

WHO IS YOU?  
IDENTIFYING “YOU” IN SECOND-PERSON NARRATIVES: A SYSTEMIC  
FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS ANALYSIS

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## ABSTRACT

In narratives, characters are introduced to readers through the use of textual clues left by the author. These clues, often in the form of pronouns, enable the reader to follow the various characters involved throughout the story. Pronouns have no lexical content and are used as referential devices, guiding the reader through the story and helping them recover the identity of the story's characters. However, some narratives employ a literary technique in which the story's protagonist is introduced by the pronoun "you" with no previous textual information given. As a result the pronoun "you" is assumed to be exophoric, pointing outside the text to the reader. Through the analysis of second-person short stories and novels this thesis will demonstrate how lexico-grammatical and discourse semantic features contribute to the interpretation of the pronoun "you" in second-person narratives functioning as either an exophoric or an endophoric expression.

You glance at the computer and notice the time. You've been reading papers much longer than you expected but decide to just read one more before finishing up for the day. You look down at the next paper and read the title, "Who is You?: Identifying "You" in Second-Person Narratives." You pick it up, leaf through the pages, and sigh.

Go to page 2.

## INTRODUCTION

The preface to this paper is a tongue-in-cheek example of the types of second-person narratives that are familiar to most readers. The first line is addressed to a “you” and narrates the activities the “you” is currently engaged in, but to whom is the “you” in the text referring? Is it referring to the person reading the paper or to another “you”, an intratextual “you” buried deep down in the paper; to be discovered by the reader at a later point? Upon seeing “you” as the protagonist of a story, an assumption is made by some readers that “you” is referring to her or him and their relationship with the text is that of a co-protagonist alongside the internal textual protagonist, but this is not always the case. There are many second-person narratives where “you” does not point outside of the text to the reader, but is contained wholly within the text.

The purpose of this paper is two-fold. The first goal is to discover if any semantic patterns exist which distinguish whether the protagonist “you” in second-person narratives is referring to the reader or to the internal textual protagonist of the story. To achieve this goal, the first chapter offers an overview of the history of Systemic Functional Linguistics as well as the frameworks of transitivity and the identification within the approach. The second chapter will then profile the second-person diegesis, or perspective, and how it differs from that of first-person and third-person perspectives. Following this chapter, a transitivity and identification analysis of four second-person narratives will be performed and the findings are detailed in the first part of chapter three. The second objective of the paper is to construct a character participant

model of second-person narratives. An explanation of the structure of a second-person narrative is not only about what it consists of but also how it relates to other diegesis, for this reason the second part of chapter three will introduce the model along with a demonstration of how it can be used to analyze narratives of other diegesis. The final chapter will summarize the work set forth in this thesis.

### **SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS**

Systemic functional linguistics theorizes that people use language to convey their perspective of the world around them. The theory was developed by M.A.K Halliday who was influenced by the linguists at the Prague School whose work aimed to explain the function of lexico-grammatical structures and later by Firth who theorized that language is a network in which lies a multitude of grammatical systems.

In his 1969 paper, "A Brief Sketch of Systemic Grammar," Halliday further expounds on this idea of a grammatical system. The paper outlines six points that compose the theory of grammar as a linguistic system: 1) grammar is a series of options. When speaking, a person unconsciously sorts through a number of options that are experientially or contextually viable. On the basis of the choices a speaker makes, a number of new options can then become available. These polysystemic choices are the grammar of a language; 2) what is conveyed by a speaker (in this sense speaker refers to both spoken and written text) is merely a catalog of grammatical choices he or she has made. Depending upon the situation, the system network

targets any number of possible combinations of choices that can be made; 3) structure is the realization of the options a speaker has chosen; 4) clauses within syntactic trees should be bracketed with the fewest possible branches; to do otherwise is redundant as the information included can be retrieved from “the systemic part of the description.” Syntactic trees describe how constituents within a clause relate to each other, where each branch is the starting point for a set of systems where choices are made; 5) labeling words in terms of structural function denotes that the speaker has already made a choice; 6) because structure is the realization of the options a speaker has chosen, the grammar of a language should show how those choices are realized (pp. 181-82).

The core principle behind this theory is that as social animals, humans use language as a tool for communication; therefore, linguistics should study how language is used in terms of making meaning, not merely about form. As Bakhtin (1982) wrote, “We are taking language not as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as ideologically saturated as a world view” (p. 271). In analyzing a written narrative, semiotic choices should not be separated from semantic choices, each is interdependent upon the other (Halliday, 2003).

When events occur in the physical world, they happen in a sequence of actions which unfold through time. However, when these experiences are construed as text, they become static. In the example, the boy ran from the dog, in written text appears to be one event, that of a boy running away from a dog. But in the physical world it actually occurs as three separate events:

- (1) the boy is engaged in an activity
- (2) the boy either sees or hears the dog and stops performing
- (3) the boy is running away from the dog

Bloor and Bloor (2004) state “When people use language to make meanings, they do so in specific situations, and the form of the language that they use in discourse is not only influenced by this complex of situations, but also to make sense out of the world around them, as such people construct meaning through language” (p. 4). They contend that in analyzing language linguists should not concern themselves with its technical aspects but rather on its functional use –how individuals use language to make meaning out of their experiences–. SFL perceives language as a “complex semiotic system” with multiple layers. These layers, or strata, called metafunctions define how texts (includes written and spoken) and clauses within a text are interrelated.

The ideational metafunction involve actions and the interrelation between those actions and their corresponding participants. This metafunction relates to how individuals talk about her or his experience both internally and externally. The ideational metafunction subsumes all those options that speakers can use to relate their perspective of the physical world, as well as their inner feelings. The textual metafunction shows how clauses within a text are related. The interpersonal metafunction deals with speaker perspective and their communicative role when interacting with another person as well as her or his relation with an interlocutor. In this

metafunction, speakers adopt roles for themselves as well as assign roles to their interlocutors, i.e. in making requests, asking questions, giving information. Narratives encompass all three metafunctions of SFL: Interpersonal in that narratives are told in terms of perspective, namely how an author uses language to express the social and personal relationships among the characters in the ontological, or story world; ideational in view that narratives construe the human experience, they are a reflection of what happens in the physical world (Fowler, 1988; Halliday, 2004; Huisman, 2007); and textual because all narratives are organized in such a way that the text creates a flow that embodies both cohesiveness and continuity. The analysis set forth in this thesis will focus on the ideational and interpersonal metafunctions and the transitivity and identification frameworks within those strata.

## **TRANSITIVITY**

Transitivity is defined as “the set of options whereby the speaker encodes his experiences of the external world, and of the internal world of his own consciousness, together with the participants in these processes and their attendant circumstances; and it embodies a very basic distinction of processes into two types, those that are regarded as due to an external cause, an agency, other than the person or object involved, and those that are not” (Halliday, 2002, p. 181).

Transitivity asks who did what to whom. When experiences are relayed in a text, they are realized through clauses. Within each clause are chunks of grammatical groups or figures. Each figure consists of a process (verb) which moves through time along with a participant. These figures may also include additional information regarding time, space, manner, cause, or location

(i.e., circumstances). These figures are grammatically situated in a clause, “[t]hus as well as being a mode of action, of giving and demanding goods & services and information, the clause is a mode of reflection, of imposing order on the endless variation and flow of events” (Halliday, 2004, p. 170). These modes of action (represented in Figure 1) are interpreted as processes and are sorted into six categories: mental, relational, behavioral, verbal, existential, and material.

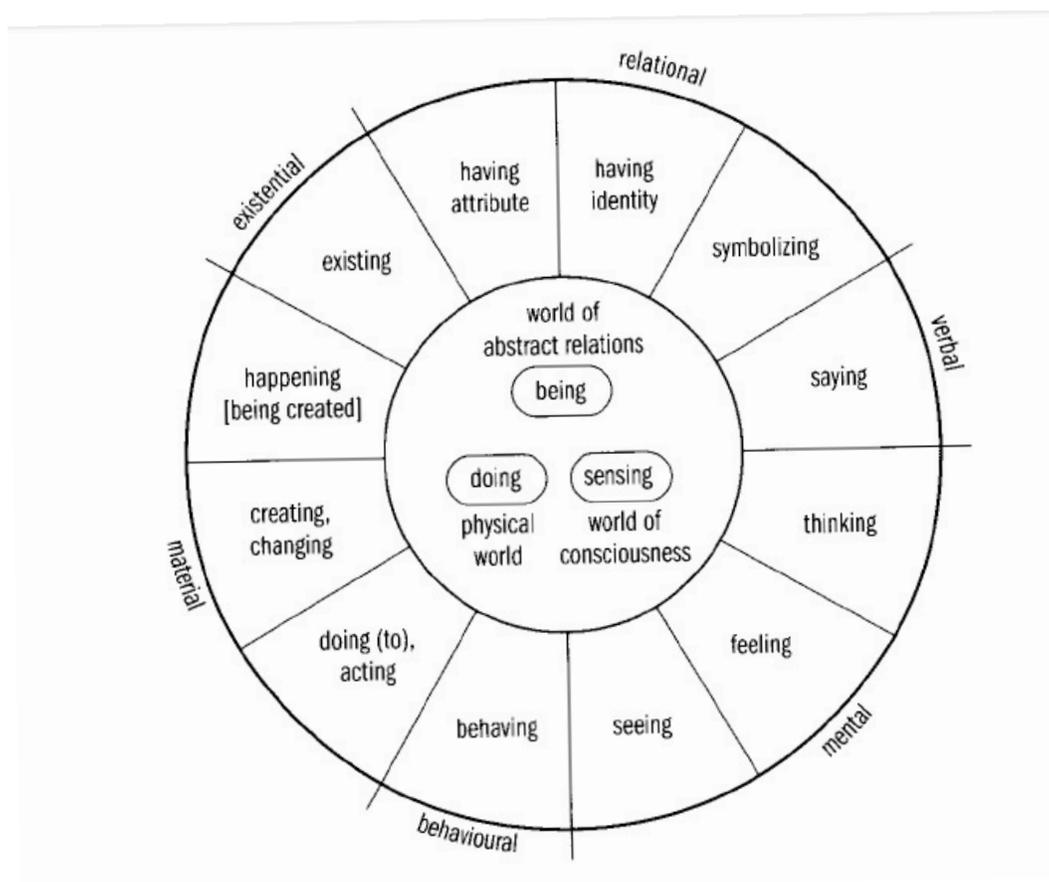


Figure 1. *The grammar of experience: types of process in English* (Halliday, 2004, p.172)

Actions, whether performed conscious or unconsciously, are classified as material processes. Material processes consist of two important elements: those who perform or cause an action and those who receive or are affected by the action. The performer of an action is the Actor. Actors exert influence on a Goal, or the entity that is affected by the action. For example, in Example 1 below, the material process, “punched”, assigns the role of Actor to “the boxer”, and that of Goal to “his opponent”.

(1) The boxer [Actor] punched [material process] his opponent [Goal].

In this regard, it is important to point out that the Actor/Goal relationship is different from an Actor/beneficiary relationship. Beneficiaries are somewhat similar to indirect objects in traditional grammar, as they either benefit from or receive an action, unlike the Goal, beneficiaries are not directly affected by the action. In Example 2 below, “Adam” in transitivity is assigned the role of Beneficiary as this lexical item is the recipient of the box of candy.

(2) Mary [Actor] sent [material process] Adam [Beneficiary] a box of candy [Goal].

Another important performer in material processes are Initiators. Initiators are different from Actors in that they initiate or cause an action without the implication of physically performing it. In Example 3, the material process “march” is being performed by the Actor, the scouts, not by the “scout master”. The “scout master” assumes the role of the Initiator and is making the Actor perform the action.

- (3) The scout master [Initiator] marched [material process] the scouts [Actor] up the hill [Circumstance].

Material processes represent physical happenings and/or doings, in contrast, mental processes represent senses and psychological happenings. Mental processes are actions that occur inwardly, and have to do with thinking and feeling. These processes are used to express the inner world of language users. Another distinction between mental and material processes are the number of participants involved. In material processes, some physical happenings, such as natural phenomena, are perceived to be self initiated without an Actor or an Initiator causing the action (for example, the ball was thrown into the pool). Mental processes require two participants to be present, a Sensor and a Phenomenon. In this process type, Sensors are those who experience the event, whereas Phenomenon is the thing that is experienced. Mental process involve actions that require cognitive abilities, thus Sensors can only be sentient beings, while Phenomenons can either be sentient or nonsentient. Mental processes can be subdivided into three categories: cognition, like think or know; affection, such as love or hate; and perception: for example, see or hear.

- (4) Perception: The cat [Sensor] sniffed [mental process] the baby [Phenomenon].
- (5) Cognition: Micah [Sensor] understood [mental process] the equation [Phenomenon].
- (6) Affection: The firework show [Phenomenon] bored [mental process] me [Sensor].

In the above examples, the mental processes of ‘sniff’, ‘understand’, and ‘bored’ are all performed by cognizant Sensors, “the cat”, “Micah”, and “me”. The Phenomenons, or the things being experienced, vary from sentient entities, “the baby” and “me” to a non-entity, “the equation”.

Copular verbs and verbs dealing with possession (have, own, possess) are rendered as relational processes. These processes concern themselves with attribution and identifying. Attributive relational processes entail a participant, the carrier, being ascribed to having a attribute, or quality. In Example 7, the relational process “were” assigns the Attribute of “loud” to that of “the fireworks” which takes the role of Carrier.

(7) The fireworks [Carrier] were [relational process] loud [Attribute].

Depending on the surrounding context processes that could be assumed of as being a mental process may also be categorized as a material process. An example of this is the lexical item *feel*. *Feel* can be defined several ways, two such definitions are that of examining an object by way of touch and experiencing an emotion or sensation.

(8) Sheila [Actor] felt [material process] the silk pillow [Phenomenon].

(9) Sheila [Carrier] felt [relational process] happy [Attribute].

In Example 8, *felt* is an action, one of physically touching the pillow, as such it is realized as a material process. Example 9 demonstrates the second definition of *felt*, a sensation

or emotion. In these types of examples the mental processes are akin to the copular verb “is”, *Sheila felt happy* is the same as *Sheila is happy*. Although happiness is a feeling that can be construed through a mental process, in this instance happy is an Attribute, it is a quality imbued by the Carrier.

Identifying relational processes involve participants called Identifiers, that are equated with a persona or function, the Identified.

(10) Tom [Identifier] is [relational process] the mayor [Identified].

In Example 10, the relational process “is” has designated the Identified lexical item “mayor” to that of the Identifier, “Tom”. Identifier/Identified roles can be assumed to have congruent relationship where the Identifier is equaled to, or is on par with, that of the Identified.

Processes involving speaking are known as verbal processes. Verbal processes coincide with those of mental and material processes in that speaking requires cognition as well as the physical action of moving lips, tongue, and teeth to make words. In verbal processes the participant who speaks is known as the Sayer, what is being said is called Verbiage, and the addressee to whom the Verbiage is directed at is the Receiver.

(11) Alan [Sayer] told [verbal process] Alix [Receiver] to leave [Verbiage].

In the above example the verbal process, “told” designates the role of Sayer to “Alan” and Receiver to “Alix”. What Alan told Alix, “to leave” is designated as Verbiage.

Amidst the material and mental processes lie those verbs associated with behavioral processes. Behavioral processes are physiological or psychological behaviors, and, although there is no clear cut definition for this process, it could be suggested that behavioral processes are mental process that are physically carried out. Behavioral processes typically involve only one participant, the behavior.

- (12) Morgan [Behaver] cried [behavior process] for two hours [Circumstance].
- (13) Mr. Cramer [Behaver] died [behavior process] from a heart attack [Circumstance].

The final process, existential, is one of minor importance and does not any relevance to the outcome of this paper; therefore, it will not be described.

In order to understand how these various processes are realized in an actual text, let us return to the opening narrative of this paper:

You (Behaver) glance (**behavioral process**) at the computer (Circumstance) and [you (Sensor)]<sup>1</sup> notice (**mental process**) the time (Phenomenon). You've (Sensor) been reading (**mental process**) papers (Phenomenon) much longer than you (Sensor) expected (**mental process**), but decide to read (**behavioral process**) just one (Phenomenon) more before finishing up for the day (Circumstance). You (Sensor) look (**mental process**) down at the next paper (Circumstance:) and [you (Behaver)] read (**behavioral process**) the title, "Who is You?: Identifying "You" in Second-Person Narratives" (Phenomenon). You (Actor) pick (**material process**) it (Goal) up, leaf (**material process**) through the pages (circumstance), and [you (Behaver)] sigh (**behavioral process**).

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<sup>1</sup> Brackets [] indicate a pronoun ellipsis.

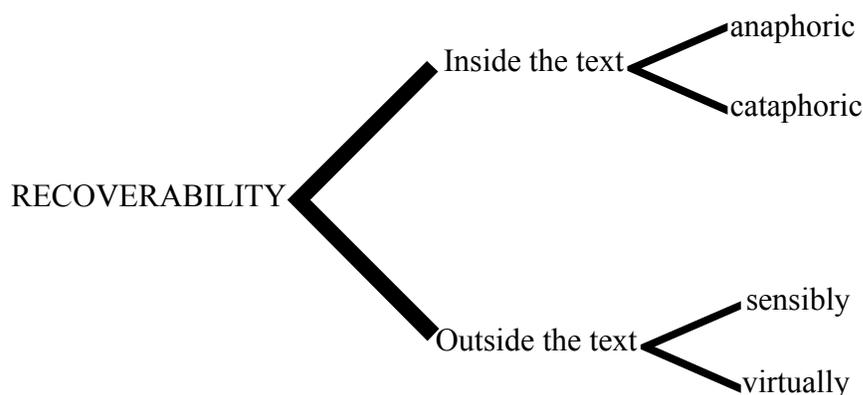
Transitivity asks “who is doing what to whom or what?” In the narrative the who is “you” and the process is “read”. “You” is the only participant and initiator of every action. Nearly every process that occurs is either one of cognition or is cognitively related. The author uses these internal processes as mimesis, as a way to construct the identity of the reader as both observer and protagonist by mimicking events that occur in the physical world.

## **IDENTIFICATION**

The system in Systemic Functional Linguistics by which participants are tracked is the identification framework. Identification concerns how participants, including things, are introduced and tracked throughout the text. When a speaker or writer begins a text (text includes both speech and written text), he or she starts by introducing someone or something and this presumed object or participant is then tracked by the reader (or listener) throughout the text by the use of pronouns, deictics, and other referential resources.

When an item is presented in a text it and a reader can track it throughout, the ability to retrieve the identity of the referent is called recoverability. Participants and objects in a text may be recovered exophorically or endophorically. Exophoric refers to the presented participant being recovered outside of the text. Referents outside of the text can be classified as being either sensibly or virtually exophoric. Participants existing outside the text that that can be recovered by using one of the five senses (touch, taste, smell, hear, see) are sensibly exophoric. An example of a sensibly exophoric reference is *Pass the sugar*. Sugar is sensibly exophoric item that can be

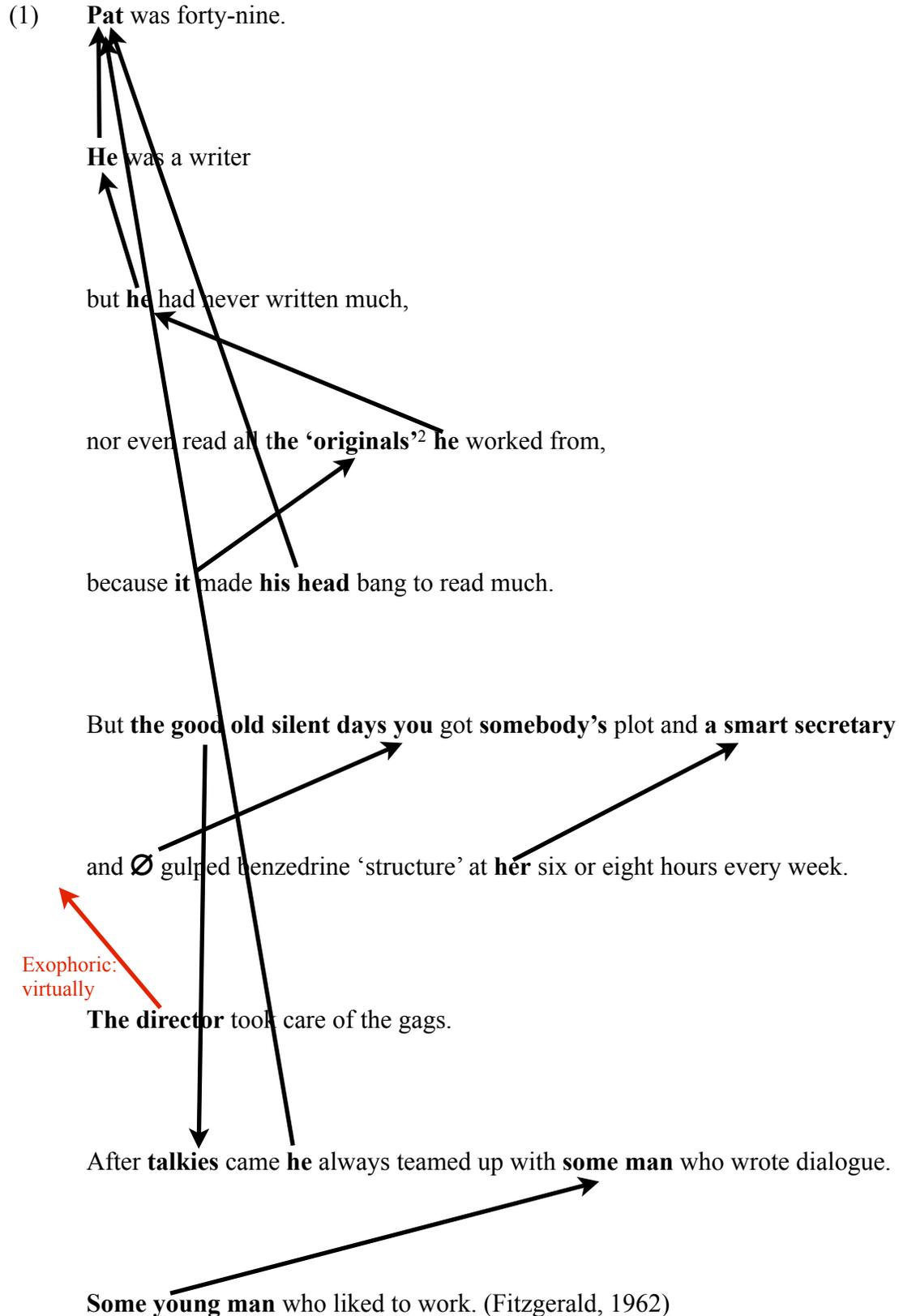
tasted. Virtually exophoric referents exist outside of a text and are generally known by everyone. An example of a virtually exophoric referent is the newspaper headline, *The new Pope has just been selected*, as the Pope is a referent item that is known by the general public. The following (Figure 2) is a systemic model of recoverability within the identification network.



*Figure 2. Recovering Identities  
(Martin and Rose, 2007, p. 169)*

There are multiple methods readers can use to track endophoric, or internal participants, in a text. When a participant is presumed at the beginning of a text and tracked using deictics or pronouns afterwards, readers can refer back to the beginning of the text or to a previous clause or section to find the identity of the participant, this is called anaphoric reference.

Authors may also present characters with a presuming reference item and then introduce the character or object at a later point in the story. This type of recoverability is known as a cataphoric reference. The following passage from the short story “A Man in the Way” demonstrates how characters are introduced and tracked in a story.



<sup>2</sup> Single quotes are used in the original text.

In the short story three characters are introduced: Pat, a smart secretary, the director, and some man. The deictic “a” is an indefinite article used to introduce a character whose identity cannot be assumed and/or whose role in the narrative is relatively unimportant, as in “a writer” or “a secretary”. The unimportance of “a” is contrasted with that of the definite article “the” which can be used to indicate that the character’s identity is assumed and/or is somehow important to the story line. In the next sentence, the possessive “his head” is used to connect a head to the protagonist Pat. If the author wrote “head” without any clear indication to whom the head belonged to, the reader would be lost. In the following sentence, the narrator reflects on the process of making a movie during a specific time period, “the good old silent days”. The “good old silent days” refers to the days when films had no sound; this reference item is used as a cataphoric reference in contrast to the lexical item “talkies”. The lexical item “somebody” is used as a generic tracking resource where the deictic “some” refers to an unknown amount and “body” is a generic term for a person; as with the pronoun “you” the narrator is using “somebody” to make another generalization and is referring to no one in the text. Although “you” is not written in the next clause, it is being referred to implicitly. When a referent item is recovered implicitly it is called an ellipsis and is denoted by the symbol, Ø. The minor character of “a smart secretary” is then introduced and can be tracked by the pronoun “her”. In the next line, “The director took care of the gags”, the participant, “the director”, can be referred to exophorically by the reader.

Although there has been no previous mention of a character with this title; it is common knowledge that all movie productions have a director whose role is vital to that of the movie's production. The compound noun "some man" in the following clause refers to an unknown person. The lexical item "some" refers to an unknown entity and "man" gives the reference item more specificity to let the the reader know that "some" isn't referring to a woman. The next sentence clarifies the term even more by introducing the epithet "young". The use of epithets and classifiers like "some" and "young" are interpersonal items used by the narrator to illustrate the hierarchy within the movie industry. The passage is regarding the process of making pictures in the silent days of film; the narrator uses those days to contrast the period in which the story is taking place. All the characters except for the protagonist are introduced by using indefinite words and articles, this indicates that the characters in the passage are not important to the story.

This section on identification illustrates how pronouns and deictics are used to track participants throughout the story. The previous section demonstrated how the system of transitivity is used by language users in interpersonal communication. The next section will briefly outline the concept of narratives and then detail the unique rhetorical style of second-person perspectives.

## SECOND-PERSON NARRATIVES

Narrative perspective can be divided into two modes, who perceives and who speaks (Genette, 1988). First- and third-person narratives can be placed within the mode of speaker. In first-person narratives “I” is sharing their version of events with the reader, what is seen or known is given to the reader by the I-narrator, as such, the reader may get a distorted view of events because she/he can only experience what is happening in the story through the I-narrator’s filter. In the third-person, events are viewed through the eyes of an unknown narrator. This narrator is a god-like, omnipresent entity who knows everything that is happening in the text. These diegeses, or narrating perspectives, are aligned along two axes: homodiegesis and heterodiegesis (Manfred, 2005). Homodiegetic narratives are typically first-person narratives in which the story is being told by a protagonist or another main character. In heterodiegetic narratives, the story is told by an unseen narrator who can either be endophoric or homophoric. First-person and third-person diegesis are from the perspective of utterance or who is speaking, conversely second-person diegeses are concerned with perception, mainly that of who is listening.

The participants in a narrative include the narratee to whom the story is being addressed, the narrator or the storyteller, and the protagonist who is the main actor of the story. Given the definition that the narratee is the addressee of the narrative may deceive readers into thinking they and the narratee are one in the same. To give an example, imagine that a school bus has three high school students (all girls) left on the bus to drop off. Two of the girls are sitting

together talking about their day at school, and the third girl is sitting alone in the back. One of the girls is recounting the story of how her crush has finally asked her out on a date (coincidentally this boy is also liked by the girl sitting in the back of the bus). In this example the speaker is the narrator, the friend is the reader or implied audience, and the narratee is the girl sitting in the back of the bus. Although the friend is being told to the story, the story is being directed to the rival sitting at the back of the bus.

Second-person narratives are arranged from the perspective of listener, as such they do not fit neatly into the current narrative models which focus on speaker oriented texts (DelConte, 2003). The next section presents how the relationship among the three major participants in a narrative contribute to the text's meaning.

## **MODELS OF SECOND-PERSON NARRATIVES**

Some readers hold the view that second-person narratives are stories in which the pronoun “you” is the protagonist and also refers outside the text to the reader. This definition leaves out many stories in which “you” is neither protagonist, such as *Creole Days*, nor represents the reader, as in *Man Down Below*. A guidebook on narratology defines second-person narratives as:

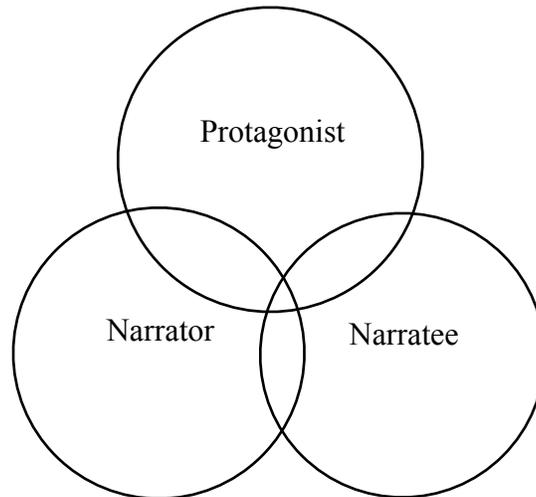
A narrative in which the protagonist is referred to in the second-person. Functionally, *you* (italics in original text) may refer (a) to the narrator's experiencing Self, (b) to some other character in a homodiegetic world, or (c) to a character in a heterodiegetic world. (Manfred, 2005)

Although this definition accounts for the differing types of second-person narratives, it is one dimensional in its description in that it doesn't adequately account for the diegetic relationship between narrator, protagonist, and narratee in the narrative. In *Who Speaks, Who Listens, Who Acts: A New Model for Understanding Narrative*, Matt DelConte offers a model for second-person narratives which more accurately explores the "relationship among multiple variables in the narrative transmission" (DelConte, 2003, p.13). First- and third-person narratives are defined by the speaker, the protagonist (first-person) or the narrator (third-person); whereas second-person narratives are centered around both speaker and interlocutor, namely the narratee and protagonist, and/or narrator, as such, the second-person narrative oftentimes overlaps with that of first and third. DelConte asserts that due to the second-person's unique rhetorical effects, previous narration models based on voice (or speaker oriented narratives) do not sufficiently account for connections made by narrator, narratee, and protagonist within the text. DelConte identifies two types of narratives which better represent the second-person: completely coincident, and partial coincident, which is divided into three different modes.

Narrations in which the protagonist, narrator, and narratee are conjoined along the same diegetic plane are known as complete-coincident narratives. In the following example from *Note to Sixth Grade Self* an unnamed narrator advises her former sixth grade self on how to recover from a bullying incident:

- (1) Read the final chapters of *A Little Princess*. Make an epic picture of a scene from a girls' boarding school in London on three sheets of paper. Push your

brother around the living room in a laundry basket. That night, in the bath, replay in your head the final moment of your dance with Eric Cassio. Ignore the fact that he would not look at you that day. Relish the sting of bathwater on your cuts. Tell yourself that the moment with Eric was worth it.



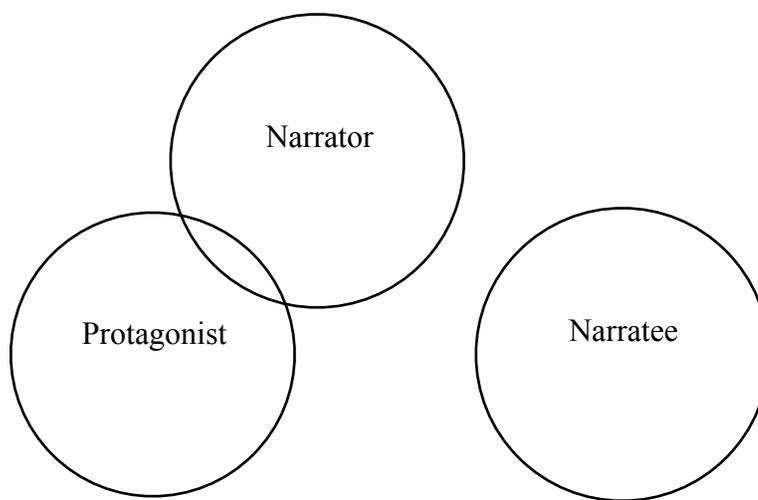
*Figure 4. Completely Coincidence*

This narrative mode employs simultaneous narration in which the narrator tells the story as it happens is found in many second-person narratives, but whether or not protagonist/narratee “you” and narrator “you” are one and the same is a bit ambiguous. Because the story is unfolding in “real time” simultaneous narration dictates that the narrator be unaware of how the story ends, therefore we have to assume that the story is happening in the narrator’s mind. She is reliving the incident, imagining what she could have done at the time.

Partial coincidence can be divided into three types: a coincidence of narrator and protagonist with a separate narratee, a coincidence of narrator and narratee in which the narrator/

narratee themselves a story about someone else, and a coincidence of an extratextual narratee and intertextual protagonist with a distinct intertextual narrator. *Travel with the Snow Queen* is an example of the first type of partial coincidence, the fusion of narrator and protagonist coupled with a discrete narratee.

- (2) You deserve a vacation, but of course you're a little wary. You've read the fairy tales. We've been there, we know. That's why we here at Snow Queen Tours have put together a luxurious but affordable package for you, guaranteed to be easy on the feet and on the budget. See the world by goose drawn sleigh, experience the archetypal forest, the winter wonderland; chat with real live talking animals (please don't feed them). Our accommodations are three-star: sleep on comfortable, guaranteed pea-free box-spring mattresses; eat meals prepared by world-class chefs. Our tour guides are friendly, knowledgeable, well-traveled, trained by the Snow Queen herself. They know first aid, how to live off the land; they speak three languages fluently.



*Figure 5. Partial Coincidence A*

The story is unique in that it contains this element of partial coincidence narratives and one in which the narrator is separate and the protagonist and narratee are joined together. The

story begins with “you” as narratee and protagonist with a narrator describing the action; as the story progresses, it occasionally shifts to the narratee/protagonist addressing an internal, unknown narratee.

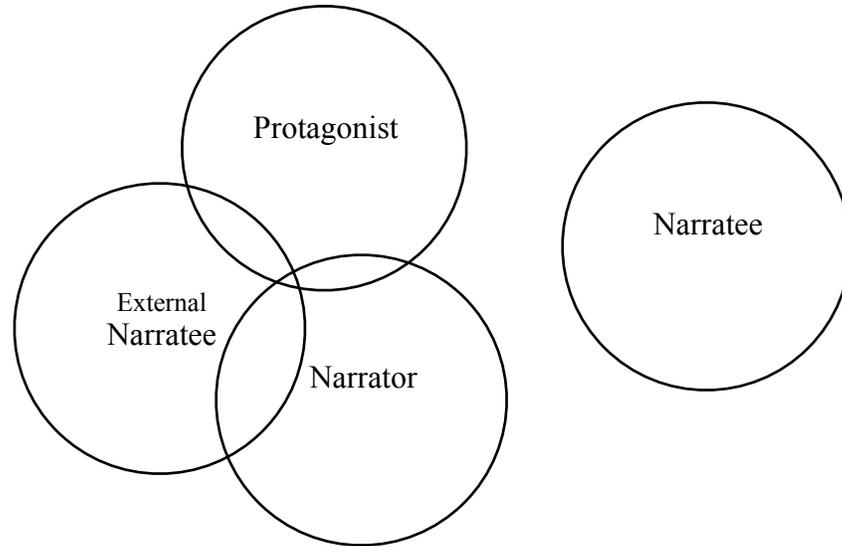
Another type of partial coincident narratives are what most think of as second-person narratives, narratives of these types involve the narrator addressing an internal protagonist and an external narratee (typically the reader) who coexist on the same diegetic plane. These pages contain many different adventures.

- (3) From time to time as you read along,  
 you will be asked to make a choice.  
 Your choice may lead to success or disaster.  
 The adventures you take are a result of your choices.  
 You are responsible because you choose.  
 After you make each choice,  
 follow the instructions to see what happens to you next.  
 Think carefully before you make a move.  
 Any choice might be your last... or it may lead you to the Secret of the Pyramids.  
 Good luck!

You are relaxing one afternoon after school when you get a phone call from your uncle Bruce, a brilliant scientist and world traveler.

"I'm just in from Egypt," he says. "I have to get some new equipment to continue my investigations of the Pyramids. How would you like to go back with me for a few weeks?"

You have always envied Bruce—dashing off to exotic places in the Middle East and the Orient, sometimes vanishing for months at a time. It doesn't take you long to make up your mind to go.



*Figure 6. Partial Coincidence B*

The narrator not only directs the action of the story, but also those of the protagonist/narratee. It tells “you” what “you” are doing, what “you” will do, or what “you” have done. In this mode the reader must alternate between the role of observer and that of addressee (DelConte 2003; Phalen, 1996). The opening paragraph of the story addresses the actual reader by instructing them on the proper method of reading the book, the paragraph that follows is similar to a heterodiegetic, third-person text in which the reader observes the story’s action from an audience’s perspective.

Using DelConte’s definition of partial coincidence narratives to foreground what constitutes as a second-person narrative, the next chapter will analyze four partial coincident texts using the transitivity and identification framework to examine how lexico-grammatical and

discourse semantic features contribute to the protagonist “you” being either an endophoric or exophoric character. On the basis of those findings, a model will be created to display the structure of endophoric “you” and exophoric “you” in a second-person narrative.

## ANALYSIS

### SAMPLES

The samples used include four types of narratives which appear to be second-person partial coincident narratives. The type of second-person partial coincident narratives are a fusion of internal and external narratee who serve as the protagonist with a separate narrator: two novels from the young adult Choose-Your-Own-Adventure series, *The Mystery of the Maya* (CYA: MOM) and *Journey Under the Sea* (CYA:JUS); the novel *If on a winter's night a traveler* (IWNT), and the short story *Travels with the Snow Queen* (TSQ). The CYA stories were chosen because they are the second-person stories that most readers are familiar with; interactive novels in which the story's progress depends upon the choices made by the reader. The novels typically are action-based adventures with several climactic points wherein the reader is presented with two or more options and must choose one to determine the fate of the protagonist (for both novels only one story path was used to analyze).

The short story *Travels with a Snow Queen* and the novel *If on a winter's night a traveler* were chosen for their distinct structure. The narratives begin like other partial coincident second-person narratives with the external narratee reader/protagonist and the internal narratee/

protagonist intertwined and a separate narrator. As the narratives progress, certain semantic features create a distance between the external narratee and internal narratee protagonist causing the two to separate leaving the reader outside of the texts in the audience role. With the separation of the reader and textual “you”, the texts take on the role of a first- or third- person narrative. To the exclusion of other chapters in *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, only the chapters which set up the pretense that “you” is the reader and in which the external reader and internal “you” begins to separate were analyzed. The samples in which the protagonist “you” is the reader are denoted by you<sub>R</sub>, and the samples which are from the perspective of the protagonist “you” is the character are denoted by you<sub>C</sub>.

## **METHODOLOGY**

In written texts, clause complexes are realized by sequential patterns of various grammatical groups (nominal groups, prepositional groups, etc.) ending in a terminal punctuation mark (such as a period, exclamation point, or question mark). Within each clause complex are smaller clausal groups which have their own grammatical configuration: Deictic + Numerative + Epithet + Classifier + Thing + Noun (Halliday, 2004). Each clause has its own meaning which contributes to the clause complex; therefore, each clause in a text needs to be separated in order to garner the meaning of the text as a whole. The samples were broken down into clauses and then each clause was analyzed using the transitivity framework. For identification each clause was analyzed by reference type and separated into categories.

## TRANSITIVITY

### YOU AS HERO/ANTIHERO

A fictional narrative's structure consists of a protagonist who goes out on a quest to find some thing. This thing may be a person, place, or object (either animate or inanimate). During the quest the hero must overcome challenges that are presented as obstacles to her/his quest. The protagonist is the hero of the story and must always appear strong, courageous, and smart. Conversely, an antihero lacks the fortitude of body and mind which composes the idea of hero. In *Travels with a Snow Queen*, you<sup>C</sup> is an antihero and is allowed to appear weak, lost and confused. In the story, the protagonist "you" has set out to find an ex-lover who left and never came back. Unlike in other fictional narratives, "you" never faces a major obstacle that hinders the quest despite being helped by others who regard the quest as a lost cause. Because others view the quest as futile, you<sup>C</sup> is often the Goal in the clause, a subservient position that is affected by the actions of others. In contrast, as the hero in the novel, you<sup>R</sup> does not play a subservient role to others in the story. The following examples demonstrates this contrast between the two protagonist figures.

- (1) They (Actor) will escort (material process) you (Goal) through the forest, which is full of thieves and wolves and princes on quests, lurking about. (TWSQ)
- (2) All along the route people (Actor) join (material process) you (Goal)...(CYA:JUS)

In Examples 1 and 2, you<sub>R</sub> and you<sub>C</sub> are both Goals in the clause. They are the protagonists in the story, but are being acted on by the minor characters, ‘they’ and ‘people’. In the case of you<sub>C</sub>, “you” is being escorted through a forest, with “they” acting as protectors. “You” is in a subservient position and is being led through the forest by “they” because the character is a flawed hero. “You” is weak and needs the help of others for protection. When you<sub>R</sub>, “you” is also a Goal, but it is not in a true subordinate position. The people are joining, not leading, “you”; even when you<sub>R</sub> is being acted on by minor characters, it is still in the guise of courageous leader.

In *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, the quest of the protagonist “you” is to finish reading a book, but is thwarted in this endeavor by various factors. Examples 3 and 4 demonstrate how the convergence of various processes aid in defining the role “you” has as hero in a you<sub>R</sub> text or antihero you<sub>C</sub> text.

- (3) Books You Haven’t Read (Phenomenon),..., [are] trying to cow (mental process) you (Sensor). But you (Sensor) know (mental process) you (Agent) must never allow yourself (Carrier) to be (relational process) awed (Attribute). (IWNT)
- (4) You (Sensor) believe (mental process) in UFOs (Phenomenon), but now that you (Sensor) are seeing (mental process) one (Phenomenon), it is frightening. (CYA: MOM)

Reading a book to the end is the goal of *If on a winter’s night a traveler*, so books are seen as a character in the novel. In the story, books are portrayed as anthropomorphic characters

endowed with the ability to disapprove and intimidate the protagonist. Unlike in you<sup>R</sup> narratives, when you<sup>C</sup> the protagonist can cause feelings in other participants (both animate and inanimate) and react to feelings brought about by those objects. In Example 3, the mental process “cow” represents the feeling that the books causes within “you”, that feeling is countered by the attribute “awe” in a relational clause as the reaction brought about by the books. In Example 4, “you” sees the UFO, but is not frightened by it. The “it” in the subordinate clause refers to the situation, and not the object. The situation is that of an opinion confirmed as fact being frightening to “you”. The cognitive mental process “believe” states an opinion that “you” has about UFOs, that opinion is then countered by the sensory mental process “see” as proof to what was once only believed has now proven to be true.

### **YOU AS SPEAKER**

For spoken interaction with characters within the novel, speech is either projected or quoted. Quoted speech is direct speech. It is the true representation of what a speaker has said whereas projected speech is indirect. It is a summary, not a true account, of what the speaker has said. In stories where that use you<sup>R</sup>, speech performed by “you” tends to be projected. The story’s conclusion is more important than the events, so dialogue is not very important to the overall story line.

- (5) You (Sayer) suggest (verbal process) a plan (Verbiage) to put on a festival with a play. On a given signal the Actors and the people in the audience will rise up and seize the king.

The actors will be carrying real weapons, but no one will suspect them because they are in the play. (CYA:JUS)

The verbal process “suggest” in Example 5 is used to explain how you<sub>R</sub> expresses a plan to the Receivers. To suggest borders on a mental process in that suggesting a plan is to propose an idea for someone to think about. In you<sub>R</sub> narratives speech is used to portray the dual role of the protagonist/narratee role. The external narratee, the reader, has some control over how events unfold and may or may not make the same suggestion; consequently “you” cannot directly say what the plan is. Therefore, “you suggest” is intended for both the external narratee and the internal audience (the Receivers) to think about the plan being put forward. Quoted speech, when used in you<sub>R</sub> narratives, is incongruently realized as indirect speech, as shown in the following examples:

- (6) As agreed, you (Actor) signal (material process) the *Maray* (Goal), “All systems GO. It’s awesome down here.” (CYA:JUS)
- (7) You (beaver) scream (behavioral process) as loud as you can: “Help me!!!” (CYA:JUS)

In Example 6, the material process “signal” is used to describe you<sub>R</sub> action of telling the *Maray* that everything is fine. A signal is a type of silent communication performed through body language. The meaning of the gesture is transformed into quoted speech as a means by which the internal protagonist can communicate with the external protagonist/reader. The reader is outside

of the ontological world of the narrative and has to be explicitly told the meaning of the signal. This pattern is also the case in Example 7, the behavioral process “scream” is used to describe the internal protagonist feeling something so intensely that it comes out through sound (intertextually). The feelings of terror are internal protagonist has to communicate feelings of terror with the external protagonist/reader which are represented as a scream.

When quoted speech in you<sub>R</sub> is used in exchanges with other characters in the story, the internal protagonist “you” continues to act as mediator with the external reader. Dialogue exchanges are used to help the reader make decisions or guide the protagonist to the next event in the text.

(8) His assistant Amanda called to tell (verbal process) you (Receiver) the news.

“Tom was onto a hot story. But he wouldn’t say what on the phone. After he was reported missing, the police found fresh blood on the altar used for human sacrifice by the Mayans. No one has seen him since,” (Verbiage) Amanda (Sayer) tells (verbal process) you (Receiver).

“Who called to tell you?” (Verbiage) you (Sayer) ask (verbal process).

“Tom’s guide Manuel. Tom said that if anything happened to him, I should call you right away,” she replies.

“Do you think you could go down there to look for him? I’m really worried.” (CYA:MOM)

Although “you” is in the role of Sayer, due to the dual nature of you<sub>R</sub>, dialogue exchanges are mostly about setting up the plot for the external protagonist/reader. The internal

protagonist's functional role in the text is that of Sayer, and the external protagonist/reader's role is Receiver. In Example 8, the exchange between the character Amanda and "you" sets up the story line for the external "you", the reader/protagonist. "You" is on a mission to find "your friend" Tom. Not only does the exchange set up the plot but also the next event of the story, meeting Tom's guide, Manuel. In narratives in which you<sub>C</sub> the plot unfolds over time throughout the story, thus an exchange of dialogue with others in the text may be used to supplement the plot but the purpose of the exchange is not to explain the plot to the reader. Another aspect of dialogue exchanges in you<sub>R</sub> narratives is "you" does not engage in exchanges with a varied amount of characters. Because dialogue exchanges are limited to events that progress the story line, they are short.

In narratives in which you<sub>C</sub>, the verbal processes are more clearly defined. The duality of "you" as reader is not present in these narrative types, therefore you<sub>C</sub> is able to interact with the intertextual characters more freely. In you<sub>C</sub> narratives, the reader is an observer, not a participator, hence the protagonist "you" in you<sub>C</sub> narratives does not need to convey every thought to an external protagonist/reader. In the next example, the exchange in dialogue between "you" and Briar Rose (she) is used to supplement the plot of the story. "You" is on a mission to find "your missing lover" who ran away with another woman and the journey has taken "you" to the castle of Briar Rose, who explains to "you" that a) your lover was there, but has since left and b) she is not the woman who ran off with your lover.

(9) "He's not in love with you," she says, yawning.

"So he was here, in this bed, you're the icy slut in the sleigh at the corner store, you're not even bothering to deny it," (Verbiage) you (Sayer) say (Verbal process)...

"Four, five months ago, he came through, I woke up," she says. "He was a nice guy, okay in bed. She was a real b\*tch, though."

"Who was?" (Verbiage) you (Sayer) ask (verbal process).

Unlike in Example 8, the dialogue exchange in Example 9 is used to add to the plot's development. "You" as Sayer does not use dialogue as a pretext to provide the reader with the particulars needed to decide the events of the story, but rather the exchange details a backstory which adds to or supplements plot development.

## **YOU AS EMOTIONAL BEING**

In the physical world, the reader's emotional state is derived from her/his internalization of events unfolding in the world around them. In you<sup>R</sup> texts behavioral and relational process are used in an effort to mimic the emotional processes of the reader. Because the protagonist in these texts are both internal and external, relational and behavioral process are used to draw the external protagonist, the reader, into the world of the novel. The following are examples of implicit emotions used in you<sup>R</sup> narratives:

(10) You (Carrier) and the people are (relational process) free (Attribute); the king is put in prison. The revolt is a success. (CYA:JUS)

Example 10 is an example of implicit happiness. The reader internalizes the story's context to conclude that the protagonist is happy. In the previous passage to this example, "you" has escaped security's clutches and freed the people of Atlantis. Because the protagonist has a dual role both inside and outside the text, the reader feelings cannot be summed up in one lexico-grammatical term. As Carrier in the relational process "you" is attributed to being free, meaning that all the decisions that the external/reader made has ended positively.

(11) You (beaver) scream (behavioral process) as loud as you can: "Help me!!!" (CYA:JUS)

In Example 11, the term "scream" demonstrates an implicit feeling of fear. As in the case of Example 10, the surrounding text helps to convey that feeling to the reader. The reader doesn't need to be told, "you are afraid", the behavioral process "scream" imparts the feeling of terror.

In you<sub>C</sub> narratives, mental processes are used to show the inner workings of the character's mind. Whereas you<sub>R</sub> has a dual role of being both inside and outside the text, you<sub>C</sub> always remains inside the text with the reader acting as observer. As an observer the reader does not rely on lexico-grammatic and semantic clues to determine the feelings of the character, you<sub>C</sub>.

(12) You've (Sensor) never liked (mental process) talking animals (Phenomenon). Once your lover gave you a talking cat, but it ran away and secretly you (Carrier) were (relational process) glad (Attribute). (TWSQ)

In you<sup>R</sup> narratives the events of the story are based on the reader's judgements and feelings, this differs from you<sup>C</sup> where the reader's opinions are unimportant and unnecessary to the plot, as such, emotional states tend to be explicitly presented in the story. In Example 12, the mental process "liked" is an explicit presentation of "you" feelings to the reader. She/he is told explicitly that "you" does not like talking animals, and the relational process "...you (Carrier) were (relational process) glad (Attribute)" alludes to the reason having to do with a cat. As the story continues, "you" has another encounter with a talking animal and the dislike for talking animals is stated again. It is then explained that this dislike for talking animals is due to the cat gossiping about the ex-lover's infidelities. Without being explicitly told that "you" disliked talking animals and the story behind the reason, the reader could never assume you<sup>C</sup> feelings for talking animals. Example 13 below is another demonstration of how processes are used in relating feelings.

- (13) The thing (Phenomenon) that most exasperates (mental process) you (Sensor) is to find yourself at the mercy of the fortuitous, the aleatory, the random, in things...(IWNT)

In Example 13, "you" has started reading a new book and while reading has discovered that the book contains numerous errors in which the same page had been printed over and over again. The mental process "exasperates" is used to describe the character's state of mind.

Without this explicit statement the reader may miss an important piece of the plot. The novel centers around the act of the protagonist finishing a book, the idea of a defective novel may not

anger some readers, therefore without the explicit statement that “you” feels “exasperated” keeps the reader from straying from the plot.

## YOU AS DECIDER

When you<sub>R</sub> is an external protagonist decisions are made by the reader. The use of the conditional lexical item *if* coupled with a mental and/or material behavioral process creates a semantic pattern used in you<sub>R</sub> narratives to indicate that the reader has to make a decision which is then realized in the text by the internal protagonist. The semantic pattern, “If you *mental process*, then you (implicitly stated) *material process*...” is clearly demonstrated in Example 14.

- (14) If you (Sensor) decide (mental process) [you (Actor)] to explore (material process) the ledge where the *Seeker* has come to rest, [you (Behaver)]<sup>3</sup> turn (behavioral process) to page 6. (CYA:JUS)

Although the word “turn” appears to be a material process it is actually a behavioral process. Because the reader is not only to turn to that page, but also to read it the word “turn” is realized as a behavioral process. In narratives with you<sub>C</sub>, the *if*+ mental process + material process pattern does not point outside to an external protagonist/narratee, instead it is a congruent indication of a mental action by the protagonist “you”.

- (15) You (Sensor) wonder (mental process), if you (Actor) should have put up (material process) flyers for Kay. (TWSQ)

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<sup>3</sup> Brackets [] indicate pronoun ellipses

In Example 15, *if* is used to portray the character's thought about a past action (or a past regret). The semantic pattern is also used in you<sub>C</sub> by other characters within the text to make proposals to "you", as in the case of Examples 16 and 17.

- (16) "If you (Actor) kiss (material process) me," he says, "you (beaver) break (behavioral process) the spell and I can come home with you." (TWSQ)
- (17) Or if you (Sensor) prefer (mental process), don't say anything; just you (Sensor) hope (mental process) they'll leave you alone. (IWNT)

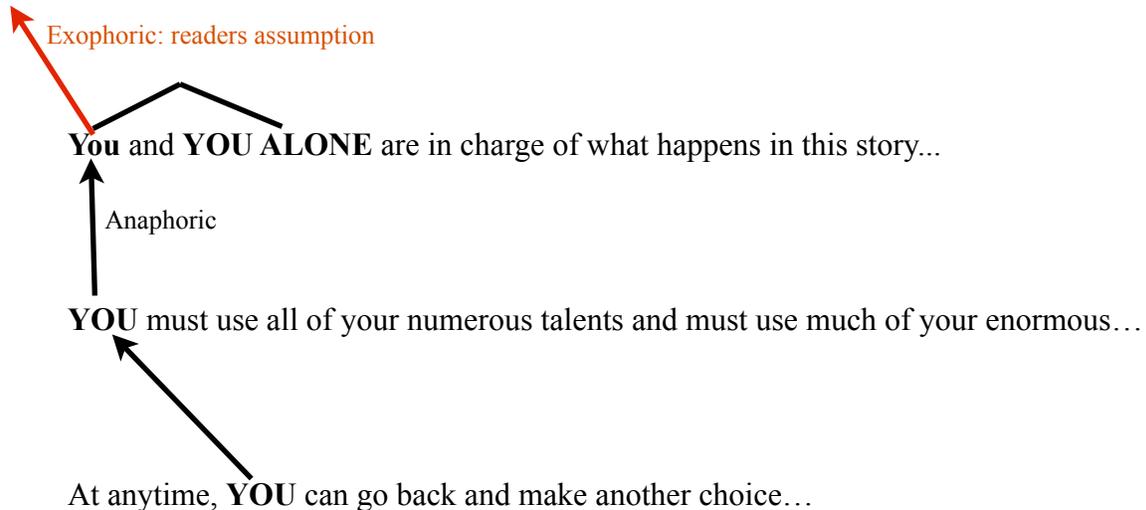
The transitivity analysis has demonstrated how lexico-grammatical features and discourse semantic patterns in second-person partial coincident narratives are used in determining the endophoric or exophoric nature of the protagonist "you". Using the identification model of SFL, the next section will further explore which discourse semantic features constitute the endophoric and exophoric qualities within the texts.

## **IDENTIFICATION**

In second-person narratives, the protagonist is introduced by the pronoun "you" with the assumption that the reader will be able to recover its identity inside or outside of the story. When the protagonist is introduced at the beginning of the story to the reader with the title "you" and there is no information given to help identify the referent item, non-recoverability makes it possible for the pronoun "you" to be interpreted as exophoric.

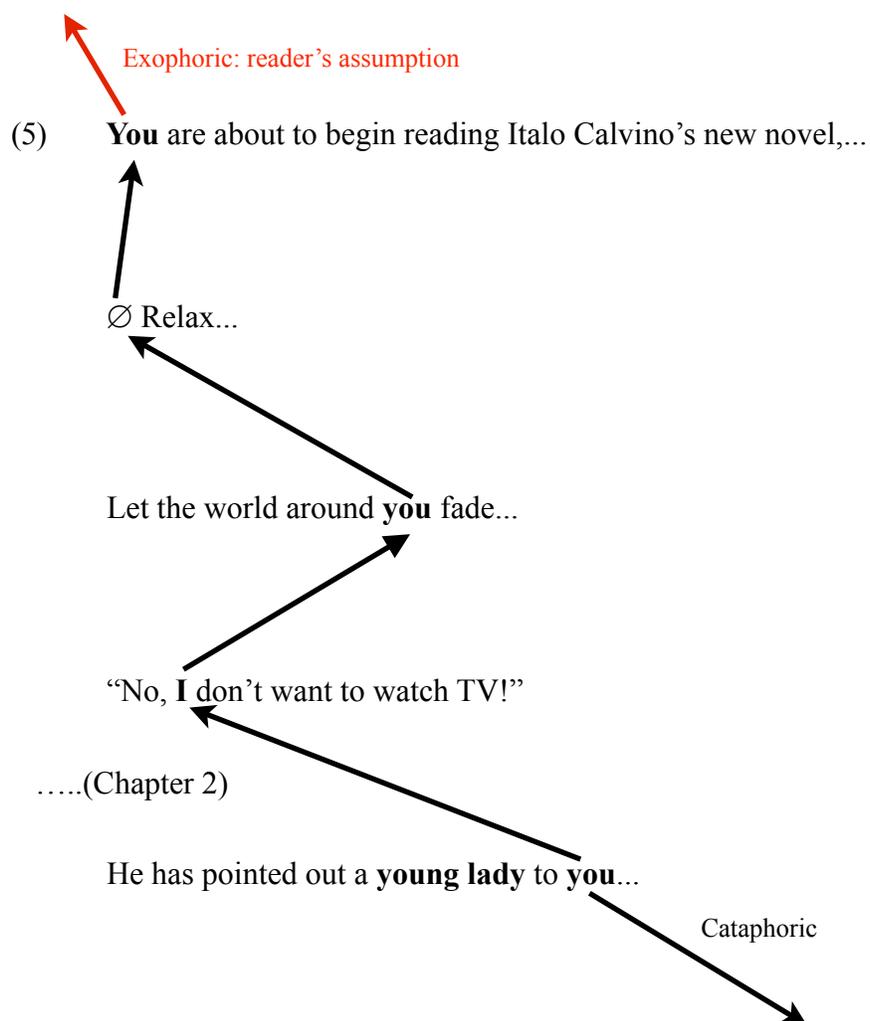
In *Journey Under the Sea* and *The Mystery of the Maya*, the notion that the reader and the protagonist are fused from beginning to end of the story is apparent. The first paragraph of the novels reads as the following:

(4) This book is different from other books.



The “you” to which the text is referring is outside of the novel because there are no referential clues anywhere within the text stating otherwise. All references made about “you” are anaphoric, with each reference leading back to the exophoric “you” at the beginning of the text. In *If on a winter’s night a traveler* and *Travels with the Snow Queen*, the identity of the “you” protagonist appears to be exophoric because they begin much like you<sub>R</sub> narratives in which the identity of “you” is presented with no referential clues. The stories seemingly start out addressing the reader, but as they progress, the separation between the textual “you” and the reader as an external observer becomes more evident.

In identification, pronouns are used in presuming what has been previously presented to the reader. In *If on a winter's night a traveler*, the pronoun “you” is used to present the protagonist as though it has already been introduced to the reader. This presumption is taken by some to indicate that they are the protagonist of the story. In the first chapter of the text, subsequent clauses continue to present “you” as being exophoric, because it cannot be recovered. In the second chapter, the narrator refers to “you” as “Reader”. Although the reference of “Reader” does not concretely identify “you”, it is at this point the external reader may begin to view the protagonist “you” as an endophoric reference item.



And so the **Other Reader** makes her happy entrance into your field of vision, **Reader**...

<b>Presenting</b>	<b>Presuming pronoun</b>
you	
	you
	you
	you
	I
	you
	Reader

*Table 1. Identification*

Example 5 demonstrates how “you” is recovered within the text. Although the pronoun “I” is used in reference to the protagonist, “you” cannot be recovered within the first few lines of the first chapter. It is the narrator using the pronoun “I” to refer to “you”; therefore, “you” is considered endophoric because the presumed protagonist hasn’t been identified. The second chapter introduces the textual character, “Other Reader”. After this introduction, the narrator then refers to “you” as “Reader”. The reader can now cataphorically track “Reader” to “you”. The referential item “Reader” in conjunction with the introduction of the intratextual character, “Other Reader” begins to create a divide between the external reader and the textual endophoric character “Reader”. The comparative deictic “other” refers to an entity in addition to one already mentioned. The moniker “Other reader” can be presumed as being someone other than the “Reader”. The reader can now separate himself/

herself from that of the endophoric “Reader”, as both “Reader” and “Other Reader” are recoverable intratextual characters.

### **YOU BOTH, YOU ALL, AND WE: PLURAL PRONOUNS**

As you<sub>R</sub> becomes you<sub>C</sub>, the protagonist can interact with other characters in the narrative to create groups. The use of plural pronouns, such as “we”, in you<sub>C</sub> narratives, may be considered an indication that all participants in the narrative exist within the same ontological realm. Plural pronouns are interpersonal: they mark the speaker’s attitude towards their interlocutor. The key difference between you<sub>C</sub> and you<sub>R</sub> is the participatory involvement of the reader. In both narrative types, the reader is outside the world of the novel. Whereas in you<sub>R</sub>, the reader remotely guides the protagonist through the story, in you<sub>C</sub> the reader can only “watch” the protagonist from a distance. This distance is reflected through the use of plural pronouns. When plural pronouns are used in you<sub>R</sub> narratives, they are mostly used by an internal character in the novel, as noted in the following example from *Mystery of the Maya*.

(5) “I tried to help Tom,” Manuel says, grabbing your heaviest suitcase...

“...Maybe together **we** can find him?”

“Where do you think **we** should start, Manuel?” **you** ask.

“...maybe **we** should go straight to Chichen Itza,...” [Manuel says]<sup>4</sup>

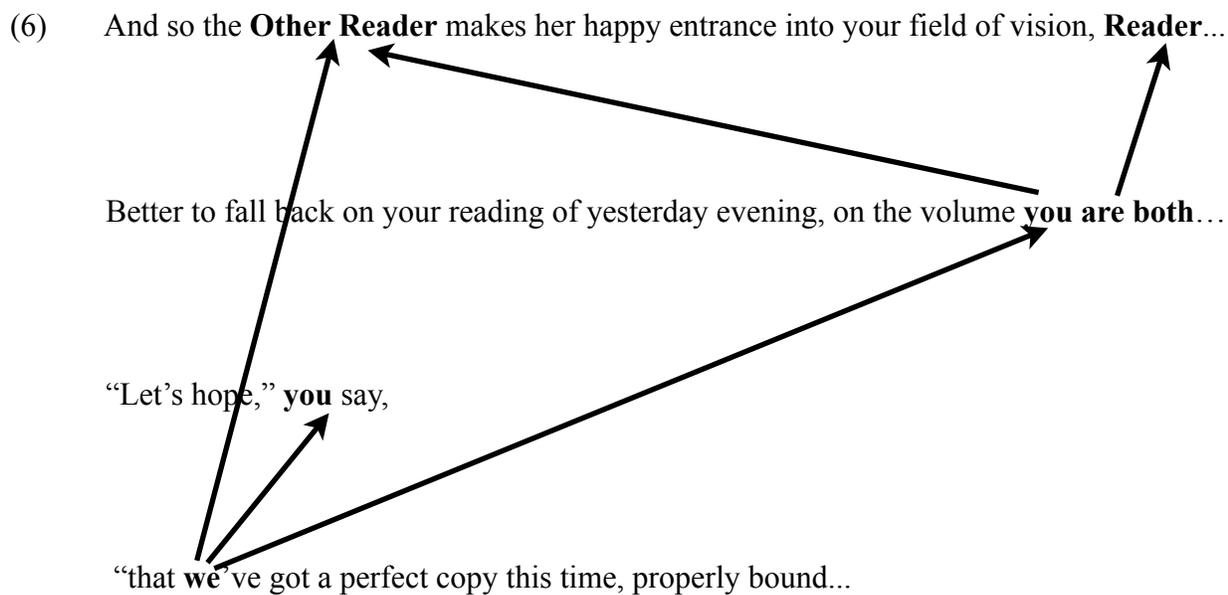
<b>Presenting</b>	<b>Presuming pronoun</b>	<b>Presenting</b>	<b>Presuming pronoun</b>	<b>Plural pronoun</b>
Manuel		you		we
	you		you	we
				we

*Table 2. Identification: Plural Pronouns-you<sub>R</sub>*

The example is similar to the manner in which plural pronouns are displayed in you<sub>C</sub>.

Because all the participants in you<sub>C</sub> narratives are internal, personal plural pronouns tend to be more frequent than in narratives where the protagonist “you” is fused with the the reader.

<sup>4</sup> Although the protagonist “you” used the plural pronoun “we”, *Mystery of the Maya* straddles the line between you<sub>R</sub> narratives and you<sub>C</sub> as it shows the discourse semantic and lexicogrammatical features of both perspectives.



Presenting	Presuming pronoun	Plural pronoun
you are both		
	you	
	you	
		we
		we
	you	
	I	
		we

Table 3. Identification: Plural Pronouns-youC

## SHE AND HE: GENDER PRONOUNS

The use of gender pronouns, he/she/her/him, also separates you<sup>R</sup> and you<sup>C</sup> and makes it easier to recover the identity of the protagonist “you”. In typical you<sup>R</sup> narratives, “you” is genderless; if “you” is exophoric, then it cannot have a gender because an author cannot predict who the readers (not implied audience) for the novel will be. The more characteristics “you” has in common with the reader, the easier it is for her or him to identify with the protagonist (Phalen, 1996). The short story, *Travels with the Snow Queen*, begins with the protagonist “you” resting from a mission to find an ex-lover, and during the break “you” checks in to an inn and sleeps with a guardsman or another traveler during the quest.

(7) ...**You** enter the walls of the city early evening...

**You** ask the man who is guarding the gate to recommend a place to stay the night,

and even as **you** are falling into the bed at the inn,... perhaps alone, perhaps with another traveler, perhaps with the guardsman

This aspect could be construed as genderless given that “you” is still unidentifiable because the sexuality of “you” is also undefined. The reader can assume that “you” is an exophoric reference item because there is no other clue to oppose this belief. The story attempts to offer clues as to the

gender of “you”: a boyfriend named Kay (although the name is gender neutral, the narrative includes references of “he” and “his” in conjunction with the name) and a red cloak are all clues given to the reader to identify “you” as a assumed female. As shown in Example 8 it isn’t until the story has progressed half way that the gender of “you” is identified.

(8) There is a certain family resemblance between the **robber queen** and the girl...

"I don't want **you** to kill **her**," the girl says,

and **you** realize that she means **you**...

Although the gender has been identified, the theme of this story, a female in search of answers from an ex-boyfriend who has left her, may resonate with many readers, and consequently “you” is only partially identified. The climax of the story happens at the end where “you” finds the missing lover and is given a name. It is at this point that “you” is fully identified as a endophoric character. “You” can now be tracked cataphorically.

(9) **You** can't find the Snow Queen

and **you** can't find Kay,

but in every room there are white geese who, **you** are in equal parts relieved...

"Gerda!" Kay is sitting at a table...

Presenting	Presuming pronoun
you	
	you
	you
	her
	you
	Gerda

*Table 4. Identification: Gender Pronouns*

Before concluding this section and presenting the model, another more important aspect used to distinguish you<sub>R</sub> from you<sub>C</sub> should be noted. Narrative models contain two basic elements: 1) the temporal organization of the ontological world and 2) the diegesis in which the narrative is projected (Huisman, 2007). Throughout this paper, the manner in which second-person partial coincident narratives are projected has been expounded on, therefore, in order to

create a useful narrative model, an analysis of the texts' temporal arrangements should also be performed.

## TEMPORAL ORGANIZATION

All four stories used in the analysis were written primarily in the present tense, which is indicative of most second-person narratives. The ubiquitous use of the present tense breaks the "fourth wall" between reader and the ontological world, creating a sense that the events in the novel are happening in real time. This temporal effect allows the reader to believe that the protagonist "you" is pointing outside of the text to her/him. Example 1 demonstrates this technique of using the "timeless tense" to create the illusion that the reader is a part of the text.

- (1) It is morning and the sun pushes up on the horizon. The sea is calm. You climb into the narrow pilot's compartment of the underwater vessel *Seeker* with your special gear. The crew of the research vessel *Maray* screws down the hatch clamps. Now begins the plunge into the depths of the ocean. The *Seeker* crew begins lowering by a strong, but thin, cable. Within minutes, you are so deep in the ocean that little light filters down to you. The silence is eerie as the *Seeker* slips deeper and deeper. You peer out the thick glass porthole and see strange white fish drifting past, sometimes stopping to look at you-an intruder from another world. (CYA:JUS)

The implication of using the present tense is that the events taking place in the story are happening now. The use of non-finite verbs and adverbial expressions like "now" help the reader to integrate the story's events into her/his immediate experience.

The use of other tenses in partial coincident narratives, primarily the past, if used too often or for too long, may break the reader's illusion that she/he is the external protagonist. A

shift in tense is used to produce an effect of distancing, or to change point of view in narratives (Jahn, 2005). In you<sup>R</sup> narratives, tense shifts occur to apprise the external protagonist/reader of supplemental information that is used to qualify a previous clause or the story line. The shift is associated with a material process in which the narrator gives “you” information about a past event. At this point the story is no longer from the perspective of addressee, and it now becomes a third-person narrative.

- (2) A few short hours later, you are flying at 35,000 feet, en route to Merida, the capital of the Yucatan. Several books on the Mayans are spread out in front of you.

At one time, the Mayans controlled huge ceremonial, agricultural and trading centers throughout the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. Their kingdom stretched from Tulum, on the edge of the Caribbean sea, to Tikal deep in the south, and on to Chichen Itza and Uxmal farther inland. Then, simply and mysteriously, the great Mayan cities faded into nothing. They became ghost towns and ruins, Mayan culture disappeared overnight. Today, vines and jungle brush cover everything. (CYA:MOM)

After the sudden switch in tense, the story then goes back to the present tense. Although in both you<sup>R</sup> and you<sup>C</sup> the time shift may change perspectives, the effect does not create any distance between the reader and the text because they are not very essential to the plot of the story. However, in you<sup>C</sup> narrative the narrative recounts are not only essential to the plot of the story, but also create an ontological distance between the textual “you” and the reader. These narrative recounts are similar to first- and third-person narratives in which there is a shift in time to some crucial event in a character’s past that relates to the story’s plot.

- (3) So this is the story so far. You grew up, you fell in love with the boy next door, Kay, the one with blue eyes who brought you bird feathers and roses, the one who was so good at puzzles. You thought he loved you-maybe he thought he did, too. His mouth tasted so sweet, it tasted like love, and his fingers were so kind, they pricked like love on your skin, but three years and exactly two days after you moved in with him, you were having drinks out on the patio. You weren't exactly fighting, and you can't remember what he had done that had made you so angry, but you threw your glass at him. (TWSQ)

In Example 2, the historical background about the Mayan civilization is not crucial to the development of the story; whether or not the reader knows this bit of information would not affect or add to the story's plot line(s) because the story's progress is contingent upon the actions of the reader, not on where the story takes place. In contrast, in Example 3, the time shift is used to give background to the plot of the story, whereas in the passage the reader is told about the events leading up to the quest "you" takes to find an ex-lover. The recollection of a past event begins to give the textual "you" a life apart from the reader. Because the reader does not share this memory, a distance has now been created between her/him and the textual "you".

In this chapter, the transitivity framework and identification model were used to demonstrate how certain lexico-grammatical features and semantic discourse patterns were used in second-person partial coincident narratives to distinguish the protagonist/reader "you" from the protagonist/character "you". The next section will use the features and patterns found to construct a character model for second-person narratives.

## SECOND-PERSON PARTICIPANT MODEL

This section presents a model based on the previous analysis of second-person partial-coincident narratives. The *Narrative Participant Model*, presented below, describes the semantic relationship between the protagonist of partial coincident narratives and the reader. The model is arranged into two systems, “you” as reader, you<sub>R</sub>, and “you” as character, you<sub>C</sub>. The components found in the model are derived from the discourse semantic and lexico-grammatical features found in the text.

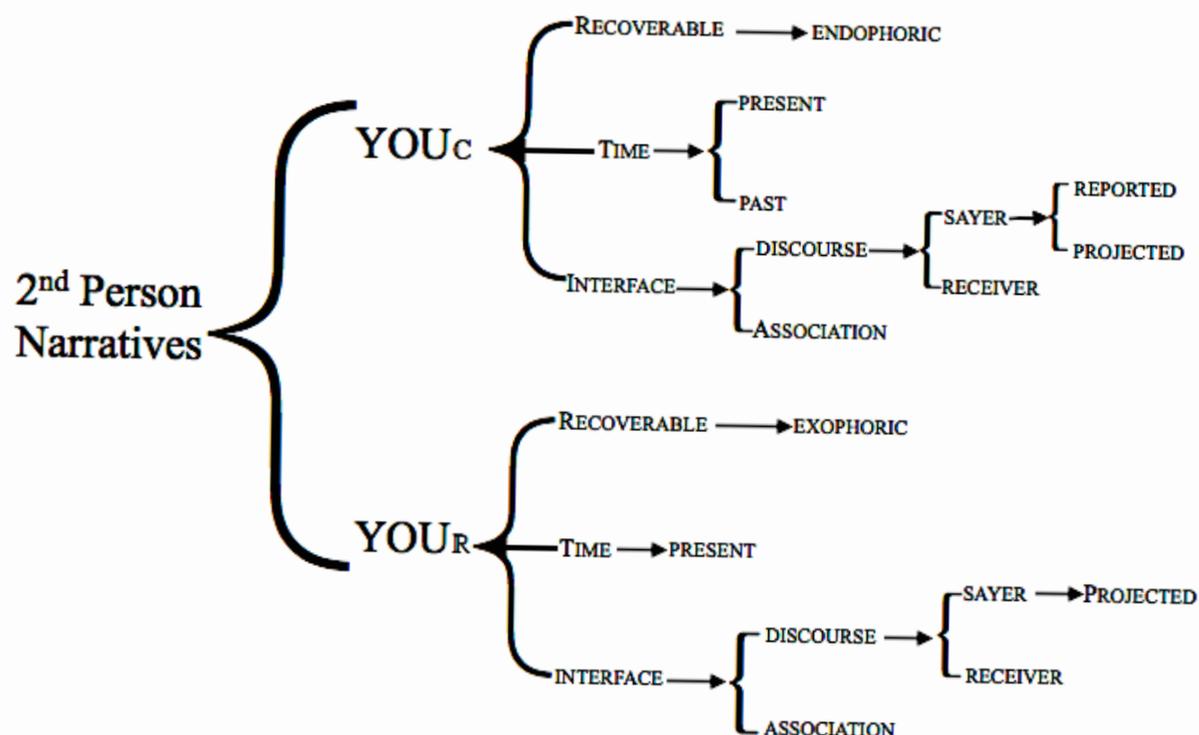


Figure 7. Narrative Participant Model-2<sup>nd</sup> Person

The following details the components of the model:

**Recoverable** refers to how “you” is recovered in the text, either endophoric or exophoric.

**Time** involves the temporal organization and tense of the story. In narratives in which the protagonist converges with an exophoric narratee, the stories are told in the present and time is constant with no or an occasional time shift. Tense for stories in which the protagonist “you” is endophoric are also told in the present, but time in these stories fluctuate.

**Interface** concerns interaction with other characters in the story. This category is divided into two sets, *discourse* and *association*. *Discourse* refers to the verbal interactions “you” has with other characters in the story. Discourse is also split into two subsets: Sayer and Receiver. Sayer refers to how speech is relayed in the text, reported or quoted, and to what extent (=/+/-). *Association* entails the protagonist’s relationship with other characters in the story, specifically how often or how many she/he interacts with.

Second-person narratives are unique in that they are written from the perspective of the interlocutor (DeLConte, 2003); as such, these narratives overlap with other narrative perspectives. This overlapping of diegesis allows for the participant model to be used to accommodate narratives written in first- and third-person. In accommodating other narratives, the designators you<sub>R</sub> and you<sub>C</sub> should be relabeled: Partial participant (you<sub>R</sub>) and Complete participant (you<sub>C</sub>).

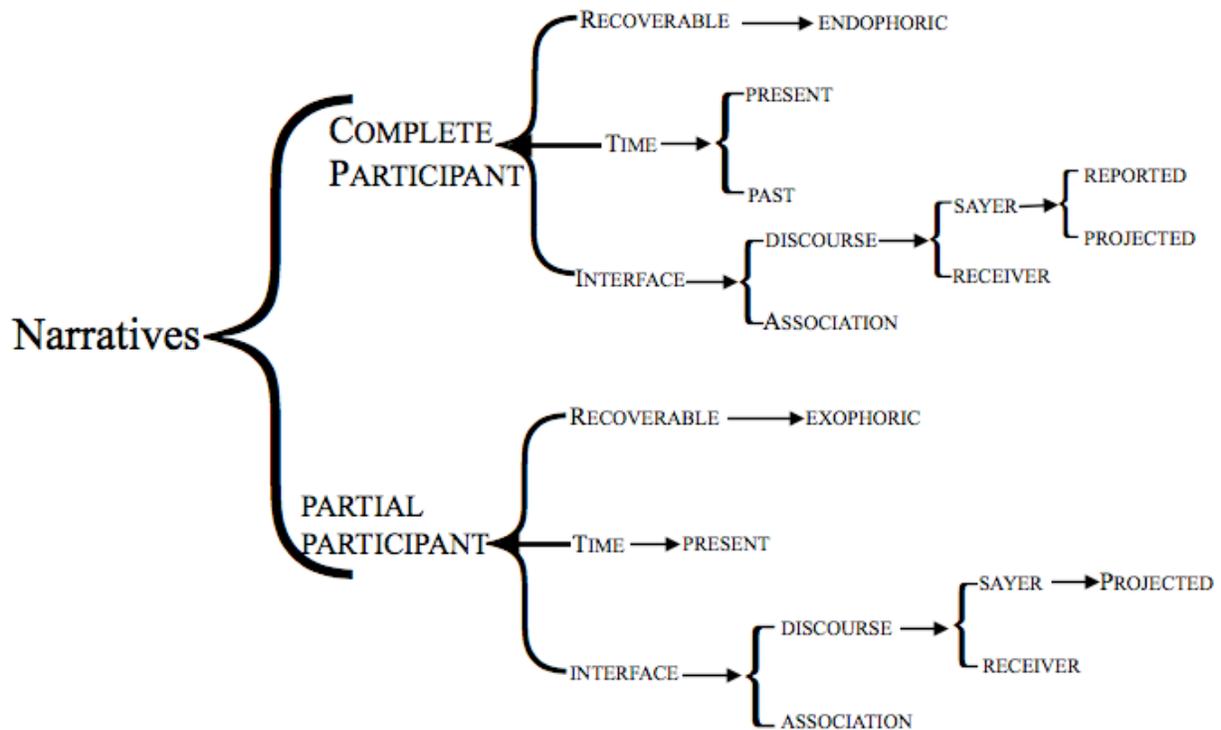


Figure 8. Narrative Participant Model-other diegesis

The following two examples were taken from the short stories “Landladies” and “Boys, Birds, and Bees” from the serial novel *The Best of Simple*, a collection of short stories written by Langston Hughes in the 1960s. The stories center around an unnamed narrator who spends his days in a Harlem bar drinking beer and listening to stories told by his friend, Jess B. Semple (aka Simple). The following texts will be used to demonstrate the workings of the participant model.

- (1) The next time I saw him, he was hot under the collar, but only incidentally about Zarita. Before the bartender had even put on the glasses down he groaned, “I do not understand landladies.”

“Now what?” I asked. “A landlady is a woman, isn’t she. And, according to your declarations, you know how to handle women.”

“I know how to handle women who act likes ladies, but my landlady ain’t no lady. Sometimes I even wish I was living with my wife again so I could have my own place and not have no landladies,” said Simple.

“Landladies are practically always landladies,” I said.

“But in New York they are landladies plus!” declared Simple. (*Landladies*)

(2) “Joyce is gone,” said Simple.

“Where?”

“That is just it. I do not know where. She must of left right from work yesterday, which were Friday, because when I rung them seven bells last night, her big old fat landlady waddled to the door and hollered, ‘Joyce is gone.’

“ ‘Gone where?’ I says.

“ ‘You ought to know. You closer than her shadow.’

“ ‘Madame, I am asking you a question.’

“ ‘You know her vacation has started. She told me to tell you she would be away for a fortnight, whatever that is.’

“ ‘A fourth-night?’

“ ‘Them is her words, not mine, so figure it out for yourself’

“And she waddled on back through them double doors. What is a fourth-night?’

“Two weeks,” I said. (*Boys, Birds, and Bees*)

The passages above are representative of other passages in the novel in which the narrator- “I” sits and listens to Simple tell stories about his daily life. The first element of the model, Recoverability, examines how characters are tracked in narratives. Despite the story being told in the first person, the “I” character is always referred to by “I” and is never named. This is reminiscent of second-person narratives where “you” is presented to the reader without any prior references to who “you” is. The absence of referential clues to mark “I” leads to the conclusion that “I” is outside of the text. The next component of the model, Time, concerns the

organization of tense in the story. In both of the passages, it appears that time shifts between the past and the present, but the present tense employed in the texts is the historical present, a tense used for narrating past events. Interface, the third component of the model, details how characters interact with each other. The “I” character engages in conversations with the character Simple, but is primarily that of Receiver or listener in those conversations, nor does it interact with other characters outside of Simple and is never featured in any plural pronouns. Application of the model reveals that “I”, although one of the main participants in the stories, only plays a partial role in the story. The role of the “I” character is to act as a “straight man” to the protagonist, and to set up the story by asking questions and making responses.

The model presented in this section offers a new method of analyzing the role of participants in second-person narratives, as well as in other diegesis. This model can be used by readers (as well as reading instructors) to look for lexical and semantic patterns. Explicit knowledge of textual patterns can help with comprehension and information recall (Carrell, 1985). Although the focus of the model is on lexical content, and not textual organization, the components used may aid in the comprehension of narrative texts.

## **CONCLUSION**

The purpose of this thesis was to explore second-person narratives, particularly those in which the protagonist converged with an exophoric and/or endophoric narratee. By using specific properties of interpersonal stratum in SFL, namely that of transitivity and identification, certain

discourse semantic patterns were found which aided in the creation of a template for identifying the main participants of the narrative perspective. All of the resources presented in this thesis can be used by readers to enhance their understanding of the relationship between the participants within a text, as well as between the text and reader. Given that all texts have defined speaker/listener roles, the ability to distinguish between the two goes to the basic foundation of a text.

The linguistic choices used by the author in managing character roles go beyond the selection of names and pronouns. As shown in the analysis, the confluence of pronouns, tense, and process types aids in defining the relationship which characters have both within and without the text.

The preliminary act in decoding the theme of a text is knowing its underlying structure. Once the structure is known, the reader can go beyond the surface of the story and delve deeper into the story's theme (McKay, 1982). Although the framework presented in this thesis is not an extensive model of the lexico-grammatical features and discourse semantic patterns a reader might encounter, it is a start in helping readers identify structures within a story in order to facilitate their comprehension.

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## APPENDIX

## APPENDIX A: LETTER FROM INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH BOARD



Office of Research Integrity

March 8, 2013

Davina Kittrell  
219 8th Ave, Apt. #3  
Huntington, WV 25701

Dear Ms. Kittrell:

This letter is in response to the submitted thesis abstract titled "Who is You? Identifying 'You' in Second Person Narratives: A Systemic Functional Linguistic Analysis." After assessing the abstract it has been deemed not to be human subject research and therefore exempt from oversight of the Marshall University Institutional Review Board (IRB). The Code of Federal Regulations (45CFR46) has set forth the criteria utilized in making this determination. Since the information in this study only involves a textual analysis it is not considered human subject research. If there are any changes to the abstract you provided then you would need to resubmit that information to the Office of Research Integrity for review and a determination.

I appreciate your willingness to submit the abstract for determination. Please feel free to contact the Office of Research Integrity if you have any questions regarding future protocols that may require IRB review.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Bruce F. Day".

Bruce F. Day, ThD, CIP  
Director  
Office of Research Integrity

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**APPENDIX B: SAMPLES****JOURNEY UNDER THE SEA****BEWARE and WARNING!**

This book is different from other books.

You and YOU ALONE are in charge of what happens in this story

There are dangers, choices, adventures and consequences. YOU must use all of your numerous talents and much of your enormous intelligence. The wrong decision could end in disaster--even death. But, don't despair. At anytime, YOU can go back and make another choice, alter the path of your story, and change its result.

Now enter the mysterious and beautiful world of Atlantis.. YOU may become famous, you might decide never to return to the earth world above, or you may not get a chance to make that decision

Whatever happens, good luck!

You are a deep sea explorer searching for the famed lost city of Atlantis. This is your most challenging and dangerous mission. Fear and excitement are now your companions.

It is morning and the sun pushes up on the horizon. The sea is calm. You climb into the narrow pilot's compartment of the underwater vessel *Seeker* with your special gear. The crew of the research vessel *Maray* screws down the hatch clamps. Now begins the plunge into the depths of the ocean. The *Seeker* crew begins lowering by a strong, but thin, cable. Within minutes, you are so deep in the ocean that little light filters down to you. The silence is eerie as the *Seeker* slips deeper and deeper. You peer out the thick glass porthole and see strange white fish drifting past, sometimes stopping to look at you--an intruder from another world.

The cable attaching you to the *Maray* is extended to its limit. You have come to rest on a ledge near the canyon in the ocean floor that ancient myth says leads to the lost city of Atlantis.

You have an experimental diving suit designed to protect you from the intense pressure of the deep. You should be able to leave the *Seeker* and explore the sea bottom. The new suit contains a number of the latest microprocessors enabling a variety of useful functions. It even has a built-in PDA with laser communicator. You can cut loose from the cable: the *Seeker* is self-propelled. You are now in another world. Remember, this is a dangerous, an unknown world.

As agreed, you signal the *Maray*, "All systems GO. It's awesom down here."

If you decide to explore the ledge where the *Seeker* has come to rest, turn to page 6.

If you decide to cut loose from the *Maray* and dive with the *Seeker* into the canyon in the ocean floor, turn to page 4.

(pg. 4)

The Maray asks you for a more detailed status report, and you comply, telling them that you are going to cast off from the line and descend under your own power.

Approval is given, and the Seeker slips silently into the undersea canyon.

As you drop into the canyon, you turn on the Seeker's powerful searchlight. Straight ahead is a dark wall covered with a strange type of barnacle growth. To the left (port) side you see what appears to be a grotto. The entrance is perfectly round, as if it had been cut by human hands.

White lantern fish give off a pale, greenish light. To the right (starboard) side of the Seeker you see bubbles rising steadily from the floor of the canyon.

If you decide to investigate the bubbles, turn to page 3.

If you decide to investigate the grotto with the round entrance, turn to page 8.

(pg. 8)

You pilot the Seeker through the rounded entrance to the grotto. Once inside, your searchlight picks up what appear to be docks and piers along the grotto walls. The Seeker's searchlight is not very powerful. However, you do have a special laser light which would light up the grotto like daylight. Unfortunately, the laser light can only be used twice for very short periods before it must be recharged aboard the Maray, now more than 2,000 feet above you on the surface.

If you decide to use the laser light, turn to page 18.

If you decide to cruise further into the grotto, turn to page 13.

(pg. 18)

The beam from the laser light illuminates the entire grotto. Far back on the floor of the grotto is a submarine! Cautiously, you maneuver the Seeker closer. It's the submarine that mysteriously disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle almost a year before. The Bermuda Triangle is more than 2000 miles away. How did the sub get here?

It doesn't appear to be damaged, but it is covered with slimy algae. Beautiful fish swim around it as though it is their own special prize. Then you notice that the main hatch is free of algae.

If you decide to enter the submarine, turn to page 28.

If you decide to cruise on through the grotto ignoring the sub for now, turn to page 30.

(pg. 28)

The submarine is indeed mysterious. Opening the hatch on the conning tower, you enter the sub. It is amazingly clean and orderly. There are no signs of life, but no signs of struggle or death.

A voice softly speaks. "Thousands of years ago, the leaders of Atlantis realized that their continent was slipping into the sea. They discovered a large underground cavern and built new

forms of living quarters for their people. Later when Atlantis was deep beneath the ocean, some of our scientists discovered and perfected an operation enabling us to breathe under water.

The voice, which sounds friendly, also tells you that there are two groups in Atlantis. One group is thought to be good while the other is seen as evil.

“Come join us,” the voice says. “You can use the secret passageway to Atlantis. It begins just over there.”

As you follow directions, you spy a remarkable underwater craft passing by. There are several people aboard, and they smile at you. Or do they?

If this is an Atlantean ship, are the people good or evil? Do they know of the secret passageway?

If you hurry in, trying to reach the secret passageway without being seen, turn to page 44.

If you rush back to the Seeker trying to escape danger, turn to page 45.

(pg. 44)

You escape being seen by the submarine craft. Following the instructions you enter a passageway. At the end of the passageway is an airlock door and beyond it a large air-filled cavern. Perhaps it is the inside of an extinct volcano.

The land is pleasant, although strange to your experience. A soft substance covers the ground, it seems to be alive. You can't tell. A gentle light comes from the sides of this huge cavern. It reminds you of early morning light just before the sun rises.

A group of people approaches you with friendly gestures. They are wearing simple clothes much like the clothes people wore in ancient Greece. They seem kind and generous. You remove your diving suit to find that the air is good to breathe.

These people speak a language that is unknown to you, but one of them acts as an interpreter. You find out that this is Atlantis. They tell you it is governed by a man who is greedy, selfish, and dangerous. The people are like slaves. Everyone is unhappy except a few who serve the ruler as lieutenants. These new friends ask for your help. Perhaps you can help them escape.

If you decide to leave your new friends and search for the ruler, turn to page 59.

If you decide to help your new friends escape, turn to page 60.

(pg. 60)

The problem is where do they escape to? The king is in charge. He rules the world below the sea and his spies are everywhere. The only answer is to devise a plan to capture the king and put him in prison.

The people are frightened. Some citizens tried to revolt years before and are still in prison. The king is smart and suspicious of everyone.

You suggest a plan to put on a festival with a play. On a given signal the actors and the people in the audience will rise up and seize the king. The actors will be carrying real weapons, but no one will suspect them because they are in the play.

The people like the plan. They ask you to become their leader.

If you accept their wish to become their leader, turn to page 81.

If you decide to help them in planning, but also to escape from this sad world, turn to page 84.

(pg. 81)

You don't want to lead a revolt but the people need you. You organize the play, and the king is pleased to have his people involved in a project that keeps them busy and happy. The people can't wait for the day when they can put the king in prison and make their own decisions.

The night of the play the theater is filled, and everyone waits for the king to appear. There is a delay. The crowd grows nervous. A messenger from the king runs into the theater announcing that the king has had a serious attack of brain fever. The king might not live.

You wonder whether the king is really ill or whether he has found out about the plot against him. The people are confused and do not know what to do. They turn to you and you tell them to go on with the play. Just then, a squad of the king's soldiers enters the theater. They are headed for you.

If you allow them to capture you turn to page 116.

If you try to escape, turn to page 117.

(pg. 117)

How can you escape? The soldiers are coming after you. You scream as loud as you can: "Help me!!!" Everyone in the theater surrounds you, forming a barrier to the soldiers. The soldiers stare at the people, hesitate, and quickly leave. They know that the odds are too great to win such a fight.

The people cry for the revolt to go on. The crowd leaves the theater and heads to the king's quarters. All along the route people join you and even the king's soldiers begin to join the crowd.

You and the people are free; the king is put in prison. The revolt is a success.

## MYSTERY OF THE MAYA

This book is different from other books.

You and YOU ALONE are in charge what happens in this story.

There are dangers, choices, adventures and consequences. YOU must use all of your numerous talents and much of your enormous intelligence. The wrong decision could end in disaster--even death. But, don't despair. At anytime, YOU can go back and make another choice, alter the path of your story, and change its result.

Your best friend Tom goes missing on assignment in Mexico. You have to help find him. Will it require you to take a potion that sends you back in time to the world of the mysterious Mayan civilization? Or is Tom still here in the present day? Can you trust Manuel? Depending on your choices, YOU may become a great Mayan ruler or a double agent fighting a modern revolution. The wrong choice could turn you into a human sacrifice on a bloody altar.

(pg.1)

It is night. You are standing on the flat top of a stone pyramid. Men dressed in long green robes crowd around you. They chant and sing in a language you don't understand.

You look into the misty light for your friend Tom. Suddenly, you see him--struggling for his life. He is strapped to an altar, his arms and legs tied down. Tom's terrified eyes meet yours and you see him mouth the words, "Help me. Please!"

A man in robes steps forward and begins to slide a knife across Tom's throat.

"Nooooo!" you scream, reaching out.

(pg.2)

You lunge forward. But the only thing you grasp is the lamp next to your bed. You jerk awake and sit up, looking around. You are home in your own room. There's no altar. No singing men. You take some deep breaths. It was just a bad dream.

Three days ago, your best friend disappeared on assignment in Mexico. He was doing a piece for cable TV on the ancient Mayan temples at Chichen Itza. His assistant Amanda called to tell you the news.

"Tom was onto a hot story. But he wouldn't say what on the phone. After he was reported missing, the police found fresh blood on the altar used for human sacrifice by the Mayans. No one has seen him since," Amanda tells you.

"Who called to tell you?" you ask.

"Tom's guide Manuel. Tom said that if anything happened to him, I should call you right away," she replies. "Do you think you could go down there to look for him? I'm really worried."

Go to the next page.

(pg. 3)

Tom is your oldest friend. You have known each other since kindergarten. You have no choice; you must go to Mexico to find him.

“Of course I will go,” you tell Amanda.

That was three days ago. You look at the packed bag next to your bed and then at your watch. Even though it’s still dark, it’s almost time to get up anyway.

A few short hours later, you are flying at 35,000 feet, en route to Merida, the capital of the Yucatan. Several books on the Mayans are spread out in front of you.

At one time, the Mayans controlled huge ceremonial, agricultural and trading centers throughout the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. Their kingdom stretched from Tulum, on the edge of the Caribbean sea, to Tikal deep in the south, and on to Chichen Itza and Uxmal farther inland. Then, simply and mysteriously, the great Mayan cities faded into nothing. They became ghost towns and ruins, Mayan culture disappeared overnight. Today, vines and jungle brush cover everything.

Turn to page 5.

(pg. 5)

Tom flew into Merida. Your plan is to go there first and try to retrace Tom’s steps. Amanda has arranged for Manuel, Tom’s guide, to meet you at the airport.

“Manuel is a well-known guide for those who seek the mysteries of the Mayans,” Amanda tells you. “and he has good connections at Merida University, where the best Mayan scholars work. But Manuel also has a reputation for being unusual. Tom suspected that he might be the reincarnation of an ancient Mayan shaman.” she warns.

Your guidebooks say shamans were extremely powerful, priest-like magicians or spellbinders. The Mayans believed shamans represented the link between heaven and earth. They were the human link to Mayan gods, such as the dreaded Plumed Serpent or the enormously powerful Jaguar.

You are curious to meet this Manuel!

Turn to page 6.

(pg. 6)

Several hours later, you land at Merida and pass through Customs. Suddenly, as if appearing out of nowhere a man is by your side.

“Hello, my name is Manuel. I am to be your guide. Welcome to Mexico.” He shakes your hand and smiles. Manuel’s skin shines like copper. His large nose and sloping forehead remind you of the ancient Mayan paintings and stone carvings in the books you studied on the plane. Suddenly you realize that Manuel himself must have descended from the Mayan people. The civilization, many say, collapsed 800 years ago, but its people live on to this day.

“I tried to help Tom,” Manuel says, grabbing you heaviest suitcase, “But....unfortunately, he did not always take my advice. Maybe together we can find him?”

“Where do you think we should start, Manuel?” you ask.

“Perhaps at the university? Dr. Lopez might help. He is a leading expert on Mayan sacrifice. Or maybe we should go straight to Chichen Itza, the last place Tom was see alive?”

If you decide to visit Dr. Lopez, turn to page 7.

If you decide to go right to Chichen Itza, turn to page 38.

(pg. 38)

You decide to go straight to Chichen Itza to talk to the police. First, you and Manuel drive to you hotel in Merida to spend the night. Merida was founded by the Spanish after their conquest of Mexico in the sixteenth century. Their old churches and fortresses gave the town a Spanish flavor.

“Tomorrow we begin,” Manuel says. “Chichen Itza, the largest site of Mayan ruins, is famous as a center of lost power. It holds a huge pyramid, a domed observatory, a deep water hole or *cenote* and the famed and feared ball court. In ancient times, the losers of the ball game also lost their lives.

That night, you notice that Manuel is quiet. He clears his throat to speak. “I have been thinking.” Manuel begins. “You may want to go to Uxamal firs. While smaller than Chichen Itza, Uxmal is far older. The Temple of the Magicians at Uxmal is filled with mystery.

“That last day, Tom kept it a secret where he went,” Manuel adds.

If you decide to go to Chichen Itza first turn to page 46.

If you decide to go to Uxmal instead, turn to page 44.

(pg. 46)

The highway to Chichen Itza runs through flat, scrubby land. A few houses or huts line the road. Then you see a giant form on the horizon. It grows larger and larger as your bus approaches, until the bus stops for good in the monument’s shadow. Il Castillo, the giant pyramid, looms above you.

Broad avenue lead out from the pyramid to other stone buildings, to courtyards, and to the evil ball court where Mayans lost their lives if they lost the game. One avenue leads to the *cenote*, or giant well, which has taken the bodies of many sacrificial victims.

A group of twenty people stand quietly at the base of El Castillo.

Your eyes follow a finger pointing up into the sky. The top of the pyramid is glowing with a bright red color! Where is it coming from?

A large spacecraft hovers over the pyramid.

“What does it mean, Manuel? What’s happening?” You are frightened.

“These Mayan ruins are contact points for other planets. That group of people has been asked to leave Earth for the planet Mergantic.”

You believe in UFOs, but now that you are seeing one, it is frightening.

“Manuel, this is incredible. Why is that thing here?”

Go to the next page.

(pg. 47)

“Earth is seen as a leading planet. Other civilizations want to learn from us. They send emissaries to ask us to return with them to an outer galactic congress on the rights of life in the universe. That is the last group of people attending the congress to depart. If you think Tom may have gone on the mission, you should join them.”

Is Manuel making this up? There is no denying the bright red glow on top of the pyramid.

If you decide to join the mission, knowing the danger of never returning, turn to page 62.

If you decide to stay and finish your job, turn to page 64.

(pg. 62)

One by one, the group standing at the pyramid enters the spacecraft by the transporter beam. You notice that halfway to the spacecraft, their bodies begin to glow. No one seems to be afraid.

Gaining confidence, you step into the transporter beam and are carried up into the spacecraft. You hear nothing as you shoot up and away into the far reaches of the universe, to the planet Merganatic and the great Congress on Intergalactic Life. You wonder why the Mayan sites were chosen as contact points. Their brutal and complex society seems an odd choice of other planets. Who knows what lies ahead?

## TRAVELS WITH THE SNOW QUEEN

Part evening, of you is always traveling faster, always traveling ahead. Even when you are moving, it is never fast enough to satisfy that part of you. You enter the walls of the city early in the when the cobblestones are a mottled pink with reflected light, and cold beneath the slap of your bare, bloody feet. You ask the man who is guarding the gate to recommend a place to stay the night, and even as you are falling into the bed at the inn, the bed, which is piled high with quilts and scented with lavender, perhaps alone, perhaps with another traveler, perhaps with the guardsman who had such brown eyes, and a mustache that curled up on either side of his nose like two waxed black laces, even as this guardsman, whose name you didn't ask calls out a name in his sleep that is not your name, you are dreaming about the road again. When you sleep, you dream about the long white distances that still lie before you. When you wake up, the guardsman is back at his post, and the place between your legs aches pleasantly, your legs sore as if you had continued walking all night in your sleep. While you were sleeping, your feet have healed again. You were careful not to kiss the guardsman on the lips, so it doesn't really count, does it.

Your destination is North. The map that you are using is a mirror. You are always pulling the bits out of your bare feet, the pieces of the map that broke off and fell on the ground as the Snow Queen flew overhead in her sleigh. Where you are, where you are coming from, it is impossible to read a map made of paper. If it were that easy then everyone would be a traveler. You have heard of other travelers whose maps are breadcrumbs, whose maps are stones, whose maps are the four winds, whose maps are yellow bricks laid one after the other. You read your map with your foot, and behind you somewhere there must be another traveler whose map is the bloody footprints that you are leaving behind you.

There is a map of fine white scars on the soles of your feet that tells you where you have been. When you are pulling the shards of the Snow Queen's looking-glass out of your feet, you remind yourself, you tell yourself to imagine how it felt when Kay's eyes, Kay's heart were pierced by shards of the same mirror. Sometimes it is safer to read maps with your feet.

Ladies. Has it ever occurred to you that fairy tales aren't easy on the feet?

So this is the story so far. You grew up, you fell in love with the boy next door, Kay, the one with blue eyes who brought you bird feathers and roses, the one who was so good at puzzles. You thought he loved

you-maybe he thought he did, too. His mouth tasted so sweet, it tasted like love, and his fingers were so kind, they pricked like love on your skin, but three years and exactly two days after you moved in with him, you were having drinks out on the patio. You weren't exactly fighting, and you can't remember what he had done that had made you so angry, but you threw your glass at him. There was a noise like the sky shattering.

The cuff of his trousers got splashed. There were little fragments of glass everywhere. "Don't move," you said. You weren't wearing shoes.

He raised his hand up to his face. "I think there's something in my eye," he said.

His eye was fine, of course, there wasn't a thing in it, but later that night when he was undressing for bed, there were little bits of glass like grains of sugar, dusting his clothes. When you brushed your hand against his chest, something pricked your finger and left a smear of blood against his heart.

The next day it was snowing and he went out for a pack of cigarettes and never came back. You sat on the patio drinking something warm and alcoholic, with nutmeg in it, and the snow fell on your shoulders. You were wearing a short-sleeved T-shirt; you were pretending that you weren't cold, and that your lover would be back soon. You put your finger on the ground and then stuck it in your mouth. The snow looked like sugar, but it tasted like nothing at all.

The man at the corner store said that he saw your lover get into a long white sleigh. There was a beautiful woman in it, and it was pulled by thirty white geese. "Oh, her," you said, as if you weren't surprised. You went home and looked in the wardrobe for that cloak that belonged to your great-grandmother. You were thinking about going after him. You remembered that the cloak was woolen and warm, and a beautiful red-a traveler's cloak. But when you pulled it out, it smelled like wet dog and the lining was ragged, as if something had chewed on it. It smelled like bad luck: it made you sneeze, and so you put it back. You waited for a while longer.

Two months went by, and Kay didn't come back, and finally you left and locked the door of your house behind you. You were going to travel for love, without shoes, or cloak, or common sense. This is one of the things a woman can do when her lover leaves her. It's hard on the feet perhaps, but staying at home is hard on the heart, and you weren't quite ready to give him up yet. You told yourself that the woman in the sleigh must have put a spell on him, and he was probably already missing you. Besides, there are some questions you want to ask him, some true things you want to tell him. This is what you told yourself.

The snow was soft and cool on your feet, and then you found the trail of glass, the map.

After three weeks of hard traveling, you came to the city.

No, really, think about it. Think about the little mermaid, who traded in her tail for love, got two legs and two feet, and every step was like walking on knives. And where did it get her? That's a

rhetorical question, of course. Then there's the girl who put on the beautiful red dancing shoes. The woodsman had to chop her feet off with an axe.

There are Cinderella's two stepsisters, who cut off their own toes, and Snow White's stepmother, who danced to death in red-hot iron slippers. The Goose Girl's maid got rolled down a hill in a barrel studded with nails. Travel is hard on the single woman. There was this one woman who walked east of the sun and then west of the moon, looking for her lover, who had left her because she spilled tallow on his nightshirt. She wore out at least one pair of perfectly good iron shoes before she found him. Take our word for it, he wasn't worth it. What do you think happened when she forgot to put the fabric softener in the dryer? Laundry is hard, travel is harder. You deserve a vacation, but of course you're a little wary. You've read the fairy tales. We've been there, we know.

That's why we here at Snow Queen Tours have put together a luxurious but affordable package for you, guaranteed to be easy on the feet and on the budget. See the world by goosedrawn sleigh, experience the archetypal forest, the winter wonderland; chat with real live talking animals (please don't feed them). Our accommodations are three-star: sleep on comfortable, guaranteed pea-free box-spring mattresses; eat meals prepared by world-class chefs. Our tour guides are friendly, knowledgeable, well-traveled, trained by the Snow Queen herself. They know first aid, how to live off the land; they speak three languages fluently.

Special discount for older sisters, stepsisters, stepmothers, wicked witches, crones, hags, princesses who have kissed frogs without realizing what they were getting into, etc.

You leave the city and you walk all day beside a stream that is as soft and silky as blue fur. You wish that your map was water, and not broken glass. At midday you stop and bathe your feet in a shallow place and the ribbons of red blood curl into the blue water.

Eventually you come to a wall of briars, so wide and high that you can't see any way around it. You reach out to touch a rose, and prick your finger. You suppose that you could walk around, but your feet tell you that the map leads directly through the briar wall, and you can't stray from the path that has been laid out for you. Remember what happened to the little girl, your great-grandmother, in her red woolen cape. Maps protect their travelers, but only if the travelers obey the dictates of their maps. This is what you have been told.

Perched in the briars above your head is a raven, black and sleek as the curlicued moustache of the guardsman. The raven looks at you and you look back at it. "I'm looking for someone," you say. "A boy named Kay."

The raven opens its big beak and says, "He doesn't love you, you know."

You shrug. You've never liked talking animals. Once your lover gave you a talking cat, but it ran away and secretly you were glad. "I have a few things I want to say to him, that's all." You have, in fact, been keeping a list of all the things you are going to say to him. "Besides, I wanted to see the world, be a tourist for a while."

"That's fine for some," the raven says. Then he relents. "If you'd like to come in, then come in. The princess just married the boy with the boots that squeaked on the marble floor."

"That's fine for some," you say. Kay's boots squeak; you wonder how he met the princess, if he is the one that she just married, how the raven knows that he doesn't love you, what this princess has that you don't have, besides a white sleigh pulled by thirty geese, an impenetrable wall of briars, and maybe a castle. She's probably just some bimbo.

"The Princess Briar Rose is a very wise princess," the raven says, "but she's the laziest girl in the world. Once she went to sleep for a hundred days and no one could wake her up, although they put one hundred peas under her mattress, one each morning."

This, of course, is the proper and respectful way of waking up princesses. Sometimes Kay used to wake you up by dribbling cold water on your feet. Sometimes he woke you up by whistling.

"On the one hundredth day," the raven says, "she woke up all by herself and told her council of twelve fairy godmothers that she supposed it was time she got married. So they stuck up posters, and princes and youngest sons came from all over the kingdom."

When the cat ran away, Kay put up flyers around the neighborhood. You wonder if you should have put up flyers for Kay. "Briar Rose wanted a clever husband, but it tired her dreadfully to sit and listen to the young men give speeches and talk about how rich and sexy and smart they were. She fell asleep and stayed asleep until the young man with the squeaky boots came in. It was his boots that woke her up.

"It was love at first sight. Instead of trying to impress her with everything he knew and everything he had seen, he declared that he had come all this way to hear Briar Rose talk about her dreams. He'd been studying in Vienna with a famous Doctor, and was deeply interested in dreams."

Kay used to tell you his dreams every morning. They were long and complicated and if he thought you weren't listening to him, he'd sulk. You never remember your dreams. "Other peoples' dreams are never very interesting," you tell the raven.

The raven cocks its head. It flies down and lands on the grass at your feet. "Wanna bet?" it says. Behind the raven you notice a little green door recessed in the briar wall. You could have sworn that it wasn't there a minute ago.

The raven leads you through the green door, and across a long green lawn towards a two-story castle that is the same pink as the briar roses. You think this is kind of tacky, but exactly what you would expect from someone named after a flower. "I had this dream once," the raven says, "that my teeth were falling out. They just crumbled into pieces in my mouth. And then I woke up, and realized that ravens don't have teeth."

You follow the raven inside the palace, and up a long, twisty stair-case. The stairs are stone, worn and smoothed away, like old thick silk. Slivers of glass glister on the pink stone, catching the light of the candles on the wall. As you go up, you see that you are part of a great gray rushing crowd. Fantastic creatures, flat and thin as smoke, race up the stairs, men and women and snakey things with bright eyes. They nod to you as they slip past. "Who are they?" you ask the raven.

"Dreams," the raven says, hopping awkwardly from step to step. "The Princess's dreams, come to pay their respects to her new husband. Of course they're too fine to speak to the likes of us."

But you think that some of them look familiar. They have a familiar smell, like a pillow that your lover's head has rested upon.

At the top of the staircase is a wooden door with a silver keyhole. The dreams pour steadily through the keyhole, and under the bottom of the door, and when you open it, the sweet stink and cloud of dreams are so thick in the Princess's bedroom that you can barely breathe. Some people might mistake the scent of the Princess's dreams for the scent of sex; then again, some people mistake sex for love.

You see a bed big enough for a giant, with four tall oak trees for bedposts. You climb up the ladder that rests against the side of the bed to see the Princess's sleeping husband. As you lean over, a goose feather flies up and tickles your nose. You brush it away, and dislodge several seedy-looking dreams. Briar Rose rolls over and laughs in her sleep, but the man beside her wakes up. "Who is it?" he says. "What do you want?"

He isn't Kay. He doesn't look a thing like Kay. "You're not Kay," you tell the man in the Princess's bed.

"Who the fuck is Kay?" he says, so you explain it all to him, feeling horribly embarrassed. The raven is looking pleased with itself, the way your talking cat used to look, before it ran away. You glare at the raven. You glare at the man who is not Kay.

After you've finished, you say that something is wrong, because your map clearly indicates that Kay has been here, in this bed. Your feet are leaving bloody marks on the sheets, and you pick a sliver of glass off the foot of the bed, so everyone can see that you're not lying. Princess Briar Rose sits up in bed, her long pinkish-brown hair tumbled down over her shoulders. "He's not in love with you," she says, yawning.

"So he was here, in this bed, you're the icy slut in the sleigh at the corner store, you're not even bothering to deny it," you say.

She shrugs her pink-white shoulders. "Four, five months ago, he came through, I woke up," she says. "He was a nice guy, okay in bed. She was a real bitch, though."

"Who was?" you ask.

Briar Rose finally notices that her new husband is glaring at her. "What can I say?" she says, and shrugs. "I have a thing for guys in squeaky boots."

"Who was a bitch?" you ask again.

"The Snow Queen," she says, "the slut in the sleigh."

This is the list you carry in your pocket, of the things you plan to say to Kay, when you find him, if you find him:

1. I'm sorry that I forgot to water your ferns while you were away that time.
2. When you said that I reminded you of your mother, was that a good thing?
3. I never really liked your friends all that much.
4. None of my friends ever really liked you.
5. Do you remember when the cat ran away, and I cried and cried and made you put up posters, and she never came back? I wasn't crying because she didn't come back. I was crying because I'd taken her to the woods, and I was scared she'd come back and tell you what I'd done, but I guess a wolf got her, or something. She never liked me anyway.
6. I never liked your mother.
7. After you left, I didn't water your plants on purpose. They're all dead.

8. Goodbye.

9. Were you ever really in love with me?

10. Was I good in bed, or just average?

11. What exactly did you mean, when you said that it was fine that I had put on a little weight, that you thought I was even more beautiful, that I should go ahead and eat as much as I wanted, but when I weighed myself on the bathroom scale, I was exactly the same weight as before, I hadn't gained a single pound?

12. So all those times, I'm being honest here, every single time, and anyway I don't care if you don't believe me, I faked every orgasm you ever thought I had. Women can do that, you know. You never made me come, not even once.

13. So maybe I'm an idiot, but I used to be in love with you.

14. I slept with some guy, I didn't mean to, it just kind of happened. Is that how it was with you? Not that I'm making any apologies, or that I'd accept yours, I just want to know.

15. My feet hurt, and it's all your fault.

16. I mean it this time, goodbye.

The Princess Briar Rose isn't a bimbo after all, even if she does have a silly name and a pink castle. You admire her dedication to the art and practice of sleep. By now you are growing sick and tired of traveling, and would like nothing better than to curl up in a big featherbed for one hundred days, or maybe even one hundred years, but she offers to loan you her carriage, and when you explain that you have to walk, she sends you off with a troop of armed guards. They will escort you through the forest, which is full of thieves and wolves and princes on quests, lurking about. The guards politely pretend that they don't notice the trail of blood that you are leaving behind. They probably think it's some sort of female thing.

It is after sunset, and you aren't even half a mile into the forest, which is dark and scary and full of noises, when bandits ambush your escort, and slaughter them all. The bandit queen, who is grizzled and gray, with a nose like an old pickle, yells delightedly at the sight of you. "You're a nice plump one for my supper!" she says, and draws her long knife out of the stomach of one of the dead guards. She is just about to slit your throat, as you stand there, politely pretending not to notice the blood that is pooling around the bodies of the dead guards, that is now obliterating the bloody

tracks of your feet, the knife that is at your throat, when a girl about your own age jumps onto the robber queen's back, pulling at the robber queen's braided hair as if it were reins.

There is a certain family resemblance between the robber queen and the girl who right now has her knees locked around the robber queen's throat. "I don't want you to kill her," the girl says, and you realize that she means you, that you were about to die a minute ago, that travel is much more dangerous than you had ever imagined. You add an item of complaint to the list of things that you plan to tell Kay, if you find him.

The girl has half-throttled the robber queen, who has fallen to her knees, gasping for breath. "She can be my sister," the girl says insistently. "You promised I could have a sister and I want her. Besides, her feet are bleeding."

The robber queen drops her knife, and the girl drops back onto the ground, kissing her mother's hairy gray cheek. "Very well, very well," the robber queen grumbles, and the girl grabs your hand, pulling you farther and faster into the woods, until you are running and stumbling, her hand hot around yours.

You have lost all sense of direction; your feet are no longer set upon your map. You should be afraid, but instead you are strangely exhilarated. Your feet don't hurt anymore, and although you don't know where you are going, for the very first time you are moving fast enough, you are almost flying, your feet are skimming over the night-black forest floor as if it were the smooth, flat surface of a lake, and your feet were two white birds. "Where are we going?" you ask the robber girl.

"We're here," she says, and stops so suddenly that you almost fall over. You are in a clearing, and the full moon is hanging overhead. You can see the robber girl better now, under the light of the moon. She looks like one of the bad girls who loiter under the street lamp by the corner shop, the ones who used to whistle at Kay. She wears black leatherette boots laced up to her thighs, and a black, ribbed T-shirt and grape-colored plastic shorts with matching suspenders. Her nails are painted black, and bitten down to the quick. She leads you to a tumbledown stone keep, which is as black inside as her fingernail polish, and smells strongly of dirty straw and animals.

"Are you a princess?" she asks you. "What are you doing in my mother's forest? Don't be afraid. I won't let my mother eat you."

You explain to her that you are not a princess, what you are doing, about the map, who you are looking for, what he did to you, or maybe it was what he didn't do. When you finish, the robber girl puts her arms around you and squeezes you roughly. "You poor thing! But what a silly way to travel!" she says. She shakes her head and makes you sit down on the stone floor of the keep

and show her your feet. You explain that they always heal, that really your feet are quite tough, but she takes off her leatherette boots and gives them to you.

The floor of the keep is dotted with indistinct, motionless forms. One snarls in its sleep, and you realize that they are dogs. The robber girl is sitting between four slender columns, and when the dog snarls, the thing shifts restlessly, lowering its branchy head. It is a hobbled reindeer. "Well go on, see if they fit," the robber girl says, pulling out her knife. She drags it along the stone floor to make sparks. "What are you going to do when you find him?"

"Sometimes I'd like to cut off his head," you say. The robber girl grins, and thumps the hilt of her knife against the reindeer's chest.

The robber girl's feet are just a little bigger, but the boots are still warm from her feet. You explain that you can't wear the boots, or else you won't know where you are going. "Nonsense!" the robber girl says rudely.

You ask if she knows a better way to find Kay, and she says that if you are still determined to go looking for him, even though he obviously doesn't love you, and he isn't worth a bit of trouble, then the thing to do is to find the Snow Queen. "This is Bae. Bae, you mangy old, useless old thing," she says. "Do you know where the Snow Queen lives?"

The reindeer replies in a low, hopeless voice that he doesn't know, but he is sure that his old mother does. The robber girl slaps his flank. "Then you'll take her to your mother," she says. "And mind that you don't dawdle on the way."

She turns to you and gives you a smacking wet kiss on the lips and says, "Keep the shoes, they look much nicer on you than they did on me. And don't let me hear that you've been walking on glass again." She gives the reindeer a speculative look. "You know, Bae, I almost think I'm going to miss you."

You step into the cradle of her hands, and she swings you over the reindeer's bony back. Then she saws through the hobble with her knife, and yells "Ho!" waking up the dogs.

You knot your fingers into Bae's mane, and bounce up as he stumbles into a fast trot. The dogs follow for a distance, snapping at his hooves, but soon you have outdistanced them, moving so fast that the wind peels your lips back in an involuntary grimace. You almost miss the feel of glass beneath your feet. By morning, you are out of the forest again, and Bae's hooves are churning up white clouds of snow.

Sometimes you think there must be an easier way to do this. Sometimes it seems to be getting easier all on its own. Now you have boots and a reindeer, but you still aren't happy. Sometimes you wish that you'd stayed at home. You're sick and tired of traveling towards the happily ever after, whenever the fuck that is—you'd like the happily right now. Thank you very much.

When you breathe out, you can see the fine mist of your breath and the breath of the reindeer floating before you, until the wind tears it away. Bae runs on.

The snow flies up, and the air seems to grow thicker and thicker. As Bae runs, you feel that the white air is being rent by your passage, like heavy cloth. When you turn around and look behind you, you can see the path shaped to your joined form, woman and reindeer, like a hall stretching back to infinity. You see that there is more than one sort of map, that some forms of travel are indeed easier. "Give me a kiss," Bae says. The wind whips his words back to you. You can almost see the shape of them hanging in the heavy air.

"I'm not really a reindeer," he says. "I'm an enchanted prince."

You politely decline, pointing out that you haven't known him that long, and besides, for traveling purposes, a reindeer is better than a prince.

"He doesn't love you," Bae says. "And you could stand to lose a few pounds. My back is killing me."

You are sick and tired of talking animals, as well as travel. They never say anything that you didn't already know. You think of the talking cat that Kay gave you, the one that would always come to you, secretly, and looking very pleased with itself, to inform you when Kay's fingers smelled of some other woman. You couldn't stand to see him pet it, his fingers stroking its white fur, the cat lying on its side and purring wildly, "There, darling, that's perfect, don't stop," his fingers on its belly, its tail wreathing and lashing, its pointy little tongue sticking out at you. "Shut up," you say to Bae.

He subsides into an offended silence. His long brown fur is rimmed with frost, and you can feel the tears that the wind pulls from your eyes turning to ice on your cheeks. The only part of you that is warm are your feet, snug in the robber girl's boots. "It's just a little farther," Bae says, when you have been traveling for what feels like hours. "And then we're home."

You cross another corridor in the white air, and he swerves to follow it, crying out gladly, "We are near the old woman of Lapmark's house, my mother's house."

"How do you know?" you ask.

"I recognize the shape that she leaves behind her," Bae says. "Look!"

You look and see that the corridor of air you are following is formed like a short, stout, petticoated woman. It swings out at the waist like a bell.

"How long does it last?"

"As long as the air is heavy and dense," he says, "we burrow tunnels through the air like worms, but then the wind will come along and erase where we have been."

The woman-tunnel ends at a low red door. Bae lowers his head and knocks his antlers against it, scraping off the paint. The old woman of Lapmark opens the door, and you clamber stiffly off Bae's back. There is much rejoicing as mother recognizes son, although he is much changed from how he had been.

The old woman of Lapmark is stooped and fat as a grub. She fixes you a cup of tea, while Bae explains that you are looking for the Snow Queen's palace.

"You've not far to go now," his mother tells you. "Only a few hundred miles and past the house of the woman of Finmany. She'll tell you how to go-let me write a letter explaining everything to her. And don't forget to mention to her that I'll be coming for tea tomorrow; she'll change you back then, Bae, if you ask her nicely."

The woman of Lapmark has no paper, so she writes the letter on a piece of dried cod, flat as a dinner plate. Then you are off again. Sometimes you sleep as Bae runs on, and sometimes you aren't sure if you are asleep or waking. Great balls of greenish light roll cracking across the sky above you. At times it seems as if Bae is flying alongside the lights, chatting to them like old friends. At last you come to the house of the woman of Finmany, and you knock on her chimney, because she has no door.

Why, you may wonder, are there so many old women living out here? Is this a retirement community? One might not be remarkable, two is certainly more than enough, but as you look around, you can see little heaps of snow, lines of smoke rising from them. You have to be careful where you put your foot, or you might come through someone's roof. Maybe they came here for the quiet, or because they like ice fishing, or maybe they just like snow.

It is steamy and damp in the house, and you have to climb down the chimney, past the roaring fire, to get

inside. Bae leaps down the chimney, hooves first, scattering coals everywhere. The Finmany woman is

smaller and rounder than the woman of Lapmark. She looks to you like a lump of pudding with black currant eyes. She wears only a greasy old slip, and an apron that has written on it, "If you can't stand the heat, stay out of my kitchen."

She recognizes Bae even faster than his mother had, because, as it turns out, she was the one who turned him into a reindeer for teasing her about her weight. Bae apologizes, insincerely, you think, but the Finmany woman says she will see what she can do about turning him back again. She isn't entirely hopeful. It seems that a kiss is the preferred method of transformation. You don't offer to kiss him, because you know what that kind of thing leads to.

The Finmany woman reads the piece of dried cod by the light of her cooking fire, and then she throws the fish into her cooking pot. Bae tells her about Kay and the Snow Queen, and about your feet, because your lips have frozen together on the last leg of the journey, and you can't speak a word.

"You're so clever and strong," the reindeer says to the Finmany woman. You can almost hear him add and fat under his breath. "You can tie up all the winds in the world with a bit of thread. I've seen you hurling the lightning bolts down from the hills as if they were feathers. Can't you give her the strength of ten men, so that she can fight the Snow Queen and win Kay back?"

"The strength of ten men?" the Finmany woman says. "A lot of good that would do! And besides, he doesn't love her."

Bae smirks at you, as if to say, I told you so. If your lips weren't frozen, you'd tell him that she isn't saying anything that you don't already know. "Now!" the Finmany woman says, "take her up on your back one last time, and put her down again by the bush with the red berries. That marks the edge of the Snow Queen's garden; don't stay there gossiping, but come straight back. You were a handsome boy-I'll make you twice as good-looking as you were before. We'll put up flyers, see if we can get someone to come and kiss you."

"As for you, missy," she says. "Tell the Snow Queen now that we have Bae back, that we'll be over at the Palace next Tuesday for bridge. Just as soon as he has hands to hold the cards."

She puts you on Bae's back again, giving you such a warm kiss that your lips unfreeze, and you can speak again. "The woman of Lapmark is coming for tea tomorrow," you tell her.

The Finmany woman lifts Bae, and you upon his back, in her strong, fat arms, giving you a gentle push up the chimney.

Good morning, ladies, it's nice to have you on the premiere Snow Queen Tour. I hope that you all had a good night's sleep, because today we're going to be traveling quite some distance. I hope that everyone brought a comfortable pair of walking shoes. Let's have a head count, make sure that everyone on the list is here, and then we'll have introductions. My name is Gerda, and I'm looking forward to getting to know all of you.

Here you are at last, standing before the Snow Queen's palace, the palace of the woman who enchanted your lover and then stole him away in her long white sleigh. You aren't quite sure what you are going to say to her, or to him. When you check your pocket, you discover that your list has disappeared. You have most of it memorized, but you think maybe you will wait and see, before you say anything. Part of you would like to turn around and leave before the Snow Queen finds you, before Kay sees you. You are afraid that you will burst out crying or even worse, that he will know that you walked barefoot on broken glass across half the continent, just to find out why he left you.

The front door is open, so you don't bother knocking, you just walk right in. It isn't that large a palace, really. It is about the size of your own house and even reminds you of your own house, except that the furniture, Danish modern, is carved out of blue-green ice-as are the walls and everything else. It's a slippery place and you're glad that you are wearing the robber girl's boots. You have to admit that the Snow Queen is a meticulous housekeeper, much tidier than you ever were. You can't find the Snow Queen and you can't find Kay, but in every room there are white geese who, you are in equal parts relieved and surprised to discover, don't utter a single word.

"Gerda!" Kay is sitting at a table, fitting the pieces of a puzzle together. When he stands up, he knocks several pieces of the puzzle off the table, and they fall to the floor and shatter into even smaller fragments. You both kneel down, picking them up. The table is blue, the puzzle pieces are blue, Kay is blue, which is why you didn't see him when you first came into the room. The geese brush up against you, soft and white as cats.

"What took you so long?" Kay says. "Where in the world did you get those ridiculous boots?" You stare at him in disbelief.

"I walked barefoot on broken glass across half a continent to get here," you say. But at least you don't burst into tears. "A robber girl gave them to me."

Kay snorts. His blue nostrils flare. "Sweetie, they're hideous."

"Why are you blue?" you ask.

"I'm under an enchantment," he says. "The Snow Queen kissed me. Besides, I thought blue was your favorite color."

Your favorite color has always been yellow. You wonder if the Snow Queen kissed him all over, if he is blue all over. All the visible portions of his body are blue. "If you kiss me," he says, "you break the spell and I can come home with you. If you break the spell, I'll be in love with you again."

You refrain from asking if he was in love with you when he kissed the Snow Queen. Pardon me, you think, when she kissed him. "What is that puzzle you're working on?" you ask.

"Oh, that," he says. "That's the other way to break the spell. If I can put it together, but the other way is easier. Not to mention more fun. Don't you want to kiss me?"

You look at his blue lips, at his blue face. You try to remember if you liked his kisses. "Do you remember the white cat?" you say. "It didn't exactly run away. I took it to the woods and left it there."

"We can get another one," he says.

"I took it to the woods because it was telling me things."

"We don't have to get a talking cat," Kay says. "Besides, why did you walk barefoot across half a continent of broken glass if you aren't going to kiss me and break the spell?" His blue face is sulky.

"Maybe I just wanted to see the world," you tell him. "Meet interesting people."

The geese are brushing up against your ankles. You stroke their white feathers and the geese snap, but gently, at your fingers. "You had better hurry up and decide if you want to kiss me or not," Kay says. "Because she's home."

When you turn around, there she is, smiling at you like you are exactly the person that she was hoping to see.

The Snow Queen isn't how or what you'd expected. She's not as tall as you-you thought she would be taller. Sure, she's beautiful, you can see why Kay kissed her (although you are beginning to wonder why she kissed him), but her eyes are black and kind, which you didn't expect at all. She stands next to you, not looking at Kay at all, but looking at you. "I wouldn't do it if I were you," she says.

"Oh come on," Kay says. "Give me a break, lady. Sure it was nice, but you don't want me hanging around this icebox forever, any more than I want to be here. Let Gerda kiss me, we'll go home and live happily ever after. There's supposed to be a happy ending."

"I like your boots," the Snow Queen says.

"You're beautiful," you tell her.

"I don't believe this," Kay says. He thumps his blue fist on the blue table, sending blue puzzle pieces flying through the air. Pieces lie like nuggets of sky-colored glass on the white backs of the geese. A piece of the table has splintered off, and you wonder if he is going to have to put the table back together as well.

"Do you love him?"

You look at the Snow Queen when she says this and then you look at Kay. "Sorry," you tell him. You hold out your hand in case he's willing to shake it.

"Sorry!" he says. "You're sorry! What good does that do me?"

"So what happens now?" you ask the Snow Queen.

"Up to you," she says. "Maybe you're sick of traveling. Are you?"

"I don't know," you say. "I think I'm finally beginning to get the hang of it."

"In that case," says the Snow Queen, "I may have a business proposal for you."

"Hey!" Kay says. "What about me? Isn't someone going to kiss me?"

You help him collect a few puzzle pieces. "Will you at least do this much for me?" he asks. "For old time's sake. Will you spread the word, tell a few single princesses that I'm stuck up here? I'd like to get out of here sometime in the next century. Thanks. I'd really appreciate it. You know, we had a really nice time, I think I remember that."

The robber girl's boots cover the scars on your feet. When you look at these scars, you can see the outline of the journey you made. Sometimes mirrors are maps, and sometimes maps are mirrors. Sometimes scars tell a story, and maybe someday you will tell this story to a lover. The soles of your feet are stories-hidden in the black boots, they shine like mirrors. If you were to take your boots off, you would see reflected in one foot-mirror the Princess Briar Rose as she sets off on her honeymoon, in her enormous four-poster bed, which now has wheels and is pulled by twenty white horses.

It's nice to see women exploring alternative means of travel.

In the other foot-mirror, almost close enough to touch, you could see the robber girl whose boots you are

wearing. She is setting off to find Bae, to give him a kiss and bring him home again. You wouldn't presume to give her any advice, but you do hope that she has found another pair of good sturdy boots.

Someday, someone will probably make their way to the Snow Queen's palace, and kiss Kay's cold blue lips. She might even manage a happily ever after for a while.

You are standing in your black laced boots, and the Snow Queen's white geese mutter and stream and sidle up against you. You are beginning to understand some of what they are saying. They grumble about the weight of the sleigh, the weather, your hesitant jerks at their reins. But they are good-natured grumbles. You tell the geese that your feet are maps and your feet are mirrors. But you tell them that you have to keep in mind that they are also useful for walking around on. They are perfectly good feet.

## IF ON A WINTER'S NIGHT A TRAVELER

You are about to begin reading Italo Calvino's new novel, *If on a winter's night a traveler*. Relax. Concentrate. Dispel every other thought. Let the world around you fade. Best to close the door; the TV is always on in the next room. Tell others right away, "No, I don't want to watch TV!" Raise your voice—they won't hear you otherwise—"I'm reading! I don't want to be disturbed!" Maybe they haven't heard you, with all that racket; speak louder, yell: "I'm beginning to read Italo Calvino's new novel!" Or if you prefer, don't say anything; just you hope they'll leave you alone.

Find the most comfortable position: seated, stretched out, curled up, or lying flat. Flat on back, on side, on stomach. In an easy chair, on the sofa, in the rocker, the deck chair, on the hassock. In the hammock, if you have a hammock. On top of bed, of course, or in the bed. You even stand on your hands, head down, in the yoga position. With the book upside down, naturally.

Of course, the ideal position for reading is something you can never find. In the old days they used to read standing up, at a lectern. People were accustomed to standing on their feet, without moving. They rested like that when they were tired of horseback riding. Nobody ever thought of reading on horseback; and yet now, the idea of sitting in the saddle, the book propped against the horse's mane, or maybe tied to the horse's ear with a special harness seems attractive to you. With feet in the stirrups, you should feel quite comfortable for reading; having your feet up is the first condition for enjoying a read. Well, what are you waiting for? Stretch your legs, go ahead and put your feet on a cushion, on two cushions, on the arms of the sofa, on the wings of the chair, on the coffee table, on the desk, on the piano, on the globe. Take your shoes off first. Now don't stand there with your shoes in one hand and the book in the other.

Adjust the light so you won't strain your eyes. Do it now, because once you're absorbed in reading there will be no budging you. Make sure the page isn't in shadow, a clotting of black letter on a gray background, uniform as a pack of mice, but be careful that the light cast on it isn't gnawing at the shadows of the letters as in a southern noonday. Try to foresee now everything that might make you interrupt your reading. Cigarettes within reach, if you smoke, and the ashtray. Anything else? Do you have to pee? All right, you know best.

It's not that you expect anything in particular from this particular book. You're the sort of person who, on principle, no longer expects anything of anything. There are plenty, who are younger than you or less young, who live in the expectation of extraordinary experiences: from books, from people, from journeys, from events, from what tomorrow has in store. But not you. You know that the best you can expect is to avoid the worst. This is the conclusion you have reached, in your personal life and also in general matters, even international affairs. What about books? Well, precisely because you have denied it in every other field, you believe you may still grant self legitimately this youthful pleasure of expectation in a carefully circumscribed area like the field of books, where you can be lucky or unlucky, but the risk of disappointment isn't serious. So, then you noticed in a newspaper that *If on a winter's night a traveler* appeared the new book

by Italo Calvino, who hadn't published for several years. You went to the bookshop and bought the volume. Good for you. In the shop window you have promptly identified the cover [with the title you were looking for]. Following this visual trail you have forced your way through the shop past the thick barricade of Books You Haven't Read, which were frowning at you from the tables and shelves, trying to cow you. But you know you must never allow yourself to be awed), that among them there extend for acres and acres the Books You Needn't Read, the Books Made For Purposes Other Than Reading, Books Read Even Before You Open Them Since They Belong To The Category of Books Read Before Being Written. And thus you pass the outer girdle of ramparts, but then you are attacked by the infantry of the Books That If You Had More Than One Life You Would Certainly Also Read But Unfortunately Days Are Numbered With a rapid maneuver you bypass them and move into the phalanxes of the books You Mean To Read But There Are Others Must Read First, the Books Too Expensive Now And You'll Wait Till They're Remaindered, the Books ditto When They Come Out In Paperback, Books You Can Borrow From somebody, Books That Everybody's Read So It's As if You Had Read Them, Too. Eluding these assaults, you come up beneath the towers of the fortress, where other troops are holding out: the Books You've Been Planning To Read For Ages. the Books You've Hunting For Years Without Success the Books Dealing with Something You're Working On At The Moment, the Books You Want To Own So They'll Be Handy Just In Case, the Books You Could Put Aside Maybe To Read This Summer, the Books You Need To Go With Other Books On Shelves, the Books That Fill You With Sudden, Inexplicable Curiosity, Not Easily Justified. Now you have been able to reduce the countless embattled troops to an array that is, to be sure, very large but still calculable in a finite number; but the relative relief is then undermined by the ambush of the Books Read Long Ago Which It's Now Time To Reread and the Books You've Always Pretended to Have Read And Now It's Time To Sit Down And Really Read Them. With a zigzag you shake them off and leap straight into the citadel of the new Books Whose Author Or Subjects Appeals To You. Even inside this stronghold you can make some breaches in the ranks of the defenders, dividing them into New Books By Authors Or On Subjects Not New (for you or in general) and New Books By Authors Or On Subjects Completely Unknown (at least to you), and defining the attraction they have for you on the basis of desires and needs for the new and not new (for the new you seek in the not new and for the not new you seek in the new).

All this simply means that, having rapidly glanced over the titles of the volumes displayed in the bookshop, you have turned toward a stack of If on winter's night a traveler fresh off the press, you have grasped a copy, and you have carried it to the cashier so that your right to won it can be established.

You cast another bewildered look at the books around you (or, rather: it was the books that looked at you, with the bewildered gaze of dogs who, from their cages in the city pound, see a former companion go off on the leash of master, come to rescue him), and out you went.

You derive a special pleasure from a just-published book and it isn't only a book you are taking with you but its novelty as well, which could also be merely that of an object fresh from the

factory, the youthful bloom of new books, which lasts until the dust jacket begins to yellow, until a veil of smog settles on the top edge, until the binding becomes dog-eared, in the rapid autumn of libraries. No, you hope always that you to encounter true newness, which having been new once, will continue to be so. Having the freshly published book, you will take possession of this newness at the first moment, without having to pursue it, to chase it. Will it happen this time? You never can tell. Let's us see how it begins.

Perhaps you started leafing through the book already in the shop. Or were you unable to, because it was wrapped in its cocoon of cellophane? Now you are on the bus, standing in the crowd, hanging from a strap by your arm, and you begin undoing the package with your free hand, making movements something like a monkey, a monkey who wants to peel a banana and at the same time cling to the bough. Watch out, you're elbowing neighbors, apologize, at least.

Or perhaps the bookseller didn't wrap the volume; he gave it to you in a bag, rip off the transparent wrapping, start reading the first lines. A storm of honking breaks over you; the light is green, you're blocking traffic.

You are at your desk, you have set the book among your business papers as if by chance; at a certain moment you shift a file and you find the book before eyes, you open it absently, you rest your elbows on the desk, you rest your temples against your hands, curled into fists, you seem to be concentrating on an examination of the papers and instead you are exploring the first pages of the novel. Gradually you settle back in the chair, you raise the book to the level of your nose, you tilt the chair, poised on its rear legs, you pull out a side drawer of the desk to prop your feet on it; the position of the feet during reading is of maximum importance you stretch your legs on the top of the desk, on the files to be expedited.

But doesn't this seem to show a lack of respect? If respect, that is, not for your job (nobody claims to pass judgment on your professional capacities: we assume your duties are a normal element in the system of unproductive activities that occupies such a large part of the national and international economy), but for the book. Worse still if you belong - willingly or unwillingly - to whom working really means working, performing, whether deliberately or without premeditation, something necessary or at least not useless for others as well as for oneself; then the book you have bought with you to your place of employment like a kind of amulet or talisman exposes you to intermittent temptations, a few seconds at a time subtracted from the principal object of attention, whether it is the perforations of electronic cards, the burners of a kitchen stove, the controls of a bulldozer, a patient stretched out on the operating table with his guts exposed.

In other words, it's better for you to retrain your impatience and wait to open the book at home. Now. Yes, you are in your room, calm; You open the book to page one, no to the last page, first you want to see how it is. It's not too long, fortunately. Long novels written today are perhaps a contradiction; the dimension of time has been shattered, we cannot love or think except in

fragments of time each of which goes off along its own trajectory and immediately disappears. We can rediscover the continuity of time only in the novels of the period when time no longer seemed stopped and did not yet seem to have exploded, a period that lasted no more than a hundred years.

You turn the book over in your hands, you scan the sentences on the back of the jacket, generic phrases that don't say a great deal. So much the better, there is no message that indiscreetly outshouts the message that the book itself must communicate directly, that you must extract from the book, however much or little it may be. Of course, this circling of the book, too, this reading around it before reading inside it, is a part of the pleasure in a new book, but like all preliminary pleasures, it has its optimal duration if you want it to serve as a thrust toward the more substantial pleasure of the consummation of the act, namely the reading of the book.

So here you are now, ready to attack the first lines of the first page. You prepare to recognize the unmistakable tone of the author. No. You don't recognize it at all. But now that you think about it, who ever said this author had an unmistakable tone? On the contrary, he is known as an author who changes greatly from one book to the next. And in these very changes recognize him as himself. Here, however, he seems to have absolutely no connection with all the rest he has written, at least, as far as you can recall.

Are you disappointed? Let's see. Perhaps at first you feel a bit lost, as when a person appears who, from the name you identified with a certain face, and you try to make the features you are seeing tally with those you had in mind, and it won't work. But then you go and you realize that the book is readable nevertheless, independently of what you expect of the author, it's the book in itself that arouses your curiosity; in fact, on sober reflection, you prefer it this way, confronting something and not quite knowing yet what it is.

## Chapter 2

You have now read about thirty pages and you're becoming caught up in the story. At a certain point you remark: "This sentence sounds somehow familiar. In fact, this whole passage reads like something I've read before." Of course: there are themes that recur, the text is interwoven with these reprises, which serve to express the fluctuation of time. You are the sort of reader who is sensitive to such refinements; you are quick to catch the author's intentions and nothing escapes you. But, at the same time you also feel a certain dismay; just when you were beginning to grow truly interested, at this very point the author feels called upon to display one of those virtuoso tricks so customary in modern writing, repeating a paragraph word for word. Did you say paragraph? Why, it's a whole page: you make the comparison, he hasn't changed even a comma. And as you continue, what develops? Nothing: the narration is repeated, identical to the pages you read!

Wait a minute! Look at the page number. Damn! From page 32 you've gone back to page 17! What you thought was a stylistic subtlety on the author's part is simply a printers'

mistake: they have inserted the same pages twice. The mistake occurred as they were binding the volume: a book is made up of sixteen-page signature: each signature is a large sheet on which sixteen pages are printed, and which is then folded over eight times; when all the signatures are bound together, it can happen that two identical signatures end up in the same copy; it's the sort of accident that occurs every now and then. You leaf anxiously through the next pages to find page 33, assuming it exists; a repeated signature would be a minor inconvenience, the irreparable damage comes when the proper signature has vanished, landing in another copy where perhaps that one will be doubled and this one will be missing.

In any event, you want to pick up the thread of reading, nothing else matters to you, you had reached a point where you can't skip even one page.

Here is page 31 again, page 31...and then what comes next? Page 17 all over again, a third time! What kind of book did they sell you, anyway? They bound together all these copies of the same signature, not another page in the whole book is any good.

You fling the book on the floor, you would hurl it out of the window, even out of the closed window, through the slats of the Venetian blinds; let them shred its incongruous quires, let sentences, words, morphemes, phonemes gush forth, beyond recomposition into discourse; through the panes, and if they are of unbreakable glass so much the better, hurl the book and reduce it to photons, undulatory vibrations, polarized spectra; through the wall, let the book is crumble into molecules and atoms passing between atom and atom of the reinforced concrete, breaking up into electrons, neutrons, neutrinos, elementary particles more and more minute; through the telephone wires, let it be reduced to electronic impulses, into flow of information; shaken by redundancies and noises, and let it be degraded into a swirling entropy. You would like to throw it out of the house, out of the block, beyond the neighborhood, beyond the city limits, beyond the state confines, beyond the regional administration, beyond the national community, beyond the Common Market, beyond Western culture, beyond the continental shelf, beyond the atmosphere, the biosphere, the stratosphere, the field of gravity, the solar system the galaxy, the cumulus of galaxies, to succeed in hurling it beyond the point the galaxies have reached in their expansion, where space-time has not arrived, where it would be received by nonbeing, or, rather, the not-being which has never been and will never be, to be lost in the most absolutely guaranteed undeniable negativity. Merely what it deserves, neither more nor less.

But no. Instead you pick it up, you dust it off; you have to take it back to the bookseller so he will exchange it for you. You know you are somewhat impulsive, but you have learned to control yourself. The thing that most exasperates you is to find yourself at the mercy of the fortuitous, the aleatory, the random, in things and in human actions-carelessness, approximation, imprecision, whether won or others'. In such instance dominant passion is the impatience to erase the disturbing effects of that arbitrariness or distraction, to re-establish the normal course of events. You can't wait to get your hands on a non-defective copy of the book you've begun. You would rush to the bookshop at once if shops were not closed at this hour. You have to wait until tomorrow.

You spend a restless night, sleep is an intermittent, jammed flow, like the reading of the novel, with dreams that seem to you the repetition of one dream always the same. You fight with the dreams as with formless and meaningless life, seeking a pattern, a route that must surely be there, as when you begin to read a book and you don't yet know in which direction it will carry you. What you would like is the opening of an abstract and absolute space and time in which you could move, following an exact, taut trajectory; but when you seem to be succeeding, you realize you are motionless, blocked, forced to repeat everything from the beginning.

The next day, as soon as you have a free moment, you run to the bookshop, you enter, holding the book already opened, pointing a finger at a page, as if that alone were enough to make clear the general disarray. "You know what you sold me? Look here. Just when it was getting interesting..."

The bookseller maintains his composure. "Ah, you too? I've had several complains already. And only this morning I received a form letter from the publisher. You see? 'In the distribution of the latest works on our list a part of the edition of the volume *If on a winter's night a traveler* by Italo Calvino has proved defective and must be withdrawn from circulation. Through an error of the bindery, the printed signatures of that book became mixed with those of another publication, the Polish novel *Outside the Town* of Malbork by Taxio Bazakbal. With profound apologies for the unfortunate incident, the publisher will replace the spoiled copies at the earliest possible moment, et cetera. "Now I ask you, must a poor bookseller take the blame for the negligence of others? We've been going crazy all day. We've checked the Calvino's copy by copy. There are a number of sound volumes, happily, and we can immediately replace defective *Traveler* with a brand-new one in mint condition."

Hold on a minute. Concentrate. Take all the information that has poured down on you at once and put it in order. A Polish novel. Then the book you began reading with such involvement] wasn't the book you thought but was a Polish novel instead. That is the book you are now so anxious to procure. Don't let them fool you. Explain clearly the situation. "No, actually I don't really give a damn about the Calvino any more. I started the Polish one and it's the Polish one I want to go on with. Do you have this Bazakbal book?"

"If that's what you prefer. Just a moment ago, another customer, a young lady, came in with the same problem and she also wanted to exchange her book for the Polish. There, you see that pile of Bazakbal on the counter, right under your nose? Help yourself."

"But will this copy be defective?"

"Listen. At this point I'm not swearing to anything. If the most respected publishing firms make such a muddle you can't trust anything anymore. I'll tell you exactly what I told the young lady. If there is any further cause for complaint, you will be reimbursed. I can't do more than that."

The young lady. He has pointed out a young lady to you. She is there between two rows of bookshelves in the shop, looking among the Penguin Modern Classics, running a lovely and determined finger over the pale aubergine-colored spines. Huge, swift eyes, complexion of good tone and good pigment, a richly waved haze of hair.

And so the Other Reader makes her happy entrance into field of vision, Reader, or, rather, into the field of attention; or, rather, you have entered a magnetic field from whose attraction you cannot escape. Don't waste time, then, you have a good excuse to strike up a conversation, a common ground, just think a moment, you can show off your vast and various reading, go ahead, what are you waiting for ?

“Then you , too, ha ha, the Pole,” you say, all in one breath. “But that book that begins and then gets stuck there, what a fraud, because it happened to you, too, I'm told; and the same with me, you know? Having given it a try, I'm dropping this one and taking this other, but what a coincidence, the two of us.”

Hmm, perhaps you could have coordinated it a bit better, but you have at least expressed the main ideas. Now it's her turn.

She smiles. She has dimples. She is even more attractive to you.

She says: “Ah, indeed, I was so anxious to read a good book. Right at the beginning, this one, no, but then it began to appeal to me.... Such a rage when I saw it broke off. And it wasn't the author. It did seem right away a bit different from his other books. And it was really Bazakbal. He's good, though, this Bazakbal. I've never read anything of his.”

“Me either,” you can say, reassured, reassuring. “A bit too unfocused, his way of telling a story, too much so for me. I rather enjoy that sense of bewilderment a novel gives you when you start reading it, but if the first effect is fog, I'm afraid the moment the fog lifts my pleasure in reading will be lost, too.”

You shake your head pensively. “In fact, there is that risk.”

“I prefer novels,” she adds, “that bring me immediately into a world where everything is precise, concrete, specific. I feel a special satisfaction in knowing that things are made in that certain fashion and not otherwise, even the most commonplace things that in real life seem indifferent to me.”

Do you agree ? Then say so. “Ah, yes, that sort of book is really worthwhile.”

And she continues: “Anyway, this is also an interesting novel, I can't deny that.”

Go on, don't let the conversation die. Say something; just keep talking. "Do you read many novels? You do? So do I, or some at least, though nonfiction is more in my line..." Is that all you can think of? Now what? Are you stopping? Good night! Aren't you capable of asking her: Have you read this one? And this? Which of the two do you like better? There, now you have something to talk about for half an hour.

The trouble is that she's read many more novels than you have, especially foreign ones, and she has an orderly memory, she refers to specific episodes; she asks you, "And do you remember what Henry's aunt says when..." and you who unearthed that title because you know the title and nothing more, and you liked letting her believe you had read it, now have to extricate yourself with generic comments, like "It moves a bit slowly for me," or else "I like it because it's ironic," and she answers, "Really? You find it ironic? I wouldn't have said..." and you are upset. You launch into an opinion on a famous author because you have read one of his books, two at most, and without hesitation she attacks frontally the opera omnia, which she seems to know perfectly, and if she does have some doubts, that's worse still, because she asks you, "And the famous episode of the cut photograph; is it in that book or the other one? I always get them mixed up..." You make a guess, since she gets mixed up. And she says "Why, what are you talking about? That can't be right..." Well, let's say you both get mixed up.

Better to fall back on reading of yesterday evening, on the volume you are both now clutching in hands, which should repay you for recent disappointment. "Let's hope," you say, "that we've got a perfect copy this time, properly bound, so we won't be interrupted right at the climax, as happens..." (As happens when, how? What do you mean?) "I mean, let's hope we get to the end satisfactorily."

"Oh, yes," she answers. Did you hear that? She said "Oh, yes." It's your turn now, it's up to you to make a move.

"Then I hope I'll meet you again, since you're also a customer here; that way we could exchange our impressions after reading the book." And she answers, "With pleasure."

You know where you want to arrive, it is a fine net you are spreading out. "The funniest thing would be if, just as we had thought we were reading Italo Calvino and it turned out to be Bazabal, now that we hope to read Bazakbal, we open the book and find Italo Calivno."

"Oh, no! If that happens, we'll sue the publisher!"

"Listen why don't we exchange telephone numbers?" (This is what you were aiming at, O Reader, moving around like a rattlesnake!) "That way, if one of us finds something wrong with his copy, he can ask the other for help....If there are two of us, we have a better chance of putting together a complete copy."

There, you have said it. What is more natural than that a solidarity, a complicity, a bond should be established between Reader and Reader, thanks to the book?

You can leave the bookshop content, you, a man who thought that the period when you could still expect something from life had ended. You are bearing with two different expectations, and both promise days of pleasant hopes; the expectation contained in the book--of a reading experience you are impatient to resume--and the expectation contained in the telephone number --of hearing again the vibrations, at times treble and at times smoldering, of that voice, when it will answer first phone call in a short while, in fact tomorrow, with no fragile pretext of the book, to ask her if she likes it or not, to tell her how many pages you have read or not read, to suggest to her that you meet again...

Who you are, Reader, age, status, profession, income: that would be indiscreet to ask. It's your business, you're on your own. What counts is the state of your spirit now, in the privacy of your home, as you try to re-establish perfect calm in order to sink again into the book; you stretch out your legs, you draw them back, you stretch them again. But something has changed since yesterday. your reading is no longer solitary: you think of the Other Reader, who, at this same moment, is also opening the book; and there, the novel to be read is superimposed by a possible novel to be lived, the continuation of story with her, or better still, the beginning of a possible story. This is how you have changed since yesterday, you who insisted you preferred a book, something solid, which lies before you, easily defined, enjoyed without risks, to a real-life experience, always elusive, discontinuous, debated. Does this mean that the book has become an instrument, a channel of communication, a rendezvous? This does not mean its reading will grip you less: on the contrary, something has been added to its powers.

This volume's pages are uncut: a first obstacle opposing impatience.

Armed with a good paper knife, you prepare to penetrate its secrets. With a determined slash you cut your way between the title page and the beginning of the first chapter. And then...

Then from the very first page you realize that the novel you are holding has nothing to do with the one you were reading yesterday.