

VIOLET BEAUREGARDE

From "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory" Roald Dahl

(Chewing ferociously on gum, waving arms excitedly, talking in a rapid and loud manner, from somewhere in audience)

I'm a gum-chewer normally, but when I heard about these ticket things of Mr Wonka's, I laid off the gum and switched to candy bars in the hope of striking it lucky. *Now*, of course, I'm right back on gum. I just *adore* gum. I can't do without it. I munch it all day long except for a few minutes at mealtimes when I take it out and stick it behind my ear for safe-keeping. To tell you the honest truth, I simply wouldn't feel *comfortable* if I didn't have that little wedge of gum to chew on every minute of the day, I really wouldn't. My mother says it's not ladylike and it looks ugly to see a girl's jaws going up and down like mine do all the time, but I don't agree. And who's she to criticise, anyway, because if you ask me, I'd say that *her* jaws are going up and down almost as much as mine are just from *yelling* at me every minute of the day. And now, it may interest you to know that this piece of gum I'm chewing right at this moment is one I've been working on for over *three months solid*. That's a record, that is. It's beaten the record held by my best friend, Miss Cornelia Prinzmetal. And was she ever mad! It's my most treasured possession now, this piece of gum is. At nights, I just stick it on the end of the bedpost, and it's as good as ever in the mornings . . .

JAMES

From "James and the Giant Peach" Roald Dahl

There *is* something that I believe we might try. I'm not saying it'll work . . . I . . . I . . . I'm afraid it's no good . . . after all . . . (*Shaking his head*) I'm terribly sorry. I forgot. We don't have any string. We'd need hundreds of yards of string to make this work . . . The Silkworm? You can wake him up and make him spin? And you, Spider, can spin just as well as any Silkworm! Can you make enough between you? And would it be strong? . . . I'm going to lift this Peach clear out of the water! With seagulls! The place is full of them. Look up there! (*Pointing towards the sky*) I'm going to take a long silk string and I'm going to loop one end of it around the seagull's neck. And then I'm going to tie the other end to the stem of the Peach. (*JAMES points to the Peach stem, which is standing up like a mast in the middle of the stage*) Then I'm going to get another seagull and do the same thing again, and then another and another . . . there's no shortage of seagulls. Look for yourself. We'll probably need four hundred, five hundred . . . maybe even a thousand . . . I don't know . . . I shall simply go on hooking them up to the stem until we have enough to lift us. It's like balloons. You give someone enough balloons to hold, I mean *really* enough, then up he goes. And a seagull has far more lifting power than a balloon. If only we have *time* to do it . . . We'll do it with bait. With a worm, of course. Seagulls love worms, didn't you know that? And luckily for us, we have here the biggest, fattest, juiciest Earthworm . . . The seagulls have already spotted him. That's why there are so many of them circling around. But they daren't come down and get him while all the rest of us are standing here. So this is what we'll do . . . (*He puts his arm around the Earthworm*) I won't let them *touch* you. I promise I won't! But we've got to hurry! Look down there! Action stations! There's not a moment to lose! All hands below deck except Earthworm!

EDMUND

From “The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe” C.S Lewis

A lion! (*Edmund cowers away from an enormous lion crouched as if it is ready to spring*) Why’s it standing so still? (*He ventures a little nearer*) Hey, its head’s all covered with snow. Only a statue. (*He walks forward and touches the lion’s head, very quickly*) Cold stone! So this is the great Lion Aslan! The Queen’s turned him into stone. So that’s the end of all their fine ideas! (*He takes a stub of pencil out of his pocket and scribbles a moustache and spectacles on the lion’s head*) Who’s afraid of Aslan? Yah! Stupid old Aslan! How do you like being a statue? (*Edmund moves on across the courtyard among stone statues of satyrs, wolves, bears, foxes and cat-a-mountains and dryads and a centaur and a winged horse and a dragon. Right in the middle stands a stone giant. Edmund moves past the giant gingerly towards stone steps leading to a doorway from which a pale light shines. Across the threshold lies a great wolf*) It’s all right – only a stone wolf. It couldn’t hurt a flea.

(*But as Edmund raises his leg to step over the wolf, the huge creature rises and opens its mouth and speaks in a growling voice. It is Maugrim the wolf, head of the Witch’s Secret Police*)

(*Trembling*) If you please, sir. My name is Edmund, and I’m the Son of Adam Her Majesty met in the wood the other day and I’ve come to bring her the news that my brother and sisters are now in Narnia – quite close, at the Beavers’ house. She – she wanted to see them. Who are you, sir? . . . (*Maugrim: I am Maugrim, the Chief of the Queen’s Secret Police*) . . . Will you tell Her Majesty I am here? . . . (*Maugrim vanishes into the house. Edmund stands very still*) It’s hard to stand still when you’re trembling. I mustn’t be afraid. Try to think about something nice . . . ah, yes . . . Turkish Delight . . . Turkish Delight . . . (*Maugrim comes bounding out of the house and escorts Edmund in through the stone doorway. On the throne, lit by a single lamp, sits the Witch. Maugrim escorts Edmund towards her. Edmund bows to the Witch*) (*Eagerly*) I’ve come, your Majesty . . . Please, your Majesty, I’ve done the best I can. They’re in Mr and Mrs Beaver’s house . . . The Beaver says – Aslan is on the move . . . They’re going to meet him at the Stone Table . . . that’s what the Beaver said . . . Please, your Majesty, I didn’t have much lunch. Could I have some Turkish Delight?

LUCY

From "Invisible Friends" Alan Ayckbourn

You may have heard my mum talking about my invisible friend. Do you remember? Well, that's my invisible friend, Zara. (*Introducing her*) This is Zara. I want you to meet Zara. Zara say hallo. That's it. Will you say hallo to Zara, my invisible friend? I invented Zara – oh, years ago – when I was seven or eight. Just for fun. I think I was ill at that time and wasn't allowed to play with any of my real friends, so I made up Zara. She's my special friend that no one can see except me. Of course, I can't really see her either. Not really. Although sometimes I . . . It's almost as if I could see her, sometimes. If I concentrate very hard it's like I can just glimpse her out of the corner of my eye. (*She is thoughtful for a second*) Still. Anyway. I've kept Zara for years and years. Until they all started saying I was much too old for that sort of thing and got worried and started talking about sending for a doctor. So then I didn't take her round with me quite so much after that. But she's still there. And when I feel really sad and depressed like I do today, then I sit and talk to Zara. Zara always understands. Zara always listens. She's special. Aren't you, Zara? (*She listens to Zara*) What's that? Yes, I wish he'd turn his music down, too. I've asked him, haven't I? (*Mimicking Gary*) "How can I hear it if I turn it down, I can't hear the bass then, can I?" I used to have pictures in here but every time he put a disc on they fell off the walls. (*Pause. The music continues*) I mean, don't get me wrong. We like loud music, don't we, Zara? We love loud music. Sometimes. (*Yelling*) BUT NOT ALL THE TIME.

(*Pause*)

Why doesn't he ever listen to quiet music? Just once. Wouldn't that be nice? . . . But if he did that, he wouldn't be Grisly Gary then, would he?

(*Pause*)

Oh, Zara, did I tell you I've been picked for the school swimming team? Isn't that exciting? Yes. Thank you. I'm glad you're excited, too. Good.

(*Pause*)

(*Shouting*) IF ANYONE IS INTERESTED AT ALL, I WAS PICKED FOR THE SCHOOL SWIMMING TEAM TODAY. WHAT ABOUT THAT, FOLKS?

(*She listens. No reply*)

Great. Thanks for your support, everyone. (*Tearful*) They might at least . . . They could have at least . . . Oh, Zara . . . I know you're always here, but sometimes I get so . . . lonely . . .

(*She sits on her bed, sad, angry and frustrated*)