

“The Street of Crocodiles” – a cooperative reading.

Today, in class, you will be reading, annotating, and discussing Bruno Schultz’s “The Street of Crocodiles”. **Do not begin until you read the following instructions (and keep these out while you are reading).**

1. Your teacher has divided you into 4 groups: A, B, C, and D. Everyone is to read the entire story during the period (or at home – if you run out of time), but you will concentrate on annotating the section that corresponds with the letter (A,B,C or D) that you’ve been given. You may use “The Street of Crocodiles” as part of your Required Reading Journal. This will be marked on your texts – **DO NOT** start with your section (unless you are A) – **everyone starts reading at the beginning** – but you will annotate (take notes) on your section only (initially). **You will be turning these in so be sure to follow directions and write, write, write (cover your section with you notes).**
2. **Start at the beginning**, and when you get to your section (for students designated A, that would be right at the start), do a close reading (closer than when reading the sections **not** assigned to you). As you read and take notes think about the following points:
 - I. What does this have to do with *The History of Love* (the novel by Nicole Krauss)
 - II. Jacob Marcus called this one of his favorite books (and little Alma later also comes under its spell) – can you see why? Look for (in Alma’s words) “clues.” These clues should **DEFINITELY** include **imagery, diction, and syntax. Find examples of these.**
 - III. Is this story more like Nicole Krauss’s “The History of Love” or the book-within-the book “The History of Love” (eg with “The Age of Glass”) Why? Look for and annotate (see 5 below) examples.
 - IV. In many ways, this story is a Panegyric (a hymn of praise) to Schultz’s hometown – how does he express that love (in a very often unsentimental way)
 - V. Annotate or write about anything else that you find interesting, well done, or curious.

Also as you annotate, keep the following in mind:

Make sure your comments and replies are thoughtful and original. Though you are using the points above (I-V) above as a starting off point. You are free to annotate to anything that you find interesting and worthy of discussion. **Write down questions** (you will a chance later to ask other students about them). Be specific in how you address the text though – do not underline (or highlight anything) unless you write something next to it (even one word is better than nothing). Stephen Booth moments are more than welcome.¹

Remember, you are to read the entire story, but to concentrate your annotations and replies on the section that you were assigned.

What You Will Turn In

As soon as you finish reading the entire story (while annotating your section), find a group *that needs your letter*. Each group will consist of an A,B, C, and D – with up to three groups having extra members (but these extra letter groups should only be formed after there are completed (A-D) groups. As soon as you are with another person start talking about the story; as soon as you have all four A-D members, start writing. Write down answers based on what you all came up with on I-IV above. This is what you will turn in along with your annotated sheets. Be as clear and specific as possible and use all of your group members’ thoughts, ideas, and specifics. Staple your groups answers to each members annotated pages (Members A and D should only have one page; Members B and C will have two each). **Put your group’s answers on top** – make sure the names of the individual members appear on **each** of their annotated sheets.

Extra Credit: A stop-motion animation of Street of Crocodiles exists online – If you look real hard you can find the full 21 minute version on YouTube. It was made by the Quay Brothers in 1987. There are excerpts as well – and there are version broken down into 4 or more parts. Please note there will be mature material in the video – please do this only with the consent of a parent. Watch the video in its entirety and write a short essay on the following using as many specifics as you can muster. You will want to have the entire copy of the text so either find it online or wait until your teacher gives it back. The essay prompt is as follows:

The film version of “Street of Crocodiles” does for Bruno Schultz’s story, what *his story* did for the historical and geographical city upon which it is based. Be sure to explain how Schultz’s text is related to the actual town – how it gives the reader a “feeling” for that town – and how the video does the same for the text. Be thoughtful. Think about the relationships between genres and media and how one media (text) may be related to another (film) Make sure you understand the idea of “meta” – as in metastory before you begin.

¹ If you don’t know what this is – it’s too late to tell you – but ask around after this assignment.