

GLORY ROAD

Written by
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CHARACTER LIST:

NARRATOR — the Narrator

MARGARET — an English instructor, 24 years old.

MICHAEL — a male student, 18 years old, wearing jeans and a lumberjack shirt.

KIM — a pert, female student, 17 years old

SETTING:

An office at UBC in a converted army barrack furnished with a desk, a bookshelf, two chairs, a wastebasket, and perhaps a blackboard. A working door opens onto a hallway. On the desk are an ashtray, a lamp, and a soup can with pens and pencils. The white paint on the bare walls of the office is peeling. October, 1964.

Scene One: Int. Office – Day

1. MUSIC: DEAN MARTIN: EVERYBODY LOVES SOMEBODY
SOMETIME: UP, FADE UNDER DIALOGUE, AND
STOP.

2. NARRATOR: Once upon a time UBC was a much smaller place – in terms of the number of students and faculty members. Many students were housed in army barracks left over from the Second World War – at Fort Camp and Acadia Park.

Some classes and junior faculty members' offices were also located in these crumbling, mouldy, white washed army barracks. These were the days before UBC's administration sold its soul in exchange for large endowments and donations from corporations, governments, and wealthy private individuals.

Despite its more modest goals, UBC attracted highly qualified teachers and researchers from around the world. But because of UBC's limited funds and facilities, some faculty members left UBC – got away as they say in faculty jargon – to pursue their research and writing elsewhere.

NARRATOR / CONT'D OVER . . .

1. NARRATOR (CONT'D)

And in those days, of course, there were strict rules of conduct governing the relationships between professors and students. And a physical education course was compulsory. So here we are in an office at UBC in a converted army barrack, sparsely furnished with a desk, a bookshelf, two chairs, a wastebasket, and perhaps a blackboard. A working door opens onto a hallway. On the desk are a few stacks of paper, an ashtray, a lamp, and a soup can with pens and pencils. The white paint on the bare walls of the office is peeling.

It's October, 1964...

MARGARET and MICHAEL sit at either side of the desk. Margaret sits casually, perhaps smoking a cigarette, while Michael nervously jiggles his right foot.

Margaret, a young English Instructor, has called Michael, a second year student, into her office. Kim, a first year student, keeps bursting into their meeting.

1. MARGARET: You needn't call me Doctor. I don't have my Ph.D. . . . yet.
I explained that in class. And stop calling me Mrs. or Miss in class.

2. MICHAEL: Yes. (PAUSE) What *do* you have?

3. MARGARET: I have my Master's, and I am working on my Ph.D. — at Harvard.

4. MICHAEL: So it *is* a Master's degree? That's enough to be an instructor?!

5. MARGARET: Stop doing that! You do that in class too, changing the drift of the conversation toward someone or something else. It is the flow, just like in writing, that I want in these essays.

6. MICHAEL: It's just that you seem very young to be teaching a Second year English class. You're younger than my High School teachers. What's your zodiac sign?

1. MARGARET: Scorpio . . . (RAISING HER VOICE) You're doing that again. (PAUSE) I need to see your UBC student card.

2. MICHAEL: Why do you need to see that?

3. MARGARET: Look. I don't have a "Michael Bedford" on my class list. And yet, Michael, you have written a mid-term and handed in . . . this essay. It's a problem.

4. MICHAEL: Will my driver's licence do? Here.

5. SOUND: A CHAIR'S LEGS SCRAPE THE FLOOR.

6. MARGARET: Is that all you go with? ... Now see here, mister. This driver's licence is a fake ID! I know, because I worked in a bar. And you are not 23 years old. Here.

7. SOUND: A CHAIR'S LEGS SCRAPE THE FLOOR.

1. MARGARET: In any case, I checked at the Registrar's office. There is no Michael Bedford registered at UBC. So, who are you?

2. MICHAEL: Sorry. That's the pseudonym I used when I wrote a column for my high school newspaper. (PAUSE) I am registered, but under a different name. Oh, I know! My student card! Let me show you. I'm in math honours, see? My real name is Martin Gage ... here.

3. SOUND: A CHAIR'S LEGS SCRAPE THE FLOOR.

4. MARGARET: It says here that you're a second year student . . . and you're 18 years old. You seem younger than your picture. And why just that glimmer of a smile?

5. MICHAEL: It's, uh, because of my parents, uh, that I use my pseudonym at UBC, when I can. Like here in your class.

MICHAEL/CONT'D OVER . . .

1. MICHAEL (CONT'D) I mean, because I'm already registered for the maximum number of courses. I'm taking six math and science courses. I couldn't sign up for any more. (PAUSE) Can I persuade you at least?

2. SOUND: A CHAIR'S LEGS SCRAPE THE FLOOR.

3. MARGARET: Well, I'm not here to restrict you. But why take my English Literature class?

4. MICHAEL: It's like fate. I guess. Like in Shakespeare's play, Twelfth Night. In which Olivia and Viola consign their future to fate, acting — uh — through time. Yes... fate.

5. MARGARET: No. I need us to be clear right now. What should I be calling you — Michael? You're taking my class under a pseudonym. As a writer I am OK with that. My question is more like, why are you taking my English class if math is your *forte*? Most of us don't understand math. Even hate math!

1. SOUND: KNOCKING ON THE OFFICE DOOR. DOOR OPENING.

BRISK FOOTSTEPS.

2. KIM: Professor ...

3. MARGARET: (TOP) Kim, who is it this time? Can you come back another time?

4. KIM: The one to whom I am kind is the one who does me most harm.

5. SOUND: BRISK FOOT STEPS. DOOR CLOSING.

6. MARGARET: Just ignore her. She's having issues. (PAUSE) So why are you?

7. MICHAEL: English was one of my best subjects in high school.

1. MARGARET: And you didn't want to give up that option, right. I mean, it's like a gate to the future, a gate you might want to enter.
(PAUSE) You talk about gates in your essay here, on *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* by James Joyce.

2. MICHAEL: Did you like it? How did I do?

3. MARGARET: See, Michael, that's the thing . . . what *I* think about your writing. Let's get back to your assertion of fate. (BEAT)
I remember you now. Do you remember me from that ball room dancing class . . . the first two weeks in September?

4. MICHAEL: What do you mean? I'm taking ball room dancing for my Phys Ed elective.

5. SOUND: KNOCKING ON THE OFFICE DOOR. DOOR OPENING.
BRISK FOOTSTEPS.

1. KIM: Oh! You're Michael *aren't* ... you? You are fortunate ... like a God. Professor ... my ears are ringing, and I can barely see.

2. MARGARET: Kim, do you mind! I am with a student. Later!

3. SOUND: BRISK FOOT STEPS. DOOR CLOSING.

4. MICHAEL: I met her this spring at the UBC high school orientation — for high school presidents and student assembly speakers. Sometimes I see her hanging around the Mathematics building, although she isn't in any of my math classes.

5. MARGARET: (LAUGHING) Yeah. Kim is of two minds and two bodies. She's quoting scraps of Sappho — the Greek lesbian poet — at me. (PAUSE) About that dance class we were in. I had just arrived from Toronto. I thought I might meet people — instructors can take courses for free. But everyone seemed so much younger. Did we dance?

1. MICHAEL: I had just arrived from Chilliwack. It was all a blur. We have to dance with everyone. I mean, with all the girls . . . The guys dance with the girls. Was it that waltz with Dean Martin? His big hit this summer?

2. MARGARET: Yes. Yeah. The song was “Everybody Loves Somebody Sometime.” So, is all this more than just something intellectual? Is it something, physical? (PAUSE) Is it because I attract you . . . physically?

3. MICHAEL: Like I said, it’s fate. Your time slot fit the vacant, blank time slot in my schedule. Like you said, it’s a gate, into the future. Actually.

4. MARGARET: So you are not denying it — the physical aspect — are you?

5. MICHAEL: Where does time go when it vacantly passes? Never again will it come to you, never again will it come.

1. MARGARET: I know that quote from Sappho too! (PAUSE) We were talking about your essay. You compare James Joyce's *Portrait* with Robert Heinlein's *Glory Road* . . . with a science fiction novel, claiming the Christian apocalypse is science fiction.

2. MICHAEL: Yes. Have you read it? It's about a guy who gets recruited by a beautiful, somewhat older woman who needs to save the Empire of the Universes. She's the queen. They pass through gates to get to different galaxies and universes and fight many battles together.

3. SOUND: KNOCKING ON THE OFFICE DOOR. DOOR OPENING.

BRISK FOOTSTEPS.

4. KIM: I honestly wish I were dead. It's what one loves that is the most beautiful.

1. MARGARET: I have never, Kim, known you to be more annoying. I can get you a transfer to the University of Toronto if you think that would help. I know Jay Macpherson. She's an English professor there.

2. SOUND: BRISK FOOT STEPS. DOOR CLOSING.

3. MICHAEL: Usually she's hanging around Morginsky's door . . . the math prof.

4. MUSIC: DEAN MARTIN: EVERYBODY LOVES SOMEBODY
SOMETIME: FADES IN UNDER DIALOGUE AND
SOUND.

5. MARGARET: (SARCASTICALLY) Older men and their bodies!
(PAUSE) You're very keen about science fiction, *aren't* you?

MARGARET/CONT'D OVER . . .

1. MARGARET (CONT'D): Technically you're not my student. So what do you say we go out somewhere before Kim returns? We'll talk about your essay and science fiction over a cup of coffee. The Christian apocalypse and dystopian futures really fascinate me.

Call me Margaret.

2. SOUND: CHAIRS' LEGS SCRAPE THE FLOOR.

THE END