

Fostered Sewage

1. How Candide Dreamed of MLP and Morgan

I awoke one morning to the sounds of rain pitter-pattering onto the bumpy wooden roof above my head. The gushing wind howled as it entered through creases and cracks in the attic. It brought with it the smell of pine leaves, which was in a relentless war with the fumes of rotting wood. Light entered through the smudged, dusty window above my twin-sized bed, and lit the attic in a blurred, crimson hue. Through this window, I saw the millennium-old pine tree that swayed to the ceaseless, ferocious wind.

I shrugged my shoulders and shoved my body forward as I wiggled upright. I arched my back, and a few strands of my fuzzy hair touched the bottom rail of the oak headboard. Placing my palms perpendicular to the bed, I tried to push myself fully upright, but I did not budge an inch. Strangely enough, I did not feel sore, and I was not tired either. I turned my head towards my right hand, then to my left hand, and then to my right hand again.

"Brilliant red, scorching, extra heaven. I must be dreaming." I blinked my eyes, but nothing changed. With puckered lips, I raised my right hand, sealed my eyes, and tensed my cheek muscles. The fingers and palm of my right hand dragged across my face. My cheeks vibrated, and my palms stung. The sound of my hand clashing onto my skin echoed throughout the thin-walled room. Yet, when I shifted my head towards my left hand, it still had no fingers; all that remained were the knuckles that lingered on my left hand and a red bruise on my cheek.

I continued to shrug my shoulders, and I pushed myself up until my back leaned against the headboard. The walls were the way I had left them before dozing off last night; they still had their clusters of grayish-brown specks, most prominently along the edges and corners; it was as if someone had smeared cigar ash on the walls; however, I knew it was mold. I stretched my legs apart. My pants began wrapping tighter around my body.

"Hemoglobin-filled, supplementary heaven." My pants were completely soaked and sticky.

I hope the paper-thin roof is not leaking again, I thought. Mr. Nathaniel Mitch Hunter McConnell Supreme White patched it yesterday with flex tape.

I grabbed my broken glasses, and I turned my head towards the bedsheet.

Everything looks normal, I thought. I lowered my legs, and I lifted myself off the bed.

Hmm, the bed is wet too. But how? I slanted my body over the bed, only allowing my head to come in close contact with the bedsheet. Then, I tapped the bedsheet with the tips of the fingers on my right hand, and I immediately flinched my body backward.

"Splendid. That's pleasantly surprising." I had wet the bed and my Curious George pajamas. I left for the bathroom, where I took a long, steamy shower, enjoying the quiet of the morning.

After cleaning up after "my fortunate accident" as my birth parents used to say, I glanced at a ticking, aluminum-rimmed, carbon-powered timepiece, also known as a digital OLED clock with a speaker.

It's only seven in the morning. I guess I have time. I sat down onto my third-hand carbon fiber desk, took my daily dose of dihydrogen monoxide, opened up my scrapbook, grasped the nearest organic gel pen with my right hand, and wrote:

May 29th, 2050

7:02:23 AM

Dear charming, quick-witted, humble self and the unintended readers of my extensive observations of daily extra-normal activities, or 'dear diary' as normal people would say,

For the official record, I am Candide The Great of the Majestic Leaking Attic. Today, May 29th, 2050, is one day after humans have landed on Mars. However, 6-year-old Don claims it was an orchestrated Hollywood illusion. While on the topic of failures like Don, I would like to note that my experiment has failed.

Before I slept yesterday, I proclaimed, "I will go into slow-wave sleep, which is what the zizz-siesta-ologists at WebMD call deep sleep. I will remember every minuscule detail of my dream because I am extremely talented; I can sleep with my eyes shut. I will remember every detail of my dream." I shut my eyes to pretend I am sleeping for myself to fall asleep.

After one month of experimentation, I have finally done it. After mastering the control of dreams, I have been able to defy reality itself. I have finally dreamt of My Little Pony. However, the dream quickly spiraled out of control when Morgan Freeman appeared. He told me that the Earth's foundations were shaking, and a dam was overflowing with gushing streams of sewage water. He commanded me to build a fortified Titanic, which, when coupled with his holy beard and deep voice, would be unsinkable; he explained that the ship would save all the animals and establish prosperity among them, even amongst the elephants and donkeys. Then, he said, "look." I raised my gaze and stared at his brown, bloodshot eyes. I have never seen such holiness before. He looked down at me and smiled with his bright, porcelain-like, snow-white teeth. I tried to

take cover, but there was only vast emptiness. A bright, white light emanated from his teeth, swallowing me whole. I gained consciousness once more, but when I looked around, nothing familiar was in sight. There was only a thick wooden arched door in a room that was reminiscent of a dungeon. I also heard the sounds of dying horses. But, then it occurred to me, the sounds were muffled screams for help. Someone was banging against a wooden object. Suddenly, I had a strong urge to pee. Luckily, I was able to find a toilet in the musty dungeon. However, I woke up early because of the never-ending roars from the sky, and because I had released a yellow stream into the bedsheet and my pants. Tomorrow, I will repeat my experiment, but this time will try to dream of blonde, thick-headed Cunegonde, who claims our potential reciprocal relationship is "non-existent."

"Candide," screamed Nancy Ocasio Nunes, "Get down here this instance." I placed my book inside the desk and covered it with a pile of papers.

"Coming," I replied as I looked at the clock.

It's 7:30 already, I thought. Splendid. I rushed down the folding, plywood loft stairs that connected the attic to the second floor, across the newly renovated rooms of Don White and Lone Er White, down the main marble staircase, and around the corner to get to the kitchen.

2. How Candide Cooked Food and Watched A Fight.

"What is that smell?" I gasped as I had constricted my nostrils. I gazed at everyone in the room. Ms. Nancy Nunes, at the mahogany wood dinner table, wore a formal shirt, but still had her night robe on underneath. She was on her iPhone XXX30, scrolling through her email, and continually refreshing the content of the screen. I shifted my head to the right, and the nasty stench of defecation bombarded my nose. Mr. Nathaniel White wore a shirt that had the words "Make America Great Again" on it. He sat there with his legs crossed while reading the headlines on trustworthy BuzzFeed, and his chest hair crept out of his unbuttoned shirt.

"What are you looking at?" asked Mr. White. He smashed his hands on to the table.

"What are you looking at!" he repeated. Ms. Nunes ignored his question, looking at me with her piercing eyes. "You are late," Ms. Nunes scowled.

"Sorry, I was writing your speech for your next election," I replied while looking down on the dirty wooden floor.

"Make sure it is better than Nathaniel White's."

Mr. White veins boiled. He punched the table with his fist.

"Better than mine? He will write an even better one for me, you donkey," said Mr. White.

"Is that your best insult? Your insults are the only thing that is more white than your name. Remember, we only married each other because we both lost a bet; our marriage is a mutual contract, literally a 100-page mutual contract," said Ms. Nunes.

What the anti-heaven, I thought. I opened the fridge, took out a few ingredients, and placed them on the kitchen counter. I turned on the stove and diced the ingredients.

"Well, I can't leave you now; the darn people would despise me, and I would lose in the poll. Anyways, Candide, you stinking brat, make us our breakfasts, clean up the house, get the mail, and take a goddamn shower. Remember, we are only looking after you because it would look good for the next election," said Mr. White. Nancy nodded her head in approval.

I faced the stoves once more, started cooking the family's daily omelets, and blended their favorite smoothies.

"Don White and Lone Er White, get down here now, sweeties," Ms. Nunes said.

"What is wrong with you, lady? I'm playing Fortnite. My team has Spanish speakers, and I have to reward them by building a wall using their resources," screamed blonde, thick-headed Don from the living room.

"I'm coming. I swiped right on every guy on Tinder," screamed Lone. "I need to get myself an e-guy."

"Come right now, and you can have Candide's lunch money," grinned Mr. White.

"Be quiet! I'm in the middle of something here! I spoke with the Mexicans very nicely; All I said to them was, 'cumo estar mejicano.'" Don smashed his controller on to the ground and stomped on it. "The Mexicans left me to die. They said I am trash. I am not trash. There are too many Mexicans playing on US servers; I could hear their whole family behind them. They will pay. I swear."

Classical Don, I thought. *He is always denying everything and throwing a tantrum.*

Don yelled, "Now, some guy is dancing over my dead body. I'm coming now." He stood from the couch and galloped into the kitchen through the opened door. Immediately, I noticed he wore a shirt that had "Done White" displayed in bold red letters.

He can't spell his first name, I thought. *Vlad Pudding, Mr. White's extramarital partner, should have worn that shirt.*

On the dinner table, I set the omelets and the smoothies. The omelets looked delicious, but they smelled disgusting; they smelled like eggs.

"Hey, what the hell is this food? I asked for fried chicken," Don exclaimed. He crossed his hands. "Nancy, look at my numbers. They are the greatest. Look at this number one. It's huge."

Nancy said, "Well, it's nice. Your number one no longer looks like a meandering river."

"Aladdin, who is a Nigerian prince from the gaseous planet Uranus, needed my money, so I sent him Candide's money. Aladdin told me he boarded a flying carpet to meet me at a beach called Don Exirsta Iddi Oht and to make me his Disney princess. So, I'm heading to the beach, but before that, I need to get my hair and nails done," said Lone.

"A Nigerian prince sent me the same email," I smirked.

"Stop lying. I need my hair done. Ugh!" said Lone.

"You don't need to have them done now. Stupid European ninja bats are flying around and killing people. Candide should go outside," Ms. Nunes grinned. Mr. White looked at Nancy again. His whole body shook, and veins appeared across his forehead.

"They are not European bats. They are Chinese bats," responded Mr. White.

"No, they are euro-asian-curry-pean bats," interjected Don.

"I am not intimidated. Their name sounds like a ripoff Nickelodeon TV show. It's probably a hoax like Mr. White's hair," said Lone.

"Why don't you call Nathaniel your father? Have some respect," said Ms. Nunes.

"I only call special people my father: god and the priest who requested that I call him daddy," said Lone.

"If you weren't my sister, I would want to be your boyfriend," said Don. He turned towards his dad, who sat across him, and his dad gave him a fist bump.

"She is your sister," Ms. Nunes replied.

"Cut him some slack. You miss all the shots you don't take. In this case, he drank too much tequila." said Mr. White.

"I need my hair done. I can't let my Nigerian prince look at me like this. I am hideous. If you're scared of that bat thing, then I will just wear some garbage bags and plague beaks. I will also use grandpa's pseudomedicamentyl and holy water gun," interluded Lone.

"Forget about it. His medicine expired a long time ago. We only use it because it's all we have," said Ms. Nunes. "Candide, remember to bring in the mail and try to get bitten by a bat. We would inherit the money from the trust fund your parents left you. You will be the superhero you wrote about in one of your diary entries."

"While you're at it, make sure to fix the sewage. I took a large dump, and now it won't flush. It keeps on hurling back at me," said Mr. White.

"Alright, I made your meals. I'll go do the chores," I said.

3. How Candide Retrieved The Shipments

I was in front of the large spruce front door. I wore a plastic bag on my head and a long protective gown--a garbage bag. I spread my legs apart, bent my knees, and grasped the handle.

This is it, I thought. I twisted the gold-plated, rusting knob, and violent winds immediately blasted the folds and creases of the garbage bag and plastic bag. The streets were empty; all the flying cars were dusty. The clouds were gray and frowned down upon me. I grabbed the packages and shut the door.

These bats are ninjas. They can't be seen, I thought.

I went to the kitchen where the whole family was, took a knife, and cut the boxes open. The boxes contained Don's new pair of Jordans and Lone's Barron's Study Guide for Serious Comedians.

My jaw dropped. At the bottom of the box was the new artificially intelligent robot vacuum, also known as Robuum, that I ordered. IRobot, the company that makes Robuum, has trouble shipping Robuum because the name sounds like a bomb, which is quite representative of its threat to humans. They had to officially call it "Not a Bomb--Robuum." The last Robuum tried to kill Lone and Don because they kicked it. Sadly, it did not know that if it slid into a bath of water, it would fry itself.

Don approached me and snatched the box of Jordans.

"I will tell my future wife that I like her like my favorite pair of Jordans. Sadly, she won't know that she is just the left shoe," Don joked to his dad, who broke into laughter.

"Your mom doesn't know that either," Mr. White smirked. Ms. Nunes disregarded his comments and continued to scroll through her email.

What a mess, I thought. I applied expired hand sanitizer onto my hand and rubbed my hands until they were dry and aching. Then, I washed my hands with soap. I still had to fix the sewage.

4. How Candide Discovered the Tisans and Flying Carpets

I flipped the light switch, yet the basement light did not turn on. The room remained dark.

"Jesus CheesesIts Christ." I shook my head, put the toolbox on the floor, and pinched my nose with my right hand.

"It smells like Mr. White." I covered my nose with my shirt, opened the toolbox, and took out a flashlight that I stuffed in between my armpits. Keeping my armpits in place, I reached for the wrench in the toolbox.

"Help! Help! Candide, Help!" echoed throughout the room. I dropped the flashlight and wrench. My breathing quickened, and I oscillated in place. I dropped down to the floor and picked up the flashlight in my right hand and pointed it in every direction.

The cries came from the corner of my room. I tiptoed across the cement floor, following the sounds to a dusty bookcase.

With a gentle nudge, the bookcase glided across the floor, revealing a wooden door, eerily similar to the one from last night's dream.

I hesitantly opened the door, revealing the rough textured cinder block walls and a portrait of Barney.

A pool formed below my feet.

Just at the right time, I thought. *I could not have wet myself at a better moment.*

In the middle of the room, there was a large decaying plywood box, where screams of help reverberated from.

I grasped the rusting crowbar in the corner with my right hand and yanked the lid off the box. Two people jumped outside of the box. They had drooping, wrinkling skin.

"Hello, I am Nun Pauli Tisan, and this is my wife Bipaar Tisan. Also, I am not a nun," greeted the old man. "You must be Candide, our hero."

"Well, I am certainly both. How do you know my name?" I replied as I slowly walked backward.

"Don't worry. We mean no harm. We are your foster parents. An evil couple kidnapped us after we invited them for lunch. They placed us in this box and took you from us," replied Bipaar Tisan.

"I want to believe you. What happens now?" I asked.

"Follow us. We know a way out of the house. We will run away to a house your parents left you."

Bipaar Tisan and Nun Pauli Tisan guided me to a staircase that led to the outside backyard. We all hid close to the wall of the secret exit. I glanced to the right. There were no signs of humans. Luscious green blades of grass and blossoming flowers thrived. The plants were more beautiful than I had remembered.

Nun Pauli waved his hands.

"All clear," he said. Nun Pauli unfolded a red, striped rug that he had taken out of his pocket. The rug had the name "Aladdin" embroidered on it. Both Bipaar and Nun Pauli stood on top of the rug. "Get on, what are you waiting for? I got the money from your account, and I'm ready to thank you."

"Wait, so this whole time, those Nigerian prince emails weren't a scam?" I asked.

"No, of course not! Are you trying to say someone would lie to you on the internet?" said Bipaar.

"Thank god!" I replied.

"They were scams," said Nun Pauli, "You are being kidnapped."