

# 7 Ways to Encourage Your Children to Enjoy Writing

### **BARBARA DANZA**

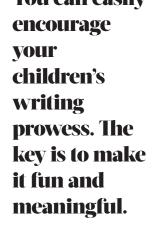
Writing is one of those essential skills that, if nurtured, can become an enjoyable and beneficial tool, one that can have a personal and professional effect for a lifetime.

Different people seem to have different opinions about writing. Some moan and groan at the thought of it, preferring, perhaps, to walk on nails or visit the dentist. Others are naturally drawn to writing, feeling somehow compelled to put pen to paper and use the act of writing to organize their thoughts and think more clearly.

If you talk to a university professor or employer of recent graduates, you'll

You can easily encourage **your** children's writing prowess. The key is to make it fun and

OLESIA BILKEI/SHUTTERSTOCK





likely hear concern about the apparent decline in writing ability being observed in young adults. What was once considered a quintessential benefit of a solid education is now falling by the

Fortunately, as a parent, you can easily encourage your children's writing prowess. The key is to make it fun and meaningful. Here are seven fun ways to encourage your children to practice writing at home.

### Write Down What They Say

A wonderful way to encourage young pre-writers or even older reluctant writers is for you to transcribe their ideas for them. With a pen and paper at the ready, ask your children to make up a story, verbalize a letter to Grandma, or conjure a silly poem. Write down exactly what they say. Don't edit it for grammar or style. Simply allow your children to experience having their exact ideas put down on paper. You can further enhance the experience by encouraging them to draw and color pictures to go along with their new

Finally, put the work to good use. Read the poem or story aloud, frequently. Mail the letter to Grandma. Show your children that what they "wrote" has value.

### Share a Journal

Another fun exercise to share with your child is to maintain a you-andme journal. Simply write to your child in a special journal designated to this process and ask for a response.

Perhaps, you pose a question such as, "What are your top three favorite flavors of ice cream?" or pose a challenge like, "Can you think of 10 other words that mean 'good'?" Or start telling a story and ask him or her to continue it, beginning a delightful back-and-forth project.

Additionally, vary your entries with doodles, paint, stickers, and other embellishments. Get creative and encourage your child to do the same. There are no wrong answers here.

He or she will delight in this special practice you share together and without hardly realizing it, will be honing his or and bound book, encourage your chil-

Copycats get a bad rap. Encourage your children to copy things down—a joke, a poem, a quote, a passage from a book anything. The act of copying proper syntax and grammar and (ideally) beautiful and well-written language strengthens the writing muscle in a very simple way. Be careful not to make this feel like a boring school assignment.

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Make it fun, perhaps by incorporating it into a craft project, making use of special pens, or doing it right alongside them.

### Read Well

Expose your children to wonderful books. Not all literature is created equal—quality varies widely. Find "best of" lists from sources you trust online and stick to the classics. Allow your children to hear and read rich, descriptive language and make reading a high priority in your home.

### **Enter a Contest**

Find writing contests for your children's age range and encourage your child to enter. Having a purpose for writing-not to mention a deadline-will encourage your children to stretch their

As they work on their entry, support them with the tools and resources they seek and be there for them emotionally as well. As anyone who's ever created anything knows, the process can have its ups and downs. Cheer them on and celebrate the completion of their project.

### **Give Them Their Own Journal**

Give your children their own personal journal. Aim to encourage a daily writing habit. Lead by example by also keeping your own journal, a process that can benefit your life in many ways. Keeping a journal and a container of pens at their bedside may be just enough to make this an enjoyable part of their every day.

### **Publish Their Work**

As their skills improve, think of ways to put their work into the world. Many online tools make self-publishing something anyone can do. Whether it's a blog, a neighborhood newsletter, or a printed

## 11 Simple Ways to Lighten Up

When did

everybody

get so

serious?

Laughter

may just

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medicine.

### **BARBARA DANZA**

hen was the last rienced a good, hearty bellylaugh? Have you been operating in "all work-no play" mode for too long? Maybe as the weeks of winter plod along, you're feeling

Perhaps it's time to lighten things up a tad. Here are 11 simple ways to lighten your mood, your heart, your outlook, and perhaps even your load.

Too many of us are spending more time than ever inside, sitting and staring at screens. The simplest way to brighten your mood is to step out into the sunshine. Take a walk around the block, around the town, through the woods, or along the water's edge. Whatever environment you find yourself in, get out into it. The effects of nature on our well-being have been well-documented. If it's cold, bundle up. If it's raining (absent the risk of lightning) take an umbrella. Make getting outside part of your daily routine.

Your body needs water, and it lets you know when it's not getting enough in a number of ways. Lethargy and moodiness are sometimes such signals, but you may be too preoccupied to notice. Make sure you're running on

all cylinders by keeping your body properly hydrated. For extra joy, add lemon or cucumber to your water or try a flavored sparkling water. Tea in the afternoon is lovely, too.

### Before you go for a walk

or head to the gym, you may not feel like it. You've got excuses at the ready explaining why you don't have the time, energy, and circumstances to make it happen. You know, though, that once you get moving, and for a good while afterward, you feel great. Those endorphins kick in, boosting your mood, and you feel proud of overcoming your excuses. Even if it's just for a few minutes, move your body.

### Cue the Music

Create an emergency playlist that goes on when you're feeling that grumpiness set in. Put all of your favorite jams on there—whether that's Beethoven or Barry Manilow—no judgment here. Uplifting music can change your state quickly.

If a sense of overwhelm is leading to anxiety, it's time to reconsider your commitments. Perhaps you've overcommitted your time or overextended your resources. Re-examine your priorities, and let go. Renegotiate items on your

calendar, cut or postpone items on your to-do list, and ask for help. We've all been there. When you face it, you'll feel a lightness you'll want to maintain.

### Joke Around

When did everybody get so serious? Laughter may just be the best medicine. Dive into some stand-up comedy, silly entertainment, or some good, old-fashioned jokes. Did you hear the

one about the guy who stole soap from the grocery store? He was trying to make a clean getaway. Lighten up and laugh more.

### **Look Within**

The real reasons you're feeling a heavy burden may not actually be external circumstances, but an internal issue. Look within and ask yourself why. Why are you so stressed by these circumstances? Why are you afraid? Why are you worried? Why are you sad?

Dig deep then see if you can't begin to reframe your emotions. Perhaps you'll need to turn to experts or spiritual teachings for higher-level perspectives. Seeing things from a higher or broader perspective can allow us to be uplifted and enlightened.

### Take a Break

We all need a break from time to time. If you're just pushing yourself all of the time you're likely

not performing very well anyway, Breaks allow us to rejuvenate, recharge, and reset. Give yourself a break.

When was the last time you played? Einstein once said that "play is the highest form of research." Hey, if it was OK for Einstein, it's OK for you. Play with your kids, play a sport, play a board game, play with those old toys you've put into storage, play with Legos, play in the snow. It's fun!

Did you know that most adults don't believe that they are creative, but most children do? I think it's a question of courage. Give it a go nobody's looking.

Doodle, paint, sew, build, write, make—do something to get those creative juices flowing.

It's been a long, winding road. You've probably got the pictures to prove it. Break out the photos and home videos and take a walk down memory lane. Share them with your loved ones. You'll be giggling and sharing "Oh, remember when ..." for a good long time.

We're all so busy these days and the simple joys and beauty in life can elude us when we're headdown working and checking boxes all of the time. Lighten things up. You'll likely lighten things for those around you as you do.

## AlinaMorse

### HOW THIS TEEN ENTREPRENEUR CREATED A MILLION-DOLLAR CANDY EMPIRE

### **JON MILTIMORE**

lina Morse is a typical 14-year-old girl in a lot of ways. She goes to high school, likes to dance, and lives with her parents.

Most parents,

I think it's

safe to say,

do not buy

**SUCCESS** 

literature.

Well, Tom

Morse did.

Alina Morse,

the CEO and founde

of Zolli Candy.

Morse, her sis-

ter Lola, and

parents Tom

"Good Morn-

ing America" in

January 2015.

and Sue on

their 5-year-

olds financial

■ Did we mention she also runs her own international candy empire? Oh. Well, she does.

The story begins with a trip to the bank when Morse was 7. She asked if she could have a sucker, but Dad discouraged her, explaining that candy was bad for her teeth. She went home empty-handed that day, but something tugged at her mind. "Candy tastes so good. Why does it have to be bad for your

Just like that, the idea for the Zollipop, a sugarless lollipop, was born.

### A Healthy Lollipop?

Instead of using simple sugars to make her candy, Morse's Zollipops are made with xylitol (pronounced zy-li-tol), a natural sweetener. It took months of research, testing, and YouTube-watching to develop the candy base, but once she finally did, Morse had the hippest lollipop in the world—a sugarfree, dairy-free, gluten-free treat that still tastes good and actually cleans your teeth. Using \$3,500 of her own money (which she had saved from birthdays and holiday gifts) and a manufacturing investment from her father, Morse built a company and sold 70,000 Zollipops in her first year. Things only grew from there.

Today the Zollipop is the third best-selling lollipop on Amazon, outselling classic brands like Dum Dums, Charms Blow Pops, and Tootsie Pops. They are sold in roughly 25,000 major retailers in America, including Whole Foods, Walgreens, Walmart, and Kroger.

Things have, you could say, worked out. Annual candy sales, which now include Zolli taffy and gumdrops, totaled \$6 million in 2018. Morse has seven employees and is a millionaire and famous. She was featured on the cover of Entrepreneur Magazine, making her the youngest entrepreneur to ever grace the cover, and she was even invited to the White House (twice!) by then-first lady

At age 14, Morse has already achieved "the American Dream." This invites an important question: How did it happen?

### The Inspiration Behind Morse and Zollipops

In August 2019, Inside Edition ran a wonderful feature on this teenage entrepreneur. From the clip, it's not difficult to see that Morse is bright, engaging, and driven—all keys to success. It's also clear that her parents had a lot to do with her achievements. (I imagine this is the case in nearly every child prodigy story). Morse's mother and father appear to be

their daughter's habits, values, and thinking. At one point, Morse tells Inside Edition that she's "always kind of had this entrepreneurial mindset." This may be true, but it's important to ask why she always had such a mindset. Evidence suggests it was no accident.

loving, nurturing parents who helped guide

Most parents, I think it's safe to say, do not buy their 5-year-olds financial success literature. Well, Tom Morse did. When his daughter was 5, he gave her the book "Rich Dad, Poor Dad." The book apparently made an impression.

a company, but I could create it with a mission," Morse explained. "I could help people through business."

"I looked at that, and I said I could create

For those unfamiliar with the work, "Rich





product experimentation in the early years.

When Morse was 5, her father gave her the personal finance book "Rich Dad, Poor



Morse at the Sweets & Snack Expo in Chicago in May

Dad, Poor Dad" explains "what the rich teach their kids about money that the poor and middle class do not." Written by business gurus Robert Kiyosaki and Sharon Lechter, it's one of the top-selling personal finance books of all time. It's the book your rich, suc-

cessful uncle bought you that you never actually opened. "Rich Dad,

books that

preaches

ial thinking. It shows how to build your own business, one that creates value by solving problems, and how to build passive income by recognizing opportunities others don't see (or don't act on).

frugality and hard work—though those are

important qualities. It teaches entrepreneur-

No one is saying Morse isn't responsible for her success. She is. It's quite possible she would have been a teenage millionaire if she hadn't read "Rich Dad, Poor Dad."

The lesson is that successful entrepreneurs create value through vision and empathy. They see how the world can be better, and they put resources—blood, sweat, capital, and time—into creating it. But it all starts with empathy, explains BuildDirect CEO

derstand and share the feelings of others—is essential to entrepreneurs because it allows them to see opportunities others do not. Basic economics teaches that this an essential component

"The driving forces in the market process are the producer-entrepreneurs who see profit opportunities arising from potential improvements in market activities," wrote Thomas C. Taylor in his classic text "An Introduction to

"While other market participants are more or less passive, unaware of or perhaps uninterested in profit-related opportunities, entrepreneur-producers search out and ex-

candy is bad for children's teeth. What it took was a child's empathy to recognize it was a problem for multitudes of children (and their parents, who have to pay their dental bills).

Unlike so many children who imagined how wonderful it would be to eat candy that tasted good and was good for your teeth, Alina Morse actually did something about it. In the process, she made millions of children (and dentists) happier and herself millions of dollars.

Jonathan Miltimore is the managing editor of FEE.org. This article was originally published



"The highest expression of empathy," writes Booth, is "addressing customer needs before they're even aware of them." Empathy—the ability to un-

of wealth creation.

Austrian Economics."

ploit profit potentials." Prior to Zollipops, it was no secret that

That's the power and beauty of entrepre-

on FEE.org

### We Need the Trades, and the Trades Need Young People

### **JEFF MINICK**

hings were going wrong. And fast, The basement of my daughter's house where I now live alone—she, Mike, and the kids moved last August to Pennsylvania—is inhabited by a water heater, a furnace, a compressor, three 4-foot-high tanks for softening the water, and a metal box beside these tanks containing salt whose purpose remains a mystery to me. For about a week, a thing-a-ma-jig at the base of the furnace had run continuously, the water softeners sounded off at irregular hours, and the compressor kept clicking off and on about five times per minute.

When the compressor reached 12 times per minute, I texted my daughter, "We need a plumber pronto," and called my son-inlaw with the same message. Before taking a job in Pennsylvania, Mike was a contractor and builder in our community. He immediately contacted a good friend here, John, the owner of a property maintenance business who that very afternoon sent one of his plumbers to the house.

William was 5-feet-10 or so, lanky, mid-50s, with a West Virginia accent and a ready smile. We went downstairs, and like all good craftsmen, he ran his hands over the parts and pieces of the various machinery, as if to take their measure through his fingertips. "The compressor's shot," he said, "and we'll have to replace the condenser, too," which was what I had earlier considered the thing-a-ma-jig. He looked over the water softeners. "I don't know much about these things. You'll need to get an outfit from Winchester to come look at 'em."

After promising he would return at 9 the next morning with all the necessary parts, William shut down the condenser, the compressor, and the water softeners, and my noisy living quarters became silent

"See you tomorrow morning," I said when he left, wondering if it would be so. Previous experiences with tradesmen and punctuality left me dubious at best.

Yet, lo and behold, William appeared at 9 a.m., parked his truck in the yard near the basement entrance, and began unloading his equipment, the condenser, and the compressor. He refused help carrying this equipment inside, refused my offer of coffee—"I already had my share"—and set to work. By early afternoon, he had installed all the necessary machinery, added a new shut-off valve for the entire system, and was loading the old compressor and his tools back in the truck.

"Come look at this thing," William said, twisting the compressor so I could see its bottom and a two-inch hole. "Rusted out. You dodged a bullet. If that bladder inside had burst, your basement would have been full of water."

### **Small Talk**

After he had loaded up his truck, we talked again for a while. We discovered we had both vacationed at Emerald Isle, North Carolina. We both had grown children who were making their way in the world and doing well. William had worked most of his life as a printer, running a machine, but several years ago he began researching his company online, and realized it and the printing business were about to go belly-up. For years, he'd run a home repair business on the side, teaching himself skills like plumbing. When the opportunity to work came up for John, he said goodbye to his printing press and leaped at a new beginning.

Before he left, I said to him, "Thank heavens we have people like you. Otherwise, the We take the luxuries they provide us as given, as ordinary as grass, until something goes awry.







When we find a plumber, a painter, or an auto mechanic who's conscientious, knowledgeable, and punctual, we feel as if we've struck gold.

rest of us would be living in caves."

"Thanks," he said, and smiled. "I like what

Two days later, the water softener guy, also named John, showed up, again right on time. He was younger than William, had longer hair, and wore some sort of blanched tattoo on his left arm. Once again, he was competent. He was in the basement less than two hours, explained to me the repairs he had made, and when I thanked him, he echoed William: "I love what I do." He told me that for nearly 10 years he had worked as a manager of a Home Depot distribution point, but "got tired of the box."

### We Need These People

All of us, at one time or another, need plumbers and electricians, painters and auto mechanics, and when we find one like William or John, conscientious, knowledgeable, punctual, we feel as if we've struck gold. Until we need them, we forget how dependent we are on such people. We take the luxuries they provide us as given, as ordinary as grass, until something goes awry. We buy our potatoes without reflecting on the many hands that brought them to the grocery store. We flip a switch, and a room at midnight fills with light. We turn a tap, and potable water flows into our kitchen sink.

For a long time, the trades lacked prestige. Those who worked in construction and allied jobs often felt stigmatized. They sat at the back of the bus while doctors, lawyers, bankers and brokers, even nurses and teachers, rode in the front. Comedian Rodney Dangerfield was famous for the line, "I don't get no respect," a line that some at the back of the bus must have sometimes thought applicable to them.

Until the pipe bursts, or the furnace oreaks down, or the car needs a new car-

Then they get respect.

### Changes in Attitude

That attitude may be changing. In his 2020 State of the Union address, President Donald Trump called for providing greater attention and money to the trades. Many of our community colleges feature courses in everything from auto repair to welding, and because of a scarcity of young people entering the trades, opportunities for employment and good wages abound.

In "A Curmudgeon's Guide to Getting Ahead," which I highly recommend to Charles Murray offers some excellent advice on choosing a vocation. Unless they are absolutely certain about their choice of vocation, Murray recommends that young people first think "about the things you enjoy." He provides a sort list for them to consider, such as: "You enjoy being outdoors"; "You enjoy solving puzzles"; "You enjoy security and predictability"; and "You enjoy risk." Examine yourself in this way, Murray suggests, and then select a vocation that will match your personality and will bring you joy.

A 2020 "U.S. News & World Report" report on the job market shows that many of those in the building trades earn good salaries and that all of the trades need more skilled workers.

And we need them, too. We need more Williams and more Johns in the world.

Jeff Minick has four children and a growing platoon of grandchildren. For 20 years, he taught history, literature, and Latin to seminars of homeschooling students in Asheville, N.C., Today, he lives and writes in Front Royal, Va. See *JeffMinick.com to follow his blog.* 

Judith Knotts has been working with the homeless community in Austin, Texas, since 2003.

There are so many reasons and we have to look at each one of those homeless people and say '... Why are they here, and how can I help them as an individual?

### A MISSION TO Shed Light on the Homeless

### **ANDREW THOMAS**

he homeless are one of our country's most neglected and misunderstood populations.

For a few days in 2003, a woman took a "leap of faith" to give up her comfortable bed and live on the streets with the homeless in Austin, Texas, and to connect with them. In return, she gained a new perspective.

Judith Knotts, 79, has lived in Austin since 2000. She earned a master's degree in educational policy and leadership from Virginia Tech University and has been working in school administration since the 1970s.

students' desks by grade-point average. Knotts knew, even from a young age, that there had to be a better way to educate students. "That was the seed for trying to

### **Engaging the Homeless**

improve schools," Knotts said.

When Knotts arrived in Austin in 2000, she started working as a school principal in elementary, middle, and high schools. Ever since she can remember, she has always had a profound interest in how people become who they are. It was this passion that would lead to her work with the homeless. In 2003, a friend of Knotts told her he was organizing a "street retreat" group in Austin.

"Within two seconds, I thought: 'I'm going.' [It] was a total leap of faith," Knotts recalled.

Inspired by his humility and honesty, she went out with the team to live among the homeless for 72 hours.

Knotts and the group went out without money, credit cards, or phones. All she had was a backpack and didn't know what to expect. The experience affected her profoundly.

"It changed my life. I saw a whole different view of the world that I never knew existed," Knotts explained.

as where to find water.

While Knotts was growing up they are, because after three speakwith her, a friendship develand attending public school in days and three nights, Knotts Pennsylvania, she recalls her was physically and emotionally fifth-grade teacher lining up the exhausted. But that was nothing compared to the indefinite period of time that the homeless would have to endure on the street.

### Relationships

Knotts looked and continues to

Although she doesn't spend nights with the homeless on the street anymore, she spends two days a week feeding them and regularly checks on them under the highways and on the street.

Knotts was shocked by the environment that homeless people

had to live in. The image of people stepping over a homeless woman sleeping on cardboard on the pavement in an alley stuck with her. The homeless were also kind to her and taught her skills such She discovered how resilient

look at each homeless person as a person as opposed to a statistic, and considers how she could help. Unafraid, she spends time with homeless people and listens to them. Without asking prying questions, she engages them in conversation and tries to offer a friendly ear.

Throughout her experience engaging with the homeless community, she's developed deep relationships. One experience that stuck with her was when a homeless man approached her

car. She rolled down her window and put her left hand outside. The man didn't ask for money.

He didn't ask for food. He took her hand, and told her how he had spent the day working, and how lonely he was. She got his name, and he went into the woods toward the tent where he lived. Tragically, she learned in the next day's obituaries

that he had died from an overdose. "I realized I was the last person that had seen him," Knotts recalled. The man hadn't asked for any money or any food, he was just in terrible circumstances, Knotts said.

Another homeless man who Knotts befriended had no legs and was in a wheelchair. While at first, he was a little apprehensive to oped. One day, his blanket slipped off and Knotts noticed a knife. He told her it was the only way for him to protect himself. Knotts visited with him regularly for the last year of his life before he too died from an overdose.

"[We were] two people [from] opposite ends of the world. We became very good friends," she said. "I mourn him. I really do. He asked me for very little, and he gave me so much."

### **Lessons Learned**

Knotts learned a lot from her experiences with the two men, and from the homeless in general. She discovered that underneath everything, people are the same. We're all human beings.

"Humanity is what binds us," Knotts said.

She also learned how kind, generous, and resilient the homeless can be. She would give a sandwich to a homeless man or woman, who, in turn, would give the meal to another homeless person who



A homeless man sleeps on the street in Austin, Texas.

really just wants to be loved.

Society often blames the homeless for their situation, but there are many causes for homelessness, Knotts explained. While some have been aban-

doned by their families or abused, others struggle with drug and alcohol abuse, or suffer from mental illness. Many are employed but aren't able to earn enough to afford housing. Others have no access to education or have been released from prison, which makes it even more difficult to find a job. Occasionally, a traumatic injury leaves a person unable to work. Natural disasters also can force people into the street.

"There are so many reasons and we have to look at each one of those homeless people and say 'What is their issue? Why are they here, and how can I help them as an individual?" Knotts said.

Society largely ignores the homeless population because the situation is ugly, and people put the issue out of their minds. Furthermore,

was in greater need. Above every- it's difficult for the everyday person

However, all it takes is one catastrophic event to force an individual onto the street. For example, Knotts was in a homeless camp and encountered a young boy. He asked if she recognized him, and she didn't. In fact, he had been one of her students.

"It's not just the lower class, or the uneducated, that becomes homeless. We could all—with one little slip—become homeless," she said.

Having written for the Austin American-Statesman since 2008, many of Knotts's articles have focused on homelessness. In an effort to bring attention to the issue, Knotts compiled a series of 34 articles and short stories into a book, titled "You Are My Brother: Lessons Learned Embracing a Homeless Community." She hopes that readers begin to better understand the homeless in their cities, and how to help.

"I'm hoping that [readers'] eyes will be opened, and their hearts will be opened," Knotts said.

I could continue the list—swap

### 5 Ways to 'Live Below Your Means'

### **ANNIE HOLMQUIST**

translates to families.

It's not often that one comes across sound, concise advice. So, when I came across the following statement the other day, I took

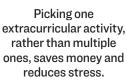
"Live below your means." This advice, writes Dr. Patrick Fagan, was given to a group of professional therapists, but it also

"What children need most from their parents is their time. Time given is attention given. In family life and in marriage, time is love. Deliberately 'living below your means' affords time for family

dinner, for hours with the children, for walks with your spouse, for family gatherings.

'Live below your means' is a strategic choice of monumental import that will enrich generations. Children need their parent's time more than their money. Time together results in affection, confidence, and a great outlook on life and will greatly influence whom they choose to be their spouse. Real wealth is time for what is most important."

Having grown up in a home where living below our means became a sudden necessity during an extended period of jobless-





ness, I have to agree. Doing without has a way of bringing a family together and reframing what is

truly important in life. Thankfully, not every family will be forced into living on a restricted income. Yet many families desire a closer bond and would be happy if they could set aside extra money for a rainy day, thus making living below one's means a reasonable and responsible move. So what are some easy ways

families can work together, live

below their means, and build

meaningful connections with

one another? I offer five ideas:

1. Make Restaurants a Treat Eating out quickly puts a strain

on the food budget. Choosing to eat in the comforts of home not only is easier on the purse, but also provides a more relaxed setting in which families can linger over the dinner table, discussing serious subjects that curious ears at the neighboring booth won't hear. Involving children in the cooking process also fosters learning and togetherness.

2. Pick One Extra

As a child, I enjoyed various short-term activities, such as a day of swimming, or maybe

a museum now and then. But when it came to one regular activity, piano lessons were my thing. I stuck with that one extra for years, eventually using the knowledge to produce income for

Fear of missing out drives many parents to enroll their children in multiple, longterm activities such as dance, soccer, and band. These activities, while enjoyable, drain families both of time and money. Picking one extra saves carpool time and reduces stress for both children and parents trying to

myself.

3. Avoid Movie Theaters

pack it all in.

The average cost of a movie ticket is more than \$9. Throw in a small treat and the cost of a movie night soars to more than \$40 for a family of four. But avoiding theaters doesn't

mean the family must kiss movies goodbye. Instead, practicing

patience and waiting for the movie to hit Netflix or the library in DVD format teaches delayed gratification for a pittance of the

### 4. Volunteer

Living below one's means can make you feel like you'll never get out in society again. Instead of forcing the family to become hermits because you can't afford anything, why not volunteer for a worthy cause in order to break out of the house? Not only will you create a common family experience, but you will be blessed

By volunteering together you will create a common family experience, and you will be blessed by helping others.



by helping others, and perhaps one day, you will be surprised to see that help reciprocated.

### 5. Make Saving Fun

My family has long enjoyed camping, but during the lean years, our old tent was breathing its last and we needed a new one. (The old tent was also a hideous shade of orange that was an embarrassment to yours truly.) To this end, we started a tent fund, using money we earned together as a family to pay for it. Not only did we save enough for our tent, but we also gained the memories we'd made earning the money, a greater appreciation for our new possession, and the prospect of many fun family adventures ahead of us.

babysitting duties with friends, find free events around town, cut back on store-bought snacks, connect with a local church to build a support network, plan simple birthday parties—but you get the idea. Living below your means as a family won't deprive your children of fun and life advancement. Instead, it may end up helping them, not only in learning frugal habits, but also in establishing lifelong bonds with those who love them the most. The price tag on that last item? Priceless.

*Annie Holmquist is the editor of* Intellectual Takeout. This article was originally published on Intellectual Takeout.

Save Time and Money: Build the Ideal

### (9, 2020 THE EPOCH TIMES THE EPOCH TIMES Week 9, 2020

## Capsule Wardrobe

Part 2: Rebuilding your wardrobe

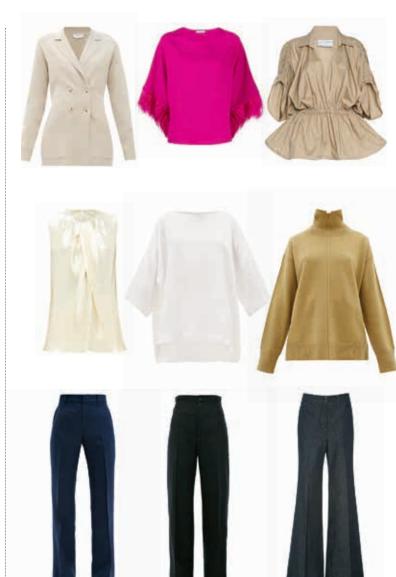
MANY NGOM

ow that you've cleaned up your closets and left the clutter zone, let's explore the ways you can rebuild your wardrobe the smart way.

You can play with core basics, neutrals, and accent colors. Here are three mini-collections, each with 25 pieces, which will help you define your style without cluttering your closet. The first is for newly retired women, who finally get to wear the clothes they love. The second collection is for women who are returning to work in an office environment. And the last collection is for moms on the go.

The items in these minicollections are available on Matchesfashion.com.







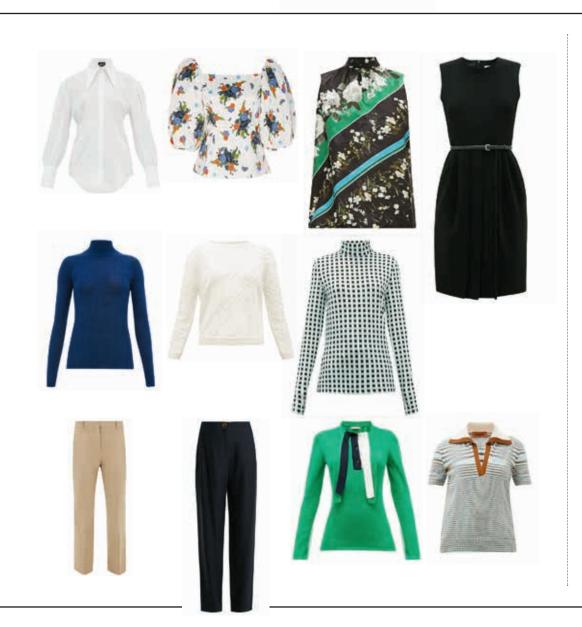


### Joining the Workforce in Style

You were working from home but now you just got the opportunity of a lifetime—your dream job. Not only do you love what you do but the dress code is flexible. It's the perfect opportunity to be professional but not boring. Your capsule includes brights, patterns, and fashion pieces.











Just because you are a stayat-home mom doesn't mean you have to wear sweats and hoodies. Instead, you can create a casual chic look for your day-to-day activities without sacrificing comfort. This capsule collection includes timeless basics with nice neutral colors that are seamlessly interchangeable.









JP YIM/GETTY IMAGES FOR NYFW: THE SHOWS

POPCORN AND INSPIRATION: FILMS THAT UPLIFT THE SOUL

# 'Maytime' from 1937: Sweethearts for a Day

### **TIFFANY BRANNAN**

t. Valentine's Day may be past, but all of February is recognized as the month of love. If you're done with flowers and candy, pull out a romantic classic film.

One of my favorite Golden Era romances is "Maytime" from 1937. This musical drama stars Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy, classical singers who made eight films together. After this film, they were known as the Singing Sweethearts of the Silver Screen; it's all about sweethearts.

A small-town girl, Barbara (Lynne Carver), considers leaving her fiancé, Kip (Tom Brown), to study opera in New York. She finds Kip's disapproval selfish and unreasonable. An elderly woman named Miss Morrison (MacDonald) overhears their quarreling and Barbara saying that she just wants to become a great singer. Miss Morrison then recounts her own youth, when she was Marcia Mornay, a famous soprano.

Years earlier, young Marcia sings for Parisian royalty. Her maestro, middle-aged Nicolai Nazaroff (John Barrymore), guides her through the evening as he has guided her career for four years. Now that her career has reached its height, his work is done, so he asks her to marry him as repayment. Honored, Marcia

Restless later that night, Marcia takes a carriage ride. When the horse breaks loose, she ends up waiting in a café where she meets the handsome, young, and carefree baritone Paul Allison (Eddy). He would rather have fun than heed his opera maestro (Herman Bing).

Paul falls for Marcia instantly, and she reluctantly agrees to lunch at his flat the next day. Back at her hotel, Nicolai has discovered her absence. She eventually makes him believe

At lunch the next day, Marcia and Paul feel love's stirrings. However, Marcia says they can't meet again. Paul thinks otherwise, so he visits her at the opera house, insisting they attend a May Day festival together. She agrees in order to get him out of her dressing room before Nicolai

On May Day, Marcia discovers true happiness. The sweethearts pledge their love, but Marcia says she must marry Nicolai. Heartbroken, they part after "one day to last a lifetime."

She weds Nicolai, expecting to never see Paul again. Nevertheless, they are destined to meet seven years later in America when they perform an opera together. After being reunited, will they be able to part again?

**Doomed by Dishonesty** 

"Maytime" shows the importance

performed Handel's "Water Mu-



Nelson Eddy and Jeanette MacDonald in "Maytime."

(Above) Marcia Mornay (Jeanette MacDonald) accepts the proposal of marriage to Nicolai Nazaroff (John Barrymore).

of honesty. The leading character's untruthfulness with her two men causes years of suffering for all

Marcia's relationship with Paul begins with half-truths. After their meeting, he asks her to dine with him. As she never explains her refusals, he persists until she accepts. If she had simply said she was engaged that first evening, he may not have pursued her further.

This dishonesty culminates

about Nicolai. Marcia sadly says, "It shouldn't have happened. I shouldn't have let it happen." She confesses that she didn't squelch their romance because it was "such fun," hoping it would "end like that and not like this." By stringing Paul along, she lets them form a deep

Marcia deceives Nicolai as well. When he suspects her first nocturnal outing was a rendezvous, she carefully avoids mentioning Paul at all. The next day, when she lunches with Paul, her secretive behavior proves that Nicolai doesn't know her whereabouts. After Paul bumps into Nicolai outside Marcia's dress- She chose the man who created and that he is just a "silly young man" who wanted to meet her.

And when the singers meet again seven years later, Nicolai instantly sees their connection. After opening night, he asks Marcia, "There was a great deal you never thought important enough to tell me, wasn't there?" She answers, "Very little."

"Very little," he replies. "Yet it's stood between us for seven years." Her deception doomed their marriage from the start.

Love Songs for All

'Maytime'

Director Robert Z. Leonard

> Jeanette MacDonald, Nelson Eddy, John Barrymore, Herman Bing, and Tom Brown **Running Time** 2 hours, 12 minutes

**Release Date** March 26, 1937 (USA)

 $\star\star\star\star\star$ 

**Not Rated** 

music adapted into vocal music.

The duet that Paul and Marcia sing beneath a flowering tree on May Day s one of the most emotional songs this duo ever sang. The image of the historically attired sweethearts against the pastel vernal background could be a vintage valentine. The exquisite melody of their duet, "Will You Remember," highlights the beautiful blend of their soprano and baritone voices.

The lyrics are a heart-rending tribute to the single spring day when they were sweethearts, and this moment shows Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy at their very best.

The May Day scene can only be surpassed by the climax, the opera sequence in America. It is a performance of the finale from "Czaritza," a fictional opera based on Symphony No. 5 by Tchaikovsky with French lyrics. The passion is palpable and multilayered in this scene, since the emotions of the characters in the opera reflect the longing of the singers playing them. As Nicolai aptly says, "They're referring to it as a living emotion. Whatever it was, it was most effective." Very true!

Films like this bring opera to the masses by incorporating classical music into deep stories. All the music is in the context of the story and furthers the plot. As a result, "Maytime" doesn't have a theatrical, stereotypical "musical" quality. This is the sort of musical that people who don't usually like musicals could enjoy. It is artistic enough to succeed without music, so the beautiful songs are just an embellishment.

### **Lonely Success**

"Maytime" shows that a career cannot replace true love and happiness. Marcia becomes a famous prima donna, but it brings no contentment. She would have been far happier without fame, married to Paul. guaranteed her career instead of the man who offered undying love. Thus, she had only one day of happiness to remember throughout her life.

Although Marcia and Paul miss their chance at happiness, their story guides Barbara and Kip. Marcia tells Barbara, "I met Paul too late, but you and Kip have the whole world ahead of you, if you want to take it." This movie reminds us to cherish true love, lest we be sweethearts for just one day.

Tiffany Brannan is an 18-year old opera singer, Hollywood historian, travel writer, film blogger, vintage fashion expert, and ballet writer. In 2016, she and her sister founded the Pure Entertainment Preservation Society, an organization dedicated to reforming the arts by reinstating the Motion Picture



FILM REVIEW: 'THOSE WHO REMAINED

### Platonic Love Against the Backdrop of Soviet Hungary

### **IAN KANE**

Recent films detailing the Jewish experience during the World War II era have avoided the depictions of extreme brutality, violence, and despair that usually are concomitant with this genre (that is, "The Pianist," "Schindler's List," and so on), and moved into new territory. From the hilariously surreal "Jojo Rabbit" to the serenely beautiful "Waiting for Anya," audiences are being treated to fresh perspectives.

Hungarian director Barnabas Toth's film "Those Who Remained" is another rich example. It begins in 1948; the Germans have already been defeated, and the iron-fisted totalitarianism of Soviet communism has been established in Hungary.

Sixteen-year-old Klara (Abigel Szoke) has an appointment for a gynecological exam. Her examiner, Doctor Korner Aladar (Karoly Hajduk), is a 40-something man that deems personal freedom and whose face is a solemn mask of individuality as threats, their pair-

She is at first skittish and panicky, but sensing a kindred spirit in Aladar, she begins to open up to him. Klara is the lone survivor of a family of four, while Aladar lost his wife and children to the Holocaust. They share a common blight in that although they are going through the motions of normal daily life, their deep despair has made them hollow inside.

Desperately in need of a father figure and someone to end her extreme loneliness, Klara soon moves out of her great-aunt Olgi's (Mari Nagy, "Budapest Noir") place and in with the good doctor. Aladar becomes her doting mentor, helping her with her homework and listening to her confidences with delicate patience.

In an especially touching scene, he breaks out some old pictures of the family he lost. The two eventually form an indescribably intimate (although platonic) relationship that transcends their age gap. In fact, from the outset, Aladar sets some strict guidelines for physical contact between the two.

### **Those Who** Remained' is an endearing, heartfelt portrait of two people whose lives have been horribly shaken.

ing raises the suspicions of some communist operatives. Aladar and Klara pick up on this and try their best to keep things on the downlow, but soon they are part of the cavalcade of gossip and distrust that go hand-in-hand in such a

In one especially harrowing scene, Klara is hauled in to face 'Those Who Remained' a communist official after being seen with her head on Aladar's lap during a visit to the local park. Meanwhile, Aladar's friend and work colleague, Pista (Andor Lukats), warns him that locals have been vanishing in the night. He also tells Aladar that he's thrown his lot in with the Communist Party and has been ordered to keep tabs on Aladar.

Hajduk and Szoke turn in some solid, very nuanced performances that convey the loneliness and despair of two damaged souls. The film is carefully paced and doesn't move too fast; it's just enough for the bonding of these two survivors to seem natural and authentic. There is also an almost palpable sense of tension as they try to remain as discreet as possible, even as their commitment to each other only deepens over time.

"Those Who Remained" is an endearing, heartfelt portrait of two people whose lives have been horribly shaken but, through mutual bonding and healing, have saved each other's soul from being irreversibly shattered.

In these fractious modern times, it's refreshing to see a male character whose frail appearance belies quiet strength and selfless heroism as he comes to the aid of a girl in need without taking advant of her. In the end, it's a beautiful mélange of tragedy and eventual hope, loss and recovery, and ultimately—the healing power of love.

Ian Kane is a filmmaker and author based out of Los Angeles. To see more, visit DreamFlightEnt.com

Director Barnabas Toth Karoly Hajduk, Abigel Szoke, Mari Nagy **Running Time** 1 hour, 23 minutes **Release Date** Feb. 14 (USA, limited)

gave the premiere of "Messiah" at

a time when oratorio, too, were

going out of fashion in London.

That may have been his reasoning

for making its premiere in Dublin.

astating frost in Ireland in 1739-

40, so Handel arranged that one

of his concerts would benefit Mer-

cer's Hospital, the Charitable In-

firmary, and debtors' prison. Due

perhaps to its public rehearsal, the

demand for entry to the venue (the

Fishamble Street music hall) was

such that ladies were advised not

to wear hoop skirts and gentle-

men not to bring swords so as to

accommodate more concertgo-

ers. The proceeds, evenly split, are

said to have secured the release

The premiere came after a dev-

a great experience.



It was extraordinary. The depth of the story about the Chinese culture, the creation, their faith, their beliefs, their concepts of

the message gets through. We see these beautiful people dancing and all these wonderful athletes, but the message is what I hope comes through ... Its culture

JOSEPH KULAKOWSKI attorney, at the Mobile Civic Center Theater in Mobile, Ala., on Feb. 11,

### SHEN YUN PERFORMING ARTS Audience Reactions

The Epoch Times considers Shen Yun Performing *Arts the significant cultural event of our time* and has covered audience reactions since the company's inception in 2006.

The Epoch Times is a media sponsor of Shen Yun Performing Arts, and believes its mission to revive the 5,000-year civilization of China is history in the making, and in line with our mission of covering and preserving traditional arts and culture.

could let go of all stressful feelings. The show inspired me, and I know now what it means to be in peace with your surroundings ... Shen Yun left with me the thought

that we should hold onto tradition, and not be burdened by too many novelties, and too many changes. We should look at a human being as someone created by divinities. We should look for the best in every human being and safeguard it.

**ULLA KOCH IOC Lifetime Achievement Award**winning Olympics coach, at the Musical Dome in Cologne, Germany, on Feb. 12, 2020



... Shen Yun is a masterpiece that will be remembered by the entire world. It's really remarkable. ... It would be something great, if [Shen Yun] can usher in the new epoch for the rebirth of humanity.

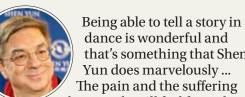
LEE DONGYEONG director, Korean Broadcasting System, at Ulsan Culture & Arts Center, in Ulsan, South Korea, on Feb. 11, 2020



It is a performance that transforms you and a special sensory feeling ... It gives us some profound messages about how mankind must dedicate itself to good over

evil, and how we must always keep in mind the fulfillment of some mandates that make us respect a higher being so that we have a better way of living together and avoid the self-destruction of the human being.

JORGE HERNANDO Pedraza, secretarygeneral of the Andean Community of Nations, at the Gran Teatro Nacional in Lima, Peru, on Feb. 8, 2020



dance is wonderful and that's something that Shen Yun does marvelously ... The pain and the suffering that people still feel from that

separation of their previous culture came across very strongly, and my daughter asked me if I cried and there was a point where I did shed a tear ... I would say it's a window into a culture that you don't often get to see. The artistry is top-notch and it's

JOHN VISHNESKI attorney and clarinetist, at the Rosemont Theatre in Rosemont, Ill., on Feb. 15, 2020



good and evil ... I hope that

will survive.

2020

In addition to valuable life lessons, this film offers a wealth of wonderful classical music. Surprisingly, only one song, the love duet sung on May Day, came from the Sigmund Romberg musical of the same name. The rest of the music consists of opera on May Day, when Paul learns excerpts, folk songs, and symphonic

Production Code.

Frederick Handel (center) presenting "Water Music" to King George on the River Γhames, July 17, 1717, by Edouard łamman.

But this unfounded story didn't

many, for this Royal Academy of Handel's second Royal Academy Music (with no connection to the current company). For example, Handel met Mar-

gherita Durastanti during his Italian sojourn (1707–1710), and she was one of the first singers he recruited for London. She enjoyed a long personal association with the composer and played major and later minor roles for him.

centers in Italy and Dresden, Ger-

But Italian singers were rather more expensive than the British singers, straining the Academy's budget. In decline due to escalating costs as well as other issues, the Academy could not survive, and Handel and the impresario John James Heidegger formed the second Royal Academy of Music. Handel recruited from Italy again.

One of his later recruits was the Italian soprano Anna Maria

of Music and for whom Handel wrote the title role of "Alcina." She sang in at least 24 of Handel's Fashions change, however, and

Strada del Pò, who was the star of

by the early 1730s, the thrill of Italian opera was over in London. In fact, English ballad-operas that poked fun at the pretensions of Italian opera gained popularity. Handel moved away from Italian opera and into English-language

Anna Maria Strada del Pò was also one of the first of Handel's Italian singers to perform oratorio, singing title roles in the oratorios "Deborah" and "Athalia," thus breaking boundaries between

oratorio is the "Messiah." Handel to this report.

of nearly 150 indebted prisoners. Of course, Handel's most famous Robert Hugill contributed

**SHARON KILARSKI** sic" to celebrate its 300-year-old commission by King George I We are amid a yearslong celof England. This coming March marks the 300th anniversary of ebration of the German-born the first publication of Handel's Eight Great Suites. To celebrate, Handel & Hendrix in London is

but English-made genius George Frideric Handel. On Feb. 23, 2020, the creator of arguably hosting harpsichordist Satoko the pinnacle of sacred music in the English language and re-Doi-Luck to perform the works. ferred to by Beethoven as the And last April, the London Handel Festival focused on the greatest composer to have ever lived will turn 335. Many of his theme "Handel's Divas." Part of the festival featured the internaworks are turning or, recently, have turned 300. tional opera conductor, prize-In July 2017, conductor Nichowinning harpsichordist, and las McGegan's Philharmonia early music specialist Bridget Baroque Orchestra and Chorale Cunningham and her com-

Celebrating Handel

Her concert titled "Costly Canaries: Mr. Handel's Search for Superstars" commemorated the 300th anniversary of the founding of Handel's Royal Academy of Music, one of the most ambitious opera companies of the **Surviving Musical Fashions** 

music, London Early Opera.

Cunningham hoped her concert would reveal some of the dilemmas Handel faced, his innovations to surmount them, and even something of his charitable nature. She also hoped to debunk some of the myths surrounding his divas.

For example, there's the famous story of Handel threatening to throw Francesca Cuzzoni out of the window when the sopany specializing in Baroque prano refused to sing an aria he it even became something of a recruited singers from operatic

had written. The act of throwing someone out of a window was the punishment for murderers in parts of Germany, and Handel was merely being witty. In fact,

theme tune for her; she sang it for 30 years.

mean that singers like Cuzzoni were not troublesome for Handel. Cuzzoni did sing the aria, and To ensure quality, Handel had for boredom to

strike, couples would be wise to

be more proactive

It's as simple as

ing. Be

intentional

about notic-

ing your rela-

tionship's bright

spots. Not only

will you appreciate

your partner more, but

you can use what's going

well to help improve less bright

Too often, people wait for some-

thing to break before trying to fix

it. Adopting a maintenance men-

tality can more proactively help

One new study tested a way

relationships. The researchers'

to help couples in already healthy

intervention had couples complete

research-based positive psychol-

· Write the story of their relation-

ship, focusing on the positives,

• Write a letter of gratitude to their

Identify their partner's strengths

and their strengths as a couple

• Create a list of positive moments

share with each other. Pick one,

 Create a desired happiness chart and discuss what small relation-

ship tweaks can help make it

At the end of the month, compared

to couples on the study's waitlist,

participants reported more posi-

functioning, and improved com-

their average relationship func-

Few people enjoy cleaning,

doing laundry, or mowing the

lawn. Yet, if you neglect those

tasks, life quickly falls into dis-

repair. Your relationship is just

the same. Rather than thinking

about replacements when your

invest the time and energy into

a little maintenance. Using any

or all of these easy-to-implement

strategies should not only help a

relationship survive, but hopefully

relationship shows signs of wear,

of the comparison group.

munication. Another month later,

tioning remained better than that

or activities partners want to

and plan a time to do it

then share with their partner

ogy activities over four weeks

your relationship.

such as:

**GARY W. LEWANDOWSKI JR.** 

arly on, relationships are easy. Everything is new and exciting. You go on dates, take trips, spend time together, and intentionally cultivate experiences that allow your relationship to grow.

Then, somewhere along the way, life happens.

One study on married couples in their 30s and 40s found that their marital quality declined over the course of a year, in terms of love, passion, satisfaction, intimacy, and commitment. Too often, people shrug their shoulders and convince themselves this is just how it goes. Switching to relationship autopilot feels justifiable when you're short on time, low on energy, and must focus on other priorities like careers and kids.

This is when doubt can creep in and tempt you to hit the reset

But maybe you're being too hard on a perfectly good relationship. Every couple experiences ups and downs, and even the very best relationships take effort.

Rather than getting out, it's time to get to work. Whether your relationship is already stuck in a rut, or you're trying to avoid ending up in one, most people need to focus more on what happens between "I do" and "I don't want to be with you anymore." As a relationship scientist, I suggest the following four psychology research-based strategies to kick off your relationship maintenance plan.

1. Use Boredom as a Pivot Point

No one raises their hand and says, "Sign me up for a boring relationship." But boredom serves a purpose. Like your phone indicating your battery is low, boredom is an early warning system that your relationship needs a recharge.

At different times, all relationships experience boredom. Psychology researcher Cheryl Harasymchuk and colleagues have explored how people react. For example, to turn things around when you're bored, do you fall back on things that are familiar and make you feel self-assured, like taking a walk around the neighborhood? Or do you choose enhancing activities—like going for a hike on a new trail in an unfamiliar park to mix things up? It turns out that study particiups and pants preferred growth-enhancing activities when they were bored, and when given a chance to plan a date, they incorporated more even the novelty into those outings. Rather very best than resigning yourself to boredom's inevitability—"This is just

2. Keep Dating

Rather than wait for boredom to strike, couples would be wise to be more proactive. It's as simple as continuing to date. Early in relationships, couples prioritize these one-on-one outings, but eventually begin to coast, just when the relationship could use an extra

how relationships are"—use bore-

dom as a call to action.

To recapture that early relation ship magic, research shows that couples should engage in new, challenging, and interesting activities. Rather than sitting at staring at your phones, couples should break their routine and try something different. It could be as simple as trying a new restaurant, or even a new dish at a favorite

Not only does branching out counteract boredom, but trying new things helps you grow as a person. All of this spills over into the relationship, increasing levels of passion, satisfaction, and com-

In one study, researchers asked married couples either to play

Every couple experiences downs, and relationships

take effort.

art class together. All couples increased their levels of oxytocinthe so-called "cuddle hormone" which helps partners bond. But

3. Movie Nights Not looking to dig out your oil course of a month, researchers others did an intense relation-

tal quality.

Activities are great, but you also need to do daily maintenance. There's an old adage in psychology research that "bad is stronger than good." For relationships, that often means focusing on what's wrong, while overlooking what's right. Talk about self-defeating. Of course, you can just as easily

the art class couples had larger oxytocin increases and touched each other more, perhaps because the activity was newer and further outside their comfort zone. That novelty may encourage them to rely on each other for assurance.

games like Jenga, Monopoly,

Scrabble, and UNO, or take an

paints? Here's a lower-key option: Grab a spot on the couch and have a couples movie night. Over the asked some couples to watch and discuss a romantic comedy such as "When Harry Met Sally," while ship workshop. Fast forward three years, and the movie watchers were less likely to have broken up.

It probably isn't just taking in any film, but rather that watching a romantic story gives couples a less threatening way to discuss relationship issues. It may also help ently. That's important, because research from psychologist Eli Finkel and others shows that viewing your own relationship through completely neutral eyes helps couples hold off declines in mari-

4. Finding the Bright Spots

find the ways your relationship is

**Daffodils** 

That floats on high o'er vales and hills,

by William Wordsworth

I wandered lonely as a cloud

When all at once I saw a crowd A host, of golden daffodils; Beside the lake, beneath the trees, Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine

And twinkle on the milky way,

Ten thousand saw I at a glance

A poet could not but be gay

In such a jocund company;

For oft, when on my couch I lie

In vacant or in pensive mood,

They flash upon that inward eye

Which is the bliss of solitude;

And dances with the daffodils

And then my heart with pleasure fills,

They stretched in never-ending line Along the margin of a bay;

Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.

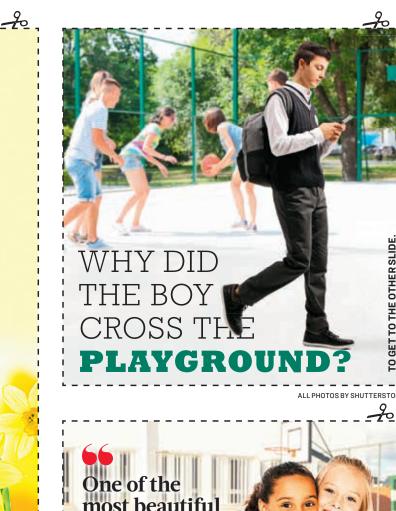
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee;

I gazed—and gazed—but little thought

What wealth the show to me had brought.

The waves beside them danced; but they

FOR KIDS ONLY THE EPOCH TIMES





IS CREATED

hat is known today as the United States Postal Service originated with the passage of The Postal Service Act, which President George Washington signed into law on Feb. 20, 1792.

The law established the United States Post Office Department. At the time the price to mail ranged from 6 to 12 cents. One of the greatest

beneficiaries of this act were newspapers. The Founding Fathers deemed newspapers essential to maintaining an educated citizenry and allowed papers to be mailed at special, low rates. Today, the Post Office

delivers mail to every address in the United States, spanning almost 42,000 zip codes.

By Aidan Danza, age 13

### ALL PHOTOS BY SHUTTERSTOCI SPECIES SPOTLIGHT: Owls vary in size, from the minuscule elf Owls have many features that owl (around 5 inches tall) to the enormous allow them to do what they do: Blakiston's fish owl, which can measure hunt silently at night without seeing what they're going after 36 inches tall. Owl species can look some of our most extremely different from one another. All thanks to their perceptive ears. Owls' ears are large, surrounded owls, however, share a generally similar enigmatic creatures. WWhile they are famed and resting on light-colored facial disks that sound to make it louder to them. fabled, and many know what an are bordered by a darker head. There may Their hearing is so precise that or may not be hornlike ear tufts, which can they can hunt in total darkness and owl looks and sounds like—who be any size depending on the species. catch prey without even seeing it. doesn't?-most people have Their diets vary by species. Many owls Owls' feathers are very soft and eat rodents, but some eat insects and dense, providing them with protection never seen an owl in the wild. others catch fish, like the aforementioned from the cold. The comb-like feathers Blakiston's fish owl. When an owl eats on the leading edge of their wings, along something, they normally swallow it with the fringe-like feathers on the whole. Then they digest what they can, trailing edge make it almost impossible to hear owls fly. This allows them to hear and regurgitate the rest (fur, bones, feathers) in a ball-shaped substance their prey and also prevents their prey called a pellet. from hearing them. A great horned owl.

### 5 Tips for Working While Caring for Small Children

### **EMMA FREIRE**

Working while caring for young children is a reality of life for many Americans. Over onethird of America's workforce does freelance, and companies are becoming more open-minded about telecommuting. These arrangements offer a great deal of freedom, but they also present significant challenges for parents of young children. Yes, daycare and babysitters are expensive, but how can you get any work done with little ones underfoot? I've been navigating these

choppy waters since I became a mother five years ago. Today, I have three children. Other parents regularly ask how I manage to get my freelance work done. Here are a few things I've learned on this journey:

### Before my eldest was born, I could

1. Reframe Your Approach

work all day. As a mom, I think four hours is the longest uninterrupted stretch I've ever had. More often it's only one hour. Parents who work from home have to embrace this change. You need to be ready to pounce on free time and do your work whenever opportunities arise. Adjusting to your new reality is critical. The good news is that you will

quickly learn to increase your productivity. I blush to remember how inefficiently I used my time before I became a mother. These days I can finish a whole project in the same amount of time it used to take me just to get started.

### 2. Use a Notebook

I do a lot of my work in a notebook

a few minutes of free time. That is not enough time to break out the laptop. But it is enough time to grab your notebook and develop some ideas or write a to-do list. That way, when you get a longer stretch to do some work, you can just open the notebook and start cranking it out. You won't spend as much of that valuable time in 3. Implement Afternoon

Gary W. Lewandowski

Monmouth University

article was originally published on The

in New Jersey. This

Jr. is a professor of psychology at

Conversation.

My two younger children still take naps. My eldest does not, but I make her stay in her room for about an hour each afternoon. She looks at books or plays quietly, and the benefits to her are similar to a nap in that it gives her time to rest and recharge. The benefits to me are that I keep at hand. There will be even greater. Afternoon quiet

4. Rethink Your Availability

my work without it.

Parents who want to work from home should take a hard look at their weekly schedule. Is there a time slot you consider off-limits that could actually be used for work? A few years ago, I read a blog

post by a mom who said she always went to a café on Saturday mornings to work. At the time, that seemed impossible for me. I believed our family should be together on Saturday mornings. But then I had a deadline and had to go to a café on Saturday morning. Since then, it's become a regular occurrence.

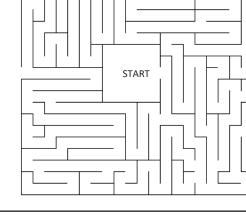
5. Don't Work and Watch Your Kids at the Same Time This may be a question of per-

occasions when parents only have time is a lifesaver. I couldn't do sonal preference, but I try to never work and mind my kids at the same time. I only work when they're asleep or in the care of another adult. Occasionally I have a deadline and I have no choice. But in my experience, this is largely counterproductive. I get very little accomplished and I snap at my kids for interrupting me. Everyone loses.

These are the biggest lessons I've gleaned from five years of balancing motherhood with freelance work. Though I certainly still have room to grow, these lessons have helped my work-life balance immensely, and hopefully will help yours

Emma Freire is a writer living in Sao Paulo, Brazil. This article was originally published on IntellectualTakeout.org





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**USE THE FOUR NUMBERS IN THE CORNERS, AND THE OPERANDS** (+, - AND X) to build an equation to get the solution in the middle. There may be more than one "unique" solution but, there may also be "equivalent" solutions. For example:  $6 + (7 \times 3) + 1 = 28$  and  $1 + (7 \times 3) + 6 = 28$ 

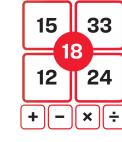


Solution For Easy 1

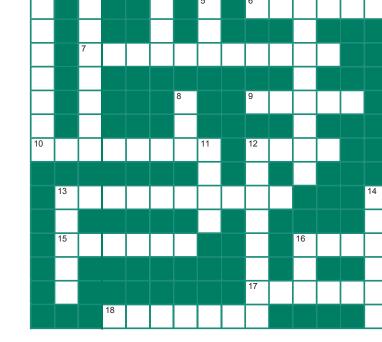


50×5-4×3





54+12+15-33



## **Across** 6 Where kids go to learn (6)

### 4 They have sneakers and boots (9) **5** A place to work out (3) **11** Swim site (4) 12 Place to take some prescriptions (8) 13 It may be green, yellow, or red (5) 14 Napoleon locale (6)

Down

## **16** Setting for many a joke (3)

Where shirts are pressed (8)

Sidewalk restaurant (4)

Where the monkeys live (3)

2 You might have bought this paper there (8)



- "Paper or plastic?" place (11)
- **9** Where travelers sleep (5)
- **10** Fountain (8)
- 12 Green places to play (4)
- 13 Where dirty clothes get clean (10)

15 Car repair place (6) 16 Where you keep your money (4)

17 Where Broadway crosses 42nd (6)

18 Place to find a good book (7)



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1861, by Alfred Stevens. Musée

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### POETRY

## Comfort for the Living POETRY and DEATH

### **JEFF MINICK**

oets, like the rest of us, have varying attitudes toward Some urge resignation, others rage; some point us to an empty tomb and salvation, others to the dust of obliteration; some bemoan the brevity of three-scoreyears and ten, others celebrate life even

when faced with imminent death. Others write poems on death that act as consolation for the living, medicine to ease our suffering and grief. These poets, possessed of the power to make beauty out of pain, put their words to paper to give us hope in the midst of our desolation. They remind us, too, of certain truths often forgotten—that death is a part of life and that while we live, our dead live on in us.

### **Death in Modern Times**

We in America are less accustomed to death than were our ancestors. Just a few generations ago, most people died in their homes. Far more women perished in childbirth, and far more children before reaching the age of 5 lay on their deathbeds surrounded by a grieving family. Victorian poets in particular devoted their attention to the funereal, at times to assuage their own grief, at times to assist and comfort those left behind.

But while most of the dying in today's culture takes places behind hospital walls, and with much less pain and agony than that endured by our ancestors, still we find ourselves at the bedside of the dying—mothers, fathers, children, and friends. We offer them the sustenance of presence, we speak to them, we beg the Almighty for a miracle, and we hold their hands and weep as their last breath escapes their lips.

And then it is we who need comfort, one whose departure has left us bereft and heart-wounded. Some turn to family and friends for easement of this pain, some to prayer, and some to memory. And some go to poetry.

Certain poets view death as a friend offering the possibility of immortality and rest. Emily Dickinson, for example, opened a poem with these lines:

- Because I could not stop for Death— He kindly stopped for me-
- The Carriage held but just Ourselves— And Immortality.

"Kindly" seems a strange word to apply to death, but many of us who are older have witnessed that kindness, especially in the demise of those who have suffered pain for years.

Like Dickinson, Christina Rossetti resorted to metaphor to explore the mystery of death in her lovely poem "Up-Hill:"

Does the road wind up-hill all the way? Yes, to the very end. Will the day's journey take the whole long

From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place? A rooffor when the slow dark hours begin. May not the darkness hide it from my face? You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night? Those who have gone before. Then must I knock, or call when just

They will not keep you standing at that door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak? Of labour you shall find the sum. Will there be beds for me and all who seek? Yea, beds for all who come.

Here, death offers an end to the troubles of this world for the "travel-sore and

### A Thousand Winds

Some poets believe that death, however horrific or unexpected, wins no final victories. In "Death, be not proud," Christian writer John Donne chides Death for its vanity, writing at the end of the poem: "One short sleep past, we wake eternally/ And death shall be no more; Death, thou shalt die."

Mary Frye turned to nature for her imshe wrote "Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep" on a brown paper shopping bag after hearing the story of a Jewish girl from Germany. Young Margaret Schwarzkopf was staying with the Fryes in the United States and was unable to visit her dying mother in anti-Semitic Germany. Frve wrote the poem—various versions exist, as she never copyrighted it—as a message of comfort for her young houseguest:

Do not stand at my grave and weep I am not there; I do not sleep. I am a thousand winds that blow, I am the diamond glints on snow, I am the sun on ripened grain,



Study of a mourning woman, 1500-1505, by Michelangelo. Pen and brown ink, heightened with white lead opaque

- I am the gentle autumn rain. When you awaken in the morning's hush I am the swift uplifting rush
- Of quiet birds in circled flight. I am the soft stars that shine at night. Do not stand at my grave and cry, I am not there; I did not die.

### The Dead Live On in Us

Other poets remind us that the dead live on in us—fixtures in our memory, whispers in our hearts. In William Wordsworth's "We Are Seven," the poem's narrator meets an 8-yearold "little cottage girl" and asks whether she has sisters and brothers. She answers seven, and when he asks where they are she replies that "two of us at Conway dwell,/And two are gone to sea./Two of us in the churchyard lie,/ My sister and brother."

The narrator tries to convince the child that she has only four siblings, but she is having done of his arguments. At the end of the poem, he reports:

- "But they are dead—those two are dead! Their spirits are in heaven!"
- 'Twas throwing words away, for still The little maid would have her will, And said, "Nay, we are seven!"

Some time ago, I dabbled in poetry. Perhaps the verse below, written about a girl I'd known in elementary school and composed long years later when grief over the death of someone I loved had a stranglehold on me, will further explain these relationships between the living and the dead.

- The dead die when we living let them die; We breathing clasp to hearts our breath-
- We cover them with sheets on icy beds; In silent rooms they speak our names.
- To us: "Remember me! Remember me!" Ah, Cissy, I remember you. Your eyes Which last saw light at seventeen still lie In me like jeweled cuts of sun-cut sea. I dream your eyes, their baffled quiet grace; Others forget, but I do not forget;
- You prick my prayers, poor altars of regret; My mind's sharp eye calls back your sea-Pray all, I pray, who read these lines
- For her whose eyes are gone when

### **Connections**

Our dead live on in us. Some deeds and words of my grandfather, born more than 120 years ago, remain a piece of me. My wife lives on in me, and in my children, and through them, in my grandchildren who never met her.

The Persian poet Rumi recognized this connection between the living and the dead in "The Window":

From my heart to yours. From this window, like the moon I keep sending news secretly. Actions, most of us agree, speak louder than

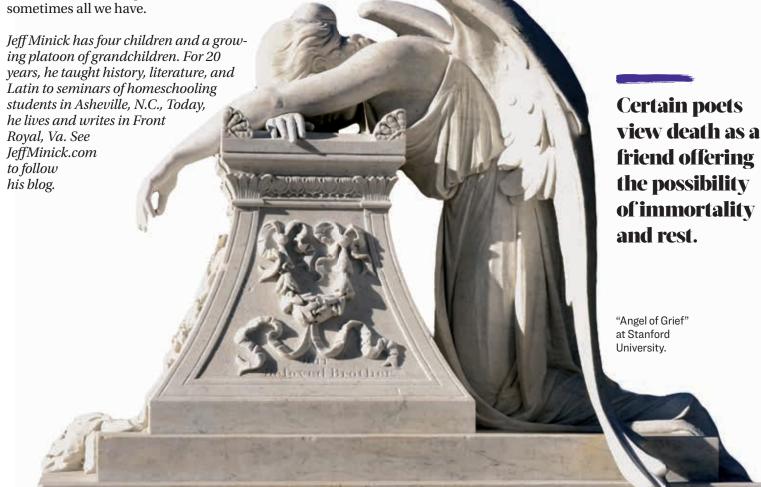
Your body is away from me

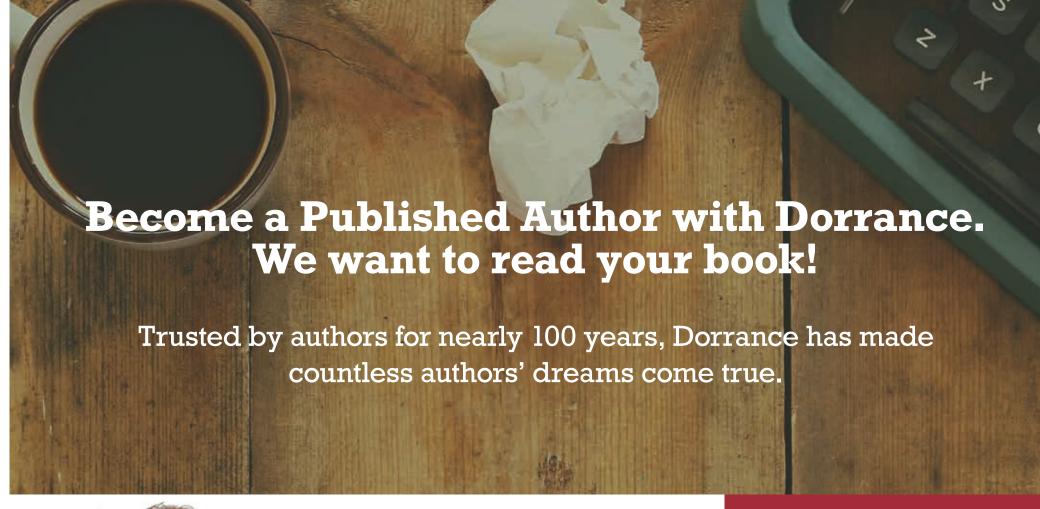
But there is a window open

the graveside, our presence when at all possible is the vital ingredient to saying

words. In our visits with the dying and at

But after "the shutting away of loving hearts in the hard ground," words are sometimes all we have.







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## The Invisible World We Ignore at Our Peril

**JAMES SALE** 

n our increasingly materially focused world, a world in which image is king over content, it is worth bearing in mind that sometimes the invis-\_ ible aspects of life, the worlds that lie beneath what we see with the naked human eye, are of far greater import.

There is a wonderful story from the Book to see some loving behavior perhaps, to of the Hebrews (11:27) where it says of Moses in a flash of inspired insight: "By faith he left Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who

He endured all manner of hardship because he was able to see "Him who is unseen." He saw what was invisible and unseeable. What a figure of speech we ones such as hate or indifference. have here—an oxymoron, or paradox. Yet we know what this means, because in our imaginations we can see the invisible, and this seeing the invisible is correlated

shows and testifies to is the reality of the world we cannot see but which is all around, and to which all myths and ancient scriptures testify in one way or another. In other words, the invisible world we might call Spirit; and this spiritual world, as Moses demonstrates, is far more powerful than the material world that we actually and directly perceive.

A modern spiritual master, Teilhard de Krishna's Holy Beings Chardin expressed it this way: "Matter is spirit moving slowly enough to be seen." Slowly enough? Why? Because Spirit is much, much faster! So fast, in fact, as to be invisible. This is atomic motion; it is so fast and so small that we cannot see it, but it is the foundation of reality.

### 72,000 Angel Warriors Ready!

In the Christian tradition, we have one important, comparable situation: In the Garden of Gethsemane, we learn (Matthew 26:53) that after Jesus orders his disciples to put their swords back into their scabbards, he says, "Or do you think that I cannot appeal to My Father, and He will at once put at My disposal more than twelve legions of angels?" A legion equaled 6,000 troops, so we are talking here of summoning some 72,000 angelic warriors! He is not alone in that desolate garden—all those holy beings are instantly available and around him.

The importance of the invisible in our lives cannot be overstated, particularly in a culture like ours, which has become so materialistic and anti-spiritual.

Just to make this point, we need to be clear that what is really important to us in our lives is really invisible: When we talk of "love" or "justice" or "freedom" or "democracy," or indeed any other value or abstraction that we may be prepared even to die for, then we are talking about the invisible.

### **Seeing Love?**

We don't see love in its essence. But when somebody loves somebody else, the matter of their body moves slowly enough for us

which we say, "Ah, that's love." Or perhaps more accurately, "That's a loving behavior."

But the essence of love always remains invisible to us. And I say this because, of course, these invisible values dictate our behaviors, our actions, in the visible world of matter—be they positive, invisible values such as love or freedom, or negative

Carl Jung, the founder of analytical psychology, asked the fundamental question: "The decisive question for man is: Is he related to something infinite or not?" Moses with faith: Beyond the evidences of our and Christ, as two prophets, assure us that senses, we know some deeper truth, and we are. Christ establishes this in a particuthis truth gives us an unstoppable power larly dramatic way, mocking—effectively—the blindness of his own apostles who What to my mind this story so vividly trust more to their own swords than to Christ's unlimited power. We are reminded of the most often quoted line: "And He said to them, 'Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, "Move from here to there," and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you." (Matthew 17:20)

There is a parallel story in the Indian myths that is worth dwelling on for a brief moment, as it helps us see the Christian and Jewish tales in a refreshed light. In Donald A. Mackenzie's fascinating book "Indian Myth and Legend," there is a wonderful and highly expressive scene where the god Krishna in mortal form, and alone, advises the weak and old maharajah to discipline and restrain his ambitious and evil son, Duryodhana, before it is too late.

Duryodhana is planning—against all sound counsel—to defraud his cousins, the Pandavas, of their rightful inheritance to the kingdom. As Krishna is giving his counsel, Duryodhana is in a rage, waiting outside with three accomplices, plotting to imprison Krishna and take him captive; thereby, they reason, weakening the Pandavas.

But Krishna knows their thoughts and their plotting, and says these inspired words in front of Duryodhana's father when Duryodhana is recalled into the room: "Ah! Thou of little understanding, is it thy desire to take me captive? Know now that I am not alone here, for all the gods and holy beings are with me."

Then, in dramatic fashion, in a divine transfiguration, he reveals his true nature and becomes a tongue of flame, fire issuing from his mouth and eyes and ears; sparks break from his skin, which is as radiant as the sun, and around him gods and divine beings appear.

Like the Pharisees and Romans, Duryodhana cannot see all the holy beings, cannot recognize the invisible power of the prophet standing before him, and so he blindly pursues his ignorant path, grasp-

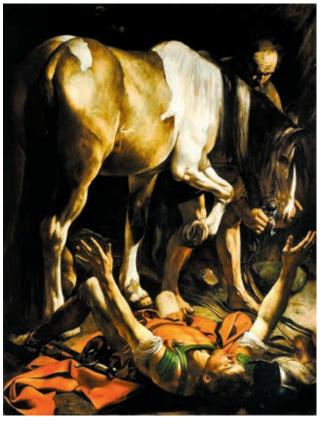




The god Sri Krishna as mentioned in Hindu mythology, on the wall of Jagannath Temple in Hyderabad,

ing for power and success, and betraying even his own family as he perceives them standing in his way. Ultimately, this process leads to total self-destruction. We see the same with those persecutors in the Christian stories: Herod, Pilate, and Judas are all destroyed by their blindness.

We might see one further extension of this analogy—and perhaps a reversal of it—in the tale of St. Paul, the agent charged with hunting down the apostles. Paul is physically blinded by God, but he ultimately comes to see the truth of Christ despite the lack of his material sight. Hence his sight is restored to him, and so much

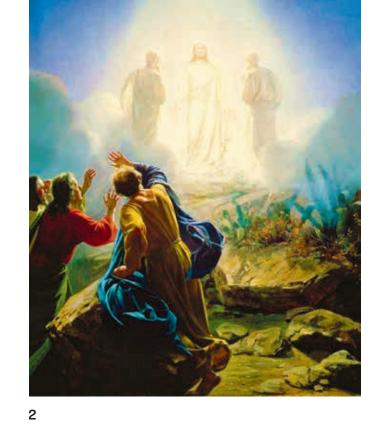


13th apostle. Paul was a government man, a man with no spiritual dimension to his life whatsoever, a materialist who did bad things for payday. But by being blinded and therefore forced to examine the immaterial world, or inner world perhaps, he becomes spiritually enlightened and is able to hear God's message. The importance of trusting in the invisible to find our way through life could not be clearer.

Again, there is parity with the Indian legends. Krishna denounces those "persons of demoniac natures ... devoid of purity, good conduct, and truth" and who claim that the "universe is void of truth, of guiding principles and of ruler." These people, according to Krishna, are those "born for the destruction of the universe."

It's pretty stark stuff, and liberal humanism hates it and always wants to water it down. But the scriptures warn us that denying the spiritual world and its claim on us have very serious consequences.

There is a very direct connection, it seems, between denying spiritual realities and being, for want of a better word, evil. Evil, as a concept, is highly unpalatable to



zealots, extremists, terrorists. As psy-

choanalyst James Hollis observed: "The

chief project of modernism, that move-

ment of literature, art, music, psychology,

philosophy, and troubled sensibility over

the last two hundred years, was to witness

the eroded authority of such institutions

[of church, government, and family] and

to dismantle their claims to govern the

The Enlightenment of the 18th century

enthroned reason (and as a consequence

science, its doting daughter) as the su-

preme authority and arbiter of our lives,

and this despite the fact that after 200

years of genuflecting to it, we find it pro-

vides no basis on which to live the "good"

life. Indeed, its abject failure to provide a

convincing moral or ethical foundation for

actually living a fulfilling life is palpable.

As English writer Peter Stanford observed,

"We imagine that we are so much cleverer

than past ages, that their wisdom can be

surpassed by our own, passed through the

modern soul."

filter of science and logic and reason. The results are misleading and dispiriting."

### The Unnameable Mystery

The true relationship between reason and the spirit is what Thomas Aquinas knew long ago in the 13th century: "Reason gets us to where unnameable mystery begins." What a marvelous expression: "the unnameable mystery." That points to where we become aware of the invisible, of the gods and holy beings around us, of ity and finally participate in the goodness miracles, of the cosmos working in almost inexpressible ways to bring about good. And this is one of the reasons we need to All quotes are from the New American believe in the spiritual world, because, to

return to Jung again, "When people feel that they are living the symbolic life, that James Sale is an English businessman they are actors in the divine drama, that gives the only meaning to human life; everything else is banal and you can dismiss author of over 40 books on management it. A career, producing children, all are and education from major international maya [illusion] compared with that one publishers including Macmillan, Pearson, thing, that your life is meaningful."

empty, and we fall prey to all forms of narcissism, addiction, emotional and physical pathologies—pathologies that have a

The scriptures warn us that denying the spiritual world and its claim on us have very serious consequences.

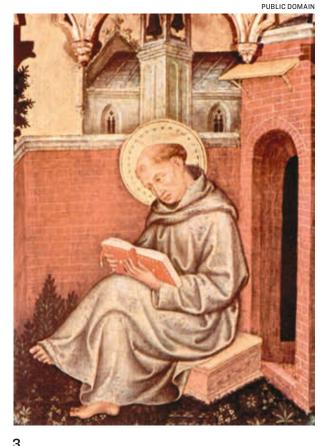
Jesus did not need his disciples to defend him; he had an army of angels at his disposal. "Taking of Christ With the Malchus Episode, circa 1620, by Gérard Douffet, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.

### (Below)

St. Paul at the moment he is blinded by God. "Conversion on the Way to Damascus," 1601, by Caravaggio. Oil on canvas Saint Mary of the People,

Jesus was transfigured in a blinding light; a Hindu myth tells of a similar transfiguration. "Transfiguration of Jesus" by Carl Bloch.

St. Thomas Aquinas, circa 1410-1412, by Gentile da Fabriano. From the Valle Romita Polyptych. Pinacoteca di Brera in Milan, Italy.



Finally, then, James Hollis again: "Symbol and metaphor are our greatest gifts, for they make culture and spirituality possible. The animal lives the mystery; the human experiences it as mystery." Denying the mystery, denying the holy ones, is to degrade us; we become like the animals

spiritual origin.

that simply live and die. Our real destiny is quite the opposite: to one day become one with the holy beings that surround divinof the whole cosmos.

Standard version of the Bible.

whose company, Motivational Maps Ltd., operates in 14 countries. He is the and Routledge. As a poet, he won first prize Without this meaningfulness our lives in The Society of Classical Poets' 2017 competition and spoke in June 2019 at the group's first symposium held at New York's



# The Rapturous Union of Heart and Mind

### **ERIC BESS**

Art has an incredible ability to point to what can't be seen so that we may ask "What does this mean for me and for everyone who sees it?" "How has it influenced the past and how might it influence the future?" "What does it suggest about the human experience?" These are some *of the questions we explore in our series* Reaching Within: What Traditional Art Offers the Heart.

That does it mean to authentically love? The term "love" is often thrown at any object that provides us the slightest pleasure. We love our spouse, our children, our favorite movie and song, and even the latest chicken sandwich. We certainly don't mean the same thing in all cases. Maybe French painter William Bouguereau can offer us insight into what it means to love, with his painting "The Rapture of Psyche."

Let's first take a look at the myth of Cupid and Psyche, thought to be initially recorded by the Hellenistic philosopher Apuleius, who lived in North Africa.

### Psyche's Beauty and Venus's Jealousy

The story begins with the introduction of a king and his three daughters. The youngest daughter is named Psyche (Soul). The two older daughters marry princes, but Psyche's beauty is too intimidating for most suitors. People gather to watch the girl whenever she walks through the city and write hymns glorifying her beauty. Some even compare her to the goddess of beauty, Venus.

This comparison angers Venus, and so she calls for her son Cupid (Love) to use his arrows of love to make Psyche fall in love with a hideous beast. Then people will again praise Venus instead of Psyche.

Cupid agrees and first makes himself invisible before he visits the sleeping Psyche. When he touches her heart with his arrow, she suddenly opens her eyes, startling him and causing him to accidentally stick himself with his own arrow. Struck by Psyche's beauty, Cupic gives Psyche an antidote to the curse before returning to heaven.

Venus realizes that Psyche has escaped the curse and decides that she herself will place the curse on Psyche. Venus makes sure that no suitors will come to visit Psyche, so Psyche's family takes her to an oracle that states:

"The princess Psyche shall never wed a mortal. She shall be given to one who waits for her on yonder mountain; he overcomes gods and men."

### The Love of Cupid

Psyche agrees to her fate and begs her parents to give her to the one waiting on the mountain so that she may appease Venus. The one waiting is assumed to be a monster. Psyche is indeed taken to the mountain, but there the West Wind carries her to a beautiful, secret valley, with a palace greater than her father's.

There, a voice calls out to her: "All that you see is yours, gentle high princess ... Fear nothing; only command us, for we are here to serve you."

Psyche realizes that her husband may not be a monster, but a beneficent power with the voice of a god. Psyche requests to see her suitor's face but is denied. The voice replies:

"Never doubt me, dearest Psyche ... Perhaps you would fear if you saw me, and love is all I ask. There is a necessity that keeps me hidden now. Only believe."

### **Cupid Departs**

Psyche is content for many days until she begins to miss her family. She asks her husband to see them, and he asks the West Wind to bring some of her family members to see her. When her two sisters arrive, they become envious of the riches Psyche enjoys. Her sisters remind her that she has married a monster and that she should kill him with a dagger as he sleeps at night so that they can all enjoy the riches.

Psyche is horrified, yet she follows her sisters' plan. She takes a dagger and lantern and waits for her husband to fall asleep. When he is asleep, she puts the lantern up to his face, only to see the



"The Rapture of Psyche," 1895, by William-Adolphe Bouguereau. Oil on canvas; 82 1/4 inches by

When love is

absent, so is

beauty, and then

sorrow and sad-

beauty of a god. She is so overwhelmed with worshipful feelings that she leans in to look closer, dropping oil from her lamp onto Cupid. He awakens and says in grief, "O doubting Psyche," before fly-

Psyche, filled with sorrow, tries to follow Cupid but is unable to. When she looks around, all of the beauty of her garden and palace has disappeared. She sadly leaves in search of Cupid.

### The Search for Love

Psyche is encouraged by Ceres, goddess of the harvest, to go to Venus and request forgiveness. Psyche goes to the temple of Venus, offers a prayer, and Venus—still jealous of Psyche's beauty—produc-

es a series of impossible tasks for her to complete in order to see Cupid again. These tasks include separating heaps of grain, beans, and lentils in one night, obtaining golden locks from a flock of fierce sheep, and obtaining some beauty from Proserpine, the wife

of Pluto, god of the underworld. Psyche receives help to accomplish each of these tasks. Ants help her organize the grain, beans, and lentils. Water nymphs tell her the secrets of obtaining the locks from the sheep, and a voice provides her the secrets of visiting the

underworld and returning to earth

In her last trial, however, the voice also tells Psyche to not look at the beauty in a box provided by Proserpine lest Psyche lose her life. Unable to avoid the temptation, Psyche does look and is overcome by the spell. She falls into a deep sleep. Cupid, having recovered from his

wounds, comes to Psyche's rescue and

revives her. The god flies to heaven, tells their story, and makes a case to the gods to have Psyche immortalized. Jupiter calms Venus with kind words, and when she remembers that anger hurts her own beauty, she immediately smiles again. Psyche is taken into the heavens, drinks the nectar of the gods, and becomes divine. She and Cupid are never

### **Interpreting the Allegory**

parted again.

For me, the myth of Cupid and Psyche isn't a romantic love story. Instead, it reveals some very interesting aspects of the relationship between the beauty of our minds and the love of our hearts. It is necessary to remember that Psyche

represents the human soul, mind, or spirit, and Cupid represents love. Let's take a close look at several aspects

of the story. First, Cupid remains hidden from Psyche. Psyche must trust Cupid despite not

knowing who or what he is. Maybe this is true for our minds as well. It is not that we must know love absolutely; in fact, perhaps we can't know love absolutely. Perhaps, instead, it's just that we need to foster a curiosity about what love is and from whence it comes so that we remain open to it and only then,

in time, will it reveal itself to us. Second, Psyche's beauty causes Cupid to undo the curse Venus placed on Psyche—the curse in which Venus hopes Psyche will fall in love a hideous beast. Is it that the beauty of our minds has the potential to undo our unhealthy desires? Philosophically, the mind is associated with our ability to reason and be rational, that is, to calculate and measure our

actions. It would seem that our ability to calculate and measure our actions possesses a beauty that can undo the potential desire for the hideous.

Also, the oracle describes Cupid as one who "overcomes gods and men." If Cupid is a representation of love, then it is love that overcomes or has power over gods and men. That is, love is a force so powerful that even the gods are overcome by it and are unable to resist it. Thus is the power of love.

Next, Psyche is rewarded when she accepts her fate and punished when she resists it. Her fate is the union with love. When she resists her fate—when she resists her inevitable union with love she suffers as a consequence. She suffers when she listens to her sisters and tries to bring death to Cupid, and she suffers when she looks at the beauty in Proserpine's box despite being instructed not to look.

Psyche, however, is helped through her trials when she pursues love. It's not that the trials disappear; it's that she's able to overcome them because supernatural forces are helping her. Is this the power of being "overcome" by love?

Our minds can calculate and measure our actions and undo the potential desire for the hideous. Unfortunately, our minds can also rationalize to an extreme, an extreme in which we excommunicate love from our lives and forget to consider and care for those around us. In the story, the absence of Cupid results in the absence of beauty as well. Love and beauty are cohorts: They mutually share space and time. When love is absent, so is beauty, and then sorrow and sadness prevail.

Finally, Psyche ascends to the heavens and becomes immortal in her union with Cupid. Love saves her from herself and forgives her mistakes, and she is allowed to ascend into the rapture of the immortal heavens because of her pursuit and sacrifice for love. The union between the beauty of the mind and the love of the heart may result in a heavenly rapture that transcends this earth.

Perhaps this is why Plato says: "Thereore I say Love is the most ancient of the gods, the most honored, and the most powerful in helping men gain virtue and

### Bouguereau and 'The Rapture of Psyche'

Bouguereau presented the moment in which Cupid awakens Psyche and takes her into the heavens. This is her ascent to the divine. The two figures are diagonally composed as moving from bottom left to top right of the picture plane, and the flow of the drapery and hair helps

reinforce this movement. The soft yellows and pastel violets provide a complementary contrast that is not jarring but pleasing to the eye. An atmospheric perspective keeps the background elements in the distance so that they play a supporting role to the ascent of the two figures. Everything is organized and composed with a soft but

endearing beauty. What's most interesting to me, however, is the body language of the two figures. Psyche, with her eyes closed and gently smiling, holds onto herself: She embraces her heart and chest as she experiences the rapture of her ascent. Cupid looks to the heavens and holds on to Psyche.

Is it that our minds are close to the divine only when we allow love to carry us to it? Should we, with our minds, embrace our hearts so that our hearts will learn to embrace others? Is it only possible to realize our full potential when we

cultivate both our hearts and minds? Here, I am reminded to caution myself against the hideous and keep love close, to stay focused and surefooted in love despite my hardships, and to trust that the power of love will make me acceptable to the heavens. I am reminded to avoid being too rational or too emotional and let my heart and mind harmonize; I am reminded to let love carry me forth in this journey called life.

Eric Bess is a practicing representational artist. He is currently a doctoral student at the Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts (IDSVA).



THE EPOCH TIMES Week 9, 2020

Mark Jackson grew up in Spring Valley, N.Y., where he attended a Waldorf school. At Williams College, his professors all suggested he write prosionally. He acted professionally for 20 years instead. Now he writes professionally about acting. In the movies.

'Buffaloed' Director

Tanya Wexler

Starring Zoey Deutch, Jai Courtney, Judy Greer, Jermaine Fowler. Noah Reid, Lorrie Odom, Raymond Ablack

Rated

**Running Time Release Date** 

 $\star\star\star\star\star$ 

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF MAGNOLIA PICTURES



### **MARK JACKSON**



ere's a hilarious little movie starring Zoey Deutch that makes itself quite useful as a whistleblower on the state of America's debt-collecting infestation. Why would that topic be funny? Remember "Back to the Future's" Marty McFly, played by Michael J. Fox? Remember his mom, Lorraine, played by Lea Thompson, and how funny she was?

Well, it was only a matter of time before Lea Thompson's actual kid, Zoey Deutch, broke away from the young Hollywood ingénue pack, and though she's got model looks—guess what her acting power alley is? That's right—she's a comedienne par excellence, just like mom.

Hollywood hadn't really figured out what to do with Deutch up until her last movie, "Zombieland: Double Tap," where she played a pink-clad ditz, running around slightly unhinged, looking way too stupid to survive a zombie onslaught—and yet survive she did. And how.

And so it would appear that Zoey Deutch's archetype (and the showbiz product she sells best), for which she will most likely henceforth be known, is as an annoying, squeaky-voiced, hyper-ambitious, scrappy, eternally optimistic and enthusiastic, cutthroat survivor, who somehow manages on top of all that to be extremely charming and watchable. That's some serious charisma.

### She's Got a Plan

Zoey Deutch stars as Peg Dahl, a girl growing up poor in South Buffalo, New York, who's feeling the classic, small-town claustrophobia of the mega-talented, weary of wearing her brother's hand-me-downs, and who's got enough ambition and entrepreneurial talent to eventually watch the city of Buffalo dwindle in her rearview mirror.

The only problem is that her supershrewd head for business is connected to a heart sorely lacking a sense of right and wrong. Her mother (Judy Greer) later laments that she did the best job she could to raise her daughter with a sense of morality.

Anyway, from a young age, Peg is determined to study business at an Ivy League institution of higher learning, and then take on Wall Street and be the next Warren Buffett.

When that fateful day arrives that she's accepted to her school of choice and realizes she can't pay for it, she starts up a flurry of hustling: selling cigarettes in school, and buffalo wings and counterfeit tickets at Buffalo Bills games, out on the sidewalk.

Then one day she gets a phone call from a debt collector. He's not too good at his job, and with her business sense being like a Spidey sense, or X-ray vision, she realizes that she could do this guy's job much better than he can.

And similar to real-life wannabe lawyer Molly Bloom discovering her own blistering talent for running illegal poker games, Peg swan dives into one of America's biggest, unregulated, con games—debt collection. Also like Bloom, Peg eventually



Zoey Deutch stars as a talented scam artist trying to escape the city of Buffalo, N.Y., in "Buffaloed."

Judy Greer plays Peg Dahl's mother, who tried to bring her daughter up right.





(Top) Talk about a good attitude! Nothing dampens the spirits of Peg Dahl (Zoey Deutch), here getting a mug shot, in "Buffaloed."

(Right) Peg Dahl (Zoey Deutch) learns the debtcollecting ropes from her boss (Jai Courtney).



goes to jail, but does she grow a conscience in the slammer? Nooo. She gets shrewder.

### **Bad Boss**

One of the reasons the movie is set in Buffalo is because that particular seedy city happens to be a sort of ground zero for the debt-collecting industry. One of the reaing judge at Peg's hearing bequeaths unto sons the movie is set in Buffalo is because her the ultimate Buffalo insider tip: He gets that particular seedy city happens to be a his wings from the one place but his blue sort of ground zero for the debt-collecting cheese dip from the other place.

Peg learns the ropes of the collecting game from her new boss, a small-time debt-collecting overlord named Wizz (Jai Courtney). In the tradition of 1992's "Glengarry Glen Ross," 1995's "Casino," 2015's "The Big Short," and 2019's "The Laundromat," Peg takes us on an

educational journey of how the money flows throughout the various con games and scams. In this particular case, it's the cons specific to the debt-collecting world, and, as ever, your jaw will drop at what the con-men vermin in our fine nation get up to in the absence of government oversight. When the cat's away...

Also like Molly Bloom, Peg eventually strikes out on her own, putting together conceived, fun, funny, her own talented crew of marginal types who share a pronounced talent for selling: namely, a Jehovah's Witnesses-type proselytizer, a phone-sex worker of a certain age, and an Indian-American utilizing a florid, Abu-from-the-"Simpsons" Indian accent to promote the restaurant he works for. That is, until she recognizes him as having attended her high school, and he's all of a sudden, like, "Oh, snap, you're what'shis-name's older sister...'

This naturally all leads to a showdown with former boss Wizz, and of course, we want to see her stick it to him. The problem is, we root for her because while she's bad-he's worse.

Allow me a quick tangent: We're getting a fair amount of this lately. Harley Quinn, for example, is a bad girl, but her adversary is so much worse that we want her to succeed in beating him to death with a baseball bat. This has got to be doing something bad to us, down there, in our collective subconsciousness. Also, like Harley Quinn, Peg is so cute and pretty and peppy and energetic, we allow ourselves to get charmed to death. Like, to the death (or maybe more like the major illness) of our souls. Sigh.

### Buffaloed

The cast all seem to have nailed the Buffalo accent, and it's likely that the good people of Buffalo will enjoy all the local references; one can assume the research was thorough. the state of your student loan.

A running gag is the local pride regarding that particular chicken dish for which Buffalo is known for the length and breadth of our great nation, and there are two main competing establishments that apparently divide Buffalo-ans in terms of their wings proclivities. Hilariously, the presid-

Because it's essentially a wee gangster tale, it's got some little gangster instances, like our Peg flying into a rage, running across town after Wizz, brandishing a goldplated .44 magnum, but generally speaking, this is an extremely satisfying American comedy. The interactions between Deutch, Judy Greer, and Jermaine Fowler are particularly enjoyable. Fowler plays a prosecutor who really should be looking to arrest Peg, but he can't help becoming twitterpated due to her spunky cuteness.

### The movie itself is welland very informative, regarding the shadowy world of debt collecting.

As mentioned, Deutch is a comedic talent to reckon with; she fires on all comedy cylinders, shifting gears and tactics like a Formula One driver. She's the driving force here, to continue the metaphor. The movie itself is well-conceived, fun, funny, and very informative, regarding the shadowy world of debt collecting.

"Buffaloed," the title, describes two things: 1) the story's setting, and 2) bullying. Debt collectors buffalo Americans not just in Buffalo, but as we all well know, from coast to coast.

When I've heard about various and sundry friends' debt loads, and imagine those albatross-like, bullying phone calls from debt collectors—I've found myself feeling fear and shame. Not anymore. Those selfrighteous-sounding debt-collecting jackals would sell their own children. Much of what's depicted in this movie is, or should be, illegal. "Buffaloed" does a fine public service of shining a spotlight on this particular American human-roach infestation. Go and laugh and be simultaneously informed about what the real deal is with

CAROL ROSEGO

THEATER REVIEW

## Finding That **Special Person**

**JUDD HOLLANDER** 

NEW YORK— Can two people from completely different worlds find common ground? This is the underlying idea of Cary Gitter's touching romantic comedy "The Sabbath Girl." Presented by the Penguin Rep Theatre, the work is now having its New York premiere.

Thirty-year-old Italian-American Angie (Lauren Annunziata) is on top of her game professionally. She's just moved into a new apartment on New York City's Upper West Side—her first place without roommates-and is the head curator of a prestigious art gallery in Chelsea, a gallery that specializes in showcasing cutting-edge artists.

**Playwright Gitter** has brought a sweet, old-fashioned sensibility to this tale about finding the right person to share your life.

Angie's personal life is another story. Her nights consist of coming home, checking her emails, eating a bowl of cornflakes, and going to bed. Her past dating experiences have not ended well, and she's not anxious to put herself out there again.

The good-natured and sincere concern from her beloved

grandmother, Sophia (Angelina Fiordellisi), prods Angie to find the perfect soulmate, such as Sophia herself did with her late

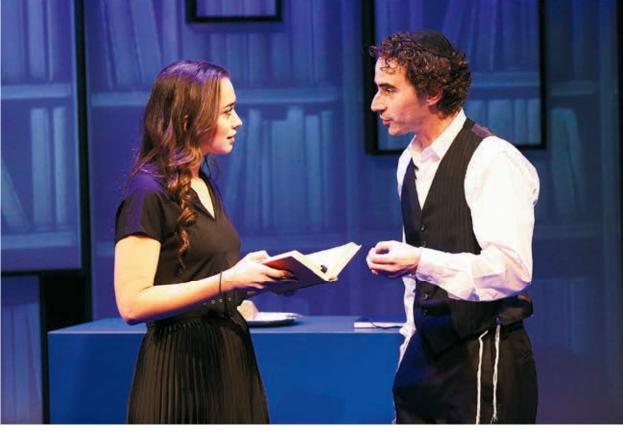
One summer Friday night, shortly after she's moved in, Angie hears a knock on her door and meets her neighbor Seth (Jeremy Rishe). Seth, who runs a knish shop on the Lower East Side, is an Orthodox Jew and thus not permitted to do any type of work on the Sabbath.

The man who used to live in Angie's apartment was Seth's Shabbos goy, a non-Jew who helps out with any needed chores (such as turning on the air conditioning) during this period. After a bit of awkwardness between the two, until Seth fully explains the situation, Angie agrees to take on this role.

That there is an attraction between Angie and Seth is obvious from the moment the two first lock eyes. They do that sort of awkward dance as they try to get to know each other.

Complicating matters is that Seth is trying to get his life back on track after a painful divorce; Angie is preoccupied with trying to convince Blake (Ty Molbak), a hot new artist, to present his first New York show in her gallery. The fact that there's also a growing personal connection between Blake and Angie gives both incentives to seal the deal.

Seth's growing friendship with Angie puts him at odds with his older, married sister Rachel (Lauren Singerman), who runs the knish shop with him. Rachel is trying to match Seth up with eligible women from their own



community, which Seth has left temporarily, Rachel hopes—in the wake of his divorce.

Playwright Gitter has brought a sweet, old-fashioned sensibility to this tale about finding the right person to share your life. As Sophia points out, everyone needs a partner with whom they can dance through life. She also points out that no relationship is perfect, but the chance to be with that special someone is infinitely preferable to sitting on the sidelines and listening to music alone.

The text takes great care to explain the Jewish Orthodox lifestyle (as opposed to Hasidic or ultra-Orthodox Judaism), while never depicting it in a condescending manner. Rachel's comments to Angie on the subject show her to be a woman proud of the choices she's made and her people's history. (It would have been nice for the program notes to include a glossary of unfamiliar terms.)

Annunziata and Rishe have great chemistry. They each believably bring forth Angie and Seth's initial

Italian-American Angie (Lauren Annunziata) meets her Jewish neighbor Seth (Jeremy Rishe), in "The Sabbath Girl."

'The Sabbath Girl

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**Running Time** 

1 hour, 20 minutes (no intermission)

Closes March 8

nervousness when in the presence of the other, while their characters stay true to their own values.

Fiordellisi makes a wonderful Sophia. Almost a second mother to Angie, the character takes great joy in dispensing wisdom that comes from experience.

Molbak does nice work as Blake, who's a bit of a caricature in the self-important-artist mold, but is a sensible sort deep down.

Joe Brancato's direction is very strong; he adroitly mixes the comic, dramatic, and romantic elements in the story. This is especially true in Angie and Seth's first meetings. The costumes by Gregory Gale are very good, particularly those of Rachel and Seth.

A heartfelt tale about trying to find that person you are meant to be with, "The Sabbath Girl" perfectly delivers its message on every level.

Judd Hollander is a reviewer for Stagebuzz.com and a member of the Drama Desk and the Outer Critics Circle.





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