

## The Small Personal Triumph of the Homosexual Couple in “A Small Triumph” by Perry Brass

### (Kemenangan Personal Kecil Pasangan Homoseksual dalam “A Small Triumph” Karya Perry Brass)

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#### Abstrak

Tujuan dari tulisan ini adalah untuk menggali nilai tersembunyi di balik cerita homoseksual yang umum dalam sebuah cerita pendek “A Small Triumph” karya Perry Brass. Konsep yang digunakan untuk mendukung analisis pada dasarnya adalah tentang hubungan homoseksual dan *gaydar* serta Down Syndrome (DS). Metode yang digunakan adalah suatu kombinasi komprehensif. Metode studi pustaka digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data. Metode tekstual berfokus pada karakter dan konflik sementara metode kontekstual menerapkan konsep homoseksual dan Down Syndrome untuk lebih memahami karakter dan konflik. Secara umum metode kualitatif digunakan untuk menyajikan analisis. Hasil menunjukkan bahwa hubungan homoseksual antara seorang DS muda dan seorang penulis dewasa yang gagal sangat rumit. Mereka saling membutuhkan untuk mengembangkan potensi mereka dan mereka bergiliran memimpin jalan menuju pencapaian kemenangan terakhir mereka sebagai pasangan homoseksual.

**Kata kunci:** Down Syndrome, homoseksual, metode kontekstual, metode tekstual

#### Abstract

This paper aims to expose the hidden value within the conventional homosexual narrative depicted in "A Small Triumph," a short story by Perry Brass. The analysis is underpinned by key concepts concerning homosexual relationships, *gaydar*, and Down Syndrome (DS). Employing a comprehensive approach, the study utilizes the library research method for data acquisition. The textual examination is concentrated on delineating the characters and conflicts, while the contextual approach employs concepts related to homosexuality and Down Syndrome to gain



deeper insights into the characters and their conflicts. The overall analysis is presented through a qualitative lens. The findings elucidate the intricacies of the homosexual relationship between a youth with DS and an unsuccessful mature writer. Their mutual dependence catalyzes personal growth, with each taking turns to navigate the path towards their ultimate triumph as a homosexual couple.

**Keywords:** contextual method, Down Syndrome, homosexual, textual method

## INTRODUCTION

In the post-modern era, issues on LGBT are not new and cannot be ignored anymore whether in real life or in literary works. “A Small Triumph,” a short story by Perry Brass, talked about a relationship between two gay people, each with unique characteristics that grew intense so quickly. The result of browsing the internet shows that no articles have been published on “A Small Triumph” by Perry Brass. Thus, this paper aims to analyze how this new gay couple feel destined to each other and consider their union is a small triumph for them in a world that still consider their sexual preference and union as not a normal one. To support the analysis, some notions on homosexuality and Down Syndrome are examined.

In talking about homosexuality, the focus of this paper is on the relationship perspective which “explores the goals and values that individuals have about relationships and their subjective experiences in relationships [...] The key feature of any relationship is that two people are interdependent, that each partner influences the other [...] that neither sex nor love be taken as a necessary or an exclusive definitional criterion for homosexual relationships (Peplau & Cochran 1990, 322–323; 327).

According to Peplau & Cochran, homosexual relationship has a unique worth in which two gay people completing each other not only based on “sex nor love” to keep their homosexual relationship going. These characteristics can be found in Perry Brass’ short story as being analyzed in the following section. Peplau & Cochran also mentioned that there are three kinds of homosexual relationship; namely, “husband-wife roles, mentor-student roles, and friendship roles” (1990, 343). In the short story by Perry Brass, the gay relationship starts in the form of “mentor-student roles” but develops into something unique as can be seen in the analysis. Meanwhile, Bullough thought that homosexuality is “a variant of sexual expression” that does not need to be debated (2019, 155).

Besides Bullough, some other open-minded observers can understand the existence of homosexuality. Patricia Nell Warren, an investigative journalist and novelist who focuses on free speech and gay and lesbian issues (Warren 2004, 53) stated that “Straight and gay people have a RIGHT to make choices about their sexual orientation [...] their destiny belongs to them” (Warren 2004, 55). Paul Varnell, a columnist at the *Chicago Free Press* and an editor of the *Independent Gay Forum* (2004, 149) declared that the accusation that homosexuality is immoral is baseless because “antigay activists fail to explain why homosexual behavior is immoral [...] holding strong views without providing defensible reasons is what we usually mean by “bigotry” (Varnell 2004, 149; 151). Thus, Warren bases her argument on the human right to choose while Varnell bases his argument on the absence of strong reason behind the accusation.

Another notion that is used to support the analysis is concerning Down Syndrome since one of the gay people involved in homosexual relationship is having Down Syndrome. Down

Syndrome is named after Dr J. L. Down who has done deep research on patients with similar characteristics (Selikowitz 2008, 26). In a simple and brief explanation, “Down syndrome is a genetic condition that causes mild to serious physical and developmental problems” (Pathak 2020). Although there are general characteristics, what should be noticed is that “Children and adults with Down syndrome vary enormously in appearance, temperament, and ability. Each one is a unique individual” (Selikowitz 2008, 25). People with Down Syndrome have positive characteristics; namely: “those with Down syndrome are typically warm and cheerful by nature, as well as loving, gentle, patient, and tolerant” (Parks 2009, 11). These positive aspects are often slighted since there are some strong stereotypes underestimating the DS people in the society. Some of the stereotypes about DS people are as follows: they are not charming, they are not intelligent, they are not good at sports, they have limited range of emotions, they will not be able to be successful, and they are overweight (DCCI 2016). Of course, these stereotypes are not all correct because DS people, like other people, are not homogeneous that can be generalized in such belittling stereotypes. The gay DS person in Perry Brass’ short story will show that not all stereotypes are correct, moreover there are still some unpredictably amazing insights in his personality.

The last notion taken to help the analysis is about *gaydar*. Etymologically, *gaydar* is a “blend of *gay* and *radar*” (Gaydar, n.d.). Although the scientific basis of *gaydar* is still debatable, but the general meaning of *gaydar* is “the ability to determine whether someone is gay based on their intuition about the person” (Lehmiller, n.d.). This term is employed since the focus of this paper is on the sudden but satisfying and completing relationship of unique homosexual couple in Perry Brass’ short story entitled “A Small Triumph.”

## METHOD

A literary analysis needs the support of suitable methods to make the analysis academically convincing. In general, the literary analysis in this paper is based on qualitative methods. For the data collection, whether for the supporting concepts or for the supporting quotations from the literary work being analyzed, the library research method is applied supported by close-reading technique. As for the specific literary research method, a combination of textual and contextual methods of analysis is employed. The textual research method focuses on the intrinsic elements of the literary text; namely, character, conflict, and setting. Meanwhile, the contextual method of analysis is “simply an analysis of a text (in whatever medium, including multi-media) that helps us to assess that text within the context of its historical and cultural setting, but also in terms of its textuality—or the qualities that characterize the text as a text” (Behrendt 2008). Behrendt’s opinion is in line with Beard’s who stressed that “Texts are produced by authors who live in the political and social world of their time, and we gain a better understanding of their works by taking these contexts into account” (Beard 2004, 3). Thus, contextual method of analysis focuses on the outside elements that must be considered if the literary analysis on a certain literary text is done comprehensively. The contextual elements of “A Small Triumph” by Perry Brass that are taken into account are the notion on homosexuality and homosexual relationship, *gaydar*, as well as the notion of Down syndrome.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In discussing the unique gay couple in “A Small Triumph” by Perry Brass, the discussion starts with a brief analysis on Peter and Andrew as a basis to comprehend the completing union that they have as a gay couple.

### A Glance of Peter Brogan

The description of Peter Brogan is directly given at the beginning of the short story as follows: “a thirty-eight-year-old, not very successful writer who lived in a rundown, mostly rent-controlled building in Chelsea” (Brass 2004, 59). Thus, Peter Brogan is not young anymore and is not rich as can be seen from his neglected rented dwelling. His work as a writer is not satisfying for him.

Peter Brogan passion is to write literary works, but so far he has just been able to write pieces of moderate literary works: “the stories that he sent off to pretentious literary magazines that had more submissions than subscribers; the poems he beat his soul into; the play that he liked so much but that never got beyond an amateur production at a church in the West Village” (Brass 2004, 68). He is not satisfied with his works because he wants to be a good and famous literary writer. He has tried to write many genres, stories, poems, dramas but to no avail. He has not got the spirit of the works, maybe because he does not concentrate on one particular genre. He is still in the level of trial and error to find his real interest in literary works.

He insists so much to become a good literary writer since he thinks he has enough education and experience to support his desire to realize his passion “he had two college degrees and years of experience” (Brass 2004, 68). For him, the process of writing literary work is so exciting. He is so intensely absorbed in its process, forgetting anything else due to the ecstasy its produces on him,

Sometimes Peter did connect. But the connection was so rare, and when it did happen, when his brain finally poured out its words with no distance between itself and the paper, when the brain itself talked; it made the awful, everyday agony of writing only a preparation for the most intense pleasure he'd ever known. A perfect, sparkling, directed pleasure that touched his deeper self even more so than sex had (Brass 2004, 68).

Peter Brogan always looks forward to the infrequent moments when he gets inspiration to write literary works. He absorbs the rare moments intensely, for him the moments outweigh other pleasure, even sex. This shows that writing of literary works is valuable for him, however, so far he has not been able to produce satisfying works.

To support his life, he writes light articles that produces money, “Some short articles for an antiques magazine, some garbagy public relations work, and some movie reviews for the Eye, since their regular reviewer was out of town. The “money work” was easier to write than his creative efforts, the work that he felt made him a writer” (Brass 2004, 67). However, he does not feel contented with what he does to get money, he keeps expecting to be able to become a literary work writer.

To spend his leisure time, Peter Brogan often visit a gymnasium near his dwelling. His appearance in sport clothes is so ordinary “in gym shorts and a T-shirt that he could never get “spanking” white no matter how much bleach he spanked into it” (Brass 2004, 59). He is also not a gym maniac, he just spends time to have casual exercises. In this gym Peter Brogan meets Andrew for the first time. Even just looking at his back, Peter feels unexplainably attracted to the young boy (Brass 2004, 59). This part will be discussed in the following chapter. This casual encounter indicates the first sign that Peter is not a heterosexual man and he has a kind of “gaydar” detecting a potential homosexual.

### **A Glance of Andrew**

Andrew is the young boy that Peter Brogan sees in the gymnasium. His back body part is described by Peter in such details as follows,

[...] this beautiful expanse of a broad, flat back on a short young man. The back was met by two nice shoulders, and then a pair of firm, silky-smooth upper arms [...] the calves of two dark, downy but muscular legs [...] his neck, which was endearingly thick and which seemed slightly out of proportion to his head. The backs of the boy's ears appeared like innocent little pink seashells [...] (Brass 2004, 59–60).

These details of bodily parts of a young male, focusing on the flesh, its color and texture, are not quite common to be described by another male on the first encounter. This fact indicates Peter Brogan's sudden sexual interest and thus strengthens his homosexual choice.

Since Peter only perceives the young boy from the back and seeing his clumsiness at the sport instrument, at first he thinks that the boy is blind since "there was a home for the blind close by" (Brass 2004, 60). However, Peter has been deeply affected by the young boy's presence "Peter became aroused by the warm, almost palpable aura of the blind boy" (Brass 2004, 61). Feeling curious about the boy, he finds him in the shower room with his father. When his father leaves him to get soap, Peter just realizes that "the boy was not blind, but had Down Syndrome" (Brass 2004, 62). This explains his clumsiness with the sport instrument. Seeing the young boy's naked body produces such a strong effect on Peter, "he wanted so much to take in all of the boy, to drink him in deeply: the face, the slightly almond eyes, the small, high ears; the open, childlike "archaic smile"" (Brass, 2004, 62). Peter is so stuck with the boy and his DS makes him innocently unique in Peter's eyes.

Andrew's young body is so impressive and arousing for Peter who has been deeply absorbed in his existence,

His chest had an early light dusting of hair and his stomach was as neat and inviting as a warm loaf of bread. His pubic hair was black, curly, and shiny with dampness. Peter looked at the boy's sex organ, which appeared like the bloom of a small orchid peering out of a marsh. He tried to read it for any clue of the boy's age, religion (he was circumcised), or thoughts. Then Peter realized he was staring; he shook his head slightly (Brass 2004, 63).

Peter's focus in describing Andrew emphasizes his homosexuality. He stares at certain parts of Andrew's body that are so arousing for him. However, Peter tries hard to control his stirred emotion before anybody else, especially the father, detects his hidden feeling and intention.

Being a person with DS, Andrew has certain characteristics of DS, such as an innocent smile, a trusting attitude, and a friendly manner,

"My name is Andrew," the boy said. He looked directly into Peter's eyes, and that smile that seemed to be permanently carved into his lips said, "You're a nice person. I feel good with you."

[...]

The boy reached up and touched Peter's shoulder. "Can I wash your back? I always wash Dad's back. He likes that" (Brass 2004, 63).

Having never met and being attracted to a person with DS, Peter is speechless and almost know nothing to give proper responses. He is so dumbfounded with Andrew uniqueness. As a writer who is so familiar with words, Peter is speechless, even in front of Andrew's father who, fortunately, does not suspect anything (Brass 2004, 63).

Andrew, who is now nineteen years old, is the third child of four children and the only son. His father, who has separated from his wife, takes Andrew with him and loves him so much as can be seen in his words, "he's been a real joy [...] I'm nuts about him" (Brass 2004, 64; 67)

when he is talking to Peter. However, his father is also concerned with Andrew's specific condition,

"You see, it makes no difference whether you're a child, an adult, an animal, whatever. The idea of a 'best friend' or an adult friend well, I think it's foreign to them. I keep wondering what he's going to do when he finds somebody. You know, like a girl? But so far he hasn't seemed to land on anyone. It just doesn't make a difference with him. See, I don't think he understands real adult friendship" (Brass 2004, 64).

Like other people, Andrew's father also follows the common opinion that a DS person cannot have close friends because such a person does not understand the idea of friendship, especially "real adult friendship." However, as will be discussed in the following sub-subsection, Andrew can understand "real adult friendship" and enjoy his homosexual relationship with Peter.

Andrew's father further explains Andrew's condition to Peter since these two adults gets close easily, "Andy's IQ is quite high. He's at a fairly good reading level. He can't read the *Times*, but he can make out street signs, has books of his own, and he's great with restaurant menus. He's amazing at math. In fact, he can add up a restaurant bill faster than I can" (Brass 2004, 64). Andrew has a light DS since his IQ is not very low, his reading ability is quite good, and he is good at math. Here Andrew represents a unique DS person and his uniqueness is getting prominent in his close relationship with Peter.

Andrew's shadow is haunting Peter for days and Peter misses him so much after he cannot see him in the gymnasium. Unable to contain his longing anymore, Peter calls Andrew's house under the pretense of asking Andrew and his father to see a film since he has free tickets (Brass 2004, 69). Since Andrew's father is so busy with his work, he asks Peter whether he is willing to take Andrew's out without him,

Listen, Pete, I hate to ask you this, but would you feel real bad about taking Andy all by yourself?

[...]

I know I'm not being fair. Sometimes it's hard for us adults to talk to him-but he's really good company. Just do me a favor: don't treat him like he's dumb, that's all" (Brass 2004, 69).

Andrew's father's offer makes Peter feel so happy because he will be alone with Andy for several hours. Andrew's father feels a little bit unjust of leaving Peter to take care of Andrew while he continues his work at home. He does not know that Peter is so excited with the unexpected chance.

When the time comes, Andrew dresses neatly with childish appearance and he looks happy (Brass 2004, 70). Andrew's happiness escalates when Peter gives him a chance to choose,

"What will we see?" the boy asked.

"I'll leave that to you."

"You will?" Andrew smiled and then looked over at Tom, who only shook his head and said, "You're going to spoil him!"

"I'm not spoiled," Andrew said and smiled at Peter (Brass 2004, 70).

Being treated as normal person by being given an opportunity to decide, makes Andrew so excited and he even tries to negate his father's worry of his being pampered. All the way on food to the movies in a nice evening, Peter tries desperately to hold himself back from hugging Andrew walking besides him (Brass 2004, 71). This moment is like a turning point date for both of them that changes their lives. This will be discussed soon.

### The Small Personal Triumph of Peter and Andrew

The close relationship between Peter and Andrew starts when they go out together to the movie without Andrew's father. Being alone with Peter, an adult male besides his father, who likes him and treats him as normal person, Andrew becomes different. He begins to express his opinion and decision. Peter who is so overwhelmed with his own feeling to the boy tends to be silent. Andrew is more talk active and decisive, as can be seen below,

"Can I hold your hand?" he whispered.

[...]

Then Andrew turned to him and said, "Let's go. I'm tired of this."

"Where?" Peter whispered.

"Your place. I want to see where you live" (Brass 2004, 71).

It can be seen that Andrew takes control of the situation. Andrew, the DS young boy, is decisive now, while Peter, the adult person, is still pondering his next step. Peter thinks that he must be so careful in handling Andrew, he does not want to take the wrong step. Andrew's surprising assertiveness can be detected in his initiative to make the first physical contact to Peter. Peter's surprise is added with another stronger surprise when Andrew decides to leave the movie and go to Peter's house. Here, Andrew is against the common stereotype that DS person is passive. Andrew's actions are beyond Peter's imagination. In this case, Peter follows Andrew's intentions.

At Peter's home, again Andrew makes Peter feel surprised when Andrew ask for wine as can be seen below,

Peter asked him if he wanted something to drink. A Coke, or some orange juice.

"Do you have any wine?"

"Do you usually drink that?"

"No. But it would be fun. Right? Can I?" (Brass 2004, 72).

Peter still treats Andrew as an innocent, under aged boy, while Andrew wants to show to Peter that he is already young adult that can choose and decide. Andrew wants to be Peter's equal. However, although Andrew is nineteen years old, his protective father treats him as a DS child that makes him having limited knowledge of the adult life in the outside world. Andrew's innocent side can be seen below,

"White or red?" he asked. Andrew looked at him....

"White or red what?"

Peter chuckled. "White wine or red wine?"

He shook his head softly, then shrugged. "You decide" (Brass 2004, 72).

Since it is the first time he acts like an adult who wants to drink wine without knowing anything about wine, Andrew is at a loss to decide what wine to drink. Andrew's childishness appears when he is afraid to taint his shirt while drinking the wine in a wine glass that needs him to raise his head to sip it (Brass 2004, 73). Behind this childish action actually lies a clever thought. If his father detects his stained shirt, he will know that Andrew drinks wine with Peter and it will raise problem for both of them.

Peter then proposes a suggestive idea of taking the clothes off. Andrew's unpredictable reaction, "Andrew smiled mischievously" (Brass 2004, 73), gives a hint that he can guess Peter's secret intention being hidden so far. Peter himself is at that moment too busy controlling himself, "He felt as if his body were going to burst out of his pants, just as his soul itself might burst from his body and float" (Brass 2004, 73). Andrew's openness makes Peter so expectant. Andrew's next statement "I like you" (Brass 2004, 73) leads Peter to the much awaited moment:

Peter kissed him on the mouth, tasting a bead of red wine left on Andrew's lips.

[...]

With his whole self, with his hands, mouth, genitals, face, and eyes, Peter explored the marvelous amber terrains of Andrew's body. Their faces often met and Peter felt himself happily, gaily swimming into Andrew's opaque eyes (Brass 2004, 74).

They have a consensual homosexual activity in Peter's apartment. Peter has been waiting for this moment since he saw Andrew for the first time.

Peter's intimacy with Andrew brings an unexpected change. Peter as a writer is skillful with words while Andrew as a DS boy has limited vocabulary mastery. However, it does not mean that Andrew is not intelligent or perceptive in his own way:

Andrew made Peter not want to talk, not want to use words, at least regular words, the words of money writing, or crafted "literary" stories

[...]

There had to be new words for loving Andrew, for holding him, feeling him breathe, kissing and sucking [...] Fabulous, wondrous words for everything Peter did, just as Andrew needed no words for marveling at the dark hair on Peter's chest; Peter's genitals, their weight and skin texture; and the loose sac of Peter's balls (Brass, 2004, 74–75).

Their intimacy demands new kind of language. Their specific closeness cannot be catered in verbal language because what they do are beyond verbal language. Andrew introduces a language of intimacy to Peter who claims mastering of the verbal language. The language of touching and loving is more potent. However, in this first homosexual activity, Peter plays the role of the leader and penetrator since he has more experience than the innocent Andrew, "he found himself returning to a place so raw and refined at once that he'd never hoped to find it in New York" (Brass 2004, 75). Andrew is like the pupil here, he is in the learning process. However, it will turn out that Andrew is a very talented pupil of homosexual activity as will be discussed soon.

Peter also realizes a surprising fact about the hidden side of Andrew. It happens when Peter insists to take Andrew home but Andrew refuses because he can go home by himself "Peter looked at him; suddenly his mouth dropped as he saw in the light, for the first time, Andrew's real face. It was no longer that strange, placid, tribal face-stamped with the archaic Down's features-but a real face, distinctly his, shockingly wise" (Brass 2004, 75). For a moment Peter can see Andrew's inner self that is covered by the DS characteristics on the surface. Other people, including Andrew's father, only see the superficial side of Andrew. Peter can see the deeper layer of Andrew because Andrew opens himself to Peter. He trusts Peter that treats him as a normal boy. Underneath the DS appearance, there is a hidden raw intelligence that can be seen by unprejudiced people only, like Peter. This portrayal impliedly contradicts the underestimating public assumption that DS person internally and externally has low intelligence. The hidden value of Andrew's personality emerges gradually in his comfortable relationship with Peter that grows deeper.

A DS person is considered unable to hide a secret due to the low intelligence. However, Andrew is a different case. He can tell a lie to his father smoothly. His father's words to Peter shows this, "Andy told me he had a great time with you! He said the movie was fine-Steve Martin is one of his favorites-and then he said you went out for a snack afterwards [...]" (Brass 2004, 76). Andrew did not tell the truth that he and Peter did not watch the film till the end and that they did not eat snack. In other words, Andrew keeps what happened between them a secret. It means that Andrew realizes that his father will be angry if he knows the truth. As a DS person, it is amazing because he can sort what kinds of info should be known by his father.



Again, Andrew as a DS person proves that he is not a flat character that is easily predicted as said by the common stereotype. However, Peter who has a glimpse of Andrew's inner self is not surprised of Andrew's action. Peter thinks that "He'd lied to Tom. That was good, Peter thought. It was adult. The boy understood at least for the moment the dangers and boundaries of the situation. He was handling this adultly [...]" (Brass 2004, 76). For a moment, the homosexual relationship between Peter and Andrew is not detected by Andrew's father yet.

The next meeting between Peter and Andrew happens when they go to a Chinese restaurant treated by Andrew's father. When Andrew's father is talking enthusiastically about his work, Andrew does something unpredictably naughty in secret,

Andrew's left hand, under the white table cloth, was discreetly investigating the area between Peter's legs [...] Andrew had managed to evade Peter's hand, unzip his pants, reach inside his boxer shorts, and totally exposed him [...] While Tom looked away at the check, Peter zipped himself back up and then looked at Andrew, who only smiled at him (Brass 2004, 77–78).

Peter is so amazed by Andrew's action. How a DS boy can have an initiative to do such thing in secret but skillfully while posing a DS appearance is beyond imagination. However, it must be remembered that Andrew is not as stereotypical DS boy as people think. There is a hidden intelligence and desire that can be detected by Peter only.

Andrew's next surprise is when his father informs Peter that Andrew's mother and sisters will come visiting them. While his father is talking, "He was looking at Peter, with the same real face that Peter had seen in his apartment, until the masklike, simple smile that he normally wore returned" (Brass 2004, 78). For a moment, Andrew shows his inner self while his father is not looking at him, but he poses her DS appearance as soon as his father addresses and looks at him. The surprise does not stop there. Andrew openly says that he refuses to go home with his father, he wants to go to Peter's apartment. What is more surprising is when Andrew states that "I love Peter" (Brass 2004, 78). Andrew's statement is like a bomb to both Peter and Andrew's father. His father's shock is lessened when Andrew says "He's my friend!" (Brass 2004, 79). Andrew's father shows his relief by saying a stereotype for DS, "Now I feel better. He had me scared for a moment. It's like I told you, they can't differentiate between one kind of feeling and another. I guess he loves you the way he loves me or a puppy or anything" (Brass 2004, 79). Andrew's father never realizes the inner side of Andrew, he is trapped and believed in the stereotypes of DS people. He finally agrees to let Andrew go to Peter's apartment for several hours.

In Peter's apartment, they have a homosexual intercourse that makes the bonding between them stronger. In their after sex conversation, Andrew shows his critical opinion,

"I'm not stupid. Just because I have Down's Syndrome doesn't mean I'm an idiot. Sometimes I have to play stupid to my father, because it's the only way he can look at me and still feel good. He wants me to stay his little boy forever. He gets upset when I'm not. But I can't. I want to spend the night with you" (Brass 2004, 79).

Andrew, labelled as a DS boy, is criticizing the stereotype concerning DS people. So far he has accepted and followed the stereotypes to make the people around him, especially his father, feel comfortable because their opinion about DS is correct. His meeting and experience with Peter make him rebel against the stereotypes. Andrew feels that he cannot be classified into fixed category because he is a unique individual with personal desires, not a rigid category. Andrew even determines to tell his father about his desire to be with Peter (Brass 2004, 79).

Andrew's strong determination causes an internal conflict in Peter. On one side he enjoys and loves the unique Andrew but on the other side he is worried about the reactions from the people he work with in the writing circle. Peter is also worried about the reactions of Andrew's father (Brass 2004, 80). When he calls Andrew's father to tell him that Andrew will spend the night at his apartment, a suspicion starts on the part of Andrew's father. To reduce the father's suspicion, Peter makes a hint about writing a story about a unique person like Andrew (Brass 2004, 80). While Peter is trying to convince the father through the phone, Andrew's sexual naughtiness becomes apparent, "Andrew smiled wickedly and ran his fingers over Peter's body and then placed his genitals next to Peter's free hand, tempting him to pet him there" (Brass 2004, 80). Andrew is like a little boy with a new toy, but in this case it is in the form of sexual action, more specifically it is about homosexual activity. That night, both Peter and Andrew indulge in satisfying homosexual intercourse for several times before Peter takes Andrew home the next morning (Brass 2004, 80).

Sorting his mind, Peter decides to keep his homosexual relationship with Andrew whatever the consequences. Peter also detains himself to contact Andrew or his father for several days to avoid any more suspicious thought about their relationship (Brass 2004, 81). When Peter meets Andrew again at the gymnasium, Andrew is so excited "'I'm getting hard looking at you. Other men don't do that for me'" (Brass 2004, 82). Andrew is addicted to their homosexual activity. Andrew also convinces Peter that they should not worry about his father becoming suspicious because "He doesn't suspect anything. He can only see me as his little retarded boy" (Brass, 2004: 82). Andrew as a critical DS boy fully realizes that his father, even though he loves him so much, is a firm believer in the DS stereotypes. Andrew refuses to be classified as a stereotyped DS.

Andrew's surprisingly critical thought can also be observed in his emotional conversation with Peter at the gymnasium:

"You don't think I know? I can't be an idiot *and* queer, too. It's not in the books, is it?"

Suddenly Peter kissed him, quickly, impulsively. There was no one around. "Andy, it's hard enough being queer and normal. Whatever that means" (Brass 2004, 82).

Andrew touchingly says that he cannot becomes abnormal in two ways. His first labelling as an abnormal person, an idiotic DS boy is more than enough for him. Now he wants to become a queer, not a DS stereotype anymore. He also does not want to be both. It is a critical but heart-touching opinion. It is rare that a DS person can be so critical in opinion. Peter is so moved that he cannot control himself to kiss Andrew. He compares Andrew's condition and his. For him, being a normal person with homosexual interest is difficult enough, so it must be much more difficult for Andrew.

The unexpected revelation of the homosexual relation is declared by Andrew and surprises Peter so much when he comes to Andrew's house on Saturday evening. All the family members behave rather strangely, "Lorna, the younger girl, who looked about sixteen, asked. "This is just crazy! My brother's got a boyfriend who's old enough to be his father. It's nuts. Dad, I thought we were going out to eat" (Brass 2004, 84). Lorna is so expressive in her opinion about the homosexual relationship between her DS brother and a much older man. Lorna is just saying out loudly what is in the family's mind. Andrew, who is so fed up with the DS stereotype and the commotion caused by his homosexuality, emotionally explodes,

"Okay. I told Mom I'm in love with you. I'm not good at secrets. The girls found it out. Laura thinks it's just cute. But Lorna is ashamed of me. She always has been."

"That's not true," Lorna said. "It's just not easy to be the younger sister of someone with Down's. Everyone thinks I should be that way, too."

"So you're not." Andy said. "That should make you happy." He turned to Peter.

"Let's go. I don't want to be here anymore."

He grabbed Peter by the arm (Brass 2004, 84).

This emotional moment is so touching. Andrew silently has been hurt by Lorna's attitude so far. According to Andrew Lorna is embarrassed by his DS, whereas she should be grateful because she is normal. Andrew's hidden feeling overflows unchecked. Andrew feels that nobody in the family knows what he feels and what he wants. For Andrew, only Peter can understand the real him. He intends to leave his family behind. Andrew shows to his family that he is a unique individual, that he has deep perceptive feelings, that he has and wants to realize his own opinion. Andrew is so decisive that makes his family shocked. Andrew's father is more resigned, "If he spends the night with you-and I guess he will-I can't stop it, but I'll worry every moment. You'll be careful, won't you? You'll be sure it's all safe? Okay?" (Brass 2004, 84). As a father, he asks Peter who is much more mature than Andrew to play safe in their homosexual activity. He cannot do anything to prevent Andrew's strong decision.

At Peter apartment, after a satisfying homosexual intercourse, the happy couple begin to have meaningful talk since Andrew is not a stereotypical DS person. They talk about why Peter is unable to write a genuine work. Andrew with his critical mind can probe the real problem, "Andy smiled. "Well, then, the writer has all these problems because he's sure that nothing's going to work out-in a big way-and everyone's going to laugh at him and kick him around, but the kid's already been through all of that, and he knows what it means to be ignored and have people talk about him like he wasn't there" (Brass 2004, 86).

According to Andrew, Peter is too concerned with the judgment of the outside world so that he cannot see simple genuine thing near him. Andrew is a real genuine case who has undergone things never imagined by normal people. Being a DS person, Andrew is stuck in closed stereotypes. He is just a no body. His existence is ignored. Most people do not think that he exists. They never filters their words or comments when he is around because they think that he never understands what they say. Andrew is treated unfairly and he is fed up with it. In this case, Andrew leads the role of a torch bearer to Peter's life. Andrew is the leader. Andrew the DS person with his genuine and serene thought is wiser and empowering than other people who are not DS.

Andrew's criticality can also be seen in his opinion concerning their homosexual relationship, "You know, you may get tired of me ... or who knows, I may ... Anyway, in this whole big world, we're kind of like a small, wonderful thing-don't you think? It's like if there really was a big war and we were the last 'gay' couple in the world, we'd still be happy with each other, right?" (Brass 2004, 86). Andrew is so realistic and mature in considering their relationship. He understands boredom that will ruin a relationship. Peter or he himself may feel bored to each other. He also fully realizes that they are minority but not ugly or wicked. They must try to keep the relationship whatever happens and they must enjoy their every moment because they and their relationship is special.

The conclusion that Peter and Andrew draw from their homosexual relationship is so touching,

"Yes, that small triumph of just us?"

"Yes," Andy said, and he hugged Peter closer to him, until Peter realized then that the boy was crying (Brass 2004, 86).

They feel that they are specifically designed for each other. Being with Peter is a triumphal achievement for Andrew and vice versa. They need each other. Andrew needs Peter to be able to escape from the DS stereotypes while Peter needs Andrew to open his mind about neglected beautiful story in pursuit of big story. Both needs each other to be able to achieve their optimal potentials. Andrew's crying is a pent-up emotion that finally find its beautiful outlet.

## CONCLUSION

Peter Brass' "A Small Triumph" is intriguing because it is not just about a common homosexual relationship. The combination of a potential Down Syndrome character and a writer who still looks for the true spirit of writing genuine story creates a surprising story. They need each other to make their hidden ability sprout marvelously. Although Peter at first seems to lead the way because he is more mature and more experienced than Andrew, in the end it is Andrew with his hidden sagacity that leads Peter to realize the genuine material for his story. As the DS person, Andrew overturns the stereotypes about DS people. Being marginalized as a DS person, Andrew becomes perceptive and thoughtful. On the other side, as a writer Peter is trapped on the norms of writing so that he cannot see authentic potential story. Their union, even though it shocks Andrew's family, makes them perfect, whether as a homosexual couple or as individuals. Both enjoy their triumphal achievement.

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