

NOTES

It has been said, “Our dreams make us who we are.” In her inspirational short story, Bridget Grace Sheaff introduces us to a young, hopeful artist whose goal is to become successful, and in the process, leaves a small town in hopes of making the dream become a reality in New York City. This selection may be performed by a female or a male and should be entered in Prose Interpretation. There is an underlying hint of sarcasm throughout this story; however, always keep the protagonist likeable; after all, the audience should root for the narrator’s ultimate success. The drama mask icons are simply visible to show the performer when to turn the pages of the manuscript.

I moved to New York to become an artist. I know. Cliché. Everyone moves to New York to become an artist or an actor or a singer or to find themselves or whatever. I’m not going to try to tell you I was any different than they are or were or will be. I moved to New York, and I was going to paint and be famous and become filthy stinking rich. That was the plan. Not a very good plan, was it? My parents gave me \$1,000 a month to live on. Not much in New York City. Not much anywhere. It barely covered rent for the tiny apartment I lived in, and the remainder wouldn’t really buy me food. I had to find a job, and fast; which is also not easy in New York City, not easy anywhere. It would seem that every job applicant was a wide-eyed, struggling artist from a small town in Ohio with no formal education and a laughable resumé. I mean, at least that’s who I was. I started out working in a flower shop. I swept the floors. I’m not joking. Sweeper. Minimum wage.



The biggest problem, in my mind, was food. At home, my mother was always trying out new cuisine and fusing cultures together. There were times where we were forced to try Italian Meatball Tacos or Kung Pao Cabbage. (It’s worse than it sounds. Believe me.) Mostly we had excellent food though with brilliant flavors and textures and combinations of flavors and textures that were all new and different. College student food really didn’t sound that appealing to me. I mean, I didn’t know macaroni and cheese came in boxes. Apparently noodles in Styrofoam cups heated to lukewarm in a microwave counted as an entire meal. It was at this time that I discovered the peanut butter and honey sandwich.



Now the peanut butter and honey sandwich is not your traditional peanut butter sandwich. Most people go with the standard pairing of peanut butter and jelly. That was just a little too normal for me. Plus, honey never goes bad. It's both timeless and incapable of being spoiled. The sweet, sugary consistency of the honey doesn't overwhelm the creaminess of the peanut butter, but it sparkles through with a liquid, golden flavor that you just can't hate. I thought I was brilliant. Here was a traditional sandwich idea modified and made completely my own. Peanut butter and honey sandwiches. I lived off peanut butter and honey sandwiches for weeks. They were cheap, easy to make, and one step above your traditional dorm food.



I was taking an art class a few blocks from my apartment. I walked in with a mixture of both excitement and terror. I sat down at an easel and started to look at the people around me. They all looked so much older than I was. I knew they had to be about my same age, but they looked mature and focused and some of them had that look on their faces that so plainly said "This class is a joke." The first assignment was to paint a tree. That was all we had to do. Paint a tree. Perfect. Simple. I would show the instructor what I could do. So I started painting a tree, but it was more than just a tree. I made the *perfect* tree. I thought of everything, the roots popping up out of the ground, the sunlight coming through the branches. I even added a pretty good bird to one of the boughs. At the end of the class, my instructor walked around, slowly examining each painting, not saying a word. When he got to mine, he stopped. He seemed to be standing there during the entire Rosary I was saying in my head, praying he would like it. He coughed slightly, looked at me and said, "Unimpressive."



You know, there were days after that class that I wanted to go back home to Ohio more than anything. I wanted to see my parents and sleep in my old room. There averaged more days of homesickness than days of feeling at home. It was on those days that I hated peanut butter and honey sandwiches. I mean, who was I kidding? I put one sweet, sticky substance on top of another sticky, sweet substance, slapped them on two lousy pieces of bread and declared myself a chef. I wasn't a chef. I was a twelve-year-old playing house. Sometimes I couldn't even swallow my sandwich. I just left it on a plate and walked away. I couldn't