The Palace Thief
by Ethan Canin

11/14/16

"The Contest"
The fall term was by then drawing to a close, and the boys had begun the frenzy of preliminary quizzes for the annual "Mr. Julius Caesar" competition. Here again, I suppose I was in my own way rooting for Sedgewick. "Mr. Julius Caesar" is a St. Benedict's tradition, held in reverence among the boys, the kind of mythic ritual that is the currency of a school like ours. It is a contest, held in two phases. The first is a narrowing maneuver, by means of a dozen written quizzes, from which three boys from the first form emerge victorious. The second is a public tournament, in which these three take the stage before the assembled student body and answer questions about ancient Rome until one alone emerges triumphant, as had Caesar himself from among Crassus and Pompey. Parents and graduates fill out the audience. In front of Mr. Woodbridge's office a plaque attests to the "Mr. Julius Caesars" of the previous half-century — a list that begins with John F. Dulles in 1901 — and although the ritual might seem quaint to those who have not attended St. Benedict's, I can only say that in a school like ours one cannot overstate the importance of a public joust.

That year I had three obvious contenders: Fred Masoudi, who, as I intimated, was a somewhat gifted boy; Martin Blythe, a studious type; and Deepak Mehta, the son of a Bombay mathematician, who was dreadfully quiet but clearly my best student. It was Deepak, in fact, who on his own and entirely separate from the class had studied the disparate people's, from the Carthaginians to the Egyptians, whom the Romans had conquered.

By the end of the narrowing quizzes, however, a surprising configuration had emerged: Sedgewick Bell had pulled himself to within a few points of third place in my class. This was when I made my first mistake. Although I should certainly have known better, I was impressed enough by his efforts that I broke one of the cardinal rules of teaching: I gave him an A on a quiz on which he had earned only a B, and in so doing, I leapfrogged him over Martin Blythe. On the fifteenth of March, when the three finalists took their seats on stage in front of the assembled population of the school, Sedgewick Bell was among them, and his father was among the audience.
I don’t know how long I stood there, between the school assembled behind me and the two boys seated in front, but after a period of internal deliberation, during which time I could hear the rising murmurs of the audience, I decided that in the long run it was best for Sedgewick Bell to be caught. Oh, how the battle is lost for want of a horse! I leaned to Mr. Woodbridge next to me and whispered, “I believe Sedgewick Bell is cheating.”

“Ignore it,” he whispered back.

“What?” Of course, I have great respect for what Mr. Woodbridge did for St. Benedict’s in the years he was among us. A headmaster’s world is a far more complex one than a teacher’s, and it is historically inopportune to blame a life gone awry on a single incident in childhood. However, I myself would have stood up for our principles had Mr. Woodbridge not at that point said, “Ignore it, Hundert, or look for another job.”

Naturally, my headmaster’s words startled me for a moment; but being familiar with the necessities of a boys’ school, and having recently entertained my first thoughts about one day becoming a headmaster myself, I simply nodded when Sedgewick Bell produced the correct answer, Lucius Cornelius Sulla.
In a position of moral leadership, of course, compromise begets only more compromise, and although I know this now from my own experience, at the time I did so only from my study of history. Perhaps that is why I again found an untenable compassion muddying my thoughts. What kind of desperation would lead a boy to cheat on a public stage? His father and mother were well back in the crowded theater, but when I glanced behind me, my eye went instantly to them, as though they were indeed my own parents, out from Kansas City. “Who were the first emperors to reign over the divided Empire?” I asked Sedgewick Bell.

It was only as I mounted the stage to present Deepak with the garland of Laurel, however, that I glanced at Mr. Woodbridge and realized that he too had wanted me to steer the contest toward Sedgewick Bell. At the same moment, I saw Senator Bell making his way toward the rear door of the hall. Young Sedgewick stood limply to the side of me, and I believe I had my first inkling then of the mighty forces that would twist the life of that boy. I could only imagine his thoughts as he stood there on stage while his mother, struggling to catch up with the senator, vanished through the fire door at the back. By the next morning, our calligraphers would add Deepak Mehta’s name to the plaque outside Mr. Woodbridge’s office, and young Sedgewick Bell would begin his lifelong pursuit of missed glory.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hundert</th>
<th>Interaction 1 with Bell</th>
<th>Interaction 3 with Bell</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaction:</td>
<td>Reaction:</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sedgewick Bell</th>
<th>Interaction with students:</th>
<th>Interaction with students:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reaction:</td>
<td>Reaction:</td>
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</table>
Foreshadowing a clue to a future event

"began his lifelong pursuit of missed glory"

"feline smile"

Feline class of cats

expell - kicked out of school

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During the contest in The Palace Thief, the reader learns a lot about Hendel based on both his actions and inactions. Complete the chart detailing his action/inaction and what you learn about him as a character.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action/Page</th>
<th>Reader Response</th>
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The Contest!
1. Contender – competitor for a championship or a high honor *(Contender - competidor por un campeonato o un alto honor)*

2. Tournament – series of contests between competitors, who compete for a prize. Noun (thing) Torneo - serie de concursos entre competidores, que compiten por un premio. Sustantivo

3. Tradition – passing a custom or belief from one generation to the next. Noun (thing) Tradición - pasando una costumbre o creencia de una generación a la siguiente. Sustantivo

4. Reverence – deep respect for someone or something. Noun (thing) Reverencia - profundo respeto por alguien o algo. Sustantivo

5. Gamble – the act of taking a chance. Noun (thing) Gamble - el acto de tomar una oportunidad. Sustantivo

6. Progression – movement towards a more advanced state. Noun (thing) Progresión - movimiento hacia un estado más avanzado. Sustantivo

7. Aristocrat – a person who was born into the highest social class. Noun (person) Aristócrata - una persona que nació en la clase social más alta. Sustantivo

8. Interrogator – a person who questions another. Noun (person) Interrogador - una persona que pregunta a otro. Sustantivo

9. Instinct – type of behavior that is in response to a stimulus. Noun (thing) Instinto - tipo de comportamiento que es en respuesta a un estímulo. Sustantivo

### Cast of Characters

- **Narrator**
  - Teacher at St. Benedict's School
  - Proud
  - Speaker

- **Student**
  - Bully
  - Boy
  - Trouble-maker

- **Protagonist (main character/who overcomes a problem)**
  - Benedict (bene = good) (dict = to say)
  - Smart
  - Hardworking
  - Student
  - Respectful
  - Good grades
  - Hundert is proud of him

- **Principal/Headmaster**
  - Mr. Kudlidge

**Mean**
- Rude
- Arrogant

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**December 16, 2016**

Mean, Rude, Arrogant

Page 165 - I gave him an A instead of a B so Sedgewick Bell could be part of the contest

Everyone has potential. Potential can help someone have power. You must use this power carefully. But, even those who have the greatest power, still are affected by the sands of time.

Strategy - a plan (un plan a strati gia)

Retrospect - in the past to look at

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action/Page</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Page 165 - I gave him an A instead of a B so Sedgewick Bell could be part of the contest</td>
<td>Unfair, outraged, disappointed, hurt, betrayed, compassionate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>168 - Hundert realizes Bell is cheating - does nothing.</td>
<td>Dishonest</td>
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<tr>
<td>167 - Hundert gives Bell easier questions</td>
<td>Liar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>173 - Hundert does not tell the senator that his son cheated</td>
<td>Hypocrite</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Favors Bell (he is Hundert's favorite student)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hundert is scared</td>
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</tbody>
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**Character Traits**
Your task: Write two paragraphs that discuss how Ethan Canin (the author of *The Palace Thief*) characterizes Hundert. You will need to cite specific textual evidence that demonstrates specific character traits.

Possible Character Traits – Please look up any words that you do not understand.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive</th>
<th>Negative</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Respectful</td>
<td>Condescending</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassionate</td>
<td>Negative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empathetic</td>
<td>Nervous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benevolent</td>
<td>Proud</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Righteous</td>
<td>Ambitious</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weak</td>
<td>Manipulated</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Text = book, whatever you are reading (poem, letter, story)

11/28/16

I was citing evidence!!

**Paragraph One**

Identify one specific character trait demonstrated by Hundert: **Nervous**

Textual evidence of the character trait:

Page 160: “I was frightened but determined, and I reminded myself that Sedgewick H. Bell was a senator, but also a father.”

Why does this piece of evidence support your chosen character trait?

This evidence shows that Hundert is nervous when meeting Senator Bell. He is frightened, which is a feeling caused by when someone is nervous and reminds himself that Bell is a man of great importance by stating he is a senator.
Paragraph Two

Identify one specific character trait demonstrated by Hundert: ______________________

Textual evidence of the character trait:
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________

Why does this piece of evidence support your chosen character trait?
__________________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________________