

Sample A - Julia

Waiting on a late appointment- interview with very important individual in the business. I've read his books. It's called fiction, but it's still him- leading. Voice, mannerisms, experiences. Are we supposed to know that? What if we're wrong? I love his books, I love him. I think. It is expressible? Can love be made witty?

You're reading a book and it says nonfiction, but you wonder if this or that really happened and you want it to be true but you doubt it but you don't want to call anyone's bluff and you don't want to judge. It's not your place to speculate, but also it is, because after it's published it'll always and never belong to the author. So there's that quandary.

If you invest enough in them books become your friends, which, subsequently, makes authors their parents. It's always interesting meeting your friends' parents because, even if they don't want it, there's this connection between the two of them, your friend and the parent. They're part of one another and it's a kind of public intimacy that you either love or hate. You stand in your friend's kitchen, not your bff or anything, and talk to the mother. Exhausting sororal chitchat and maybe she calls you *sweetie*- which is the kind of undeserved recognition for which I, in particular, scrounge. But she doesn't love you. She doesn't know you. She loves the part of you that's young, or the part of you that's polite, or pure, or wise, and you don't love her either. Maybe you love the way her rings sound when she puts her hands together, maybe or you love her oven mitts. You love a part of her- your friend, her child. Someone you thought you know, but now you realize you're nothing in comparison. What's an afternoon of raising holy [heck] or a three hour English project? You're the friend, not the mother. The reader, not the writer. A lousy, twisted, critic trying to convince someone you've just met, and will never know that you're not a criminal degenerate. That you're not green. That you're in the know. That you've got nothing to prove when, actually, you do. You're a liar and a poser and a thief and they know it. But they don't let on. You love a parent the way you love an author. It's based on association and guilty assumption.

And that's why I hate the initial meeting with friends' parents. And why I hate meeting authors I've read. But sometimes it's inevitable. What can you talk about that won't make you look stupid? It's the same reason I sometimes hate asking math teachers to just use real words, or asking English teachers to tell me what the point is, or why I hate talking about history with history teachers because it's either so brilliant or so daft that I usually need a good week or two to sort it all out. So I usually just talk about something else and hope they get the metaphor. And I don't ask journalists about journalism.

So I'm waiting on the guy. For the interview. And he shows. He smokes. I wait. He looks. I begin.

Q: So...

A: So...

Q: Guess my favorite Muppet.

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