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VOICE ACTING  
**EXPO**



## **Dead Witch Walking by Kim Harrison**

*Female mystery/fantasy*

I stood in the shadows of a deserted shop front across from The Blood and Brew Pub, trying not to be obvious as I tugged my black leather pants back up where they belonged. This is pathetic, I thought, eyeing the rain-emptied street. I was way too good for this. Apprehending unlicensed and black-art witches was my usual line of work, as it takes a witch to catch a witch. But the streets were quieter than usual this week. Everyone who could make it was at the West Coast for our yearly convention, leaving me with this gem of a run. A simple snag and drag. It was just the luck of the Turn that had put me here in the dark and rain.

"Who am I kidding?" I whispered, pulling the strap of my bag farther up my shoulder. I hadn't been sent to tag a witch in a month: unlicensed, white, dark, or otherwise. Bringing in the Mayor's son for were-ing outside of a full moon probably hadn't been the best idea. A sleek car turned the corner, looking black in the buzz of the mercury streetlamp. This was the third time around the block for it. A grimace tightened my face as it approached, slowing.

"Damn it," I whispered. "I need a darker door front."

"He thinks you're a hooker, Rachel," my backup snickered into my ear. "I told you the red halter was slutty."

"Anyone ever tell you that you smell like a drunk bat, Jenks?" I muttered, my lips barely moving.

Backup was unsettlingly close tonight, having perched himself on my earring. Big dangling thing—the earring, not the pixy. I'd found Jenks to be a pretentious snot with a bad attitude and a temper to match. But he knew what side of the garden his nectar came from. And apparently pixies were the best they'd let me take out since the frog incident. I would have sworn fairies were too big to fit into their mouths.



## **Grace by Jane Roberts Wood**

*female narration • Spring 1944, Chapter 1*

Grace Gillian kneels before her hyacinth bed, her bare fingers raking the accumulation of decaying leaves from around the plants. She has long since shucked off her gardening gloves. She loves the feel of the earth's awakening, the humid, fertile smell of it.

Grace is thirty-eight years old. Slender. High cheekbones. Generous mouth. Dark brown hair, almost auburn with the russet highlights around her face. But it is her eyes, soft gray eyes tilting up at the corners, that one remembers. When she reads a poem she loves or when a student makes a perceptive comment, her face lights up and her eyes become radiantly blue. But she does not know she is beautiful. And, although her name is Grace, neither does she think of herself at all, it is in sensible, nearly mundane terms—teacher, gardener, friend. But she is neither sensible nor mundane. And on this day, as she rakes the sodden leaves from the hyacinth bed, she is thinking of John, whom she loves beyond telling. My true, pure love. A love not fueled by desire. This is what she believes. She feels she has long since turned away from desire.

The pecan trees, arching high over her and over her turquoise-colored house, have not yet leafed out. Nor has the elm by the front door. But the magnificent live oak is in full leaf. And a single wild plum and a domestic peach in the northwest corner of her garden are dizzily in bloom, infusing the blue air and the yellow grass with the colors and scents of spring.

A song from the kitchen radio drifts out into her garden. "I'll be seeing you in all the old familiar places," Jo Stafford sings tenderly. Since the War, all the songs are heart-rendering to Grace. Looking closely at the hyacinth buds, she can faintly discern the color—purple or white—each will become. Colors of the mourning.



She, Grace, although not in mourning, is deeply sad. Anna, her next-door neighbor, is sick. Sick to death. When she thinks it again, sick to death, the phrase takes on its literal meaning. Anna is sick, and in a day or two she will go to her death. And then John will leave. He has told her this.

“If something happens to Anna”—IF not WHEN said carefully—“I’m going to get into this War.” Raising an eyebrow, he smiled. “I’ll probably end up with a desk job. But if they’ll have me, I’m going.” Remembering, her eyes fill, and she sits back on her heel and with the sleeve of her sweater wipes the perspiration and tears from her face.



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## **Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck**

*male, fiction*

George came quietly out of the brush.

George said quietly, "What the hell you yellin' about?"

Lennie got up on his knees.

"You ain't gonna leave me, are ya, George? I know you ain't."

George came stiffly near and sat down beside him. "No."

"I knowed it," Lennie cried. "You ain't that kind."

George was silent.

Lennie said, "George."

"Yeah?"

"I done another bad thing."

"It don't make no difference," George said, and he fell silent again.

Only the topmost ridges were in the sun now.

The shadow in the valley was blue and soft.

From the distance came the sound of men shouting to one another.

George turn his head and listened to the shouts.

Lennie said, "George."

"Yeah?"

Ain't you gonna give me hell?"

"Give ya hell?"

"Sure, like you always done before."



VOICE ACTING  
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Like 'If I di'n't have you I'd take my fifty bucks --"

"Jesus Christ, Lennie! You can't remember nothing that happens,  
But you remember ever' word I say."

"Well, ain't you gonna say it?"

George shook himself. He said woodenly,

"If I was alone I could live so easy."

His voice was monotonous, had no emphasis.

"I could get a job an' not have no mess."

He stopped.

"Go on," said Lennie.

"An' when the enda the month come--."

"An' when the enda the month come I could take my fifty bucks an' go to a...  
cathouse..." He stopped again.

Lennie looked eagerly at him. "Go on George. Ain't you gonna give me no more  
hell?"

"No" said George.

"Well, I can go away," said Lennie.

"I'll go right off in the hills an' find a cave if you don' want me."

George shook himself again.

"No," he said.

"I want you to stay with me here."

Lennie said craftily --- "Tell me like you done before."

"Tell you what?"



VOICE ACTING  
**EXPO**



"Bout the other guys an' about us." George said.

"Guys like us got no family. They make a little stake an' then blow it in. They ain't got nobody in the worl' that give a hoot in hell about 'em—"

"But not us," Lennie cried happily. "Tell about us now."

George was quiet for a moment. "But not us," he said.

"Because —"

"Because I got you an' --- "

"An' I got you. We got each other, that's what, that gives a hoot in hell about us," Lennie cried in triumph.

The little evening breeze blew over the clearing and the leaves rustled and the wind waves flowed up the green pool. And the shouts of men sounded again, this time much closer than before.

George took off his hat. He said shakily,

"Take off your hat, Lennie . The air feels fine."

Lennie removed his hat dutifully and laid it on the ground in front of him. The shadow in the valley was bluer, and the evening came fast. On the wind the sound of crashing through the brush came to them.

Lennie said, "Tell how it's gonna be."

George had been listening to the distant sounds.

For the moment he was business-like.

"Look acrost the river, Lennie, an I'll tell you so you can almost see it."

Lennie turned his head and looked off across the pool and up the darkening slopes of the Gabilans.

"We gonna get a little place," George began. He reached in his side pocket and brought out Carlson's Luger; he snapped off the safety, and the hand and gun lay on the ground behind Lennie's back. He looked at the back of Lennie's head, at the place where the spine and skull were joined.

A man's voice called from up the river, and another man answered.

"Go on," said Lennie.

George raised the gun and his hand shook, and he dropped his hand to the ground again.

"Go on," said Lennie.

"How's it gonna be? We gonna get a little place."

"We'll have a cow," said George.

"An' we'll have maybe a pig an' chickens....

"an' down on the flat we'll have a....little piece of alfalfa—"

"For the Rabbits." Lennie shouted.

"For the Rabbits." George repeated.

"And I get to tend the rabbits."

"An' you get to tend the rabbits."

Lennie giggled with happiness.

"An' live on the fatta the lan'."

"Yes."

Lennie turned his head.

"No, Lennie. Look down there acrost the river, like you can almost see the place."

Lennie obeyed him. George looked down at the gun.





There were crashing footsteps in the brush now. George turned and looked toward them.

"Go on, George. When we gonna do it?"

"Gonna do it soon."

"Me an' you."

"You.... an' me. Ever'body gonna be nice to you. Ain't gonna be no more trouble. Nobody gonna hurt nobody nor steal from 'em."

Lennie said, "I thought you was mad at me, George."

"No," said George. "No Lennie. I ain't mad. I never been mad, an I ain't now. That's the thing I want you to know."

The voices came close now.



VOICE ACTING  
**EXPO**



## **Pride and prejudice**

*female, fiction*

Mrs. Gardiner's caution to Elizabeth was punctually and kindly given on the first favorable opportunity of speaking to her alone; after honestly telling her what she thought, she thus went on:

"You are too sensible a girl, Lizzy, to fall in love merely because you are warned against it; and, therefore, I am not afraid of speaking openly. Seriously, I would have you be on your guard. Do not involve yourself or endeavor to involve him in an affection which the is a most interesting young man; and if he had the fortune he ought to have, I should think you could not do better. But as it is, you must not let your fancy run away with you. You have sense, and we all expect you to use it. Your father would depend on your resolution and good conduct, I am sure. You must not disappoint your father."

"My dear aunt, this is being serious indeed."

"Yes, and I hope to engage you to be serious likewise."

"Well, then, you need not be under any alarm. I will take care of myself, and of Mr. Wickham too. He shall not be in love with me, if I can prevent it."

"Elizabeth, you are not serious now."

"I beg your pardon, I will try again. At present I am not in love with Mr. Wickham; no, I certainly am not. But he is, beyond all comparison, the most agreeable man I ever saw--and if he becomes really attached to me--I believe it will be better that he should not. I see the imprudence of it. Oh! That abominable Mr. Darcy! My father's opinion of me does me the greatest honor, and I should be miserable to forfeit it. My father, however, is partial to Mr. Wickham. In short, my dear aunt, I should be very sorry to be the means of making any of you unhappy; but since we see every day that where there is affection, young people are seldom withheld by immediate want of fortune from entering into engagements with each other, how can I promise to be wiser than so many of my fellow-creatures if I am tempted, or how am I even to know that it would be wisdom to



VOICE ACTING  
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resist? All that I can promise you, therefore, is not to be in a hurry. I will not be in a hurry to believe myself his first object. When I am in company with him, I will not be wishing. In short, I will do my best."

"Perhaps it will be as well if you discourage his coming here so very often. At least, you should not remind you mother of inviting him."

"As I did the other day," said Elizabeth with a conscious smile.

"Very true, it will be wise in me to refrain from that. But do not imagine that he is always here so often. It is on your account that he has been so frequently invited this week. You know my mother's ideas as to the necessity of constant company for her friends. But really, and upon my honor, I will try to do what I think to be the wisest; and now I hope you are satisfied."

Her aunt assured her that she was, and Elizabeth having thanked her for the kindness of her hints, they parted; a wonderful instance of advice being given on such a point, without being resented.

## **Slow Burn - A Leo Watterman Mystery by G. M. Ford**

*male, mystery*

I never meant to break his thumb. All I wanted was a ride in the elevator . The burnished brass doors were no more than ten feet away when I was gently nudged toward the right.

"Pardon me..." I began.

He was a big beefy kid with a flattop, smelling of scented soap and Aramis. He kept pushing, his blue blazer now locked on my elbow, his big chest bending my path steadily toward the right, toward the stairs, away from the elevators.

I planted my right foot and swung back, only to find myself nose to nose with another one. African-American, this time; otherwise, same blazer, same size, same grimace.

"What's the problem, fellas?"

"No problem," said Flattop. "You just come along with us."

I stood my ground. "What for?" I said with a smile.

He reached out and locked a big hand onto my upper arm , squeezing like a vise, sending a dull ache all the way to my fingertips. His hard little eyes searched my face for pain. "Listen , Mr. Private Dick..." he sneered. "You just..."

I took a slide step to the right, putting Flattop between me and his partner , jerked my arm free, grabbed his thumb with one hand, his wrist with the other, and commenced introductions. Something snapped like a Popsicle stick. His mouth formed a silent circle. When I let go, he reeled backward, stumbling hard into his buddy as he danced in circles, gasping for air and staring at his hand.

"Whoa, whoa," his partner chanted.

"You want some too?"



He reached for the inside pocket of his blazer. I froze. He flipped open a black leather case. His picture over the name Lincoln Aimes.

"Hotel security," he said quickly.

Flattop was still turning in small circles, eyes screwed shut, cradling his damaged hand, whistling "The Battle Hymn of the Republic" through his nose.

I shrugged. "All you had to do was say so, fellas."

He rolled his eyes in the direction of his partner. "Lance wanted to," he said with a sigh. "You know, he—"

His explanation was interrupted by a familiar voice rising from behind me.

"And what's this?"

Marty Conlan had put in his twenty-five years with SPD and then gotten himself a steady job. He'd been the security chief for the Olympic Star Hotel for the better part of ten years now. Other than having an ass that was cinched up tighter than a frog's, he wasn't a half-bad guy. "These belong to you, Marty?"

He ignored me, glowering instead at the twirling Lance.

"Did he attack you?"

I don't think Lance heard the question. He was otherwise occupied, making noises like a suckling pig and hopping about like a weevil.

Conlan turned his attention to Lincoln Aimes. "Well? Did he?"

Aimes thought it over. "Not exactly," he said.

"Did you identify yourselves?" "Not exactly," Aimes repeated. "I thought I told you two—" This time, Aimes interrupted. "Lance wanted to..." he began.

Conlan waved him off, checking the lobby, whispering now. "Jesus Christ. Take him down to the staff room. Call him a doctor. I'll be down as soon as I can."



We stood in silence as the pair made their way around us, heading down the hall in the opposite direction from which they'd been trying to move me . "All they had to do was identify themselves," I said.

"Yeah, Leo. I know . You're famous for being the kind of guy who comes along quietly." He heaved a sigh. "Come on up to the office for a few minutes, will ya? We need to talk."



## **The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy Intro**

*science fiction, narration, dialect*

Far out in the uncharted backwaters of the unfashionable end of the western spiral arm of the Galaxy lies a small unregarded yellow sun.

Orbiting this at a distance of roughly ninety-two million miles is an utterly insignificant little blue green planet whose ape- descended life forms are so amazingly primitive that they still think digital watches are a pretty neat idea.

This planet has - or rather had - a problem, which was this: most of the people on it were unhappy for pretty much of the time.

Many solutions were suggested for this problem, but most of these were largely concerned with the movements of small green pieces of paper, which is odd because on the whole it wasn't the small green pieces of paper that were unhappy.

And so the problem remained; lots of the people were mean, and most of them were miserable, even the ones with digital watches.

Many were increasingly of the opinion that they'd all made a big mistake in coming down from the trees in the first place. And some said that even the trees had been a bad move, and that no one should ever have left the oceans.

And then, one Thursday, nearly two thousand years after one man had been nailed to a tree for saying how great it would be to be nice to people for a change, one girl sitting on her own in a small cafe in Rickmansworth suddenly realized what it was that had been going wrong all this time, and she finally knew how the world could be made a good and happy place. This time it was right, it would work, and no one would have to get nailed to anything.

Sadly, however, before she could get to a phone to tell anyone about it, a terribly stupid catastrophe occurred, and the idea was lost forever.



This is not her story.

But it is the story of that terrible stupid catastrophe and some of its consequences.

It is also the story of a book, a book called The Hitch Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy - not an Earth book, never published on Earth, and until the terrible catastrophe occurred, never seen or heard of by any Earthman.

Nevertheless, a wholly remarkable book.

It is, perhaps, the most remarkable book ever to come out of the great publishing houses of Ursa Minor - of which no Earthman had ever heard either.

Not only is it a wholly remarkable book, it is also a highly successful one - more popular than the Celestial Home Care Omnibus, better selling than Fifty More Things to do in Zero Gravity, and more controversial than Oolon Colluphid's trilogy of philosophical blockbusters Where God Went Wrong, Some More of God's Greatest Mistakes and Who is this God Person Anyway? In many of the more relaxed civilizations on the Outer Eastern Rim of the Galaxy, the Hitch Hiker's Guide has already supplanted the great Encyclopedia Galactica as the standard repository of all knowledge and wisdom, for though it has many omissions and contains much that is apocryphal, or at least wildly inaccurate, it scores over the older, more pedestrian work in two important respects.

First, it is slightly cheaper; and secondly it has the words Don't Panic inscribed in large friendly letters on its cover.

But the story of this terrible, stupid Thursday, the story of its extraordinary consequences, and the story of how these consequences are inextricably intertwined with this remarkable book begins very simply.

It begins with a house.



## **The Watcher's Keep**

*male/female, fantasy (Chapter Two)*

A fire was already laid in the hearth when Alexandra and Peter finally arrived home. Supper was on the table and Molensa was just starting to pour some wine into a simple iron goblet at the head of the table. Peter noticed there were two extra place settings, each sporting a goblet of wine. There was also an intricately carved white hazel wood staff cradled in the stand next to the door. The staff sported a bronze wolf's head pommel, brightly polished and well worn on the top. He knew what this meant, they both knew.

"Oh, there you two are at last," Molensa said, appearing a bit more annoyed than they felt she should be. "I thought you would both go to bed hungry this night, you stayed at the Abbey so late after lessons." Molensa was a large woman. Not obese, but clearly someone who enjoyed eating good food. Her silver hair was pulled back and tied with a scarf as always.

Peter knew immediately they had been caught. "We did not stay late after lessons today," he said quickly. "We were... we did not go to the Abbey this morning. We were out in the forest, near to the Silver Stream waterfall."

"Were you out in the woods with that old hermit again?" Molensa asked pointedly.

Neither of them could lie to her, she could read it in their eyes, and besides, she wouldn't really care. "Yes, we went to visit Karoel," Alexandra spoke up. "We wanted to spend some time with him before the Harvest begins. We did not mean any harm, we just wanted to hear more stories about the Old Days, before the world was broken and the Great Rift was formed."

Peter joined in, "From the time when there was still magic in the land, and there were elves and wizards and dwarves and dragons and griffins and —"



“Enough! That will be quite enough of that!” Molensa barked, glancing quickly toward the closed kitchen door. “I will not have you speaking such prattle. Brother Cadresean will be disappointed that you two have not learned your lessons better than this. There are no such creatures as dwarves or dragons, there never were, and there will be no more such talk in this house.”

She was not really angry they knew, just cautioning them. Talking of the Old Days was considered blasphemous in the Church, and was not allowed anywhere in the lands of King Leondis Tarbane. You most certainly did not speak of such things with a Julean monk in the house, bound by the laws of their Order to report all such heresy directly to His Holiness the Archbishop in Solenta. Compromising Brother Cadresean was not going to happen tonight if Molensa had anything to say about it.

The heavy door to the kitchen opened slowly and three men filed through, engaged in a quiet discussion. The first was Bairden Oldsted, the master of this house and guardian of the twins. Bairden was a large man by human measure, with dark, strong, weathered hands that had long held a chisel and hammer in the service of the King or his Lord. His face was kind, with wrinkles set deeply around his eyes — as much a sign of his nature as his deep belly laugh. His face was partially hidden by a thick growth of beard, which always seemed to shelter an escaped fragment or two from the stonework of the day. Today was no different.

The second man was much smaller, dressed in the plain brown robes of the Julean monks, which made his pale skin appear almost ashen. He sported a wild shock of jet black hair that seemed to have been pasted across his high forehead. He could have been a wraith next to the two larger, healthy men.

He was a stranger, though the children had seen him before. He was a recent arrival at the Abbey, and they knew him to be from the Royal Court — a counsellor of some worth attached to the Church. Not a High Counsellor to be sure, and not truly a monk or a priest, if you can believe the back room gossip at the Abbey, but a



man who was obviously feared by the local Brethren. The whispered dread that swept through the monastery was enough for the children to appreciate Molensa's earlier actions and caution. The staff at the door was his, they knew, and it was reported that he used it to discipline some of the less pious monks.

The last man to enter was dear Brother Cadresean. His enormous brown robe, ruffled and wrinkled as usual, was tied awkwardly around his equally enormous belly, and he was chewing on some scrap of the upcoming meal that he had stumbled upon while the men were talking privately in the kitchen. His normally rosy cheeks were particularly pink this evening, and his shaved head wore a gloss that made it gleam like highly polished marble. He liked to sample the fine wines and ales that the Abbey produced, and it appeared he had been imbibing this evening already.

"Ho, ho there you little lost lambs, have you been playing tricks again on a poor bedraggled monk," Cadresean bellowed at the children. Sheepishly he glanced toward the pale little man who had moved over in front of the fire, and who pretended he had not heard, or just ignored this roaring greeting for Cadresean's favorite students.

"Ahem, I mean where have you two been all day," speaking more now as befit a monk of his Order, and the Head Master at the Abbey in Alnen. "You have worried your dear mother sick, and you have missed your lessons today on top of it."

Mother? Alex wondered to herself, Did he mean Molensa?

As Peter opened his mouth to reply, Molensa piped in quickly, "I am so embarrassed Brother. I had forgotten until just this very minute that I sent the children on an errand today, to Hildale to pick up the makings for tonight's dessert. I know how much you appreciate a bit of sweet fare after supper, and there was not a pound of fine chocolate to be had anywhere in Alnen. I am so deeply sorry to have caused you to worry. I must be losing my faculties in my old age."



"That's right," chimed in Alexandra, "chocolate and almonds for bearded crumb pie, Brother. Your favorite dessert I believe. Mother, I am surprised at you, forgetting that you sent us on such an important errand." Alexandra decided to play along with the ruse, without really knowing why.

Peter looked around confused, first at Alexandra, then at Molensa. He was just about to open his mouth and disagree when, "Don't say a word Peter," Alexandra said to him in the silent speech that the two of them had secretly shared as long as they could remember. "Keep quiet and let's see where this is going. I am afraid of this pale little man from the Royal Court. He frightened me at the Abbey and he is even more frightening here, now. Not only that, but Brother CadreSean called Molensa Mother! He of all people certainly knows better than that."



## **When Frank Met Rosie**

*Headed for Trouble, Suzanne Brockmann • male/female, romance*

Rosie looked up into the deluge and just laughed. She must've been even more drunk than Frank had thought, so he grabbed her by the hand and pulled her, and together they ran for the shelter.

It was pointless--they were already soaked--running wouldn't keep them from getting any more wet. Still, the sound of her laughter made him smile, and--go figure--he was laughing, too, when she finally pulled him into a narrow doorway.

She was breathless and soaked. Her face wasn't all that was glistening wet, but her smile was so damn infectious as they stood there, squeezed together in a space where he'd have barely fit on his own. She was warm and soft against him, the neckline of that clingy top truly amazing from his vantage point.

"This seems like a good time for introductions," she told him. "I'm Rosie Machado. I'm from Hartford. In Connecticut."

"Frank O'Leary," he said. He couldn't look down into her face without getting an eyeful of her sonnet-worthy cleavage. Sweet Jesus, he loved full-figured women.

"Do you want to...", she started, then stopped. She made an embarrassed face. "God, I've never done this before. You're going to think that I'm..." She took a deep breath, which completely renewed his faith in a higher power. "I really never, ever do this, but do you want to..."

She didn't hesitate for more than a second or two, but that was all the time Frank needed to fill in the blank.



(Italics) Have sex, right here in this shadowy doorway. (end italics) He would kiss her, his hands sweeping her skirt up, her leg wrapping around him as they strained to get closer, even closer...

She was going to ask him for it, and he was going to have to turn her down because she was drunk, except, he couldn't think of anything or anyone he'd rather do.

But then she finished her question with, "Maybe go get some coffee? With me?"

At first her words just didn't make sense.

She wanted hot, steaming... Coffee.

She was looking up at him, her lower lip caught between her perfect teeth. She was feeling trepidation both at the fact that she'd been so bold as to suggest to a near stranger that they go get coffee, and because she thought he might actually say no.

Frank started to laugh. "I know a place we can go."

He took her by the hand, and once again pulled her out with him, into the rain.



VOICE ACTING  
**EXPO**



## **Wind In The Willows – Mole**

*Childrens*

The Mole had been working very hard all the morning, spring-cleaning his little home.

First with brooms, then with dusters; then on ladders and steps and chairs, with a brush and a pail of whitewash; till he had dust in his throat and eyes, and splashes of whitewash all over his black fur, and an aching back and weary arms.

Spring was moving in the air above and in the earth below and around him, penetrating even his dark and lowly little house with its spirit of divine discontent and longing.

It was small wonder, then, that he suddenly flung down his brush on the floor, said `Bother!' and `O blow!' and also `Hang spring-cleaning!' and bolted out of the house without even waiting to put on his coat.

Something up above was calling him imperiously, and he made for the steep little tunnel which answered in his case to the gravelled carriage-drive owned by animals whose residences are nearer to the sun and air.

So he scraped and scratched and scrabbled and scrooged and then he scrooged again and scrabbled and scratched and scraped, working busily with his little paws and muttering to himself, `Up we go! Up we go!' till at last, pop! his snout came out into the sunlight, and he found himself rolling in the warm grass of a great meadow.

`This is fine!' he said to himself. `This is better than whitewashing!'

The sunshine struck hot on his fur, soft breezes caressed his heated brow, and after the seclusion of the cellarage he had lived in so long the carol of happy birds fell on his dulled hearing almost like a shout.

Jumping off all his four legs at once, in the joy of living and the delight of spring without its cleaning, he pursued his way across the meadow till he reached the hedge on the further side.



VOICE ACTING  
**EXPO**



## **With Friends Like These - Dorothy Rowe**

*female, non-fiction*

We value friends, but the path of friendship, like love, rarely runs smooth. We may feel jealous of a friend's achievements when we want to feel happy for her. We might find it hard to give friends objective advice, unrelated to the person we want them to be. We can be reluctant to allow each other to change, sometimes falling out in a way that is painful for all involved. And yet, friendships are vitally important; central to our enjoyment of life.

More fundamentally, friendships are essential to our sense of who we are. Neuroscientists have shown that our brain does not reveal to us the world as it is, but rather as possible interpretations of what is going on around us, drawn from our past experience.

Since no two people ever have exactly the same experience, no two people ever see anything in exactly the same way.

Most of our brain's constructions are unconscious. Early in our life our stream of conscious and unconscious constructions create, like a real stream, a kind of whirlpool that quickly becomes our most precious possession, that is, our sense of being a person, what we call "I," "me," "myself." Like a whirlpool, our sense of being a person cannot exist separately from the stream that created it.

Because we cannot see reality directly, all our ideas are guesses about what is going on. Thus our sense of being a person is made up of these guesses. All the time we are creating ideas about who we are, what is happening now, what has happened in our world, and what our future will be. When these ideas are shown by events to be reasonably accurate, that is, our ideas are validated, we feel secure in ourselves, but when they are proved wrong, we feel that we are falling apart.

Friends are central to this all-important sense of validation.





When a friend confirms to us that the world is as we see it, we feel safer, reassured. On the other hand, when we say, “I’m shattered,” or “I’m losing my grip,” we might not be using clichés to describe a bad day but talking about something quite terrifying that we are experiencing: our sense of who we are is being challenged. So terrifying is this experience that we develop many different tactics aimed at warding off invalidation and defending ourselves against being annihilated as a person.

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We are constantly assessing how safe our sense of being a person is. Our assessments are those interpretations we call emotions. All our emotions relate to the degree of safety or danger our sense of being a person is experiencing. So important are these interpretations to our survival that we do not need to put them into words, although of course we can. Our positive emotions are interpretations to do with safety, while the multitude of negative emotions define the particular kind of danger and its degree. Joy is: “Everything is the way I want it to be”; jealousy is: “How dare that person have something that is rightly mine.” We can be invalidated by events such as the bankruptcy of the firm that employs us, but most frequently we are invalidated by other people.

A friend told me how her husband had used her password and pin to drain her bank account and fund his secret gambling habit.

Losing her savings was a terrible blow, but far worse was her loss of trust in the person she saw as her best friend. When she described herself as falling apart,



I assured her that what was falling apart were some of her ideas. All she had to do was to endure a period of uncertainty until she could construct ideas that better reflected her situation.

Friendship can be rewarding but, like all relationships, it can also be risky. Other people can let us down, insult or humiliate us, leading us to feel diminished and in danger. Yet we need other people to tell us when we have got our guesses right, and, when we get things wrong, to help us make more accurate assessments.

Live completely on your own and your guesses will get further and further away from reality.

The degree of risk we perceive from our friends relates directly to the degree of self-confidence we feel. When confident of ourselves, we feel that we can deal with being invalidated; when lacking self-confidence, we often see danger where no danger need exist. Take jealousy, for example. Feeling self-confident, we can rejoice in our friend's success at a new job; feeling inferior, we see danger and try to defend ourselves with: "It's not fair." We can fail to see that our friendship should be more important to us than our injured pride.

Our levels of confidence also relate to how ready we are to accept change, and how able we are to allow our friends to change.

To feel secure in ourselves, we need to be able to predict events reasonably accurately. We think we know our friends well, and so can predict what they will do. We create a mental image of our friends, and we want to keep them within the bounds of that image.

Our need to do this can override our ability to see our friends in the way they see themselves. We do not want them to change because then we would have to change our image of them. Change creates uncertainty, and uncertainty can be frightening.



However, an inability to allow change can lead to the end of a friendship. Falling out with a friend shows us that our image of them, from which we derive our predictions about that friend, is wrong; and if that is the case, our sense of being a person is threatened.

If we lose a friend, we have to change how we see ourselves and our life. Each of us lives in our own individual world of meaning.

We need to find friends whose individual world is somewhat similar to our own so that we are able to communicate with one another.

The people who can validate us best are those we can see as equals, and with whom there can be mutual affection, trust, loyalty and acceptance. Such people give us the kind of validation that builds a lasting self-confidence despite the difficulties we encounter. These are our true friends.

## **Ordeal in Space, Robert A. Heinlein**

*male/female, science fiction*

Maybe we should never have ventured out into space. Our race has but two basic, innate fears; noise, and the fear of falling. Those terrible heights—Why should any man in his right mind let himself be placed where he could fall...and fall...and fall—But all spacemen are crazy. Everyone knows that.

The Medicos had been very kind, he supposed. “You’re lucky. You want to remember that old fellow. You’re still young and your retired pay relieves you of all worry about your future. You’ve got both arms and legs and are in fine shape.”

“Fine shape!” His voice was unintentionally contemptuous. “No, I mean it,” the chief psychiatrist had persisted gently. “The little quirk you have does you no harm at all—except that you can’t go out into space again. I can’t honestly call acrophobia a neurosis; fear of falling is normal and sane. You’ve just got it a little more strongly than most—but that is not abnormal, in view of what you have been through.

The reminder sent him to shaking again. He closed his eyes and saw the stars wheeling below him again. He was falling...falling endlessly. The psychiatrist’s voice came back through to him and pulled him back. “Steady old man! Look around you.”

“Sorry.”

“Not at all. Now tell me, what do you plan to do?”

“I don’t know. Get a job I suppose.”

“The company will give you a job, you know.”

He shook his head. “I don’t want to hang around a spaceport. Wear a little button in his shirt to show the was once a man, be addressed by a courtesy title of captain, claim the privileges of the pilot’s lounge on the basis of what he used to be, hear the shop talk die down whenever he approached a group, wonder what they were saying behind his back—no thank you!

“I think you’re wise. Best to make a clean break, for a while at least, until you are feeling better.”



"You think I'll get over it?"

The psychiatrist pursed his lips. "Possible. It's functional you know. No Trauma."

"But you don't think so?"

"I didn't say that. I honestly don't know. We still know very little about what makes a man tick."

"I see. Well I might as well be leaving."

The psychiatrist stood up and shoved out his hand.

"Holler if you want anything. And come back to see us in any case."

"Thanks."

"You're going to be all right. I know it."

But the psychiatrist shook his head as his patient walked out. The man did not walk like a spaceman. The easy, animal self-confidence was gone.

Only a small part of Great New York was roofed over in those days; he stayed underground until he was in that section, then sought out a passageway lined with bachelor rooms. He stuck a coin in the slot of the first one which displayed a lighted "vacant" sign, chunked his jump bag inside, and left. The monitor at the intersection gave him the address of the nearest placement office. He went there, seated himself at an interview desk, stamped in his finger prints, and started filling out forms. It gave him a curious back-to-the beginning feeling; he had not looked for a job since pre-cadet days.

He left filling in his name to the last and hesitated even then. He had had more than his bellyful of publicity; he did not want to be recognized; he certainly did not want to be throbbed over—and most of all he did not want anyone telling him he was a hero. Presently he printed in the name "William Saunders" and dropped the forms in the slot.

He was well into his third cigarette and getting ready to strike another when the screen in front of him at last lighted up. He found himself staring at a nice-looking brunette. "Mr. Saunders," the image said, "will you come inside please? Door seventeen."



The brunette in person was there to offer him a seat and a cigarette. "Make yourself comfortable Mr. Saunders. I'm Miss Joyce. I'd like to talk with you about your application."

He settled himself and waited, without speaking.

When she saw that he did not intend to speak, she added, "Now take this name "William Saunders" which you have given us—we know who you are, of course, from your prints."

"I suppose so."

"Of course I know what everybody knows about you, but your action in calling yourself "William Saunders," Mr.—"

"Saunders"

"—Mr. Saunders, caused me to query the files." She held up a microfilm spool, turned so that he might read his own name on it. "I know quite a bit about you now—more than the public knows, and more than you saw fit to put into your application. It's a good record, Mr. Saunders."

"Thank you."

"But I can't use it in placing you in a job. I can't even refer to it if you insist on designating yourself as Saunders."

"The name is Saunders." His voice was flat, rather than emphatic.