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Running

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Running

Abstract

In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay's first paragraph.

"The diner in which they sat was hot and sticky on this late July morning. Hot and sticky, but still very crowded. After the short wait for a table, the couple sat down in a nearby booth. The usually cold, red, leather cushions were now a hot seat-warm and sticky from the last customers. A frazzled waitress came by right away to take their drink orders."

Cover Page Footnote

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REBECCA GARTZ

RUNNING

The diner in which they sat was hot and sticky on this late July morning. Hot and sticky, but still very crowded. After the short wait for a table, the couple sat down in a nearby booth. The usually cold, red, leather cushions were now a hot seat—warm and sticky from the last customers. A frazzled waitress came by right away to take their drink orders.

“A large orange juice and a water, please. Lots of water,” Michelle said.

“Just a coffee,” Doug said.

“Coffee? How could you drink coffee on the hottest day of the year?”

“What was that?” Doug said as he took his eyes away from the children running through a sprinkler across the street from the diner.

“Never mind.”

The waitress set down their drinks. “What can I get you to eat?”

“We’ll both have the eggs over my hammy, one with white toast and one with wheat toast,” Michelle ordered for both of them.

“It’ll be right up,” the waitress said.

“So, seriously, Doug, we need to talk.”

Doug knew what was coming, and he was dreading having this conversation. It was about time he told her, though.

“I’m beginning to feel that you’re ashamed of me,” she continued. “Are you embarrassed to have me around your friends? Why don’t we ever hang out at your place? You’re almost 30 years old and you’re afraid of what your friends will think of me?”

“No, of course I’m not embarrassed by you. My friends love you.”

“I think you are.”

“No, I promise you, you’re great.” Doug looked around the diner for their waitress and flagged her down.

“Then, what’s the problem, Doug?”

“Could I get a refill please?” Doug patiently waited for their waitress to fill up his glass. He poured in some sugar and more cream than usual. He stirred it slowly. Michelle stared at him.

“Michelle, my friends love you. You have nothing to worry about with them.”

“Then why don’t you ever take me over to your place? I’m sick of spending all of our time together at my apartment.” Michelle set her arms on the table and leaned in to Doug for an answer.

“It’s not that simple.” Doug shifted in his seat. He glanced out the window again at the kids. He wished he could be running right now too. Michelle drummed her paint chipped nails on the table and looked at Doug with impatient eyes.

“This food seems to be taking a long time. Maybe I should go find the waitress,” Doug said.

“No, maybe you should give me an answer.”

Doug knew this day would come. It happened in all of his relationships. This

one was especially uncomfortable because he really liked Michelle.

“Dammit, Doug, I’m sick of these games. What is the problem with me?”

“It’s not you, it’s me.” As soon as he said that, Doug knew it was a bad idea. Could he get any more cliché?

Michelle started to get up to leave. “I’m not going to put up with this. ‘It’s not you, it’s me.’ Please, Doug, you can do a little better than that.” Michelle was not going to waste any more time on a relationship that was not going anywhere.

Doug watched Michelle unstick her bare legs from the red leather and proceed to turn her back on him forever.

“I still live with my parents,” Doug shouted as she turned to leave. He immediately turned back to the kids running through the sprinkler.

“Oh.” Just then, the waitress came by with their food. Michelle sat down to eat.

EMILY CLAIRE RYAN

LET’S PRETEND

Get out the capes, the guns,
the tea set, the tanks;
Let’s pretend

We’ll slay the dragon, win the war,
Make the tea;
We’re going to pretend

Prepare the planes, the boats,
the uniforms, the troops;
Let’s pretend

We’ll be invincible, a force to be reckoned with,
Defeat all evil;
We’re going to pretend.

Lay down to sleep, eat and drink,
love, cry, be human;
We can’t pretend.