

MODERNIST FICTION

Gertrude Stein

If I Told Him

A Completed Portrait of Picasso

If I told him would he like it. Would he like it if I told him.
Would he like it would Napoleon would Napoleon would would he like it.
If Napoleon if I told him if I told him if Napoleon. Would he like it if I told him if I told him if Napoleon. Would he like it if Napoleon if Napoleon if I told him. If I told him if Napoleon if Napoleon if I told him. If I told him would he like it would he like it if I told him.
Now.
Not now.
And now.
Now.
Exactly as as kings.
Feeling full for it.
Exactitude as kings.
So to beseech you as full as for it.
Exactly or as kings.
Shutters shut and open so do queens. Shutters shut and shutters and so shutters shut and shutters and so and so shutters and so shutters shut and so shutters shut and shutters and so. And so shutters shut and so and also. And also and so and so and also.
Exact resemblance to exact resemblance the exact resemblance as exact as a resemblance, exactly as resembling, exactly resembling, exactly in resemblance exactly a resemblance, exactly and resemblance. For this is so. Because.
Now actively repeat at all, now actively repeat at all,

now actively repeat at all.
Have hold and hear, actively repeat at all.
I judge judge.
As a resemblance to him.
Who comes first. Napoleon the first.
Who comes too coming coming too, who goes there, as they go they share, who shares all, all is as all as as yet or as yet.
Now to date now to date. Now and now and date and the date.
Who came first Napoleon at first. Who came first Napoleon the first. Who came first, Napoleon first.
Presently.
Exactly as they do.
First exactly.
Exactly as they do too.
First exactly.
And first exactly.
Exactly as they do.
And first exactly and exactly.
And do they do.
At first exactly and first exactly and do they do.
The first exactly.
At first exactly.
First as exactly.
At first as exactly.
Presently.
As presently.
As as presently.
He he he he and he and he and and he and he and he and and as and as he and as he and he. He is and as he is, and as he is and he is, he is and as he and he and as he is and he and he and and he.
Can curls rob can curls quote, quotable.
As presently.
As exactitude.
As trains.
Has trains.
Has trains.
As trains.
As trains.
Presently.

Proportions.
Presently.
As proportions as presently.
Father and farther.
Was the king or room.
Farther and whether.
Was there was there was there what was there was there what was there was there there there was there.
Whether and in there.
As even say so.
One.
I land.
Two.
I land.
Three.
The land.
Three.
The land.
Two.
I land.
Two.
I land.
One.
I land.
Two.
I land.
As a so.
They cannot.
A note.
They cannot.
A float.
They cannot.
They dote.
They cannot.
They as denote.
Miracles play.
Play fairly.
Play fairly well.
A well.
As well.
As or as presently.
Let me recite what history teaches. History teaches.

As a Wife Has a Cow A Love Story

Nearly all of it to be as a wife has a cow, a love story. All of it to be as a wife has a cow, all of it to be as a wife has a cow, a love story.

As to be all of it as to be a wife as a wife has a cow, a love story, all of it as to be all of it as a wife all of it as to be as a wife has a cow a love story, all of it as a wife has a cow as a wife has a cow a love story.

Has made, as it has made as it has made, has made has to be as a wife has a cow, a love story. Has made as to be as a wife has a cow a love story. As a wife has a cow, as a wife has a cow, a love story. Has to be as a wife has a cow a love story. Has made as to be as a wife has a cow a love story.

When he can, and for that when he can, for that. When he can and for that when. he can. For that. When he can. For that when he can. For that. And when he can and for that. Or that, and when he can. For that and when he can.

And to in six and another. And to and in and six and another. And to and in and six and another. And to in six and and to and in and six and another. And to and in and six and another. And to and six and in and another and and to and six and another and and to and in and six and and to and six and in and another.

In came in there, came in there come out of there. In came in come out of there. Come out there in came in there. Come out of there and in and come out of there. Came in there, come out of there.

Feeling or for it, as feeling or for it, came in or come in, or come out of there or feeling as feeling or feeling as for it.

As a wife has a cow.

Came in and come out.

As a wife has a cow a love story.

As a love story, as a wife has a cow, a love story.

Not and now, now and not, not and now, by and by not and now, as not, as soon as not not and now, now as soon now now as soon, now as soon as soon as now. Just as soon just now just now just as soon just as soon as now. Just as soon as now.

And in that, as and in that, in that and and in that, so that, so that and in that, and in that and so that and as for that and as for that and that. In that. In that and and for that as for that and in that. Just as soon and in that. In that as that and just as soon. Just as soon as that.

Even now, now and even now and now and even now. Not as even now, therefor, even now and therefor, therefor and even now and even now and therefor even now.

So not to and moreover and even now and therefor and moreover and even now and so and even now and therefor even now.

Do they as they do so. And do they do so.

We feel we feel. We feel or if we feel if we feel or if we feel. We feel or if we feel. As it is made made a day made a day or two made a day, as it is made a day or two, as it is made a day. Made a day. Made a day. Not away a day. By day. As it is made a day. On the fifteenth of October as they say, said anyway, what is it as they expect, as they expect it or as they expected it, as they expect it and as they expected it, expect it or for it, expected it and it is expected of it. As they say said anyway. What is it as they expect for it, what is it and it is as they expect of it. What is it. What is the fifteenth of October as they say as they expect or as they expected as they expect for it. What is it as they say the fifteenth of October as they say and as expected of it, the fifteenth of October as they say, what is it as expected of it. What is it and the fifteenth of October as they say and expected of it.

And prepare and prepare so prepare to prepare and prepare to prepare and prepare so as to prepare, so to prepare and prepare to prepare to prepare for and to prepare for it to prepare, to prepare for it, in preparation, as preparation in preparation by preparation. They will be too busy afterwards to prepare. As preparation prepare, to prepare, as to preparation and to prepare. Out there.

Have it as having having it as happening, happening to have it as having, having to. have it as happening. Happening and have it as happening and having it happen as happening and having to have it happen as happening, and my wife has a cow as now, my wife having a cow as now, my wife having a cow as now and having a cow as now and having a cow and having a cow now, my wife has a cow and now. My wife has a cow.

Ernest Hemingway

Hills Like White Elephants

The hills across the valley of the Ebro were long and white. On this side there was no shade and no trees and the station was between two lines of rails in the sun. Close against the side of the station there was the warm shadow of the building and a curtain, made of strings of bamboo beads, hung across the open door into the bar, to keep out flies. The American and the girl with him sat at a table in the shade, outside the building. It was very hot and the express from Barcelona would come in forty minutes. It stopped at this junction for two minutes and went on to Madrid.

“What should we drink?” the girl asked. She had taken off her hat and put it on the table.

“It’s pretty hot,” the man said.

“Let’s drink beer.”

“Dos cervezas,” the man said into the curtain.

“Big ones?” a woman asked from the doorway.

“Yes. Two big ones.”

The woman brought two glasses of beer and two felt pads. She put the felt pads and the beer glasses on the table and looked at the man and the girl. The girl was looking off at the line of hills. They were white in the sun and the country was brown and dry.

“They look like white elephants,” she said.

“I’ve never seen one,” the man drank his beer.

“No, you wouldn’t have.”

“I might have,” the man said. “Just because you say I wouldn’t have doesn’t prove anything.”

The girl looked at the bead curtain. “They’ve painted something on it,” she said.

“What does it say?”

“Anis del Toro. It’s a drink.”

“Could we try it?”

The man called “Listen” through the curtain. The woman came out from the bar.

“Four reales.”

“We want two Anis del Toro.”

“With water?”

“Do you want it with water?”

“I don’t know,” the girl said. “Is it good with water?”

“It’s all right.”

“You want them with water?” asked the woman.

“Yes, with water.”

“It tastes like licorice,” the girl said and put the glass down.

“That’s the way with everything.”

“Yes,” said the girl. “Everything tastes of licorice. Especially all the things you’ve waited so long for, like absinthe.”

“Oh, cut it out.”

“You started it,” the girl said. “I was being amused. I was having a fine time.”

“Well, let’s try and have a fine time.”

“All right. I was trying. I said the mountains looked like white elephants. Wasn’t that bright?”

“That was bright.”

“I wanted to try this new drink. That’s all we do, isn’t it—look at things and try new drinks?”

“I guess so.”

The girl looked across at the hills.

“They’re lovely hills,” she said. “They don’t really look like white elephants. I just meant the coloring of their skin through the trees.”

“Should we have another drink?”

“All right.”

The warm wind blew the bead curtain against the table.

“The beer’s nice and cool,” the man said.

“It’s lovely,” the girl said.

“It’s really an awfully simple operation, Jig,” the man said. “It’s not really an operation at all.”

The girl looked at the ground the table legs rested on.

“I know you wouldn’t mind it, Jig. It’s really not anything. It’s just to let the air in.”

The girl did not say anything.

“I’ll go with you and I’ll stay with you all the time. They just let the air in and then it’s all perfectly natural.”

“Then what will we do afterward?”

“We’ll be fine afterward. Just like we were before.”

“What makes you think so?”

“That’s the only thing that bothers us. It’s the only thing that’s made us unhappy.”

The girl looked at the bead curtain, put her hand out and took hold of two of the strings of beads.

“And you think then we’ll be all right and be happy.”

“I know we will. You don’t have to be afraid. I’ve known lots of people that have done it.”

“So have I,” said the girl. “And afterward they were all so happy.”

“Well,” the man said, “if you don’t want to you don’t have to. I wouldn’t have you do it if you didn’t want to. But I know it’s perfectly simple.”

“And you really want to?”

“I think it’s the best thing to do. But I don’t want you to do it if you don’t really want to.”

“And if I do it you’ll be happy and things will be like they were and you’ll love me?”

“I love you now. You know I love you.”
 “I know. But if I do it, then it will be nice again if I say things are like white elephants, and you’ll like it?”
 “I’ll love it. I love it now but I just can’t think about it. You know how I get when I worry.”
 “If I do it you won’t ever worry?”
 “I won’t worry about that because it’s perfectly simple.”
 “Then I’ll do it. Because I don’t care about me.”
 “What do you mean?”
 “I don’t care about me.”
 “Well, I care about you.”
 “Oh, yes. But I don’t care about me. And I’ll do it and then everything will be fine.”
 “I don’t want you to do it if you feel that way.”
 The girl stood up and walked to the end of the station. Across, on the other side, were fields of grain and trees along the banks of the Ebro. Far away, beyond the river, were mountains. The shadow of a cloud moved across the field of grain and she saw the river through the trees.
 “And we could have all this,” she said. “And we could have everything and every day we make it more impossible.”
 “What did you say?”
 “I said we could have everything.”
 “We can have everything.”
 “No, we can’t.”
 “We can have the whole world.”
 “No, we can’t,”
 “We can go everywhere.”
 “No, we can’t. It isn’t ours any more,”
 “It’s ours.”
 “No, it isn’t. And once they take it away, you never get it back.”
 “But they haven’t taken it away.”
 “We’ll wait and see.”
 “Come on back in the shade,” he said. “You mustn’t feel that way.”
 “I don’t feel any way,” the girl said. “I just know things.”
 “I don’t want you to do anything that you don’t want to do—”
 “Nor that isn’t good for me,” she said. “I know. Could we have another beer?”
 “All right. But you’ve got to realize—”
 “I realize,” the girl said. “Can’t we maybe stop talking?”
 They sat down at the table and the girl looked across at the hills on the dry side of the valley and the man looked at her and at the table.
 “You’ve got to realize,” he said, “that I don’t want you to do it if you don’t want to. I’m perfectly willing to go through with it if it means anything to you.”
 “Doesn’t it mean anything to you? We could get along.”

“Of course it does. But I don’t want anybody but you. I don’t want any one else. And I know it’s perfectly simple.”
 “Yes, you know it’s perfectly simple.”
 “It’s all right for you to say that, but I do know it.”
 “Would you do something for me now?”
 “I’d do anything for you.”
 “Would you please please please please please please stop talking?”
 He did not say anything but looked at the bags against the wall of the station. There were labels on them from all the hotels where they had spent nights.
 “But I don’t want you to,” he said, “I don’t care anything about it.”
 “I’ll scream,” the girl said.
 The woman came out through the curtains with two glasses of beer and put them down on the damp felt pads. “The train comes in five minutes,” she said.
 “What did she say?” asked the girl.
 “That the train is coming in five minutes.”
 The girl smiled brightly at the woman, to thank her.
 “I’d better take the bags over to the other side of the station,” the man said. She smiled at him.
 “All right. Then come back and we’ll finish the beer.”
 He picked up the two heavy bags and carried them around the station to the other tracks. He looked up the tracks but could not see the train. Coming back, he walked through the barroom, where people waiting for the train were drinking. He drank an Anis at the bar and looked at the people. They were all waiting reasonably for the train. He went out through the bead curtain. She was sitting at the table and smiled at him.
 “Do you feel better?” he asked.
 “I feel fine,” she said. “There’s nothing wrong with me. I feel fine.”

[1927]

Cat in the Rain

There were only two Americans stopping at the hotel. They did not know any of the people they passed on the stairs on their way to and from their room. Their room was on the second floor facing the sea. It also faced the public garden and the war monument. There were big palms and green benches in the public garden. In the good weather there was always an artist with his easel. Artists liked the way the palms grew and the bright colours of the hotels facing the gardens and the sea. Italians came from a long way off to look up at the war monument. It was made of bronze and, glistened in the rain. It was raining. The rain dripped from the palm trees. Water stood in pools on the gravel paths. The sea broke in a long line in the rain and slipped back down the beach to come up and break again in a long line in the rain. The motor-cars were gone from the square by the war monument. Across

the square in the doorway of the café a waiter stood looking out at the empty square.

The American wife stood at the window looking out. Outside right under their window a cat was crouched under one of the dripping green tables. The cat was trying to make herself so compact that she would not be dripped on.

"I'm going down and get that kitty," the American wife said.

"I'll do it," her husband offered from the bed.

"No, I'll get it. The poor kitty out trying to keep dry under a table."

The husband went on reading, lying propped up with the two pillows at the foot of the bed.

"Don't get wet," he said.

The wife went downstairs and the hotel owner stood up and bowed to her as she passed the office. His desk was at the far end of the office. He was an old man and very tall.

"Il piove," the wife said. She liked the hotel-keeper.

"Sì, sì, Signora, brutto tempo. It is very bad weather."

He stood behind his desk in the far end of the dim room. The wife liked him. She liked the deadly serious way he received any complaints. She liked his dignity. She liked the way he wanted to serve her. She liked the way he felt about being a hotel-keeper. She liked his old, heavy face and big hands.

Liking him she opened the door and looked out. It was raining harder. A man in a rubber cape was crossing the empty square to the café. The cat would be around to the right. Perhaps she could go along under the eaves. As she stood in the doorway an umbrella opened behind her. It was the maid who looked after their room.

"You must not get wet," she smiled, speaking Italian. Of course, the hotel-keeper had sent her.

With the maid holding the umbrella over her, she walked along the gravel path until she was under their window. The table was there, washed bright green in the rain, but the cat was gone. She was suddenly disappointed. The maid looked up at her.

"Ha perduto qualche cosa, Signora?"

"There was a cat," said the American girl.

"A cat?"

"Sì, il gatto."

"A cat?" the maid laughed. "A cat in the rain?"

"Yes," she said, "under the table." Then, "Oh, I wanted it so much. I wanted a kitty."

When she talked English the maid's face tightened.

"Come, Signora," she said. "We must get back inside. You will be wet."

"I suppose so," said the American girl.

They went back along the gravel path and passed the door. The maid stayed outside to close the umbrella. As the American girl passed the office, the padrone bowed from his desk. Something felt very small and tight inside the girl. The

padrone made her feel very small and at the same time really important. She had a momentary feeling of being of supreme importance. She went on up the stairs. She opened the door of the room. George was on the bed, reading.

"Did you get the cat?" he asked, putting the book down.

"It was gone."

"Wonder where it went to?" he said, resting his eyes from reading.

She sat down on the bed.

"I wanted it so much," she said. "I don't know why I wanted it so much. I wanted that poor kitty. It isn't any fun to be a poor kitty out in the rain."

George was reading again.

She went over and sat in front of the mirror of the dressing-table, looking at herself with the hand glass. She studied her profile, first one side and then the other. Then she studied the back of her head and her neck.

"Don't you think it would be a good idea if I let my hair grow out?" she asked, looking at her profile again.

George looked up and saw the back of her neck, clipped close like a boy's.

"I like it the way it is."

"I get so tired of it," she said. "I get so tired of looking like a boy."

George shifted his position on the bed. He hadn't looked away from her since she started to speak.

"You look pretty darn nice," he said.

She laid the mirror down on the dresser and went over to the window and looked out. It was getting dark.

"I want to pull my hair back tight and smooth and make a big knot at the back that I can feel," she said. "I want to have a kitty to sit on my lap and purr when I stroke her."

"Yeah?" George said from the bed.

"And I want to eat at a table with my own silver and I want candles. And I want it to be spring and I want to brush my hair out in front of a mirror and I want a kitty and I want some new clothes."

"Oh, shut up and get something to read," George said. He was reading again.

His wife was looking out of the window. It was quite dark now and still raining in the palm trees.

"Anyway, I want a cat," she said. "I want a cat. I want a cat now. If I can't have long hair or any fun, I can have a cat."

George was not listening. He was reading his book. His wife looked out of the window where the light had come on in the square.

Someone knocked at the door.

"Avanti," George said. He looked up from his book.

In the doorway stood the maid. She held a big tortoiseshell cat pressed tight against her and swung down against her body.

"Excuse me," she said, "the padrone asked me to bring this for the Signora."