

The Erotic Adventures of Candide

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by David Bruce

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Dedicated to non-rapists everywhere.

Previously published under a pseudonym.

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Chapter 1: Candide's Early Life

In Westphalia, a gentle youth lived in the beautiful castle of Baron Thunderstormcumlightning. Anyone could look at the youth's face and see that he was both good-natured and weak-minded. This is why he was given the name 'Candide,' although 'Virginia' would have been a good choice if he had been born female. No one knew who his parents were, but that did not keep the servants from guessing, aka gossiping. Their guess, or gossip, was that Candide was the son of the Baron's sister and a nearby nobleman. The two knew each other well enough to sleep together, although they did not know each other well enough to speak to each other in public. After all, in some circles, sleeping together does not constitute an introduction. Besides, the Baron's sister could trace her noble family back 72 generations, while the nearby nobleman could trace his nobility back only 71 generations. No marriage could ever result from two people who were so widely disparate in social class.

The Baron was well respected, for his castle had a door and actual windows, rather than simply openings to the great outdoors. His hall had a tapestry, and his dogs were numerous enough to form a hunting pack. Such wealth demanded respect, and so all the people around laughed when the Baron told a joke.

The Baroness weighed 350 pounds, thus demonstrating an aversion to starving. She would not die easily in a famine. Such foresight demanded respect, and all the people around looked at her butt whenever she waddled in public.

Other members of the family included the Baron's 17-year-old beautiful and delicate daughter, Cunegonde, who was a virgin, although all the boys around wished that she were not when they looked at her butt whenever her hips swayed in public. The son of the Baron was as beautiful and as delicate as Cunegonde, and he demonstrated a sense of fashion seldom seen in young men who play sports, which he did not. Dr. Pangloss was the tutor to Cunegonde and to Candide, and Candide marveled at his intelligence.

Dr. Pangloss taught all subjects at the same time and in the same way. He specialized in philosophy and theology and history and grammar and rhetoric and nonsensiology. He argued at length in every lecture that this is the best of all possible worlds and the Baron is the best of all possible Barons and he, Dr. Pangloss, is the best of all possible tutors. He also argued that the paper used to make his Ph.D. diploma was the best of all possible paper, although some people who were apparently jealous of Dr. Pangloss' great learning thought that toilet paper was more useful.

In his lectures, Dr. Pangloss gave many examples of how the world had been designed to serve Mankind. For example, the design of eyes made it possible for Mankind to see, the design of ears made it possible for Mankind to hear, and the design of dildos made it possible for women to avoid marriage. Because of these things, we know not only that the world is good, but also that the world is the best of all possible worlds.

Candide believed all that Dr. Pangloss taught him. He could easily believe that this was the best of all possible worlds, for Cunegonde was the prettiest of all possible girls, and watching her through her bedroom window as she undressed at night was the most interesting of all possible sights. When Candide had told Dr. Pangloss about this most interesting of all possible sights, Dr. Pangloss had insisted on joining Candide outside Cunegonde's window each night, and he had agreed with Candide that this was the most interesting of all possible sights. Clearly, Dr. Pangloss must be the best of all possible tutors.

One day Cunegonde took a walk and discovered that Dr. Pangloss had more students than herself and Candide, for on this day he was tutoring Pacquette, a pretty serving girl. This day's lesson involved cause and effect and sufficient reason, and the lesson involved Pacquette's

being naked from the waist up and Dr. Pangloss' being naked from the waist down. Cunegonde observed that Pacquette's naked breasts were sufficient reason to cause Dr. Pangloss' thing to grow erect and point upward, although Pacquette helped it to grow erect and point upward with a pulling movement of her hands. Cunegonde then saw Pacquette give Dr. Pangloss' thing a kiss before she put it in her mouth and began sucking on it. Cunegonde could see that the kiss was sufficient reason for Dr. Pangloss to smile and that Pacquette's sucking was sufficient reason for Dr. Pangloss to breathe heavily. Cunegonde also noticed that occasionally Pacquette brought her head far back, allowing Dr. Pangloss' thing to escape from her mouth, which sucked air as the tip of Dr. Pangloss' thing flew upward. Whenever this happened, Pacquette made eye contact with Dr. Pangloss — eye contact that plainly said, *I know that what I am doing is very, very naughty, but I like being very, very naughty.* Watching Pacquette and Dr. Pangloss made Cunegonde feel the way she felt when making herself especially clean between her legs with soap and water and the clever use of her fingers. She also wondered if men could kiss in such a way to make women smile and if men could suck in such a way to make women breathe heavily.

As she continued watching Pacquette and Dr. Pangloss, she wondered whether Candide and she herself could review Pacquette's lesson in their leisure time in a private place at home, thus demonstrating a desire to learn while avoiding grade-grubbing by declining to ask for extra credit. She also wondered whether she and Pacquette could ever engage in a contest: She would suck Candide's thing, Pacquette would suck Dr. Pangloss' thing, and at the same time they would suck air as they watched whose thing-tip rose fastest and stood tallest. The winner of the contest would get to suck each man's thing. The loser would have to be satisfied with watching.

As she walked back to the castle after Dr. Pangloss had moaned especially loudly and Pacquette's mouth had dripped goo, she thought, *I too can make a face that says I know that what I am doing is very, very naughty but I like being very, very naughty if I should ever look at Candide in between bouts of sucking his thing.* Or, she thought, *I can make a face that says I'm a normal, healthy girl-next-door type who just happens to enjoy sucking men's things if I should ever look at Candide in between bouts of sucking his thing.* Funny, she thought, *I have never had an acting lesson in my life, but I know that I can make those faces. Perhaps I was born with that knowledge. Perhaps all women are.*

While walking back to the castle, Cunegonde met Candide, who had also learned to make himself especially clean with soap and water and the clever use of his fingers. They met, they blushed, and they did nothing.

But the next day, they met behind a screen in the castle. They blushed, they kissed, and they touched many places on each other that they had not touched before. Candide's fingers undid some buttons, and Candide's mouth began sucking on Cunegonde's nipples. Soon afterward, Cunegonde's fingers undid some buttons, and Cunegonde's mouth began sucking on Candide's thing. Unfortunately, before the eagerly awaited arrival of goo, Baron Thunderstormcumlightning heard some gasps, looked behind the screen, and then started yelling. Cunegonde was so startled that although she looked her father in the eyes, she forgot that Candide's thing was in her mouth. Suddenly, she remembered, and she brought her head far back, allowing Candide's thing to escape from her mouth, which sucked air as the tip of Candide's thing flew upward. *I would win the contest,* she thought.

Because of his erection, Candide was unable to get himself properly covered, which meant that Baron Thunderstormcumlightning kept kicking Candide's bare backside as he drove Candide from the castle. The kicks resulted in a de-erection, and Candide was able to cover

himself properly as he thought about where he was to live now and how he was to make a living.

Cunegonde was disappointed because she had not made a special face for Candide. Before she and Candide had been so rudely interrupted, she had not been able to chose between the face that said *I know that what I am doing is very, very naughty but I like being very, very naughty* and the face that said *I'm a normal, healthy girl-next-door type who just happens to enjoy sucking men's things*.

Dr. Pangloss and Pacquette had not witnessed Candide's being driven from the castle with many kicks to his bare backside because they had been engaged in a scientific experiment in which goo was deposited in Pacquette's front hole, but they heard later what had happened with Candide, Cunegonde, and the Baron.

Chapter 2: Candide Joins the Bulgars

Candide did not know what to do with himself, so he kept walking until he was finally so exhausted that he lay down in a field to sleep despite the snow that was gently falling. He grieved at having the best of all possible bare backsides kicked by the best of all possible Barons to drive him from the best of all possible castles.

The next morning, he went to the nearest town, where he stood outside an inn. Inside was, he knew, the best of all possible breakfasts, but unfortunately the best of all possible breakfasts costs money, and he had none.

Two men wearing blue noticed Candide, and one man said to the other, "This good-looking chap seems to be the right height." The man who had spoken then invited Candide to dine with them in the inn. Candide declined, explaining that he had no money, but when he said that he was five-feet-five to the man's next question, the man said that the meal was on him. After all, he said, a man with money ought to do a good deed now and then and spread the money around.

Candide eagerly accepted, and the three men entered the inn and ordered breakfast and ale. When the waitress, a good-looking blonde with melon-heavy breasts straining her top, arrived to refill their glasses, she saw that the man in blue who had been doing most of the speaking held money in his hand. The meal and first round of ale had already been paid for, and the money in his hand was much more than was needed to pay for the second round of ale yet not enough to pay her to spend even 15 minutes in bed with him, so she wondered what he wanted. Some kind of sexual excitement, no doubt, but what kind?

She looked at the voluble man in blue and raised her eyebrows, and the voluble man in blue said, "Lean over some more, and keep leaning over for a moment." She knew then what he wanted, and she was willing, so she leaned over and her melon-heavy breasts fell out of her top. The voluble man in blue cupped each breast and gently lifted it and then gave the blonde waitress the money.

The blonde waitress covered her melon-heavy breasts and walked away, happy that a little sexual excitement could induce men to part with money. She was also happy because in times of war, some extra money could be exactly what was needed to keep herself and her loved ones safe. As she walked away, the voluble man in blue called out, "I like variety, and I have money, so each time I order another round of ale, send over a different waitress."

Candide and the voluble man in blue talked, with the voluble man in blue doing most of the talking as he praised the King of the Bulgars, and all three men drank.

Arriving to refill their glasses of ale was a good-looking red-headed waitress with breasts the size of oranges. She knew from talking to the blonde waitress with melon-heavy breasts what the voluble man in blue wanted, and since he was holding money in his hand she leaned over. Her breasts did not immediately fall out of her top, so she shrugged her shoulders to help them fall out, which they did. The voluble man in blue gently cupped and lifted each of her breasts and then gave her the money.

The red-haired waitress covered her breasts that were the size of oranges and walked away, happy that a little sexual excitement could induce men to part with money. She was also happy because in times of war, some extra money could be exactly what was needed to keep herself and her loved ones safe. She then told a good-looking black-haired waitress about the voluble man in blue, who was praising the King of the Bulgars to Candide.

Arriving to refill their glasses of ale next was the good-looking black-headed waitress with breasts the size of plums. She came to the table, refilled their glasses, looked at the money in the hand of the voluble man in blue, and bent over. To make up for what nature had not given

her, she shook her shoulders and pulled down on her top and her breasts fell out of her top. The voluble man in blue gently squeezed each of her breasts and then gave her the money.

The black-haired waitress covered her breasts that were the size of plums and walked away, happy that a little sexual excitement could induce men to part with money. She was also happy because in times of war, some extra money could be exactly what was needed to keep herself and her loved ones safe. She then told a good-looking brown-haired waitress about the voluble man in blue, who was still busy praising the King of the Bulgars to Candide. The blonde waitress with melon-heavy breasts overheard their conversation, and she told the good-looking brown-haired waitress, “Yes, you are next in line to refill their glasses of ale. You won’t get a tip, dearie, but refill their glasses anyway.”

The good-looking brown-haired waitress dreaded the moment when the men’s glasses needed to be refilled. Her breasts were the size of eggs — fried — and she dreaded the men’s comparing her breasts to the breasts of the other waitresses in the inn and she dreaded being laughed at by the voluble man in blue. True, anyone who looked at her top would see two bumps, but the two bumps were there only because her nipples were the size of olives.

The moment she dreaded arrived, and the good-looking brown-haired waitress went to the table and refilled the glasses. To her surprise, the voluble man in blue was holding in his hand a tip that was twice the size of the tips that he had given the other waitresses. With a question in her eyes, she looked at the voluble man in blue, who told her, “Shrugging your shoulders or shaking your shoulders won’t work in your case, so you will have to do more.” The brown-haired waitress used her hands to pull down her top and reveal her breasts. The voluble man in blue gently pinched each nipple — twice — and then gave her the money.

The black-haired waitress covered her breasts that were the size of fried eggs with an olive on top and walked away, happy that a little sexual excitement could induce men to part with money — and even more happy to discover that some men greatly prefer women with very small breasts to women who have breasts the size of melons. She was also happy because in times of war, some extra money could be exactly what was needed to keep herself and her loved ones safe.

Later, at home, she asked her sister, who was also had breasts the size of fried eggs with an olive on top, whether some men liked that size of breast.

“Of course,” her sister said, “I hope that you haven’t been worrying about that. Some men like very large breasts, some men like medium-sized breasts, and some men like they call ‘tiny tops.’ It’s the same with body types. Some men like thin women, some men like medium-sized women, and some men are what are known as “chubby chasers.” The fashion magazines stress only one kind of body type that men like. If you look at most of the fashion and women’s magazines, you will think that all women worry about the size of their butts. Lots of women think that ‘I like Big Butts’ is a funny novelty song, but lots of men think, ‘No, he’s just singing it the way it is.’

“When it comes to what men like, it’s impossible to tell, and so it is foolish to try to transform your body into a body that you think men will like. Just keep your body healthy because you just can’t tell what men will like. Once, I was walking on a sidewalk with two men behind me. I heard one man tell the other man, ‘Look at the pair of elbows on her!’ And he wasn’t trying to be funny.”

As the black-haired waitress with the breasts that were the size of fried eggs with an olive on top walked away, the voluble man in blue asked Candide, “Will you drink to the King of the Bulgars?”

Warmed by the ale, and made light-headed by the ale, and impressed by the amount of money that the voluble man in blue was able to spend on breakfast and ale and sexual

excitement, Candide said, "By all means!"

All three men drained their glasses, and the two men in blue told Candide, "Congratulations! You have just joined the Army of the Bulgars!"

That was not what Candide had intended to do, but the voluble man in blue and his companion did not listen to him. They clapped him in irons, and they carried him away. Candide got training in the army of the Bulgars. The first day he made some mistakes and was given 30 lashes, the second day he made fewer mistakes and was given 20 lashes, and the third day he made even fewer mistakes and was given only 10 lashes. He was a prodigy.

However, on the fourth day Candide decided to make use of his free will and take a walk. The walk took him far from the Bulgars, but not far enough. Some Bulgars captured him, returned him to camp, and court-martialed him for desertion. He was found guilty and given his choice of punishments: to run the gauntlet naked 36 times or to have 12 bullets shot into his brain. He chose to run the gauntlet 36 times.

The soldiers stripped him naked, and then sent him through the gauntlet. After the first time he ran through the gauntlet naked, his buttocks were red, raw, and bleeding. After the second time he ran through the gauntlet naked, he begged for 12 bullets to be fired into his brain. The Bulgars prepared to grant his request, but the King of the Bulgars passed by, saw him, inquired about his case, and granted him a pardon because he recognized that Candide was not yet used to the ways of the best of all possible worlds. After three weeks of doctoring, Candide's buttocks had grown a layer of skin, and he was ready to rejoin the regiment.

At that time, the army of the Bulgars went into battle against the army of the Agars.

Chapter 3: Candide Among the Bulgars

The battle was splendid as the soldiers in the Bulgar Army were wearing splendid uniforms and the soldiers in the Avar Army were wearing equally splendid uniforms. The uniforms were so beautiful that the soldiers looked like very expensive toy soldiers dressed in very expensive toy uniforms. This was fortunate as the very expensive uniforms soaked up much of the blood of the dead and dying soldiers as the cannons battered through each army's ranks, tearing off arms and legs and heads and other appendages. Still, the uniforms were not enough to soak up all the blood, especially after the soldiers charged and used their bayonets. No soldier wanted to die for his country, but almost every soldier wanted the enemy soldiers to die for their country. Perhaps 30,000 soldiers died in the battle, but Candide was not one of them. Being one of the few soldiers who did not want anyone to die, he threw away his weapons as quickly as possible and hid until the carnage was over.

Bulgar and Avar civilians supported the troops, and they believed that the very best way to support the troops was to send them into battle so that they could be slaughtered. In addition, they put "Support the Troops" magnetic stickers on the back of their cars.

After the battle, the Bulgar King and the Avar King ordered hymns to be sung to God, praising Him for allowing their soldiers to slaughter the soldiers of the other army and make many, many women widows, and many, many children half-orphans.

However, the Bulgar King and the Avar King should have had additional hymns of praise sung. When Candide ran away from the battle, he came across an Avar village that the Bulgar Army had destroyed. No young Avar men were in the village because they were at war, but the enemy is the enemy, and all tautologies are true, and so the Bulgars had mortally wounded the old men of the village, had mortally wounded the mothers of the village, and had mortally wounded the children of the village. They had also mortally wounded what had been the young virgins of the village, but the soldiers had waited to mortally wound them until after the young virgins had ceased to be virgins as many, many soldiers wanted to demonstrate to the other soldiers that their bodies were both anatomically correct and fully functional.

Everywhere were dead bodies, and parts of bodies, and crying, dying old men, and crying, dying mothers, and crying, dying former virgins, and crying, dying children.

Candide was horrified and ran away. He saw a young virgin who had escaped being used to make many, many soldiers happy before she would have been disemboweled. When she saw him and the uniform he was wearing, she ran. Candide did not try to follow her. She thought that he was one of the soldiers who had destroyed the village and all the life that had been in it.

Candide could guess what would happen to the young virgin. In times of war, when food is scarce, and women have no money and nothing to sell but their bodies, they start small businesses and become entrepreneurs. He had seen many such entrepreneurs serve the soldiers of the Bulgar Army.

Next he came to a Bulgar village that had been destroyed by the Avar Army. The Avar soldiers had treated this village and its inhabitants exactly the same way that the Bulgar soldiers had treated the Avar village and its inhabitants.

A young mother holding a sickly infant had escaped the disembowelment although she had not escaped the many, many men who wished to use her body to prove that they were men. With hatred in her eyes, she watched Candide approach her, and when he began to pass her, she said to him, "Wassa matter, Joe? Don't you fuck?"

"I beg your pardon," Candide said.

"The Bulgar Army and the Avar Army have destroyed everything for miles around. I don't have any food or money to buy food. How am I supposed to keep my baby alive unless you do

the very good deed of fucking me and giving me money or food for my baby?”

“I don’t have any food or any money or anything,” Candide said. “I am a deserter, and as soon as I find something else to wear, I will take this uniform off and relieve my bladder and my bowels on it.”

“God bless you,” the woman said. “I wish another 100,000 soldiers were just like you.”

Candide could not help the woman or her baby, so he left. He found some old clothes, and he treated his uniform exactly as he had told the woman he would. He then made his way to Holland.

Candide knew absolutely no one in Holland, but he had heard that the country was both rich and Christian, and therefore he thought that its citizens both had the means and the desire to be charitable.

Unfortunately, his means of information seem to have been inaccurate, as everyone he asked for help roughly refused his request and threatened to have him put in jail. When he asked a man who had spoken eloquently for an hour on charity where he could find food in that country, the man asked him if he believed that the Pope was the Antichrist.

Candide said that he had never met the Pope and so did not have an opinion on the matter, but he did know for sure that he was hungry.

The man told Candide to get lost, but his wife, who was at an upstairs window listening to the conversation below, did worse than that. She had a full chamber pot full of the stuff that comes from the bodily openings that human beings find very useful but are least proud of, and she dumped the chamber pot’s contents on Candide’s head. Righteous indignation motivates many people, and many people like to have the opportunity to show the depths to which righteous indignation drives them.

Hungry, and tired, and stinky, Candide was in a bad way. Fortunately, a man who had never been baptized as an infant — James the Anabaptist — pitied Candide and took him home, allowed him to take a bath and then eat. He also gave him clean clothing to wear and meaningful work — Candide got a job in one of James the Anabaptist’s Holland factories and began to manufacture Persian rugs.

One day, Candide saw a man who needed help in much the same way that he had needed help. This beggar was missing an eye and an ear and the tip of his nose and was ill and disgusting.

Chapter 4: Candide and Dr. Pangloss

Candide gave the beggar a little money, and the beggar threw his arms around Candide, who was horrified by this close contact with the repulsive beggar.

“Don’t you recognize me?” the beggar asked him. “It is I: Dr. Pangloss.”

“What has happened to you?” Candide asked. “And what has happened to Cunegonde?”

“I am faint from hunger,” Dr. Pangloss said, and he fainted.

Candide revived him and took him to James the Anabaptist, who fed him. This revived Dr. Pangloss, and he was able to speak again.

“What has happened to Cunegonde?” Candide asked.

“She has died,” Dr. Pangloss replied.

Faint from shock and grief, Candide fainted.

James the Anabaptist revived him with some bad vinegar. This allowed Candide to hear more bad news.

“The Bulgars attacked our castle soon after you had left,” Dr. Pangloss said. “The Baron tried to defend Cunegonde, so the Bulgars smashed his head and killed him. They then hacked the Baroness to pieces. Because Cunegonde was young and pretty and defenseless, they allowed her to stay alive a while longer, so that they could rape her again and again because she was an enemy of the Bulgars (so they said) or perhaps simply because she was young and pretty and defenseless.

“The young Baron, Cunegonde’s brother, was also an enemy of the Bulgars (so they said), and also young and pretty and defenseless, and so the Bulgars treated him exactly the same way that they treated Cunegonde.

“Having raped Cunegonde and the young Baron again and again, they killed them horribly by disemboweling them.

“I was so surprised to hear the Bulgar soldiers say that Cunegonde and her brother were enemies of the Bulgars. They were my pupils, and I don’t think that either of them ever had the slightest interest in politics.

“Despite this horrible news, we can rejoice because the Avar soldiers did exactly the same things to the young and pretty and defenseless daughter and the young and pretty and defenseless son of a nearby Bulgar lord.”

“Humanity would have been better served if the Bulgar soldiers and the Avar soldiers had done exactly the same things to each other instead of to the young and pretty and defenseless daughters and sons of families,” Candide said.

“History shows that sometimes that happens, but more often it happens to the young and pretty and defenseless daughters and sons of families,” Dr. Pangloss replied.

Candide then asked how Dr. Pangloss had come to be in the condition he was currently in.

“I have lost an eye, an ear, and the tip of my nose because of love,” Dr. Pangloss said.

“How can love, which is so beautiful, produce such a horrible effect?” Candide asked.

“Pacquette gave me a venereal disease,” Dr. Pangloss said. “Before giving me the disease, she had lost her virginity to a priest to whom she had gone to confess. He had felt that she needed more sins to confess, so he helped her by sinning with her. He had gotten the disease from a countess who had been raped by a man with the disease. Actually, the man raped her twice. The first time he raped her, he gave her the disease. He then got himself cured, but when he raped her a second time, she re-infected him. And so on and so forth, back to the time of Christopher Columbus.”

“Such a disease must have come from the devil,” Candide said.

“Perhaps it did, but we humans have been vigorously and enthusiastically spreading it since it originated, whether it originated through natural or supernatural means,” Dr. Pangloss said. “Our soldiers and the soldiers of the enemy are especially interested in those activities that spread the disease. Whenever two armies of 30,000 soldiers fight each other, approximately 20,000 soldiers in each army will be suffering from venereal disease. War is a wonderful way of avoiding the expense of curing people who suffer from venereal disease. Because we are so eager to go to war, no doubt we shall soon spread this disease to countries that lack both war and venereal disease.”

“But we must cure you,” Candide said.

“Yours is a noble sentiment, but I have no money,” Dr. Pangloss said. “How can I be cured without money?”

Candide appealed to James the Anabaptist, who paid to have Dr. Pangloss cured and gave him a job as his bookkeeper.

After a couple of months, James the Anabaptist had to sail to Lisbon, Portugal, on business. He took Candide and Dr. Pangloss with him.

As they sailed to Lisbon, Dr. Pangloss, who was always ready to engage in philosophy, shared his optimism with James the Anabaptist, who was a good man despite not being an optimist.

“Men were not born evil,” James the Anabaptist said, “but they soon learn evil. Babies are not born soldiers, but they soon learn to be soldiers. Human beings are the creators of weapons such as swords and cannons and other horrible ways to kill people both up close and from a distance. A man invented the gun to satisfy a desire that is common to humanity: A person is over there, and I want to kill him. And violence can be financial as well as physical. Just think of banks foreclosing on people who have paid many thousands of dollars to buy a house but who have lost their jobs and so cannot afford to pay the mortgage.”

“All is for the best,” Dr. Pangloss said. “The fittest survive. When a nuclear bomb makes a direct hit on a group of soldiers, the fittest soldiers live while the weakest soldiers die. The same applies to financial matters. Competition is good for businesses. So is profit.”

“You can say that competition is good for businesses only if you ignore the vast number of bankrupt businesses that are quickly forgotten,” James the Anabaptist said.

As they neared Lisbon, a storm arose. The sky grew dark, and the wind blew harder and the waves grew enormously.

Chapter 5: Candide and the Disaster in Lisbon

Half of the passengers were too ill from the rolling of the ship to pray. The other half prayed when they were not shrieking; unfortunately, the rolling of the ship was so terrifying that they never stopped shrieking. Some people were trying to keep the ship from sinking, but in the confusion no one could take charge.

James the Anabaptist was on deck trying to help. A sailor, frightened by the terrific storm, knocked him down. The blow made the sailor lose his balance, and he fell from the deck, but managed to grab hold of a mast that had fallen. James the Anabaptist helped the sailor to get on deck again, but his efforts made him lose his balance and he fell into the sea. The sailor did not even look at him.

Candide did look at him when he briefly resurfaced, but James the Anabaptist went again under the water, never to return to the surface as a living man. Dr. Pangloss tried to comfort Candide by using philosophy to prove that God had created the harbor of Lisbon so that James the Anabaptist could drown in it, but Candide found little comfort in this foreknowledge and providence of God.

The ship split in two, and all fell into the sea. The sailor quickly discovered that he had been frightened for little reason: He was an excellent swimmer and swam quickly to shore. Dr. Pangloss and Candide also reached shore by holding on to floating wreckage.

The survivors made it to the city of Lisbon, and immediately an earthquake quaked the earth, sending to heaven or hell thousands of people who were attending church. In all, 30,000 people died because of the earthquake as they were crushed in the fallen churches.

The sailor recognized an opportunity when he saw the death, destruction, and confusion.

“I can profit from this!” he exclaimed.

He saw a woman whose upper half was trapped in the wreckage so that she could not get free. He lifted up her dress, pulled down her underwear, and raped her enthusiastically and vigorously. When he was finished, he started to leave. However, the violence of the rape had loosened the wreckage that was keeping the woman captive. She ran the sailor down and tackled him, exclaiming, “I’m a professional! You can’t do that to me without paying!”

“I don’t have any money,” the sailor said.

“You better get some!” the woman replied.

They went into a tavern that had been heavily damaged by the earthquake. The sailor gave the woman the money that was in the cash register, and then they got drunk together. When the woman passed out from drinking too much, the sailor took off her underwear and raped her while she was unconscious, and then he took her money. Before he left, he lifted her dress above her waist and left her legs parted so that everything she sold for money was on display for anyone who entered the tavern.

Meanwhile, Candide was lying on a street, suffering because of the wounds he had received while falling from the broken ship into the sea. He pleaded with Dr. Pangloss, “Get me something to drink! I am dying!”

Instead of getting him something to drink, Dr. Pangloss instead gave him a lecture on the causes and history of earthquakes until Candide fainted. Finding himself without an audience for his lecture, Dr. Pangloss brought some water with which to revive Candide so that he could continue to listen to the lecture.

The next day, people worked together to find and share food and to try to rescue anyone who was still alive and trapped in the wreckage. People shared what food they could find, and they grieved together. They also managed to save some lives by working together. Sometimes,

when things are at their worst, people are at their best. The sailor had done a very good deed by leaving the vicinity.

Dr. Pangloss continued to espouse his philosophy that this is the best of all possible worlds, but the only person who was listening to him was an officer of the Inquisition, who asked him whether he believed in original sin and free will.

Dr. Pangloss was trying to explain that a belief in determinism and a belief in free will need not be contradictory when the officer of the Inquisition nodded to his assistant, who arrested Dr. Pangloss and Candide.

Chapter 6: Candide, Dr. Pangloss, and the Inquisition

The earthquake had destroyed most of Lisbon, and since earthquakes are acts of God, the proper way to propitiate God is to do what is pleasing to Him. What is pleasing to God, of course, is to adore and worship Him, and the best way to do that is with an act of faith, aka auto-da-fé. In short, the wise men of the age decided that the most effective way to stop earthquakes was to burn several people to death.

With this in mind, the Inquisition had rounded up several sinners, including these:

- A man who had advocated the teaching of evolution in Kansas. He protested that he believed in God and that he believed that God had created evolution, but the Inquisition rejected this as a mere prevarication.

- A woman who had stated in public that God had not sent AIDS to punish homosexuals. She protested that a merciful God would never do anything so cruel as to send a disease to punish one group of people but that also punished fetuses who acquired AIDS in the womb, but the Inquisition rejected this as a mere prevarication.

- Two teenage girls who had been caught kissing each other. They had protested that they were merely practicing for when they would have boyfriends — they wanted their first kiss with a boy to be special and practice makes perfect, but the Inquisition rejected this as a mere prevarication.

- Two gay men, who were arrested for engaging in unnatural behavior. The two men protested that homosexual acts are practiced by hundreds of species in the animal kingdom and therefore must be natural, but the Inquisition rejected this as a mere prevarication.

- Two gay men, who were arrested for wearing leather in a public park after dark. They protested that they had never gotten a woman pregnant and had never raped a woman and thus had not increased the number of abortions or the amount of sexual violence against women, but the Inquisition rejected this as a mere prevarication.

- A woman who had advocated that politicians ought to wear the kind of clothing that NASCAR racers wear. That way, voters could see at a glance the logos of the big companies that donated money to and owned the politician, but the Inquisition rejected this as a mere prevarication.

- Dr. Pangloss and Candide — Dr. Pangloss for speaking, and Candide for seeming to listen approvingly. Dr. Pangloss protested that God had created this world and that this world was the best of all possible worlds, but the Inquisition rejected this as a mere prevarication. Candide protested that God would never be so cruel as to use the Inquisition to punish sinners, but the Inquisition rejected this as a mere prevarication.

- A Republican who had appeared on *Hardball with Chris Matthews*, and when Mr. Matthews had asked him to name the Republican accomplishments of the 1990s and 2000s, some of which time the Republican party had held the Presidency and had held a majority in the Senate and the House of Representatives, the man had hemmed and hawed. Finally, the man said that the Republican party had kept Americans safe, but the Inquisition asked, “What about 9-11?”

- One person who was not punished at the auto-da-fé was Monty Python member Graham Chapman, although he might have been if not for the action of fellow Python member Eric Idle. Mr. Chapman had appeared on a TV talk show, during which he discussed his homosexuality. The Inquisition wrote Monty Python, enclosing in the letter some prayers for Mr. Chapman’s soul, as well as the biblical verse stating that if a man lie with another, he shall be taken out and killed. Mr. Idle read the Inquisition’s letter, and then he wrote in reply, “We’ve taken him out and killed him.”

These sinners were placed in rooms in a dungeon that was kept dark to prevent prisoners from being sunburned, and in a week they were brought forth to do their part in preventing earthquakes. All of them except Candide and Dr. Pangloss were burned at the stake. By the time the Inquisition got around to making Dr. Pangloss useful in the prevention of earthquakes, it had started to rain, and so Dr. Pangloss — contrary to custom — was hung by the neck. Candide's punishment was lighter than that of the others because he had merely listened to heresy, not spoken it. He was flogged in time to music created by some of the greatest musical geniuses the world has ever known.

Candide was upset, and he thought, *How can this be the best of all possible worlds? I have been treated horribly, but I am alive. Dr. Pangloss has been hanged and is dead. James the Anabaptist has drowned and is dead. And Cunegonde has been disemboweled and is dead.*

An old woman came up to him and said, "Cheer up, and follow me."

He followed her.

This was fortunate because despite the precautions of the Inquisition, another earthquake occurred, and if Candide had been around, the Inquisition might have thought that just one more death was needed to prevent earthquakes.

Chapter 7: Candide and the Old Woman

The old woman had said to Candide, "Cheer up, and follow me."

Cheering up was impossible, but following the old woman was possible, and Candide did what was possible.

The old woman took him to an apartment that was modestly furnished, but it did have what he needed: a clean bed, clothing, ointment for his wounds from the whipping, and food and drink. She also gave him a sword, although Candide then saw no need for it.

"Eat and drink, and I will rub this ointment on your wounds, and then you can rest," the old woman told him.

Later, she told him, "May Saint Bernard Francis Law take as good care of you as he did of the children under his protection. I will see you tomorrow."

Perhaps she did not know that Saint Bernard Law is best known for attempting to cover up many Catholic priests' serial raping of children.

Candide tried to thank her, but the old woman would not accept thanks that she told him belonged to another person, instead telling him, "You should kiss someone else's hand, not mine."

For the next two days, the old woman brought ointment and rubbed it on Candide's wounds, and she brought food and drink for him.

"Why are you doing this?" Candide asked. "Who are you? Why won't you let me thank you?"

The old woman did not answer him, but the next time she showed up, she did not bring him food. Instead, she told him, "Follow me."

Candide followed her, and she took him to a house with ornamental gardens and ornamental ponds. He followed her upstairs, and she left him in a room with a couch. Soon, she returned with a veiled and bejeweled woman and told him, "Lift her veil."

Candide did. At first he thought that he was seeing Cunegonde, and then he knew that he was seeing Cunegonde. Overcome by emotion, he fainted and fell on the hard floor. Overcome by emotion, she fainted and fell on the soft couch.

The old woman poured alcohol down their throats to revive them, and Candide and Cunegonde began to speak to each other as the old woman left the room.

"Are you really alive?" Candide asked Cunegonde. "I had heard that soldiers raped you and then slit open your belly."

"Yes," Cunegonde answered, crying. "Both of those events occurred, but they are not always fatal, either singly or together. As for rape, many, many women are walking around today who have been raped. All men know someone who has been raped, whether or not they know that she has been raped. These women are the men's mothers, daughters, sisters, girlfriends, wives, and friends. And many women bear scars — physical, or mental, or both — from the rape."

"Were your parents killed, as I have heard?" Candide asked.

"Yes," Cunegonde answered, crying.

"Was your brother killed?"

"Yes," Cunegonde answered, crying.

"Why are you here in Portugal? How did you find me?"

"I will tell you everything," Cunegonde said, "but first you must tell me your adventures from the time that you were literally kicked out of Westphalia after innocently sharing a kiss and wandering hands with me."

Candide did exactly that, and Cunegonde cried when she heard of the deaths of James the Anabaptist and of Dr. Pangloss. Then she told Candide her story.

Chapter 8: Cunegonde Tells Her Story

“I was asleep when the Bulgars attacked my father’s castle and killed my parents and my brother. I fainted, and a Bulgar private took advantage of the opportunity and started raping me. Because I was unaccustomed to being raped, when I regained consciousness I started to resist him. I was naïve and thought that the Bulgar was doing something out of the ordinary to me when actually he was doing nothing that has not done by many, many soldiers during every war and often during times of peace. Although the Bulgar realized that I did not know what goes on during war and peace, he stabbed me in my side. I still have the scar.”

“I would like to see it!” exclaimed Candide.

“You will,” Cunegonde replied. “A Bulgar captain came in and saw the Bulgar private on top of me, thrusting away. Insulted because the private did not salute him, the Bulgar captain shot and killed him. Whenever a Bulgar captain walks in on a Bulgar private raping an innocent civilian, all the captain wants to hear is a hole sucking air as the private jumps up and stands at attention. In such circumstances, the private’s thing is also expected to stand at attention.

“The Bulgar captain ordered my wounds to be taken care of, and I became his cook because I was very pretty, and as everyone knows, what soldiers do with very pretty women is to make them cooks. I was not raped by the Bulgar captain, no matter what you may later hear. A woman may be raped once, but it makes her resolve never to be raped again. The Bulgar captain had beautiful, soft skin.

“In a month, the Bulgar captain needed money, and having grown tired of my, ahem, cooking, he sold me. The purchaser was Don Issachar, a cultivator of women who enjoys plowing their fields, or so I have heard. I have not been raped by Don Issachar, no matter what you may later hear.

“While I was attending Mass, the Grand Inquisitor noticed me and desired me. He ordered me to appear at his palace, and after interviewing me, he told me that as a Christian I ought not to be the slave of a Jew such as Don Issachar. He also suggested to Don Issachar that he give me to him. Don Issachar declined to do that, and so the Grand Inquisitor began to talk about auto-da-fés, with the result that Don Issachar agreed to share me with the Grand Inquisitor.

“The kind of sharing they meant was the sharing of my cooking. Each time they visited, they wanted to sleep with me but I fended them off with my cooking. Instead of sleeping with me, they ate a big sloppy meal and then took a nap on the couch. From TV fast-food commercials, you can learn that men prefer eating a big sloppy meal to sleeping with a beautiful woman. I treated Don Issachar and the Grand Inquisitor exactly the same way I treated the Bulgar captain.

“The bargain they made was that Don Issachar could have me Mondays, Wednesdays, and the Jewish Sabbath, while the Grand Inquisitor could have me the other days of the week. For six months, they have been quarreling over who can have me the night between Saturday and Sunday — Don Issachar claims that it is part of the Jewish Sabbath, while the Grand Inquisitor claims that it belongs to the Christian Sabbath. I have been resisting the Grand Inquisitor exactly as much as I have been resisting Don Issachar. I have not been raped by the Grand Inquisitor, no matter what you may later hear. Both Don Issachar and the Grand Inquisitor have beautiful, soft skin.

“Because of the quarrel over the night between Saturday and Sunday, the Grand Inquisitor decided to hold an auto-da-fé — not only would it prevent earthquakes, but it would persuade Don Issachar to let the Grand Inquisitor have me during the disputed time. I attended the auto-da-fé, and I was very surprised to see burned at the stake the guest who defended the

Republican Party on Chris Matthews' TV show. In my experience, such people do the burning and are not burned. I was also surprised to see a man who resembled Dr. Pangloss hung, and not in a good way. I was even more surprised when I saw you being flogged while you were stripped naked. Your skin is even more beautiful and softer than the skin of the Bulgar captain.

"I did not cry out and try to prevent the atrocities from happening because my voice stuck in my throat, although I did think about writing a strongly worded letter to the editor of my local newspaper. I wondered how you and Dr. Pangloss came to be victims of the Inquisition in Portugal, and I realized that Dr. Pangloss had been incorrect when he taught me that this is the best of all possible worlds.

"I was agitated by all of these sights, and I thought about the slaughter of my parents and my brother, and I thought about the Bulgar soldier who raped me, and I thought about the Bulgar captain who made me his slave, and I thought about being the slave of Don Issachar and the Grand Inquisitor, and I thought about Dr. Pangloss' death in the auto-da-fé, and I thought about helping you. I ordered the old woman, my servant, to take care of you. She has done that very well, and she has brought you here. You must be hungry, so let's eat."

They sat down at the table and ate, and then they sat down on the couch and got busy. They were busy when Don Issachar arrived. It was the Jewish Sabbath, and he had come to do with Cunegonde the things that he — and, separately, the Grand Inquisitor — usually did with Cunegonde.

Chapter 9: Candide and Cunegonde's Captors

Don Issachar saw Candide and Cunegonde being busy on the couch, and he cried, "I am already sharing you with the Grand Inquisitor! Must I share you with this mongrel dog as well?"

Thinking that Candide was unarmed, Don Issachar drew a dagger and attacked him, but Candide drew the sword that the old woman had given him and to Don Issachar's surprise, it was Don Issachar who died.

Cunegonde was afraid: "If the police come, we are dead."

"Unfortunately, Dr. Pangloss is dead, or he would give us good advice," Candide said, "but the old woman has just come through the door, so let us ask her for advice."

This showed good sense on Candide's part, but just as the old woman began to speak, the door opened, and the Grand Inquisitor stepped into the room.

The Grand Inquisitor stopped out of surprise, and Candide thought, "This is the person who is responsible for the auto-da-fé that killed Dr. Pangloss and during which I was whipped. If he can, he will hold another auto-da-fé and kill me and perhaps kill Cunegonde, too. Better that he die than that Cunegonde and I die."

Reasoning thus, Candide thrust his sword through the Grand Inquisitor and killed him.

"Now we will have the Inquisition set on finding, excommunicating, and killing us," Cunegonde said. "How can you, Candide, who are so gentle, kill both a Jew and the Grand Inquisitor within five minutes of each other?"

"I have experienced so much of the world that in some ways I am like other men who live in the world," Candide replied.

"That is one way to solve the problem of who can have Cunegonde the night between Saturday and Sunday," said the old woman. "Another way would have been for Cunegonde to get on top of one of her masters, put his thing in her front hole, and then allow her other master to use her rear hole at the same time. Both ways of solving the problem have disadvantages, but only one involves the loss of life. Still, Candide's way of solving the problem is, I think, more satisfactory to the woman."

"To most women, anyway," Cunegonde said. "Some women like cooking with gas."

The old woman knew that her advice was needed, and she gave it: "Candide must saddle the three horses in the stable. Madam Cunegonde must gather her jewelry and gold coins. Let us ride together to Cadiz, although I can sit on only one buttock. This time of year, the weather is pleasant for riding at night. Once we are at the port of Cadiz, we can sail anywhere."

The plan was put into action, and the three rode away. Soon after they had gone, members of the Inquisition arrived and found the bodies of Don Issachar and of the Grand Inquisitor. They threw the body of Don Issachar on a garbage heap, and they gave the body of the Grand Inquisitor a magnificent burial.

Chapter 10: Candide, Cunegonde, and the Old Woman Travel to Cadiz

The next day, after staying overnight in Badajoz, the three travelers arrived in the small town of Avicena, where they stopped at an inn and Cunegonde discovered that she had been robbed.

“Who can have taken my jewelry and gold coins?” Cunegonde wailed. “Where can I find another Jew and another Grand Inquisitor to give me more jewelry and gold coins?”

“I think I know who robbed you,” the old woman said. “It must have been the Franciscan who stayed with us at the inn in Badajoz. After all, he came into your room twice late night.”

“Twice?” Cunegonde said. “I know of only once.”

“Why was he in your room?” Candide asked.

“He was touching me under the sheets,” Cunegonde replied.

“Did you tell him ‘no, stop, don’t’?” Candide asked.

“Not at all,” replied Cunegonde. “In my experience, when a woman says, ‘No,’ the man thinks she is saying ‘Yes.’ When a woman says, ‘Stop,’ the man thinks she is saying ‘Go.’ And when a woman says, ‘Don’t,’ the man thinks she is saying ‘Deeper and faster.’

“So, of course, I did not tell him, ‘No, stop, don’t.’ Why would I want to encourage him?”

The old woman said, “The second time he came into your room, I told him to get out, but by the time I woke up and told him to get out, he must have discovered your jewelry and gold coins.”

Cunegonde said to Candide, “Don’t ask me where I hid them.”

“According to Dr. Pangloss, the property of this world is owned in common by all,” Candide said, “and so the Franciscan should have left us enough jewelry and gold coins to be able to continue our journey, but apparently the Franciscan does not know philosophy because he did not leave us anything.”

“What shall we do?” Cunegonde asked.

“Let’s sell one of the horses,” the old woman said. “I don’t weigh much, so I can ride with Cunegonde on her horse, although I have only one buttock, and we shall continue our journey to Cadiz.”

They sold one horse to a Benedictine prior who prided himself on how well he knew the Bible. This Benedictine prior followed the Biblical verse “He was a stranger and I took him” by buying the horse for a very low price.

Soon the three travelers arrived at Cadiz, where an expedition was being fitted out to take soldiers first to Argentina and then to Paraguay, where the Jesuits needed to be brought under control because they were inciting the natives to rebel against the King of Spain and the King of Portugal.

Candide had served in the Bulgar army, so he demonstrated his marching skill to the leaders of the expedition, and they made him a captain in their army. Now an officer, he boarded a ship, along with Cunegonde and the old woman.

The trip to the New World took a long time, and they had lots of time for discussion. One topic of interest was the optimistic philosophy of Dr. Pangloss, a philosophy that did not seem to apply to the parts of the world that they had already seen.

“The New World that we are going to must be the world to which Dr. Pangloss’ optimistic philosophy applies,” Candide said. “The Old World that we have just left can hardly be the best of all possible worlds.”

“I love you on the sea, and I loved you in the Old World,” Cunegonde said. “Love is good, but I must admit I have experienced many bad things in the Old World.”

“I believe that the New World is the best of all possible worlds,” Candide said. “After all, we have not experienced a storm like the one I experienced at Lisbon. We have had calm sailing.”

“I hope you’re right,” Cunegonde said, “but I have experienced many bad things, and I am afraid that the New World is very much like the Old World.”

“Both of you complain about your misfortunes,” the old woman said, “but neither of you has suffered misfortunes as bad as mine.”

Cunegonde was shocked, not because the old woman was speaking without being spoken to, since intimate servants are allowed to do that, but because Cunegonde was convinced that her misfortunes were misfortunate indeed.

She said to the old woman, “Your misfortunes cannot be as bad as mine unless everything that I have suffered — being raped, being stabbed, seeing my father’s castle destroyed, seeing my family (father, mother, and brother) killed before my eyes, and seeing the man I love whipped in an auto-da-fé — you have suffered twice. In addition, I was born to a Baroness who can trace her nobility back 72 generations and yet I became a cook.”

“Madam,” the old woman said. “You don’t know my birth or my story, and if you saw my butt you would stop complaining about your misfortunes. Let me tell you my story.”

Chapter 11: The Old Woman's Story, Part One

The old woman continued, "I have not always been ugly, with bloodshot eyes and a nose that can touch my chin. I haven't always been a slave or a servant. My parents were well born. My parents are Pope Urban X and the Princess of Palestrina. Until I was 14 years old, I lived and was reared in a castle much finer than any castle in Westphalia.

"I was beautiful. My breasts were fully formed — and what breasts! The women who bathed me praised my breasts and all the other parts of my body — and they weren't even lesbians! All men would have loved to bathe me.

"I was engaged to be married to a prince of Massa-Carrarra, a very handsome man. However, before the marriage took place his former mistress invited him over for chocolate, and two hours after drinking the chocolate he died in horrible pain. Such things happen.

"My mother decided to take me on a voyage to assuage my grief. We set sail, but Barbary pirates overtook us. The soldiers we had taken along to protect us screamed and begged for mercy — which they did not get.

"My mother and I and the women we had taken with us were all stripped naked — a specialty of pirates everywhere. They inserted their fingers in the place where normally a woman will insert only the nozzle of an enema. I learned that such is the custom of pirates on the high seas because sometimes jewelry is hidden in that place. I also learned that the pirates do not trust each other to search that place diligently because not just one pirate searched that place; instead, dozens of them did. In fact, each pirate searched me there three or four times. Some did not use their fingers.

"We should not single out the Muslim Barbary pirates as the only ones practicing this custom, for the Knights of Malta, a Christian group, practiced this custom on Turkish women. Indeed, pirates everywhere practice this custom. Actually, 'custom' is the wrong word; this act is so common that apparently it is performed in accordance with international law.

"I and the other women, all of whom were also beautiful, suffered on that pirate ship. At age 14, I was a virgin, but the pirate captain took me for his own and took what was left of my virginity, too — one hole was still virgin territory, but not for long. He thought that he was doing me a great favor by raping me daily. But I need not tell you any details — such rapes are common, and I don't want to bore you. You and everyone else must know many women who have been raped.

"We arrived in Morocco, where the 50 sons of the Emperor Muley Ismael had 50 armies, and each son fought all the other sons, with the result that people dressed in red so that their clothing would match the color of the blood that covered the grounds.

"The heavily armed pirate captain and his heavily armed crew were not safe in Morocco because everyone else there was also heavily armed. And having my mother, our beautiful servants, and me made them unsafe because everyone wanted to take us away from the pirates. A band of blacks attacked the pirate captain and his crew; they fought fiercely over the women. One man grabbed my mother's right arm, another grabbed her left arm, another grabbed her right leg, another grabbed her left leg, and all pulled, with the result that my mother was torn into four pieces.

"Soon, all except me were dead: the pirate captain, his crew, the blacks who had attacked him, my mother, and all of our beautiful female servants. Such attacks with similar results took place often in Morocco, although thankfully peace reigned briefly five times a day as the Muslims said their prayers.

"I was able to wiggle out of a pile of dead bodies and pieces of dead bodies, and I dragged myself to the shade of a big tree, where I slept due to exhaustion.

“I awoke and felt a strange sensation between my legs. A man had come along, removed my clothing, and put his head between my legs. I looked at him, and he raised his head, looked at me, and said, ‘What a misfortune to be without testicles.’

“I did not tell him ‘no, stop, don’t.’ In my experience, when a woman says, ‘No,’ the man thinks she is saying ‘Yes.’ When a woman says, ‘Stop,’ the man thinks she is saying ‘Go.’ And when a woman says, ‘Don’t,’ the man thinks she is saying ‘Deeper and faster.’

“So, of course, I did not tell him, ‘No, stop, don’t.’ Why would I want to encourage him?”

Chapter 12: The Old Woman's Story, Part Two

“Despite the obvious disadvantages of this situation, I was pleased that the man spoke my own language, and I was not especially upset that he lacked testicles, although normally I am against the custom of castrating a boy in order that he may retain a high voice as an adult and sing in a religious choir, as I learned had been done to this man, who explained to me that he had sung in the choir of the Princess of Palestrina.

“‘The Princess of Palestrina!’ I exclaimed. ‘She is my mother!’

“‘So you are the little princess I helped rear to the age of six!’ he exclaimed.

“It was so. He related his adventures to me, explaining that a Christian power had sent him to the King of Morocco to make a treaty by which the Christian power would grow rich by selling the King of Morocco weapons to be used to kill Christians.

“He added, ‘I have made the treaty, and now I will take you back to Palestrina!’

“I thanked him with tears in my eyes, but instead of taking me back to Palestrina, he took me to Algiers and sold me as a slave.

“In Algiers I caught the plague, which is much worse than an earthquake because it is longer lasting and more painful. By then, I was 15 years old, and for the past year I had been raped almost daily, had seen my mother torn into four pieces, had experienced war and starvation, and now thought that I was dying of the plague. But I was wrong about dying. I didn't die, but most of the people around me died, including the man who had bought me.

“I, along with the other surviving slaves, was sold. I was taken to Tunis and sold again, and then I was taken to Tripoli. Over and over I was sold, with each master enjoying my body until he sold me to another master. I served masters in Alexandria, in Smyrna, and in Constantinople, and eventually I was owned by an aga who was defending Azov against the Russians, who besieged the city.

“The aga took me and the other members of his harem to a fort. The rest of the harem was destroyed, with only our little fort remaining. The Russians besieged us and kept food from entering the fort, trying to starve us out.

“Eventually, the aga and his men grew so hungry that they killed, cooked, and ate two eunuchs. Then they grew so hungry that they wanted to kill, cook, and eat us members of the harem. However, a Muslim holy man convinced them not to kill us, at least not right away.

“The holy man said, ‘Instead of killing them, simply cut off one buttock from each woman. That way, you can enjoy a delicious meal. Later, if need be, you can cut off the other buttock and eat it.’

“They listened to the holy man, and each of us women was held down as they cut off one of our buttocks. The holy man kept our wounds from becoming infected by the use of an ointment.

“The aga and his men had just finished their meal when the Russians attacked and killed them all. Just a few hours earlier and none of us women would have been deformed. The Russians did not pay any attention to us — apparently, our recent wound made us no longer sexually desirable. But a French surgeon took care of us, and after my wound had healed he had sex with me. He liked amputees, as do some other men. He assured me that such wounds as I and the other women had suffered were common during times of siege.

“I was given to a Boyar as his reward for fighting bravely. In addition to whipping me daily, he made me his gardener until his bones were broken as he lay tied on a wheel for some court intrigue or other. I escaped and traveled across Russia. I worked as a barmaid cum prostitute in Riga, Rostock, and many other places, eventually ending up in Rotterdam.

“I have grown old, and throughout my life I have often wanted to kill myself, but I — and most other people — lack the courage to do such an act. In all my travels and wide experience, I have known only 12 people who had the courage to kill themselves, although I have known many hundreds who have wished to commit suicide. Somehow, and for what reason I do not know, I love life. Perhaps a cruel god instilled that love in me to keep me alive and miserable.

“Finally, I became the servant of Don Issachar, who placed me in the service of you, Cunegonde. You know the rest of my story.

“My life has been one of misery, poverty, and degradation, and I am ashamed to have told it to you because such stories are so commonplace that I fear that I have bored you. Still, it is customary to tell one’s life story while on a sea voyage. It helps to pass the time.

“All I have told you is true. My life has been wretched, and I have often cursed it. I am willing to bet my life that every passenger on this ship has felt the same way I do. Ask them, and if you find anyone who is satisfied with his or her life, throw me overboard and let me drown. You will be doing me a favor.”

Chapter 13: Candide in Buenos Aires

In fact, Candide and Cunegonde did ask the other passengers if they had cursed their fate, and they discovered that the other passengers had cursed their fate many, many times.

One passenger who had cursed his fate was a pro-life protester who had murdered the last remaining late-term abortionist in the United States and then had fled first to Europe and now to South America. This pro-life protester had just received news that his wife, who was seven months pregnant, was carrying a fetus that was very severely deformed and would never be able to survive outside the womb. Even worse, unless his wife received a late-term abortion, she would almost certainly die while giving birth. The only American doctor who had the necessary experience in dealing with this kind of late-term abortion was the doctor whom the pro-life protester had recently killed.

Another passenger who cursed her fate had gotten very, very drunk with a man whom she thought was her friend. When she collapsed, unconscious, he had carried her to her bed and raped her, something that she had discovered only after finding out that she was pregnant although she had thought that she was a virgin.

Another passenger who had cursed his fate was a student who had partied all semester long and then had gone to each of his professors — one at a time — and told them that he was very close to getting on the Dean's List, and he would get on the Dean's List if only the professor would cut him some slack. Of course, each professor had told him that the professor would not cut him any slack even though he might get on the Dean's List; instead, each professor had told him that the professor would grade his work fairly, just like the professor graded the work of the other students. Each time a professor had told him that his work would be graded fairly, based on the paper's content, format, and mechanics, the student's eyes had filled with tears and he had asked, "Are you threatening me?" Each professor had graded the student's work fairly, and the student — who was on academic probation — had flunked out of college.

Another person who cursed her fate was a celebrity who wanted to act well in good movies but who became famous starring in a television sitcom that was not well regarded by the critics. The money was good, but she was no longer able to go to the mall except when she wanted to be perked up by being recognized by many, many fans, something she never wanted to do because she wanted nothing to do with anyone who would watch — voluntarily and without being paid — the sitcom she starred in.

Another person who cursed his fate was a man who mourned because he had not been born into either the Kennedy family or the Bush family. If only he had, he said, his life would be wonderful because he would be rich and well connected.

Another person who cursed her fate was a young woman who had been taught that she ought to be a virgin when she got married. Therefore, to keep her hymen intact she had had oral and anal sex with all of her boyfriends, only to break her hymen while she was riding on horseback.

Soon the ship sailed into Buenos Aires, where the governor was Don Fernando de Ibaraa, y Figueora y Mascarenes y Lampourdos y Souza, a man whose pride made everyone want to hit him, although because of his power they could not. A lustful man, he noticed the beauty of Cunegonde, and he inquired whether Candide was married to her or related to her.

Candide told the truth: "I am engaged to marry Cunegonde, an event that I hope will happen soon and will be graced by your presence."

Don Fernando sent Candide away on an errand, and then he declared his love for and to Cunegonde, asking her to marry him quickly, whether in a church or out of it. Cunegonde asked for 15 minutes to think over the marriage proposal, although Don Fernando definitely

preferred that he and she spend the 15 minutes doing something else, and during the 15 minutes Cunegonde consulted the old woman, who pointed out, “Don Fernando is rich and powerful and has a handsome mustache and is likely to have riches and power and a handsome mustache for a very long time. You, on the other hand, are beautiful now, but the beauty of a woman seldom lasts even with the help of massive plastic surgery and often not even then. In addition, many men will consider you damaged goods, since you have been raped and since a Bulgar captain and a Jew and a Grand Inquisitor have enjoyed your sexual favors, no matter what you have told Candide. Does Candide have prospects? If he does, they in no way compare to Don Fernando’s riches and power and handsome mustache. I love security, and if security involves marrying Don Fernando, I would marry Don Fernando. Since Don Fernando has no interest in marrying me, I advise you to marry Don Fernando.”

Just then a small ship entered the harbor, and on it were men hunting Candide to bring him to justice for the murder of the Grand Inquisitor. They had learned that he had traveled to South America from a Franciscan monk who had, as the old woman, suspected, stolen Cunegonde’s jewelry and gold coins. The Franciscan monk had tried to sell some of the jewelry. The jewelry was recognized as being among the possessions of the Grand Inquisitor, and the Franciscan monk was hanged. Before he was hanged, he confessed that he had stolen the jewelry and the gold coins, and he described the woman he had stolen the riches from and the people with whom she had been traveling and in which direction they were traveling. This was enough to lead Candide’s pursuers to Cadiz, where they discovered that he had set sail for South America.

The old woman advised Cunegonde, “You have nothing to fear. Don Fernando loves you and will protect you.”

The old woman then ran to Candide and advised him to flee, as he was sure to be executed if he were captured.

Candide was ready to take her advice, but where would he go?

Chapter 14: Cunegonde in Buenos Aires, and Candide in Paraguay

Candide left on horseback in a hurry and in the company of Cacambo, who was a very capable Spaniard and a very capable valet and a very capable human being. Cacambo was widely traveled, and he had worked as a choirboy (but not as a castrato), commercial agent, sailor, sexton, servant, and soldier. In addition, he could spell.

Meanwhile, Don Fernando sent a package to Cunegonde. The woman who delivered the package said that it contained the national costume of Argentina, and that Cunegonde must wear only the national costume of Argentina and nothing else when she met Don Fernando. The woman would take Cunegonde to Don Fernando as soon as Cunegonde got dressed.

Cunegonde opened the package and found a cheerleading outfit; however, the cheerleading outfit lacked any clothing to go under the skirt. At first, Cunegonde was going to wear her own underwear, but the woman who had delivered the package and was helping her dress reminded her not to wear anything that was not the national costume of Argentina. Cunegonde obeyed, and hoped that a strong wind would not lift her skirt when she walked to meet Don Fernando. She had worn similar costumes — but with a thong — both in private and in public for Don Issachar and the Grand Inquisitor and the wind had not always obeyed her wishes.

After the woman had delivered Cunegonde to Don Fernando and left, he said to her, “Now it is time for you to audition to be my wife.”

Cunegonde thought, *Audition? Previously, he had made marriage to him sound like a sure thing.*

But Cunegonde did everything that Don Fernando asked her to do, including cartwheels, and after she had filled her mouth, and then swallowed, Don Fernando told her, “Congratulations! You have passed the audition to become my mistress. I will be your protector in Argentina and will support you, and you will do anything that I tell you to do, especially if it is sexual in nature.”

Cunegonde thought, *Mistress? What happened to being his wife? But I am far from home, and I need protection, and I realize that being a mistress with a home is better than being a single woman without a home. And maybe he will give me jewelry and gold coins. I will be his mistress.*

Meanwhile, Candide lamented because he had been forced to leave Cunegonde, and he worried about where he should go. Fortunately, ever-capable Cacambo knew where they could go.

“A change of fortune often necessitates a change in loyalty,” Cacambo said. “You had been planning to fight *against* the Jesuits. Now plan to fight *for* the Jesuits. We can go to Paraguay and meet the commandant. He will be happy to have under his command a soldier who knows the Bulgar drills.”

“Have you been in Paraguay before?” Candide asked.

“Yes,” Cacambo answered. “I enjoy traveling and seeing how the world works — and sometimes it works in a very strange fashion. For example, the Jesuits came to South America to serve the people, and they have served the people so well that the Jesuits have everything and the people have nothing. This is not unusual; I have seen it all over the world. The best way to tell whether someone is a public servant is to see how many servants he has. If he — and it is usually a he — has many servants, he is a high-ranking public servant. The Jesuits are remarkable. In Europe, they serve the King of Spain and the King of Portugal, but here in South America, the Jesuits kill the Spaniards and the Portuguese.”

Soon, they reached a border post. Soldiers surrounded them, and a Paraguayan officer told them that they could not talk to the commandant for another three hours. He also told them that

the commandant did not allow any Spaniard to stay in Paraguay for more than three hours. In addition, the Paraguayan officer told them that the commandant did not allow any Spaniard to speak in his presence.

Cacambo said, "My master here is not a Spaniard. Instead, he is German. And both of us are hungry. Please give us something to eat while we wait to speak to the commandant."

The Paraguayan officer went to the commandant and spoke to him.

"From God all good things come," the commandant said. "Since this man is a German and is not a Spaniard, I may talk to him without defiling myself. Bring him to me."

Candide soon arrived, and he was able to observe that the commandant's table was laden with golden plates and lots of rich food. Outside, he had seen native Paraguayans eat their small, poor meal from wooden bowls.

After Candide had kissed the hem of the commandant's robe, he noticed that the commandant was young, and handsome, and effeminate. The commandant also did some noticing of his own, and Candide and he stared at each other as Candide said, "I come from the unpopular and dirty province of Westphalia in Germany. I was born in the beautiful castle of Baron Thunderstormcumlightning."

In amazement, the commandant asked, "Are you really Candide?"

And in amazement, Candide asked, "Are you really the young Baron, Cunegonde's brother? We thought that you have been disemboweled by the Bulgars!"

The commandant and Candide hugged each other, and Candide told him, "You will be happy to learn that your sister, Cunegonde, is alive and well in Buenos Aires."

The two talked, and they ate, and Candide told the young Baron his story, and then the young Baron told Candide what had happened to him after Candide had been forced to leave the Baron's castle with many kicks to his bare backside.

Meanwhile, Cacambo served them.

Chapter 15: Candide Kills Again

The young Baron said, "I will always remember the day that I witnessed the murder of my parents and the rape of my sister. I also was slit open and was left for dead, along with some children whom the Bulgars had murdered. All these corpses littered the landscape, leading me to believe that people should be fined for littering.

"Following a massacre, a clean-up takes place, although the fellows who commit the massacre are seldom the people who perform the clean-up. I was loaded on a wagon along with my dead parents and three murdered children, and all of us were taken away for burial. A Jesuit sprinkled salty holy water on us, and when it got into my eyes, my eyelids fluttered. Seeing this, the Jesuit placed his hand on my crotch, and when he felt something move, he knew that I was still alive.

"Because I was handsome, he took an interest in me and nursed me back to health and made me a Jesuit. Moreover, when he tired of me he sent me to Rome, where I was recruited to go to Paraguay because Spanish Jesuits are regarded as hard to manage and German Jesuits are regarded as very willing to follow orders, no matter what those orders may be.

"I am under orders to fight the followers of the King of Spain, and I will do so. But is it true that my sister, Cunegonde, is still alive and is in fact well?"

"Yes," Candide said, "I have left her but recently."

The two men embraced often as they told their stories, and the young Baron said, "Perhaps we two together can rescue my sister and bring her here."

"We can and we shall," Candide replied, "and then I shall marry her."

"You — marry *her*?" the young Baron sneered. "How dare you! You are a nobody, and Cunegonde's mother can trace her nobility back 72 generations. Cunegonde shall marry no man unless he can trace his nobility back for over 73 generations."

"Her birth is not the deciding factor in whom she shall marry," Candide said. "I have rescued her from a Jew and a Grand Inquisitor, and she wants to marry me. These facts are more important than mere birth."

"Spoken like a true commoner," the young Baron said, and he drew his sword and whipped the flat of the blade across Candide's cheek.

Candide was unfamiliar with how the nobility insulted each other, so he drew his sword and plunged it into the body of the young Baron, just as he done earlier to the bodies of the Jew and the Grand Inquisitor.

"Oh, no," Candide cried. "I have killed a Jew, a Grand Inquisitor, and the young Baron! All three men were religious, and two of them were Catholic priests! How can I, who am so gentle, do such a thing!"

"Such is the way of the world," Cacambo said. "Inside each of us, no matter how gentle, is a killer. And if anyone disbelieves me, they ought to join the United States Army and see how many ways they learn to take life from a fellow human being.

"But let us think about our own lives. The Jesuits will want to take our lives because you have taken the life of the young Baron, their commandant. Put on his Jesuit robe, and we shall try to escape before the young Baron's death is discovered."

Quickly, Candide put on the Jesuit robe, he and Cacambo got horses, and they rode out of the Jesuit camp as Cacambo rode ahead of Candide and cried, "Make way! Get out of the way of the Reverend Father Colonel!"

Chapter 16: Demon Lovers

Cacambo and Candide rode quickly, and they left the Jesuit camp before anyone realized that Candide had killed the Jesuit commandant. Cacambo, an experienced and competent man, had filled their saddlebags with food and wine and water, so that they had plenty to eat and drink.

Eventually, Cacambo suggested that they eat and rest, and so they stopped under a shady tree and Cacambo laid out food and wine and water.

“How can you expect me to eat when I have just killed the young son of the Baron, Cunegonde’s brother?” Candide complained. “And how can you expect me to eat when I will probably never see Cunegonde again? And what will the tabloid TV shows say?”

Nevertheless, the two men ate, and then Cacambo left to answer the call of nature. While Cacambo was gone, Candide heard some shrieks, and he got up and looked around. To his surprise, he saw two naked young women running away from two naked demons with tails, who were using whips to put stripes on the women’s butts. As the two demons ran after the shrieking women, the demons’ erections bounced up and down.

Candide was shocked, and he thought about how he could rescue the women. He had been trained in shooting while he was in the Bulgar army, and he grabbed hold of his rifle and shot the two demons, killing them instantly. However, he was shocked a second time when the two women threw themselves on the bodies of the demons, wailing and weeping.

Just then, Cacambo returned. Seeing Candide holding the rifle, and seeing the two women wailing and weeping on the bodies of the two demons, Cacambo said, “Now you’ve done it! Those women and demons were lovers!”

“I meant everything for the best,” Candide said. “Whoever would have thought that women could take demons as lovers?”

“Sexual behavior is mysterious and varied,” Cacambo said. “Don’t expect others to conform to what you think is proper. People fall in love with both sexes and all races. Some people like fat women, some people like women with breasts that look like a fried egg with an olive on top, and some people like women with a beautiful pair of elbows. Women also prefer very different things in men and in other women. Some women prefer women who look like men.

“But I am afraid that we are in for some trouble. Those women will tell the other demons what happened, and they will come for us.”

The women suddenly jumped up, grabbed the whips that the demons had been using to put stripes on their butts, and ran away.

Cacambo was right. The demons came for them that night. Cacambo and Candide slept by a campfire, and the fire alerted the demons to where they were. When Cacambo and Candide woke up in the morning, they found that they could not move because the demons had tied them up.

The demons took them to their village, and there Candide and Cacambo saw both female demons and human women. The female demons were naked and had tails, like the male demons, and the human women were naked and did not have tails. However, each human woman had the handle of a whip in her rear hole, and the tail of the whip hung down like a demon’s tail.

Confused, Candide asked, “What is going on here?”

“The human women dress like that to attract a male demon as a lover,” Cacambo said. “The male demons regard tails as being very attractive, and therefore the human women have artificial tails.”

“I am glad that women in our civilized societies don’t do anything that silly,” Candide said.

“Sometimes I wonder about high heels and push-up bras,” Cacambo said, adding, “The male demons are very fond of whipping as a form of foreplay, and the use of the whips as tails has a very definite advantage, as you will see.”

Candide did see, and soon.

Occasionally, a male demon would take a whip out of a human female’s rear hole. Immediately, the human female would bend over, and the demon would whip her. Usually, the demon would whip the human female only once and then reinsert the whip handle in her rear hole. The human female would then stand up straight, proud of her stripe, which was physical proof that a male demon had found her attractive.

“The stripes are coveted by both the female demons and the human women,” Cacambo said. “The more stripes, the more evidence that the female is coveted. The females show each other their stripes and talk about them for hours.”

“It’s kind of like a woman from our society showing off a new piece of jewelry that has been given to her by a male,” Candide said.

“Exactly,” Cacambo replied.

Occasionally, a male demon who had the beginnings of an erection would whip a human woman twice, sending her running and shrieking, as the male demon pursued her with the whip, giving her stripes as his erection grew.

Soon, when the woman was moist enough, she would turn around and take a running leap into the demon’s arms and hold on to his shoulders. While the demon held her by the thighs, the human woman would raise herself up and down on the demon’s erection, until all goo had been squirted, then the demon would let her down and she would bend over and allow the demon to reinsert the whip handle in her rear hole.

And a good time was had by both the demon and the demon’s lover.

Despite their interest in anthropology, Candide and Cacambo soon noticed that the demons were heating a very large pot of water. Apparently, soup was on the menu.

“I wonder what kind of soup they will make,” Candide said.

“I am afraid that the meat and marrow for the soup will be donated by us,” Cacambo said, “but I will attempt to speak to them.”

Cacambo then said to the demon with the largest tail — both in front and in back, “I am afraid that you have made a mistake. Obviously, you are preparing to kill us, and therefore, obviously, you think that we are your enemies.”

“Indeed, you are,” the demon replied. “A man wearing a Jesuit robe killed two of our number, and your friend is wearing a Jesuit robe. The Jesuits are our enemies because of what they do in this continent. We always kill our enemies.”

“You are ethically and morally correct to kill your enemies,” Cacambo. “Any study of history will show that that happens all of the time. However, any study of history will also show that sometimes an innocent person — or two — is executed. For example, my friend is wearing a Jesuit robe, but he is not a Jesuit. In fact, he killed a Jesuit and then took his robe to use as a disguise to escape from other Jesuits. The Jesuit he killed must be the Jesuit who killed two of your number.

“You can easily verify that my friend killed a Jesuit. Simply take the robe to the Jesuits and ask what happened to its owner.”

The demons were rational beings, and they did as Cacambo advised. They were very happy to learn that Candide had murdered a Jesuit, and they released Candide and Cacambo immediately and treated them to soup made of vegetables and beef — real beef, from cattle. Each of the human women also allowed Candide and Cacambo to whip them — once — as a

reward for killing a Jesuit. An overeager Cacambo whipped a human woman twice — and almost ended up in the soup.

The demons then escorted Candide and Cacambo to the border of their territory.

Candide was happy to leave such a strange land and its strange inhabitants, and he thought that it was strange to feel happy because he had killed a Jesuit.

Chapter 17: Cacambo in the Land of Eldorado

At the border of the land of the demons, Cacambo said to Candide, “The Old World is as bad as the New World. I want to go to Europe — and quickly.”

“Perhaps the New World is as bad as the Old World, but the Old World is plenty bad,” Candide replied. “In my country, the Bulgars and the Avars are slaughtering each other and raping as many women as they can — and some men, too. If I go to Portugal, I shall be a victim of an auto-da-fé. And this New World is plenty bad. If I stay here, I shall probably end up in a pot of soup. But the New World is where Cunegonde is, and so I want to stay here.”

Cacambo, practical man that he was, suggested going to Cayenne in hopes of finding better luck there.

They crossed hundreds of miles of rough territory. Their horses died, they ran out of food, they lived on coconuts for a month, and they were discouraged. Eventually, when they were totally exhausted, they came to a stream.

Cacambo said, “We are exhausted, and we cannot walk any longer. I see a boat. Let’s steal it and fill it with coconuts and float downstream. We may not find a better place, but we will find a new place.”

“Let’s do it,” Candide said.

They floated downstream for many, many miles and eventually the stream disappeared into a cavern — as did Candide, Cacambo, and the boat that was now half-filled with coconuts. For 24 hours they were in the dark and then they reached daylight again. Their boat crashed, and they discovered that they were in a vast valley that was surrounded by mountains with sheer cliffs that not even a Sherpa could climb. Carefully, they climbed from rock to rock, heading toward the green parts of the valley away from the cliffs.

Eventually, they reached their goal, and they were astounded. Everything was beautiful. Many of the fields were cultivated, and filled with crops. Some fields were cultivated, and filled with flowers. Yet other fields were uncultivated, and filled with wildlife. Here Nature was an artist, and the gardeners were Nature’s helpers.

They also saw many human beings, who traveled in carriages pulled by large llamas.

Candide and Cacambo were impressed by the fertility of the soil, and by the looks of the people they saw, and Candide exclaimed, “This is a better country than my home country!”

They also discovered that gold was so plentiful in this land that they could stoop and pick up gold nuggets from the ground. Soon they had their pockets full, and were carrying as many gold nuggets as they could hold in both their hands.

Cacambo said to Candide, “Earlier, you said that this is a better country than your home country. I have to say that this is a better country than any other country in the world. It’s easy to become rich here. All you have to do is to bend over and pick up wealth off the ground!”

“Still, there are some disadvantages,” Candide said. “Our pockets will need to be reinforced, as mine have holes in them because of the heaviness of the gold.”

“So do mine,” Cacambo said. “Also, the gold gets heavy after a while. Plus, we have to bend over to pick up the gold. Of course, I’m not complaining about that last part.”

Soon, they came to an inn. They were hungry for real food, as they had eaten nothing but coconuts for a month. They went in and were served food that was astonishingly good because it was made from scratch and had no preservatives. Also contributing to the goodness of the meal was the beauty of the two waitresses who served them.

Candide attempted to pay for their meal with a gold nugget, but the innkeeper laughed and said, “When I saw you carrying all that gold, I thought that you might be strangers to our country, which is called Eldorado. Gold is worthless here because we have so much of it. We

use it mainly as a building material. But don't worry. The government of Eldorado will pay for your meal and lodging. But do throw the gold nuggets outside. Otherwise, you'll get holes in your pockets."

"What makes your country so prosperous?" Candide asked. "Is it the wealth?"

"If by wealth you mean gold, the answer is no," the innkeeper replied. "To us, gold is a building material because it is so abundant. However, our country is prosperous for many reasons. We have not forgotten ancient wisdom, which is actually modern wisdom if modern people would recognize it as wisdom. We transmit much of that wisdom through the telling of stories. For example, every child of Eldorado learns this story:

"The Zen master Gisan was taking a bath. The water was too hot, so he asked a student to add some cold water to the bath. The student brought a bucket of cold water, added some cold water to the bath, and then threw the rest of the water on a rocky path. Gisan scolded the student: 'Everything can be used. Why did you waste the rest of the water by pouring it on the path? There are some plants nearby which could have used the water. What right do you have to waste even a drop of water?' The student became enlightened and changed his name to Tekisui, which means 'Drop of Water.'"

"Please tell us more ancient wisdom," Cacambo requested.

"A student once asked a Zen master how one could practice the Tao," the innkeeper began. "The Zen master replied, 'When you are hungry, eat, and when you are tired, sleep.' Puzzled, the student asked, 'But isn't that what people already do?' 'No,' replied the Zen master. 'When most people eat, they are filled with 1,000 worries, and when they sleep, they are bothered by 1,000 cares.'"

"Why does everything taste so good?" Candide asked.

"Everything is made from scratch," the innkeeper replied, and everything is real food, not the food-like processed substances that are available in 'civilized' countries outside of Eldorado. Here we eat food, mostly plants, and we tend not to overeat."

"Who is the leader of your country?" Candide asked.

"It varies," replied the innkeeper. "Every four years we have an election. We elect a King who rules for four years, and after those four years, we elect a Queen. We believe in the two sexes sharing power."

"How long will the government let us stay here?" Candide asked.

"You may stay as long as you like," the innkeeper said. "Actually, because of natural barriers it is even harder to get out of Eldorado than it is to get into Eldorado, and you must know how hard it is to get into Eldorado.

"However, don't worry about getting a job. Our officials will find one for you. In Eldorado everyone works and is productive. We have 100 percent employment."

"But aren't some people incapable of doing work," Candide said. "Don't you have Welfare?"

"Indeed we have people who are incapable of doing real work, and so indeed we have Welfare. But our Welfare is not like the Welfare of the outside world. The people in Eldorado who are on Welfare still have to work."

"What kind of work do they do?" Cacambo asked.

"They write book reviews," the innkeeper said. "But now that you have eaten, you can go across the street to the health center. You will be assigned to a job of your liking, and you will receive a free health examination."

The innkeeper went outside with Candide and Cacambo and pointed out a large building across the street.

Once Candide and Cacambo entered the building a middle-aged woman greeted them, learned that they were new to Eldorado and sent them to the Employment Office, where they were asked what kinds of work they enjoyed. Cacambo had done many things in his life, and he liked making things grow.

“Good,” the employment officer said. “Everyone needs to eat, and plant food is some of the best food. And flowers are pretty.”

Candide had done nothing but be a soldier, and he told the employment officer that he hated that.

“Good,” the employment officer said. “No one likes a bayonet in their belly. So what do you like?”

“I like flowers,” Candide said.

“Good,” the employment officer said. “So do we all. Besides being a pleasure to look at, all flowers are a source of oxygen and some flowers are a source of food. Since you two are friends, we will keep you together. You will be working in a greenhouse, growing flowers and other things. You will work six hours a day Monday through Friday, and two hours on Saturday or Sunday. That will give you time to visit our beaches and have other kinds of fun. However, be aware that during harvest you will be working many more hours than that, as will all of us. Harvest is a very important time of year. Tomorrow morning at 9 a.m. someone will come to the inn and walk you to where you will work.”

Next, Candide and Cacambo visited the doctors’ offices. Each saw two doctors. The examination was thorough and included not just a physical exam but also a mental exam. While Candide saw the doctor specializing in physical health, Cacambo saw the doctor specializing in mental health, and then they switched doctors.

The doctor specializing in physical health discovered that Candide and Cacambo were in good health, but very tired after their journey; therefore, he sent a note to Candide and Cacambo’s place of work saying to avoid having them do anything very strenuous for a few days.

The doctor specializing in mental health discovered that much of Cacambo’s sexual experience had been of the small, sad, sick variety. Based on what Cacambo told him, the doctor concluded that Cacambo did not always take no for an answer — something that is troubling anywhere, but especially troubling in a place such as Eldorado. Cacambo tended to be pushy with women, and he was very capable of crudely propositioning 99 women on the chance that the 100th woman would say yes — or at least not say no so strongly that he could not ignore the no. Cacambo was also very interested in anal sex play. The doctor knew that Cacambo needed a woman who would take steps to keep Cacambo’s mind off other women and who most importantly would teach him that no really means no and is not a word said by women who supposedly play hard to get but intend to soon say yes.

The doctor specializing in mental health discovered that Candide was traumatized by the kinds of sex he had seen — so much of what he had seen consisted of soldiers raping women and girls. Even the consensual sex was of the small, sad, sick variety, consisting mainly of females forced to sell their bodies in order to stay alive and to keep their loved ones alive. Even Candide’s brief sexual episode with Cunegonde in Westphalia was far from ideal. Both of them had had their first kiss together and were either giving or receiving oral sex two minutes later. They had completely skipped the very enjoyable hands-holding stage and the oh-gee-I-can’t-believe-we-both-like-Chinese-food stage. Candide thought of sex as being something dirty, even when it was done with someone you loved. The doctor knew that Candide needed a woman who would teach Candide that sex is not dirty as long as both partners respect and care for each other and as long as each partner knows that no means no.

After Candide and Cacambo left, the doctor posted two messages on the Eldoradoan online discussion board about sex. He described Candide and stated what Candide needed. The doctor was sure that quickly a young Eldoradoan woman would claim Candide. In Eldorado, many young women enthusiastically experimented with sexuality during their college years, later settling down in a married relationship and raising children. The sexual experimentation was neither unusual nor looked down upon. Sure enough, within 15 minutes a Miss Ariel wrote on the online sex discussion board, "Candide is mine!" Because Miss Ariel had claimed Candide, other women would stay away from him sexually until Miss Ariel posted an online message saying that she was no longer interested in Candide.

Finding a woman who would be interested in Cacambo would be more difficult, the doctor knew. The doctor posted the relevant information about Cacambo, but the messages that the women wrote about Cacambo indicated disgust rather than interest. Many women were disgusted by his interest in anal sex play, and all of the women were disgusted because Cacambo apparently did not always take no for an answer.

However, after the message had been online for a few hours, a Miss Victoria posted this message online: "I'll take Cacambo." The doctor knew Miss Victoria, who not only worked at the health center but was famous as a sex blogger and women's self-defense expert in Eldorado. The doctor was pleased that Miss Victoria was interested in Cacambo. She could take care of herself, and she could teach Cacambo what he needed to know.

Candide and Cacambo had spent the entire afternoon at the health center. They went back to the inn and dined, and then they played cards — no gambling — with some of the regular diners after everyone had eaten.

They learned that the inn was kind of a social club and restaurant as well as a hotel for travelers. Many people ate there regularly because they did not want to take the time to cook from scratch. And many people played cards or other games there after dining.

While they were playing cards, two women came into the inn and asked to join the game. Everyone was happy to play cards with two such attractive women. The two women introduced themselves as Miss Ariel and Miss Victoria.

After they had played cards for a while, Candide and Cacambo were ready to go to their rooms in the inn. Miss Victoria and Miss Ariel volunteered to show them their rooms.

Miss Ariel disappeared with Candide in his room, and Miss Victoria took Cacambo to his apartment, which was simply furnished, but which had everything he needed: a bathroom with a shower big enough for two people, a bedroom with a large bed, a table and chairs, a closet, a couch that would seat two people, two nightstands, and a bookcase. (Eldorado had many libraries.)

"I've heard about you, Cacambo, and I want to know you better," Miss Victoria said.

"How much better?" Cacambo asked.

"A lot better," Miss Victoria said.

"As much as a friend with benefits would?"

"Yes," Miss Victoria said.

"Do you require payment?"

"No, I am not a prostitute."

"Why are you interested in me?"

"I know some people at the health center, and I have heard that you are interested in anal and other sex play. So am I."

"Shall we get down to it?" Cacambo asked.

"I am happy that you asked me instead of assuming that I would be interested, and I am happy to get down to it. Now get naked."

Cacambo got naked, and Miss Victoria told him, "Before I get undressed, I need to teach you Eldorado's major sex rule. Remember this because you will be tested on it. Eldorado's major sex rule is this: No means no, stop means stop, and don't means don't."

Miss Victoria undressed, slowly, while Cacambo watched. Then Miss Victoria said, "Now tell me the first part of Eldorado's major sex rule."

"No means no," Cacambo said.

"Very good," Miss Victoria said, and she knelt so that her head was very close to Cacambo's thing, which stiffened slightly. "Now tell me the second part of Eldorado's major sex rule."

"Stop means stop," Cacambo said.

"Very good," Miss Victoria said, and she held Cacambo's thing in her hand, and his thing stiffened a little more. "Now tell me the third part of Eldorado's major sex rule."

"Don't means don't," Cacambo said.

Very good," Miss Victoria said, and she tugged a few times on Cacambo's thing, which stiffened quite a lot. "Now let's take a shower."

Miss Victoria held on to his thing and led him to the shower. When it was the right temperature, they got in, and Miss Victoria washed Cacambo's back with a soapy washcloth and then she washed his thing.

Miss Victoria got more soap on the washcloth and invited Cacambo to wash her back, and then she said, "Wash me between my legs."

Cacambo did, enjoying himself, and then Miss Victoria asked, "Where do you want to squirt your goo?"

"Can I squirt it in your mouth?" Cacambo asked.

"No problem," Miss Victoria replied. "Can I use a finger to massage the hole in your bottom? I won't put my finger inside you; instead, I will simply caress the outside of the hole in your bottom."

"No problem," Cacambo replied.

"Good," Miss Victoria said. "Most guys don't want to explore that part of their sexuality."

With the warm water running, she put Cacambo's thing in her mouth, and she held his balls in one hand as she sucked, and with the other hand she held one of his butt cheeks. After sucking for a while, she put a finger in between his butt checks, located the hole in his bottom and rubbed it.

Cacambo squirted his goo, and Miss Victoria kept sucking until his thing was completely limp. As she kept on sucking, she let the goo go out of her mouth and down the shower drain. When she was done sucking and letting the goo run out of her mouth, she kissed Cacambo's thing, and then she stood up, and kissed his mouth.

"Did you enjoy yourself?" she asked.

"Immensely," Cacambo said. "Thank you."

"My pleasure," Miss Victoria replied. "Do you want me to stay the night?"

"Of course."

"Let's get cleaned up." After they got cleaned up, they put on their underwear, and Miss Victoria went to the closet, opened it, and showed Cacambo a number of games and puzzles.

"I'm a puzzle fanatic," she said. "Care to do a jigsaw puzzle with me?"

"Sure."

"Pick one out."

Cacambo picked out two: one showed cute puppies, and the other showed cute kittens.

"Are you a dog or a cat person?" he asked.

"Cat," she replied.

Then they sat together at the table and talked as they put the jigsaw puzzle with the kittens together.

Later, Cacambo thought that putting the jigsaw puzzle together with Miss Victoria was perhaps the second best thing that had ever happened to him, with the first best thing being squirting his goo into her mouth.

Miss Victoria stayed the night, but left early the next morning. She showed up at the inn again the next evening. Again, Cacambo, Miss Victoria, Candide, and Miss Ariel played cards together downstairs before going upstairs to Cacambo's and Candide's apartments.

Miss Victoria asked Cacambo, "Now, what do you want me to do for you?"

"I want to play a game of rumpy-pumpty with you," Cacambo said. "I want to put my thing in your rear hole."

"We can do that," Miss Victoria said. "In my experience, when done right, anal sex is pleasant, and at times it is much more than pleasant. First, however, you will have to undergo some education. Now let me tell me the major sex rule of Eldorado."

"No means no, don't means don't, and stop means stop," Cacambo said.

"Very good," Victoria said, and she rubbed Cacambo's crotch with her hand. "Now let's go take a shower."

They took a shower, dried each other off, and went naked into the bedroom.

Miss Victoria asked, "Are you sure that you want to put your thing in my rear hole?"

"Yes," Cacambo replied.

"I thought that you might, so I came prepared. In order for you to do that, you will first have to do some other things," Miss Victoria said, and she opened her bag and took out a strap-on dildo. "Do you know what this is?"

"Yes."

"Well, what you want to do to me, I am first going to do to you."

"Why?"

"The anal tissues are very delicate, and I am not going to let you put your thing in my rear hole and pump me without any consideration for what I am feeling. The best way for you to have consideration for what I will be feeling is for you to experience the same thing that I will be feeling.

"At this time you have a decision to make. If you want to put your thing in my rear hole, you have to let me put this strap-on dildo in the hole in your bottom. Are you willing to let me do that, or should I leave?"

"I am willing," Cacambo said.

"OK," Miss Victoria said. She set the strap-on dildo on the table, and then she said, "Tell me the first part of Eldorado's major sex rule."

"No means no," Cacambo said.

"Very good," Miss Victoria said, and she held Cacambo's thing in one hand and stroked it with her other hand, His thing stiffened a little. "Now tell me the second part of Eldorado's major sex rule."

"Stop means stop," Cacambo said.

"Very good," Miss Victoria said, and she held Cacambo's balls in one hand while she stroked his thing with her other hand, and his thing stiffened a little more. "Now tell me the third part of Eldorado's major sex rule."

"Don't means don't," Cacambo said.

"Very good," Miss Victoria said, and she knelt and kissed his thing gently a few times. "Now let's get started."

She took a few items from her bag and set them on the table, beside the strap-on dildo: lubricant, some Wet-Naps, and some condoms.

“First we need to be lubricated correctly, and we need to stretch the holes that we will be using,” Miss Victoria said. “Put some lubricant on your finger, and insert it in the hole in your bottom. I will do the same thing to the hole in my bottom.”

Both squatted, and both put their hands between their legs and their finger in the hole in their bottom.

“Push your finger in and out several times,” Miss Victoria said. “I want you to find a part that is especially sensitive and feels very pleasant when it is gently stroked. If you curve your finger and gently slide it in and out of your hole, you should find it.”

“I found it,” Cacambo said. “I hate to admit this, but it does feel good.”

“All men have that spot,” Miss Victoria said. “Women have it, too, but it is smaller, and so many women don’t enjoy anal sex, although they might if their partners were better educated. Gay men know about that spot, and most of them enjoy anal sex. Straight men such as yourself should know about that spot. It is another way to feel sexual pleasure.

“Now I want you to put more lubricant on your finger, and on the finger next to it, and then I want you to insert both fingers in the hole in your bottom and push them in and out. The strap-on dildo I will be using is narrow, but you still need to have your hole stretched before I put the strap-on dildo in you.

“I will be doing to myself the same thing you are doing. Remember, stretch your hole now. That way, the strap-on dildo will not make you feel pain.”

Both kept their fingers moving in and out of the holes in their bottom, and then Miss Victoria said, “I am going to look at your hole now. Keep your fingers in it. I want to make sure that it is stretched enough.”

Miss Victoria looked, and then she said, “I think you’re ready, but what do you think?”

“I’m ready,” Cacambo said.

“Stand up and clean your hands with a Wet-Nap or two,” Miss Victoria said.

Both Cacambo and Miss Victoria cleaned their hands, and then Miss Victoria put on the strap-on dildo and rubbed lubricant on it.

“Now bend over the table.”

Cacambo bent over the table, and Miss Victoria positioned the strap-on dildo for entry.

“When you first put your thing in my rear hole, you must do it very slowly and gently. If you simply jam it in, it will hurt — a lot. I won’t demonstrate that to you, but I will say that if you mistreat me today, the punishment will be severe. The police will investigate, and the judge will make a ruling, and the punishment is likely to include my painfully mistreating you exactly the same way you painfully mistreated me. That’s the way justice works here. Justice, the major sex rule, and sex education in the schools are among the major reasons why we don’t have many problems with sexual misbehavior in Eldorado. I am now going to insert the dildo slowly and gently. Tell me how it feels.”

She pushed the dildo against Cacambo’s hole, which stayed closed briefly, then opened and allowed the dildo to enter.

“It feels strange, scary, and a little painful,” Cacambo said.

“It would feel a lot stranger, a lot scarier, and a lot more painful if I were to just jam the dildo in your hole,” Miss Victoria said. “What little pain you feel is due mostly to this being your first time. Nearly all of my boyfriends have felt a little pain — at first — when they first do this. When they relax, the pain goes away and the sensation they feel is pleasure. After a few times of doing this, you will feel much pleasure and no or very little pain, even during the entry phase — assuming, of course, that you have a considerate, gentle partner.

“Now I am going to stroke very slowly, and I am going to try to position the dildo so that it will stroke that area that felt pleasurable when you inserted your finger in your hole and moved your finger in and out. Let me know when the strokes hit that spot and feel pleasurable.”

“Right there,” Cacambo said.

“Now enjoy yourself,” Miss Victoria said. “I won’t move very fast. To increase your pleasure, use one hand to play with yourself while I stroke.”

She moved the strap-on dildo in and out of Cacambo’s hole several times, and she said, “When you are doing me this way and you are ready to squirt your goo, you will be excited and probably not thinking about my pain or pleasure. Therefore, when you feel yourself getting excited and you begin to stroke quickly, if you stroke too hard and too fast, I will tell you either to slow down or to take your thing out of my rear hole.

“If you take it out, put your thing here.”

Miss Victoria took the strap-on dildo out of Cacambo’s hole and placed it in between his butt cheeks like a hot dog between two buns. She kept moving the dildo between his cheeks and said, “Do this until you squirt goo. If you want to squirt goo onto my back, take off the condom.”

Miss Victoria then stopped stroking and took off the strap-on dildo. Cacambo stood up and turned around, and Miss Victoria picked up a condom, knelt before Cacambo so that her head was very close to his thing, which was almost fully erect, and said, “What is the major sex rule of Eldorado?”

“No means no, don’t means don’t, and stop means stop,” Cacambo said.

“Very good,” Miss Victoria said, and she sucked Cacambo’s thing until it was fully erect, and she then put the condom over the tip of his thing and used her mouth and hands to cover his thing with the condom. She then stood up, covered the condom with lubricant, added some lubricant to her rear hole, and said, “Now it’s my turn to bend over the table. Remember what I said about being considerate and gentle when you first put your thing in my rear hole. Don’t just jam your thing in there and start pumping.”

“Don’t means don’t,” Cacambo said.

“Very good,” Miss Victoria said, and she kissed Cacambo’s mouth, and then turned around and bent over the table.

The entry was gentle, the strokes were very slow at first and then picked up a little speed. Miss Victoria put one hand between her legs as Cacambo stroked, and her hand was busy. When Cacambo became excited and the strokes picked up a lot more speed, Miss Victoria said, “Either slow down, or take it out.”

Cacambo slowed down for a few strokes, but he was very excited and almost ready to squirt goo, so he took out his thing and put it between Miss Victoria’s butt cheeks like a hot dog in a bun and started rubbing.

“If you want to squirt your goo on my back, take off the condom,” Miss Victoria said.

Cacambo quickly took off the condom, then resumed his strokes and soon he squirted some streams of goo onto Miss Victoria’s back with loud moans. Miss Victoria also moaned, but her moans were due more to the action of her hand between her legs and to a desire to please Cacambo than due to Cacambo’s thing. Still, Cacambo’s stroking had felt pleasant to her although the experience was not earth shaking.

Miss Victoria stood up, turned around, and said, “I had fun, and I hope that you did, too.”

“Oh, I did. I definitely did,” Cacambo said.

“Good, now let’s take a shower together, and then I’ll clean my equipment up,” Miss Victoria said.

Later, after they had showered together, dressed in their underwear, and Miss Victoria had cleaned her equipment, Miss Victoria asked Cacambo if he wanted her to stay all night or if he preferred that she leave.

“Which do you prefer?” Cacambo asked.

“I have some work to do at home,” Miss Victoria said, “but I can stay if you want me to.”

“What kind of work?”

“I write a sex-blog in addition to working a regular job at the health center. I will write about our sexual encounter. I will let my readers know that you are a perfect gentleman and know and obey Eldorado’s major sex rule. You will find that the women in Eldorado will respect you. If you had not obeyed Eldorado’s major sex rule, I would contact the police, and you would find some major discomfort in your life. In Eldorado, we try to stop problems early. Fortunately, you and I have not had any problems.

“By the way, do you know what kind of sexual activity you want tomorrow night? Do you have any preferences?”

“Yes,” Cacambo said. “I want to continue exploring back-hole play. I want to give you an anal massage.”

“We can do that, but you know, of course, that I will first give you an anal massage.”

“I’m looking forward to it,” Cacambo said.

“So am I,” Miss Victoria said. “Chances are, you won’t squirt goo only from the anal massage, so you will want more service than that. Do you know now what you will want then, or do you want to decide later?”

“I’ll decide later, but for now I have a question for you.”

“What is it?”

“In the world outside Eldorado, a feminist philosopher says that during heterosexual sex, the man invades the woman. Do you think that is true?”

“In rape, it most definitely is true, but not in consensual sex between adults. A different feminist philosopher could say that during heterosexual sex, the woman surrounds the man. However, in my opinion, military metaphors have no place in describing heterosexual, consensual sex between adults.

“Do you want me to stay the night?”

“You may leave,” Cacambo said. “You have a sex-blog entry to write.”

Miss Victoria kissed Cacambo on the lips and said, “I enjoyed our heterosexual, consensual sex last night, I enjoyed our heterosexual, consensual sex tonight, and I expect to enjoy more heterosexual, consensual sex with you tomorrow. Good night.”

Then she left.

The next evening, after both couples — Cacambo and Miss Victoria, and Candide and Miss Ariel — had worked on a jigsaw puzzle downstairs, the two couples went upstairs and into two separate rooms.

Miss Victoria said to Cacambo, “I understand that you want to give me an anal massage and that you want me to give you an anal massage. Is that correct?”

“Yes,” Cacambo said.

“Do you want a finger-in-the-hole anal massage, or do you just want a massage of the exterior of the hole?”

“I want a finger-in-the-hole anal massage.”

“We’ll do both. The exterior massage will be a warm-up for the in-the-hole massage. Have you decided what you want to do after that?”

“Yes, regular thing-in-the-front-hole sex.”

“I can certainly accommodate you with that,” Miss Virginia said. “You should know that anal massage is one of my favorite things to do, and I want to do that with and to you because so few men are willing to explore anal sex play — at least when it’s the hole in *their* bottom.

“Now tell me the first sex rule of Eldorado.”

“No means no, don’t means don’t, and stop means stop,” Cacambo said readily.

“Very good,” Miss Virginia said, and she rubbed Cacambo’s crotch. “Now get naked.”

Cacambo got naked, Miss Virginia looked him over, with pleasure, and then she said, “Watch me get naked.”

As she got naked, one garment at a time, she smiled at Cacambo.

When she was naked, she said, “If you have to go to the bathroom, do it now. I don’t want to feel something nasty when I put my finger in the hole in your bottom, and I don’t want you to pee in the shower.”

“You don’t have to worry about those things,” Cacambo said

“Let’s take a shower,” Miss Victoria. “As you may have guessed by now, I enjoy taking showers with the man I am currently seeing.”

They turned on the water, let it warm up, and then stepped into the shower. They got wet, and then Miss Virginia got a washcloth soapy and washed Cacambo all over, paying special attention to his thing and to the area between his butt cheeks.

Then she said, “Now wash me.”

Cacambo washed her with a soapy washcloth, paying special attention first to her breasts.

This made Miss Victoria smile, and she said, “We all know how dirty a woman’s breasts get. I have to change my bra three or four times a day.”

“I know you’re being gently sarcastic, but I would like to see that,” Cacambo said.

“Perhaps I’ll bring over lots of underwear and model my lingerie for you,” Miss Virginia said.

Cacambo then washed Miss Virginia very carefully between her legs and between her butt cheeks.

“That feels good,” she said.

“I enjoyed it when you washed my thing and washed me between my butt cheeks,” Cacambo said.

“I like a man who knows what he likes. Are you ready to begin the anal massage?”

“Yes,” Cacambo said.

Miss Virginia adjusted the shower spray to a light mist, saying, “The lubrication we will use is soap, and I don’t want it to wash away too quickly. Now spread your legs and bend over, putting your hands on your knees.”

Miss Virginia lathered up her hands, then she brought a hand down to Cacambo’s butt cheeks and used a finger to find the hole in his bottom. She used her other hand to hold Cacambo’s thing, but she did not pull on it. She rubbed her finger in circles around and around Cacambo’s hole for a long time, stopping now and again to lather her hands again.

“We will do only the exterior anal massage now,” Miss Victoria said. “When you are ready, you will then do my exterior anal massage, and then I will put my finger in the hole in your bottom and massage you. Finally, you will do the same for me, and then we will dry off and move to the bed.”

Miss Victoria continued to use her finger to rub circles on Cacambo’s hole, and she held Cacambo’s thing with her other hand.

After a while, Cacambo said, “That’s enough. Now I want to massage you.”

“OK,” Miss Victoria, “But remember, don’t put your finger in the hole in my bottom yet — not until I do that to you first.”

“Don’t means don’t.”

Cacambo did the same thing to Miss Victoria’s rear hole that she had done to him, and he used one hand to feel Miss Victoria’s left breast. Miss Victoria moaned softly during the massage. After a while, she told Cacambo to stop so that they move to the next form of massage.

Cacambo stopped, Miss Victoria lathered up her hands, and again she touched Cacambo’s hole and made circles around it. Then she pressed in the center of the hole, saying, “Relax.”

Cacambo’s hole stayed tightly shut for a moment, then opened, and Miss Victoria’s finger slid in. She pushed her finger in and out, saying, “I’m trying to find the part of the hole that feels good when it is stroked. Have I found it?”

“That’s it — right there,” Cacambo said.

Miss Victoria kept stroking that part.

“I don’t hear you moaning,” she said to Cacambo. “Are you enjoying yourself?”

“Yes, very much.”

“Well, moan to let me know it. And tell me when you want to massage the interior of my rear hole.”

“I feel silly moaning,” Cacambo said.

“Moaning is a way to let your partner know what she is doing right. You don’t have to moan loudly or a lot. Pretend you’re an actor — you’ll get used to it. I’m studying acting at the university as well as working a regular job. Moaning is not that difficult.

“By the way, don’t squirt your goo and leave me disappointed. I am looking for some action tonight.”

Cacambo moaned occasionally, and he discovered that the moans increased his enjoyment, and then he said, “That’s enough. It’s time for you to get this kind of massage.”

“OK,” Miss Virginia said. “Remember that stop means stop. I’ll let you know when it’s time to stop, but I will give you some time to enjoy yourself. Also, I mentioned that I’m studying acting. That includes voice work. Would you like any particular kind of moans? I can do anything from soft moans to orgasmic moans. Let me know what you want, and I’ll be happy to do it.”

“Soft moans will be fine,” Cacambo as he soaped his hands. “Maybe I can learn something from you.”

Cacambo’s finger made circles around Miss Victoria’s rear hole and then he inserted his finger into her rear hole, and she helped him to find the spot that felt good when stroked, and then she moaned softly, but much more often than Cacambo had moaned. With his other hand, Cacambo felt her left breast.

All too soon, Miss Victoria said, “That’s enough. Stop so we can move to the bed.”

Cacambo was disappointed that the anal massage had stopped so soon, but stop means stop. Besides, moving to the bed was hardly a punishment.

They dried off and then moved to the bed. Miss Victoria said, “This is what we will do. You are already half-hard, and I will get you all-hard.”

As she said this, she began to stroke Cacambo’s thing, alternating strokes with both hands.

“First I will get on top of you. You will lie still so that I can control the movements. Next we will do the missionary position. I want you to use slow strokes. When I tell you to turn me over, I want you to turn me over, and then I want you to stroke deep, to stroke hard, and to stroke fast. You will use my front hole, not the hole that you have been massaging. Make my breasts and my buttocks bounce. Do you understand?”

“Yes.”

“You can squirt your goo in me. Neither of us has an STD, as I know from your medical reports at the health center, and I’m on birth control. Is that OK with you?”

“Sure,” Cacambo said.

“Very good,” Miss Victoria said. “You are fully hard now. Lie down on the bed, and let me climb on top of you.”

Miss Victoria straddled Cacambo, positioned his thing between her legs, and slowly slid up and down on it for a while, and then she said, “Let’s trade places.”

Miss Victoria lay down on her back, and Cacambo slid his thing in her front hole, and he stroked smoothly and slowly.

As he stroked, he said, “Are you sure that after I turn you over, you want me to stroke you deep, hard, and fast? Eldorado seems to value sensitivity and gentleness and slow strokes.”

“You are right,” Miss Victoria said. “Unfortunately, some guys are overly sensitive. I hate it when a guy takes me out on a date and he cries during the movie.

“You should be aware that the second major sex rule of Eldorado is this: Yes means yes until someone says no. Because guys nearly always say yes, in practice the second sex rule means this: When she says she’s ready, she’s ready — until she says no, don’t, or stop. The first major sex rule takes precedence over the second major sex rule.

“The second major sex rule acknowledges that sometimes what we women want is a good hard fuck. Now turn me over.”

Cacambo turned her over. Miss Victoria raised her hips in the air, and Cacambo grabbed her hips and then began to stroke deep, hard, and fast. Cacambo could not see Miss Victoria’s face, but she was smiling. Then her smiles turned to heavy breathing and gasps. When Cacambo squirted his goo into Miss Victoria’s front hole, the earth shook for two people.

Cacambo released Miss Victoria’s hips, and she turned over and lay on her back with her legs open. Cacambo did not lie down, but stayed on his knees. He had a good view.

Miss Victoria put a forefinger in her front hole and slowly moved it in and out.

“Thanks,” she said. “I needed that.”

Cacambo said, “Do you mind if I do that?”

“Go ahead. You deserve it.”

Miss Victoria removed her finger from her front hole, and Cacambo’s finger replaced it. Miss Victoria’s finger then began to rub the area just above her front hole.

As Cacambo and Miss Victoria talked, Cacambo’s finger moved in and out of her front hole as he marveled at how wet and warm and slippery it was, and Miss Victoria’s finger found and rubbed the part that was normally hidden by the clitoral hood and was now engorged with blood and escaped from captivity.

“Have you always been open about your sexuality?” Cacambo asked.

“As open as other people in Eldorado,” Miss Victoria replied. “Like people everywhere, I discovered sexuality early. I used to like to sit on the bathtub drain when the water ran out because it felt interesting. I also used to like to sit on the washing machine and bend forward during the spin cycle. Actually, I still do those things.

“That’s enough. Let’s take a shower together,” Miss Victoria said, and she stopped rubbing the engorged bump above her front hole.

Cacambo kept fingering her front hole.

“Stop!” said Miss Victoria in a no-nonsense voice.

Cacambo stopped, and he took his finger out of Miss Victoria’s front hole.

“Sorry,” he said.

Miss Victoria crossed her legs, and then she said, “Just in case you have a very low IQ, let me explain to you what ‘No mean no, don’t means don’t, and stop means stop’ means.

“If we are ever doing something sexual together, and I say, ‘No’ or ‘Don’t’ or ‘Stop,’ and you say something like, ‘No, I’m not going to stop,’ your ‘No’ does not cancel my ‘No.’ In Eldorado, either sex partner can put an end to the activity by saying ‘No’ or ‘Don’t’ or ‘Stop.’ Do you understand?”

“Yes, I understand,” Cacambo said. “Are you mad at me?”

“You stopped when I said ‘Stop,’ so that is good, but I think when I said ‘That’s enough. Let’s take a shower together,’ that was plenty signal enough for you to know to stop.

“Go take a shower. I’ll use the sink to get cleaned up.”

“Are you going to leave after you get cleaned up?” Cacambo asked.

“I’m thinking about it,” Miss Victoria said. “I’ll decide later.”

When Cacambo got out of the shower, Miss Victoria was in bed, wearing her underwear, and doing a crossword puzzle.

“I’ve decided to stay,” she told Cacambo. “Put on your underwear, get into bed, and help me do this crossword puzzle.”

Later, as they were lying side on side in bed in the dark, Cacambo thought that doing the crossword puzzle had been the second-best time of his life. Squirting his goo was still number one, but he was surprised at how good the second-best time was.

Cacambo had made a minor mistake that night. On a later night, he made a major mistake.

He and Miss Victoria were in the shower together, and Cacambo was massaging her rear hole, pushing his finger in and out. Miss Victoria said, “Let’s move to the bed now,” but Cacambo replied, “In a moment.” Miss Victoria said, “Stop,” but Cacambo again said, “In a moment.” Miss Victoria twisted around, and hit Cacambo hard in the head with her elbow.

Cacambo was angry for a moment, but then he apologized and kept on apologizing.

Miss Victoria did not accept his apology.

She got out of the shower, dried herself, and put on all her clothing, not saying anything to Cacambo or even looking at him.

Cacambo blocked the bedroom door so she could not leave, and he kept on apologizing.

Miss Victoria took a cell phone out of her purse and told Cacambo, “The police are on speed dial. If I push this button, an alarm will sound in the police department and in this inn. The innkeeper and his male employees will come and restrain you, and then the police will arrive and take you away.

“It’s your choice. Will you move away from the door so I can leave, or should I press this button?”

Cacambo kept apologizing, but he moved away from the door.

Miss Victoria left without having accepted his apology.

The next morning, the waitresses at the inn were cold and distant to Cacambo as they served him his breakfast, but they were as kind and friendly to Candide as they had ever been. Cacambo realized that Miss Victoria had written about him on her sex-blog. Candide knew that something was wrong, but Cacambo did not volunteer any details, and Candide did not ask any questions.

After Candide and Cacambo had eaten breakfast, two male police officers arrived and talked to Cacambo in his apartment.

Cacambo made a full confession of what he had done the previous night, and he apologized.

The police officers made him sign a confession, and they took his photograph.

One police officer then said to Cacambo, “A judge has already reviewed the case and assigned the punishment if you should confess, which you have. You are sentenced to 15 stripes across your buttocks. You will have to appear at the local police station either at noon or

at 5 p.m. for your punishment. Which time you appear is up to you, but you do not want to fail to show up for either time.

“If you disagree with the sentence, you may see a judge first, but the judge will be free to impose a harsher — or a more lenient — punishment if he or she sees fit.

“In addition, Miss Victoria will decide whether she wants your photograph and a description of what you did to appear in Eldoradoan newspapers. She has already written about you on her sex-blog — and not favorably. I don’t know if you will ever see her again, but if you do, I advise you to be nice to her.”

Cacambo thought all that morning about being whipped 15 times. When noon arrived, he thought about going to the police station but decided not to. That afternoon, he regretted his decision. If he had gone at noon, the whipping would be over. Instead, all afternoon at work he dreaded what would happen at 5 p.m.

At 5 p.m. he appeared at the police station. Two male police officers made him pull his pants and underwear down, then stretch out across a table, and then they used manacles to restrain his hands. A female police officer then arrived with a whip. She cracked the whip a few times in the air first, and then she expertly made 15 stripes on Cacambo’s buttocks, starting at the top and working her way down. Finally, she dipped her hands in water and then in salt, and then she rubbed the salt in Cacambo’s stripes.

After the female police officer had left, the two male police officers released Cacambo’s hands, told him to pull up his underwear and pants over the salt, and not to wash off the salt until he arrived back at his room at the inn.

Then they told him to get out.

The next day Cacambo wondered if Miss Victoria would show up.

A knock sounded on his door that evening, and when he opened the door, Miss Victoria was standing there. She did not come in. Instead, she looked at him coldly and asked him coldly, “What is the first major sex rule of Eldorado?”

“No means no, don’t means don’t, and stop means stop,” Cacambo.

“You know how to parrot the words,” Miss Victoria said. “I hope that you also know what they mean. I will see you in two days.”

“Are you going to have my photograph put in the newspapers?” Cacambo asked.

“I’m thinking about it,” Miss Victoria replied.

Two days later, Miss Victoria arrived, wearing jeans and carrying a bag.

She entered the room after Cacambo had recited the first major sex rule of Eldorado, and she said, “This time I’m going to decide what we will do. It is something that you have liked in the past. And don’t worry — I know what the words ‘no,’ ‘don’t,’ and ‘stop’ mean.

“I have a strap-on dildo in my bag, and with your permission I am going to put it in the hole in your bottom. You will play with yourself until you squirt goo as I keep stroking the dildo in and out of the hole in your bottom.

“Is this OK with you, or should I leave?”

“It’s OK with me,” Cacambo said.

Miss Victoria did not undress, but instead wore the strap-on dildo over her jeans. Before they got started, she put a tablecloth over the table. She pushed the strap-on dildo in and out of Cacambo’s hole, and Cacambo stroked his thing, and before long a few streams of goo were displayed on the tablecloth.

“Get cleaned up, and get dressed, except for your shoes, and we will watch some TV,” Miss Victoria said.

“I didn’t even know a TV set is in here,” Cacambo said.

“It’s hidden in plain sight, but you need a special remote control, which I have, to use it,” Miss Victoria said.

When Cacambo and Miss Victoria were on the bed together, minus their shoes, she pressed the power button on the remote control. The entire wall opposite their bed was the TV screen. On the screen was a film of an attractive couple, fully clothed, kissing and hugging and smiling at each other.

“Eldorado has several TV channels, including a health channel and an ethics channel, in addition to several sex channels. This is the foreplay channel. It has no nudity, and no touching of any areas normally covered by a swimsuit. Other channels are, shall we say, more advanced. But all the channels feature lots of kissing and hugging.

“Everyone in Eldorado decides which channels to have in their homes. This is the most popular channel.

“TV is, of course, educational. We have a channel devoted to ethics. We also have a channel devoted only to showing Cary Grant romantic comedies because when guys watch Cary Grant movies they become much better dates, as movie critic Pauline Kael has observed. Guys who watch way too many music videos in which males sing about ‘sluts’ and ‘bitches’ and ‘ho’s’ are often bad dates. By the way, don’t ever call a woman of Eldorado a slut, bitch, or ‘ho’. You won’t like what will happen.”

“They watched for a while, and then Miss Victoria asked, “Would you like to kiss me?”

Cacambo did.

“We can kiss, but remember, don’t touch anything that is normally covered by a swimsuit.”

“Don’t means don’t,” Cacambo said, “and I am not merely parroting the words, but we have done things a lot more advanced than kissing.”

“Indeed we have, and you ruined it,” Miss Victoria said. “Do you agree to obey my rules, or shall I leave?”

“I will obey your rules,” Cacambo said.

After a long kissing session, Miss Victoria left.

The next few meetings were much the same. They would meet, Victoria would stay dressed and use the strap-on dildo, and Cacambo would play with himself and squirt some streams of goo. Only after he had squirted goo would they watch TV. After the first time they watched TV, they always watched the ethics channel first, and then they watched one of the sex channels.

The sex channels they watched became more advanced.

On one channel were films of topless women making out with shirtless men. In these films the men would touch and kiss the women’s breasts. Miss Victoria allowed Cacambo to touch and kiss her breasts for a while, and then she said, “That’s enough.” Cacambo always stopped when she said, “That’s enough.”

Their next session involved watching a much more advanced channel. On this channel the women kept her panties on, while the man was completely naked. The films on this channel always began with the man’s recitation of Eldorado first major sex rule, and they always ended with the man’s squirting streams of goo with the help of the woman’s mouth or hands or breasts. While they were watching this channel, Miss Victoria held and stroked Cacambo’s thing.

The next session they completed their strap-on session, and then they watched the most advanced hardcore channel, in which both the man and the woman were completely naked, and the man’s thing often pushed in and out of one or the other or both of the woman’s holes. Each movie began with the man’s recitation of Eldorado’s first major sex rule. Occasionally, the woman said ‘no’ or ‘don’t’ or ‘stop,’ and the man obeyed.

Cacambo was completely naked, but Miss Victoria was wearing panties as they watched this channel.

Cacambo was surprised and happy when Miss Victoria asked him, “Do you want to give me an anal massage?”

Of course, he said that he did.

Miss Victoria took lubricant and her cell phone out of her purse and gave it to Cacambo. Then she took off her panties and lay down on her stomach on the bed with her legs apart and her toes touching the floor.

She showed Cacambo the cell phone and said, “Don’t make me use this.

“When you are massaging my rear hole, start with an exterior massage and when I tell you to, begin the interior massage. Occasionally, I will tell you to stop. Stop immediately. Do you understand?”

“I do,” Cacambo said.

All went well. Cacambo performed the massage as instructed, stopping when Miss Victoria told him to stop. She even moaned a few times.

For their next session, Miss Victoria wore a blouse and skirt instead of the jeans she has been wearing. After Cacambo had recited the major sex rule of Eldorado, they sat down, each in his or her own chair, and Miss Victoria said, “We’ll been watching the ethics channel for a while now. Let’s see what you have learned. Tell me some ways to determine right from wrong.”

“If something will have bad consequences, we probably ought not to do it,” Cacambo said. “If something will have good consequences, we probably ought to do it. This seems obvious. If hitting yourself on the head with a hammer gives you headaches, I recommend that you stop hitting yourself on the head with a hammer. All of us should ask ourselves this: What are the consequences of what I am thinking about doing?”

“I am very sorry for what I did to you, and I know that the consequences of treating you that way are bad for you and for me.”

“Very good,” Miss Victoria said, and she took off her blouse. “Take something off, and continue. Each time I take something off, you take something off.”

Cacambo took off his shirt, and then he said, “The Golden Rule is important to determining whether something is right or wrong. Here are two formulations of the Golden Rule, one stated positively, and the other stated negatively:

“Treat other people the way you want to be treated.

“Do not treat other people the way that you do not want to be treated.

“Ask yourself: Is what you are thinking about doing consistent with the Golden Rule?”

“I am very sorry for what I did to you, and I know that it violated the Golden Rule.”

“Very good,” Miss Victoria said, and she took off her bra. Cacambo took off his pants.

“Reversibility is also important in determining whether an action is right or wrong,” Cacambo said. “‘Reversibility’ means that what you want to do to another person, that person can also do to you. One way to find out if something is morally right is to ask if you want something done to you. You may be thinking that you would like other people to be forced to do something, but would you want to be forced to do that thing? For example, a rapist forces himself on women and rapes them. Would that rapist want to be raped in a prison shower?”

“I am very sorry for what I did to you, and I would not want you to do to me — against my wishes — what I did to you.”

Miss Victoria took off her panties from under her skirt, and Cacambo removed another article of clothing.

“To be moral, we ought to treat human beings as valuable, and we ought not to treat other human beings badly,” Cacambo said. “In fancy language, we ought to treat other human beings and ourselves as ends (valuable in themselves) rather than as means (things to be used, then tossed aside). All of us ought to make sure that what we are thinking about doing treats other people with respect.

“The moral philosopher Immanuel Kant formulated a moral rule that he called the categorical imperative. This is one of the ways that he expressed it, as translated by James Ellington: ‘Act in such a way that you treat humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of another, always at the same time as an end and never simply as a means.’

“If you treat another person as a means, then you are using that person. For example, a guy unfortunately might be very nice to a woman, sleep with her, then never call her. In this example, the guy is treating the woman as a means to an orgasm, not as someone valuable in herself.

“If you treat other people as ends, then you are treating them as valuable in themselves. For example, you can treat everybody you meet with common courtesy (which, as you probably know, is no longer common). If you see a parent teaching her young child how to cross the street, you can decide to refrain from jaywalking this one time and thus be a role model for the child. You can also refrain from demonstrating power by ordering around waitresses in a restaurant.

“I am very sorry for what I did to you, and I know that when I did it I was not treating you as valuable in yourself.”

Miss Victoria removed her skirt, and Cacambo removed another article of clothing.

“Happiness is good,” Cacambo said. “We have to do some things, such as make a living and pay our bills. We ought to do some things, such as exercise and eat food that is good for us. We want to do some things, maybe even things that other people find silly. As long as the things we want to do don’t conflict with the things we have to do and the things we ought to do, go ahead and do them. Ask yourself: Will what you are thinking about doing bring happiness to people, including yourself?

“I am very sorry for what I did to you, and I know that it did not bring happiness either to you or to me.”

Miss Victoria removed a shoe, and Cacambo removed another article of clothing.

Cacambo said, “Another way to determine whether an action is right or wrong is to ask this: What would happen if everybody did it? For example, if everybody pirates music, what would happen? Chances are, less new music will be written. If musicians can’t make a living from their music, they will have to get money from other sources, including jobs that may not allow them enough time to write and perform good music.

“I am very sorry for what I did to you, and if everyone did what I did, the world would be a horrible place for women — and actually for men, too, since no one’s mother, wife, sister, girlfriend, or female friend would be safe.”

Miss Victoria removed another shoe, and Cacambo removed another article of clothing. Cacambo was wearing only one sock, and Miss Victoria was wearing only her two stockings.

Cacambo said, “Another way to determine whether an action is right or wrong is to ask this: Do you want what you did to be made public? If you do something you are proud of, such as win an academic scholarship or win an athletic event, you probably want people to read about it in the newspaper. If you are caught shoplifting, you probably do not want people to read about it in the newspaper.

“I am very sorry for what I did to you, and I do not want to read about it in the newspaper.”

Miss Victoria took off one stocking, and Cacambo took off his one remaining article of clothing. Miss Victoria then said, "Can you tell me anything that will make this last stocking disappear?"

"Men and women everywhere — not just in Eldorado — ought to know and respect the first major sex rule."

"Take off my stocking," Miss Victoria said, "and let's take a shower."

In the shower, they anally massaged each other, and then they went to the bed, where Cacambo stroked Miss Victoria gently in the missionary position, and then stroked her deep, hard, and fast after she told him to turn her over.

After Cacambo had squirted streams of goo, Miss Victoria lay on her back and invited him to put his finger in her front hole. As he pushed his finger in and out, and Miss Victoria rubbed the part that had emerged from its hiding place under the clitoral hood, she told him, "Your period of probation is over. Don't make a mistake like that again."

Later, they did a crossword puzzle together, and then Miss Victoria left to write a sex-blog entry.

The next morning, the waitresses treated Candide well, but they beamed at Cacambo. They had read Miss Victoria's sex-blog. Miss Victoria and Miss Ariel joined Cacambo and Candide for breakfast at the inn, but the two couples had separate plans for the day.

Cacambo and Miss Victoria bicycled to a spot on the lake that she wanted Cacambo to see, while Candide and Miss Ariel bicycled to a different spot on the lake. Everything Cacambo saw as they bicycled was pleasant, and beautiful, and fruitful. The fields were well cultivated, the orchards were ripe with fruit, parks and libraries and schools were present in the villages, and everyone was happy.

As they bicycled, they came to a lake with an artificial beach and a pier, and in the water of the lake they saw two young couples who were skinny-dipping. Obviously, the two couples were in love, and obviously, the two couples did not mind being naked together — or being seen by Cacambo and Miss Victoria, who made no attempt to hide their presence. Soon, the two couples climbed on the pier by means of a ladder.

The men lay down on their backs on the pier, and the two women first massaged their things and balls with their hands, then they licked the men's things, starting near the balls and licking upward. Next they put the men's things in their mouths and sucked. Finally, when both men were fully erect, they straddled the men, positioned the men's things just right, and slid down on the men's things. At first, they slid up and down very slowly, but then they gathered speed until they were bouncing up and down above the men's balls.

At this point, Cacambo and Miss Victoria walked closer to the pier, but Miss Victoria warned Cacambo that they could not go on the pier while the two couples were on it.

Sure enough, when they almost close enough to step on the pier, the two women stopped bouncing up and down, and simply sat with the men's things still inside their front holes. One of the women shouted at them, "Stop right there! Marilyn and I don't mind if you watch, but we want you to watch from a distance. Stay on the beach, or swim in the lake, if you like, but don't step on the pier. If you do, Marilyn and I and our boyfriends will leave, go home, and do this behind closed doors where you can't watch us."

Miss Victoria yelled back, "No problem! We will do what you want. We will stay here, off the pier, and watch."

Marilyn then shouted to Cacambo and Miss Victoria, "We're having fun, and you ought to have fun, too. Why don't you do something that is fun?"

Cacambo and Miss Victoria did exactly that as Miss Victoria knelt in front of Cacambo and sucked his thing as he watched the two women bounce vigorously for a while, making their

breasts and their boyfriends' balls bounce, and with everyone but Miss Victoria — who was too busy — occasionally emitting a moan of pleasure or a squeal of happiness.

When the two women got tired of riding their lovers, they traded positions with their lovers and their lovers rode them. Marilyn and her partner climaxed first, with Marilyn's partner emitting a stream of goo inside Marilyn. Soon afterward, the other woman and her lover and Cacambo climaxed, with Cacambo emitting into Miss Victoria's mouth a stream of goo, which she swallowed. The two boyfriends got off the women, and all four lovers on the pier sat up.

The woman who had first shouted at Cacambo and Miss Victoria shouted at them again: "It's OK to come onto the pier now. Come join us."

Cacambo and Miss Victoria did so, and the woman said, "I'm Lauren. You already know Marilyn's name. My boyfriend is Don, and her boyfriend is Bob."

Cacambo and Miss Victoria introduced themselves, and Miss Victoria said, "Cacambo is new to the pier."

Lauren said, "I thought that he might be. That's why I let you two know about the rules that Marilyn and I have for when we are on the pier."

"Is everyone in Eldorado so open about sex as you are?" Cacambo asked.

"Speaking of open, would you mind if I did one of my favorite things right now, Lauren?" Don asked.

Lauren knew what he meant because she had often let him do one of his favorite things. She smiled at him and said, "We have already done one of my favorite things, so be my guest."

She had been sitting cross-legged, but now she leaned back, resting on her elbows, and she opened her legs, raising her knees, and putting her feet flat on the pier.

Don put his right forefinger in his mouth, sucking on it not to make it wet but to make sure it was clean, then he inserted his finger into Lauren's front hole, marveling at how warm and wet and slippery it was. Then he began to slowly slide his finger in and out of Lauren's front hole.

Lauren looked at Cacambo and Miss Victoria, and she said, "Remember, look but don't touch."

Bob looked questioningly at Marilyn, who smiled at him but shook her head no.

"Back to your question," Lauren said to Cacambo. "Are all Eldoradoans as open about sex as Marilyn and me? Not at all. Most Eldoradoans would never, never do what Marilyn and I like to do.

"This lake is very large, and it has several artificial beaches, all of which are used by different groups of Eldoradoans, and each of which is isolated from the other beaches. Those Eldoradoans who would never get naked in public — except for one day a year on a different beach — much less have sex in public use the beach that is biggest by far. Those Eldoradoans who like being naked on beaches but would never have sex in public use another big beach. Only gay men use a third beach. Only lesbians use yet another beach. And this beach is used by people like Marilyn and me and our boyfriends, who like to sometimes be naked in public and who like to sometimes have people to watch us as we have sex."

"Some of the people who use this pier go further than Lauren and me," Marilyn added. "Some of the women would invite strangers such as yourselves to fill one or both of their holes instead of simply letting you watch."

"When those people use the pier, Marilyn and I either sunbathe on the beach or swim in the lake," Lauren said. "It's interesting to watch the groups on the pier, but Marilyn and I know that we don't want to join them."

"Here in Eldorado, you can do most of what you want to do, but you must be careful to do it at the right time and in the right location," Marilyn said. "No one has sex in front of children,

and the things that are appropriate for Lauren and me to do here on the pier would not be appropriate to do at other places. We know that, and the other Eldoradoans know that. As long as everyone does what they want to do at the right time and in the right location, nobody has problems.”

“I’m ready to go back into the lake,” Lauren said. “Anybody want to join me?”

Don pulled his finger out of Lauren’s front hole, put it in his mouth for a moment, then removed it and said, “Thanks for letting me do that, Lauren. It’s one of my favorite things to do.”

“I know how much you like doing that, Don, and so I like it, too. It’s not as enjoyable to me as some of the other things we do, but it is pleasant.”

Bob said to Marilyn, “You know, if I ever were to try that, it might be one of my favorite things, too.”

“I am willing to let you do that to me — once — at home, in private,” Marilyn said, “but if I don’t like it, I won’t let you do it to me again in private, let alone in public. But if I do like it, then it won’t be something you do to me. Instead, it will be something we do together, and I will let you know when and where we will do it.”

“That sounds fair,” Bob said.

Marilyn said to Cacambo and Miss Victoria, “It’s back to skinny-dipping for us. Would you two like to get naked and join us?”

Cacambo and Miss Victoria got naked and joined them.

After skinny-dipping for a while, all six climbed onto the pier and sat for a while.

Cacambo said to Lauren, “You mentioned that one beach is used by those Eldoradoans who would never get naked in public except for one day a year. What did you mean by that?”

Lauren said, “In Eldorado, everyone between the ages of 35 and 65 is required to go to the nude beach one day a year and be naked in public for at least two hours. They use their IDs to check in and out of the beach, and on the beach are nudists who make sure that everyone on the beach is naked. Some people are exempt from doing this because they have a doctor’s excuse. Unfortunately, sometimes people get ill and have to take medication that makes them gain weight.”

“This has absolutely nothing to do with sex,” Marilyn said. “It is a health measure. Since Eldoradoans know that they will be naked in public for a couple of hours each year, they tend to take care of their bodies.”

“It’s funny being on the nudist beach,” Bob said. “You can see who uses the beach regularly — they have deep, dark, all-over tans. The people who are there only for a couple of hours a year can be identified by their cottontails — their butts aren’t tanned.”

“It’s also funny going to the gym when spring arrives,” Don said. “Suddenly the gym fills up with middle-aged people who want to look good naked when they go to the nudist beach.”

“Young adults such as ourselves aren’t required to go to the beach,” Lauren said. “People our age tend to be healthy.”

“Are people embarrassed when they go to the beach?” Cacambo asked.

“Actually, not much,” Marilyn said. “Since everyone else is naked, people quickly stop being embarrassed — unless someone has a lard ass and thunder thighs, that is. Of course, such a sight is arousing to the chubby chasers.”

By this time, everyone was dry, and they all got dressed. Lauren, Marilyn, Bob, and Don all looked like boy- and girl-next-door types. No one would guess that they enjoyed having sex while other people watched.

When all were dressed, they said goodbye, and Cacambo and Miss Victoria continued to bicycle around the lake. Soon they arrived at a park where a couple was picnicking. The couple

saw Cacambo and Miss Victoria and invited them to eat, saying that they had plenty of food to share.

Cacambo and Miss Victoria accepted, and they sat down to eat and introduced themselves to each other. The couple's names were Tom and Sally, and they had been married for three years, but did not have any children yet. They made small talk until they were done eating, and then Cacambo explained that he was newly arrived to Eldorado and was enjoying himself.

"Have you learned the first major sex rule of Eldorado?" Tom asked.

"No mean no, don't means don't, and stop means stop," Cacambo said.

Tom and Sally laughed.

"He has learned the second major sex rule as well," Miss Victoria said.

Tom and Sally laughed again.

"Both are good rules to learn," Tom said, "and it is important to learn the first rule first."

Then he asked Sally, "Do you want to tell them our history?"

"Sure," Sally said to her husband, and then she said to Cacambo and Miss Victoria, "Tom was once a newcomer to Eldorado. I picked him after reading about him on the online sex discussion board. He had a little bit of a problem learning the first major sex rule of Eldorado."

"My experience with sex before coming to Eldorado was small, sad, and sick," Tom said, "and I brought a bad attitude with me to Eldorado. I am grateful to Sally for teaching me about good, clean, healthy sex and how to treat a woman."

"Tom was a little upset that I was more experienced than he was — but he got over that," Sally said.

"Now I don't mind that Sally was experienced," Tom said. "That happened before she met me, and I'm not concerned about she did before she met me. I am concerned only about what she and I do now."

"I feel the same thing about Tom and his sexual history," Sally said. "But I'm not ashamed of having been with some other men. They taught me some things, and I have taught Tom some things they taught me."

"For example, she taught me about anal sex," Tom said. "I thought that I was going to simply put my thing into her rear hole and start pumping. She told me no the night I brought up having anal sex with her, and I was surprised the next night when she showed me a strap-on dildo."

"I borrowed one from a girl I know," Sally said. "That's one of the advantages of Eldorado. People share."

"Once she put the dildo in the hole in my bottom, I knew that I would have to be careful when I put my thing in Sally's rear hole," Tom said. "I didn't and don't want to hurt her."

"You certainly seem to enjoy that kind of sex when we have it even though you are stroking much slower than you thought you would," Sally said.

"Anal sex spices things up. To me, that kind of sex is earth shaking," Tom said.

"To me, it's pleasant," Sally said. "Speaking of spicing things up, how do you rate the times you kiss, lick, and suck me between my legs?"

"To me, those times are pleasant," Tom said.

"To me, those times are earth shaking," Sally said.

"What do you think of vaginal sex?" Miss Victoria asked.

"It's earth shaking," Tom and Sally said together, then laughed.

"I notice that people are very open about sex here," Cacambo said. "Why is that?"

"One of the most interesting things in life is sex," Tom said.

"So why shouldn't we talk about it?" Sally said.

"Better: Why not do the things we talk about?" Tom said.

Everybody laughed.

Chapter 18: Candide in the Land of Eldorado

While Cacambo was starting and having a relationship with Miss Victoria, Candide was starting and having a relationship with Miss Ariel. The same night that that the four had played cards together for the first time and Miss Victoria had shown Cacambo to his apartment, Miss Ariel showed Candide to his apartment.

Candide's apartment was simply furnished, but it had everything he needed: a bathroom with a shower big enough for two people, a bedroom with a large bed, a table and chairs, a closet, a couch that would seat two people, two nightstands, and a bookcase. (Eldorado had many libraries.)

"Miss Ariel said to Candide, "I want to know you better. In fact, I want you to know that I am interested in you."

"I am interested in you, too," Candide said.

"You are new here, so you do not yet know our ways," Miss Ariel said. "I want to get to know you better, but I also want to teach you something. Listen carefully because you will be tested. The first major sex rule of Eldorado is this: No means no, don't means don't, and stop means stop. Now, what is the major sex rule of Eldorado?"

"No means no, don't means don't, and stop means stop," Candide said.

"Good," Miss Ariel said. "You are a fast learner."

"I have a question," Candide said.

"Ask it," Miss Ariel said.

"You said that you are interested in me, and then you taught me the major sex rule of Eldorado. Does that mean that you are going to have sex with me tonight?"

"No, silly," Miss Ariel said. "Right now, I hardly know you, although I do want to get to know you better."

"No means no," Candide said.

"You really are a fast learner," Miss Ariel said. "That makes me like you."

"So what do you want to do?" Candide asked.

"I like to do jigsaw puzzles. Do you like to do puzzles?"

"Yes."

"In each closet of the inn are puzzles. Go to your closet and pick one out."

Candide picked out two puzzles: one with a photo of puppies, and one with a photo of kittens. He showed them to Miss Ariel and asked, "Are you a puppy or a kitten person?"

"I'm a kitten person."

They spread the pieces of the kittens puzzle out on the table, and they had put together a little more than the frame when Miss Ariel said that it was time for her to leave.

Candide walked her to the door, and Miss Ariel said, "I had a good time with you, and I want to see you again. May I come by tomorrow after supper?"

"Yes," Candide replied. "I enjoyed myself, too."

"Good, I will see you tomorrow. We can play cards downstairs again and then come up to work on the puzzle some more."

She kissed Candide lightly on the cheek and left.

The next evening, they played cards together, then worked on the puzzle together, and Miss Ariel kissed Candide on the lips. Every evening afterward, they went a little further sexually each time. Sometimes, at first, Miss Ariel would ask Candide to tell her the first major sex rule of Eldorado. They engaged in kissing sessions on the couch, and later they engaged in kissing sessions on the bed, and one magical evening Miss Ariel even took off her blouse and let

Candide engage in some over-the-bra touching. A few evenings later, Miss Ariel took off her blouse and unfastened her bra and let Candide engage in some under-the-bra touching.

So things progressed sexually, little by little. Of course, they did not just engage in sexual play. They went on real dates as well: supper out, concerts, sports events. But things progressed sexually as well, and soon they were almost naked as they kissed on the bed. Miss Ariel still kept her panties on, and Candide still kept his undershorts on, but Miss Ariel would let Candide kiss her nipples and touch her between her legs (over her panties) and she would take his thing out of his undershorts and stroke it.

One night as they were doing this, Candide climaxed and squirted goo on Miss Ariel's belly and panties. Always before, Candide had squirted his goo in a tissue.

"Sorry," Candide said.

"You have nothing to apologize for," Miss Ariel said. "When people play the kind of games we play, accidents such as this are bound to happen. It looks like I will walk out of here without wearing any panties under my other clothing."

Miss Ariel took off her panties — this was the first time that Candide had seen her without panties — and used them to mop up the rest of the goo.

She told Candide, "I'm not ready to go home yet. You may rub me between the legs, but don't stick your finger inside me. I'm not ready for that yet."

They kissed, and kissed, and kissed, and Candide rubbed and rubbed, and rubbed, and eventually Miss Ariel moaned, and moaned, and moaned. Then they stopped kissing.

Miss Ariel was surprised at how late it was when she looked at the clock.

"I think it's time I slept over," she said. "I don't want to walk home this late. It is OK if I sleep over?"

"Of course," Candide said.

The next morning they woke up at the same time. Miss Ariel got out of bed, saw her panties on the nightstand, put her hands in front of her pubic hair, and spun around.

In a serious voice, she said, "Candide, did you take off my panties while I was sleep — oh wait, I remember."

She relaxed then, and let her hands move away from her pubic area.

Candide looked at the just-now-uncovered pubic area, and his thing made a bump in the sheet that covered it.

Miss Ariel saw the bump, and she smiled and parted her legs.

The bump grew bigger.

Miss Ariel then took a condom out of her purse, got on the bed, and uncovered Candide's thing.

She held his erect thing in her hand and said, "Candide, the second major sex rule of Eldorado is this: Yes means yes until someone says no, don't, or stop. I'm ready to say yes, Candide. Are you ready to say yes to me?"

"Yes," Candide said.

Miss Ariel straddled Candide's body. She held the condom in her mouth, and with one hand she stroked Candide's thing while her other hand was busy between her legs. When she was wet enough, she put the condom on Candide's thing, positioned herself over Candide's thing, and lowered herself. She then raised and lowered herself, moaning softly.

Candide's thing squirted goo much too soon, both he and she thought.

Candide was afraid that Miss Ariel would be angry, and he apologized, but she knew that it would take time for Candide to learn control, so she simply leaned down, kissed him a few times on the lips, and then said, "I would love to stay and cuddle, Candide, but I really, really have to pee!"

Miss Ariel then ran to the bathroom, and Candide heard the sound of feminine peeing.

Miss Ariel flushed the toilet, came into the bedroom, and said to Candide, “Come and pee, Candide, and then take a shower with me. Then you have to go to work, and I have to go to class.”

In the shower, Candide said to Miss Ariel, “I am inexperienced. How should I treat a woman after I have sex with her?”

“Exactly the same way you treated her before you had sex with her — and definitely call her or see her very soon.”

As time passed, Candide and Miss Ariel continued to have sex, and they settled on three favorite positions: woman on top, missionary, and rear entry. Once in a while, they did something different.

Miss Ariel knew that Candide really, really liked her breasts, and so she suggested something different one day: she wanted Candide to learn how to check her breasts for lumps. She also wanted this to be a serious breast exam just like a doctor would give patients and would teach patients to do at home, but more exciting.

And so one evening Candide and Miss Ariel headed for the health center across the street from the inn.

“In Eldorado, we have many short classes in how to give breast exams,” Miss Ariel said. “Boyfriends and husbands are invited to participate. For them, we sometimes also include a lesson on full-body massage. These short classes work out well. The women and their boyfriends or husbands practice at home what they learn from the class. Women get many more breast exams than they need, but they don’t mind.

“I am a medical student here, and I know that this health center can teach you what you need to know.

“Actually, I do a lot of teaching, although I am still a student. The students study gynecology, and they have to learn how to give a woman a pelvic exam. That includes practical experience. I have undergone training, and once the students are ready to get practical experience, I teach them how to perform a pelvic exam on me. They have already learned the basics from the doctors who teach them, but I teach them such things as to warm up the speculum before inserting it in my front hole, and I teach them what is inappropriate to say during a pelvic exam.

“I also am frequently the woman whom the doctors give a breast exam to when teaching students how to give a breast exam.

“Frequently, classes are held on such topics as how to perform a self breast exam, but we will attend a class on how to do a partner breast exam.”

Miss Ariel explained that the health center also included a gym and aerobics classes, including a nude aerobics class for lesbians.

“I would like to see that,” Candide said.

“You never will,” Miss Ariel said. “I have been to it a few times — just enough so that one of my friends got a toaster oven.”

At the health center, they found the class on how to do a partner breast exam. Four other couples were there, and the equipment for each couple included a mirror and a bed.

The class was free. Eldorado had socialized medicine, something that supported Eldorado’s capitalist economic system. Healthy employees are employees who show up to work, and since the government paid for health care, businesses did not have to, something that helped lead to the formation of many small businesses.

One thing that was different about Eldorado was that the distance between the top earners and the bottom earners was not huge. Yes, doctors and CEOs made more money than other

people, but in Eldorado the top one percent of the population did not own 80 percent of the country's wealth. Instead, the top one percent of the population owned 10 percent of the country's wealth.

The doctor who was teaching the class arrived with another young couple, and Miss Ariel explained to Candide that the doctor had a TV show that covered a health-related topic each week. One of the shows was about breast cancer, and in it he gave a breast exam to a young woman.

"He's been doing the show for 30 years, so the show has quite a library of films," Miss Ariel said. "The old shows are rerun frequently on cable TV, often after being updated with new information."

The doctor then began to speak about the importance of doing a self breast exam, or having a partner examine your breasts, at least once a month. One good way to remember to do the exam is to do it at the same time each month — for example, on the first of the month.

He also explained that most lumps found in breasts are benign, but that if a lump were malignant, it is best to find it early so that the cancer can be cured. He then said that although most breast cancer is found in women, about two percent of the cases of breast cancer occur in men, and so men also ought to examine their breasts or have a partner examine their breasts each month.

The doctor then said, "Let's get started. Men, please remove your shirts."

Candide was surprised. Miss Ariel grinned at him and said, "Don't worry. You'll be able to examine my breasts later."

The young man who had come in with the doctor took off his shirt and stood by the doctor.

The doctor said, "This is an exam that can be done very quickly, but please be thorough. It can also be done as a self breast exam rather than as a partner breast exam.

"Men's breasts may be checked as they are standing up.

"First, look at your partner's breasts," the doctor said. "Check for any changes in shape or size of the breasts. Check for any dimpling, puckering, or unusual redness. Be sure to check the nipples.

"Your partner should use the mirror to also look for these things. Your partner probably knows what his breasts look like better you do, and so he should also do a visual check.

"Women," the doctor said, "now the touching starts. Have the man put his right hand behind his head and on his neck."

Candide and the other bare-chested men did this.

"Start with the right breast. Use your index, middle, and ring fingers to check the entire breast. Start with the nipple and then go around the breast, making bigger and bigger circles until you have covered all of the breast. Go very high up on the chest, and very far to the sides of the chest. Do this three times.

"As you press down firmly with your fingers, check for lumps. If you feel any lumps, tell your partner to see a doctor. Of course, I will be able to check your partner right here and right now if you feel any lumps."

The doctor demonstrated the correct technique on the young man, and Miss Ariel and the other women practiced the technique on their partners.

The young woman who had come in with the doctor stood nearby.

"Next squeeze the nipple with two fingers," the doctor said. "Check for any discharge. If any discharge occurs, tell your partner to see a doctor, who in this case will be me.

"Now repeat the process for the left breast. The man will put his left arm behind his head on his neck, and you will use your three fingers to press all areas of the breast and check for abnormalities."

The doctor again demonstrated on the young man, and the women again followed his instructions as they checked the left breast of their partners, including squeezing the nipple with two fingers.

“Did anyone detect any abnormalities? Any lumps or any discharge from the nipples? No one? Good.

“That’s all there is to do it. You may want to do the touching part of the partner breast exam in the shower or just after you take a shower together because the soap and water will make your hand move smoothly on the skin.

“Are there any questions?”

“No? Then let’s move on the partner examination of the woman’s breasts.

“Men, put your shirts back on, and women, please take your tops off.”

The young woman who had come in with the doctor took off her top and then stood by the doctor.

“Often, a woman’s breast cancer is first discovered by her boyfriend or husband. This is not surprising because so many men love breasts. This is also a good thing because a very high percentage of breast cancer cases can be cured, especially when found early.

“Often, a lump or bump is found accidentally during foreplay. It is a good idea, I believe, to do a more scientific breast exam than occurs in many relationships, and if doing a more thorough breast exam counts as foreplay, few if any couples — or doctors — will object.

“First, men, do the visual exam that the woman did to your breasts. Check for the same things. Check for any changes in shape or size of the breasts. Check for any dimpling, puckering, or unusual redness. Be sure to check the nipples.

“As the men did, the women should check themselves in the mirror. They probably know their own breasts better than their partners do, and they will know better when a change in shape or size occurs. They will also know whether any change is due to their menstrual cycle.

“Now the women should lie down on their backs in bed. Gravity will flatten the breast area, making it thinner, thereby making it easier to detect lumps.

“Each woman should put her right arm behind her head on the neck. Men, start with the right breast. Use your index, middle, and ring fingers to check your partner’s entire breast. Start with the nipple and then go around the breast, making bigger and bigger circles until you have covered all of the breast. Go very high up on the chest, and very far to the sides of the chest. Do this three times.

“I will demonstrate on this young woman. She will be standing up so that you can see the demonstration.”

The doctor demonstrated on the young woman as the men practiced the technique on their partners.

“As you press down firmly with your fingers, check for lumps. If you feel any lumps, tell your partner to see a doctor. Of course, I will be able to check your partner right here and now if you feel any lumps.

“Squeeze the nipple with two fingers, and look for any discharge. Of course, the breasts of a lactating woman will discharge milk. A bloody discharge or a discharge that smells bad is something to tell your doctor about immediately.

“Now repeat the process on the left breast. Of course, the woman should put her left arm behind her head now instead of her right arm.

“Take your time and examine your partner’s breasts thoroughly.

“Did anyone detect any abnormalities? No one? Good.

“Women, you can put your tops on now.

“Do this at least monthly, but feel free to do this much more often. If you want, you can make this a regular part of your sex lives. When you do this at home, complete the breast exam, and then engage in any other activity, including sexual activity, you wish.

“Please check out the schedule for other classes here at the clinic. They include many sex-related classes, such as nude body massage. This class may be of special interest to many of you.

“Thank you.”

“How did you like the class on breast exams?” Ariel asked as they walked back to the inn.

“I was surprised to find that men need to have breast exams, and I really enjoyed examining your breasts, although it was in a somewhat clinical atmosphere.”

“It’s important to first learn how to do the breast exam correctly, and then you can do the breast exam in much more intimate settings,” Miss Ariel said. “At the health center classes are offered on how to avoid pregnancy and STDs, although one of those things can be very good and the other one is always bad. For people aged 18 and under, we stress abstinence, but we give everyone, including those who are 18 and under, information about birth control.

“One of the good things about Eldorado is that pregnancies are planned, so whenever we hear that someone is pregnant, we say, ‘Congratulations!’ instead of ‘Is that good news or bad news?’

“Once in a while, something does go wrong with a pregnancy, and sometimes it goes wrong late in a pregnancy. Eldorado is a very good place, but it is not a perfect place. We have doctors who perform abortions when they need to be performed, including late-term abortions when they are necessary. These abortionists are greatly respected in Eldorado because they safely perform a necessary service.

“By the way, I have named my right breast Thelma and my left breast Louise.”

Back in Candide’s apartment, Miss Ariel talked about the sexual activities she wanted them to engage in for the rest of the evening.

“A breast exam is similar to a breast massage, so let’s keep to themes of breasts and massages. I want you to touch my naked body all over, and I want you to put your thing between your breasts and squirt goo all over my neck. That’s kind of special, but let’s do it.”

“Sounds good to me,” Candide said.

“When you are touching me all over, you will probably want to put a finger or two into one of my holes, won’t you?” Miss Ariel asked.

“Oh, yes,” Candide said. “Definitely.”

“I will be lying on my stomach at first when you touch me, and then I will turn over and lie on my back,” Miss Ariel said. “You may touch only my front hole and not the hole in my bottom. Touching the rear hole before touching the front hole is a definite no-no, but I don’t want you to touch my rear hole at all. Do you understand?”

“I understand,” Candide said.

“Because what we will be doing is special, tell me this: what is the major sex rule of Eldorado?”

Candide said, “No means no, stop means stop, and don’t means don’t.”

“Very good,” Miss Ariel said, putting her hand on Cacambo’s crotch and rubbing it. “Let’s get started. Let me watch you get naked.”

Candide got naked, and then Miss Ariel said, “Now watch me get naked.”

Miss Ariel undressed, slowly, while Candide watched.

“Lie on the bed on your stomach, and be sure to position your thing so that you don’t bend it when it gets erect, as I hope it will during the massage,” Miss Ariel said. “You want to touch

me all over, but I am going to touch you all over first. I will show you a few massage techniques that I enjoy and that I hope you will enjoy.'

Miss Ariel touched Candide all over, including massaging his buttocks in such a way that the hole in his bottom was revealed, and then she told Candide to turn over, and she massaged his front, showing him some techniques that she liked, and one technique that she knew she would like if she were a man: a gentle stroking of Candide's thing.

Then it was Candide's turn to do the touching. Miss Ariel lay on her stomach, and Candide did to her everything that she had done to him while he was lying on his stomach, including massaging her buttocks in such a way that her rear hole was revealed.

"Remember, look but don't touch me there," Miss Ariel said.

"I won't. Don't means don't," Candide said.

"Very good," Miss Ariel said.

Candide finished massaging all the skin that showed itself to him, and then Miss Ariel turned herself over, and Candide began to massage new areas of her skin. Miss Ariel moaned gently to let Candide know when he was touching her in a way she enjoyed. As he massaged her skin, Miss Ariel massaged his thing. When Candide reached the area between Miss Ariel's legs, he brushed his hands gently against her inner thighs. Miss Ariel parted her legs and raised her knees, gently stroking Candide's thing all the while, and Candide inserted a finger partway into Miss Ariel's front hole. He used his hand to cover Miss Ariel's mound, and rubbed gently, gently pushing his finger in a little way and pulling it out again, over and over. Miss Ariel moved her hips gently and rhythmically, and she moaned.

After Miss Ariel had moaned several times, she said that she was ready for him to put his thing between her breasts. Miss Ariel reached for a tube of lubrication on the nightstand, poured some on her hands, and rubbed it onto the skin between her breasts and the sides of her breasts that could touch each other, and she rubbed it onto Candide's thing.

Candide straddled Miss Ariel's chest, leaving her arms free, and then he moved back and forth with his thing between Miss Ariel's breasts as she pushed her breasts together to create friction. After several thrusts, Candide squirted some streams of goo onto her neck, while Miss Ariel moaned to make his climax better, and then he got off her and lay down beside her.

Miss Ariel felt the goo on her neck, rubbing it in circles.

"Do you like that?" Candide asked.

"I like goo while it's warm," Miss Ariel said. "Unfortunately, it cools down so quickly. Hand me some tissues, will you?"

A few days later, when Miss Ariel and Candide both had a full day off from work, Miss Ariel said to Candide in his apartment, "I think it's time to go to the beach."

"I don't have a bathing suit," Candide said.

"You won't need a bathing suit," Miss Ariel. "It's a nudist beach for adults."

"Oh," Candide said.

"You're new to the nudist beach, so let me tell you now that staring is not permitted. If you stare, we will be asked to leave."

"OK," Candide said.

"In addition, it is considered impolite to get an erection, so I am going to do something special for you."

"What?"

Miss Ariel picked up a pillow from Candide's bed and dropped it in front of Candide, and then she knelt on the pillow so that her head was close to Candide's pubic area and said, "Take out your thing, and I will show you."

Candide took out his thing, and Miss Ariel kissed it.

Then she said, "This is special. I already know that you know the major sex rule of Eldorado, so I will simply tell you what not to do. Don't touch my head while I am sucking your thing, and don't move your thing in and out of my mouth. I will do the moving. Do you understand?"

"Yes," Candide replied.

"In addition, because what I am doing for you is special, I want you to show me that you appreciate it. Moan a little. You don't have to be loud, but definitely moan. If you have to, practice your acting ability."

"OK."

Miss Ariel put Candide's thing in her mouth, and with her eyes closed, she sucked it as she moved her head toward Candide and away from Candide. Candide moaned.

After a few sucks, Miss Ariel stopped and said, "Candide, this is already special, but is there anything I can do to make it more special for you? Is there anything you want?"

"If it's OK with you, could you keep your eyes open and make eye contact? And could you stop sucking once in a while and give me a look that says you know what you're doing is naughty but you like doing it anyway?"

"I don't think it's at all naughty," said Miss Ariel. "I do think it's a lot special."

"Fulfilling my request may take some acting ability," Candide said.

"I think I can do that," Miss Ariel said.

She sucked and sucked, with lots of eye contact, occasionally stopping to give Candide a look that he found arousing.

Soon, Candide told her, "I'm almost ready to squirt my goo."

Miss Ariel sucked harder and faster, and she raised one hand to give Candide a thumb's-up sign.

Candide squirted his goo in Miss Ariel's mouth, and she alternated sucking and swallowing until Candide's thing was completely limp.

Then she said to Candide, "Put your thing back in your pants. You know how you want it adjusted. The only bad thing about the nudist beach is that I can't watch the men adjust their things in their bathing suits when they come out of the water because they aren't wearing bathing suits."

"Thank you for letting me squirt goo in your mouth," Candide said. "I wasn't expecting that."

"I hadn't planned on that, or on swallowing, but I didn't want to risk getting goo on my clothes or in my hair," Miss Ariel said, and then she kissed Candide.

After kissing Candide, she looked at him and said, "I must have some goo in the corner of my mouth, and now that I've kissed you, you have, too. Let me get that for you. Hold still."

Miss Ariel leaned toward Candide and licked the corner of his mouth twice, and then she licked the corner of her own mouth.

"Good," she said, "now we can go to the nudist beach without being embarrassed."

They rode their bicycles to the nudist beach for adults. As they rode, Candide said, "I really enjoyed the naughty-girl looks you gave me."

"That was acting," Miss Ariel said. "And I really enjoyed your moaning."

"That was not acting," Candide said.

Once at the nudist beach, they took off their clothing in a dressing room for couples, showered, and then put on suntan lotion. Miss Ariel carefully applied the suntan lotion to Candide's thing and balls, pointing out that a man has some places where he especially ought not to be sunburned. Then they hit the beach.

Candide noticed that although many couples were at the beach, many people were in groups. Groups of young women were common, as they wanted to work on their all-over tans. Most of the sunbathers, including Miss Ariel, had all-over tans, but Candide was mostly white all over. A few people were cottontails, showing that they often sunbathed elsewhere, but with their bathing suits on.

Candide remembered Miss Ariel's warning not to stare, but he often glanced, and sometimes he looked. His thing was beginning to move around without any help from hands. Miss Ariel noticed and suggested that they go in the water.

The coolness of the water shrank Candide's thing for a while, but some very attractive young women came into the water, and he began to look, and then stare, at them.

Miss Ariel whispered in his ear, "You should be staring at *me*."

"Sorry," Candide said, and he paid attention to Miss Ariel for a long while, but he was still aware of the naked attractions in the water around him — as well as of the naked attraction that was Miss Ariel.

After a while, Miss Ariel wanted to go back to the beach, but Candide said, "Uh, I'm not sure that's good to do right now."

Miss Ariel felt Candide's thing. It was erect.

"I can feel that you like this nudist beach," Miss Ariel said.

"Indeed I do," Candide said.

"Have you noticed some of the young couples swimming to the other side of the lake?" Miss Ariel asked.

"Yes," Candide said.

"They are swimming to the cabins over there. The cabins are filled with many sets of sheets and bowls filled with condoms. Let's pay the cabins a visit."

"Ok," Candide said.

They swam to the other side of the lake. Most of the cabins were busy, and noisy, but one was open, so they walked in and hung a "Do Not Disturb" sign on the front door.

Miss Ariel said, "What do you want to do?"

"I want you to suck my thing for a while, and then I want to have fun in the missionary position," Candide said.

"You're getting a lot of special attention today," Miss Ariel said. "Soon I will ask you for special attention."

Miss Ariel sucked Candide's thing briefly, and then she lay on the bed with her legs parted, and Candide got on top of her, began kissing her, and then put his thing first in a condom and then in her front hole and both Candide and Miss Ariel had fun.

As they exited the cabin after making up the bed, they saw a young couple kissing as they waited for them to leave. The man's thing was erect, and the woman was holding it but not stroking it out of fear of premature squirting. After Candide and Miss Ariel left the cabin, the couple walked into the cabin, with the woman leading the man and holding his thing.

"At the cabins, lots of women treat their boyfriends and husbands as pull toys," Miss Ariel commented.

They swam across the lake, stepped onto the beach, and began to leave.

In front of front was a group of seven young women who had just arrived at the beach. They were naked, and they were getting their beach towels ready to lie on. They flapped their beach towels in the air, let them float to the ground, and then bent over to adjust them perfectly.

Suddenly, Candide saw seven front holes and seven rear holes. He stopped, and he stared — he obviously stared. One of the women turned around, saw him staring, and said something

to her friends. They immediately straightened up, turned around, and held their hands over their recently shaved pubic areas.

Miss Ariel was horrified by Candide's staring.

She grabbed his thing — firmly — and said, "It's time to go, boyfriend — *now!*"

She walked away, and Candide had to follow.

The seven young women giggled as they watched Miss Ariel lead Candide away.

In the undressing and dressing room, a still-naked Miss Ariel told off Candide, "You embarrassed me out there! All of those seven women — and anyone else who was watching — think that I'm a bad girlfriend! They think that either I'm not giving you any or that what I'm giving you is bad! Both of us know that what I give you is good and plenty! Just today I let you squirt goo in my mouth and in a condom that was in my front hole!"

"I'm sorry," Candide apologized. "I just don't get to see what I saw that often."

"You can see it as often as you like," Miss Ariel said. "Just ask me."

She turned around, parted her legs, and bent over and grabbed her ankles.

"Do you like what you see?"

"Yes, very much," Candide said.

Miss Ariel straightened up, turned around, and said, "Do you know how the nudist beach came into existence?"

"No," Candide said.

"For a long time, it was not a nudist beach. Once in a while, a woman would take off her top, but men would stare at her and she would feel uncomfortable and put her top back on. Then one day a woman took off her top, and the men glanced at her occasionally, but not enough to make her uncomfortable. Soon another woman took off her top, and then another woman, and another woman. Soon almost every woman on the beach was topless.

"A few days later a woman took the bottom of her bathing suit off. No one bothered her, and soon some other women, but not all, were sunbathing and swimming completely nude. And then a young couple — a man and a woman — took off their bathing suits, and the place became a nudist beach."

"If we ever come back, I'll control myself," Candide promised.

"I just hope that we don't get kicked out," Miss Ariel said.

As they were exiting, a manager of the nudist beach said to them, "I need to talk to you."

The manager pointed to Miss Ariel and said, "Don't treat your boyfriend like a pull toy on the beach — that's what the cabins are for."

The manager then pointed to Candide and said, "The usual rule is look, but don't stare, but for you there's a new rule: glance, but don't look. Really, you embarrassed yourself as well as seven young women out there."

"I'm sorry," Candide said.

"We're both sorry," Miss Ariel said. "Can we come back to the beach?"

"Yes, this is just a warning," the manager said. "We realize that a person can mess up the first time on a nudist beach, and this is clearly the young man's first time. I also personally am aware that the views on the beach are interesting — very interesting." She added, "The only bad thing about the nudist beach is that I can't watch the men adjust their things in their bathing suits when they come out of the water because they aren't wearing bathing suits."

During their bicycle ride back home, Candide asked Miss Ariel, "How many men have you had sex with?"

Miss Ariel smiled and answered, "Just one — you."

She was obviously lying, but Candide said, "Good answer."

Candide and Miss Ariel often returned to the nudist beach for young people, and he learned to glance and not stare, although while he was on the beach, his thing was usually a couple of inches longer than when he was not on the beach.

They also played new games occasionally at home, although usually the games they played were Woman on Top, Missionary Position, and Rear Entry.

For example, Miss Ariel invented a game she called Thing Flip. The first time they played the new game was after they had returned from visiting the nudist beach the second time. In Candide's apartment, they got naked, and Miss Ariel kneeled in front of the standing Candide.

"This new game that we will play is called Thing Flip," she said, holding Candide's thing. "I am going to flip the end of your thing in the air.

She held her hand behind Candide's thing, then brought her hand forward so that the end of Candide's thing was flipped in the air, almost touching his belly before falling again. She then caught his thing in her hand as it fell.

"That is simple enough," she said. "But there is more. I am going to flip your thing in the air and then use my hand to grab your balls. At the same time I will try to catch the end of your thing in my mouth. Let's try it."

"She flipped the end of Candide's thing in the air and caught it in her mouth while her hand grabbed Candide's balls. She sucked the end of Candide's thing as she drew her head back. As Candide's thing exited her mouth, she sucked in air. The end of Candide's thing fell, and she released his balls and caught his thing in her hand.

"This may seem like a one-handed game, but it's not," Miss Ariel said. "As I am playing with your thing and balls with my right hand, my left hand is busy between my legs."

They played Thing Flip only briefly because soon the end of Candide's thing did not need to be flipped in the air. It stood in the air on its own. Miss Ariel sucked Candide's thing for a while, and then as they moved to the bed she said to Candide, "The problem with Thing Toss is that you can't play it for very long, but I'm not complaining."

Another game they played was Peek-a-Boo. In this game, Miss Ariel lay naked on the bed with her legs close together and her knees raised in the air, while Candide stood at the bottom of the bed. Miss Ariel would open and close her knees slowly. Candide was situated in such a way that when her knees were closed, he could see her face and arms and legs, but not her breasts, belly, or between her legs. As her knees opened, he could see these interesting parts of her body. Miss Ariel was always amused as she looked at Candide's eyes. When her knees were closed, he looked her in the eyes. As her knees spread apart, his eyes traveled down her torso until he was staring at the place between her legs. Her knees opened and closed, and as they did, Candide's eyes traveled down and then back up her body.

Yet another game they played was Hide-and-Seek. Miss Ariel had started to shave her pubic area after she had noticed Candide's interest in the freshly shaven pubic areas of the seven young women at the nudist beach. Miss Ariel explained to Candide that a certain part of her body was hidden and he had to find it by coaxing it to come out of hiding. That part was hidden under her clitoral hood. The scientific name of the hidden part was the clitoris, but Miss Ariel called it a bean. By licking and sucking Miss Ariel between her legs, Candide was able to coax her bean to become engorged with blood and come out of hiding. When it came out of hiding, he used his tongue to write his name on it. Miss Ariel especially enjoyed it when he dotted the i in his name with a heart shape.

Of course, a game that they had long played and continued to play was called Hide the Thing.

One evening, Miss Ariel showed up at Candide's apartment with a small suitcase.

“I’ve been shopping,” she said, “Once or twice a year, I go on a shopping spree and buy intimates. Now I am going to model for you all the things I bought. This modeling is something that Miss Victoria says Cacambo enjoys, and I think that you may enjoy it, too.”

She had Candide take off his clothes and lie on the bed so that he could touch his thing while she modeled. She took her suitcase into the bathroom so she could change without Candide seeing her first few outfits.

Quickly, she came back into Candide’s bedroom.

“This first outfit is actually not a new outfit, but something that I made out of an old outfit. As you can see, I am wearing a very old T-shirt, but I have cut out holes so that my nipples are revealed. In addition, I am wearing a very old pair of shorts, but I have cut off most of the part that covers my butt. This is my T&A outfit, and it costs nothing. It is very environmentally friendly, and I plan to wear it around your apartment when I want you to be interested in me.”

“With that outfit, or without it, I am very interested in you,” Candide said.

“That’s sweet,” Miss Ariel said. “I hope that you also like my next outfit.”

She disappeared into the bathroom, but quickly returned wearing the same top but an old pair of pantyhose on the bottom. Speaking of bottoms, there was no bottom to the pantyhose. Miss Ariel had cut out the crotch of the pantyhose.

“I like these pantyhose because they allow for easy access,” Miss Ariel said. “Look!”

Miss Ariel turned around and bent over, and Candide could see that the pantyhose did indeed allow easy access to both of her holes.

Candide stroked his thing.

Miss Ariel’s next few outfits were revealing nightgowns, and then she came into Candide’s bedroom wearing nothing but a bra and panties.

“Let me show you the undergarments I bought,” she said.

First she modeled all the pairs of panties she had bought. When she had modeled each pair of panties, taking a pair off and then putting another pair on in front of Candide, she pulled off the last pair and then started modeling bras. Candide looked at the bras, but he also often looked at her hairless pubic area. When she had modeled her last bra, she took it off and stood naked in front of Candide.

“I can see you enjoyed the fashion show,” she said, looking at Candide’s thing.

“Indeed I did,” Candide said, stroking his thing.

“Let me help you with that,” Miss Ariel said, and she climbed on the bed and slowly sucked Candide’s thing while her hand was moving between her legs.

When she was wet enough, she put a condom on Candide’s thing, then climbed on top of him and rode him until he squirted goo into the condom.

“I didn’t think that would take long after the fashion show, and I was right,” Miss Ariel said. “Luckily, I came prepared.”

After taking the condom off Candide’s thing and then licking the goo off the top of Candide’s thing, she took out of her handbag a silver vibrator.

“Let me show you how this works,” she said. “You twist the control here, and it turns on the vibrator. The more you twist it, the more vigorously it vibrates.”

“Was it embarrassing to buy that?” Candide asked.

“Not at all. I bought it online.”

Miss Ariel lay down on the bed, parted her legs and raised her knees, and then told Candide, “I’ll get things started. You get in a position where you can see between my legs.”

Miss Ariel put the vibrator on the lowest setting and then gently inserted the vibrator between her legs. Because she was already wet, it went into her front hole easily.

She pushed it in and out a few times, and then she told Candide, "OK, now you take over. I'll let you know what I want, and you follow directions. Just push it in and out slowly right now, and as time goes on, turn the control on the vibrator up and push it in and out faster."

"OK," said Candide.

"One more thing," Miss Ariel said as Candide began to slowly push the vibrator in and out of Miss Ariel's front hole, "Usually, you cannot form complete sentences when you are making love, but you have already squirted your goo. Therefore, as you move the vibrator, I want you to tell me how much you love me."

"Will do," Candide said.

At first, Candide said the usual sweet nothings, such as "I love you more than the Sun, the Moon, and the entire universe," but as he moved the vibrator in and out faster and turned up the vibrator to the highest setting, he said a number of things that really made Miss Ariel hot:

"I love you so much that I will pick you up at the airport.

"I love you so much that I will take out the garbage without being asked.

"I love you so much that I will never forget your birthday.

"I love you so much that I will never tell you that you look fat in jeans.

"I love you so much that I will never miss the toilet when I pee, and if I do miss, I will clean up the mess immediately.

"I love you so much that after I am done peeing, I will always put the toilet seat down.

"I love you so much that I will move your furniture around for you.

"I love you so much that I will carry heavy boxes of boxes when you move.

"I love you so much that I will stop and ask for directions.

"I love you so much that I will allow you to watch what you want to on TV.

"I love you so much that I will connect your TV to your stereo system for you."

"I love you so much that I will rub your feet whenever you ask me to."

After an orgasm that was due as much to Candide's words as to the vibrator, Miss Ariel said, "I think I'm going shopping for intimates again tomorrow."

A Meta Moment

A woman was reading *The Erotic Adventures of Candide* while lying in bed next to her husband, who was reading something boring about economics. As she read, she thought, *I would be willing to do some of these things if I knew that my husband would not do something that would make me gag and if I knew that my husband would always take no for an answer.*

Just then, her husband said, "Are you ready to go to sleep? Should I turn out the lights?"

"I'm almost ready," the woman said.

She pulled the covers off her husband and said, "Raise your pelvis in the air."

He was surprised, but he did as she asked, and she pulled down his pajama bottoms and his undershorts.

She then moved down on the bed so her husband's thing was very close to her face but she could see her husband's face.

"Repeat after me," she said. "No means no, don't means don't, and stop means stop."

Her husband said, "No means no, don't means don't, and stop means stop."

"I'm going to do something you like but that I have not done for a very long time," she said. "Here are the rules: Don't touch my head and don't hump your body. In short, don't do anything that will make me gag. Remember this: If I gag, I bite."

"OK," her husband said.

She kissed his balls and thing several times, and then she began to lick his balls and thing. When his thing rose in the air, she started sucking his thing.

Her husband moaned, and he forgot himself: He touched her head.

Immediately, she stopped sucking and she let her teeth touch his thing.
Immediately, he took his hands off her hand and put them behind his head.
She waited a moment, and then she started sucking again.

Her husband kept his hands behind his head, and he moaned, and soon he said, "I'm almost ready to squirt my goo."

His wife raised one hand and gave him a thumb's-up sign, and she started sucking harder and faster.

Soon he squirted his goo in her mouth.

She swallowed, then sucked some more, and then she drank part of a glass of water that she kept on her nightstand.

Then she kissed her husband on the mouth, looked at the corner of his mouth and leaned toward him and licked the corner of his mouth, and then she licked the corner of her mouth.

Finally, she kissed him on the mouth again and told him, "You can put your thing back. You know how you like it adjusted."

"I'm glad that you stopped touching my head immediately. As long as you know that no means no, and as long as you obey the rules I set, I can make you very, very happy. I remember 20 years ago when you grabbed my head and made me gag. I haven't sucked your thing since then until today. If you hadn't made me gag, I would have been sucking your thing every month or every week for the past 20 years."

"So you're saying that because I made you gag 20 years ago I have missed out on having my thing sucked between 240 times and 1,040 times during the past 20 years?"

"That's right."

"If I hadn't made you gag, would we have been having anal sex for the past 20 years?"

"Not even in your dreams."

Then she rolled over, turned off her light, and went to sleep.

Her husband turned off his light, but he lay awake for a little while, thinking, *No means no, don't means don't, and stop means stop. I am going to follow any rules my wife tells me to follow because I want to be very, very happy.*

The next morning the husband said to his wife, "I don't know what book you were reading last night, but if you'll tell the name of the author, I'll be happy to buy you copies of all his or her other books."

"Thank you," his wife said. "If they are anything like this book, I would like to read them — with my hand between my legs. And then, of course, I would show my appreciation to you for giving me those books."

Back to *The Erotic Adventures of Candide*

A few evenings later, as they were lying in bed half-naked and kissing, Miss Ariel asked Candide, "Would you like to watch some porn?"

"Where?"

"Right here."

"Do we even have a TV set in here?"

"That entire wall is the screen. Watch."

She took a remote control out of her bag, clicked it, and the entire wall opposite the head of the bed came to life.

"We have a few porn channels in Eldorado," Miss Ariel said. "This is the least risqué."

She clicked the remote control, and photographs and short videos of half-naked and naked young women began appearing on the wall. They were wearing various combinations of masks, sunglasses, and wigs.

"Why are they wearing the masks, sunglasses, and wigs?" Candide asked.

“This is the channel for 18-year-olds,” Miss Ariel said. “They are still very young, and they may regret posting these photographs and videos later, so the government requires them to disguise their features in some way. If they ever want the government to delete their photographs or videos, the government can do that very quickly. Of course, this is the channel that shows young women. The young men have a channel of their own, but the channel featuring young women is vastly more popular.”

“How do the photographs and videos get on TV?” Candide asked.

“The 18-year-olds submit them, then the government contacts them to make sure that the person in the photograph or video is actually the person who submitted the porn.”

“What other kinds of porn do you have?” Candide asked.

“Men and women aged 19 can post masturbation photographs and videos. These often feature sex toys. The person performing can have their features disguised if he or she wishes, but it is not required. Again, the government checks to make sure that the person in the photograph or video has given permission for these materials to be shown on TV. In this age of cell phones that can take photos and videos, the government wants to be careful.

“We have another channel for hard-core sex. The videos have to be shot in government-run movie studios. To make sure that everything is on the up-and-up, both partners — male and female, male and male, or female and female — have to say Eldorado’s major sex rule before they do anything, and after completing the sex act or acts, they have to say to the audience, ‘Thanks for watching.’

“We don’t allow group sex or anything really weird. That’s for home.”

They watched all three of the channels for a while, and then played Hide the Thing with Woman on Top, following which Miss Ariel asked Candide, “Do you want to make a hard-core video with me?”

“Sure,” Candide said.

“Good,” Miss Ariel said. “I’ve already written the script — there’s not much dialogue, of course. It’s in my purse. Let’s go over it to make sure that you want to do it, and if you do, I’ll make us an appointment at the videographers’ offices.”

Candide liked the script, what there was of it, and a week later he and Miss Ariel were at the videographers’ movie-making offices at the Health Center.

Two videographers, both women, were present, and they showed Candide and Miss Ariel the set — which was a bed with nightstands. On one of the nightstands was a glass of water. Around the bed on the floor was drawn a line.

“We won’t go past the line while we are making the video,” said Miss Vicky, one of the videographers, “unless, of course, one of you does not take no as an answer.”

“And then, of course, we summon the police,” said the other videographer, Miss Mary.

“How did you get this job?” Candide asked.

“This is volunteer work in the evenings for both of us,” said Miss Mary.

“We simply happen to enjoy videotaping loving couples while they are having sex,” said Miss Vicky. “Only women are allowed to be sex videographers in Eldorado.”

“Shall we get started?” Miss Ariel asked.

“Anytime both of you are ready,” Miss Mary replied.

The video started with Miss Ariel and Candide fully clothed on the bed.

First Miss Ariel and then Candide looked into the camera and said, “No means no, don’t means don’t, and stop means stop.”

Candide said, “I sure am tired. I think I’ll take a nap.”

He lay back on the bed and fell “asleep.”

Miss Ariel slowly moved to him, as if she were afraid that he would wake up, and kissed him on his lips, and then she slowly moved down his body, unbuttoning his shirt, and kissing, licking, and sucking whatever needed to be kissed, licked, and sucked. She especially spent time kissing, licking, and sucking Candide's nipples.

When she got below Candide's bellybutton, she undid his belt and pants button, unzipped his zipper, and pulled his thing and balls out. Then she began kissing, licking, and sucking these newly uncovered parts of Candide's body.

Candide stayed "asleep," although he moaned once in a while, and soon he squirted goo into Miss Ariel's mouth.

Miss Ariel stopped sucking, opened her mouth to make sure the camera taped footage of the goo, and then drank the glass of water. She then carefully licked the leftover goo from the end of Candide's thing and slowly put Candide's thing and balls back into his pants and zipped and fastened everything that needed to be zipped and fastened.

Candide then "woke up," and he sat up.

"I had the most wonderful dream," he said. "Would you like to have sex?"

"I sure would," Miss Ariel said, and she began to rub Candide's crotch, "but nothing seems to be happening."

Candide said to her, "I swear that this has never happened before!"

Then Miss Ariel and Candide both looked into the camera and said, "Thanks for watching."

End of movie.

Miss Ariel and Candide returned a few days later and made a video in which they played Toss the Thing, Hide and Seek, Peek-a-Boo, and Hide The Thing. The citizens of Eldorado could vote thumbs-up on videos they liked. This video became popular and was shown often, and soon the young couples of Eldorado were playing the two new games: Toss the Thing and Peek-a-Boo. The other two games were old favorites.

By the way, the couple who filmed a sex scene after Candide and Miss Ariel had changed the sheets was a husband and wife who acted in an anal sex scene. The husband enjoyed anal sex more than the wife did, but the wife enjoyed making her husband happy and so thing-in-her-bottom-hole sex was a regular part of their sex life.

The wife had written the scene, which involved her being an actress who was auditioning for a part in a movie. Passing the audition involved more than acting.

Before filming started, the wife told the videographers, "I don't want this movie to have gynecologic close-ups — or proctologic close-ups — so I want the camera to be focused on my face while my husband pumps my rear hole from behind me."

Of course, this was not a problem.

After the husband and wife had stated Eldorado's major sex rule, the husband said, "You have passed the first part of the audition, but to get the role, you have to pass the second part."

"Let us guess," the wife said. "I have to have sex with you, right?"

"How did you know?"

"This isn't my first audition."

"Well, to get this role, you have to let me put my thing in the hole in your bottom."

"No way! Not for a non-speaking role! But give me the part of a character who speaks some lines, and it's a deal!"

"OK," the husband said, "and if you really do a good job in the second part of the audition, I'll give the character some extra lines to speak."

"Sounds good," the wife said.

The two undressed, the wife put a condom on her husband's thing, and the wife got on the bed on her hands and knees, near the nightstand, which had a magazine that she wanted at hand, and her husband put lubrication on the part of her body that needed it most. After lubricating his thing while staring at his wife's bottom, he put his thing in the hole in her bottom.

"Now act!" he said.

The wife said, "First I am going to act the part of a teenybopper who enjoys this kind of sex."

She smiled, and smiled, and smiled as her husband pumped her, and she blew a bubble with the gum she had hidden in her mouth, and when the bubble popped she swallowed the gum.

"Now I am going to play the role of a bored prostitute," the wife said. She reached for the magazine on the nightstand, idly turned a few pages as her husband pumped her, and then she looked backward at him and said, "Let me when you're done."

She knocked the magazine to the floor, and said, "Next I am going to play the role of a bored porn star." She then started saying over and over in a totally bored voice, "Ooh. Ahh. Ooh. Ahh."

Then she said, "Now I am going to play of a wife who does this very often with a husband who enjoys this more than she does." She looked back at her husband, and said, "In the morning, don't forget to take out the garbage."

Next she said, "VIPs in the movie and theater world watch porn, so as part of this audition I am going to recite Juliet's speech from *Romeo and Juliet* where she is waiting for Romeo to join her for their wedding night:

Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds,
Towards Phoebus' lodging: such a wagoner
As Phaethon would whip you to the west,
And bring in cloudy night immediately.
Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,
That runaway's eyes may wink and Romeo
Leap to these arms, untalk'd of and unseen.
Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
By their own beauties; or, if love be blind,
It best agrees with night. Come, civil night,
Thou sober-suited matron, all in black,
And learn me how to lose a winning match,
Play'd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods:
Hood my unmann'd blood, bating in my cheeks,
With thy black mantle; till strange love, grown bold,
Think true love acted simple modesty.
Come, night; come, Romeo; come, thou day in night;
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.
Come, gentle night, come, loving, black-brow'd night,
Give me my Romeo; and, when he shall die,
Take him and cut him out in little stars,
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish sun.

O, I have bought the mansion of a love,
But not possess'd it, and, though I am sold,
Not yet enjoy'd: so tedious is this day
As is the night before some festival
To an impatient child that hath new robes
And may not wear them.

“By the way, the word ‘come’ has more than one meaning.

“Next I will play the part of an actress engaging in hole-in-the-bottom sex so that she can get a speaking role in a movie.” She cleared her throat and then said, “This is great! My first speaking role! Finally, I can hear myself speak in a movie! And all I have to do to advance myself is to keep putting out! I am good at putting out! I am going to put out so much that I will get really good parts in really good movies! In fact, I am going to put out so much that I will win the Academy Award for Best Actress three years in a row!”

Her husband was breathing very hard now and pumping faster, so his wife said, “For the last part of my audition, I am going to play the role of someone who really enjoys this kind of sex — FASTER! HARDER! DEEPER! IT FEELS SO GOOD!”

Her husband squirted goo into the condom in his wife’s rear hole. Exhausted, he lay on the bed.

His wife took the condom off his thing, weighed it and her husband’s goo in her hand, and said, “Oooh, that was a good one!”

She then looked at the camera and said, “Thanks for watching!”

Her husband lifted his head and said, “Yeah, thanks for watching.”

“By the way, honey,” his wife said, “I meant what I said about taking out the garbage.”

A week or so later, Miss Ariel and Candide went to the nudist beach for young couples and discovered that they were minor celebrities. No one recognized them at first, but as Miss Ariel and Candide came out of the water to sun themselves after visiting the cabins on the other side of the lake they were noticed by the seven young women whom Candide had embarrassed a few weeks earlier by staring at them.

One of the young women said to Miss Ariel and Candide, “You’re our heroes! Our boyfriends love it when we play Toss the Thing.”

A second young woman said, “Of course, we make them play Hide and Seek first. It’s only fair.”

The first young woman looked at Candide, smiled, and said, “Oh! My beach blanket is crooked! I need to straighten it up!”

The other six young women picked up on the hint and said, “Our blankets need straightened, too!”

All seven young women turned around and bent over to straighten their blankets, and Candide found himself looking — make that staring — at 14 holes.

But he didn’t stare for long. He had learned his lesson. When the seven young ladies straightened up and turned around, they saw Candide kissing Miss Ariel.

The first young woman said, “What you’re giving him must be excellent and plentiful.”

After that, Candide and Miss Ariel sunned themselves and then headed toward the showers.

The seven young women were already in the women’s showers, and since Miss Ariel wanted to talk to them, possibly about Candide, she went to the women’s showers instead of going to the co-ed showers with Candide.

But then Candide decided that he really wanted to shower with Miss Ariel, so he walked into the women’s showers, where Miss Ariel and the seven young women were showering.

Of course, Miss Ariel did not scream — but the seven young women did and they attempted to hide their nakedness with their hands.

The result was that Candide was banned from the young people's nudist beach for the rest of the year.

As he and Miss Ariel were bicycling home, Candide said, "I don't understand it. Before I went into the women's showers, I saw every hole the seven young women had between their legs. Why would they scream?"

"Why shouldn't they?" Miss Ariel asked. "Just because you see a woman naked at one time and in one place does not mean that you have the right to see her naked at any time and any place."

"I guess that makes sense," Candide said, "but something else puzzles me. When I saw the 14 holes of the seven young women, I thought that was pretty exciting, but when I saw the seven young women screaming, blushing, and attempting to hide their nakedness, that was even more exciting. Does that any sense at all?"

"Yes," Miss Ariel said. "Seeing everything can be exciting, but almost seeing everything can be even more exciting. And modesty can be very becoming."

While riding their bicycles back home, Candide and Miss Ariel came across a floating outdoor tea-room, one of many small businesses in Eldorado. "Floating" meant that it moved from place to place, not that it floated on the lake, although it was located near a beautiful beach. An Eldoradoan man searched for spots of natural beauty, filled with flowers and beautiful scents, then made tea there for anyone who wanted it. This sign announced his prices: "The price of tea is however much you give me, from a penny to money that is much more valuable. You can even drink for free, if you like; but I can't give you a better bargain than that."

Candide and Miss Ariel drank some tea and relaxed and talked, and later the man who ran the floating outdoor tea-room joined them and told them some stories, including this one:

"One day the governor of Kyoto wanted to see the Zen teacher Keichu, so he gave Keichu's attendant his card, which read, 'Kitagaki, governor of Kyoto.' The attendant took the card to Keichu, who looked at it and then said, 'Tell him to get lost.' When the attendant returned with the card and the message, Kitagaki thought a moment, then scratched 'governor of Kyoto' off the card and sent it back to Keichu, who welcomed him."

And this one:

"When Zen master Tekisui was on his deathbed, another Zen master named Keichu came by his house. He left a box of cakes for Tekisui, and he also gave this message to a servant to give to Tekisui: 'You're old enough to die without regret.' When Tekisui heard the message, he smiled."

"Who was that man?" Candide asked Miss Ariel as they bicycled away from the floating tea-room after enjoying tea and conversation and leaving some money.

"Zen masters sometimes hide themselves, appearing to be ordinary people while practicing Zen in secret," Miss Ariel said. "This Zen master has an unusual occupation in Eldorado — he runs a floating outdoor tea-room. Of course, he hides himself in plain sight. Anyone who recognizes wisdom will realize that he is a master."

"Lots of people in Eldorado are not Zen masters, although they do follow the principles of Zen Buddhism and of Taoism in their daily lives. For example, you may notice that when the servers at the inn put down a plate or a cup, the plate or cup never makes noise and never spills. Where you come from, being a server is regarded as a low-status job, but here people are making it an art form."

"Everything seems to be perfect in Eldorado," Candide said.

“We have old age and death here, just like everywhere else,” Miss Ariel said, “but perhaps our attitudes are different from the attitudes of people outside Eldorado. I know an elderly couple who are very good people. The man fell and could not get up, and his wife was not strong enough to help him get up. Fortunately, he was not hurt in the fall. She talked to her husband, and then she called a neighbor and asked him to come over and help her lift her husband up — but not to come over for an hour. She then placed potted plants on the floor of the room where her husband had fallen, and she made sandwiches, and then they had a picnic.

“Most of our old people are wise. An old man I know is happy everyday. I asked him how he manages to do that, and he said that he gets up in the morning and decides to be happy that day.

“Of course, ‘old’ is often a negative word in the outside world. Perhaps we should say that the people of Eldorado grow older, not old. Even an infant grows older, so ‘older’ is not a negative word.”

After drinking tea and bicycling further, Candide and Miss Ariel stopped near another beach, this one for families. Here everyone wore bathing suits.

They saw some children: a young boy and girl, and an even younger boy and girl. The two younger children saw that the older children were holding balloons, and the younger children cried because they did not have balloons. The older boy and girl spoke together briefly, and then they gave their balloons to the younger children, who stopped crying. Of course, one of the younger children eventually let go of the balloon string, and the helium-filled balloon floated away. The younger child started crying, but his mother told him to look at how beautiful the balloon was as it floated away in the sky, and he stopped crying. His young sister released her balloon on purpose so that they could watch it float away.

Candide and Miss Ariel also saw a father showing his son a nest filled with beautiful blue eggs. The son wanted the eggs, but the father explained that young birds would hatch from the eggs and become adult robins, and it was better to have robins than to have their eggs.

In addition, Candide and Miss Ariel saw a group of young women compete in a race, swimming out to touch a buoy and then swimming back to shore. One young woman was very talented at swimming and was soon far in the lead. Her friends on shore shouted, “Go, Betty, go!” She won easily, and the other competitors, who were good sports, congratulated her.

Shortly thereafter, Candide, Miss Ariel, Cacambo, and Miss Victoria were playing cards together in the evening when Miss Ariel said to Candide and Cacambo, “You have been here a couple of months now. It is almost time for you to decide whether you want to stay.”

“You mean that we have a choice?” Candide said. “I thought that there was no way out of Eldorado once you entered.”

“You have a choice,” Miss Victoria said. “You will have an audience with the King, and if you wish to leave, he will see to it that you will be put on the other side of the mountains that hide and protect Eldorado.”

“And he will give you anything you need,” Miss Ariel said.

“Anything that we need?” Cacambo said. “Like llamas loaded with gold and precious jewels?”

“Gold and precious jewels are good building materials, but are not otherwise useful. Of course, the llamas are very useful,” Miss Victoria said. “The King will give you those things if you want them.”

“I want them,” Cacambo said. “One llama loaded with gold and jewels means that I would never have to work again.”

“Work is one of the pleasures of life,” Miss Victoria said, “as long as you find it meaningful and as long as it meets your material and at least some of your intellectual and

spiritual needs.”

“If we had 25 llamas loaded with gold and precious jewels,” Candide said, “we could be kings.”

“Being a King — or a Queen — is actually not that good a job,” Miss Ariel said. “Too many mandatory meetings.”

“That’s true,” Miss Victoria said. “There is way too much pomp and circumstance for my taste — and outside of Eldorado, there is way too much pomp and pomposity involved in being a head of state.”

“But if we had 50 llamas loaded with gold and jewels, we could be Emperors,” Cacambo said.

“Or, better, 100 llamas loaded with gold and jewels,” Candide said.

“What about us?” Miss Ariel and Miss Victoria said together.

“You can be the wives of us Emperors and help us spend our wealth,” Candide and Cacambo said together.

“Candide, we need to talk,” Miss Ariel said.

At the same time, Miss Victoria said, “Cacambo, we need to talk.”

Candide and Cacambo marveled at the bad timing of Miss Ariel and Miss Victoria, who broke up with them just before they could have been rich and in a higher social class than anyone else.

Candide and Cacambo did meet with the King of Eldorado, who was much like everybody else in Eldorado, except that he had more meetings and dinners to attend than anyone else and less private time.

The King pointed out that being King was an OK job, but that he was looking forward to resting after the next election was held, when a Queen would be elected.

“Why a Queen?” Candide asked.

“In Eldorado, a King is elected and rules for four years, and then a Queen is elected and serves for four years,” the King said. “It is a way for the sexes to share power.”

The King also answered other questions that Candide and Cacambo asked. For example, Cacambo wondered why some men were called Mr., while he and Candide were sometimes called by a different title.

“We have different titles for married and single women, and for married and single men,” the King said. “Unmarried women are called, for example, Miss Victoria, while married women are called, for example, Mrs. Smith. Similarly, married men are called, for example, Mr. Smith, while unmarried men are called, for example, Mid. Cacambo.”

“What is the meaning of ‘Mid’?” Candide asked.

“It is short for ‘Middle,’” the King said. “People are not fully mature until they are married and, we hope, have children. An unmarried man with a girlfriend is not fully grown up until he marries; instead, he is in the middle between adolescence and full maturity.”

“Does this system have any advantages?” Cacambo asked.

“It reminds young people that a full life includes a married, committed relationship, and, preferably, children. Also, when people know that a certain man or woman is married, they are much less likely to pursue that person sexually.”

“What are the best things about Eldorado?” Candide asked.

“Full employment is one of the best things here,” the King replied. “Some of our citizens are mentally and/or physically handicapped, but they work at occupations for which they are suited. Leisure time is another good thing here. Anyone who wishes to enjoy or to create art of various kinds can do that here. Another good thing is that common courtesy is common here,

although I understand that in most of the world nowadays common courtesy is not common. The same thing is true about common sense.”

The conversation then turned to the desire of Candide and Cacambo to leave Eldorado, and the King promised to help them leave. Within a week, the apparatus for lifting them over the mountains that separated Eldorado from the rest of the world had been built, and Candide and Cacambo were lifted out of Eldorado and into the outside world, along with the 100 llamas that they had requested be loaded with gold and jewels from Eldorado.

As Candide and Cacambo left Eldorado, Miss Ariel and Miss Victoria met together to commiserate.

“I am sorry that Candide is leaving Eldorado,” Miss Ariel said. “He was definite husband material.”

“I am sorry that Cacambo is leaving Eldorado,” Miss Victoria said. “He was definite sex-blog material.”

“However, I want my next boyfriend to be less greedy,” both said together.

Chapter 19: What Happened to Candide and Cacambo — and Martina

Candide and Cacambo's journey started well. They enjoyed pleasant weather, and they felt rich. But the llamas started to die because of the journey. Some llamas died in a bog. More llamas died in a desert. Other llamas died in the mountains. Of course, Candide and Cacambo were unable to carry the treasure that the llamas had been carrying, so they were forced to leave it behind. After traveling 100 days, Candide and Cacambo had only two llamas left.

"The physical treasures of this world do not last long," Candide said to Cacambo. "We can see that by how much treasure we have lost with the loss of 98 llamas. Only virtue lasts long — and Cunegonde's beauty."

"True," Cacambo said, "but each llama is loaded with more treasure than the King of Spain will ever spend. And I think I see the town of Surinam in the distance, so chances are these llamas will live and we will enjoy the treasure they are carrying."

They arrived in Surinam, and they saw a black slave lying on the ground. Correction: They saw most of him. His left leg and right hand were nowhere to be seen.

"What happened to you?" Candide asked, overcome with pity.

"My master, Mynheer Vanderdendur, did this to me," the black slave said.

"I work in a sugar mill, and when my right hand was caught in the mill, rather than stop the mill, lose profit, and save my hand, my master cut off my right hand.

"I did not think that was fair, and so I ran away. But I was caught, and the custom is to cut off a leg of a runaway slave to serve as a warning to other slaves who may be thinking of running away."

"How did you come to be a slave?" Candide asked.

"My mother sold me," the slave replied. "She advised me to worship God and so be happy, and she told me that she was happy because by selling me to my white master she had become rich.

"I have worshipped God, and I have learned that we are all the children of God, and so we are brothers and sisters, but I have also learned how badly brothers can treat brothers and sisters. My brother and master, Mynheer Vanderdendur, has treated me horribly."

Candide and Cacambo were speechless, and they left.

After a while, Candide said to Cacambo, "The slave's story is so sad that not even a savage satirist can make it funny."

"I agree," Cacambo said.

The two men sought out a Spanish captain and asked to be taken to Buenos Aires, but after the captain heard that Candide and Cacambo were planning to rescue Cunegonde, he declined to take them there, saying, "We would die a slow and painful death because Cunegonde is now the favorite mistress of Don Fernando de Ibaraa, y Figueora y Mascarenes y Lampourdos y Souza, the governor."

Candide and Cacambo were upset by this news, but they quickly worked out a plan in which Cacambo would go to Buenos Aires and ransom her from Don Fernando de Ibaraa, y Figueora y Mascarenes y Lampourdos y Souza.

"In our pockets we have valuable diamonds that are worth in total \$5 million or \$6 million," Candide said. "Give Don Fernando \$1 million, and if that is not enough, give him \$2 million. The important thing is to rescue Cunegonde. If I go, he will put me to death because I am his rival and the Inquisition is looking for me. He cannot have those objections to you — especially if you make him rich."

Cacambo agreed, and they parted after agreeing that the three of them would meet again in Venice.

Then Candide let it be known that he wanted to take passage on a ship to Venice. Mynheer Vanderdendur had both a large ship and a large desire for money, so he met Candide and said that he would sail him to Venice for \$10,000.

Candide agreed immediately, and Mynheer Vanderdendur then said that actually it would cost Candide \$20,000 to sail to Venice.

Again, Candide agreed immediately, and Mynheer Vanderdendur then said that actually it would cost Candide \$30,000 to sail to Venice.

Again, Candide agreed immediately, and Mynheer Vanderdendur knew for certain that Candide must be immensely rich, and he guessed that the two llamas of Candide must be loaded with immense treasure.

Mynheer Vanderdendur collected \$30,000 — or, actually, two diamonds, the smaller of which was worth more than \$30,000 — from Candide, loaded Candide's possessions, including and especially the llamas, on his ship, and then sailed away without waiting for Candide to get on board.

Shocked, Candide watched the ship away, and he said, "It is just as if I had never left the Old World. Such a trick is worthy of the worst scoundrels in the Old World."

Angry, Candide sought out a judge, who fined him \$10,000 because Candide was somewhat loud in his denunciation of Mynheer Vanderdendur. The judge then listened to Candide, which was followed by the judge's collecting another \$10,000 from Candide for court costs. The judge also promised to look into the matter, maybe, if Mynheer Vanderdendur should ever return to Surinam.

By this time, Candide was more than ready to leave Surinam, reasoning that anywhere in the world had to be a better and more ethical place, and he paid for passage on a French ship that was leaving for Bordeaux. He also let it be known that he would pay the passage to Bordeaux for whatever person could show him that he or she was the most unfortunate person in Surinam. (Slaves were excepted, as they could not leave Surinam.) Each person who wanted to make that claim had to show up that evening in a tavern where Candide was staying.

Before evening arrived, Candide took a look around, and he saw many things that he had not seen while he was living in Eldorado:

- He saw gum in the urinals of the men's restroom. The men had spat the gum out where they peed and left it for someone else to pick up and throw away.

- He saw that the mirror in the men's restroom was splattered with gunk, apparently by someone who had been brushing his teeth and who had not bothered to clean the mirror when he was done.

- He saw aluminum cans in a trashcan that was next to a recycling container.

- He saw beautiful shrubbery of a kind that he had seen in Eldorado, but in the dense leaves of the shrubbery someone had left empty fast-food containers instead of throwing them into a trash can.

- He saw much litter, including easily recycled plastic bottles that had contained water. In Eldorado, the citizens drank tap water to reduce the amount of plastic their society used. Some of the litter Candide saw now consisted of plastic bags that had been blown by the wind and then caught on tree branches.

So many people came to the tavern that it seemed to Candide that everyone in Surinam — including the employees in the tavern — considered him- or herself to be the most unfortunate person in Surinam. Unable to hear from every person due to lack of time, Candide selected 25 or 30 people and listened to their claim to be the most unfortunate person in Surinam.

One such person was Martina, who made sarcastic remarks as other people told their stories.

One person who claimed to be the most unfortunate person in Surinam was a man who mourned that he would like to be the heavyweight boxing champion of the world but that he lacked the size to do so: "I look around and I see many big people. If I only had their size, I could be the heavyweight champion!"

"What is preventing you from being the lightweight champion?" Martina asked.

A man mourned because of a lack of education in his youth: "I'm a musician, and I really wish that I had studied music theory because it would make me a much better musician."

"You aren't dead yet, so why don't you start studying music theory?" Martina asked.

An elderly American mourned because of "creeping socialism" in the United States.

"Why don't you stop cashing your Social Security checks, and why don't you stop using your Medicare benefits?" Martina asked.

Another person mourned because he wanted to be a great writer but lacked the time to write.

"Do you watch TV?" Martina asked.

"Yes," the want-to-be great writer replied.

"How much?" Martina asked.

"Four hours each evening, and more hours during the day on weekends," the want-to-be great writer replied.

"Why don't you turn off the TV and write?" Martina asked.

Another person mourned because she was fat.

"What is your favorite meal?" Martina asked.

"A double-cheeseburger, French fries, and a shake," the fat woman replied.

"A milk shake?" Martina asked.

"Actually, legally the fast-food restaurants aren't allowed to call it that because it does not contain milk," the fat woman said.

"What does it contain?" Martina asked.

"Sugar and additives," the fat woman said.

"Why don't you eat veggies and fruits, and go for a walk once in a while? And, please, stop eating the whole cow!" Martina said.

A student mourned because his teachers were unfair, lowering his grade because of spelling, grammar, and punctuation errors.

"Anyone can learn to spell correctly and to use grammar and punctuation correctly," the student said.

"So why don't you learn to spell correctly and to use grammar and punctuation correctly?" Martina asked.

Candide was so entertained by Martina's sarcasm that he announced that she had won the contest and was the most unfortunate person in Surinam. The other contestants were unhappy with the outcome of the contest, but Candide cheered them up by giving each of them \$100.

Candide had not yet heard Martina's story, but he soon learned it. He also learned that Martina's blend of sarcasm and cynicism and ability to think made her an entertaining companion, just as he had hoped.

One of the defining moments of Martina's life occurred when she was gang-raped. She had cried for help, but no help had arrived. A rapist had held a knife against her throat, and she had stopped crying for help. As the rapists were busily raping her, they talked about the local professional sports team. When the rapists were through, one of the rapists had held the knife above Martina's eyes as if he were thinking about blinding her, but he had suddenly gotten up and ran away with the other rapists. Then Martina had cried.

Now she talked to Candide about the gang-rape and about what it had done to her conception of God.

“Let’s say you are walking along the sidewalk and suddenly you hear a scream for help from the other side of the street,” Martina said. “You look and you see a gang of men has started raping a woman. What do you do?”

“You have several options:

“One, you could run over and try to stop the rape.

“Two, you could stay on your side of the street but start yelling for help or call the police on a cell phone, hoping that the men will stop raping the woman.

“Three, if the situation seems sufficiently dangerous, you could pretend you don’t see anything, keep walking past the scene of the crime, and then call the police.

“Four, you could pretend you don’t see anything, keep walking past the scene of the crime, and then keep walking and not call the police.

“Finally, and some people have probably done this, you could walk across the street and join in the rape.

“Those are the options. What would you do?”

Candide replied, “Of those options, I would at least call the police. I would be a coward or evil if I did anything less.”

“Good answer,” Martina said. “I wish that you had been there and had seen me.

“Next question: Which of those options does God do?”

“God is omniscient (all-knowing), so presumably He knows that the rape is occurring. God is omnibenevolent (all-good), so presumably He wants to help the woman and stop the rape. And God is omnipotent (all-powerful), so presumably He can help the woman and stop the rape.

“But what does God actually do in a situation such as this?” Martina asked.

Candide replied, “Rapes occur every day, and although I hate to say it, based on our experience I think we can say that God acts most like the person who keeps walking past the rape and doesn’t even bother to call the police.”

“Something definitely seems wrong here,” Martina said.

“I agree,” Candide said.

“For many people, the main reason they don’t believe in God is that evil exists,” Martina said. “The ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus put the problem of evil in a dilemma:

“Premise one: If God is omnipotent (all-powerful), then he could prevent evil.

“Premise two: If God is omnibenevolent (all-good), then he would prevent evil.

“Premise three: Evil exists.

“Conclusion: Either God is not omnipotent, or God is not omnibenevolent.

“If this dilemma cannot be refuted, then it seems the omnipotent, omnibenevolent God of the Judeo-Christian religions has to go. After all, I personally cannot doubt the existence of evil after reading books concerning the Holocaust and slavery. Certainly, one visit to a Children’s Hospital should convince anyone that evil exists. The sight of bald-headed children dying of incurable cancer is definitely convincing to me. And we all know that rapes occur every day. As you know, I have personally been gang-raped,” Martina concluded.

“Of course, some philosophers mention free will when speaking about the problem of evil,” Candide said. “God does not commit rape; human beings do. And human beings can decide not to rape or harass women, or to prevent rape and harassment. For example, comedian Jay Leno once noticed a woman being harassed by a man, so he went over and pretended to be the woman’s boyfriend and chased the harasser away.

“And some people think that by facing evil in the world and responding to it well — perhaps by becoming counselors for other women who have been raped — we can build our souls and make them worthy to enter Paradise,” Candide concluded.

“If facing evil in the world and responding to it well is a good thing,” Martina said, “then perhaps the logical conclusion of your argument is that every woman ought to be raped and become a counselor for other women who have been raped. However, I doubt that many women will respond well to being raped. If it were up to me, I would cut off the genitals of every man who gang-raped me and put them in a giant blender, turn it on for an hour, then flush the liquid down the toilet. In fact, I would like to do that to the genitals of every rapist.

“Actually, I’d like to be God for just one day so I could make a few changes in the World. That guy whose name is on every list of date rapists written on the walls of women’s restrooms? Zap! You have two breasts and a vagina, and guess what? A guy who is just like what you used to be is about to not take no for an answer. That guy who tells racist jokes? Zap! Guess what — you’re black. That preacher who spoke about the ‘sin’ of homosexuality last Sunday? Zap! Let’s see how your male friends treat you now that you really, really like them. That guy who hates Jews? Zap! If you feel a pain, it’s because you’ve just been circumcised. The secretly gay politician who openly supports anti-gay legislation? Zap! Not only do you have the forty-year itch, your brain itches. Good luck trying to scratch it. The neo-con who doesn’t think that water-boarding is torture? Zap! You’re an innocent Iraqi who has just been arrested because American officers think you’re a terrorist. My advice to you is to confess — quickly. The torturers want to know if you wrote *Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*? Confess that you did. The torturers want to know the next location you targeted for your terrorism? Make something up. Make up anything that will stop the torture, at least temporarily — and it will stop only temporarily.”

Chapter 20: Candide and Martina Set Sail

Candide and Martina set sail for Bordeaux. As Candide had hoped, Martina was an excellent conversationalist. She had experienced much and had thought much, which is often a good combination, although what is experienced can often be bad. She was good company.

Martina was also more pessimistic than Candide, who still had some diamonds in his pocket and who still retained hope of soon seeing Cunegonde. Martina did not have any diamonds in her pocket, and she had no family or friends or suitors to look forward to seeing.

Candide explained to her Dr. Pangloss' philosophy that this is the best of all possible worlds, and he asked her for her opinion.

"I have been persecuted as a Socinian, but I am actually a Manichean," she replied. "Both are heresies. The Socinians deny the doctrine of the Trinity and the divinity of Christ. We Manicheans tend to believe that the forces of good and of evil are eternally opposed and are equally powerful, although I personally believe that the forces of evil are more powerful than the forces of good. To me, abundant evidence shows that Satan is more powerful than an omnibenevolent God, if such a god exists. All anyone need do is look at the bald-headed children in a hospital.

"But of course much more evidence of a powerful Satan exists," Martina continued. "Look at modern corporations. Many corporations don't treat people well, but instead treat them like lunch. Look at health insurance and pensions. At one time employees could work for a corporation for 20 or 30 years while enjoying paid health insurance the entire time and then receive a good pension and continued paid health insurance. Such things nowadays happen to CEOs and corporate Vice Presidents, and of course, politicians — even those who tend to vote against pensions and health care for ordinary employees. Modern economists also often tend to support the corporation over people, as when an economist argues that a corporation exists for one purpose only: the maximization of profit. And the courts tend to agree, and they even rule that corporations are persons and therefore can buy politicians by spending vast amounts of money to show political ads on TV for the sole purpose of misleading voters to vote against their own interests and against a just society. How else can you explain why people would vote against politicians who wish people to have low-cost effective health care?"

As Candide and Martina were talking, their ship drew near two other ships that were battling each other. As their ship approached very close to the two other ships, one ship fired a cannon and sunk the other one, sending over 100 people on board to a death by drowning.

"Such is the way of the world," Martina said. "We don't need evil corporations; people are quite evil enough."

"So much fighting and death is indeed evil," Candide said.

As they watching the sinking of the ship, they saw a llama — luckier than the humans on board the ship — swimming toward them. It was one of the two treasure-laden llamas stolen from Candide by Mynheer Vanderdendur! Indeed, the ship that had sunk belonged to Mynheer Vanderdendur. In addition to being a thief and a slave-owner, he was a pirate and his ship had attacked the other, victorious ship.

"Some good exists in the world," Candide said. "Mynheer Vanderdendur has been punished by God for his evil deeds, and so have the pirates on board his ship."

"I am familiar with Mynheer Vanderdendur and how he gets men to work for him," Martina said. "He kidnaps men and takes them to sea. Unless they turn pirate and do what he tells them to do, he forces them to walk the plank. In such a case, the men do not do evil freely but are forced to do evil. Why does God kill so many basically good men in order to kill one truly evil man named Mynheer Vanderdendur? And why must so very many good men —

Iraqi, American, Canadian, British, etc. — be killed in order to capture and hang Saddam Hussein?”

Martina and Candide continued their discussion of good and evil for the two weeks they were on board ship, but neither changed the other person’s opinions. Martina remained convinced that although some little good existed in the world, the evil vastly outweighed it, while Candide remained convinced that although some little evil existed in the world, the good vastly outweighed it. He was happy to have recovered the llama even though it no longer carried treasure, and he felt that it was a sign that he would see Cunegonde again.

Chapter 21: Candide and Martina Approach Bordeaux

As Candide and Martina approached Bordeaux, they continued to talk.

“Have you been in France before?” Candide asked Martina.

“I have been in several provinces,” Martina replied, “and I have seen there the same stupidity, ignorance (which is different from stupidity), and evil that I have seen elsewhere. The people there engage in gossiping maliciously, pursuing sex (voluntary or not), and as is becoming the norm throughout the world, proclaiming their pride in their lack of anything resembling knowledge. There, as elsewhere, both knowledge and wisdom are out of fashion.”

“Have you been in Paris?” Candide asked.

“Yes, I have,” Martina said. “Some places in this world are different from other places in this world. Based on what you have told me, I have to say that Eldorado is much different from other places in this world. In fact, its goodness is so different from the other places in this world that I don’t expect ever to see Eldorado. Paris is another place that is different.”

“Is Paris renowned for its goodness?” Candide asked.

“Far from it,” Martina said. “The evil that is found in the world — with the exception of Eldorado — is also found in Paris. However, in Paris the women are fighting back — with the help of a few men. In Paris, a man attempted unsuccessfully to rape me. In a city other than Paris, I was gang-raped.”

“I offered to pay your travel expenses to Bordeaux,” Candide said, “but now I offer to pay your travel expenses if you agree to travel further with me. I am going to Venice to wait for Cacambo to bring me Cunegonde, and I will pass through Paris to get there.”

“You have money, and I lack money,” Martina replied. “I will go with you.”

They then continued their philosophical conversation.

“Why did God create the Earth?” Candide asked.

“To drive us mad,” Martina replied.

“Have human beings always been cruel?” Candide asked.

“Have hawks always cruelly hunted pigeons?” Martina asked. “Of course, the answer is yes, and the same answer applies to your questions about human beings.”

“Your analogy is flawed,” Candide said. “A difference exists between hawks and human beings. Hawks do not have free will; human beings do.”

“My analogy is correct,” Martina said. “The nature of hawks and of human beings is to be cruel, as is clearly seen through their behavior. All free will does is to make the behavior of human beings more reprehensible, as they freely choose to do evil, all the while knowing that it is evil. A hawk kills in order to eat. A human being kills for many reasons: defending one’s self, taking revenge, following orders, obeying army training, having fun, and deliberately doing evil. For each killing done in necessary self-defense, a thousand or more unnecessary killings take place.”

Chapter 22: Candide and Martina in Paris

When Candide and Martina arrived in Paris, they set out to explore the city at night on foot. They ran across two women wearing T-shirts bearing this slogan: “Imagine 604,800 seconds, 10,080 minutes, 168 hours, 7 days without violence.” One of the women handed Candide a card that said this: “The next time you see or hear one of us in trouble, pay attention. We can’t stop violence by ourselves.” Candide kept the card.

They also saw a woman wearing a t-shirt depicting a woman with glasses and the slogan “Reading is Sexy.” The t-shirt was designed by Sarah Utter, guitarist for Bangs.

Another visitor to Paris, whose name was Courtney, also set out to explore the city at night on foot, but she went alone. However, she soon noticed that she was not alone. A strange man was following her. Worse, few people were around, and she did not feel safe. She walked down a street, and the strange man walked down the same street. She walked down a different street, and he walked down that same street. She went to the subway and boarded a car, and he boarded the same car.

She even confronted the man and told him to stop following her, but he simply ignored her words and stared at her chest. She got off the subway and he got off at the same stop.

Courtney looked at the stairs going up to street level, but some of the lights were burned out and she did not feel safe going up the stairs in the dark — not with the strange man following her. The lights by the elevator were lit, so she went there. The strange man stood beside her and stared at her chest.

On the verge of tears, Courtney thought, *There is no way in Hell I am getting on the elevator with that man. He is going to rape me, and then he is going to kill me.*

Just then the elevator door opened, and Candide and Martina stepped out. Candide knew immediately just by looking at the young woman, whom he had never seen before, that something was wrong. And he thought that the something wrong must be the man who was staring at the young woman’s chest.

Though Candide had never seen the young woman before, he said to her loudly and with enthusiasm, “Hi! How are you?”

And though Courtney knew that she had never seen this new man and the woman who was with him, she replied, loudly and with enthusiasm, “I’m fine! How are you?”

Candide and Courtney chatted as if they were old friends, with Martina adding a few comments, and the strange man disappeared.

“You saved my life!” Courtney said to Candide. “That man was following me! I was afraid he was going to rape me and then murder me!”

“I knew that something was wrong,” Candide said. “You looked so scared.”

Candide and Martina walked Courtney to her hotel. Courtney thanked them again, and Candide and Martina walked away.

“I wish that you had been around when I was gang-raped,” Martina said. “I shouted for help, but no one came to help me.”

As Candide and Martina wandered around Paris the next day, they witnessed a mother protecting her 14-year-old daughter. The mother and daughter were on the sidewalk separated by a few feet because the mother was putting a coin in the parking meter.

A man came walking on the sidewalk and grabbed the bottom of the daughter, giving her butt cheeks a thorough feel with his fingers and palm.

The daughter cried out in alarm, and the mother came running. She made her hand into a fist and hit the man on the back of his neck not with her fingers but with the bony side of her wrist.

The man cried out in pain.

The mother then started screaming at the man, who attempted to walk quickly away from her, but she kept following him and screaming and attracting the attention of everyone in the vicinity to him.

“YOU GODDAMN MOTHERRAPER! YOU KEEP YOUR GODDAMN HANDS OFF MY DAUGHTER! I’D SAY YOU WERE A GIGANTIC PIECE OF SHIT, BUT THAT WOULD BE AN INSULT TO GIGANTIC PIECES OF SHIT! YOU’RE A GODDAMN FATHERRAPER, TOO!”

As the mother kept screaming, she also kept trying to kick the man in the balls. Finally, the man ran away.

The mother then said to the daughter, “If a creep ever does that to you again while other people who are not creeps are around, you do to him exactly what I did to this creep. You not only have my permission to scream every filthy word and phrase you know or can invent at him, you have my orders to scream every filthy word and phrase you know or can invent at him. And do your best to kick him in the balls or in any other place that you can reach and that will hurt. Yell and scream and let passersby know what filthy pieces of shit guys like that are. The goddamn filthy pervert ought to be castrated.

“If something like that ever happens when other people who are not creeps are not around, scream and run away. Break windows. Throw things. Get away, if you can. If you can’t, do what you have to do to survive, and after it is over, call the police so they can gather evidence.

“By the way, you should be aware that four-letter and ‘bad’ words have power. Don’t take away their power by overusing them. Don’t be the kind of person who constantly says ‘words’ such as ‘Cincingoddamnati.’”

Candide and Martina then walked away — Candide was a little afraid of the anger of the mother.

Later, as Candide and Martina were arguing about philosophy, Candide made an emphatic point and to emphasize it he flung his arms wide, and the back of his hand hit something soft. He turned, and he saw the 14-year-old girl with the protective mother. He also saw that the back of his hand had hit the part of the girl’s clothing that covered the part of her body that was growing pubic hair.

“I am so sorry,” Candide apologized.

The girl’s mother came up from behind her and said, “Watch where you’re flinging those hands, buster.”

“I am so sorry,” Candide apologized again.

Embarrassed, he walked away, and Martina followed him.

“I forgot to cuss him,” the 14-year-old girl said.

“That was an accident,” her mother said. “He should have been more careful with his hands, but that was an accident. Still, when we get home, I’m going to have you practice screaming at perverts. And I’m signing you up for self-defense lessons as soon as possible.”

While continuing to wander around Paris, Candide and Martina saw a window display of a scene from the movie *Shrek*. The display showed Princess Fiona in a castle guarded by a fire-breathing dragon. But someone had snuck into the window display and put a small sign by the action figure that was Princess Fiona. The small sign said, “Wait to be rescued, hell! I’m gonna rescue myself. I’ve got Ninja-fighting skills.”

Candide and Martina also saw a man wearing a T-shirt that bore the slogan “gay? fine by me.” Then they saw a woman wearing a T-shirt that bore the slogan “conservative? fine by me.” Finally, they saw a teenager wearing a T-shirt that bore the slogan “gay conservative? fine by me.”

A rape occurred near Candide and Martina as they walked. The rape occurred in an upstairs apartment of a building they were walking by. The man finished raping the woman, pulled up his pants, and said, “You can’t do anything about this, bitch.” Then he calmly walked downstairs and out the front door.

He had walked very few steps when the woman he had raped — still naked — came flying out of the door, ran to him, and jumped on his back and wrapped her legs around him. With her hands she dug into his eyes, doing her best to blind him, and she screamed, “RAPIST! RAPIST! RAPIST!”

The street was filled with women, and they came running. Within moments, the rapist’s clothes were torn off, and women were scratching and biting him. A weightlifting woman grabbed his thing and pulled it, stretching it so much that forever after the man was incapable of rape — or of sex. Another woman who carried a sharp knife in her purse cut off his genitals, although they were now useless for anything having to do with sex. Martina was not just a witness to what happened to the man; she picked up the man’s severed genitals and then ran to a store to buy a blender. Meanwhile, Candide stayed in the background because he was very afraid of the anger of the women. The rapist was almost lynched — the women tied a rope to a street lamp and put the noose around his neck, but the police rescued him. A kind clothing-store owner gave the naked woman a bathrobe to cover herself with.

The rapist was given a fair trial, found guilty of multiple rapes, put in prison, and quickly discovered how it felt to be a rape victim rather than a rapist — he was a serial rapist, and some of his victims were the wives, daughters, sisters, and girlfriends of the hardened criminals in prison. The hardened criminals who made him bend over told him, “You can’t do anything about this, bitch.”

While in Paris, Candide and Martina saw women performing a memorable protest against gang-rape while the rapist’s trial was going on. The women went out in groups, found a man walking by himself, and then swarmed around him and covered him in pink Post-It notes that said, “Gotcha!”

In a public park, Candide and Martina saw a squad of radical cheerleaders protest media that demand that all women look like Barbie dolls even if that means that their bodies are so thin that they can’t menstruate:

I am fit, I’m not fat.
And I know where my booty’s at.
What’s my secret, what’s the score?
I eat breakfast, dinner, supper, and more!
Do a good deed, feed the hungry,
Buy a skinny fashion model a double cheeseburger!
Do it for her!

Also in the public park, Candide and Martina learned that environmentalists were angry because a politician had recently misspoke, aka augmented reality, aka lied through his teeth, and said that trees caused pollution that killed people. Therefore, the environmentalists had hung from the branches of several trees banners that said, “STOP ME BEFORE I KILL AGAIN.”

Candide and Martina also saw a group of women who called themselves “A Swarm of Dykes” holding a “Pick a Dyke” contest in the public park. In this contest, passersby were asked to look at two women who were standing side by side and pick out which of the two women was a lesbian and which was a heterosexual. Straight passersby tended to perform badly in the contest and so learned that you can’t (usually) tell a person’s sexual orientation

just by looking. Gay and lesbian passersby tended to have well-developed gaydar and so performed better in the contest, but even they occasionally made mistakes.

Candide enjoyed the walk immensely, but naturally enough he felt tired afterward. When he complained to Martina about feeling a little tired, some people at the inn who had earlier seen him selling a diamond to pay for his and Martina's stay at the inn immediately became his close personal friends, plying him with hot soup that he did not want and summoning two doctors whom he did not need, but who needed to make car payments and so gave him many medical tests that he did not need, all while charging extra — much extra — for house calls. For a while, his close personal friends and doctors thought that Candide would die, but once Martina tricked everyone into leaving his bedroom by throwing some bills from Candide's wallet into the hallway, and then locking the door, he got some sleep and awoke feeling energetic.

One person who was hard to get rid of because of his persistence was an obliging abbé who hung around the inn and greeted Candide and Martina every time they left their rooms. The abbé offered to show them Paris. Martina would have preferred to see Paris without the abbé's company, but Candide enjoyed the company of other people and accepted the abbé's offer.

After enjoying an excellent and expensive supper, for which Candide paid, at a restaurant that the abbé recommended, they went to see a play, tickets for which Candide paid, at a theater that the abbé recommended. The abbé had expensive tastes, and he was always happy to find someone such as Candide who had the money and the generosity to pay for other people, such as the abbé.

Candide enjoyed the play, and he asked about the number of plays that had been written in France.

"Several thousand," the abbé replied.

"That's a lot," Candide said. "How many of them are any good?"

"Five or six," the abbé replied.

"That's a lot," Martina said.

Candide also asked about the number of critics in France.

"Several thousand," the abbé replied.

"That's a lot," Candide said. "How many of them are any good?"

"Five or six," the abbé replied.

"That's a lot," Martina said.

Candide expressed an interest in seeing Mademoiselle Clairon, the lead actress in the play and a woman who bore a slight resemblance to Cunegonde.

Unable to take Candide and Martina to the home of Mademoiselle Clairon, a woman of distinction who received only visitors of distinction, the abbé said that she was engaged that evening, and he offered to take them to another woman's house. Candide accepted the offer, and the abbé took them to a lady who ran a house that had a gambling room and rooms that were used for other entertainments. The lady's name was the Marquise de Parolignac, although part of the name was honorary — an honor that she had bestowed on herself.

The abbé, Candide, and Martina walked into the gambling room, where no one greeted them. The gamblers were all morose and were all losing, and the Marquise de Parolignac was busy watching to make sure that no one was cheating and causing the odds not to favor the house. The Marquise's two young daughters — one dark and one light — usually helped her watch to make sure that no one was cheating, but the Marquise's young daughters were known to disappear occasionally. The light one occasionally disappeared with a woman, and the dark one occasionally disappeared with a man.

The Marquise's light young daughter noticed Martina now, and as Candide prepared to play cards and the abbé prepared to watch the card game, the Marquise's light young daughter whispered to Martina, who nodded yes. They then disappeared into a room that offered a different kind of entertainment.

This room was comfortable, and it was warm. It had a bed, a table, a chest of drawers, a large bathroom with a stand-up shower that could fit at least two people, and another door leading somewhere. On the table was a pack of cards.

The Marquise's light young daughter and Martina then began to play a game. They each cut the deck, and whoever had the lower card shed an article of clothing. Martina never had the lower card, but she was not surprised. Soon Martina was completely naked, while the Marquise's light young daughter was completely clothed.

The Marquise's light young daughter then whispered to Martina, and then they moved to the chest of drawers. The Marquise's light young daughter opened a drawer, and Martina looked in the drawer. Again, she nodded yes, and they returned to the table and again took turns cutting the deck of cards. Again, Martina had the lower card. She was not surprised.

They returned to the open drawer, and Martina looked inside and made her choice. She withdrew a dildo — long but slim — with a suction cup on the end. Martina then went into the shower, leaving the door open, and stuck the suction cup of the dildo onto the wall at a little lower than waist level. Meanwhile, the Marquise's light young daughter sat on a chair and watched.

Martina bent over with her back to the dildo, and she backed up while she guided the dildo into her front hole. Slowly, she moved her body back and forth onto the dildo, sliding it in and out of her body. Then she gradually picked up speed.

The Marquise's light young daughter watched quietly, not moving.

Martina rocked back and forth, now going quite quickly and making low moans. After a series of gasps and moans, she backed away from the dildo, stood up, closed the shower door, turned on the water, and took a shower, thinking, *This kind of dildo is great! It makes clean-up so easy.*

The shower door was glass, and the Marquise's light young daughter sat and watched Martina take a shower.

When Martina got out of the shower, having cleaned both herself and the dildo, she dried herself with a towel. The Marquise's light young daughter came over to her and whispered something.

Martina wrapped the towel around herself, and the Marquise's light young daughter led her to the door that opened somewhere. The Marquise's light young daughter opened the door to reveal a room with a padded bench, at one end of which was a machine. Connected to the machine was a dildo.

The Marquise's light young daughter used a remote control to show Martina how the machine worked, and Martina saw that the remote control controlled how deep and how fast the dildo would thrust into a front — or rear — hole. The Marquise's light young daughter whispered something to Martina, who looked at the machine, thought for a moment, and then shook her head no.

They went back to the front room. Martina kissed the dildo and put it in the drawer. If she had had a rose, she would have put it in the drawer next to the dildo. Then she got dressed. Then Martina and the Marquise's light young daughter went back to the gambling room, where Martina watched the abbé watch Candide lose at cards, and the Marquise's light young daughter watched to make sure that no one was cheating — until a young woman with breasts

that looked like fried eggs with an olive on top came in. Then the Marquise's light young daughter whispered to the young woman, and the two disappeared together.

While Martina had been busy with the light young daughter, Candide had not been playing cards the entire time. The Marquise's dark young daughter had noticed him when he entered the room, and she whispered something to him, and he nodded yes and then disappeared with her into another room. There they had sex, after which she praised a valuable ring on his finger, and he gave it to her. His generosity in giving her the ring surprised her, as the gift she expected to get from the men she had sex with was the gift of goo, and other gifts were seldom forthcoming. After they had had sex, Candide felt guilty for being unfaithful to Cunegonde. Oddly, until he had squirted his goo inside the Marquise's dark daughter, he had not thought of Cunegonde at all.

Of course, Candide lost heavily at cards, and of course the abbé got a share of Candide's money from the Marquise, to whom he often brought suckers to lose at cards, but the amount of money he was getting through such means was not enough for him. Therefore, he asked many, many questions about Cunegonde and Cacambo and the old woman, and soon a letter arrived for Candide.

The letter was signed "Cunegonde," but neither the letter nor her signature were written by Cunegonde's hand, a fact that the content of the letter cleared up:

"My dear Candide, I have been in Paris, but I am ill and am too weak to write, and so a hotel maitre'd — a stranger to you — is writing this for me. I lost everything in Buenos Aires. I have been separated from Cacambo and the old woman, but I expect them to join me soon. Please visit me and make me happy again, but come alone as I am unable to have many visitors due to my illness. Bring money, as I am desperately poor."

Candide quickly visited Cunegonde, leaving Martina behind, and he was saddened when the hotel maitre'd told him that the light was too much for Cunegonde's eyes, and that she would have to remain within the curtained bed as they spoke together. The maitre'd also told him that because of Cunegonde's illness, her voice was altered and so he should not be surprised if her voice sounded odd. The maitre'd then left Candide and Cunegonde alone.

"I am so happy to have found you again," Candide said. "Now that we are together, we shall never part."

"True," Cunegonde said, "but I am in distress — both in health and in finances. I need money."

"And you shall have it," replied Candide, who noticed that Cunegonde's illness made her voice sound hoarse and almost masculine, "But first I want you to do something for me."

"What is that something?" Cunegonde said.

"For a very long time we have been separated, and for a very long time I have not had the satisfaction that a man wants and needs," Candide said, deciding that he would not tell Cunegonde about the Marquise's dark young daughter or about Miss Ariel in Eldorado. It was much better for her to think that he had been faithful to her.

"This is very true," Cunegonde said in her hoarse, almost masculine voice.

"So I would like you to suck my thing the way you did just before I was thrown out of Westphalia with many kicks to my bare backside."

"How much money you got?" Cunegonde replied — a reply that Candide was not expecting.

"I have a diamond in my pocket," Candide said.

"Let's see it — the diamond, not the pocket," Cunegonde said.

Candide handed the diamond through a place where two curtains met, and a strong, muscular hand took the diamond from him.

“OK,” Cunegonde said. “Get your thing out, play with it, and when it is hard, point it through the place where the two curtains meet.”

Candide did just that, and he felt his thing being taken into Cunegonde’s strong, muscular mouth and then being vigorously sucked. At times, he thought he felt hairs — like those of a mustache and a beard — on Cunegonde’s face, and he thought, “My, how Cunegonde has changed.” But because he was enjoying himself so much, he did not think long about Cunegonde’s new facial hair, choosing instead to concentrate on what her mouth was doing.

Apparently, Don Fernando de Ibaraa, y Figueora y Mascarenes y Lampourdos y Souza has taught Cunegonde some new tricks, Candide thought. I ought not to be grateful to him, but I am.

Just then, an officer of the law and the abbé arrived and arrested Candide for the commitment of immoral acts in a hotel of dubious reputation — if the hotel had had a good reputation no crime would have been committed.

Cunegonde was not charged with a crime because Cunegonde was not present. Instead, Candide was surprised by the man behind the bed curtains — and yes, it was a man.

Fortunately, Martina arrived on the scene. She had known that the abbé was a cheat and a scoundrel. Or, possibly, she had known that almost every man is a cheat and a scoundrel, and had reasoned that since the abbé was a man, that therefore he was almost certainly a cheat and a scoundrel. Therefore, when Candide turned up missing, she had followed the abbé to see if he would lead her to Candide.

In any case, she arrived and was able to prevent Candide from being taken to jail by bribing the officer of the law, the abbé, and the man who had been behind the bed curtains. The bribes, of course, were paid with Candide’s money.

Martina also was able to get the officer to find passage on a ship for Candide and Martina to escape from Paris and France.

The officer who had arrested Candide but had then been bribed took them to his home and left them in the custody of his wife. While Candide watched TV in the living room, the officer’s wife befriended Martina in the kitchen and began to complain about her 16-year-old daughter.

“I am so afraid for her,” the officer’s wife said. “She is curious about sex, and the boys would love to satisfy her curiosity — more than once and more than one boy at a time. I have caught my daughter watching pornographic movies — without my permission, of course. My daughter says that she would like to do the things the pornographic actresses do — because of the pornographic movies, she thinks that such things as anal sex are expected of women nowadays. Pornography should be educational but all too often it provides the wrong kind of education. And my daughter has begun to steal. I don’t know what to do.”

“I have an idea,” Martina said, and she showed the officer’s wife something that she had in her purse.

Soon after, the officer’s wife’s daughter arrived home from school — late — and talked to them in the kitchen. Martina and the officer’s wife made an excuse to leave for a while, and when they returned, the daughter was gone.

Martina opened her purse, and she saw that the item she had shown the officer’s wife was missing. She and the officer’s wife went to the door of the daughter’s room — quietly — and listened. They heard the hum of a vibrator and the moans of the daughter. The mystery of the missing item was solved!

Marina and the officer’s wife smiled at each other, but they did not laugh until they were well out of earshot of the daughter.

Soon after the daughter had stolen Martina's vibrator, the officer took Candide and Martina to the coast, where he watched as they boarded a ship for Portsmouth, England.

Later, the daughter told her mother, "I've been thinking a lot about what you told me about boys, and I've decided to wait until I'm 18 to have sex."

"That's a wise decision," the officer's wife said.

For Christmas, the officer's wife gave her daughter batteries — lots and lots of batteries.

Chapter 23: Candide and Martina Almost Set Foot on England

Candide and Martina soon neared England, where Candide hoped that they would meet rational people, and Martina was sure that they would not. Their ship sailed into the harbor of Portsmouth, and from their position on deck they saw a large crowd of people. A blindfolded man knelt, and four soldiers each fired three bullets into the man's head. The crowd of people applauded, and then they melted away.

Candide asked an Englishman who had just boarded the ship, "What did I just see?"

The Englishman replied, "We have just executed an English admiral who did not kill enough of the enemy because he was too distant from the French admiral."

"The French admiral was just as distant from the English admiral as the English admiral was to him," Candide pointed out. "Did the French execute their admiral?"

"No," the Englishman replied, "but it is good to execute an admiral once in a while. It serves to motivate the rest."

Candide said to Martina, "The English are even less rational from the French, and look at what we suffered while we were in France! I do not want to even set foot in England."

Martina agreed that Candide's desire to avoid setting foot in England was wise, and Candide arranged for the captain of the ship to sail them to Venice. In two days, the captain had finished his business in England, and they set sail for Venice.

During the voyage, Candide and Martina discussed whether executing an admiral once in a while was a good way of motivating the rest. In other words, was it a good way of reforming the admirals?

Both Candide and Martina agreed that they could easily form a list of people who ought to be executed as a way of motivating the other people in their profession, but Martina pointed out that the people who would make such a list in real life would not be people like Candide and herself.

"The problem with many reforms is that the people who are in charge of reforming other people are themselves the people who need to be reformed," Martina pointed out.

"The people who would make up a list of other people to be shot are most likely themselves the people who ought to be shot. The reformers are often the very people who ought to be reformed."

"Can you give me a specific example?" Candide asked.

"President George W. Bush — a C student — 'reformed' American education with his No Child Left Behind legislation," Martina said. "That legislation added more and more testing to education, with the result that now teachers feel obligated to teach only what is on the test rather than what is important, interesting, and useful. Now American schools test students over and over, and they always find that the education of the students is lacking. It's like never feeding a child, but weighing it frequently to see if it has gained weight."

"Do all reforms fail to reform?" Candide asked.

"No, but many do," Martina replied. "The problem is that the reformers often have little or no experience in what they are trying to reform. Education is certainly a good example. The reformers often have never taught, or have taught very little, or used to teach a very long time ago. Yet they are the ones passing judgment on the teachers who are in the classroom year after year.

"Reformers don't seem to realize that — with the exception of Lake Woebegone — half of all students are below average, half of all teachers are below average, and half of all schools are below average. The focus needs to be on ensuring that the worst teachers are competent and the worst schools are competent, but the reformers seem to regard as incompetent any

teacher or school that is below average even though we all know that the worst teacher at one school can be better than the best teacher at another school.

“As for students, the focus needs to be on ensuring that all students have the opportunity to get a good education. Unfortunately, not all students will take advantage of that opportunity, and we can’t fire students the way that we can fire teachers.”

“In a country such as the United States, the best minds must be trying out to figure out how to improve the education of students,” Candide said.

“Actually,” Martina replied, “the best minds are trying to solve much more pressing problems.”

Candide asked, “Such as?”

“They are trying to solve the problems of how to get Americans to watch more television and eat more junk food.”

“What are other very good minds doing?” Candide asked.

“Some are trying to figure out how to get people to have enough credit-card debt that they are spending lots of money on interest charges but do not have so much debt that they go bankrupt. Others are writing TV sitcoms,” Martina replied. “Very good minds are also writing misleading or even lying — but effective — political advertisements to be shown on TV. Of course, by ‘good minds’ I do not mean ethical minds.”

As they talked, their ship arrived in Venice.

“At last I shall see Cunegonde,” Candide said. “Cacambo is a good man, and I trust him.”

Chapter 24: Pacquette and Giroflée

As soon as Candide and Martina landed in Venice, they started to look for Cacambo and Cunegonde, but they were unable to find them. They stayed in Venice for a few months, checking each incoming ship to see if Cacambo and Cunegonde were arriving, but they were never successful in finding them.

“I don’t understand this,” Candide said. “We have had time to travel much of the world and have stayed a few months in Venice, and yet Cacambo and Cunegonde have not yet arrived in Venice. They have had plenty of time to arrive.”

Candide was depressed, and Martina did not say the right things to cheer him up.

“Almost certainly you were wrong to have trusted this Cacambo,” she said. “When you give that much money to a person, the money will almost certainly corrupt him, if he was not already corrupted before. My guess is that Cacambo took the money and ran, and he did not even attempt to rescue Cunegonde.”

As they discussed the character of Cacambo, whom Candide still hoped would bring Cunegonde to him, they saw a pretty young woman and a handsome young man walking together and looking very happy. The pretty young woman and the handsome young man walked arm in arm, they looked into each other’s eyes, and they smiled at each other.

“Here at least are two people who are happy,” Candide said.

“I doubt it,” Martina said.

“We can easily find out,” Candide said. “I will invite them to dinner, and we can talk to them.”

The invitation was quickly made and quickly accepted, as Candide’s face was honest — and for another reason. They went to the inn where Candide and Martina were staying in separate rooms, and all the while they were walking to the inn, the young woman kept looking steadily at Candide.

When everyone was seated at the table, the young woman said to Candide, “Don’t you recognize me?”

Candide had been talking to the young man, whom he had learned was a monk named Brother Giroflée, and so he had not looked closely at the young woman, but now he did.

“Pacquette!” he exclaimed. “I have not seen you since I was kicked — literally — out of the castle where I grew up.”

“I remember that day well,” Pacquette said.

“That was the day that you gave Dr. Pangloss a venereal disease,” Candide said, showing that being honest is not at all the same thing as being discrete.

“That is true,” Pacquette said, “but I am not entirely at fault. Dr. Pangloss willingly and enthusiastically participated in the act that led to his getting a venereal disease. He did more than that, too. After he squirted his goo inside my front hole, he inserted his finger into my rear hole, greatly surprising me, especially when he said that he was checking to see whether I had a prostate gland.

“My history has been troubled. A priest to whom I had gone to confess my sins seduced me; he gave me the disease that I passed on to Dr. Pangloss. Perhaps I should be grateful that at least the priest liked to seduce women instead of molesting children, but somehow I cannot be grateful for what the priest did to me.

“I would have died, but a doctor was able to cure me of the disease. Out of gratitude to him, I slept with him — more than once. I slept with him often enough, in fact, for his wife to become so jealous that she beat me and made her husband’s life a misery. That misery ended when the doctor’s wife complained of a stomachache, and the doctor gave her a broth that

cured her of having a stomachache — as well as made sure that she would never get any disease that a live person could possibly get. The doctor fled to escape being prosecuted for murder, but the prosecuting attorney wanted to prosecute someone, so he prosecuted me. A judge found me innocent, but only after I agreed to sleep with him. He soon grew tired of sleeping with me — many men like variety — and passed me on to another man. This man soon grew tired of sleeping with me and especially grew tired of supporting me and so one night he allowed some of his friends to rape me and then he forced me to leave. I drifted into prostitution as a means of staying alive, and I have followed that profession with just one brief interlude.

“For a while, I found a job as a rape counselor. My sexual history made me empathetic with these women, and I accompanied them to hospitals to provide support as they were examined for evidence of the rape. I learned that all of these women’s clothing was taken for evidence, and that often these women had to go home wearing only a hospital gown. Therefore, I started Project Sweatsuit, which provided new sweatsuits to these women so that they did not have to go home wearing only a hospital gown.

“Unfortunately, the economy worsened, and I lost that job, and soon I was working again as a prostitute. It’s too bad that I lost my job just then. Just a little longer, and I would have taken training to learn self-defense for women, a skill that I definitely need in this job and that I would have taught to other women if I had been able to keep my old job. Still, we prostitutes pass along information to each other. I know that hairspray makes a very good substitute for Mace, and I know where to kick a man. In addition, when necessary I bite rather than suck. Still, anyone in this profession will get beaten and raped occasionally, and that is definitely true of me. My life is miserable, and I don’t know how to make it better.”

“But you looked so happy with Brother Giroflée,” Candide said.

“Brother Giroflée is a john,” Pacquette. “I will sleep with him and get paid for it. Part of my job is to provide a girlfriend experience, and so I act like a girlfriend to men who don’t have a girlfriend. I am not yet at the point where I simply bang as many men as possible as quickly as possible in order to make as much money as possible, although that day will come when I begin to lose my looks. I seemed to be happy with Brother Giroflée, whom I just met today, because that is part of my profession.

“I hate this profession. I used to enjoy sex, but no longer. I never should have been forced into this profession. Having sex should be a wonderful experience, but now it is nothing of the kind for me. Now the insertion of a penis in my vagina is as exciting as the insertion of a finger in my nostril.”

Pacquette looked at Brother Giroflée, smiled ‘happily,’ and said, “But of course I am sure to enjoy having sex with you.”

“Am I right about the misery of at least one member of this couple?” Martina asked Candide, and Candide acknowledged that the answer was yes.

Candide turned his attention to Brother Giroflée and asked, “Are you happy?”

“No, I am not,” Brother Giroflée, “although Pacquette will give me 15 minutes of happiness as long as I pay her. In addition, I have enjoyed the time that she and I have spent walking together. I greatly enjoy the girlfriend experience and would like to have a real girlfriend despite being a monk. When I was 15 years old, my parents forced me to become a monk so that they could give what would have been my eventual inheritance to my older brother. I hate being a monk, and I would like to be a Muslim.

“Quite simply, being a monk holds no appeal for me. I realize that this profession should be spiritual, but I feel nothing at all like that. For me, the Christian religion is a dead religion. When I attend Mass, I get nothing out of it. I feel bored by what should be a miracle. When I

hear a homily, I get nothing out of it. Instead of education and inspiration, I get only boredom. I never should have been forced into this profession. Having a religious calling should be a wonderful experience, but it is nothing of the kind for me.

“The only thing that makes life bearable is getting a few dollars and spending them on a bottle or two of wine and a prostitute like Pacquette. Other than these all-too-brief times, I am miserable.”

“Would you say that I am right about the misery of both members of this couple?” Martina asked Candide, and Candide acknowledged that she was right.

After they had dined together, Candide gave Brother Giroflée a sizable sum of money, and he gave Pacquette twice as much money.

“I am sure of one thing,” Candide said. “Through my experience, I know that sometimes I see people I never expected to see again. I take hope in that. It means that perhaps I may see Cacambo and Cunegonde again.”

“I hope that she will, one day, make you happy, but I doubt that happiness has a place in this world,” Martina replied.

“You are bitter, and you are cynical,” Candide said.

“‘Bitter’ and ‘cynical’ are synonyms for ‘experienced’ and ‘wise,’” Martina said.

“Tomorrow let us see a Venetian man named Signor Magnocurante, a man who was born rich and is reputed to have never known trouble,” Candide said.

“I would like to see such a man,” Martina replied.

Chapter 25: Candide and Martina Visit the Viennese Nobleman Magnocurante

Candide and Martina sailed in a gondola to the home of Signor Magnocurante, a man who was supposed to have never known trouble.

True to his reputation, Signor Magnocurante greeted them courteously and after they had all introduced themselves, he showed them around his estate. He had been born rich, and he had stayed rich, and he was likely to stay rich. In addition, although he had been born ignorant, like everyone else, he had been well educated, and he was likely to stay well educated.

Signor Magnocurante first showed Candide and Martina his gardens, which were lovely and spacious and comfortable and cool with shade even in the middle of a hot day, and then he showed them a few rooms of his home, especially his library, which was spacious and comfortable and cool with air conditioning.

Candide saw bookcases upon bookcases filled with books. “You can’t possibly have read all of these books,” he said.

“That is correct,” Signor Magnocurante said. “This library has been the work of generations, and no single person could read all of these books. But I have read many of them, and I will continue to read many more. I realize that reading is one of the best parts of life, and I realize that in a few hours I can gain the knowledge that an author has spent a year or more putting in a book.

“One great advantage of reading books is that it is a good way of spending time with the author. Both George Carlin and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., have died, so it is impossible for me or anyone else to spend time with them in real life, but I and other people can enjoy their company by reading one of their books or by reading their interviews.

“I do read many books by and about celebrities. These days, ‘celebrities’ is almost a bad word, but celebrities include actors, musicians, and authors. These people are artists. They have done something worthwhile in their lives, and they deserve to be famous. In addition to books by and about celebrities, I read classic books.”

“Have you read any classic books that you felt were a waste of time?” Martina asked.

“Yes,” Signor Magnocurante said, “but often I think my lack of appreciation of a classic is due to a lack of sensitivity and intelligence on my part rather than to any lack in the classic itself. An old book with a very good reputation most likely deserves that reputation. It is the newer books that are more likely not to deserve their reputations, whether good or bad. Still, many new books are good books.”

“Are there any disadvantages to reading good books?” Martina asked.

“The main disadvantage is so often not finding someone with whom you can intelligently talk about the book,” Magnocurante said. “You would think that would be easy now that we have the Web, but many people who have read — or claim to have read — a book have no opinion to express about it other than ‘it sucks’ or ‘it’s great.’ I believe that it is important to be creative as well as to enjoy other people’s creativity; in fact, I think that everyone ought to have an art to practice. Therefore, I post reviews of books and movies on the Web. My reviews average a little over one thousand words each. Occasionally, I get worthwhile comments about one of my reviews, but most people simply post the comments ‘it sucks’ or ‘it’s great.’

“We have many good books, including recently written good books, among us, but what we lack is an audience for good books. Like Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., I think that our Welfare recipients ought to be part of that audience. In order for a person to get Welfare, that person

ought to do two things: one, get rid of the TV, and two, as Mr. Vonnegut suggests, write a weekly book report.

“My book and movie reviews are free because I don’t need money, but I do think that most creators — the ones who are not as financially fortunate as I am — ought to be paid for their art. Books, music, and art ought to be free when food, shelter, and clothing are free.

“In addition to my reviews, I publish many books using the pseudonym David Bruce. Actually, his full name was Bruce David Bruce. He was my boring English teacher in college, and he stressed that reading is one of the best parts of life and that everyone should practice an art. He’s still alive, but he doesn’t mind my using his name. After all, he teaches at a university, and the rule for university teachers is publish or perish. Actually, my using his name is not really cheating because he often publishes using a pseudonym. Quite simply, if the head honchos at the university were aware of some of the subjects of the books he writes, he would be fired — immediately. He is one of those teaching adjuncts who don’t have tenure. Many of my books are collections of anecdotes, and many of my other books are discussion guides to great and good books. Like my reviews, the discussion guides are free downloads, while the collections of anecdotes are usually available at a low cost or are free downloads.”

“What is your opinion of product placement in works of art?” Martina asked.

“I’m all for it, as long as they are my products and my works of art,” Signor Magnocurante replied, then continued, “One of my major reasons for reading and writing so much is to keep myself from suffering from Old Man’s Disease: Old men tend not to read new books, but instead to reread old books. I read books that I have not read before so that I can find anecdotes to use in my books that are collections of anecdotes.”

Among the many bookcases filled with books, Candide also saw a television in the library, which surprised him.

“Do you watch much television?” he asked his host.

“No,” replied Signor Magnocurante. “I don’t have cable or satellite or web-streaming TV, and so I seldom watch much TV. It is not that I think that TV is always bad; in fact, I am certain that some of it is good. However, I spend my time reading good books and watching good movies and writing reviews and essays. The TV is so I can watch good movies on my DVD player. I don’t have time to watch regular television or to play video games because I am determined to read every good book and to watch every good movie. That does not leave time to waste watching television commercials or playing video games. If you watch a 60-minute TV program, chances are good that you are watching 15 minutes of commercials.”

“Don’t you watch TV news?” asked Martina.

“No,” said Signor Magnocurante. “What I gained from watching the news on TV was lost in watching the misleading political commercials that were shown in breaks during the TV news shows. I feel that I am better informed if I read newspapers and seek out news on the Web and ignore the political ads on TV.”

“What about sports?” Candide asked.

“Watching sports is an entertainment,” Magnocurante said, “but it is an entertainment that I can do without. If I watch a sports event for three hours on TV and my team loses, I feel as if I have wasted my time. All that I have truly done is to allow myself to be manipulated into watching TV commercials that I don’t need to see. After all, I don’t drink beer and I already have a late-model car. And I don’t need to watch TV to see scantily clad women because Missy, Chrissy, and Prissy spend a lot of time with me. I pay them well, and they are happy to do such things as sunbathe topless in the garden. They do other things as well.”

“Are they prostitutes?” Martina asked.

“You can call them that, but I don’t,” Signor Magnocurante said. “They are high-class call girls, but I don’t use that term either; after all, they are women. I know that the work of prostitutes can be hard, and I know that having sex with a prostitute is not ideal, but their work is at the high end of the scale. Perhaps they do not mind it. Or, perhaps they do. Martina, you may ask Missy whatever you like. She is in the garden. Chrissy and Prissy are away. Candide and I will stay in the library and not disturb you.”

Martina left to visit Missy, who was sunbathing topless in the garden.

“Hi, I’m Martina,” she said. “Signor Magnocurante sent me to you.”

“What am I supposed to do?” Missy asked. “Sleep with you, or answer your questions?”

“Answer my questions,” Martina said. “Does Signor Magnocurante often ask you to do those two things you mentioned?”

“Not often, but sometimes,” Missy said.

“Would you sleep with me if Signor Magnocurante asked you to?”

“Yes, I would,” Missy said. “I can say yes or no, and once in a while I say no, but for you I would say yes.”

“To whom would you say no?”

“Someone with disgusting body odor,” Missy said.

“Do you mind answering my questions?” Martina said.

“No,” Missy said. “Signor Magnocurante will pay me for doing that. It’s easier work than sleeping with someone.”

“How did you get into this business?” Martina asked.

“I got tired of being poor and of either being unemployed or working for shit wages, so I answered an ad for being an escort.”

“How did that go?”

“The man running the escort service made it clear that he was suspicious of me. He told me straight out that he thought I was a police officer. However, he kept talking to me, and I managed to convince him that I was serious about being an escort.”

“What happened then?”

“He told me what the work entailed. Being an escort is being a prostitute. It is not glamorous work. At first I thought being a high-class call girl might be glamorous, but he explained that it is not. I had thought that the very highly paid businessmen who would purchase my services would do such things as take me out to dinner, but he explained that they are busy. They would simply pay me, have sex with me, and then show me out.”

“Did this information make you not want to do this work?”

“Not at all,” Missy said. “I appreciated his honesty, and I liked what he said about the money I could earn.”

“What happened then?”

“He asked me to sleep with him to show that I was capable of doing this work.”

“And?”

“I slept with him. I found out that I am capable of having sex with a man whom I do not love.”

“Was he a good lover?”

“No. The sex was quick and meaningless. It was a job interview and had nothing to do with romance or love. Afterward, he got a telephone call. It was one of the escorts. She had gone to visit a client, but she left without having sex with him.”

“Why not?”

“They had agreed to have vaginal sex, but instead he asked for anal sex.”

“Was anal sex something that she did not do?”

“No,” Missy said. “The man running the escort service explained that this escort provided full service; however, one of the rules for keeping escorts safe is to agree ahead of time what she will do, and if the man wants something else to leave immediately.”

“How does he keep his escorts safe?”

“He has a number of ways to do that. For example, when the escort arrives at the place where she is supposed to service the man, she will tell the man that she has to make a phone call. She then calls the man running the escort service to let him know — using code words — that she is OK.

“He has other ways of making sure that escorts are safe. One thing that he does is to train his escorts. For example, after I slept with him he told me that the only mistake I had made was to get undressed at the same time as him. It’s better to have the man get undressed first. That way, the escort maintains more control. Of course, many women who are not prostitutes enjoy watching a man undress before they undress. I also got training on how to verbally control a situation when it is necessary.”

“How did you get this job?”

“Signor Magnocurante called the man running the escort service. Signor Magnocurante asked for three women — ‘women’ was his word, and I appreciate that he used it — and the man running the escort service sent him us three women. We have it fairly easy here. Not every prostitute does, of course. Anyone who is a prostitute will almost certainly be beaten and raped more than once. That is why we three women are willing to give the man running the escort service a percentage of our earnings. He makes us feel safe, and when necessary, he is very capable of getting revenge on anyone who hurts any of us. I have seen him do it. He and I and another of his employees got into a car, and he drove us to a bar, where we waited until a man who had hurt the other employee left the bar. The man running the escort service hurt him badly — much more badly than the employee had been hurt.

“People think that prostitutes are exploited, but I am not sure that that is always true. If exploitation occurs, it occurs on both sides. I provide a little sexual excitement to a man, and he gives me money. Both of us benefit. I can make more money in a single day providing Signore Magnocurante with a little sexual excitement than I could make in a couple of weeks working at McDonald’s or Walmart.

“If the government regulated prostitution so that rapes and beatings did not occur, things would be better for everyone. The government would make money to help pay for such things as police, teachers, and other good things. A prostitute should look at the police as being protectors, but all too often prostitutes look at the police as being the enemy.”

“Signor Magnocurante is a cultured man,” Martina said. “Why does he need your services?”

“This is a guess, but I think that he feels that he is simply too wealthy to risk getting married and then divorced. He was married, and he got divorced, and he got burned in the divorce. The woman who divorced him got a vast sum of money, and now he prefers to keep his money for himself and not risk losing so much of it in a divorce. Think of Heather Mills and Paul McCartney. It’s no wonder that after those two got divorced — nastily — someone wrote this graffito in London: ‘Marry me, Paul — I have my own money.’ So far, Magnocurante has not fallen in love with a rich woman, and until he does, he wants the services that the two other women and I provide.

“Besides, I think that most men prefer sleeping with more than one woman. We certainly see that happening when men have the opportunity to do that. Look at John Edwards and Tiger Woods. Men who are faithful are often simply untested. Male teachers tend not to have groupies, but if they did, many of them would act like male rock stars.”

“How can we stop prostitution, if such a thing can be done?” Martina asked.

“I doubt very much that prostitution will ever completely disappear, but to reduce its prevalence a good economy is necessary. If I had been able to get a good job, I would not be doing this. Therefore, to reduce the prevalence of prostitution, support labor unions and raise the minimum wage. To be honest, I hope that I won’t be doing this for much longer. In this profession, no one ever advances. As age reduces one’s beauty, one’s income also declines.”

“Do you like doing this?”

Missy was silent for a while, and then she said, “I like the money.”

“Have you ever appeared in a pornographic film?” Martina asked.

“No.”

“Why not?”

“One characteristic of much pornography is a hatred of women. I don’t know why. You would think a man would be happy if a woman agreed to have sex with him.

“Unfortunately, these days a woman who agrees to appear in a porn movie is all too often almost consenting to be raped. I use the word ‘almost’ because ‘consensual rape’ is a contradiction in terms. Too many porn movies regard women as sluts, bitches, and whores who deserve to be raped.

“Porn is educational, but all too often it teaches only the wrong things. It focuses on technique, which can be a good thing, but it focuses on technique to the exclusion of any kind of emotional connection.”

“Do you ever think of death?” Martina asked.

“I love life. I want a long, healthy old age, and then I want to be dead before I hit the floor.”

“I am going inside,” Martina said. “Thank you for answering my questions.”

Chapter 26: Candide and Martina Dine with Former VIPs

One evening Candide and Martina sat down to dinner at the inn at a table with a tablecloth that hung nearly to the floor. Also seated at the table were six foreign visitors to Venice. Their presence was only to be expected, as many foreigners had come to Venice to enjoy the carnival, which had ended the previous night.

Candide felt a hand on his shoulder and heard a voice close to his ear tell him, "I am so happy to see you again." Candide turned to see who was speaking to him — it was Cacambo! Overjoyed, Candide said, "If you are here, Cunegonde must be here! Take me to her!"

Quietly, Cacambo said, "Cunegonde is in Constantinople, along with the old woman. I am a slave, and I must wait on my master, who is sitting at this table with you. Ask no questions now. I will explain all later."

The six foreigners who were sitting at the table with Candide and Martina ate very little but drank much wine. Occasionally, one of the foreigners gasped with pleasure. Guessing what was happening, Martina dropped her napkin, bent down to pick it up, and peeked under the tablecloth. As she suspected, six prostitutes were under the table, each with a thing in her mouth, each servicing one of the six foreign visitors sitting at the table.

Cacambo said to his master, "When your Majesty is finished, your transportation is ready for you to leave Venice."

A valet then came into the room and said to one of the foreigners, "When your Majesty is finished, your transportation is ready for you to leave Venice." The same thing happened with three other valets, but the sixth valet said something different: "When your Majesty is finished, prepare to be arrested. You have overextended your credit, and you are about to be arrested and thrown into debtors' prison. I am leaving, as you can no longer borrow money to pay me."

The sixth valet left the table and walked to the door leaving out of the inn, and right behind him was the prostitute who had been servicing his master underneath the table.

Candide spoke to the man who lacked money, "I have money, and I will give you enough money to pay off your debts and some more money besides." Candide then gave him a small but valuable diamond.

Hearing this, the valet came back to the table and waited on his master, and the prostitute came back and disappeared under the table.

"Who are you?" Candide asked. "The carnival is over, so this can't be a masquerade. Are all six of you really majesties?"

"Yes," said the first foreigner, whom Cacambo served. "I am Ahmed III. I dethroned my brother in order to get a throne, and in turn my nephew dethroned me. In addition, he cut off the heads of my most trusted advisors. So the wheel of fortune turns."

"Yes," said the second foreigner. "I am Ivan, and I was Emperor of all the Russias. I lost my throne while I was still an infant, and as I grew up I was reared in prison. 'Reared' is definitely the right word. So the wheel of fortune turns."

"Yes," said the third foreigner. "I am Charles Edward, once King of England. My father gave up the throne so that I could have it. Although I fought to keep the throne, I was defeated and almost a thousand of my friends have been murdered because of their support for me. So the wheel of fortune turns."

"Yes," said the fourth foreigner. "I was the King of Poland, and war took away my throne. So the wheel of fortune turns."

"Yes," said the fifth foreigner. "I was also the King of Poland, and I lost my kingdom twice. Fortunately, I have gotten another land to rule, and I have done much good there. So the wheel of fortune turns."

“Yes,” said the sixth foreigner, who had been impoverished until Candide demonstrated his generosity. “I am Theodore, and I was once King of Corsica, a land not as great as that of the other majesties sitting at this table. I used to be treated like the King I was, and until your generosity I was close to being treated like the pauper I was. I once coined the money of my kingdom, but until you showed me generosity, I had no money but only debts. So the wheel of fortune turns.”

Candide was surprised at the turns of the wheel of fortune that these six men had undergone. Martina was not surprised.

Candide then bought Cacambo from Ahmed III, and Cacambo sat down and ate with his former master and the others.

While they were eating, four other former kings arrived at the inn, but Candide ignored them, because he was busy thinking about seeing Cunegonde again.

At various times during the dinner, a prostitute would come out from under the table, wipe her mouth, be paid, and leave the inn.

Chapter 27: Voyage to Constantinople

Cacambo, Candide, and Martina boarded a ship that would take them to Constantinople, where they could rejoin Cunegonde and the old woman. Candide was in high spirits because at last he would see Cunegonde, his beloved, again.

“Dr. Pangloss was right all along,” he said. “Everything works out for the best.”

“Not in my experience,” Martina said.

Candide was so happy that he ignored Martina’s comment, but he did remark about his astonishment at meeting so many deposed kings and at his having been an instrument of charity to one of them.

“Neither of those things is remarkable,” Martina said. “History is mainly the record of the deposing of kings, and economics is mainly the study of world leaders spending so much money that is not theirs that they bankrupt their countries and themselves, and thus are in need of charity. Show me ten world leaders, and I will show you nine charity cases.”

Soon Candide returned to a subject that was dear to him: Cunegonde.

“Is she still beautiful?” he asked Cacambo.

“Not at all,” Cacambo said. “Her life has been hard, and she is the poor slave of a poor master. She works all day and all of her work has made her horribly ugly.”

“Ugly or not,” Candide said. “I love her, and when we meet again I shall marry her.”

“But how did you, she, and the old woman end up in such a poor way? The fortune that you carried out of Eldorado would have lasted many kings many lifetimes.”

“It lasted me two weeks,” Cacambo said. “Don Fernando de Ibaraa, y Figueora y Mascarenes y Lampourdos y Souza took a big portion of it, and I was robbed of the rest by a pirate who was skilled in such an action. He took us across the Atlantic Ocean to Constantinople and sold us. I became the slave of Ahmed III, as you know, and now Cunegonde and the old woman are the slaves of a different master.”

Candide asked Martina, “Who do you think is more unfortunate in this world: me, or one of the deposed kings we saw in Venice?”

“The answer would have to be one of the deposed kings we saw in Venice,” Martina said. “You have something to look forward to: You are going to see Cunegonde, although she has become ugly, and you are looking forward to seeing her. Which of the deposed kings is the most unfortunate I don’t know because I can’t look into each King’s heart, but your heart is singing although you and Cacambo have lost so much money.”

“Dr. Pangloss would know which of the deposed kings is the most unfortunate,” Candide said. “On the other hand, perhaps Dr. Pangloss would say that none of the deposed kings is unfortunate because we live in the best of all possible worlds.”

A few days later, curious about the structure of the ship, Candide and Martina went down to where the slaves did the rowing, and he thought that a couple of the slaves looked familiar.

“You know,” he said to Martina, “one of the slaves looks like an older, beaten-down Dr. Pangloss, and the slave rowing next to him looks like an older, beaten-down young Baron.”

Hearing Candide’s voice, the two slaves stopped rowing and started shouting, “Candide! Is it really you? Don’t you recognize us? We really are Dr. Pangloss and the young Baron!”

Their master ran over and started whipping the two slaves, but Candide immediately shouted, “Stop! I want to buy these two slaves. How much do you want for the eminent philosopher Dr. Pangloss and for the proud young Baron?”

“He’s an eminent philosopher, is he?” the slave master said. “Previously, I would have sold him for \$1.69 and been happy, but since he’s an eminent philosopher, I’ll happily take \$1.29.”

Wait! You seem to think that being an eminent philosopher is a good thing. In that case, I won't take a penny less than \$50,000. As for the proud young Baron, I won't take a penny less than \$1.29 for him."

"It's a deal," Candide said. "Take us back to Venice so that I can sell a diamond or two, and you shall have your money. Wait! Take us to Constantinople and I'll sell a diamond or two there."

It was too late. The master of the slaves had already ordered his ship turned around, and soon they arrived back in Venice.

Candide called for some Jewish money merchants to buy some of his diamonds. These Jews were aware of their long and proud history, in which time and time again they had been exploited and had been the victims of attempted genocide, and they had responded in pretty much the same way that pretty much all peoples in pretty much all times and pretty much all places respond: They exploited other peoples. Of course, being the people of the one true God they did not often attempt genocide, although a war here and there was an honored part of their history. A Jew who arrived to buy one of Candide's diamonds appraised it as being \$100,000, but offered only \$50,000 for it, swearing on the grave of Adolf Hitler that he could not offer more.

Candide took the money and bought both Dr. Pangloss and the young Baron. With tears in his eyes, Dr. Pangloss thanked Candide. The young Baron merely nodded and said that he would pay back the \$1.29 to Candide as soon as he made his fortune.

Candide then purchased — or, in some cases, repurchased — passage for all of them on the galley and they sailed for Constantinople.

Once they arrived in Constantinople, however, they learned that Cunegonde and the old woman had been sold to a deposed prince of Transylvania now living in Turkey, and they boarded passage on another ship that would take them to Turkey.

Chapter 28: The Stories of Dr. Pangloss and the Young Baron

Candide apologized to the young Baron for almost killing him with a sword in the New World.

“I have experienced many worse things,” the young Baron said, “although it does offend me that a commoner such as yourself would attempt to kill me. The person who kills me should be able to trace his nobility back for over 73 generations.

“Let me tell you how I ended up as a slave on this galley. A Jesuit physician cured the wound you gave me, and I soon was fighting against the Spaniards again. However, the Spaniards captured me and I was taken to Buenos Aires, but my sister, Cunegonde, had already left. I was ransomed and went to Rome, and then I was sent to Constantinople. I went to the public baths, where I met a young Turkish man. We put suntan lotions on each other’s backs, and then we put suntan lotion on each other’s buttocks, and then we were simultaneously applying suntan lotion to another part of each other’s body. An old Turkish man saw us and objected, perhaps because the public baths were in a building that did not admit sunlight, or because I never learned to ride a bicycle, or for some other nonsensical reason, although in my defense I can say that I did not have enough blood in my brain at that point to be able to think clearly. Anyway, he called the guard, and I was arrested. I wish that he had waited another couple of minutes because the young Turkish man’s application of suntan lotion to a certain part of my body was making me very happy and a few more strokes would have made me ecstatic. I dare say that the young Turkish man was also on the verge of ecstasy. A judge ordered me to be given a hundred strokes of a different kind than the young Turkish man had been giving me and I had been giving him. These strokes were made with a whip on the tender soles of my feet, following which I was made a slave and sent to row on this galley.”

“And you, Dr. Pangloss, what is your story?” Candide asked. “The last time that I saw you, you were being hung in an auto-da-fé.”

“I was hung, and not in a good way,” Dr. Pangloss said, “I was hung inefficiently. The Inquisitors who do the work of God are very skilled at burning people to death, but they lack experience at hanging people by the neck until they are dead. The rope was wet because of the rainy weather, and so the noose did not close tightly around my neck, and I merely passed out instead of dying. The Inquisitors cut me down before I died, and a surgeon bought my body so he could dissect it. He put me, still unconscious, on a dissecting table, and he cut me open from my navel to my collarbone. At this point, I regained consciousness and screamed, and the physician at first thought that he had released evil spirits from my body. When he realized that I was still alive, he sewed me up again and took care of me. I found work as a servant to a Knight of Malta, and in the interest of scientific inquiry I helped practice this group’s custom of searching Turkish women, but when he was unable to pay me the salary I had earned, I became the servant of a Venetian merchant who took me to Constantinople.

“In Constantinople, I followed a very pretty and very young lady into a mosque, where she prayed. As she prayed, she bent forward and a bouquet of flowers that rested between her breasts fell out of her cleavage, and I saw the opportunity to do a good deed by putting the bouquet back where it belonged.

“I believe in doing things thoroughly, and so I took a long time in replacing the bouquet in order to be sure that it was positioned correctly. Oddly, my good deed did not please the very pretty and very young lady. She screamed and attracted the attention of a holy man, who, unknown to me, ran for an officer of the guard.

“While doing my good deed, I remembered a longtime scientific project of mine. Supposedly, no woman has a prostate gland, but how can we be sure of that unless we check each

woman to see if she has a prostate gland? Therefore, my hands crept up her skirt, pulled down her underwear, and I inserted a finger into her rear hole to see if she had a prostate gland — purely for the reason of scientific inquiry, of course.

“She screamed, or perhaps I should say that she continued to scream, as she had been doing that for a while, and the officer of the guard arrived and arrested me. A judge ordered me to be given a hundred strokes with a whip on the tender soles of my feet and then made me a slave and sent me to row on this galley.”

“Dr. Pangloss, you have been hung, dissected, whipped a hundred times on the tender soles of your feet, and made a galley slave,” Candide said. “Do you still believe that this is the best of all possible worlds?”

“I do, indeed,” Dr. Pangloss said. “I have faith in my philosophy, and my having faith means that I believe things that I know aren’t true.”

Chapter 29: Cunegonde, Again

Candide listened intently to the stories of Dr. Pangloss and the young Baron, as did Martina, and as they talked and listened, their galley took them to the house of the deposed prince of Transylvania who owned Cunegonde and the old woman.

They disembarked from the galley, and they immediately saw Cunegonde and the old woman, who were hanging up laundry to dry in the sun.

Cunegonde was shocked to see how ugly Cunegonde had gotten. Her face was wrinkled, her skin was raw and red, and her eyes were bloodshot. She was fully clothed, but Candide could see that her breasts sagged and her buttocks no longer formed a bubble butt, but instead were withered. She had been beaten senseless with an ugly stick.

‘Senseless’ is the correct word because she did not realize that she had grown ugly. True, she sometimes wondered why the deposed prince of Transylvania did not take her to bed, as her other owners had done, but she had decided that he must be gay.

Candide immediately bought the freedom of Cunegonde and of the old woman. He also bought a small farm.

Fortunate is the man who is loved by a beautiful woman who does not know that she is beautiful, but less fortunate is the man who is loved by an ugly woman who does not know that she is ugly. Candide was among the less fortunate men of this planet.

Looking at Cunegonde, he no longer wanted to marry her, but she insisted on a wedding, and so Candide, an honorable man, asked the young Baron for the hand of his sister in marriage.

The young Baron refused!

“My sister can trace her nobility back for 72 generations, and you cannot,” the young Baron said. “Therefore, you can never marry my sister. She shall be married to no man unless he can trace his nobility back for over 73 generations.”

Candide was shocked!! He was so shocked that it takes two exclamation marks to express his shock!! (Make that four exclamation marks!! Six!! Eight!! The hell with it!!)

“I have freed you from a life of slavery, and I have done the same thing for your sister,” he pointed out. “Cunegonde may not realize that she is ugly, but you certainly do. No man other than myself, much less a man who can trace his nobility back for over 73 generations, is likely to marry her. She is too ugly, and many, many men have used her during her life. She wants to marry me, and I am willing to marry her. I cannot understand why you will not allow us to be married.”

“You don’t have to understand,” the young Baron said. “All you have to do is to not marry my sister. As long as I am alive, I shall not allow you to marry her.”

Candide thought, !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Later, when Candide told Martina what the young Baron had said to him, Martina thought, !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Chapter 30: Conclusion

Because Cunegonde was so ugly, Candide kept having second thoughts about marrying her, but Cunegonde was adamant that the wedding should take place quickly. Equally adamant was the young Baron, but he was adamant that the wedding should not take place quickly — or at all.

Candide was a man of his word. He had promised Cunegonde that he would marry her, and so of course he would. But what could he do about the young Baron? He consulted his friends, with the exception of Cunegonde, about the young Baron. Dr. Pangloss made lengthy arguments to prove that Cunegonde was a free woman and so the young Baron had no right to control whom she married. Martina recommended that the young Baron be cast into the sea and drowned. Cacambo recommended that he be sold and made a galley slave again.

Reasoning that some people are so negative that it is only right to get them out of your life, Candide decided to follow Cacambo's recommendation, and soon the young Baron was made a galley slave, although without the knowledge of Cunegonde, who was simply aware that her brother had vanished one day.

At this time, Candide also took the opportunity to speak to Dr. Pangloss and to impress upon him the importance of taking no for an answer. Candide made it clear that if Dr. Pangloss did not take no for an answer, then what had happened to the young Baron could and would happen to him. The others, except Cunegonde, who was not present, backed up Candide and made it clear that they would help Candide to sell Dr. Pangloss as a galley slave unless he behaved himself.

Dr. Pangloss agreed, of course, and he backslid — or nearly backslid — only once. He came across Martina in the barn that was on the little farm, and he asked her if he could put his finger inside her rear hole to check to see if she had a prostate gland — in the interest of scientific inquiry, of course. Martina said no, but Dr. Pangloss was both persistent and insistent, so Martina picked up a long stick that was in a pile of firewood that was stored in the barn and said, "Sigmund Freud once pointed out that sometimes a cigar is just a cigar and not a phallic symbol. Well, this stick is definitely a phallic symbol." Rats were plentiful in the barn, as were rattraps, and Martina used the stick to trigger a rattrap, which sprung and broke the stick into two pieces. Martina then reminded Dr. Pangloss that many people nowadays have more than one career in their lives and often revisit earlier careers as well as start new careers, and she said that she felt that he would make a very good galley slave, or a very good eunuch, or both.

Thereafter, Dr. Pangloss left Martina alone.

This unpleasantness was more than made up by the increased happiness of Cunegonde, and others, all of whom busily planned her wedding.

The wedding was simple, but it ate up most of Candide's remaining money. The wedding brought happiness to everybody, especially Cunegonde, and the wedding night brought happiness to Cunegonde and Candide, especially Candide, who discovered that in the dark Cunegonde was not ugly and that her front hole was as warm and wet and slippery as the front holes of beautiful women.

However, the happiness of the group of friends did not last. All that they owned now was the little farm and a few personal possessions. Cunegonde became uglier each day, and her increasing ugliness made her personality hateful — one of her new personal possessions was a mirror. The old woman was already as ugly as a person could get, but now her health declined, with the result that her personality became even more hateful than that of Cunegonde. Cacambo was the only one who worked on the small farm, but because he was the only one

who worked, he was exhausted and bitter. Dr. Pangloss hated his fate of ending up on a small farm instead of being a full professor of philosophy at Harvard or Yale. Martina was the same as ever. Since she was convinced that all of existence is wretched, she was never surprised by wretchedness; instead, she was pleasantly surprised whenever something even a little bit good happened. As for Candide, he became bored, but this happened to everyone on the small farm. The only thing that relieved their boredom was arguing among themselves, or in the case of Cacambo, feeling too exhausted to be bored.

The old woman became so bored that one day she said, “Which is worse? To be raped by pirates, to have one buttock cut off, to be hung in an auto-da-fé, to be dissected, to have the tender soles of one’s feet whipped, to become a galley slave, to run the gauntlet in the Bulgar army, to be cheated out of great wealth — in short, to suffer all that we together have suffered?”

“Or is it worse to be bored?”

Candide replied, “That is a good question.”

The philosophers of the group discussed the question. Martina, ever the pessimist, set forth the proposition that Humankind is doomed to suffer, and the best that anyone can hope for is to be bored. Dr. Pangloss, ever the optimist, set forth the proposition that since he had always believed that this is the best of all possible worlds, he would continue to believe it, despite all his own personal experience and all the personal experience of his friends.

Soon the small farm had visitors. Pacquette and Brother Giroflée arrived in a state of poverty and distress. They had quickly spent the money that Candide had given them. They had broken up and then reunited. Brother Giroflée had converted to Islam but was still not happy. Pacquette still sold her body to every man she could, but the money she made barely kept her body and soul together.

“Remember what I told you earlier,” Martina said to Candide. “I told you that the money you gave them would not make them happy. In fact, money did not make you happy, although you had many millions of dollars more than Pacquette and Brother Giroflée. I don’t believe that anything makes people happy, but I especially believe that money won’t make people happy except for the happiness that comes from being able to pay the bills.”

Dr. Pangloss was happy to see Pacquette, although he pointed out to her that the last time he had seen her she made been the cause of his losing an eye and an ear and the tip of his nose.

Pacquette and Brother Giroflée stayed with the group of friends, but boredom set in again. However, an opportunity to escape the boredom, at least briefly, came up. The group of friends heard about a famous Turkish philosopher — a dervish — who lived near them. Candide, Dr. Pangloss, and Martina visited him.

“Sir, why was Humankind ever created?” Dr. Pangloss asked respectfully.

“Why do you bother your heads about that?” replied the dervish.

“Sir,” Candide said, “we wonder why evil exists if God exists at the same time.”

“Why do you think that God thinks about you all the time?” replied the dervish. “Do you think that God ought to treat you the way that you treat a pet hamster? Do you think that God ought to provide for you all the things that you provide for the pet hamster: food, water, shelter, and a comfortable existence with no danger? Should God regard you the way that you regard a pet hamster?”

“What ought we to do?” Dr. Pangloss asked.

“Quit talking so much about things that you can’t change,” replied the dervish, and he slammed his door in front of their faces.

End of interview.

Martina was not surprised.

On their way back to their small farm, the group of friends ran across some travelers who told them the most recent news: Somewhere a major crime had taken place, somewhere a war was taking place, somewhere someone had been assassinated, and somewhere a great natural disaster had occurred. In other words, in many somewheres all the usual things were taking place.

Martina was not surprised.

As they were walking, hot and tired, they saw an old man sitting in the shade outside a comfortable house situated on a small farm. The old man saw that they looked hot and tired, and he invited them to sit with him and take some refreshment.

Martina was pleasantly surprised.

They accepted, and the old man's two sons and two daughters brought out chairs so the group of friends could sit with them in the shade. They also brought out many refreshments, all made from things grown on their farm or made from ingredients that had been purchased with money they had made from selling the produce grown on their farm.

Candide and the others at first attempted to discuss world affairs with their host, but the old man replied that he paid attention only to things that he could change. When a neighbor's barn had burned down, the old man had brought food to the family on the day that his sons had helped to rebuild the barn. Everyone from miles around had worked to rebuild the barn, and to cook lots of food, and then they had eaten the food that everyone from miles around had brought, and everyone from miles around had danced in the new barn. The old man had fiddled in one of the groups of musicians that had played at the dance. As for bad events that had already occurred in a far-away place, nothing the old man could do could undo those bad events, and so he concentrated on the things he could do to improve the world and did not speak or think excessively about the evils he could do nothing about.

Candide was impressed by the words of the old man, and he was impressed by the comfort of the old man's home and by the quality of the refreshments. As in Eldorado, everything was made from scratch — if not by the old man's family, then by another family that the old man's family bartered with.

"You must have a vast estate to enjoy such luxury," Candide said.

"I have 20 acres," said the old man, "but it is enough. I enjoy the small luxuries and the necessities that the small farm provides, and I am happy to bring good into the world when I can. Certainly, growing food is one of the most important jobs in the world.

"My children and I work on the farm, although of course my children do most of the work now. We are looking forward to one wedding soon, and I hope three more weddings after that. The married couples can either live with me or build a house on the small farm. My children are thrifty, and they may end up buying other small farms near mine. Of course, at least one child will stay with me, and his or her future spouse is welcome to stay with me, too.

"We work, and because all of us work, none of us is overburdened with work. The work we do keeps away the three great evils that afflict many, many people: boredom, vice, and poverty. Because we work, we aren't bored, we don't have the time to engage in vice, and we have all the necessities — and a few luxuries."

On the way back to their own small farm, Candide, Dr. Pangloss, and Martina talked about the old man's words. Back on their own small farm, they told the others what the old man had said. All together, they decided to work, just as the old man and his family did.

And they did work. Candide and Cacambo worked in the fields and greenhouse, just as they did at Eldorado. Brother Giroflée also worked in the fields and greenhouse, as well as doing carpentry, and during harvest time, everyone worked in the fields because working quickly was important. The old woman did the laundry, and she discovered that the exercise

was good for her health and so her personality changed and became much more agreeable. Pacquette embroidered. Cunegonde specialized in pastries and fancy foods, while Martina became expert in baking bread and cooking the simpler foods. She also became an expert maker of coffee, including espresso and cappuccino.

Although everyone worked hard, especially at harvest time, they also had fun. Some of their first profits went to buy playing cards, puzzles, and games. Evenings were fun times as they gathered together in the large sitting room and played such games as Fuck Your Neighbor — the card game, not the sexual activity. They also learned to play musical instruments and to practice other arts. Martina wrote.

Candide noticed Martina writing in her room, and he asked to see some of her work. She was willing to show him a satire, and Candide eagerly read it. He was not surprised that Martina wrote savage satire, but he was surprised to see that her work included so many explicit sex scenes.

He asked her about the numerous sex scenes, and she explained, “I am writing mainly to amuse myself and to keep my brain active, but I would also like to make money, and if writing sex scenes will help me to do these things, then I will write lots of sex scenes. I have no intention of sneering at money. If I were an artist and someone were to commission me to draw dancing ducks, he or she would have them tomorrow. Besides, I like genre-bending, as in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*. In fact, my next satire will be titled *Pride and Prejudice and Orgies*. Besides, sex is an excellent subject for satire.”

She added, “I know that we have made a good place here, but I would like to have some kind of positive impact — no matter how limited — on the wider world. Satire may be the way to do that. I have already chosen my pseudonym: David Bruce. I know that Signor Magnocurante is already that name, but I’m going to help myself to it, too.”

Brother Giroflée and Pacquette worked hard, but they did not have to work so hard that they were unable to make the bedsprings of their bed squeak late into many nights, a sound that their friends found comforting.

Of course, Brother Giroflée did not pay Pacquette for sex, but every time they had sex, he put a penny in a jar. After their first year together on the small farm, they had \$3.17 in pennies.

Candide and Cunegonde often made their own bedsprings squeak. Candide became curious about thing-in-the-back-hole sex, and Cunegonde, who knew all about Eldorado’s major rule of sex from the stories that Candide and Cacambo told, agreed to try it as long as Eldorado’s major rule of sex applied to the little farm. Candide replied that of course it did. In fact, it applied everywhere in the world, although far too many people were unaware of its existence. He, of course, was very aware of its existence, and he obeyed and respected the rule. Cunegonde also made him promise not to bring up thing-in-the-back-hole sex again after they had tried it but to let her bring up the subject when she was ready. They tried thing-in-the-back-hole sex, and although Candide was careful to be gentle and to go slow, he liked thing-in-the-back-hole sex better than Cunegonde did. However, Cunegonde did bring up thing-in-the-back-hole sex on Candide’s birthday and on Christmas, and he was satisfied with having thing-in-the-back-hole sex twice a year.

Dr. Pangloss knew that he was ugly because he had lost an eye, an ear, and the tip of his nose. He also knew that the old woman was ugly. He spoke to her, but she was unwilling to let him check her back hole to see if she had a prostate gland. However, she was willing to let him check her front hole for any diamonds that the pirates might have missed — but only if he did not use his finger. Soon, Dr. Pangloss had moved into the old woman’s room and their bedsprings sometimes squeaked at night. Dr. Pangloss was happy because a woman had

volunteered to sleep with him, and the old woman was happy because her sex life consisted of more than sitting on the bathtub drain as the water ran out.

Cacambo was passing by Martina's room one night when she was unaware that the door was open. She was taking out a dildo from her purse when she looked up and saw Cacambo, who turned his head and saw her — and the dildo. He hesitated a moment, and then he said to her, "The major sex rule of Eldorado — and this small farm — is this: No means no, stop means stop, and don't means don't."

Martina had once been gang-raped, so she found the major sex rule of Eldorado comforting. She definitely enjoyed sex with women, but she also enjoyed sex with men who were not rapists and who understood that the major sex rule of Eldorado actually applied to the whole world. She invited Cacambo into her room, and that night her bedsprings squeaked. The next morning he asked Martina for permission to look in her underwear drawer, which she granted. Cacambo was happy to discover that Martina's underwear drawer contained a strap-on dildo. That night, Martina was happy to discover that she had a bend-over boyfriend, although she had not acquired the strap-on dildo for that particular use. After a few nights had passed, Martina tried thing-in-the-rear-hole sex, but after only two inches she discovered that she didn't like it. She said, "No, stop, don't," and Cacambo immediately stopped and withdrew his thing from Martina's rear hole. However, Martina let Cacambo know what she did like, and very quickly Cacambo learned how to dot the i in Martina's name with a heart, and he learned where to write Martina's name with his tongue. Soon, Cacambo moved into Martina's room, and their bedsprings squeaked, although occasionally it was the table that Cacambo bent over that made noises.

The old woman noticed that she was washing many more sheets than usual, but sheets are easy to wash, so she didn't complain. Besides, the washing machine and dryer made doing the laundry easy.

One evening, as everyone was relaxing and doing puzzles at the end of a day of work, Dr. Pangloss said, "I am not a full professor at Harvard or Yale, but perhaps this really is the best of all possible worlds. We certainly have suffered. The old woman was raped by pirates and had one buttock cut off. I was hung in an auto-da-fé and dissected, and I then became a galley slave. You, Candide, were forced to run the gauntlet in the Bulgar army, and you were cheated out of great wealth. All of us have suffered. Still, this is a pleasant moment in a pleasant place."

"And to keep it that way, we must work in the garden," Candide said. "And let's keep in mind that in the best of all possible real worlds, women are empowered to say no when they want to, and men respect and obey that no. Of course, men must be empowered to say no when they want to, and women must respect and obey that no."

"You have spoken wise words," Martina said to Candide, "but I think we all know that, with the exception of your small farm and the old man's small farm, and some kind people and activism here and there, the real world is still in very much the same old mess it has always been in."

Chapter 31: Conclusion, Continued

Can Martina's satire make a difference? Maybe. Chances are, she could make a more valuable contribution by running for public office or becoming a lawyer or journalist. Here are some articles she wrote while using her pseudonym:

Public Domain Ideas for YouTube Videos

1) A young woman in college was going through a Goth / Punk phase, and she wore heavy, scary makeup most of the time. Sometimes, she didn't take off the makeup even when she was going out for a run in the park. One day, she was running in the park while wearing the heavy, scary makeup, and a masked man jumped out from behind a bush, grabbed her arm, and said, "I'VE GOT YOU NOW!" The scary Goth woman said, "THE POLICE ARE AFTER ME!" Scary masked man ran away in one direction, and scary Goth woman ran away in the opposite direction.

Alternatively, the young woman can be clean-cut and when she says, "THE POLICE ARE AFTER ME!" the masked man can laugh at her. So she says, "I'M A SHOPLIFTER!" Lots of clean-cut young women are shoplifters, so the masked man runs away.

2) A man was trying to pick up a woman, and he was persistent even after she made it clear that she was not interested in him. Finally, she asked, "May I borrow your phone?" He handed her his phone, and she looked through the contacts and saw a contact labelled "Mom." She called that number, and when his mom answered, she said, "Your son is trying to pick me up, and I have told him over and over that I am not interested, and he is persistent even after I have made it clear that I am not interested." They talked for a minute or so, with the woman giving the man's mother a few details, and then she handed the phone back to the man and said, "Your mother wants to talk to you."

3) A man was walking one way on the sidewalk, and a woman was walking toward him on the sidewalk. When they got close, the man said, "You're a bit too thin for me." The woman replied, "You're a bit too thick for me." They kept on walking past each other.

4) Two women were riding their bikes in the neighborhood when a man working on his roof began to catcall them. The two women got off their bikes, walked over to his house, knocked the man's ladder over, and then got on their bikes and rode away. NOTE: Use a wooden ladder, or be very careful about power lines.

5) Some men are scary, obviously, but other men are not scary. A man was arguing with a woman on a bus. The man was standing up, and the woman was seated. Eventually, the man got so angry that he kicked the seat the woman was sitting on. This is, of course, an act of violence. A quick-thinking man ran up behind the angry man and grabbed the top of his sweatpants and pulled them down to his ankles. The quick-thinking man then stood between the woman and the angry man, and he stared at the angry man. The angry man pulled his pants up and walked back to his own seat. The woman thanked the quick-thinking man, who said, "You're welcome," and he went back to his seat and sat down. The angry man got off the bus at the next stop.

6) This story is just about a man who simply did the right thing. A woman ordered a pizza and thought she had time to take a quick shower before it was delivered, but she heard the doorbell ring as she was wrapping a towel around herself after the shower. She went to the door and let

in the pizza-delivery man. She handed him her credit card, and he handed her the pizza, and — oh! my goodness! — her towel accidentally fell to the floor. Pizza-delivery man immediately turned around so he couldn't see her, and she picked up the towel and held it in front of her. Pizza-delivery man finished the credit-card transaction and handed the woman her credit card and the receipt by holding it over his shoulder and behind his back, and he left. NOTE: In the case of the pizza delivery, the woman can be wearing a two-piece swimsuit so you don't get censored.

7) A woman went into a coffee shop and a man there tried to pick her up. She did not want to be picked up, but the man was persistent. The woman bought two hotdogs and two Cokes. She went to a table and put down one hotdog and one Coke on each side of the table. She sat down. The man sat down opposite her. She pushed her hotdog and her Coke toward him, and then she got up and left. The man had a decision to make: Does he get up and follow the woman, or does he stay and eat? The man stayed and ate. (NOTE: This actually happened at Carol Lee Donuts in Athens, Ohio, back when it had a Carol Lee Donuts.)

Sex, of course, is supposed to be fun:

8) A husband and wife are kissing in their bedroom.

Suddenly, someone says, "Cut! That was terrible! Go find some bushes and practice!"

The somebody is one of their daughters, who has been filming them.

The wife says, "But we're married!"

The husband says, "And we have kids!"

The wife says, "And you're one of them!"

The husband says, "And who said you could film us!"

Another daughter walks into the bedroom and says, "I don't have anything to wear. Can I wear something of yours, Mom?"

She opens the closet door and looks through the clothes and says:

"Mom, I didn't know you were a cheerleader.

"Mom, I didn't know you were a nurse.

"Mom, I didn't know you were a Japanese schoolgirl—

"Oh."

A third daughter, who is very young, walks into the bedroom, and goes into the closet and takes out of a drawer or a box a pair of pink furry handcuffs. She holds them high and says, "Mom, can I take these to school for Show and Tell?"

The wife takes away the handcuffs and says, "You better take a stuffed animal, honey."

The girl next door walks into the bedroom and sees the pink, furry handcuffs and says:

"Hey.

"Wow.

“Neat.

“Can I borrow those?”

The husband and wife shoo out the girls, and the husband says, “Honey, are you willing to be Helen of Troy tonight?”

She says, “Sure, if you’re willing to be Conan the Barbarian.”

Please, someone take these stories and make videos to put up on YouTube, Vimeo, or wherever.

Fred Flintstone Supports Drag Queens

Take a look at what Fred Flintstone wears. Obviously, he thinks it is OK for a man to wear a dress.

I have known a few men who have worn dresses or skirts in public. They weren’t all gay.

One guy wore a dress as an experiment to see whether it is true that USAmerica is the land of the free and the home of the brave.

He figured, “I’ll be brave and wear a dress, and I’ll see whether I am free to wear a dress.”

He thought that he might be beaten up — or cat-called.

But this is Athens, Ohio, and all that happened was that some women gave him tips on how to get a good fit.

After a few days or a week, he stopped wearing dresses.

He wasn’t gay.

Another guy I know loved fashion.

He used to watch the Oscars, the Tonys, the Grammys, and the Emmys awards shows and criticize the men for all wearing the same thing: black tuxedos.

The women, on the other hand, wore fabulous dresses, with many colors, many designs, and many designers.

He thought, *Why should the women have all the fun?*

And he began to wear women’s clothing — quite well, in fact.

He wasn’t gay.

A police officer got married.

On their wedding night, the wife went into the bathroom and came out wearing a lovely nightgown.

Then the police officer went into the bathroom and came out wearing a lovelier nightgown than his wife was wearing.

He said, “I can’t help this.”

His wife said, “I love you, and I accept this. You don’t need to worry about it. It’s not a problem.”

It is common for a wife to buy a mastectomy bra and for the salespeople to be kind, solicitous, polite, and all-around great people.

It is also common for a wife to be tempted to say, “I don’t want to mislead you. I don’t have breast cancer. I haven’t had my breasts removed. My husband just likes to wear a bra.”

There are other reasons to wear a dress or a skirt, or something like a skirt.

I have recently seen a guy wearing a Scottish kilt, perhaps as a way to show pride in his Scottish heritage.

My name is David Bruce, and there was a King David Bruce of Scotland, and so I suppose could wear a kilt if I wanted to.

I think more men may be wearing skirts and dresses in the future because of global warming.

It’s simply true that skirts and dresses are cooler than pants.

I tell you what. If next summer is hotter than this summer, if you see me on Court Street, I will be wearing shorts.

I don’t want to wear a dress, but I don’t care if other guys want to.

The Seven Deadly Sins

1) Pride — A sinner who is guilty of Pride thinks, “I am the center of the universe, and I am better than other people. Quite simply, I am more important than other people.”

2) Envy — A sinner who is guilty of Envy thinks, “I am the center of the universe, and if you have something I want, I envy you.”

3) Wrath — A sinner who is guilty of Wrath thinks, “Because I am the center of the universe, everything ought to go my way, and when it does not, I get angry.”

4) Sloth — A sinner who is guilty of Sloth thinks, “I am the center of the universe, so I don’t have to work at something. Either other people can do my work for me, or they can give me credit for work I have not done because if I had done the work, I would have done it excellently.”

5) Avariciousness and Prodigality — A sinner who is guilty of Avariciousness or Prodigality thinks, “I am the center of the universe, so I deserve to have what I want. If I want money, I get money and never spend it, or if I want the things that money can buy, then I spend every penny I can make or borrow to get what I want. Either way, I deserve to have what I want.”

6) Gluttony — A sinner who is guilty of Gluttony thinks, “I am the center of the universe, so I deserve these three extra pieces of pie every night. This is my reward for myself for being so fabulous.”

7) Lust — A sinner who is guilty of lust thinks, “I am the center of the universe, so my needs take precedence over the needs of everyone else. If I want to get laid, it’s OK if I lie to get

someone in the sack and never call that person afterward. My sexual pleasure is more important than the hurt of someone who realizes that he or she has been used.”

Many of the sinners in the Inferno believe themselves to be the center of the universe. According to Dante’s cosmology, the Earth is the center of the universe. Circle #9 of the Inferno is at the center of the Earth. Lucifer is at the center of the Circle 9.

What is at the exact center of the universe? I know. It is inside Lucifer. The exact center of the universe is that place where food is not food anymore.

Afterword

In Chapter 22, Candide rescues a woman who is being followed by a strange man. This event happened in real life to an Ohio University student who was visiting London. Her thoughts and some of the dialogue as recounted in this book really occurred. Men don't have to be the enemy. A penis does not have to be used as a weapon. If a man threatens someone with it, take it away from him.

By the way, the wisdom stories that are told in Eldorado can be found in these books:

- Chung, Tsai Chih (editor and illustrator) and Kok Kok Kiang (translator). *The Book of Zen*. Singapore: Asiapac, 1990.
- Cleary, Thomas, translator. *Zen Antics: A Hundred Stories of Enlightenment*. Boston, MA: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1993.
- Reps, Paul, compiler. *Zen Flesh, Zen Bones*. Rutland, VT: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1957.
- Stryk, Lucien and Takashi Ikemoto, selectors and translators. *Zen: Poems, Prayers, Sermons, Anecdotes, Interviews*. Chicago, IL: Swallow Press, 1981.

The dialogue of the stories comes word for word or almost word for word from these books.

Twenty Questions: A Popmatters Interview with David Bruce (Pseudonym of Martina)

1. The latest book or movie that made you cry?

About Alice, by Calvin Trillin.

2. The fictional character most like you?

Martin, in *Candide* by Voltaire.

3. The greatest album, ever?

Nothing is More by Go Betty Go, who I wish shared the Ramones' longevity. Also, *Anthology* by the Ramones, who never had a hit, but ended up in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. And, of course, *Greatest Hits, Volume 16*, by the Donnas, who share my love of the Ramones. Just like all of the members of the Ramones took the name 'Ramone,' so all of the members of the Donnas have taken the name 'Donna.' By the way, I define "greatest" as "bringing me the most amount of pleasure."

4. Star Trek or Star Wars?

Neither.

5. Your ideal brain food?

Good books, music, movies, works of art, and performances by gifted satiric comedians.

6. You're proud of this accomplishment, but why?

I am a survivor. So many people are not, including some people who are still alive.

7. You want to be remembered for...?

Savage satire and sex scenes.

8. Of those who've come before, the most inspirational are?

The purveyors of ancient wisdom: Jesus, Confucius, Lao-tse, Muhammad, Buddha. Most people don't know this, but ancient wisdom is also modern wisdom. I won't claim to completely understand this wisdom, but I do admire it from a distance.

9. The creative masterpiece you wish bore your signature?

Candide, by Voltaire. Also, works by Jonathan Swift, Jane Austen, Mark Twain, and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr.

10. Your hidden talents...?

I can exist in two centuries at the same time.

11. The best piece of advice you actually followed?

Candide advised me to travel with him and let him pay the bills. This actually turned out very well. I am pleasantly surprised.

12. The best thing you ever bought, stole, or borrowed?

A blender.

13. You feel best in Armani or Levis or...?

Naked, but only when I am alone or with a lover who understands that no means no, don't means don't, and stop means stop.

14. Your dinner guests at the Ritz would be?

Candide, Cacambo, Cunegonde, Dr. Pangloss, the old woman, Pacquette and Giroflée. Also, the old man and his family.

15. Time travel: where, when, and why?

The Roman empire at the time of the Pax Romana. Peace is necessary for happiness, and a time of great peace can be a time of great happiness. I would like the Pax Romana to be the Pax Americana, but that seems unlikely. Too bad, because I do enjoy modern conveniences such as blenders and things that use batteries.

16. Stress management: hit man, spa vacation, or Prozac?

Prozac I can live without. I would rather face reality and be depressed than to exist in the world in a drug-induced stupor and be happy. I can think of many people I could tell a hit man (or woman) about, although with my luck the hit man (or woman) would be a federal agent.

17. Essential to life: coffee, vodka, cigarettes, chocolate, or...?

Coffee. If caffeine were an illegal drug, I would be a user of an illegal drug.

18. Environ of choice: city or country, and where on the map?

Anywhere safe. In my experience, small farms tend to be places of safety. However, large cities can be safe if they have enough feminists, including weightlifting feminists and feminists with sharp knives, and if they have stores that sell blenders.

19. What do you want to say to the leader of your country?

Lead. Make the world a better place than you found it. If you can't do it with all your power and influence, who can?

20. Last but certainly not least, what are you working on, now?

I am proofreading all of my books one last time. This has been a humbling experience.

APPENDIX A: “I WANT TO DIE — OR FIGHT BACK” (A Short Story)

Chapter 1: The Beginning

Martina visited a bad section of the city, where she noticed a lot of family-owned stores, many of them owned by whites and by Asian-Americans. She also noticed a lot of hostility and tension between the workers in the stores and their customers, many of whom were black. In some stores, the Asian-Americans would even follow any blacks who entered the store. That way, the Asian-Americans could make sure that the blacks did not shoplift anything.

She entered a store to make a small purchase. In this store, the elderly storekeeper was shorthanded and so stayed by the cash register and did not follow around the three black teenagers who entered the store behind Martina. However, Martina noticed that his eyes followed the three black teenagers when they were within his line of sight, as they often were. The storekeeper also kept his eyes on the mirrors that extended his line of sight.

Martina quickly learned that the three black teenagers knew where the mirrors were located. They stole stuff when they knew that the elderly storekeeper could not see them. When they had stolen enough, they went to the cash register area and one teenager paid for some inexpensive items. Martina estimated that the three black teenagers had stolen items that were worth four or five times the amount that the one black teenager had actually paid.

Martina picked up a few small items, went to the cash register area, and opened her large purse to get some money — and to allow the elderly storekeeper a chance to glance inside her purse and see that she was not stealing anything.

The elderly storekeeper also looked over Martina's body with a quick glance — not in a lecherous way, but simply to see if her clothing had any telltale bumps that indicated the presence of shoplifted items. The only bumps she had were all natural — the gifts of God.

“Did you see those three teenagers?” he asked her. “I know that they stole from me just now, but I can't do anything about it because I did not see them steal anything. They're stealing me poor. Soon I am going to have to close this store because of a lack of profit. That actually will hurt this neighborhood because less competition means higher prices. Those teenagers don't realize that by stealing from me they are hurting themselves and their families.”

“That's a shame,” Martina said. “Someone ought to do something.”

That night, Martina had an idea that she put into effect the following day. Each day, she would go to a store, buy the kinds of items that the teenagers were stealing, put them in her purse, and then go to the store of the elderly storekeeper. There she would pick up a few items, but she would also wait until she was in an area that the elderly storekeeper could not see, and she would unload her purse, placing on the shelves the items that she had previously purchased at another store. Then she would pay for the items she had picked up, always opening her purse wide so that the elderly storekeeper could see that she was not stealing anything. Often she saw the black teenagers in the store. Often they would steal things that she would quickly replace with the items that she had smuggled into the store.

The first time Martina did this, she thought, *Shopstuffing. It's a nice change from shoplifting.*

When the elderly storekeeper took inventory at the end of the month, he was pleasantly surprised. He had losses from shoplifting, but the losses were not close to being as significant

as they had been in previous months. He also wondered if he was wrong about the three black teenagers. Maybe they weren't shoplifters, after all.

The day after the elderly storekeeper took inventory, the three black teenagers entered the store, and the elderly storekeeper greeted them and said a few pleasant words to them. They did their normal shoplifting — and later Martina did her normal shopstuffing. By this time, Martina and the elderly shopkeeper were old friends, and although Martina always opened her big purse wide, the shopkeeper felt no need to glance into it. Instead, they simply talked for a few minutes as and after she had paid for her purchases.

And each day the elderly storekeeper and the three black teenagers talked, and soon the three black teenagers were shoplifting less and a little later the three teenagers were not shoplifting at all — at that particular store. And a little later than that they were telling their friends not to shoplift at that particular store.

At the end of the month, the elderly shopkeeper took inventory, and this time he was greatly surprised because the inventory showed that he had more items than he should have had. Normally, when he bought 100 chocolate bars and sold 80 items, he would have 10 chocolate bars left — 10 having been stolen by shoplifters. But this time, when he bought 100 chocolate bars and sold 80 chocolate bars, he had 25 chocolate bars left.

In the modern world, miracles don't happen, unless you count the miracle of existence. A rational reason must exist for the excessive number of items on his store shelves. So the next time the three black teenagers entered the store, he asked them if they been bringing items into the store and putting them on his shelves.

They were surprised by the question, and one of them, whose name was Bill, asked, "Why would we do that?"

The elderly shopkeeper, whose name was Max, replied, "You're going to think this is funny, but I used to think that you three guys were shoplifting."

"No!" the three black teenagers said.

"Yes, I did," Max said. "And I thought that maybe you were feeling guilty about shoplifting so you were putting items on the shelves to replace the items that you used to steal."

"Nope. Wasn't us," Bill said. And his two friends agreed that they would never do such a thing as shoplift or return items that they had stolen.

So they said, but Max didn't believe them. He still believed that the three black teenagers had been smuggling items into his store and putting them on the shelves when they were out of his line of sight.

Martina quit shopstuffing soon afterward. The elderly shopkeeper never had a surplus in his inventory again, but his losses from shoplifting, although irritating, were livable. And whenever he looked at the three black teenagers, he saw three honest black teenagers although previously they had always looked like shoplifters to him. And whenever the three black teenagers looked at Max, they saw a nice elderly gentleman — someone who should not suffer from shoplifters.

Chapter 2: The Rape and Its Aftermath

Living in or even near a bad section of town is a bad idea, and people who do so usually do so involuntarily and have many reasons to live elsewhere. Visiting in or near a bad section of town is also a bad idea, and people who do so often find out why it is a bad idea.

Late one evening as the evening turned into night, shortly after leaving a subway Martina heard a sound coming from an alley. The sound was that of a child crying “Mommy! Mommy!” Always a Good Samaritan, Martina went deep into the alley to find and help the child.

She had a good motive, but it had bad consequences.

When Martina was deep into the alley, a man jumped out from behind a dumpster. In his hand was a phone, and recorded on the phone was the sound of a child crying, “Mommy! Mommy!”

Another man who now stood behind Martina grabbed her arms and held them tightly, while a third stuffed a dirty rag in her mouth and then wrapped duct tape around her head and across her mouth to make sure that she could not spit out the rag and cry for help. They also used duct tape to bind her hands behind her. The first man shut off the phone. Then they took turns raping her.

They threw her on the ground of the alley, and one man held her arms and sat on her head. Another man lifted her dress and pulled off her underwear, then penetrated her first with his fingers and then with his penis. The third man kept watch for police and pedestrians. When a pedestrian appeared, the man simply showed himself, stared at the pedestrian, and looked dangerous, and the pedestrian crossed the street, never being near enough to hear any suspicious sounds coming from the alley. When a police car appeared, the man simply hid himself in the alley and called a low warning to the other men. When one man finished raping Martina, they rotated. Not all the men ejaculated. One man tried very hard to, thrusting with all his strength into her, but failed to achieve orgasm, possibly due to alcohol and illegal drugs and bad health.

Martina thought, *This cannot be happening to me, but it is happening to me. I am a good person. I don't deserve this. No one deserves this.*

The rape itself was unpleasant, to use a weak word for a strong sensation that cannot be accurately put in words, and unpleasant were the other sensations Martina endured. The weight on her head caused her to have a headache, and she wondered if she had a concussion. She had a slight cold, and breathing through her nose was not giving her enough oxygen. In fact, snot was running down from her nose and her snot made noises as she tried to breathe. Also, the man currently sitting on her head did not use toilet paper well enough. And when he switched positions with the man who had raped her first, he farted in her face.

While Martina was being raped, she kept telling herself in her head, *I am not my body. I am not my body.* As much as she could, she experienced the sensation of being out of her body, and she drifted in and out of her body. As much as she could, she told herself, *This is not happening to the real me. It is happening only to my body.*

She did not struggle. She had had no time to scream or attempt to flee before being grabbed by a man much stronger than her, and she knew that each of the three men was much stronger than her. She vaguely hoped that not struggling would save her life by not angering the men raping her.

She also did not try to see the men's faces or to memorize discriminating details about them, again vaguely hoping that this might save her life. Instead, she concentrated on not being her body.

Still, when the men rotated and a man got off her head, she got glimpses of the men. One man had a dragon tattoo on his neck, and later, after the rape, Martina wondered how stupid a criminal must be to get a permanent identifying mark such as a highly visible, highly distinctive tattoo. She wondered if prison guards encouraged tattooing among the prisoners as a way to more easily identify them when they committed new crimes after they got out of prison.

Martina also noticed that the men were wearing condoms. *They must be half-smart*, she thought. *I know that they aren't wearing condoms out of respect for me. They simply don't want to leave that kind of DNA behind.*

Once the rapes were over, the taunting began. The man with the dragon tattoo on her neck enjoyed dominating others, including the two men with him, in various ways. Martina began to think of him as Dragonneck and the others as Bignose — the size of his nose was the only thing distinctive about him — and Fartypants. One way Dragonneck kept his victims afraid and got what he wanted was through sudden changes in personality, such as becoming angry in an instant after seeming to be friendly. He also enjoyed sarcasm: saying one thing while meaning the opposite or at least something very different.

Dragonneck inserted his fingers shallowly into Martina, and then he said to her, "I absolutely love and adore you. Your beauty overwhelms me, and I am yours forever. I want to be the white knight who takes you away on his white steed, and I want to take care of you for the rest of your life. I swear that I shall always respect you, and I want you to be aware that I know that No means No, Stop means Stop, and Don't means Don't."

Then his tone changed, and he said, "Of course, you did not say No, you did not say Stop, and you did not say Don't. Of course, your mouth was gagged, but still...."

Then his tone changed, and he said, "I want you to bear my children, and I want to marry you. We shall be happy together for the rest of our lives."

Then his tone changed, and he said, "And everyday I will invite my friends over to fist-fuck you." And as he said the word "fist-fuck," he also did the action. And yes, there was blood.

Dragonneck used Martina's underwear to wipe between her legs, and then he said to her, "We know where you live. Don't go to the police about this, or we shall rape you all over again, and by all over I mean in every hole you have. And this time we won't allow you to live. After all, being alive is a privilege. By the way, I am keeping your underwear and your juice and your blood as a souvenir."

The taunting was in some ways worse than the rape, and Martina thought, *I don't want to live. I want to die.* If she had not been gagged and Dragonneck had heard these words, he would have immediately thought, *This is the happiest day of my life.*

Actually, Dragonneck had thought about killing her. But he did not kill her. Instead, he told Martina, “This is your lucky day. You’re going to live, provided that you don’t go to the police. Getting away with rape is a lot easier than getting away with murder.”

Dragonneck then punched her hard in the stomach a few times to ensure that she could not stand up for a while, and then the three men left after first going through her purse and taking her money and cell phone.

Again they were at least half-smart. Dragonneck wore cheap latex gloves as he went through her purse, and he did not keep her cell phone, but instead stepped on it and crushed it. He also was half-smart enough not to keep Martina’s underwear. He simply carried it a few blocks and then threw it away in a trash can.

Fartypants had one final gift for Martina before leaving. He dropped his pants and farted in her face, and Martina felt specks hitting her face.

Then the three men walked away as they talked about sports.

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Once she was able to breathe again, Martina cried. She was able to release her hands and the gag in her mouth. She slipped her bound hands under her bottom and over her feet so that her hands were in front of her. Then she cut the duct tape with the sharp edge of a broken board poking out of the dumpster. She did not go to the police, although later she realized that that was a mistake. All she wanted to do was to go home and douche and take a shower and wash her hair, and she did those things. The bleeding had stopped by the time she reached home. She checked three times to make sure that all locks were locked.

No sleep was possible for her that night, although she lay in bed with the top sheet and blankets completely covering her, including the top of her head, except for a hole through which she breathed. She left all the lights in apartment on. Time did not move in a smooth, continuous pattern. She would look at the clock and then an hour later look at it again and see that only a few minutes had passed. Once, she looked at the clock and then after a few minutes had passed she looked at it again and saw that an hour had passed. She wondered if she had fallen asleep, but she did not feel as if she had been asleep. She kept thinking, *From talking with friends, I know that lots of women have been raped, and now I am one of them. Everybody knows a woman who has been raped even if they don’t know that she has been raped. Many people don’t have to look outside their immediate family to find a female — often not yet a woman — who has been raped. Raped females are mothers, sisters, daughters, aunts, cousins, and grandmothers. Rape is so common that often articles about it do not make the front pages of newspapers.*

All she could think about was the rape and how bad she felt.

In the morning she got up and got ready for work. On a morning TV show, a sympathetic celebrity was interviewing a woman who had been raped. The rapist had been tried, the woman had testified against her rapist, and the rapist had been convicted. Because the rapist had been a serial killer, the case had received national and even international attention.

The woman described what had happened: “My boyfriend and I had left a party to get some fresh air. We went down by the railroad tracks. We did not hear the man who approached us from behind. He had a large rock, and he hit my boyfriend on the head. My boyfriend fell to

the ground, and I started to scream, but the man held a knife against my throat. He tied my hands behind me, took off my pants, and raped me, and when he was finished, I begged him to put my pants back on me so I wouldn't be found naked. For some reason, he put my pants back on me. He then hit my head with a rock, knocking me unconscious. He must have thought I was dead because he left. When I regained consciousness, I got to my feet and went to a nearby house, where they called the police and untied me. The man who killed my boyfriend and raped and tried to kill me was a serial killer who was found in another state six months later. All of his other, known victims were dead, and it was up to me to testify against him so he would pay for his crimes."

The celebrity interviewer praised her, saying, "I know that it took a lot of courage to testify against the attacker, but that is exactly what is needed. Unless women report crimes — including sex crimes — to the police, unless they are willing for evidence to be gathered, and unless they are willing to testify against their attackers, the attackers will simply move on to the next victim and keep on victimizing woman after woman."

Martina knew that she had done the wrong thing by coming home and taking a shower. She doubted that the three men knew where she lived, although it was possible, and she realized that if she had gone to the police, important evidence — evidence that had flowed down the drain of her shower — could have been gathered. In addition, she could have given the police a good description of her attackers, especially Dragonneck. Going to the police and then to a hospital for the gathering of evidence would be embarrassing, uncomfortable, and time-consuming, but still the right thing to do, even if she had to come home wearing a hospital gown or a cheap sweatshirt and cheap sweatpants because her own clothing was evidence.

Martina was too tired to think much now. She had to go to work. If she was lucky, she would get involved enough in her work — she had a job that she liked and that paid well — to forget the rape for a few minutes.

People respond to grief in different ways. Some people drink and party — often, these people drink and party even when they aren't feeling great grief. Other people withdraw into themselves and can't function. And other people — such as Martina — throw themselves into their work in an attempt to distract themselves from their grief.

Martina worked hard all day and stayed at the office late. She was sorry when she felt that she had to leave her office and go home. She knew she would miss the distraction from her rape, but she wanted to get home before dark.

At home, she dumped her mail on the table and then forced herself to eat. Now that she was no longer working, she was rerunning the rape in her mind over and over. She also imagined other rapes happening to her — rapes that had not happened but that could happen. She also imagined taking revenge for the rape: kicking the rapists in the balls, castrating them, making them die slowly, painfully, and bloodily. At times, she punched and kicked the air as she imagined what she wanted to do to the rapists. She also cried out loudly at times. Her cry was sometimes a cry of anger, sometimes a cry of pain, and sometime a loud swear word. She also imagined owning a huge, fierce dog so that she could walk safely at night. She thought, *Let guys look at the huge dog and get off the sidewalk and stay away from me. With a dog like that, I would not have to worry about sexual harassment or rape. One difference between men and woman is that most men can walk around at night without fear — many women can't.*

Her mail piled up for a few days until she could bring herself to look at it. One item was a DVD she had ordered. Martina preferred owning physical DVDs to using a streaming service.

Martina did not mind watching an action movie occasionally as long as the hero was a woman, and this was one of those movies. It was *The Brave One*, starring Jodie Foster as a woman who becomes a vigilante after her fiancé is murdered and she is raped.

Martina thought, *Why not at least take a few steps to be prepared in case of attack?*

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Martina was a novice when it came to firearms, and she did some research online — a little — before going to a gun shop. She often had revenge fantasies in which she killed rapists, but she had decided to stay as legal as she could. She had thought, *No sense in having the police catch me with an illegal gun that I have no concealed-carry permit for. Why should I be punished when the rapists go free? I'll get the gun legally and get a legal concealed-carry permit. Once that is done, then I will get my revenge if I should have the opportunity — which I probably won't. If I can, I will try to get away with revenge, and if I don't get away with it, I will be happy with the knowledge of what I did to the rapists. And who knows, maybe I can get revenge against the rapists legally.*

The owner of the gun shop was knowledgeable and was not out simply to make a bunch of bucks. Of course, he was a big believer in the Second Amendment. After Martina approached him, he said, “The Second Amendment says that ‘the right of the people to bear arms shall not be infringed.’ This has always been clear to me, and I don’t know why people have a problem with it.”

Martina thought, *That is clear, isn't it? The government shall not infringe the right of the people to bear arms. Of course, criminals and convicts are people. Should the government give guns to convicts so that their right to bear arms is not infringed? Kindergarteners are people, too. Should public-school teachers give guns to kindergarteners so that their right to bear arms is not infringed? Still, the Second Amendment protects my right to bear arms, and that is something I am in favor of.*

Also, of course, he quoted only part of the Second Amendment. The full Second Amendment is this: “A well regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed.”

The gun-shop owner added, “You’ve come to the right place. Now let’s find the right gun for you. What are you going to use the gun for?”

Martina replied, “Self-protection. I would like a gun that will blow a hole clear through a guy.”

The gun-shop owner had heard this before, and he could guess why Martina wanted a gun. He said automatically, “You’re going to need a bigger purse.”

The gun-shop owner spent time educating Martina, who emphasized to him, “I want a gun that I can carry around with me so I will have it if I need it to protect myself.”

The gun-shop owner said, “The main thing you need is a gun that will fit your hand. You don’t necessarily need a big gun. At close range, most small guns will inflict more than enough damage to stop or kill an attacker.”

He also advocated not carrying a gun in a purse, although some specially made purses have compartments for carrying a gun. He said, “In the situations you need a gun for, you don’t want to be looking down inside your purse trying to find your gun in the midst of everything you are carrying in it. You need to keep your head up and your eyes focused on the attacker or attackers. I recommend carrying the gun on your body. Because of concealed-carry laws, lots of manufacturers are starting to make fashionable clothing that will conceal a gun.”

The gun-shop owner also advised Martina, “You really ought to take classes at a firing range and try out a variety of guns there before buying one of your own. For one thing, in our state such classes are mandatory if you want a concealed-carry permit. For another, since I teach some of those courses, I can let you try some of the guns we have available here. That way, you will know you want it before you buy it. But if you want a gun right away, I can show you a few that will meet your needs along with something to use to carry the gun. And, of course, I can help you get the licenses you need.”

Martina appreciated the advice and signed up for one of the classes that the gun-shop owner taught. She got started on a gun permit right away and started taking the class to get the concealed-carry gun license. Even after getting her permits, she took lessons in shooting accurately from the gun-shop owner.

The gun-shop owner taught her, “If you want to stop a guy, shoot him in the chest. That is always a good place to aim because if you miss the chest, you are likely to still hit something important. If the shot is low, you may hit him in the stomach. If the shot is high, you may hit him in the head. If the shot is off to the side, you may hit an arm or shoulder. A bullet in any of these places will almost certainly make a man decide to quit attacking you.”

Martina soon realized that he was right. The target was in the shape of a silhouette of a man. She aimed for his chest but once missed and hit him between the eyes. One day, after taking lessons for a while and becoming a good markswoman, she aimed at another part of the target — the part where was located the thing that makes a man a man. She scored several direct hits on the target’s crotch, and the gun-shop owner joked, “I was thinking of asking you for a date, but now I don’t want to.”

Martina smiled for perhaps the first time since the rape.

The gun-shop owner advised Martina to take self-defense lessons in addition to taking lessons in gun handling and gun safety. One important lesson of self-defense is to run away if you can. She did all this, and she got in shape through the exercise in practicing self-defense. Her self-confidence was boosted as she gained knowledge of how to take care of herself, including gaining accuracy in shooting, and as she began to carry around the gun.

A woman named Victoria taught the self-defense class. A main focus here was on prevention, but she also taught more active forms of self-defense. One of the things that Martina learned was that stranger rape such as she had endured was much rarer than date rape. Most women who are raped are raped by people they know.

Victoria’s approach to self-protection was feminist. Much of it involved education and training in disabling men by attacking pressure points that would cause them great pain. Victoria avoided the kinds of self-protection that involved women basically barricading themselves in their homes and never leaving because they are so scared of being raped. She believed in living her life, but also in being prepared if bad people made an appearance in her life.

One self-defense weapon she used in her classes was the Kubotan key chain, which is a hard high-impact plastic rod about 5.5 inches long with a key chain at one end. Sometimes, the other end of the rod is pointed. The Kubotan key chain can be used to strike or stab at an attacker, and it can be carried in a purse. It can be used as a weapon whether the woman is attacked from in front or from behind. Martina bought one and carried it in her purse, and she learned well how to use it for self-defense.

She also learned about reporting a rape because even after self-defense training, a person can be raped: Report the rape immediately. Do not take a bath or a shower. Do not douche. If possible, do not go to the bathroom. And during the rape try to be observant — without being obvious about it — and gather information such as the rapist’s hair color and length, facial hair, odors, race, age, weight, height, clothing, and identifying features such as tattoos, scars, and rings or other jewelry. Often, it is a good idea not to smoke or chew gum.

Although Martina had not reported the rape, she decided to mail an anonymous letter to the police. In the letter, she described the rape and she described the rapists. She described in detail what had happened. She also explained that she had not been thinking well after the rape and had gone home and washed away important evidence. She explained that she did not want to go to the police now because she did not think it would do much good, but she did want the police to have important information and so she was writing this letter. She mailed the letter and hoped that it would do some good.

One other thing she did was to get Red Cross certifications in first aid, CPR, and even water rescue. A person can be too negative, always focusing on negative things such as rape. Being raped is one of the worst things that can happen to a person. Saving a life is one of the best things that a person can do.

With all of her training in self-defense and emergency techniques, Martina felt safe enough to live her life again and even to go out at night alone.

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Holly was out late at night, alone, a tourist in a strange city. She had promised her parents not to be out alone at night, but she had disobeyed them so she could see a live professional production of the musical *Wicked*, an experience she had greatly enjoyed and had thought worth every penny of her very expensive ticket. But now three strange men, one of whom had a dragon tattoo on his neck, were following her.

She got on a subway car; they got on the same subway car. She got off the subway car at a stop; they got off at the next stop. She got on another subway car; they got on the same subway car.

The three men approached her, and the man with the tattoo said to her, “You seem to be lost. May we help? We can take you to where you are going.”

Holly replied, “No, I’m fine. I don’t need any help.”

He was persistent: “The city can be dangerous at night. We can protect you. Let us help you.”

Holly said, “No, I don’t need any help. And quit following me.”

She got off the subway car at the next stop, which was near her hotel, and the three men got off the subway car. The stop was deserted because it was late at night. Holly saw a security camera by the elevator, and she hoped that someone was watching, but she knew that quite possibly no one was watching — in fact, the security camera could even be a fake camera installed simply to make people feel safer because they thought a security camera was there and a security guard was watching.

The elevator doors opened.

The man with the dragon tattoo on his neck said, “Get in. Ladies first.”

Holly said, “No. You guys go ahead. I’m meeting someone here.”

The man with the dragon tattoo on his neck said, “You’re lying. Get in the elevator.”

Holly was near tears as she said, “No. Stay away from me.”

The man with the dragon tattoo on his neck said, “That’s not going to happen.”

The elevator doors closed, and the elevator went up.

The man with the dragon tattoo on his neck said, “When the elevator comes back down, get in the elevator.”

Holly said, “No.”

The man with the dragon tattoo on his neck said, “Why not?”

Holly was crying with her back against the wall as she said, “You are going to rape me. You are going to rape me and then you are going to kill me.”

The elevator started down.

The man with the dragon tattoo on his neck said, “Sounds good to me. What do you guys think?”

Bignose and Fartypants replied, “Sounds good to us, too.”

The elevator doors opened, and Martina stood there, searching in her purse for some change for a vending machine. She saw immediately that a young woman had her back against a wall and was crying as three men — the same three men who had raped Martina — stood in front of her.

Dragonneck reacted quickly, launching himself toward Martina. But Martina’s fingers were already around her Kubotan key chain, and she stabbed his throat hard with it as she dropped her purse. This stopped him, briefly, but Bignose and Fartypants had time to react, and they came toward Martina as Dragonneck reached out one arm to grab her — his other arm was on his face. But with her other hand Martina had undone the two buttons on her easy-to-open jacket, and she got her gun and shot the three men one time each in the chest. She was tempted to shoot each of them in the head, but resisted. That would look like an assassination rather than self-defense, and she had no desire to go to prison for killing the three men who had raped her. She put away the gun. Holly was still leaning against the wall, crying hard, and Martina went to her. They put their arms around each other, and then Martina started crying, too. The time it had taken to shoot the three rapists was less than a minute.

Police arrived quickly. The security camera was real and had recorded what had happened, but no one was watching. Fortunately, a security officer who was making her rounds had heard the shots. She had come running and then called police.

Bignose died as soon as he was shot, Fartypants died before the ambulance arrived despite lifesaving efforts by the police (Martina did not help), and Dragonneck died shortly after telling police that Martina had shot him and his two friends for no reason. But Holly told her story, which made it clear that the three men were a threat to her life and to Martina's life. In addition, Martina told the police about the three men having previously raped her. She also told them about the anonymous letter she had written and mailed to the police. The letter had never been made public, and so the police believed that she had written and mailed it. In addition, the footage recorded by the security camera backed up the stories of Holly and Martina.

The three rapists were dead, killed by Martina in self-defense. Everything Martina had done was legal. She even was able to show the police her concealed-carry permit. No charges were filed.

After a thorough investigation, a police officer told Martina, "You did the right thing. Normally, the best thing to do is to flee, but you could not do that because you were in an elevator. Self-defense laws say that you can use only as much force as is needed to protect yourself — you can't shoot someone as they are running away from you. In this case, you had no time to shoot a warning shot, and if you had tried to shoot each of the three men in a leg or an arm, chances are that you would have missed and would have ended up dead."

Later, Martina reflected that the reality of shooting the three rapists was different in many ways from the fantasy versions she had imagined. In most fantasy versions, Bignose died quickly, as he had in real life. Fartypants usually died more painfully than Bignose — and sometimes Martina imagined herself peeing through her underwear onto his head before he died. Most importantly in her fantasy versions, Martina taunted Dragonneck after shooting him in the chest.

Martina had imagined herself saying to Dragonneck as he lay on the floor bleeding from the bullet wound she had given him, "You seem angry. Is there a problem? Have I done anything to upset you? Please, tell me what I have done wrong. I don't want anything to come between us. Is it something I said?"

Then Martina had imagined herself saying to Dragonneck, "I value our friendship," just before shooting him first in the crotch and then in the head.

Chapter 3: Onward

One hot day a few weeks later, Martina saw a car parked in front of a bar. Inside was a small girl. Because of the heat, Martina knew that the little girl could easily get heat stroke and die.

Martina tried the car doors, but they were locked. The windows were up, so she was unable to unlock the doors. She motioned to the little girl to open the door, but the little girl shook her head no, probably because she had learned in school not to trust strangers.

Fortunately, near the bar was a soft-drink machine. Martina bought a cold soft drink, and then she held it up for the little girl to see. The little girl then opened the door and Martina opened the soft drink and gave it to her.

The little girl was sweating, and she quickly gulped some of the cold soft drink.

“Where are your parents?” Martina asked.

“My daddy is inside the bar,” the little girl said. “He said that he just wanted a quick one.”

“What does he look like?” Martina asked.

“He’s big and fat,” the little girl said.

“What color hair does he have?” Martina asked.

“Black,” the little girl said.

Martina went inside the bar, and located the little girl’s father quickly. He was easy to find; the bar was never crowded at that time of day.

Martina walked over to him, “Excuse me, sir. Your little girl is outside in the car and waiting for you. It is dangerous for her to be in the car alone on such a hot day.”

“Mind your own business, bitch,” the little girl’s father said.

Martina went back outside and wrote down the license plate of the car the little girl was in, and then she asked the little girl, “Does your father come here often?”

“All the time,” the little girl replied.

“Does he get drunk a lot?” Martina asked.

“All the time,” the little girl replied.

“You must hate it when he gets drunk,” Martina said.

“No,” the little girl said. “He’s mean when he doesn’t have anything to drink. I like him a lot better when he’s drunk.”

“Do any social workers come to your house?” Martina asked.

“Yes,” the little girl said. “Sometimes they take me away from my daddy for a few weeks, but he always gets me back.”

“If you could have anything you want, what would it be?” Martina asked.

“The same thing my mommy wants: my family to have a steady paycheck that isn’t drunk up every week.”

“Does your mommy live with you and your daddy?”

“Yes.”

Meanwhile, inside the bar the bartender, who had not known that a little girl was alone in a car outside his bar, was talking to the little girl’s father earnestly about how much trouble the father could get into if he were charged with child neglect, and especially if, God forbid, the little girl should get heat stroke and die.

The little girl’s father chugged his beer and went outside. He saw Martina and ordered her to get away from his car and his little girl.

Martina slowly walked backwards away from the car, facing the little girl’s father, and she asked him, “If you could have anything you want, what would it be?”

“A never-ending supply of beer,” he replied before getting in his car and driving away.

Martina was able to find out his name and address by using the license plate number of the car and by talking to the bartender.

The next evening, the little girl’s father had a pleasant surprise.

A truck pulled up to his home, and a deliveryman got out and delivered a couple of cases of beer to the little girl’s father, explaining that it was a paid-for gift.

Every day after that, a truck pulled up to his trailer and delivered a couple of cases of beer.

Meanwhile, the little girl’s mother was having her own pleasant surprises. Once a week, when her husband was sleeping off a hangover, a delivery was made directly to her: an envelope containing money. The name of whoever had sent the gift was not in the envelope with the money. It was not a great amount of money, but it was enough to pay some bills and buy groceries.

The little girl’s mother was very happy. Finally, she did not have to worry about her husband drinking up most of his paycheck.

The little girl’s father was in beer heaven, and he made the most of it. He did not go to work anymore because he had what he valued most. He simply stayed home and drank and watched TV until he passed out. He repeated this routine daily and often twice daily.

In six months, he had a case of cirrhosis of the liver — a case that should have been that of a much older alcoholic. He didn’t see a doctor until months later, and by then he had destroyed his liver, and he died soon after the diagnosis was made.

The little girl and her mother were secretly relieved that he had died, but they had sad faces at the funeral.

The envelopes containing money continued, and an anonymous note that came with one of the envelopes containing money just after the funeral announced that the money gifts would be for smaller and smaller amounts each month until a year was over and then the money would stop coming. That gave the mother time to get a job and start making her own money.

Years later, the little girl, now grown up, talked about how much her daddy had loved her and how good a daddy he had been, but the mother knew and remembered how relieved the little girl had been when her daddy died.

Not years later, but soon after the alcoholic father had died, Martina read in the city newspapers about a man named Mr. Smith who had stopped a rape. He explained, “I had parked my car and was walking the rest of the way to work when I heard a young girl screaming in the alley. I ran into the alley and saw a man wrestling the girl to the ground. She was screaming, and she was fighting him. Apparently, he had grabbed her and carried her into the alley. I ran to the man and pulled him off the girl. He ran away, and I called 911.”

A police spokesman explained that because of the descriptions provided by Mr. Smith and the girl, who was 14 years old and had been walking to school, the attacker had been arrested and had admitted that he wanted to have sex with the girl. Charges had been filed.

Several months later, the man was convicted of attempted rape and sent to prison.

In interviews following the rescue, Mr. Smith said, “I just did what anyone would do.”

Martina thought, You did what anyone would do? No. Rapists would not act the way you did. I frequently hear about rescues from fires. I frequently hear about rescues from burning cars. I frequently hear about rescues from drowning. I seldom hear about someone stopping a rape. The heroes when it comes to dealing with rape are often anonymous: prosecutors, doctors and nurses who gather evidence in a hospital, police officers who dig up evidence, forensic scientists, rape counselors, 911 and other emergency-line operators, self-defense teachers, and guys who know that No means No, Stop means Stop, and Don't means Don't. And once in a while someone like Mr. Smith becomes a hero.

In the interviews, Mr. Smith said, “I am not a hero.”

Martina thought, Heroes are like that. They do heroic actions, and then they deny that they did anything heroic. Heroes will say that it feels good saving a life or doing a good deed. At most, a hero will say that it feels good to be able to help someone else. Heroes tend to be humble about their heroism. Some people deserve recognition and more than recognition.

Some good things did happen to Mr. Smith as a result of the publicity. He received many, many thanks from many, many women — young women, mothers, and grandmothers — and from a few men. The family members of the girl he had rescued were especially thankful.

He also received a letter containing a few hundred dollars in bills and a thank-you card. The hand-printed note in the thank-you card said, “Thanks. We need more heroes like you.” He tried to send it back to the return address with a note explaining that all he had wanted to do was to help someone, but the letter he mailed came back to him with a notation saying, “No such address.” Martina had used a fake address when she mailed the letter.

...

Late one evening as the evening turned into night, shortly after leaving a subway Martina heard a sound coming from an alley. The sound was that of a child crying “Mommy! Mommy!” Martina kept on walking. She quickly reached a well-lighted, safe area, and then she used her cell phone to call 911.

The End

APPENDIX B: ABOUT THE AUTHOR

It was a dark and stormy night. Suddenly a cry rang out, and on a hot summer night in 1954, Josephine, wife of Carl Bruce, gave birth to a boy — me. Unfortunately, this young married couple allowed Reuben Saturday, Josephine’s brother, to name their first-born. Reuben, aka “The Joker,” decided that Bruce was a nice name, so he decided to name me Bruce Bruce. I have gone by my middle name — David — ever since.

Being named Bruce David Bruce hasn’t been all bad. Bank tellers remember me very quickly, so I don’t often have to show an ID. It can be fun in charades, also. When I was a counselor as a teenager at Camp Echoing Hills in Warsaw, Ohio, a fellow counselor gave the signs for “sounds like” and “two words,” then she pointed to a bruise on her leg twice. Bruise Bruise? Oh yeah, Bruce Bruce is the answer!

Uncle Reuben, by the way, gave me a haircut when I was in kindergarten. He cut my hair short and shaved a small bald spot on the back of my head. My mother wouldn’t let me go to school until the bald spot grew out again.

Of all my brothers and sisters (six in all), I am the only transplant to Athens, Ohio. I was born in Newark, Ohio, and have lived all around Southeastern Ohio. However, I moved to Athens to go to Ohio University and have never left.

At Ohio U, I never could make up my mind whether to major in English or Philosophy, so I got a bachelor’s degree with a double major in both areas, then I added a Master of Arts degree in English and a Master of Arts degree in Philosophy. Yes, I have my MAMA degree.

Currently, and for a long time to come (I eat fruits and veggies), I am spending my retirement writing books such as *Nadia Comaneci: Perfect 10*, *The Funniest People in Dance*, *Homer’s Iliad: A Retelling in Prose*, and *William Shakespeare’s Othello: A Retelling in Prose*.

By the way, my sister Brenda Kennedy writes romances such as *A New Beginning* and *Shattered Dreams*.

APPENDIX C: SOME BOOKS BY DAVID BRUCE

Retellings of a Classic Work of Literature

Arden of Faversham: A Retelling

Ben Jonson’s The Alchemist: A Retelling

Ben Jonson’s The Arraignment, or Poetaster: A Retelling

Ben Jonson’s Bartholomew Fair: A Retelling

Ben Jonson’s The Case is Altered: A Retelling

Ben Jonson’s Catiline’s Conspiracy: A Retelling

Ben Jonson’s The Devil is an Ass: A Retelling

Ben Jonson’s Epicene: A Retelling

Ben Jonson’s Every Man in His Humor: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Every Man Out of His Humor: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's The Fountain of Self-Love, or Cynthia's Revels: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's The Magnetic Lady, or Humors Reconciled: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's The New Inn, or The Light Heart: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Sejanus' Fall: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's The Staple of News: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's A Tale of a Tub: A Retelling

Ben Jonson's Volpone, or the Fox: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Complete Plays: Retellings

Christopher Marlowe's Dido, Queen of Carthage: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Doctor Faustus: Retellings of the 1604 A-Text and of the 1616 B-Text

Christopher Marlowe's Edward II: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's The Massacre at Paris: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's The Rich Jew of Malta: A Retelling

Christopher Marlowe's Tamburlaine, Parts 1 and 2: Retellings

Dante's Divine Comedy: A Retelling in Prose

Dante's Inferno: A Retelling in Prose

Dante's Purgatory: A Retelling in Prose

Dante's Paradise: A Retelling in Prose

The Famous Victories of Henry V: A Retelling

From the Iliad to the Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose of Quintus of Smyrna's Posthomerica

George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston's Eastward Ho! A Retelling

George Peele's The Arraignment of Paris: A Retelling

George Peele's The Battle of Alcazar: A Retelling

George's Peele's David and Bathsheba, and the Tragedy of Absalom: A Retelling

George Peele's Edward I: A Retelling

George Peele's The Old Wives' Tale: A Retelling

George-a-Greene: A Retelling

The History of King Leir: A Retelling

Homer's Iliad: A Retelling in Prose

Homer's Odyssey: A Retelling in Prose

J.W. Gent.'s The Valiant Scot: A Retelling

Jason and the Argonauts: A Retelling in Prose of Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica

John Ford: Eight Plays Translated into Modern English

John Ford's The Broken Heart: A Retelling

John Ford's The Fancies, Chaste and Noble: A Retelling

John Ford's The Lady's Trial: A Retelling

John Ford's The Lover's Melancholy: A Retelling

John Ford's Love's Sacrifice: A Retelling

John Ford's Perkin Warbeck: A Retelling

John Ford's The Queen: A Retelling

John Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore: A Retelling

John Lyly's Campaspe: A Retelling

John Lyly's Endymion, The Man in the Moon: A Retelling

John Lyly's Galatea: A Retelling

John Lyly's Love's Metamorphosis: A Retelling

John Lyly's Midas: A Retelling

John Lyly's Mother Bombie: A Retelling

John Lyly's Sappho and Phao: A Retelling

John Lyly's The Woman in the Moon: A Retelling

John Webster's The White Devil: A Retelling

King Edward III: A Retelling

Mankind: A Medieval Morality Play (A Retelling)

Margaret Cavendish's The Unnatural Tragedy: A Retelling

The Merry Devil of Edmonton: A Retelling

The Summoning of Everyman: A Medieval Morality Play (A Retelling)

Robert Greene's Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay: A Retelling

The Taming of a Shrew: A Retelling

Tarlton's Jests: A Retelling

Thomas Middleton's A Chaste Maid in Cheapside: A Retelling

Thomas Middleton's Women Beware Women: A Retelling

Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker's The Roaring Girl: A Retelling

Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's The Changeling: A Retelling

The Trojan War and Its Aftermath: Four Ancient Epic Poems

Virgil's Aeneid: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's 5 Late Romances: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 10 Histories: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 11 Tragedies: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 12 Comedies: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 38 Plays: Retellings in Prose

William Shakespeare's 1 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's 2 Henry IV, aka Henry IV, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's 1 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 1: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's 2 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 2: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's 3 Henry VI, aka Henry VI, Part 3: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's All's Well that Ends Well: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's As You Like It: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Comedy of Errors: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Coriolanus: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Cymbeline: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Hamlet: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Henry V: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Henry VIII: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Julius Caesar: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's King John: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's King Lear: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Love's Labor's Lost: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Macbeth: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Merchant of Venice: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Merry Wives of Windsor: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Othello: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Pericles, Prince of Tyre: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Richard II: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Richard III: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Taming of the Shrew: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Tempest: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Timon of Athens: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Troilus and Cressida: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's Twelfth Night: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Two Gentlemen of Verona: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Two Noble Kinsmen: A Retelling in Prose

William Shakespeare's The Winter's Tale: A Retelling in Prose