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The Modern and the Celestial: Re-Imagining Hawthorne's 'The Celestial Railroad'

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The University of Southern Mississippi

THE MODERN AND THE CELESTIAL: RE-IMAGINING HAWTHORNE'S 'THE
CELESTIAL RAILROAD'

by

Connor Bell

A Thesis
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Abstract

Nathaniel Hawthorne's commentary through his works of fiction are said to be timeless. However, what would his fiction look like in response to the direction that society has taken since he has passed? This thesis seeks to illustrate Nathaniel Hawthorne's sentiments in regards to modern society. Through close analysis of Hawthorne's works, his life, and his morals, his ideas have been illustrated in a contemporary reimagining of one of Hawthorne's most profound satires, "The Celestial Railroad." In this re-write, modern technologies and mentalities are brought into consideration in accordance to Nathaniel Hawthorne's ideals.

Key Words: Allegory, contemporary re-write, modern, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Hawthorne's ideology

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It is hard to be finite upon an infinite subject, and all subjects are infinite. By some people, this entire scrawl of mine may be esteemed altogether unnecessary, inasmuch, "as years ago" (they may say) "we found out the rich and rare stuff in this Hawthorne, whom you now parade forth, as if only yourself were the discoverer of this Portuguese diamond in our Literature." — But even granting all this; and adding to it, the assumption that the books of Hawthorne have sold by the five-thousand, — what does that signify? — They should be sold by the hundred-thousand, and read by the million; and admired by every one who is capable of Admiration.

-Herman Melville in "Hawthorne and His Mosses" (1851)

Introduction

Time and its Consequences

Hawthorne was a truly gifted author, exalted by his contemporaries as a man without equal. Herman Melville and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow both sang his praises long after his death, with Herman Melville writing a book that chanted his admiration and Longfellow writing a poem entitled “Hawthorne” that mourned the loss of a man whose genius he reveres as almost magical, referring to Hawthorne in the poem as “The Wizard.” Even Edgar Allen Poe, a harsh critic of Hawthorne’s work, admits in his review of *Twice-Told Tales* that Hawthorne’s stories “belong to the highest region of Art--an Art subservient to genius of a very lofty order,” (*Poe n.p.*). A reclusive prodigy, Hawthorne subtly reflects the complexity of his time. To borrow words from Herman Melville’s essay “Hawthorne and His Mosses,” to glean from a man such as Hawthorne is “better than to be at the harvest of others” (*Mosses n.p.*).

But even with works of literature from inspiring writers such as Hawthorne, it becomes necessary to consider how these works stand in a modern context. Society changes, and along with this change comes a different set of cultural norms and ideals. Innovations in the fields of transportation and information have accelerated these changes, and the world in which Hawthorne was writing in is only partly similar to the world in which we live today. Time flows faster now; facts are available at the touch of a button, and one can travel to the other side of the world in half a day if they desire to do so.

However, in “The Celestial Railroad,” Hawthorne has created a work of Satirical Allegory all at once so captivating and potent that, it can apply to the morals and changes of any time period. Consequently, I have applied his same mode of critique to issues

arising in society today, with a focus on a critique of morality in the church in regards to contemporary culture, of course, as would have been his own focus. In this reimagining of Hawthorne's "The Celestial Railroad," I have expressed, through representation of Hawthorne's philosophies and through imitation of his writing, Hawthorne's ideals in regards to issues with modern Christian society.

Why a Rewrite?

After much consideration upon the subject of how to best portray Hawthorne's principles in regards to contemporary issues in the church, it eventually became apparent that it is unreasonable to portray such a writer's views through any medium save through a work of fiction, as Hawthorne himself found it necessary to do. The full extent of Hawthorne's views cannot be accurately expressed through definition and summarization, as the duality of his frustration and love for the church would be muddled by such an oversimplification. To merely summarize his ideals would be doing both the research and the writer a disservice; Hawthorne's views of the church are complex, and in order to understand them fully, they must be demonstrated, not abridged.

In addition to accurately portraying Hawthorne's sentiments, rewriting the work is also the only way that I could accurately display that I, as the researcher, understand Hawthorne's perspective well enough to extend it to something beyond the works that he completed in his lifetime. Research alone can prove that I am knowledgeable of Hawthorne and his views, but the medium of fiction allows me to show an understanding of Hawthorne's voice, along with his ironic mode, his artistic tendencies, and, to a further

extent, his craft itself. Without proving an understanding of these crucial elements, it would be possible for me to write an essay on Hawthorne's views while having never understood the underlying intentions and motives of his writing style. In short, rewriting one of Hawthorne's works is the only way to demonstrate that I, as a researcher, understand Hawthorne beyond merely the factual.

Why Imitate Hawthorne's Voice?

Just as an artisan apprentice must imitate the works of a master in order to show his understanding of a craft, so it also becomes necessary for me to imitate Hawthorne's work in order to better understand his views myself. As a researcher, this imitation was invaluable to me, allowing me to learn more about Hawthorne and his sentiments than any book on his craft ever could have. Though I did consult texts on the subject of Hawthorne's craft that aided my understanding, such as "Talking Shop: Craft and Design in Hawthorne, James, and Wharton" by Peter J. Betjemann, my understanding of Hawthorne's voice and his works emerges primarily from the works themselves, as these are obviously the most direct sources on the subject.

Aristotle once stated that "the highest form of understanding is teaching." Explaining an idea to someone else in your own way is the ultimate way to prove substantial knowledge on a subject, and this explanation is what ultimately proves to be the defining characteristic of true comprehension. This rewrite intends to prove the understanding of the researcher in the same manner, while also extending Hawthorne's ideals beyond the constraints of time that he was shackled to within his lifespan. I have

used Hawthorne's voice throughout the work, and the ideas portrayed in this rewrite are therefore intended to be an extension of Hawthorne's thought, not my own.

Introducing Nathaniel Hawthorne

The Man

When first taking a look at Hawthorne, it comes as a shock that so much powerful literature could come from a man who lived such a simple life. Born on July 4th, 1804, Hawthorne was born into a loving, financially stable family in Salem, Massachusetts. Other than the death of his father in 1808, Hawthorne had a rather uneventful and fortunate childhood. He entered Bowdoin College in Brunswick, Maine at the age of 17, where his friendships began with Franklin Pierce, who would later become President of the United States, and Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, who we now revere as one of the greatest poets in history. He married Sophia Peabody on July 9, 1842, and later had 3 children with her, his daughter Una, his son Julian, and his daughter Rose. He wrote with success when he not employed, so there were hardly times in his life when he or his family had anything more than minor financial struggles. He was respected as an author during his time, and lived, by most accounts, a balanced, sociable, and happy life before he died in 1864. Henry James, in his Biography *Hawthorne*, states that Hawthorne's career was "probably as tranquil and uneventful a one as ever fell to the lot of a man of letters; it was almost strikingly deficient in incident, in what may be called the dramatic quality" (James 1).

However, Henry James goes on to praise Hawthorne's unique artistic mind, saying that "Few men of equal genius and of equal eminence can have led on the whole a simpler life... Hawthorne is the most valuable example of the American genius" (James 1-2). This opinion was shared among those who knew Hawthorne. He was reputed to be a

quiet genius by his peers, respected, even adored, by his contemporaries. He held close friendships with many prominent historical and literary figures, including Henry David Thoreau, Herman Melville, and the 14th President of the United States of America, Franklin Pierce.

In a manner that obeyed Hawthorne's grounded way of thinking and common sense, Hawthorne wrote very little whenever he had work, instead accomplishing most of his writing during periods of time in which he was seeking employment (Cambridge 3). Although Hawthorne did invest in his jobs outside of his writing career, writing was his true passion, and he often feared that if he were to invest himself too deeply into his occupations, he would become pessimistic and would eventually become one who would merely "plod along with the multitude" (Cambridge 2). Hawthorne's need for diversity is a trademark of his life, and he was labeled by his peers with many titles: outdoorsman, author, man of God, farmer, friend, and father.

The Man of God

The Puritan background of his family was something that Hawthorne wrestled with throughout his lifetime, as hinted at in his writing. After his father's death in 1808, Hawthorne was partially cared for by his uncle, who insisted that he receive an education at Bowdoin College when he became of age. Hawthorne appreciated the education that he received there, but was ultimately frustrated with his time there due to the religious views that the school attempted to impress upon its students (Cambridge 1-2). Eventually, Nathaniel Hawthorne, originally Nathaniel Hathorne, added the 'w' to his name in order

to separate himself from his Puritan forebears, which included John Hathorne, a prominent judge in Salem during the infamous “Salem Witch Trials” at the end of the 17th century.

Hawthorne’s view of religion was a complex one. For evidence on this subject, one needs to look no further than his works themselves. “Sunday at Home,” a short-story by Nathaniel Hawthorne (though Edgar Allen Poe argues that it falls more under the category of an essay) reveals many of Hawthorne’s opinions toward the Church. He sees the church building in the story as a place of “solemn gloom” that is periodically lit up by episodes of authenticity, such as children playing or men singing happy songs after the service itself is concluded. “Sunday at Home” illustrates how Hawthorne’s view of the church differed from most of the attendants there, as Hawthorne viewed the service itself as a low-spirited spectacle, stating that the sight of men and women bursting out of the doors after the service was “one of the pleasantest scenes of the day” (Sunday n.p.). Hawthorne surely had issues with the Church, but reading “Sunday at Home” sheds light on the ways in which he loved the Church at the same time that he criticized it. Hawthorne desperately searches for authenticity in the Church; his favorite moments of the service that he imagines from his home are the moments in which he sees members of the congregation act in a manner that is in accordance with their true selves.

In “The Minister’s Black Veil,” Hawthorne more solidly addresses the issue of falseness in the Church. The Black Veil is well-understood to be a symbol for Mr. Hooper’s secret sin in the story, and his infamous line at the end of the story, “lo! on every visage a Black Veil!” shows the way in which everyone in the congregation of the preacher’s church is living in similar sin as well, although they do not admit it as Mr.

Hooper does. The way that Mr. Hooper was chastised in the story ironically proves to be Hawthorne's criticism of the church members themselves, as the men and women in the congregation are so scandalized by the notion of Mr. Hooper's secret sin that they avoid him, fleeing from his presence when they know they should be offering to help. Here, Hawthorne calls attention to the discomfort associated with being genuine in the church, and how it is avoided at all costs in order to retain social standing and acceptance.

This feeling of social priority over the virtues encouraged in the Church is also touched upon by Hawthorne in "The Celestial Railroad." In the story, Hawthorne reveals his feelings toward "liberal curiosity" in society and the way in which people allow their morals to be dictated by the masses and by what is convenient. The narrator in the story compromises in what he knows to be right in order to travel to the "Celestial City," or heaven, by train instead of by walking the "straight and narrow path" as his predecessors have done. Although he and all of his fellow passengers believe themselves to be "Pilgrims" like Christian in Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, they eventually learn that they were tricked, and end up on the ferry to Hell.

An overarching theme of "The Celestial Railroad," of course, is Hawthorne's critique of the church's tendency to break from traditional ideals in order to conform to modern conveniences. According to Hawthorne, comfort decides the course of action of those in the Church more often than morality does, and this is the thing which Hawthorne finds a need to critique in his works of fiction. The convenience of the trip that the "pilgrims" undergo in "The Celestial Railroad" becomes something that they become dependent on, even leading them so far as to laugh at the old, tiresome method that the pilgrims had taken before them.

Because of Hawthorne's embittered attitude toward the church, many believed him to be an enemy of the church and a very non-religious man. However, this sentiment could not be further from the truth. Hawthorne criticized the church because he saw a stark contrast between what was said and what was done by Christian men and women. This hypocrisy needed to be addressed, and Hawthorne found that the best way to show people the error of their ways was through fiction. Herman Melville recognized Hawthorne's goal of bettering the church in this way, even going so far as stating that knowing Hawthorne "persuades me more than the Bible of our immortality" (*Mosses* n.p.). Hawthorne may have never claimed himself to be a member of a church outright, but he is inseparable from the idea of religious thinking, and his criticisms of the Church illustrate the need he felt to address its issues.

The Writer

Throughout his career, Hawthorne published 5 novels, 80 short stories, and several works of non-fiction and essays. With the exception of *Fanshawe*, Hawthorne almost exclusively wrote short stories earlier in his career, moving toward writing novels only after his publication of *The Scarlet Letter* in the Spring of 1850 (Cambridge 66-67). It is largely believed that his timidity toward writing novels was as a result of the embarrassment caused to Hawthorne by the unsuccessful reception of his first large work, which he ultimately "disavowed and tried to suppress" (Cambridge 33). Due to this embarrassment, Hawthorne spent the first two decades of his career writing almost nothing but short works.

In his earliest short stories, Hawthorne focuses on sin and estrangement in individuals, and this topic is ever-present in his works throughout his career. His most famous works focus on this theme intently, exploring them in ways other writers often feared. In “The Minister’s Black Veil” for example, Hawthorne brings up the secret sins in the individual, ultimately calling his readers to practice social holiness by illustrating the disastrous effects of keeping their true selves hidden. Sin and estrangement are further explored in *The Scarlet Letter*, as Hester Prynne is ostracized for her sin while those who condemn her do so by ignoring that they, themselves, are sinners.

This irony illustrated by Hester Prynne’s persecutors is one of Hawthorne’s greatest tools in his writing. Hawthorne’s ironic mode is what makes his stories complex, and the satire is ever-present throughout his works. Using aspects of both situational irony and rhetorical irony, Hawthorne paints a picture that is never one-sided, forcing his readers and make comparisons between characters and actions that they may not have made otherwise. Ultimately, Hawthorne was a master of the ironic mode, and this mastery, in combination with his focus on sin and estrangement in individuals and in the church, made him one of the most powerful writers of the 19th century.

On “The Celestial Railroad”

The Satire

One of Hawthorne’s favorite modes of writing was Satirical Allegory. In his book *Mosses from an Old Manse*, he includes eight satirical sketches: “The Hall of Fantasy” (1843), “The New Adam and Eve” (1843), “The Procession of Life” (1843), “The Celestial Railroad” (1843), “The Christmas Banquet” (1844), “The Intelligence Office” (1844), “Earth’s Holocaust” (1844), and “A Select Party” (1844). These works of satire contain varying degrees of contemporary reference, but even in the works more focused on his own time, the fiction is more directed toward larger ideas in humanity than individual issues of the age (Neal Frank Doubleday 1942).

This is especially true of “The Celestial Railroad.” Many argue that this satirical allegory is Hawthorne’s most underappreciated work. The satire is often dismissed by critics, who state that Hawthorne did not intend the work to have much depth in its criticisms of the church. However, the very nature of the work makes it timeless. Since it satirizes Bunyan’s “The Pilgrim’s Progress,” Hawthorne’s work takes on a medium that is both well-known by his readers and readily allows itself to be manipulated by the addition of new characters and, thus, as is the nature of allegory, ideas. In addition, “The Pilgrim’s Progress” had already proved itself to be a timeless work through its simple yet complex nature, and also bore the criticism of the church that Hawthorne so often sought in his works.

To be sure, “The Celestial Railroad” is a masterful piece of fiction. Hawthorne converts Bunyan’s work with ease to express his arguments, and also adapts the work

beautifully to address Hawthorne's contemporary age of steam. In his essay "Hawthorne's Satirical Allegory," Professor Neal Frank Doubleday sates that "The Celestial Railroad," along with another of his satirical works, "Earth's Holocaust," represent "the fullest development and the perfection of their genre in Hawthorne" (330). Emerson mirrors this remark, as the only praise that he gave directly to Hawthorne's writing was in regard to "The Celestial Railroad," about which he said that the work "has a serene strength which we cannot afford not to praise in this low life" (Emerson 211).

The Adaptation

This section will remain short, for if I have created a work similar to that of Hawthorne's, the symbols in the work should think for themselves. There are too many adaptations made in this re-write for it to be practical to list them all, although it is indeed necessary to explain, briefly, the significant ideas addressed in the work and Hawthorne's views in relation to similar matters. Hawthorne's "The Celestial Railroad" was often focused on industrial age technology, and it has been necessary to add references to more modern forms of transportation and civilization. There are many of these references, the most significant of which are aviation, the protagonist's main form of transport (which now resembles a cruise ship), and the set of tracks by which Hawthorne's protagonist in his satire travelled.

Also included in the rewrite is the character of Mr. Voluntourist. He is meant to reflect the growing rise of "Voluntourism" in contemporary society, which is short for "Volunteer Tourism." It is a rather recent term, created to define certain travelers, especially travelers who are members of the Christian Church, who use volunteering as a

tool in order to travel abroad. This tendency is exploding in popularity in most developed societies. This is largely due to the information available to those in modern society about trials and tribulations in other nations; as statistics and stories become more readily available across cultures, so global interest in such issues grow.

At first glance, such a response seems naturally good. Most of these volunteers provide monetary aid, and they often assist those struggling to meet their basic needs. However, actions taken by those travelling to volunteer are often selfishly motivated. People often participate in Voluntourism in order to boost their own credentials, experience a different culture, or, in short, appease their own consciences. None of the physical actions taken by these volunteers are intrinsically bad themselves; however, in travelling in order to help someone whose needs are not fully understood by the traveler, resources are often wasted and prominent issues are often neglected. There have been multiple books written by Christian scholars on this subject, such as *When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor... And Yourself* co-written by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert and *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help, and How to Reverse It* by Robert D. Lupton.

To briefly summarize these works, they speak of the ways in which charities and churches often address an issue which they think is a problem, when in reality they haven't taken the time to meet the real need of those that they "help." As a result, issues might be only temporarily abated, as is the case when charity happens when justice is needed. Worse still, those who give their time to such endeavors often fall victim to pride about having "helped" someone else, and they often neglect the relational aspect of assisting others in favor of a more "doctor-patient" relationship in which those

volunteering feel that they know the needs of the people they are helping better than the people know them themselves (Corbett and Fikkert 161). In his works of fiction, Hawthorne often outlines the ways in which love and sacrifice are necessary for a man to help another, and I have translated this ideology into a criticism of voluntourism in the rewrite.

There is also, briefly, a recognition of modern fuel needs, and the tendency for modern societies to refuse to recognize where these fuels come from, so long as we get the fuel that we need. As the fuel is brought to the ship by the demon Apollyon, the protagonist becomes fearful and unable to act. He also sees that Apollyon has brought the fuel from a place that is dreadful and seems to imply painful labor, but this knowledge and fear do not deter him from his current mode of comfortable transport.

The last two changes that I will address are the introduction of the new servants in the city of Vanity and the new Hall Artificial in the same city. The servants themselves represent both advertisements and the internet, along with a host of other modern conveniences, insofar as they assist, for a price, those living in the city of Vanity. They go so far as to 'aid' the citizens of Vanity by telling them what it is that they desire whenever they cannot distinguish these desires for themselves. This is meant to represent the manipulation suffered by those living in materialistic society, and to illustrate the way in which trust in the knowledge of others often takes over conscience or instinctual feelings in the modern world.

The Hall Artificial, of course, represents the artificial things in society. The shows performed there represent scandalous and crude entertainment, which is often attention-grabbing in nature but has no benefits for the intended audience. Those attending want

only to be dazzled; they no longer seek beauty or simplicity in art, but only more complexity so that they can be wowed further.

In regards to all of these issues, I have studied Hawthorne's ethics in his works to better address them as he would have done. To the best of my ability, I have prevented all cases of personal bias toward these issues, and have internalized Hawthorne's voice in my attempts to provide an answer to these concerns as Hawthorne would have done. Whether Hawthorne would be satisfied or appalled at this rewrite, I cannot say. All that I can say is that I have tried to accurately extend his principles past the limits of his own lifetime, and anything beyond that must be said by the rewrite itself.

The Rewrite

Not long ago, passing through the gate of dreams, I visited a region of the earth in which lies the famous city of Destruction. It interested me much to learn that, by the public spirit of some of the inhabitants, a great ship had recently been constructed in the harbor of the populous and flourishing town for the purpose of allowing the residents to take a leisurely excursion, at the time of their desire, to lands abroad, with the final destination being the famed Celestial City. Having a little time upon my hands, I resolved to gratify a liberal curiosity to make a trip thither.

As I walked toward the harbor to initiate my outing, I happened upon a pair of steel strips running along the ground, nearly invisible to the human eye as they were overgrown with wild foliage and therefore concealed from view. Upon further examination, I saw that it was a track for a railroad, worn down from many years of use and now taken over in its entirety by the wild grasses of the area. Plants grew all about the tracks, pressing themselves through the smallest crevices in the wooden ties and, I perceived with wonder, even pushing out the rail spikes that held the tracks together. It was an interesting sight, to be sure, but I hadn't the time for such idle viewing, as I knew my vessel to be primed to depart and I was still a fair distance away, so I recovered my baggage and continued my walk toward the ticket booth.

As I approached the ship, I saw it to be impossibly large, with abundant portholes upon its sides and six great stacks running along the spine which released a great deal of smoke, despite the ship being idle. Presently, I arrived at the desk of the registrar and paid a sum (a hefty sum indeed!), after which servants tended to my luggage, triggering in me a feeling of great relief upon being provisionally unencumbered of the great

burden. After paying my bill, the attendants showed me to my room, a wondrous facility with a great view of the sea, and I resolved to explore the deck soon thereafter.

Upon exiting the stairs into the fresh air, I found the upper deck to be quite crowded, and it was my good fortune to enjoy the company of a refined gentleman- one Mr. Curry-Favor- who, though he revealed that he had never set foot inside the Celestial City, still seemed as well acquainted with its laws, customs, policies, and statistics, as those of the maritime corporation that owned the very vessel upon which we stood. Being, moreover, a Director of said maritime corporation, and one of its largest stockholders, he had it in his power to give me all desirable information respecting that praiseworthy enterprise.

The ship's engine released a grinding clamor as we began to glide away from the harbor. My fellow passengers and I waved goodbye to people fluttering on the docks, who were, I reasoned, entertaining a secret envy at our excursion. One could not blame them for their desire; how grand a sight we must have been to them! The vast mass of the ship, larger than a small village, floating along with such ease and leaving nothing behind but a ripple in its wake! I chuckled at the thought.

Almost immediately upon our departure, however, a putrid, disagreeable stench pervaded the air, so strong that my eyes began to pool and I found it necessary to rush below deck in order to evade the scent's reaches. Inside, I again met Mr. Curry-Favor, who let out a laugh upon seeing my disturbed countenance. "I see that you have become acquainted with the Slough of Despond! I must sincerely apologize; I should have warned you to move to the shelter of the air below deck beforehand. To this day, the Slough remains an untamable land feature; with all that the forces of science could muster, the most that could be done to improve the Slough's influence was to dam it off with a great amount of

Self-Defeating Reason, which has been imprinted into a matter like stone through some scientific process. Although the dam itself has been constructed by our finest engineers, the material used, by its very nature, is occasionally prone to giving way, and the men are inclined again to mend it with some new development, which, I can say with great fortune, is often readily at hand.” Mr. Curry-Favor stared at the dam as we passed, shook his head at the thought. “It’s a dreadful business; that’s why I never leave the maritime industry.”

“Ah, well I am indebted to the constructors of such a thing! I could in no way imagine that this ship could make it through such a quagmire by its own power. Mr. Curry-Favor, if I may be so bold as to present to you a question; you seem to be a man of plentiful means, and you are clearly well-versed in the aspects of travel. What is hindering you from joining the blooming trade of Aviation? I have heard much of this exciting new trade; to be sure, it does not deal with inconveniences like this dreadful Slough in which we are forced to become familiar with, and I daresay that an aircraft must travel many times faster than the speed of the vessel upon which we now stand.”

“Oh, though it aches me to state it aloud, I must admit to you, as my newly-met acquaintance and confidant, that the air industry, although it is verily more capable than our current mode of travel, is a dreadful undertaking for reasons unlike that which one would immediately expect. The passengers are not sociable by any means, as they are usually secured in acquiring information surrounding their respective businesses and counting funds by which they plan to secure their retirement at the Celestial City upon their arrival. They are surrounded by their servants, who cling to them in hopes of receiving portions of prosperity, tending to their master’s every need and answering in

the affirmative to every inquiry thereof. These servants are the most dreadful of all, as their presence makes it so that I am not required in the slightest! The aircrafts have been designed to well-nigh pilot themselves, and so I find that I am much more suited to roam the decks of the crafts that travel along at their leisurely pace, that I might relieve passengers of any grievances and allow them to see their respective journeys to their completion.”

“That mode of travel does sound dreadful, indeed!” I responded. “In any case, you are a noble man for aiding those of us who fall closer to the middle-class. However, I must raise another question surrounding a different method of transport, for upon travelling to the ticket booth this morning, I stumbled upon an old set of tracks, and these greatly sparked my curiosity. I have heard stories about that renowned railroad, as I have learned of many marvelous men in history who have used it in their travel to the great Celestial City. What became of that rail line? Although surely our nautical vehicle is a comparable form of transport, what happened to that great train?” “Ah, you speak, of course, of my Uncle’s tracks; to be sure, that floral erosion is a most bizarre happening, indeed! Out of necessity, the track was forced into an untimely retirement due to the wreathed encroachment. It was as if nature itself declared war against the track, in some places even disassembling the very foundation upon which it once stood! Although it can never be proven, it is suspected by those most prominent in the travel industry that the invasion was a direct result of the actions of Mr. Great-Heart himself.” “Christian’s most stalwart companion? Surely that cannot be so!” “I regret to say that it is so indeed, as he was known far and wide to be an enemy of the railroad, as old-fashioned as his mind was. Why he insists upon encouraging those walking upon that dreadful trail to the Celestial

City on foot, while over encumbered by their enormous burdens, I will never understand. Luckily, however, we in the world of business have created ways to avoid this savage business, and we can happily dispose of such archaic notions. Why, there are two such poor beings now!”

He pointed and I saw, on the far shore, two such travelers on foot, taking slow, deliberate steps due to the colossal burdens that they determined to carry on their backs. Even from that distance, it was perceptible to what extent they subjected themselves to struggle, and one could observe the way that their legs were shaking with each tremulous movement forward. Some of those on deck pointed to them in wonder, and a group began to laugh and make reproachful remarks, some imitating them in a stroke of comedy and ridicule. I could not help but join in with the merriment, incredulous at the idea of someone obtuse enough to purposefully expose themselves to such needless strife. These men were fools for insisting upon such a tormenting journey. I felt a surge of pride upon thinking about the great liberality of the age, and the many different routes that had become available to the thinking man due to his generational progress.

I was surprised, however, to see that a man whom I recognized as a friend of Mr. Curry-Favor, whose name was Mr. Voluntourist, had not joined in with the gaiety, and he shocked me further by standing up on a platform and calling out to the others for their attention. The crowd gradually grew silent to hear his words. “Cease and desist in your jeering, fellow pilgrims! I understand that these men’s struggles might seem outlandish from the comfort of our own vessel, but let us not forget that these humble persons can be alleviated of their torment yet; although it is easy to chide them for their obstinacy, I would like to remind you all that these are still men just like you and I, and that we

should do whatever is in our power to alter them from their current course, as it is apparent to even the most simple-minded of us the way in which they can be alleviated of their struggles. Are we not barbarians if we do not share with them the wondrous conveniences that we have developed for ourselves? Are we not to blame for their struggles when we are available to be doctors, and these men our patients?" His words invoked in all of us a feeling of sheepish foolishness, and Mr. Voluntourist removed his cap and went about the lot of us in order to collect funds by which we might support these struggling men, although we knew their methods to be strange and unrefined. In a fervor of passion, we each donated whatever excess funds we had on our persons, which Mr. Voluntourist then put into a bottle that he set into the ocean so that it might float to shore and aid the pilgrims in their struggles. I had my uncertainties as to whether or not the bottle would reach its destination in the time that the men would be in the region, but the very gesture of the collection itself was so romantic and satisfying that my emotions and my guilt were wholly appeased, and thusly I walked to the bow of the boat in aims of viewing our measured progress toward the Celestial City.

At some distance from our course in the sea, Mr. Curry-Favor pointed to a large, antique edifice, which, he observed, was a tavern of long standing, and had formerly been a noted stopping-place for pilgrims. I identified it as the famous House of the Interpreter, the man who aided Christian in his comprehension of the signs for his original expedition to the Celestial City. The sight of such an aged and beautiful structure brought warmth to my heart, and I felt a gentle drawing toward the estate, a craving which I expressed to Mr. Curry-Favor. "What a beautiful artifact of the great Christian's initial journey that,

though antiquated, inspired travelers worldwide to travel toward the Celestial City through his tale. I have long had a curiosity to visit that mansion.”

“An old ruin, indeed,” said my cohort with a nostalgic nod of his head. “You are not the first passenger to express an interest in traversing thither. However, when we attempted to build a port near his abode, The Interpreter himself entered a disgraceful fit of anger, shouting incoherencies while he tore the structure to pieces. The old fool makes porting here an impossibility, and the sea is too rough in this area for any man to cross by way of dinghy. Therefore, the visitation of such a place is unmanageable except through a journey by way of land.” “Well, that is discouraging! How does he spend his time if he is now so unwelcoming toward pilgrims such as ourselves?” “It is said that the Interpreter still meets the occasional traveler at his abode, entertaining them in the same way that he had in times of old despite being aged far past his prime, most probably struggling himself to keep up even such a homely lifestyle. However, he is trapped in his old mindset, not being open-minded enough to welcome those who have parted from the traditional mode of travel. By any means, the place is not worth the investment of our time, as there is no need to have an interpreter to obey the route by which we travel.”

Soon after seeing the house, we saw the famed region in which Christian was relieved of his Burden upon the sight of the Cross. I will admit that here I began to feel a pang of doubt in our method of travel, since it seemed to me in that moment to differ so greatly from that of the great Christian and was also refuted by the renowned Mr. Great-Heart, but my doubt was soon alleviated by the voice of the captain on the bullhorn, who expressed to us the history of the area, related to us a summary of Christian’s journey, and informed us of sights that we were to see in the near future. His knowledge on the

subject of our journey reassured me once again of the certainty of our course, as a patron so well-informed on the particulars of our collective journey could hardly steer us wrong. He also took this time to reassure us of the safety of our own baggage, which thankfully, due to modern improvements, was now able to be taken with us into the Celestial City upon our arrival.

Our route by sea allowed us to bypass much of the area that would been a hindrance were we to travel upon land, and Mr. Curry-Favor soon informed us that we were currently passing the area that Christian was forced to suffer during his great walk, the infamous Hill difficulty. We could just see a spot on the horizon that I knew to be the house Beautiful; but long since had I deemed it unworthy for any inquiries to a journey thither, for I had heard that the experience there paled in comparison to the newly constructed facility, called the Hall Artificial, in the City of Vanity, toward which we were making great haste. I looked forward to this visitation with great anticipation, as I had heard very much about the Hall Artificial, although the ideas that I had heard about the performances therein were vague. Even so, it was recommended by nearly all I had encountered.

Just past the House Beautiful, we passed an opening that I recognized to be the Valley of Humiliation, above which a small town had recently been erected by the name of Dissuasion. The inhabitants there seemed to make a time of sitting on their porches and consuming various drinks, jeering and mocking those who entered the Valley with great ecstasy, while also making a game out of throwing their bottles in aims of landing them on the heads of those walking at the bottom. Mr. Voluntourist emerged by my side. He shook his head in pity. “Those devils! Do they not see how those hikers suffer without

their further insults? To be sure, those men are creatures of the highest fortitude to endure such hardships.” His words sunk within me, and these men did indeed now invoke in me a feeling of sincere pity. “My dear Mr. Voluntourist, everyone can see that you have a genuine heart toward these suffering travelers, and your princely collection was a memorable act indeed. If I may be so bold to ask, what makes it so you take the mode of sea transport instead of trekking to the Celestial City as they do?” “Ah, I am glad to see you too share sympathies for these individuals,” Mr. Voluntourist replied. “These men are suffering for naught, and while others mock them for their sufferings, I feel the need to instead aid them, as I wish to end their suffering by opening their minds to the newer possibilities available in this great day and age, so that they might join our company and we can travel together as kinsmen in comfort toward our joint destination. What benefit they think they receive from their insistence on the traditional, I do not know; but it is hereby our prerogative, as fellow pilgrims, to foster in them a mind undeceived of such disagreeable notions. I, for one, believe that we are called to change the minds of these men, and we should never cease in our travels aimed at doing such.” Upon hearing this, a wave of inspiration flooded me. Of course! Never had it occurred to me that converting these men away from their sufferings and into our way of living would be such a viable option. Since they were struggling so greatly in their way of life and we were able to enjoy such an existence of leisure and luxury in comparison, why could we not add these travelers into our own flock and save them from their own lack of reason? Oh beloved Mr. Voluntourist! I audibly expressed my enthusiasm to him, and then silently assured myself that I would aid this great man in whatever endeavors he constructed toward achieving this wondrous goal.

Looking toward the coast, my demeanor changed as I saw a sight that made my body shudder. A great orange light radiated itself from within a gaping split in the earth, and even from our vantage point in the sea I could distinguish shadows dancing upon the surrounding rocks and mountains that seemed so frightful in nature that I shrank away.

“Mr. Voluntourist!” I exclaimed, not without a tremor in my voice. “Surely that is not the infamous Valley of the Shadow of Death! Was its existence not disproven by the scientist, Mr. Worldly-Wise?” It was Mr. Curry-Favor who answered, coming to our side on the bow. “Pleasing to observe that you are so well-versed in the sciences! And be wary to address him correctly; he is now a Doctor of notable prestige.” He said excitedly.

”Of course, everything that you have read by the respectable Dr. Worldly-Wise is correct, despite the occasional naysayer you may find who argues for the contrary. What you see here is nothing more than the glow of the same mine from which the natural gases are extracted in order to fuel our current vessel.” My posture straightened at the realization.

“Oh, how could I have been more mistaken? Rest assured that I have been told of this great mine prior to this conversation, though I will admit that I imagined it to take up a more hospitable appearance. Who works those great caverns?” “Why, I’m surprised that you have to ask! It is common knowledge that the mine is inhabited and run by men under close supervision of their employer, Mr. Live-For-The-World. The gasses are then delivered from craft to craft by the renowned Apollyon, through the use of his mighty wings. Why, we are quite fortunate today, for here he comes now!”

At these words he pointed his fingers to the skyline, and I saw a being advancing toward the ship with frightening speed. Within moments, he had arrived at the vessel and, upon landing on deck with a great impact that shook the vessel at its very core, he began to

transfer the gasses from his great container into the tank built into the ship for fueling. His wings were like those of a dragon, and he had the feet of a bear and polished scales strewn throughout his body. Out of his stomach was a face like that of a lion, which breathed smoke and flame openly. I faltered in my speech and fell backwards at the sight of him. "Get on your feet, fellow!" Mr. Curry-Favor said to me. "Do you truly lack the tolerance to not observe respect toward one on whom our journey relies?" I returned to my feet, though I did not look back at the creature. "I must apologize. I admit that his appearance is not natural to me, and, though I will show more mastery over my reactions, he is indeed a frightening being." Mr. Curry-Favor shot me a chastising glance. "Oh, my dear fellow, don't be so close-minded! He is a complex, extraordinary being in his own right, and should be treated with the utmost regard. Never in my life have I seen him bring harm to even the most troublesome pest." I took the man for his word, letting out a nervous laugh to demonstrate to him that I held no ill-will. Despite Mr. Curry-Favor's calming words, however, I did not feel at ease until the monstrous being fled our vessel and once again became a speck of darkness on the horizon. With that event concluded, we then retired to our respective rooms, though my stay there was haunted by visions of the terrifying Apollyon, who laughed at my panic brought on as a result of his sheer presence.

The next morning, upon returning to my companions above deck, I was quickly brought out from my disheartened state, as I now saw that we were ported at the great Vanity Fair! We descended the ramp onto the shore, and we were welcomed immediately upon our arrival by salesmen offering tricks and desires of all sorts, with men having set up a bazaar which offered us the finest pleasures, beverages and cigars for promises of

sharing our possessions from the boat; particularly, a commodity which they referred to as conscience. The city seemed to flourish in the art of such trade, and conscience was by far the most common product that entrepreneurs sought after.

Oh, how apparent it was that this business had thrived in recent years! The streets of the City of Vanity were gilded with the finest shades of gold and silver, and the structures there were so proud and boastful that it made one feel in awe of the possibilities of mankind. Though I had heard that people often stayed and made their homes at this great Fair instead of advancing to the Celestial City, I had never deemed it a reasonable possibility until seeing how wondrous and animated that place was in actuality.

I spied Mr. Voluntourist venturing into a side street chapel, and remembering my inward promise to aid him in whatever manner I could, I entered closely behind him, seeing that he was speaking to a member of the clergy who introduced himself as Mr. Wind-of-Doctrine. Upon joining their conversation, I heard Mr. Voluntourist convey to the pastor all of the travels he had been on and the sights that he had seen, ending his account by telling Mr. Wind-of-Doctrine about the great wave of emotion that had swept over the passengers on the ship and made us take up a collection for the struggling and impoverished men we saw forcing themselves to suffer the weight of their own burdens without any modern improvements. At this, Mr. Wind-of-Doctrine was greatly moved, and stated, "You have done great things in the eyes of the church, Mr. Voluntourist; and rest assured that, though the bottle that contained your collection no doubt reached these people and aided them physically, it is the very notion of what you all endeavored that is the true victory in this case. Come; some of these very same pilgrims like those you

speaking of are presently passing through the town; let us go and speak to them the good word.” And so they went and I followed, attempting to learn whatever I could from these great men, who were surely more deserving of admission to the Celestial City than anyone whom I had yet met.

We advanced toward two of the aforementioned hikers, who had recently arrived to the Vanity Fair, yet it took us several minutes for us to wrestle our way through the crowd to them, for where passengers on our ship had been confronted by propositions upon our arrival, these men had become absolutely inundated. Although they did not carry any physical properties with them (as they left their burdens and possessions at the sight of the Cross; a practice which, to me, seemed counterintuitive), I was surprised to learn that the most prized belongings for those offering trades were not anything that could be touched, but were rather non-physical properties of the men, such as their virtues or their disciplines. Most coveted of all were these hiker’s very souls themselves, as I learned by way of listening in on conversations initiated by men dressed in impeccably clean suits who whispered in the hikers’ ears offers of trades for mansions, fame, and the most sensual and gorgeous of women, all in hopes of attaining these coveted humanities. My affiliates and I wrestled our way through the enormous crowd. When we finally reached the hikers, Mr. Wind-of-Doctrine addressed them and, due to his prominence in the community, the crowd allowed him silence so that he might better speak with the travelers.

“Mr. Tenacious and Mr. Gallant,” Mr. Wind-of-Doctrine began, for he knew them by name. With a warm smile that made his cheeks grow red, he continued. “It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the great Vanity Fair! Long have we awaited your arrival,

and we hope to make your stay here as hospitable as possible. Please, let us aid you with one of our servants, employees of the great Mr. Vanity himself!”

This was how I learned of the servants that had recently gained such great popularity in the area. These employed men were stationed readily throughout the Fair, and they were intentionally dressed to look intelligent, wearing spectacles and coats and holding their hands behind their backs as they spoke. Whenever anyone in the Fair needed anything regarding information on a subject, these servants seemed to have the information readily at hand, relaying the material to the inquirer with shocking promptness, as if every subject was at the front of their minds. Their usefulness also extended beyond their knowledge, as they were also able to answer questions about the inhabitants’ day to day lives, such as telling them what to do regarding entertainment, careers, and their very relationships. At first I suspected that these men of servitude were being taken advantage of in some way, for why else would they willingly allow themselves to be used as servants in this way when they were so intelligent themselves? But I then learned that they were driven by way of trade as well, as Mr. Vanity was arguably the richest man in the region, and he saw to it that these servants were provided for far beyond the average means of the other inhabitants as a way of payment for their subjection.

What an incredible time, when such information was available to all through such generous servitude! Surely developments in the near future would alleviate the world from all grievances, for these knowledgeable beings would provide each free-thinker with whatever information was necessary for their respective undertakings! However, I was

disappointed to perceive that the travelers did not see the inherent value in having such a servant, and they politely declined Mr. Wind-of-Doctrine's generous offer.

Being an adaptable man, Mr. Wind-of-Doctrine continued his welcome unabated. "My dear Mr. Tenacious, surely your feet must ache, and you must be, to an extent, weary of your present company, no matter how agreeable he may be. Please, stay for a time; I assure you that you can afford it, and you can even stay in my church, as I have plenty of space that I am willing to give." Mr. Wind-of-Doctrine then leaned in close to him and spoke in a lower voice. "I can use your help evangelizing to these people here; many people are not as resolute in their relationships with the Lord of the land as you and I." Mr. Tenacious replied, "I appreciate your offer and your hospitality. However, my companion and I know that our place is to continue forward on this narrow path on which we have set, and we have resolved not to cease in our travels until our journey is finished."

"But what of me, and what of the people here?" Mr. Wind-of-Doctrine pleaded. "Do you not feel a calling to aid me in my evangelism here?" At this statement, Mr. Tenacious looked upon Mr. Wind-of-Doctrine with a look most compassionate and pitiful, and his voice quaked with his response. "Were it so simple, I would gladly oblige your request. However, I fear that these men are too far separated from our current path, and in order to truly change their perception on the Lord of the land, it would be necessary for these men and women to return to the start of our current path, and continue down it by their own merit." This statement was met with mirth from the crowd, who all relayed the ridiculousness of such a request, as they knew themselves to currently be

within close vicinity to the Celestial City, and the beginning of the path which Mr. Tenacious spoke of was a vast multitude of miles in the other direction.

The laughter died down, and Mr. Voluntourist took the opportunity to speak up. “Well, at the very least, allow us to alleviate the remainder of your journey. We have the finest modes of transport here, and I will personally cover the expenses of your ticket in order for you to board. These are most agreeable methods of travel, as these fine passengers here can attest to. Please; it suffers me greatly to see you fellow pilgrims struggle so needlessly, so I entreat you to allow yourselves aid in this small fashion.” At this, Mr. Gallant’s eyes filled with tears, and he spoke to Mr. Voluntourist directly. “Your aims are noble, I admit, but your heart is not in the right place. Please, good pilgrim, return to the start of the path on which we walk. We are not the people who suffer.” At this, the men turned to continue their walk, which caused the crowd to once again enter a frenzy of sales and propositions. They pestered the hikers until they reached the outer limits of the Fair, and then they conceded, calling the men fools and chiding them for their obstinacy. With the hikers’ leaving, the sun set, casting them as silhouettes on the horizon. Something about the sight instilled in me a feeling of pure beauty, and part of me longed for the intricate adventure that these men had set out on, all as a result of resolving to follow such a simple path and obstinate virtues. However, I silently reassured myself that these men were oversimplified in these views, and, in truth, the nature of the pilgrim’s journey was much more complex than they forced themselves to believe. My attention was soon thereafter turned once again to the Fair, which had returned to its state of constant vigor and activity.

Mr. Voluntourist approached me, clearly agitated. “It is a pitiful sight indeed! What obstinate men they are to deny such hospitable offers from fellow pilgrims such as ourselves! And to even dare to attempt to convert us to their current mode of suffering? The bravado! Sometimes, I can only take comfort in the knowledge that we are all on our way to the same Celestial City, and that, once we have all attained citizenship there, these men will be aware of the needless errors of their current methods.” In this statement, I took comfort as well, and I decided to go with Mr. Voluntourist elsewhere to continue our exploration of that eventful fair.

We weren’t long in our venture before we found ourselves at the foot of a great rectangular edifice, which Mr. Voluntourist informed me was the famous Hall Artificial. Many people were pouring inside, and we were fortunate in that a show was about to begin. We paid our admission fee, and we were escorted to our seats by one of the aforementioned servants, who offered up suggestions of what to do after the show and told us to visit him if we felt a discomfort of any manner. Surely everyone seated in the facility must have felt kingly, for to be waited on so thoroughly by such servants was the epitome of luxury. The lights in the theater dimmed, and the crowd tittered excitedly in anticipation.

A drum beat pervaded the following silence, and smoke began to pour onto the stage.

A man, whose name I learned from the program pamphlet to be Mr. Synthetic, appeared from behind a curtain stage right, and people applauded as he rolled onto the stage an enormous white canvas, which was mounted on a sort of wagon that supported it so that it might stand freely. With showy gestures, he proceeded to climb a large ladder mounted behind the canvas, from which he poured, from a large container suspended

from the ceiling by a rope, a copious amount of white paint, which drizzled onto the front of the canvas and covered it with a color exactly alike to the color that it had been before. Mr. Synthetic then descended from the ladder and, after walking dramatically to the corner of the canvas, he signed his name with stark black paint. A show of sparklers went off around him, and he then made an obscene gesture to the crowd before walking off the stage. The curtains closed.

While the performance did nothing more than to perplex my faculties, my fellow patrons of the theater went absolutely wild, throwing flowers onto the stage and whistling, shouting for the man to come back in order for them to sing his praises. Mr. Voluntourist nodded his head as he looked at the stage with admiration, giving such a look of deep understanding toward the canvas that it made me wonder if I had missed something in the show, or if, perhaps, the show was part of a larger context which I did not understand. “What does it mean?” I asked Mr. Voluntourist. “Why, the act was a statement on morality!” he responded. “Did you not understand it?” I resolved to ask Mr. Voluntourist for further explanation after the remainder of the show, and, my perplexity somewhat assuaged, I again sat in order to view the next act.

The lights dimmed again and the crowd again grew silent. A large woman, who was lying naked on a cart in a position as if she were being painted in a portrait, was rolled out onto the stage. A violin began to play beautifully, which was soon thereafter accompanied by a cello, a woodwind section, and then, an entire ensemble of instruments. I awaited her voice in great anticipation, but whenever she opened her mouth, her notes were less musical and instead more orgasmic, and she began to fondle herself onstage in a way that made me wonder about the nature of the theater that I had

entered. After several minutes of this performance, all at once the music stopped playing, and she stood up and shot the audience a look of condescension. After shouting “Perverts!” at the crowd, she walked off the stage and the curtains closed once again. The audience once again responded with praise and admiration, and I was again confused as to the nature of the show. Now even more unsure of my own understanding of the demonstrations, I returned to my seat, afraid to ask Mr. Voluntourist about the act in fear that it might make me seem thick-headed.

Before the audience had concluded their applause, onto the stage came a lone man, and the crowd shushed. He walked slowly as a result of a severe limp in his right leg, and the crowd grew almost reverent with expectation while awaiting his act. His method of travel was so slow and deliberate, and it seemed as if time itself was put on hold as he took his step, followed by the drag of his other foot. Once he had finally attained a position satisfying to him on the stage, he reached into a bucket of water he had brought with him, retrieving from within it a sponge and with it wetting his arm from his shoulder to his wrist. He then, from his back pocket, retrieved a glove formed out of interwoven straw and sticks, slipping it onto his hand and tugging it at the wrist to ensure that it was on snugly. With no visible trepidation, he retrieved a match from his pocket. I let out a gasp in shock upon my realization of his intentions, but those seated around me turned and hushed me, and I therefore remained silent. The man stroked his match, and, after holding the match close to his visage in order to make sure that it was properly alight, he held it underneath the glove. What followed was a sound of pure agony as the fire spread across his hand. His face contorted into a feeling of pure pain, and tears began to stream from his eyes. The theater itself filled with the smell of burning flesh, and the

experience forced tears into my visage. I held my handkerchief under my nose, but Mr. Voluntourist chastised me in a harsh whisper, saying “My word, companion! Please, be respectful! Subject yourself to the experience!” He reached over to pull my hand away from my face, and those seated in front of me shot me rude glances. Finally, I could endure the experience no longer, and had to stand up and take leave of the building.

When I escaped to the outside of the Hall Artificial, I sat and wiped my eyes with the handkerchief that was still in my hand, but its smell was now positively ruined, so I threw it onto the ground by the door. I heard applause from inside as the man’s show had concluded, and Mr. Voluntourist rushed out of the door soon after. Upon seeing me wandering away from the building, he approached me, a disapproving look in his eye. “Well, I hope you feel proud! I consider myself under very good standing with the artistic community here, though my reputation is now jeopardized because of my acquaintance with a man so unaccustomed to the depictions of fine art!” “I’m sorry, my friend, it’s just... the show was so disagreeable to the reasoning mind, and even to the senses themselves!” “Oh, don’t be imperceptive. Why, that show was a celebration of the very nature of entertainment itself. It is a place to leave reason behind; a place to feel sensations that have never been felt before. I myself have been to several such shows, and I can attest that this was one of the most subtle.” I was in a state of utter confusion, for I did not retrieve any of these messages from the acts that we witnessed. However, I conceded that I was mistaken, and feigned sickness in hopes that I might be forgiven for my rude intrusion during the course of the show. I parted with Mr. Voluntourist then, and wandered alone in hopes of finding something to remedy my current feelings of self-pity and confusion.

I remained for a time in Vanity Fair, finding that I enjoyed many of the other pleasures available far more than the dreadfully extraordinary artistic showings at the Hall Artificial. I spent morsels of my conscience thriftily, making sure to remain responsible in my transactions so that I might save enough to pay my way into the Celestial City if need be. I enjoyed the City's pleasures to the best of my ability, relishing the company of various interesting women, testing my wits by way of gambling, and experiencing some of the finest beverages a bartender could create while socializing with those respected in the community. However, I soon found these pleasures to be short-lived, and reasoned that it would take more extreme methods in the future to derive such equal pleasures as I had felt upon my first arrival to the City of Vanity. Proud of myself for my foresight and reason toward such matters, I resolved to continue on my journey, and, thus resolved, I returned to the dock in order to complete the final leg of my voyage.

When I returned, however, I learned that the ship on which we had been travelling had returned to the wharf from which I had first departed in order to pick up more passengers, and those wishing to go the Celestial City were now directed toward a timeworn ferry, which, I was informed, had been taking people from Vanity Fair to the Celestial City for all of eternity. I allowed myself to be ushered aboard, and the ramp was raised behind me and the other passengers.

Much to my surprise, I saw Mr. Curry-Favor addressing the crowd from the shore. "Make sure to give the ferryman a sum in appreciation for his services!" He smiled and waved his arm, a handkerchief in his hand. "He usually takes whatever coin you have on your person!" Upon saying this, Mr. Curry-Favor's face contorted into a maleficent smile, and he laughed outright. In the midst of his cackles, smoke emitted from his mouth

and nostrils, and a jet of flame shone from his eyes, proving the true nature of his heart to be all of a red blaze. The deceiver! To deny the existence of Satan, when all the while feeling his fiery tortures raging in his very breast! I hurried myself to the side of the boat in hopes of swimming to shore, but the ferryman all at once urged the vessel forward, and I lost my footing and fell to the deck. Cowering in fear, I was doused by water which spilled over the side of the boat, so cold- so deadly cold, with the chill that will never leave those waters, until Death be drowned in his own river. With a shiver and a quake in my heart, I awoke. Thank Heaven, it was a dream!

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