

The Eulogy

By G. L. Horton

When my father died all these people came up to me or sent me cards saying they felt with me in my loss. What loss? How could they? If they thought it was a loss, they didn't really know me. They didn't know him, either-- or rather, they knew him the way most people knew him: the public man. Not what he was to me, not in private.

My father had so many friends, he was active in all these charities and in the town and people all thought he was so generous and charming. Not to me! I was the family scapegoat, his punching bag. But I can't say that, can I? No one would believe it. Except my sister. She's often said to me that she could never understand why my father was so cold and cruel to me. If he had behaved towards her as he did to me, she couldn't have stood it, she says. I couldn't stand it either, but what could I do?

Comes the funeral, everyone said to me, "You're creative, you're the writer, you must write something that can be read in synagogue." What could I write? What could I say that wouldn't be a lie? He's my father, yes. But as soon as I could I put distance between us, to put a limit to how much he could hurt me. Am I to say that? Shame the family? In the end, I went around and gathered little stories from people, about his charm and his jokes and his good deeds, and put them together as "so and so says about my father that..." even though to me he was nothing like that. I don't think anybody noticed that it was all hearsay, not admissible in court. I didn't actually say anything in my own voice. Not a word of false witness-- just a false impression, with the terrible black facts left out...

It Came From Texas

By [Josh Weckesser](#)

Tim is the neurotic protagonist of a high school "basement" comedy. Today, Tim has agreed to act as though his basement is owned by Texas, so that he can't boss anyone around. All day, people keep showing up at his door, and Tim has to let them in - because it isn't his basement.

Here, Tim loses patience with one of his guests - the ridiculously clingy Beth, who still loves Jonas, her ex, despite his complete lack of interest. Beth has just called Tim "weird" ...which was probably a mistake...

TIM:

Weird? You think I'm weird? You come into my basement, which, by the way, is owned by Texas today, and you start yelling at people because of the music that's playing! What a weak will you must have, eh? But I suppose that's not weird, is it? No, of course not. It's completely normal to just go along with the flow and do whatever everyone else is doing and never taking the time to question what's going on or where you're going. It's perfectly normal to be a sheep. Ah, but I do know something about you, Beth, that's isn't so normal. Oh, that would hurt, wouldn't it, if I could expose something about you that wasn't pristine and pure and, heaven forbid, normal? That would be awful. But, sadly for you, I do.

Why did you come over here today, Beth? Oh, that's right, you came to see Jonas, whom you care about, right? Yes, you do. You care about him. That's too bad, because it's not "normal" to care about anyone these days, takes too much effort and individualistic thought. People want what they want now and they don't give a damn who they hurt or why they hurt them, that's what's normal, that's what not weird, right Beth? But you care about him anyway.

What is causing you to throw yourself onto that spear? You know he'll never want you, you know this! You're too intense for him. Jonas can't live in your world anymore than you can live in his, and yet, despite this, you still call to him, you still go to him. Do you enjoy the heartache? He'll be there only when he has nothing else to do, and is bored with himself. Run, Beth, run while you can. Only pain awaits you at the end of this road. But you know it and you're going to walk down the road to the end anyway, knowing it will only leave you empty and hurting. But you call me weird? Please.

[pause; TIM puffs out audibly] Whose turn is it? [long uncomfortable silence] What? [BETH takes in a sobbing breath] Oh, calm down Beth, I wasn't serious.

Ivanov

By Anton Chekhov

Ivanov seems to be going through a remarkable change in his life, similar to a modern-day midlife crisis: he is depressed all of the time, and has begun to treat those around him with endless disdain. He is especially cruel to his wife, Anna, who is gravely ill. He tries to explain his recent transformation to a friend, Lvov.

IVANOV:

I suppose I am dreadfully guilty, but my thoughts are muddled, my soul is in the grip of a kind of apathy, and I am no longer able to understand myself. I don't understand myself or other people...

I should like to tell you everything from the beginning, but it's a long story, and such a complicated one that if I talked till morning I couldn't finish it...

Anna is a remarkable, an extraordinary woman... She changed her religion for my sake, left her father and mother, gave up wealth, and if I had asked her for a hundred more sacrifices, she would have made them without batting an eye. But, you see, I am in no way remarkable, and I have sacrificed nothing. However, that's a long story... The whole point is that... to put it briefly, I was passionately in love with her when I married, and swore that I would love her forever, but... Five years have passed, she still loves me, but I... Here you tell me that she is going to die soon, and I feel neither love nor pity, but only a sort of emptiness and lassitude. To anyone looking at me this must seem appalling; I myself don't understand what is happening within my soul...

No Exit

By Jean-Paul Sartre

No Exit is a play about three souls trapped in Hell who find that they are to torture each other for all eternity in a never-ending circle. The characters; sadistic lesbian Inez, socialite and baby-killer Estelle, and Garcin the war-deserter chase each other around a Second-Empire drawing room - an existential version of Hell.

ESTELLE:

You mine! That's good! Well, which of you two would dare to call me his glancing stream, his crystal girl? You know too much about me, you know I'm rotten through and through... Peter, dear, think of me, fix your thoughts on me,

and save me. All the time you're thinking, "my glancing stream, my crystal girl." I'm only half here, I'm only half wicked, and half of me is down there with you, clean and bright and crystal-clear as running water... Oh, just look at her face, all scarlet, like a tomato. No, it's absurd, we've laughed at her together, you and I, often and often... What's that tune? - I always loved it. Yes, the St. Louis Blues... All right, dance away, dance away. Garcin, I wish you could see her, you'd die of laughing. Only - she'll never know I see her. Yes, I see you, Olga, with your hair all about, and you do look a dope, my dear. Oh, now you're stepping on his toes. It's a scream! Hurry up! Quicker! Quicker! He's dragging her along, bundling her round and round - it's too ghastly! He always said I was so light, he loved to dance with me. *[Estelle is dancing as she speaks.]* I tell you, Olga, I can see you! No, she doesn't care, she's dancing right through my gaze. *[Stops sharply.]* What's that? What's that you said? "Our poor dear Estelle." Oh, don't be such a humbug! You didn't even shed a tear at the funeral... And she has the nerve to talk to him about her poor dear friend Estelle! How dare she discuss me with Peter! Now then, keep time. She never could dance and talk at the same time...

Oh, what's that? No, no. Don't tell him. Please, please, don't tell him. You can keep him, do what you like with him, but please don't tell him about - that. *[She gives up.]* All right. You can have him now. Isn't it foul, Garcin? She's told him everything, about Roger, my trip to Switzerland, the baby... "Poor Estelle wasn't exactly- " No, I wasn't exactly - True enough. He's looking grave, shaking his head, but he doesn't seem so very much surprised, not what one would expect. Keep him then - I won't haggle with you over his long eyelashes, his pretty face. They're yours for the asking. His glancing stream, his crystal. Well, the crystal's shattered to bits. "Poor Estelle!" Dance, dance, dance. On with it. But do keep time. One, two. One two. How I'd love to go down to earth for just a moment, and dance with him again. *[She dances again, for some moments.]* The music's growing fainter. They've turned down the lights, as they do for a tango. Why are they playing so softly? Louder, please. I can't hear. It's so far away, so far away... I - I can't hear a sound. *[She stops dancing.]* All over. It's the end. The earth has left me. *[To Garcin.]* Don't turn from me - please. Take me in your arms. *[Behind Estelle's back, Inez signs to Garcin to move away.]*

The Seagull

Anton Chekhov

Masha has resolved to kill her love for Treplev, who has recently tried to kill himself, by marrying Medvedenko, who's affection she does not truly return. She relates her plan to Trigorin, a famous writer who she has known only for a short time.

MASHA:

I'm telling you all this because you're a writer. You may be able to use it. I tell you honestly: if he had seriously wounded himself, I would not have gone on living another minute. But I have courage, all the same. I've made up my mind to tear this love out of my heart - tear it out by the roots.

I'm going to get married. To Medvedenko... (Beat.) To love without hope... to spend whole years waiting for something... But when I marry, there'll be no more of that, new cares will stifle the old. Anyhow, it will be a change...

Don't look at me like that. Women drink more often than you imagine. Only a few drink openly, as I do, the majority drink in secret...

Good luck! You're a very unassuming person, I'm sorry to be parting from you...

My schoolmaster is none too clever, but he's kind, and a poor soul, and he loves me very much. I'm sorry for him...

Well, I wish you all the best. Don't think badly of me. I'm very grateful to you for your friendly interest. Do send me your books, and be sure to autograph them. Only don't write: "To my esteemed friend,"; but simply: "To Masha, who doesn't know where she comes from or why she is living in this world." Good-bye!