near my ear. "It's ugly. My feeling is, if you don't like a word, you don't have to use it." She straightened up, leaving behind a slight odor of Clorets.

250 At lunchtime we went out to get our trays of sloppy joes, peaches in heavy syrup, coconut cookies, and milk, and brought them back to the classroom, where Miss Ferenczi was sitting at the desk, eating a brown sticky thing she had unwrapped 255
from tightly rubber-banded waxed paper. "Miss Ferenczi," I said, raising my hand. "You don't have to eat with us. You can eat with the other teachers. There's a teachers' lounge," I ended up, "next to the principal's office."

260 "No, thank you", she said. "I prefer it here."

"We've got a room monitor," I said. "Mrs. Eddy." I pointed to where Mrs. Eddy, Joyce and Judy's mother, sat silently at the back of the room, doing her knitting.

265 "That's fine," Miss Ferenczi said. "But I shall continue to eat here, with you children. I prefer it," she repeated.

"How come?" Wayne Razmer asked without raising his hand.

270 "I talked to the other teachers before class this morning," Miss Ferenczi said, biting into her brown food. "There was a great rattling of the words for the fewness of the ideas. I didn't care for their brand of hilarity. I don't like ditto-machine jokes."

275 "Oh," Wayne said.

"What's that you're eating?" Maxine Sylvester asked, twitching her nose. "Is it food?"

280 "It most certainly is food. It's a stuffed fig. I had to drive almost down to Detroit to get it. I also brought some smoked sturgeon. And this," she said, lifting some green leaves out of her lunchbox, "is raw spinach, cleaned this morning."

"Why're you eating raw spinach?" Maxine asked.

285 "It's good for you," Miss Ferenczi said. "More stimulating than soda pop or smelling salts." I bit into my sloppy joe and stared blankly out the window. An almost invisible moon was faintly sil-

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290 vered in the daytime autumn sky. As far as food is concerned," Miss Ferenczi was saying, "you have to shuffle the pack. Mix it up. Too many people eat . . . well, never mind."

"Miss Ferenczi," Carol Peterson said, "what are we going to do this afternoon?"

295 "Well," she said, looking down at Mr. Hibler's lesson plan, "I see that your teacher, Mr. Hibler, has you scheduled for a unit on the Egyptians." Carol groaned. "Yessss," Miss Ferenczi continued, "that is what we will do: the Egyptians. A remarkable
300 people. Almost as remarkable as the Americans. But not quite." She lowered her head, did her quick smile, and went back to eating her spinach.

After noon recess we came back into the classroom and saw that Miss Ferenczi had drawn a
305 pyramid on the blackboard, close to her oak tree. Some of us who had been playing baseball were messing around in the back of the room, dropping the bats and gloves into the playground box, and Ray Schontzeler had just slugged me when I
310 heard Miss Ferenczi's high-pitched voice, quavering with emotion. "Boys," she said, "come to order right this minute and take your seats. I do not wish to waste a minute of class time. Take out your geography books." We trudged to our desks and,
315 still sweating, pulled out *Distant Lands and Their*

People. "Turn to page forty-two." She waited for thirty seconds, then looked over at Kelly Munger. "Young man," she said, "why are you still fossicking in your desk?"

320 Kelly looked as if his foot had been stepped on. "Why am I what?"

"Why are you . . . burrowing in your desk like that?"

"I'm lookin' for the book, Miss Ferenczi."

325 Bobby Kryzanowicz, the faultless brown-noser who sat in the first row by choice, softly said, "His name is Kelly Munger. He can't ever find his stuff. He always does that."

"I don't care what his name is, especially after lunch," Miss Ferenczi said. "Where is your book?"

330 "I just found it." Kelly was peering into his desk and with both hands pulled at the book, shoveling along in front of it several pencils and crayons, which fell into his lap and then to the floor. "I hate a mess," Miss Ferenczi said.

335 "I hate a mess in a desk or a mind. It's . . . unsanitary. You wouldn't want your house at home to look like your desk at school, now, would you?" She didn't wait for an answer. "I should think not. A house at home should be as neat as human hands can make it. What were we talking about? Egypt. Page forty-two. I note from Mr. Hibler's lesson plan that you have been discussing the modes of

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345 Egyptian irrigation. Interesting, in my view, but not
so interesting as what we are about to cover. The
pyramids, and Egyptian slave labor. A plus on one
side, a minus on the other." We had our books
open to page forty-two, where there was a picture
of a pyramid, but Miss Ferenczi wasn't looking at
350 the book. Instead, she was staring at some object
just outside the window.

"Pyramids," Miss Ferenczi said, still look-
ing past the window. "I want you to think about
pyramids. And what was inside. The bodies of the
355 pharaohs, of course, and their attendant treasures.
Scrolls. Perhaps," Miss Ferenczi said, her face
gleeful but unsmiling, "these scrolls were novels
for the pharaohs, helping them to pass the time in
their long voyage through the centuries. But then,
360 I am joking." I was looking at the lines on Miss
Ferenczi's skin. "Pyramids," Miss Ferenczi went on,
"were the repositories of special cosmic powers.
The nature of a pyramid is to guide cosmic energy
forces into a concentrated point. The Egyptians
365 knew that; we have generally forgotten it. Did you
know," she asked, walking to the side of the room
so that she was standing by the coat closet, "that
George Washington had Egyptian blood, from his
grandmother? Certain features of the Constitution
370 of the United States are notable for their Egyptian
ideas."

Gryphon

Without glancing down at the book, she began to talk about the movement of souls in Egyptian religion. She said that when people die, their souls
375 return to Earth in the form of carpenter ants or walnut trees, depending on how they behaved—
“well or ill”—in life. She said that the Egyptians believed that people act the way they do because
of magnetism produced by tidal forces in the
380 solar system, forces produced by the sun and by its “planetary ally,” Jupiter. Jupiter, she said, was a planet, as we had been told, but had “certain properties of stars.” She was speaking very fast. She said that the Egyptians were great explor-
385 ers and conquerors. She said that the greatest of all the conquerors, Genghis Khan, had had forty horses and forty young women killed on the site of his grave. We listened. No one tried to stop her. “I myself have been in Egypt,” she said, “and have witnessed much dust and many brutalities.”
390 She said that an old man in Egypt who worked for a circus had personally shown her an animal in a cage, a monster, half bird and half lion. She said that this monster was called a gryphon and that
395 she had heard about them but never seen them until she traveled to the outskirts of Cairo. She wrote the word out on the blackboard in large capital letters: GRYPHON. She said that Egyptian

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astronomers had discovered the planet Saturn but
400 had not seen its rings. She said that the Egyptians
were the first to discover that dogs, when they are
ill, will not drink from rivers, but wait for rain, and
hold their jaws open to catch it.

“She lies.”

405 We were on the school bus home. I was sitting
next to Carl Whiteside, who had bad breath and a
huge collection of marbles. We were arguing. Carl
thought she was lying. I said she wasn’t, probably.

410 “I didn’t believe that stuff about the bird,” Carl
said, “and what she told us about the pyramids?
I didn’t believe that, either. She didn’t know what
she was talking about.”

415 “Oh yeah?” I had liked her. She was strange. I
thought I could nail him, “If she was lying,” I said,
“what’d she say that was a lie?”

“Six times eleven isn’t sixty-eight. It isn’t ever.
It’s sixty-six, I know for a fact.”

“She said so. She admitted it. What else did
she lie about?”

420 “I don’t know,” he said. “Stuff.”

“What stuff?”

“Well.” He swung his legs back and forth. “You
ever see an animal that was half lion and half bird?”
He crossed his arms, “It sounded real fakey to me.”

Gryphon

425 "It could happen," I said. I had to improvise,
to outrage him. "I read in this newspaper my mom
bought in the IGA about this scientist, this mad
scientist in the Swiss Alps, and he's been putting
430 genes and chromosomes and stuff together in test
tubes, and he combined a human being and a ham-
ster." I waited, for effect. "It's called a hamster."

"You never." Carl was staring at me, his mouth
open, his terrible bad breath making its way toward
me. "What newspaper was it?"

435 "*The National Enquirer*," I said, "that they sell
next to the cash registers." When I saw his look of
recognition, I knew I had him. "And this mad scien-
tist," I said, "his name was, um, Dr. Frankenbush."
I realized belatedly that this name was a mistake
440 and waited for Carl to notice its resemblance to the
name of the other famous mad master of permuta-
tions, but he only sat there.

"A man and a hamster?" He was staring at me,
squinting, his mouth opening in distaste. "Jeez.
445 What'd it look like?"

When the bus reached my stop, I took off
down our dirt road and ran up through the
backyard, kicking the tire swing for good luck. I
dropped my books on the back steps so I could
450 hug and kiss our dog, Mr. Selby. Then I hurried
inside. I could smell brussels sprouts cooking, my

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unfavorite vegetable. My mother was washing
other vegetables in the kitchen sink, and my baby
brother was hollering in his yellow playpen on the
455 kitchen floor.

“Hi, Mom,” I said, hopping around the playpen
to kiss her. “Guess what?”

“I have no idea.”

460 “We had this substitute today, Miss Ferenczi,
and I’d never seen her before, and she had all
these stories and ideas and stuff.”

465 “Well. That’s good.” My mother looked out
the window in front of the sink, her eyes on the
pine woods west of our house. That time of the
afternoon her skin always looked so white to me.
Strangers always said my mother looked like Betty
Crocker, framed by the giant spoon on the side
of the Bisquick box. “Listen, Tommy,” she said:
470 “Would you please go upstairs and pick your
clothes off the floor in the bathroom, and then
go outside to the shed and put the shovel and ax
away that your father left outside this morning?”

475 “She said that six times eleven was sometimes
sixty-eight!” I said. “And she said she once saw a
monster that was half lion and half bird.” I waited.
“In Egypt.”

“Did you hear me?” my mother asked, raising
her arm to wipe her forehead with the back of her
hand. “You have chores to do.”

Gryphon

480 "I know," I said. "I was just telling you about
the substitute."

"It's very interesting," my mother said, quickly
glancing down at me, "and we can talk about it
later when your father gets home. But right now
485 you have some work to do."

"Okay, Mom." I took a cookie out of the jar on
the counter and was about to go outside when I
had a thought. I ran into the living room, pulled
out a dictionary next to the TV stand, and opened
490 it to the Gs. After five minutes I found it. *Gryphon*:
"variant of griffin." *Griffin*: "a fabulous beast with
the head and wings of an eagle and the body of a
lion." Fabulous was right. I shouted with triumph
and ran outside to put my father's tools in their
495 proper places.

Miss Ferenczi was back the next day, slightly
altered. She had pulled her hair down and twisted
it into pigtails, with red rubber bands holding them
tight one inch from the ends. She was wearing a
500 green blouse and pink scarf, making her difficult to
look at for a full class day. This time there was no
pretense of doing a reading lesson or moving on
to arithmetic. As soon as the bell rang, she simply
began to talk.

505 She talked for forty minutes straight. There
seemed to be less connection between her ideas,

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but the ideas themselves were, as the dictionary would say, fabulous. She said she had heard of a huge jewel, in what she called the antipodes, that was so brilliant that when light shone into it at a certain angle it would blind whoever was looking at its center. She said the biggest diamond in the world was cursed and had killed everyone who owned it, and that by a trick of fate it was called the Hope Diamond. Diamonds are magic, she said, and this is why women wear them on their fingers, as a sign of the magic of womanhood. Men have strength, Miss Ferenczi said, but no true magic. That is why men fall in love with women but women do not fall in love with men: they just love being loved. George Washington had died because of a mistake he made about a diamond. Washington was not the first true President, but she didn't say who was. In some places in the world, she said, men and women still live in the trees and eat monkeys for breakfast. Their doctors are magicians. At the bottom of the sea are creatures thin as pancakes who have never been studied by scientists because when you take them up to air, the fish explode.

There was not a sound in the classroom, except for Miss Ferenczi's voice, and Donna DeShano's coughing. No one even went to the bathroom.

Gryphon

535 Beethoven, she said, had not been deaf; it was
a trick to make himself famous, and it worked. As
she talked, Miss Ferenczi's pigtailed swung back and
forth. There are trees in the world, she said, that
eat meat: their leaves are sticky and close up on
bugs like hands. She lifted her hands and brought
540 them together, palm to palm. Venus, which most
people think is the next closest planet to the sun,
is not always closer, and, besides, it is the planet of
greatest mystery because of its thick cloud cover.
"I know what lies underneath those clouds," Miss
545 Ferenczi said, and waited. After the silence, she
said, "Angels. Angels live under those clouds."
She said that angels were not invisible to everyone
and were in fact smarter than most people. They
did not dress in robes as was often claimed but
550 instead wore formal evening clothes, as if they
were about to attend a concert. Often angels do
attend concerts and sit in the aisles where, she
said, most people pay no attention to them. She
said the most terrible angel had the shape of the
555 Sphinx. "There is no running away from that one,"
she said. She said that unquenchable fires burn just
under the surface of the earth in Ohio, and that the
baby Mozart fainted dead away in his cradle when
he first heard the sound of a trumpet. She said
560 that someone named Narzim al Harrardim was the
greatest writer who ever lived. She said that plan-

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ets control behavior, and anyone conceived during a solar eclipse would be born with webbed feet.

565 "I know you children like to hear these things," she said, "these secrets, and that is why I am telling you all this." We nodded. It was better than doing comprehension questions for the readings in *Broad Horizons*.

570 "I will tell you one more story," she said, "and then we will have to do arithmetic." She leaned over, and her voice grew soft. "There is no death," she said. "You must never be afraid. Never. That which is, cannot die. It will change into different earthly and unearthly elements, but I know this
575 as sure as I stand here in front of you, and I swear it: you must not be afraid. I have seen this truth with these eyes. I know it because in a dream God kissed me. Here." And she pointed with her right index finger to the side of her head, below the
580 mouth where the vertical lines were carved into her skin.

Absentmindedly we all did our arithmetic problems. At recess the class was out on the playground, but no one was playing. We were all standing in small groups, talking about Miss Ferenczi.
585 We didn't know if she was crazy, or what. I looked out beyond the playground, at the rusted cars

piled in a small heap behind a clump of sumac, and I wanted to see shapes there, approaching me.

590 On the way home, Carl sat next to me again. He didn't say much, and I didn't either. At last he turned to me. "You know what she said about the leaves that close up on bugs?"

 "Huh?"

595 "The leaves," Carl insisted. "The meat-eating plants. I know it's true. I saw it on television. The leaves have this icky glue that the plants have got smeared all over them and the insects can't get off 'cause they're stuck. I saw it." He seemed demoralized. "She's tellin' the truth."

600

 "Yeah."

 "You think she's seen all those angels?"

 I shrugged.

605 "I don't think she has," Carl informed me. "I think she made that part up."

 "There's a tree," I suddenly said. I was looking out the window at the farms along County Road H. I knew every barn, every broken windmill, every fence, every anhydrous ammonia tank, by heart.

610

 "There's a tree that's . . . that I've seen . . ."

 "Don't you try to do it," Carl said. "You'll just sound like a jerk."

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I kissed my mother. She was standing in front of the stove. "How was your day?" she asked.

615 "Fine."

"Did you have Miss Ferenczi again?"

"Yeah."

"Well?"

620 "She was fine. Mom," I asked, "can I go to my room?"

"No," she said, "not until you've gone out to the vegetable garden and picked me a few tomatoes." She glanced at the sky. "I think it's going to rain. Skedaddle and do it now. Then you come back inside and watch your brother for a few minutes while I go upstairs. I need to clean up before dinner." She looked down at me. "You're looking a little pale, Tommy." She touched the back of her hand to my forehead and I felt her diamond ring against my skin. "Do you feel all right?"

630

"I'm fine," I said, and went out to pick the tomatoes.

Coughing mutedly, Mr. Hibler was back the next day, slipping lozenges into his mouth when his back was turned at forty-five-minute intervals and asking us how much of his prepared lesson plan Miss Ferenczi had followed. Edith Atwater took the responsibility for the class of explaining to Mr. Hibler that the substitute hadn't always

635

Gryphon

640 done exactly what he, Mr. Hibler, would have done,
but we had worked hard even though she talked
a lot. About what? he asked. All kinds of things,
Edith said. I sort of forgot. To our relief, Mr. Hibler
seemed not at all interested in what Miss Ferenczi
645 had said to fill the day. He probably thought it was
woman's talk: unserious and not suited for school.
It was enough that he had a pile of arithmetic
problems from us to correct.

For the next month, the sumac turned a
650 distracting red in the field, and the sun traveled
toward the southern sky, so that its rays reached
Mr. Hibler's Halloween display on the bulletin
board in the back of the room, fading the pumpkin
head scarecrow from orange to tan. Every three
655 days I measured how much farther the sun had
moved toward the southern horizon by making
small marks with my black Crayola on the north
wall, ant-sized marks only I knew were there.

And then in early December, four days after
700 the first permanent snowfall, she appeared again
in our classroom. The minute she came in the
door, I felt my heart begin to pound. Once again,
she was different: this time, her hair hung straight
down and seemed hardly to have been combed.
705 She hadn't brought her lunchbox with her, but she
was carrying what seemed to be a small box. She
greeted all of us and talked about the weather.

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Donna DeShano had to remind her to take her overcoat off.

710 When the bell to start the day finally rang, Miss Ferenczi looked out at all of us and said, "Children, I have enjoyed your company in the past, and today I am going to reward you." She held up the small box. "Do you know what this is?" She waited.
715 "Of course you don't. It is a Tarot pack."

Edith Atwater raised her hand. "What's a Tarot pack, Miss Ferenczi?"

 "It is used to tell fortunes," she said. "And that is what I shall do this morning. I shall tell your fortunes, as I have been taught to do."
720

 "What's fortune?" Bobby Kryzanowicz asked.

 "The future, young man. I shall tell you what your future will be. I can't do your whole future, of course. I shall have to limit myself to the five-card
725 system, the wands, cups, swords, pentacles, and the higher arcans. Now who wants to be first?"

 There was a long silence. Then Carol Peterson raised her hand.

 "All right," Miss Ferenczi said. She divided
730 the pack into five smaller packs and walked back to Carol's desk, in front of mine. "Pick one card from each one of these packs," she said. I saw that Carol had a four of cups and a six of swords, but I couldn't see the other cards. Miss Ferenczi studied
735 the cards on Carol's desk for a minute. "Not bad,"

she said. "I do not see much higher education. Probably an early marriage. Many children. There's something bleak and dreary here, but I can't tell what. Perhaps just the tasks of a housewife life. I think you'll do very well, for the most part." She smiled at Carol, a smile with a certain lack of interest. "Who wants to be next?"

Carl Whiteside raised his hand slowly.

"Yes," Miss Ferenczi said, "let's do a boy." She walked over to where Carl sat. After he picked his five cards, she gazed at them for a long time. "Travel," she said. "Much distant travel. You might go into the army. Not too much romantic interest here. A late marriage, if at all. But the Sun in your major arcana, that's a very good card." She giggled. "You'll have a happy life."

Next I raised my hand. She told me my future. She did the same with Bobby Kryzanowicz, Kelly Munger, Edith Atwater, and Kim Foor. Then she came to Wayne Razmer. He picked his five cards, and I could see that the Death card was one of them.

"What's your name?" Miss Ferenczi asked.

"Wayne."

"Well, Wayne," she said, "you will undergo a great metamorphosis, a change, before you become an adult. Your earthly element will no doubt leap higher, because you seem to be a

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sweet boy. This card, this nine of swords, tells me
770 suffering and desolation. And this ten of wands,
well, that's a heavy load."

"What about this one?" Wayne pointed to the
Death card.

"It means, my sweet, that you will die soon."
775 She gathered up the cards. We were all looking at
Wayne. "But do not fear," she said. "It is not really
death. Just change. Out of your earthly shape."
She put the cards on Mr. Hibler's desk. "And now,
let's do some arithmetic."

780 At lunchtime Wayne went to Mr. Faegre, the
principal, and informed him of what Miss Ferenczi
had done. During the noon recess, we saw Miss
Ferenczi drive out of the parking lot in her rusting
green Rambler American. I stood under the slide,
785 listening to the other kids coasting down and land-
ing in the little depressive bowls at the bottom. I
was kicking stones and tugging at my hair right up
to the moment when I saw Wayne come out to the
playground. He smiled, the dead fool, and with the
790 fingers of his right hand he was showing everyone
how he had told on Miss Ferenczi.

I made my way toward Wayne, pushing myself
past two girls from another class. He was watching
me with his little pinhead eyes.

Gryphon

795 “You told,” I shouted at him. “She was just kidding.”

 “She shouldn’t have,” he shouted back. “We were supposed to be doing arithmetic.”

800 “She just scared you,” I said. “You’re a chicken, You’re a chicken, Wayne. You are. Scared of a little card,” I singsonged.

 Wayne fell at me, his two fists hammering down on my nose, I gave him a good one in the stomach and then I tried for his head. Aiming my
805 fist, I saw that he was crying. I slugged him.

 “She was right,” I yelled. “She was always right! She told the truth!” Other kids were whooping.

 “You were just scared, that’s all!”

810 And then large hands pulled at us, and it was my turn to speak to Mr. Faegre.

 In the afternoon Miss Ferenczi was gone, and my nose was stuffed with cotton clotted with blood, and my lip had swelled, and our class had been combined with Mrs. Mantei’s sixth-grade
815 class for a crowded afternoon science unit on insect life in ditches and swamps. I knew where Mrs. Mantei lived: she had a new house trailer just down the road from us, at the Clearwater Park. She was no mystery. Somehow she and Mr. Bodine,
820 the other fourth-grade teacher, had managed to fit forty-five desks into the room. Kelly Munger

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asked if Miss Ferenczi had been arrested, and Mrs. Mantei said no, of course not. All that afternoon, until the buses came to pick us up, we learned
825 about field crickets and two-striped grasshoppers, water bugs, cicadas, mosquitoes, flies, and moths. We learned about insects' hard outer shell, the exoskeleton, and the usual parts of the mouth, including the labrum, mandible, maxilla,
830 and glossa. We learned about compound eyes, and the four-stage metamorphosis from egg to larva to pupa to adult. We learned something, but not much, about mating. Mrs. Mantei drew, very skillfully, the internal anatomy of the grasshopper
835 on the blackboard. We learned about the dance of the honeybee, directing other bees in the hive to pollen. We found out about which insects were pests to man, and which were not. On lined white pieces of paper we made lists of insects we might
840 actually see, then a list of insects too small to be clearly visible, such as fleas; Mrs. Mantei said that our assignment would be to memorize these lists for the next day, when Mr. Hibler would certainly return and test us on our knowledge.