

James Landis

The Chrysalis

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I shivered on the futon in the guest room of my parents' house watching Sunday night television, covered in blankets (it was always the coldest room in the house - even colder than the basement). The phone rang and I hoped that it wasn't for me. I didn't want to leave the warm comfort of my carefully arranged blankets or the mind-numbing bliss of the television world. I pretended not to hear the first time my parents yelled from the living room, trying to gather the strength to abandon the delicate fortress of detachment I had achieved.

"Yeah..." I answered, picking up the phone with as much forced irritation as I could manage.

"What's up man?!?" I heard Adam's voice over the characteristic buzzing from the television interference with his cordless phone in his dorm room. I slouched back onto the futon and looked out the window at the flurries of snow dancing randomly around my parents' back yard. "It's almost too cold for shorts here, man. It's only like fifty."

"You're a mutant, though," I returned, reviving a long-dead inside joke.

"So. It's still fifty here." I thought about what waiting for the bus was going to be like tomorrow, and wished I didn't have a week of work left before I could go back home to school. I didn't care that it would be even colder in New York than Ohio. Cold is bearable when you have friends to share it with.

"That's an ice age for New Orleans, then, isn't it? People are going to wig out down there." I desperately searched for clouds in his blue skies.

“So who’s still home?” he quickly replied, fending off my attack and quickly countering with his own. “It’s just you, right?”

Ouch. “Well, Kavita’s here. And the Juniors. Or Seniors, whatever they are now. But I guess they go back to school tomorrow. They’re all too busy now anyway, though.”

“That sucks for you man,” he allowed himself a little compassion.

“So I guess your plane didn’t crash,” I remarked cynically. The news earlier had reported the chance of “severe winter weather,” and had already declared half of Minnesota “a disaster.” I was worried that I wouldn’t be able to get out in a week when it was time for me to go home.

“Nope. It wasn’t even delayed either. I guess that’s why he was home so early. Another stab at my tender homesickness. I heard a loud banging noise and new voices entered our phone conversation.

“What’s up Adaman? Did you just get back? We’re going to Sammy tonight, you want to come?”

“Don’t you have class tomorrow?” I asked him.

“Yeah, I think so, I don’t know. Have fun this week though, man.” Suddenly I was desperate. I cursed myself for hiding in my castle of apathy. I hopelessly searched for ways to keep him on the phone just a little longer. “Send me some email when you get home,” he said hurriedly.

“All right man, have fun tonight,” I said, trailing off as I slowly hung up the phone. I collected my blankets around me and began to create a new cocoon for myself. Slowly I drifted back to the television, and forgot about where I was.