

From *You're a Good Man, Charlie Brown*

Lucy: Now Linus, I want you to take a good look at Charlie Brown's face. Would you please hold still a minute, Charlie Brown? I want Linus to study your face. Now, this is what you call a Failure Face, Linus. Notice how it has failure written all over it. Study it carefully, Linus. You rarely see such a good example. Notice the deep lines, the dull, vacant look in the eyes. Yes, I would say this is one of the finest examples of a Failure Face that you're liable to see for a long while.

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Sally: A 'C'? A 'C'? I got a 'C' on my coat hanger sculpture? How could anyone get a 'C' in coat hanger sculpture? May I ask a question? Was I judged on the piece of sculpture itself? If so, is it not true that time alone can judge a work of art? Or was I judged on my talent? If so, is it fair that I be judged on a part of my life over which I have no control? If I was judged on my effort, then I was judged unfairly, for I tried as hard as I could! Was I judged on what I had learned about this project? If so, then were not you, my teacher, also being judged on your ability to transmit your knowledge to me? Are you willing to share my 'C'? Perhaps I was being judged on the quality of coat hanger itself out of which my creation was made...now is this not also unfair? Am I to be judged by the quality of coat hangers that are used by the dry-cleaning establishment that returns our garments?

From *The Santaland Diaries*

Crumpet: I am applying for a job as an elf. Even worse than applying is the very real possibility that I will not be hired, that I couldn't even find work as an elf. That's when you know you're a failure. I'm down to the wire here, twenty dollars away from walking dogs. After begging my mother for a loan, I applied at a place that covers styrofoam creatures in moss. Left to its own devices, nature can cover things in moss. For free. It's not that difficult a task but still I didn't get the job. A skill. A person needs a skill. Why hadn't I ever realized that before? In order to become an elf, I filled out ten pages' worth of forms, took a multiple choice personality test, underwent two interviews, and submitted urine for a drug test. The first interview was general, designed to eliminate the obvious sociopaths. During the second interview we were asked why we wanted to be elves, which, when you think about it, is a fairly tough question.

From *The Drowsy Chaperone*

Man in Chair: Okay. Now here it comes. The moment I was talking about. A moment that has fascinated me more than any other and that has brought me back to this record again and again. Here it comes. (Pause). You can't quite make out what she says because someone drops a cane. Is she saying "live while you can," or "leave while you can"? And that's exactly what you think when you're standing at the altar, isn't it, "Live" or "Leave" and you have to live. So, one day, you say "I love you" and you basically phrase it as a question, but they accept it as fact and then suddenly there she is standing in front of you in a three-thousand-dollar dress with tears in her eyes, and her nephew made the huppah, so what do you do? You choose to live. And for a couple of months you stare at the alien form in the bed beside you and you think to yourself "Who are you? Who are you?" And one day you say it out loud...then it's a trial separation and couples counseling and all your conversations are about her eating disorder and your Zoloft addiction, and the whole "relationship" ends on a particularly ugly note with your only copy of Gypsy spinning through the air and smashing against the living room wall. But still, in the larger sense, in a broader sense, it's better to have lived than left, right?

From *Blithe Spirit*

Charles: (Softly) Ruth! --Elvira! --are you there? (A pause) Ruth! --Elvira! --I know damn well you're there. (Another pause) I just want to tell you that I'm going away, so there's no point in your hanging about any longer--I'm going a long way away-- somewhere where I don't believe you'll be able to follow me-- in spite of what Elvira said I don't think spirits can travel over water. Is that quite clear, my darlings? You said in one of your more acid moments, Ruth, that I had been hag-ridden all my life! How right you were! But now I'm free, Ruth dear, not only of Mother and Elvira and Mrs. Winthrop, but free of you too, and I should like to take this farewell opportunity of saying I'm enjoying it immensely-- (*The vase on the mantelpiece falls on to the hearth-stone and smashes*) Aha!--I thought so--you were very silly, Elvira to imagine that I didn't know all about you and Captain Bracegirdle. I did. But what you didn't know was that I was extremely attached to Paula Westlake at the time!