

the brunswickan

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Opinion is a forum for Brunswickan staff members to present their own viewpoints on various topics. Their opinions are not necessarily those of the Brunswickan's editorial board, its staff, or its publishers.

Opinion

Continued from p. 10

Ms. Harrows wasn't back from the doctor's by third period, so I started on Delilah's list. She objected to forty-three references to spirits, ghosts, and related matters, twenty-one obscene words (obscene misspelled), and seventy-eight others that she thought might be, such as pajock and cockles.

"Where are we?"
 "Morticians International," I said. "Again. 'Death presented as universal and inevitable.'" I peered at the paper. "That doesn't sound right."

Ms. Harrows took the paper away from me. "That's their 'Thanatopsis' protest. They had their national convention last week. They filed a whole set at once, and I haven't had a chance to sort through them." She rummaged around in her stack. "Here's the one on *Hamlet*. 'Negative portrayal of interment preparation personnel'"

"The gravedigger."
 "And inaccurate representation of burial regulations. Neither a hermetically-sealed coffin nor a vault appear in the scene."

We worked until five o'clock. The Society for the Advancement of Philosophy considered the line, "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio, than are dreamt of in your philosophy," a slur on their profession. The Actors' Guild challenged *Hamlet's* hiring of non-union employees, and the Drapery Defense League objected to Polonius being stabbed while hiding behind a curtain. "The clear implication of the scene is that the arras is dangerous," they had written in their brief. "Draperies don't kill people. People kill people."

Ms. Harrows put the paper down on top of the stack and took a swig of cough syrup. "And that's it. Anything left?" "I think so," I said, punching *reformat* and scanning the screen. "Yes, a couple of things. How about, 'There is a willow grows aslant a brook/That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.'"

"You'll never get away with 'hoar,'" Ms. Harrows said.

I passed out *Hamlet* and assigned Wendy and Rick to read the parts of *Hamlet* and Horatio. "The air bites shrewdly; it is very cold," Wendy read. "Where are we?" Rick said. I pointed out the place to him. "Oh. 'It is a nipping and an eager air.'"

"What hour now?" Wendy read.

"I think it lacks of twelve."

Wendy turned her paper over and looked at the back. "That's it?" she said. "That's all there is to *Hamlet*? I thought his uncle killed his father and then the ghost told him his mother was in on it and he said 'To be or not to be' and Ophelia killed herself and stuff." She turned the paper back over. "This can't be the whole play."

"It better not be the whole play," Delilah said. She came in, carrying her picket sign. "There'd better not be any ghosts in it. Or cockles."

"Did you need some Solarcaine, Delilah?" I asked her.

"I need a Magic Marker," she said with dignity.

I got her one out of the desk. She left, walking a little stiffly, as if it hurt to move. "You can't just take parts of the play out because somebody doesn't like them," Wendy said. "If you do, the play doesn't make any sense. I bet if Shakespeare were here, he wouldn't let you just take things out."

"Assuming Shakespeare wrote it," Rick said. "If you take every other letter in line two except the first three and the last six, they spell 'pig,' which is obviously a code word for Bacon."

"Snow day!" Ms. Harrows said over the intercom. Everybody raced to the windows. "We will have early dismissal today at 9:30."

I looked at the clock. It was 9:28.

"The Over-Protective Parents Organization has filed the following protest: 'It is now snowing, and as the forecast predicts more snow, and as snow can result in slippery streets, poor visibility, bus accidents, frostbite, and avalanches, we demand that school be closed today and tomorrow so as not to endanger our children.' Buses will leave at 9:35. Have a nice spring break!"

Delilah was out in the hall, on her knees next to her picket sign, crossing out the word "man" in "Spokesman."

"The Feminists for Fair Language are here," she said disgustedly. "They've got a court order." She wrote "person" above the crossed-out "man." "A court order! Can you believe that? I mean, what's happening to our right to freedom of speech?"

"You misspelled 'person,'" I said.

Reprinted in part from a short storey by Connie Willis (ADO)
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