

Candide - Group Work #5 - Chapters 26-28

Group Work must be done together and discussed. Do not divide the questions amongst the group members. If any time remains,, revisit questions 1 & 3.

1. *This question should be answered as a series of short, complete answers rather than a single developed paragraph.* Why does Candide consider the Count a genius (cite the specific quote)? Find 5 specific genres, entertainments, or arts that the Count dismisses. Briefly outline Martin's opinion of the Count (and the Count's views) in this chapter. When, where, do Martin's views appear to change (hint: watch for who's talking to the Count)? Why, ultimately, does Martin believe that the Count is not "the happiest man alive." Which word, time after time, appears associated with Martin's replies to Candide's optimistic pronouncements?

After reading through Chapter 28, which

character do you feel most closely resembles that of the book's author, Voltaire. Why?

2. What do you believe Voltaire's purpose is in telling the incident of the six kings? Why are they all in town? How do their adventures compare with those of Candide and other characters (do you remember how Candide & Cacambo got to El Dorado (think current and drifting)? Why does Candide feel so sorry for them? What does Martin have to say on this subject?

groundwork for this question. On

"do you think has the most to complain of?" Martin answers by saying that he "couldn't say...I should have to look into your (Candide, the kings, et al) to find out." We may have talked about this in class in fact, but I want your group to explain what could Martin mean here? When the old lady told her story, most of the class (and presumably most readers) believed that she had a terrible life, probably the most terrible, recounted in the book. Does that mean that she has suffered the most? Think of the story of *The Princess and the Pea*. If you can, bring in as many specifics as you can from other books (*Mango House*, stories from World Lit, etc.) Remember the six kings. Answer this question with the specific deliberation and thought that it deserves.

believe it (can someone who loses a goldfish mother dies. Quickly read and use the Mary the back of this sheet. If you feel like doing a believe that this idea is so essential and in EC: find the picture of the old woman on this



3. Number 2 above should lay the page 130 Candide asks Martin who

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Also be realistic, do you really suffer more than someone whose Schmich column that you have on little mind reading: why does Scotese many ways the heart of the book? page.

**MARY
SCHMICH**



LIFE AND DEATH SEND BULLETINS OF OUR SHARED FATE

November 21, 1999

The bulletin boards in the place I work are decorated with grief.

Every week or two, or sometimes every other day, someone posts a notice of some heartbreak that has befallen someone who works here. Sometimes I know the person, sometimes I don't. But in this public way I learn the deepest losses of the people who surround me most of my days.

A mother has died. A father. A son. A spouse. A colleague. Diseases or accidents are named. Surgery dates are announced, and a few days later the outcomes. Funeral homes and times are noted. Charities, please, in lieu of flowers.

These stark declarations, rarely more than a typed sentence or two, hang on ordinary white paper next to announcements of job openings and job changes, computer classes and carpet cleaning, family leave policy, stock prices and dates of softball games.

On the bulletin boards, the most transforming moments in a life are tacked between, or sometimes under, the routine and the mundane. One person's grief assumes its inevitable ranking in the wider world.

It's not just in my office that bulletin boards broadcast the tragedies that make up ordinary lives. It's true in offices everywhere, and it's a curiously ancient custom in our modern times, an echo of the village square.

Sometimes the bulletin board bulletins bring to mind a poem W.H. Auden wrote based on a painting called "Landscape With the Fall of Icarus." The painting--by Pieter Brueghel I, one of the "Old Masters" of painting--depicts the fall of Icarus, the winged boy who fell to Earth after flying too close to the sun.

Icarus, drowning, is important enough to be featured in the painting's title, and yet to find him in the picture you have to search. His flailing legs are off in the margin, dwarfed by the busy world, by the ships, the sea, the shepherd, the plowman who pay him no regard.

The poem starts:

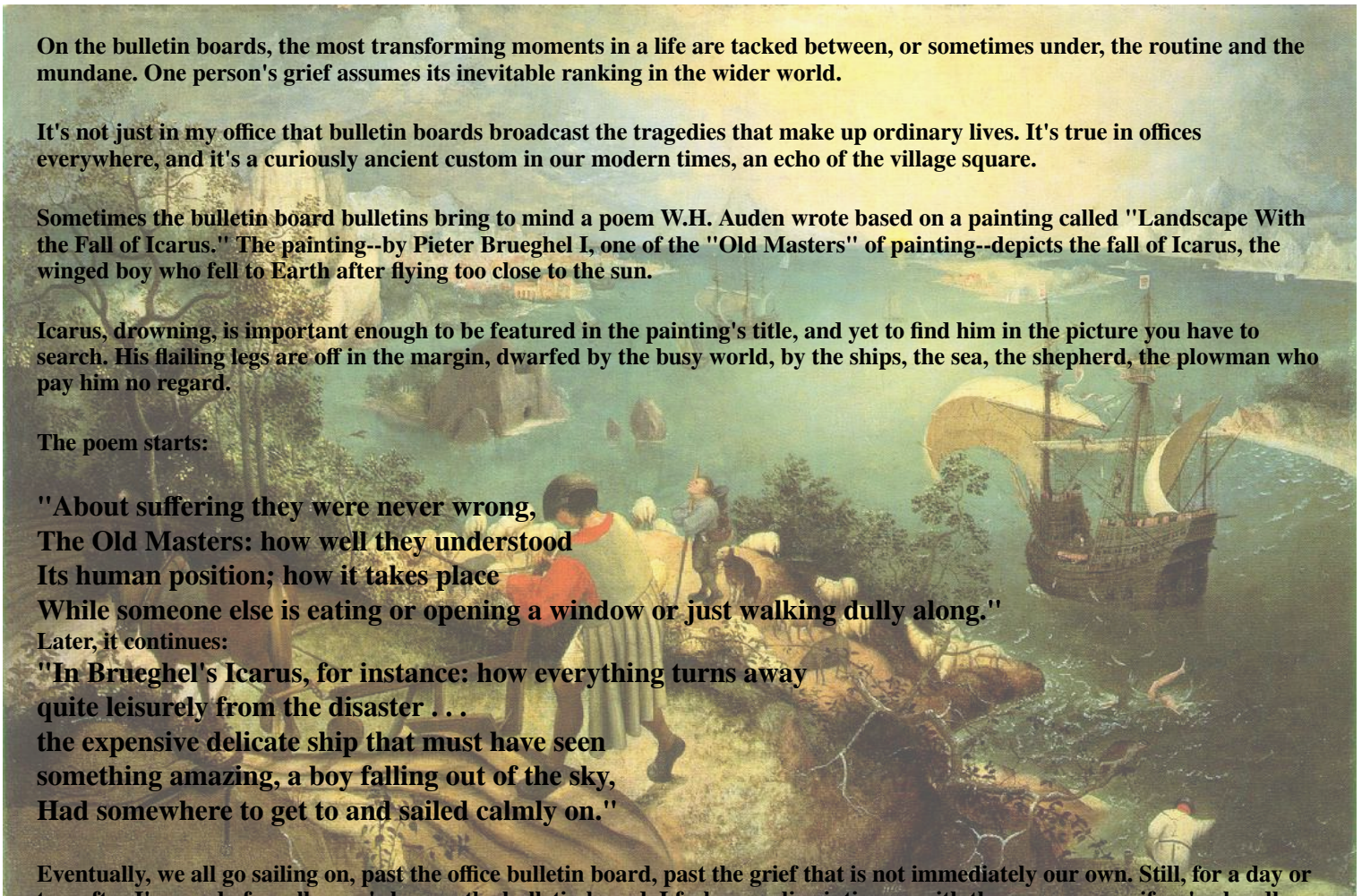
"About suffering they were never wrong,
The Old Masters: how well they understood
Its human position; how it takes place
While someone else is eating or opening a window or just walking dully along."

Later, it continues:

"In Brueghel's Icarus, for instance: how everything turns away
quite leisurely from the disaster . . .
the expensive delicate ship that must have seen
something amazing, a boy falling out of the sky,
Had somewhere to get to and sailed calmly on."

Eventually, we all go sailing on, past the office bulletin board, past the grief that is not immediately our own. Still, for a day or two after I've read of a colleague's loss on the bulletin board, I feel a peculiar intimacy with the person, even if we've hardly met. Someone who was just another face in the elevator is brought briefly into relief once his grief is made public on the wall.

Every once in a while, the notices are lined up like gravestones, four or five in a row, and it seems an epidemic, a statistical freak show. You think: How can so much death and loss be happening in my world? In my village?



That's what the bulletin boards remind us, that for many of us our offices are our villages, and that in any village the lives, with all their losses, are somehow shared. There is some faint consolation in the fact that the new baby pictures go up on the board too.