

Writing Comp

Joe is the one with the smile that makes people nervous.

Hunter is the one who smokes with his dog.

Bella is the one with the three babies.

Archy is the one with eyes only for Joy.

Joy is the one who pretends to love Archy.

Karter is the one who just sits.

Baby James squirms in his mothers arms. Julia is in the stroller, and Gale is crawling around Bella's feet. The grass is dry and yellow. Bella puts James down next to Julia, all three with olive skin, and deep brown eyes. None of them have more hair than a peach, but the hair they do have is black like coal. Their mother came here once with her husband, she was young, delicate, but strong too. Like a flower. I suppose I have a biased opinion on flowers. Bella looks on the verge of tears as all babies start to cry. She comes often now, to be away from the world I suppose. I never see Gavin, her husband. He is away in the city almost all the time. The only way I know this is Bella often talks to herself, about how horrible it is to be alone.

The boys shy away from him as he smiles. In my opinion it's not that bad, but then again, living here I've seen much worse. It's crooked, his teeth are pointed. Joe knows his smile is like this. It wasn't always this way though, he has been coming here for as long as I can remember which isn't that long mind you. My lifespan is only a decade or so. He used to be quite handsome

even with his baby face. He used to have a silky swoop of chocolaty brown hair looking over electric blue eyes. He also used to bring girls from school here. Now his face is gaunt, wrinkles splitting his baby face, his crop of hair peppered with gray. He started selling drugs. When he failed to pay a bunch of men came almost flattening me, and ruined his lovely smile.

Archy has never been in love. He thinks he's in love, but he's not. Love only counts if the other person loves you back. I have never been in love myself, but I have seen people in love. Archy thinks that Joy is also in love, therefore convincing himself that he is in love. Joy is not only here with Archy, she is here with Tom, and Daniel. Archy knows none of this of course. But I know. I know that Joy is here more than Archy thinks, I know that Archy is not in love. I know a lot of things. There are so many things you can learn from just listening.

Tom, Daniel, and Archy all think that they are the only ones Joy takes to this park. All think they are in love. None know about the others. She says the same things to all of them. Telling how much she enjoys their company, telling them about how she thinks about them before shutting out the light before bed. On that bench, right there, less than eight feet from me. They play with her long blonde hair. Joy knows that they are in love with her, and because she thinks she is being kind, she lies. She lies about her family, and her love for all of them. She can't bring herself to tell even one of them. Sometimes she sits on the grass, two feet from me, legs pulled close to her chest, and she cries. She cries about her guilt, she cries about her lies, and about how she is living with her grandmother because her mother died during childbirth. She cries about how she has to give her father money for rent after he moved out. She cries, and yet she never stops lying.

They just sit. All the time. Staring at the mountains. So still I worry if they are breathing. I have never seen Karter talk. Their name is stitched into their backpack, with a stop sign pin

next to it. I've memorized every detail of their backpack. They sit with it on, their back facing me. Their shaggy black hair moves with the wind. I don't know why they just sit. But I'm sure they know.

His dog almost ate me once. Hunter saved me at the last minute. He told his dog that if we harm nature there is no way of getting it back. This is not true of course, nature has life, just as humans. We can grow back. He puts a cigarette between his teeth and blows out a gray cloud. Smoking has always fascinated me, breathing fire is what it looks like. Why people do it is also something I don't know. Just to prove they can perhaps. I cannot make judgments as I have not done it. Hunter and his dog are here the most often. I feel as if I have gotten to know him best of all. He does not know this seeing as I am just a dandelion in a park.