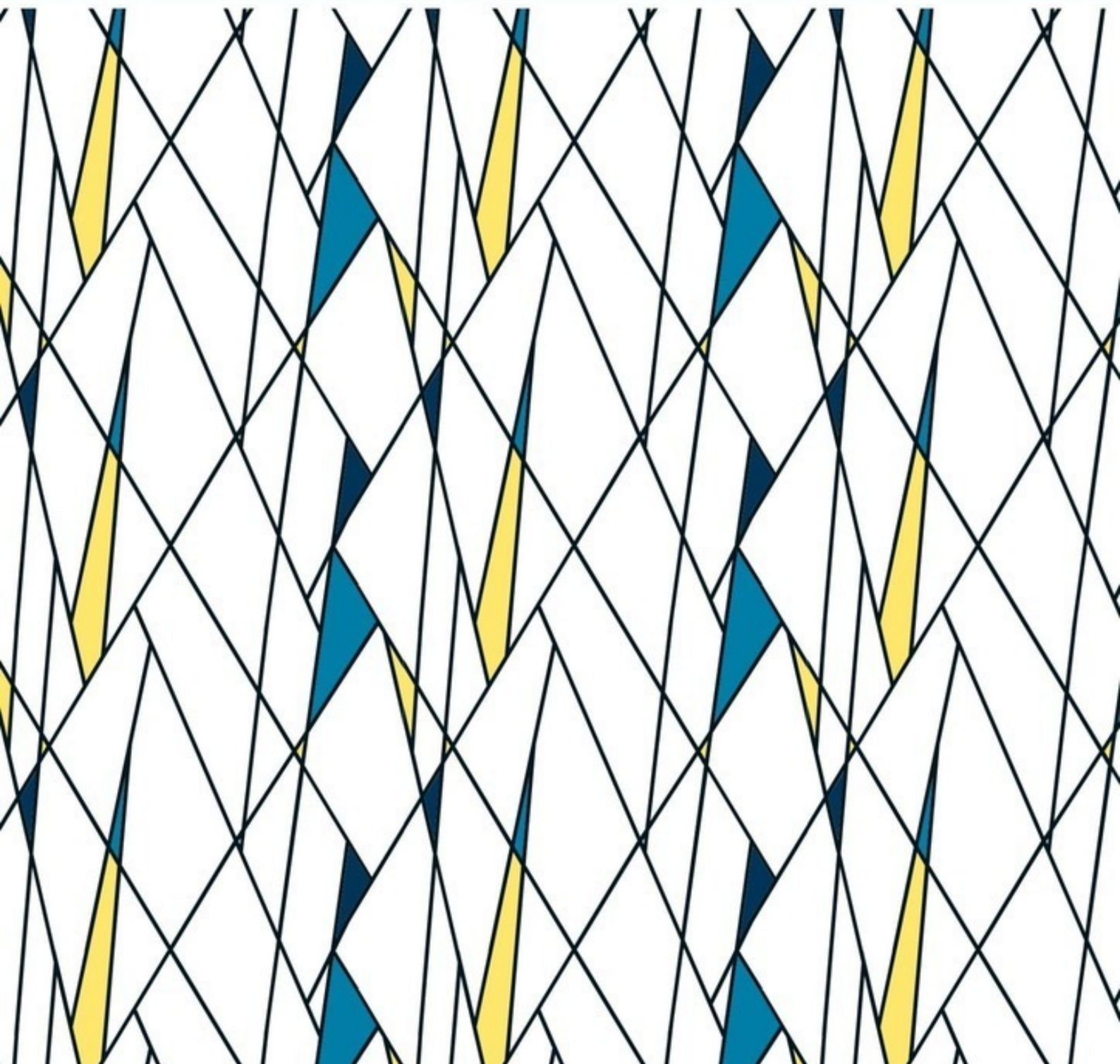


ANASTASIIA DENIZ MITCHELL

MY NY University



Anastasiia Deniz Mitchell

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«Издательские решения»

Mitchell A.

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Have you ever dreamt of love? I bet you have! You can meet your special someone practically everywhere: at school, at work, or at university! Curious? Then, plunge deeply into Ella's adventures full of vivid emotions, disappointments (and appointments!), joys and sorrows mixed with the girl's rage to live! That's where the main character finds her true love! Enjoy the book! Yours, Anastasiia Deniz Mitchell

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Anastasiia Deniz Mitchell

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Anastasiia Deniz Mitchell
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Author's Note

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Yours,

Anastasiia Deniz Mitchell

My story began when I was a third-year student. It was a long story. This is a story that has been continuing up to today. I must say that it has ended happily, and my memories are still alive. They're very close to me. So close that I recall every moment of the story with great passion. I've always loved him, and I love him now. I'm really grateful for all trials of life. I bless my stars for everything I have. And the more I bless, the more I see how happy I am.

Ella, 1 January 1996

New Subject

I was an English language student at New York University at the time. Well, I like English literature and the English language in general. That's why I chose this department. I like English, with its vocabulary, grammar and all the other hidden gems you can encounter during the process of your studying.

I came from London, the UK, to study in America on a grant. It was much credit for me, so I didn't miss a chance to visit a new country, with its rich culture and nice people.

Having studied for two years already, I thought I really deserved to cross the line. To be honest, the two years were rather exhausting than boring. But who isn't in the same situation as me now? I guess everybody is. I'd already had lots of subjects. PE, for example. It's both tiring and boring. I have never liked doing sports, but people say it's good for your health. I don't say «no».

I did well in almost all subjects. Except PE. So what? What should I do if I have never had any great athletic ability? Nevertheless, it doesn't mean I'm overweight. I've got a slim build despite everything.

Although I never liked new subjects. Actually, I'm always suspicious towards something new. And old-school one. Maybe.

And that term, which was the first one of the third year, we had a new subject – History of English Literature. Imagine – a young man would be the teacher! Well, young men rarely go in for teaching languages, especially literature. But why not? When I graduated, I'd love to be a teacher too.

I adore teaching. No matter whom you will teach, it'll always give you a lot of pleasure. And no matter where you will teach – at school or at university – you'll be satisfied with what you do.

Besides, I adore studying. I simply love reading and writing something down. Especially when this «something» is about some facts from real life.

Seniour students from our university said that the new teacher was thirty-five. He was said to be divorced. So, he'd be a good bait for young girls. Rubbish! Why should I believe it all? First, it'd seem forbidden for teachers to have an affair with their students. And second, it'd seem forbidden for students to have an affair with their teachers. And third, why gossip about the teacher?

I also heard that his wife wasn't a good one. So, that was the reason why he was divorced. Poor him! He must've deserved the best wife ever..!

Frankly speaking, there were lots of gossips like that. I believed no rumour. It's quite impolite of a student to be gossiping about a teacher, especially if he's a young professor.

Someone was saying he was a dangerous one. I wondered why. They said he gave the students no higher than a C. A C? Why such a low grade? Why flunk a student? And if this student tried hard? So hard that he or she would worth more than a thousand A's? I don't know. It would be rather cruel of him.

The First Class

For that reason, I didn't feel like going to attend History of English Literature. Actually, I'm a person who isn't comfortable with every single change. But you need to start somehow anyway!

That's how I started a new subject.

While I was thinking about his being «so dangerous,» he came in to the room. Well, we didn't have classes in large lecture rooms because there weren't many of us in the year. We were only twenty (such a small number for an American university!).

«Hello, everyone! I'm happy to see you here! So, let me introduce myself. My name is Andrew Ledger. But just call me Andrew. No need to call me «Mr Ledger' or something like that. Is that clear to you..? Good. Well, how're you? How's your life?»

While speaking, he was smiling! A «dangerous» one, yes. Maybe, he'll show that when it comes to our exam? Thank God, we have four months ahead of the thing.

His name was... Andrew? Not that Prince Andrew from my hometown? No way...

Of course, everyone said they were doing well. No one dared say they were in bad mood or something similar. No one wanted a C, D or E for the exam.

Then, he said: «Let's get to know each other. What I offer you is a kind of a game. You each write a short story about yourself and then give it to me. Please, don't write your name on your sheet of paper, so you'll do it anonymously. I read them aloud, and you'll try to guess whose story it is. And I'll check how well you know each other at the same time! Deal?»

Oh, my God! His speech was so friendly! And actually, I... liked him! No professor had been talking to the audience in such a friendly manner!

I wrote my story and handed it in to Andrew. Although it was rather strange to call him by name, not by saying «Mr [someone]».

«Well, I now have all your stories. The first one is: „I'm a clever girl, and I like studying a lot. I've read a thousand books, for me to be educated. I'll promise I'll be the best..!“ Hmm, I don't even know if I should read on. Maybe, you, guys, will try to guess who this year-mate is?»

Holy cow! He began reading my story first!

He continued: «So, who's this?»

And then... everyone in my group pointed at me. I was on a grant anyway.

Actually, there were only three of us who received grants. But I'd been trying to show I was the cleverest one. Why? I myself don't know that! A strange thing...

Andrew said: «Oh, who's that? I can see now. Well, what's your name?»

I introduced myself.

«Well, nice to meet you, Ella. Now, let's discuss your short story. Why did you wrote you are clever? Where's the proof?»

How funny!

I answered: «The books in my home are the proof.»

«And that's it?»

«Of course, not. There're many other proofs.»

«For example?»

He was definitely trolling me! Maybe, that's why he was a «dangerous» one! Did he like trolling every single student?

«For example, my hobbies. I like writing poetry.»

«What? Poetry? And can you read us some of your poems?»

I read two or three poems I wrote the day before the class.

I write poems every day. Not because of inspiration. Because of my DESIRE to write poems.
He said: «Well, not bad, not bad. And how often do you write poems?»

I told him (and everyone else) how often I did that.

«And do you know that writing poems doesn't make you famous?»

I said, «I don't want to become famous. I just do that because I like it.»

«Has everyone heard Ella? She writes poems because she likes it!»

He laughed.

Why did he?

So, I asked him why he did.

He said: «Those who don't laugh, Ella, life becomes a torture.»

«Why so? I think it doesn't.»

«But I think it does. Who else is of the same mind? Who else think life isn't a torture?»

It seemed like no one understood why the question was asked. It was History of English literature, not philosophy.

Finally, Edward said he thought so. Edward was our group- (and year-) mate. He always shoved his oar in a conversation when someone needed help. Say, he asked our professor, Mrs Jane, not to stop receiving the papers from Sally, our other groupmate, when the girl needed some more time to finish one. Whereas Mrs Jane was against prolonging the deadline. Anyway, Edward was a good guy. Although he rarely helped me.

Then, after Edward, everyone else in the group said they thought so too. Andrew laughed.

«Of course, you do! Me as well! And do you know why? I've just changed my mind!»

A good sense of humour. Just a perfect sense of humour. And it was after I thought he was a masochist or someone like this. A recluse, maybe. Or just a desperate person. Although he didn't seem one.

We all laughed too. Why cry because of that...?

Then, he asked the other students about their mini-biographies. Nothing special. Full stop.

«Which, hatch'd, would, as his kind, grow mischievous...»

«What do you know about this poem?»

On each desk, there was a handout with the following:

It must be by his death: and for my part,
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
But for the general. He would be crown'd:
How that might change his nature, there's the question.
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder;
And that craves wary walking. Crown him? – that; —
And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,
That at his will he may do danger with.
The abuse of greatness is, when it disjoins
Remorse from power: and, to speak truth of Caesar,
I have not known when his affections sway'd
More than his reason. But «tis a common proof,
That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;
But when he once attains the upmost round.
He then unto the ladder turns his back,
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
By which he did ascend. So Caesar may.

Then, lest he may, prevent. And, since the quarrel
Will bear no colour for the thing he is,
Fashion it thus; that what he is, augmented,
Would run to these and these extremities:
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg
Which, hatch'd, would, as his kind, grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell.

No one had ever heard about this poem.

«What? And you call yourself students of this department?» Andrew laughed.

«Hey, it's not that funny,» Edward said.

«But how come you study here and have never heard about this poem?»

«It's impossible to know everything, is it?»

«Ella,» Andrew said and looked at me, «what do you think about what Edward has just said?»

«Well, I think he's right.»

«Because?»

«Because it's not compulsory for us to know all these poems.»

«Hmm... Who told you so?»

I said nothing. We weren't obliged to know everything anyway.

«Well, if you have nothing to say, then let ME say this: you're students. And students are those who must learn everything new. Otherwise, how're you going to pass your exams if not by cramming?»

Indeed, how? We had nothing to do but to cram the things found out.

«Well,» I interfered, «I'll remember everything without cramming much.»

He laughed.

«How? A human's brain can accumulate things by remembering them. And if you remember hard, it'll be a big plus for you, Ella.»

«But I'll try hard without cramming!»

He didn't say anything.

«Anyway, at least, guess what the poem is about.»

«It's about some soldier,» said one of our groupmates.

«And how did you guess that?» Andrew asked.

«According to the words «Caesar', «power', «ambition', and «kill'.»

«Thank you very much, Simona! Any other suggestions?»

A few minutes passed. Still no answer.

«What? No suggestions? How come nobody wants to be a genius?» the teacher smiled. «Well, this poem – to be closer, a monologue – is taken from William Shakespeare's play called „The Tragedy of Julius Caesar“. Yeah! A tra-ge-dy! Don't you understand what it all means?»

Finally, Edward was so kind to answer:

«It means this Julius Caesar will die.»

«And that's it?» the teacher laughed again.

«I think yes.»

«No, it isn't! The Tragedy of Julius Caesar is a history play and tragedy. It is one of four plays written by Shakespeare based on true events from Roman history. Following Caesar's death, Rome is thrust into a period of civil war, and the republic the conspirators sought to preserve is lost forever. Although the play is named «Julius Caesar', Brutus, one of the conspirators against Caesar, speaks more than four times. By the way, the central psychological drama of the play focuses on Brutus' struggle between the conflicting demands of honour, patriotism, and friendship.»

My God, how did he know it all? How had he learnt it all by heart?

He was definitely a few sandwiches short of a picnic!

«What else do you know about the play?»

No answer. Nobody knew a thing.

Stella said, «There are a lot of characters.»

«Wow! See – Stella knows almost everything about Shakespearian plays!»

I thought, «I'll show you next time it's me that knows everything!»

It was in the nick of time.

Andrew said:

«So, your home assignment will be to find out more about this particular play. Post scriptum: I'm not asking you to find out everything about all his plays. Because it's near to impossible!»

Then, he laughed.

A weird man he was.

At home, I got down to my homework. Frankly speaking, it was really hard to find something about the play. No books about it in my room. So, I had to visit the library.

The librarian asked me what I was doing here. I was visiting it for the first time anyway. When she heard that I was looking for the information about the Shakespearean play, she literally laughed.

«I wonder if you study Shakespeare's biography and plays in the first year.»

I told that we did. She laughed again. And then, she rolled her eyes. I think she was asking herself what teacher sent me to the library to look for the information about Shakespeare.

But nonetheless, I liked her. She was a kind woman. She always helped me when needed.

When I was about to leave, she asked:

«I wonder if you should begin with studying the ancient English literature.»

Wait, the ancient English literature? Did it exist?

Anyway, where was the man's logic? We should've started with the old times, not with Shakespeare.

Something was wrong here.

I spent the whole night writing out all the information about the play called «Julius Caesar.» Actually, I'd found something interesting. I was going to read it out loud in front of Andrew the following day. And add colour to his weird principles.

«Well, okay. Who's ready to give the answer to my question? What do you know about the play?»

I raised my hand.

«Sorry, forgot your name.»

«Ella.»

«Ella... Hmm... Interesting...» he seemed to be lost in his thoughts.

Then, he woke up and said, «Tell us all you can say.»

I started: «In this play, there are many characters present: Julius Caesar himself as a main character, Octavius Caesar, Mark Antony and Lepidus. We also come across conspirators against Caesar: Marcus Brutus (Brutus), whose speech you gave us at the previous class, Cassius, Casca, Cinna, Metellus Cimber, Trebonius, Caius Ligarius, Tribunes, Flavius and Marullus. Moreover, we have some Roman Senate Senators, for instance, Cicero, Publius and Popilius Lena. As for the citizens...»

«Stop it! Stop it! Stop-p-p it-t-t!» he interrupted me.

«What's wrong with that?»

«Nothing. But: you mustn't read it. Tell us all about the play WITHOUT reading and even looking at your notes.»

I was struck. How come I couldn't read anything at all?

«Well, and how am I going to do it?»

«I don't know. Some-how, I'd say.»

I was struggling to remember at least a bit of what I wrote last night. But in vain.

«Hmmm... And what shall I do with you? Give you a „D“?»

«N-n-no. Why should you?»

«Because you've come to the class unprepared.»

«I am!»

«I don't see it, judging by your eyes trying to find something in the notebook. How many pages have you written?»

«Ten.»

«And how many have you learnt?»

I fell silent.

«I'll answer the question for you: you've learnt none. None! Can you imagine that?»

He was loose in the beans. High time to go to the asylum.

«So, for this class, Ella will get a „D“.» He said this in a sarcastic manner and then looked at me.

«Okay, if you aren't ready, continue reading.» He put the stress on the word «reading».

«Sure!» I said calmly.

I went on READING, as he told me to.

To be honest, I didn't remember where I stopped, so I started with what my eyes fell on:

The main source of the play is Thomas North's translation of Plutarch's «Lives». Shakespeare makes Caesar's triumph take place on the day of Luperalia instead of six months earlier. For dramatic effect, he makes the Capitol the venue of Caesar's death rather than the Curia Pompeia. Caesar's murder, the funeral, Antony's oration, the reading of the will and the arrival of Octavius all take place on the same day in the play. However, historically, the assassination took place on 15 March, the will was published on 18 March, the funeral was on 20 March, and Octavius arrived only in May. Shakespeare has Caesar say «Et tu, Brute?» («And you, Brutus?») before he dies. Shakespeare deviated from these historical facts to curtail time and compress the facts so that the play could be staged more easily. The tragic force is condensed into a few scenes for heightened effect. The play contains many anachronistic elements from the Elizabethan era. The characters mention objects such as doublets (large, heavy jackets), which did not exist in ancient Rome.

«Okay. Enough,» he said, smiling and showing his white teeth.

At that moment, I saw how handsome he was. His smile was magnificent. He'd got dark hair. And he wore quite a decent (!) suit. Of course, all our university teachers had to wear decent suits, not to get fired.

And, well, he had an aquiline nose. A Roman one. It meant he entered my life as a conqueror of my heart!

He did.

I don't know what happened. I started to like him. No, I even began to adore him. How strange of me! To like the crazy man who laughed at every single mistake of yours.

We listened to the other students. Then, Andrew said:

«Okay. The facts about William Shakespeare were a warm-up. What you'll have to do for the next time is to find information about the English literature before the Norman conquest. So, the Anglo-Saxon and the Anglo-Norman literature. Is the task clear?»

Frankly speaking, I didn't understand a word. What should we find? Which period was given..?

I had to do something about that.

«The Anglo-Saxons, whoever they were...»

«The Anglo-Saxons, whoever they were, did many things for us. Not for us as Americans, but for us as a whole population. That is, the humans. And what they did you'll find at home. Or at the library, as you like.»

Smart words.

So, I went to the library again. This time, I needed to find something about Old English. And, seemingly, English during and after the Norman conquest. Hmm...

What I found evaded any explanation. I understood practically nothing.

Well, at least, I had to write it all down:

Old English, or Anglo-Saxon, is the earliest recorded form of the English language, spoken in England and southern and eastern Scotland in the early Middle Ages. It was brought to Great Britain by Anglo-Saxon settlers in the mid-5th century, and the first Old English literary works date from the mid-7th century. After the Norman conquest of 1066, English was replaced, for a time, as the language of the upper classes by Anglo-Norman, a relative of French. This is regarded as marking the end of the Old English era, as during this period the English language was heavily influenced by Anglo-Norman, developing into a phase known now as Middle English...

Quite a long writing. It took good ten pages.

Wait, I'd found even more! (I had to make a brilliant display in front of our professor):

Englisc, from which the word English is derived, means 'pertaining to the Angles'. In Old English, this word was derived from Angles (one of the Germanic tribes who conquered parts of Great Britain in the 5th century). During the 9th century, all invading Germanic tribes were referred to as Englisc. It has been hypothesised that the Angles acquired their name because their land on the coast of Jutland (now mainland Denmark) resembled a fishhook <...>

The Old English period is followed by Middle English (12th to 15th century), Early Modern English and finally Modern English.

This took another twenty notebook pages.

Now, it was time to find something about Anglo-Norman. It was twice as hard.

After filling thirty-five pages in total with writing, I decided that I was ready for the class.

«Ignorance is bliss...»

Frankly speaking, I had some strange feeling. As if I was NERVOUS before my speech. But why? Why had I got this feeling? I don't know. But I didn't want to make a blooper in front of Andrew anyway.

So, I needed to prepare my speech in advance. Was it possible to learn it all by heart..? I didn't think so. There must've been another way to impress the teacher.

I started rehearsing my speech. It turned out long enough. I hoped he'd like it. The first thing I had to bear in mind is the keep-smiling art. The second thing was to keep my head while speaking.

I hope there's a piece of advice on how to pull oneself together at night. Wait, I also had to look well. Otherwise, he wouldn't look at me.

So, I'd been rehearsing until it was time to go to bed. To be honest, I'd done only Andrew's subject today. So what? I had some time to get ready for the other ones as well.

«So, who's going to speak first?» he asked.

«Me!» I shouted out.

«Hmm... Why so impatiently, Ella?»

«I've just been preparing for your subject...»

«What, for the whole night?» he interrupted me.

«Absolutely not!»

«Then, why're you so confident? Did you know that people behave like this only if they've been studying all night?»

«I didn't.»

I didn't want bad blood to appear between us. And I hoped it wouldn't.

«Ella, you're quite quick on the uptake!»

«Thank you!»

«It's not a compliment, you know!» he laughed.

«What's it, then?» I asked.

«It's nothing! Just nothing! By the way, do you know any synonyms for the word «nothing'?»

We all were taken aback. What synonyms? For what word..?

«No one knows a single synonym,» I said.

«Oh, and why? Aren't you the students of New York University?» he asked, pretending to be bewildered and raising his eyebrows.

«There's an expression. I hope you know at least that,» he turned to the blackboard and wrote the following:

Ignorance is bliss

«So, what's this and who said this?» he asked.

«It's a well-known proverb,» Edward said.

«How do you know that, Edward?» Andrew asked.

«Well...» Edward yawned, «I just heard something about it.»

«Ha-ha! And that's it?»

«Well, yeah...» Seemed like Edward was just waking up. Although the afternoon was well along. He hadn't slept for the whole night getting ready for Andrew's class, I supposed...

A lazy guy, yes.

«I think it's an idiom,» I quickly put in a word.

«Prove it, then.»

«Well...» Although I didn't want to be like Edwards who knew absolutely nothing. «It's been said that idioms and fixed expressions are an integral part of folklore...»

«Wait, what does folklore have to do about ignorance?»

I couldn't answer the question.

«It means you're ignorant, Ella,» Andrew said and smiled.

My God! Fair hair, blue eyes. And his smile... And his aquiline nose...

He always wore black jeans and a suitjacket, a white shirt under it. So he did now.

Of course, I was ignorant in comparison with him because he knew practically everything, and I knew practically nothing!

«Okay, now, let's pass over to your home assignment. What was it, Ella?»

I was really happy he'd been asking me more often than the others.

I was flattered. And I'd try even more, for Andrew to be impressed. No, for me to steal the scene for him! To be like the excellent brightness of the sun!

«Well, it was about the Anglo-Saxons,» I started. «They...»

«No, no, Ella!» He interrupted me. «I only asked you what the assignment was. Let's listen to somebody else. You've already shown your knowledge today.»

What? How come? I'd been preparing for his class for the whole night!

He smiled. First, he asked me anyway! It seems like he quickly changed his mind.

«Now, Catherine!» he called the girl.

Catherine's my best friend. I just call her Kate. It suits her better. Kate's a dark-haired girl. She's got big brown eyes. She's a Jew. Jews are so nice! They always treat you as if you belonged to them, even if you aren't! So, I treat her as if she belonged to the English too. We're finger and thumb. And we both studied in America, far away from our homelands, so we were in the same boat. In contrast to her, I have got blue eyes and fair hair.

Kate lived in the student hostel with me. Her room was just next to mine. Her mother is a Jew too, and her father is an American. They both lived in California at that time.

I've also got another best friend, Tülay. She's from Turkey, but she studies in London. We always write letters to one another: I send mine to the UK, and she gets hers to the USA. Tülay lives in London with her family, and she has decided it'd be better for her to stay there. And I'm a Bedouin. I like going from one place to another. That's why I'm here, in New York.

«So, Catherine?» Andrew asked, distracting me from my thoughts.

«Just call me Kate,» she said. «It'd be more convenient for you to call my name when you need.»

«Okay. Sure! So, Kate...» he paused, «tell us all about the Anglo-Saxons, the Anglo-Norman language and all that jazz.»

I felt sorry for Kate. How would she make her speech?

Fortunately, she did it very well.

After Kate's speech, Andrew turned to me:

«So, Ella, see how well-prepared she is? You should take an example by your friend!»

«Of course,» I said and then smiled too.

I wanted to watch his reaction. I smiled sincerely indeed. I'm not a bad girl. I don't have any false feelings. Frankly speaking, I don't even know how one can show false emotions. Your feelings and emotions must be truly sincere.

He stood, his mouth wide open. He didn't say anything.

After some time, he continued speaking:

«Okay, that's it. Now, let's pass over to our today's topic. And it's not William Shakespeare,» he looked at me cunningly. He looked at me again!

«What's it?» Sally asked.

«It's Beowulf,» Andrew smiled.

«What?» Edward's mouth formed an O.

«Beowulf, Edward,» Andrew said, his speech seasoned with irony.

«And who's Beowulf?» Edward seemed to have just woken up.

«Well, Edward doesn't even understand where he is,» the teacher laughed. «Do you, Edward?»

«No.»

«I see that too,» the man went on smiling.

«How about thinking big, Edward?»

«It can pay to, though,» the boy agreed.

«Okay, okay,» Andrew paused. «Let me put you in the picture about Beowulf. Beowulf is an Old English epic poem, one of the most important works of Old English literature. And did you know that the story is set in the 6th century? In other words, in the year dot.»

I thought about what he had just said. Was «the year dot» the same as the 6th century?

Then, I asked the question to Andrew. He laughed.

«I think so. And why are you asking, Ella?»

«Because I don't think it's the same thing,» I replied boldly.

«Nice try!» Andrew chuckled. «But don't you know that everything too old can be called happening in the year dot?» He looked at me.

Everybody stayed silent.

«Now, back to the topic,» the professor said. «In fact, Beowulf hits the spot just out of the gate. First – because it's written in Old English. Second – it's not just odds and ends but the blend of fictional, legendary and historic elements.»

I tried to listen attentively.

«And what about dialects of Old English? Do you know any?» he asked.

No answer.

«Okay. We'll speak about that later. Now, another question. Would you like to study Old English as a foreign language?»

I said:

«Yes, I'd love to. Studying and speaking another language is quite cool for a person.»

«Why do you think so?» he asked.

«Because any language develops our mind.»

«Indeed?» he smiled. «Okay. And what about speaking it? Do you find it hard? Does it give you any trouble to speak Old English?»

«I don't think so,» I answered. «By the way, Old English isn't that foreign, I suppose. First, it's the same English, but a bit old.»

«So what? And what'd be your further reasons?»

«I didn't finish yet. Second, if the language is old, it's a variation of our mother tongue. Am I not right?»

«Actually, it depends on the perspective.» Andrew paused. «Now, what I'd like to pinpoint your attention upon is the characters of the poem...»

And so, he spoke up to the end of the class.

I admired him. He was so smart and intelligent! How could one person know everything that he had put on the line during the class? He did it very well. He could hit the ground running in a few moments! He wasn't down-to-earth in any way. He acted his age. He always carried his point.

I wanted to be like him. But for me, it'd be quite a job. I couldn't have such a hard-nosed attitude as he had. Andrew was full of beans at each class! We had his classes twice a week, but still, the payoff was seen. At least for me.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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