

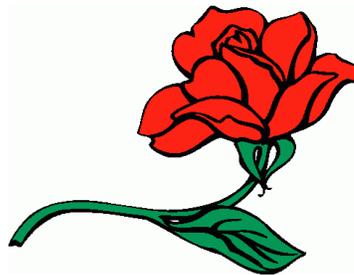
The True and Concise

Memoir

of

Skyler Bingsworth:

A Tragicomedy







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Sprung like a sprig of grass there grew a young Skyler, destined to carry the Bingsworth namesake to his lofty tomb in the hills and furrows of Nebraska. A gift from the firmament, some would say. We cannot speculate just how tumultuous was his birth—for God's sake, man, give a warrior his due time to collect himself and recollect the past: the death of a man's mother is perhaps the most arduous of tasks of tale-telling since the days of yore.

She, a young lass, prime and curved as she was, would be the prey of my father, a lustful sailor by the name of Gavin Bingsworth, infamous for his questionable tactics in the Battle of Bhurkana, which left the Red Sea more red than the mid-turnip of a flank steak in its rarest form. And he devoured her with a passion that appeared passionless to her, laying there limp and afraid and with her hands clasped about her mouth so the other devils would not know that a woman was aboard—but also because she wished not to taste of the be-curved hairs falling and spiraling off my father's beastly bodess like nettles, such as those that children might stick to the tips of their noses, detached thenceforth from their parent tree. Poor orphan that she was, she bore her garland of pubis like a goddess emerged from some

nether region of the earth, or some distant, remote past. And she would wear her garland strapped across her chin to mirror the likeness of the brutes who that ruddy ship did harbor—such precautions were necessary in these times, such that we cannot even imagine now.

See the comforts about you: this was not always. A bastard, some might call my father, and they would be just in doing so, yet there is something commendable about his virtue that has been rubbed and swabbed off on me that I must relate to you: suffering builds character. And there you sit, reading my tale off some blasphemous technological device—“In my day,” echoes the burly, husked voice of my father, “we used to lunge up mountains and fare the most sullen of hurricanes all whilst studying the finest of scripture ever writ.” But here we are, in our pampered, bubbled lives, sucking at the teat of convenience, and there you sit. No! Sit, do pay attention:

Libations for gods past are still accepted. Just send donations to my secret cove in Denmark. You can pay for your secular missteps in ways of mind and, perhaps, of flesh as well. There will be a time for tea, and the halls will be laden with portraits painted by qualified artistes commissioned by long-tailed grackle kings, and plates and



flagons all will hold a bounty of mutton and mead for the indulgence of a generation entire.

Ah, I digress. As I was saying: suffering builds character. Why, just look at me. Chiseled chin, blonde flowing locks, a body seemingly sculpted by Zeus himself, Oz-like emerald eyes that could make any cougar swoon. But the shell of a man tells little of the pearl within. To tell of my suffering we would have to harken back to the first raw cry of the first spawned fledgling of Time—and what greater suffering can a man endure other than to trudge through the mire and whirlwind of this merciless earthly life without his dear mother?

My father, too, lost his mother early on. Prideful man that he was, he often would exclaim that he was not woman-born whilst beating on his great breast like some savage mock-king of our little drab cottage. Some men cannot bear the weight of their misery and so buck heads with it and project their anger on all the world. Such was my father, shoving inanimate objects with a vengeance as if they had intentionally obstructed him, sputtering obscenities at the cats, gnashing away at a precious peach. And yet, unlike the common familial misfortune when a parent replicates his baleful and baseless self, I have within my constitution harnessed an effeminate warmth by way of

marking my father's shortcomings and behaving otherwise. And though at times I truly did, at the core of my being, relate with my father on issues grotesque and ungodly, my outward behavior was rebellious in that it was rooted in morality. Sure, humoring the whores of countless exotic coasts sounds like a boisterous blast for any young bachelor, but would I remorselessly mount thousands of strangers knowing full well I'd be the sole origin of an epidemic of the clap? Heavens no. But it was this double-consciousness that produced in me the fiery desire to take to the stage! And for that, in whatever twisted form of fate, I must thank my father. Had I known that his weekly beatings would one day land me the role of Lysander in the Fertile Thespian company's rendition of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Globe Theatre, I would have welcomed each blow. Even so, let's not give the man too much credit. It is not in the stars to hold our destiny but in ourselves!

I know what you're thinking: I thought I was reading the memoir of Skyler Bingsworth. Well, rest assured, dear reader. To tell of any man's history one must begin with his origins. But alas, enough of this pish-posh about my father. Let's get to the meat of it, shall we?



I first knew I would be destined for stardom when in grammar school I auditioned for the role of John Proctor in *The Crucible*. Yes, this was the role that would be the catalyst for all my future endeavors in the arts. “Because it is my name!” I can hear my prepubescent cords bellow throughout the auditorium and flutter the heartstrings of all in attendance. As on the stage as in life, I would, through my artistry, dispel all heretics who dared venture forth in the name of tainting Truth with whatever prideful ignorance tied their noggins in knots unfathomable by those of sound mind and decent heart. And against the adversity of corrupt authority and their imposition of their hidden agendas, I shall forever quoth the late great Giles Corey: “More weight! More weight!”

My work on the stage all was devised to pierce the veil of fraudulence so strewn over the eyes of the masses. Such passion would get me into quite a bit of trouble, you see. Why, I do recall one evening midway through my high school’s presentation of *The Importance Of Being Earnest* I, rapt in a fit of zeal and disgust, improvised in perfect iambic pentameter a ten minute monologue, didactic in nature, that was more editorial than artful, after having witnessed audience members whom attended previous nights’ showings

participate in the absurd, mechanical formalities much like those parodied in the play. I wanted to assure that that night's crowd would not miss the intention of Wilde's brainchild. But, as I, cross-dressed as I was in my frilly bodice and my wide wireframe gown, played the part of Lady Bracknell, such sentiments only convoluted the already confused audience and, moreover, the integrity of the play as a whole. It was selfish and silly of me to impart on them mine own beliefs in a manner so inappropriate, so insulting to the form and function of something that will outlive my name, and yours.

Knowing well I'd be blacklisted for such an impingement on our joint effort by the Playcrafters of Omaha Central High, I hid my face in shame for the whole of my remaining semesters. I would weep, yes, I would weep day and night, all the while soliloquizing my pain to a dear mourning dove kind enough to visit me periodically during my time of weakness. I filled my shelves with volumes of poetry and mimicked the greats until I was afforded the muse and the mechanics necessary to attune mine own harp—such is the music you read before you. Lone bard that I was, destined to suffer the ever-wavering ecstasies of joy and sorrow, I would not be alleviated of my solitude



until the wayfarer goddess of my undying passion, Ursula Iguaràn, fared her way into my heart-webbings one muggy summer eve.

Broad-shouldered, skin like mahogany, my mulatto Athena did lead me by the hand out of my pitiful state, my meager closet of a room crowded with tear-soaked pages upon pages of verse, and readied me for battle, for life is war and war is life. My Aphrodite, with her Frida Kahlo-esque brow bespeckled above her eyes, her soul-searing, lilac eyes—I do recall the hollow call of her great seashell, how it warbled in my tangles—and O, how I would die for her! The call was initially intended for her father’s cattle, lowing in the fields betwixt their farm and my cottage, and all other animals with ears to hear, for animals did gravitate to her naturally, unencumbered by the threat of her human form. Elegant in stature, eloquent in tongue—how could I not devote every fiber of my being to the pursuit of this dazzling damsel?

The seashell was a gift from her good uncle who skimmed coasts west and east of our land, and those of foreign whereabouts, for treasures such as this. My father, reeking of brandy and whatever chemical mixture that day did require, dug up from his murky memory the form and essence of her Uncle Tomás Iguaràn: “Ah, that slouching sack of lard. Why even speak of him, you twit? He was a lousy sailor,

and if his niece bears even a smidgen of his miserable likeness I'm sure she is just as expendable." My father's claim of Tomás's lousiness was based on his honesty—honesty among such a vile and debauched bunch of sailors was a dangerous trait to retain. My Ursula was at first hesitant to receive my advances, for it was by my father's hand that her good uncle did meet his demise. Tomás's naïveté would be the cause of his undoing; silly was he for relating the truth of certain extralegal activities during the Battle of Bhurkana to the Shah of Yemen. Such was the turmoil betwixt our families; such were we, star-crossed lovers.

"My dear maiden," I addressed her with a kindness so chivalric I had hoped my true nature would deliquesce the fog of my contentious familial title.

Leaning lazily about her steer, she leered at me and snorted. "Bingsworth," she said, and spat.

"What's in a name?" I quoted with a smooth tongue. "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet."

She could not hide her blushing. "How cliché. I must say, I expected something more eccentric from you, you crank, sitting there



at your windowsill day in and day out reading and scribbling like one gone mad.”

There was a playful lilt to her endearingly raspy voice. I had begun to feel a softness from her I thought I'd never be permitted to behold. I was beaming, elated and ecstatic there, young and with my cornflower hair tousled by the wind blowing through that idyllic pasture.

And in but a second's time that heaven was rendered its sulfuric opposite when her father's cumulonimbus presence shaded our merry meeting. Once she had seen his reflection in my horror-stricken eyes she turned and looked at him, one arm propped on their mailbox, glaring at me with a stern eye much like that of a mother bobcat.

Ursula pat her steer into motion, and said, “I must go.”

My next encounter with my dear Ursula would not come for many a moon. I wanted to prove to her my worth—my Bingsworth!—that I was not the “eccentric” homebody her mind had conceived me as: It was time to return to the stage.

My days from then on were filled with recitations and memorizations of lines from plays both old and new, all brilliant in

their own right. Who was I? I, who thought so highly of myself in my illusions of grandeur, that, because I had read so prolifically, I was the beholder of the finest gems of literature man had come to know. Such efforts were for internal gain only, serving no other but myself. For the quest of my dear Ursula, and for the sake of all future audience attendees—for humanity!—I realized I must release and unfurl my emotive gifts in some form of outward expression.

That year the Omaha Community Playhouse was holding auditions for the zany director Franc Lephûmę's rendition of *Oedipus the King*. My cats as my audience, I recited verses until daybreak. If not for my father's increasingly severe alcoholism I might have been silenced by his belt, or the remote, or whatever object at his disposal. So as he slept in his stupor the cats would mew in applause as I perfected myself as Tiresias. I went to such lengths to become the role that I squeezed lemons in mine eyes, thereby blinding myself for several days. There was a moment I thought I'd never see again, but the hope that my performance would make Ursula tremble with awe was all the light my vision did require.



Lephûmę, however, was not thrilled with my being the blind prophet. Rather, after noting the impassioned fervor of my delivery—my “oomph” (his word, not mine)—that I would be the most opportune candidate for the part of Oedipus the King himself. Now, flattered as I was to have been awarded the lead role, I must say I was a tad disturbed that my presentation evoked dynamics of a character so controversial in nature in this renowned man’s mind. A zany director, indeed. As bizarre as the play turned out, it would be the one to revive my acting career. I do not attribute the success of the play solely to Lephûmę; it was more so the compelling chemistry between I and the goodly fawn who played the part of Jocasta. What strange alignments of the stars brought forth my Ursula in such a knotted labyrinth of significance?

The bond created over the course of our collaboration was one so strong a wolf or gator could not gnaw through, nor could the wrath of feuding fathers. No matter what obscene obstacles these boyish men would put in our path, our love would not be dissuaded. Aye, the course of true love never did run smooth. In the months that followed the production Ursula and I would meet every Tuesday at dusk under the big oak betwixt her community college and the lone shack I had

rented at the time to escape my father's drunken tyranny, and to be closer to her, of course. There were three stems protruding from one selfsame stump, and when one had gone to rot it had been cut and in its place a sort of stool remained—I called this my “hobbit chair,” wherein I would sit, one elbow perched upon a raised knee, and recite poems of love for my dear Ursula, or where she would sit and sing to me, my head in her lap and O, what motherly compensation! Ursula's father Xavier Iguaràn—that rascal, how I detest him to this day; let him rot in peace—did one day, driven by some mischievous impulse, place tacks standing upright on my hobbit chair, which I proceeded to set my fanny upon. My father was no less outrageous in his antics. One summer's eve I was walking through a pleasant pink fog lingering in the schoolyard, and, seemingly from the ether, I heard my Ursula's voice: “Skyler! Skyler! Do help me!” I followed that angelic tone that did warm my soul, and there in a six-foot deep hole I found my love. I would never forgive my father for this callous act, this deliberate insult. These attacks would be concluded when Xavier set flame to my little shack, my precious study.



But the burning of my humble home was not the act that did end my and Ursula's celestial rapport. It was wholly unnecessary, for Ursula was called to France and I to England by certain illustrious talent scouts who had witnessed our catalytic performance some months prior. It was a difficult decision indeed: to choose between one's true love and one's career; such divided passion would haunt me for the rest of my days. When we parted we spoke lovingly of reuniting in Brussels or in Spain, but our hearts both were filled with doubt. And so she found success touring all of Europe playing mostly roles of heroines archaic and contemporary, such was fitting for my goddess. But when she passed through London—where the Fertile Thespian company was based, mind you—and I received not a call, letter, nor even buzz to my beeper, I was deflated by her apathy.

Such a sorrowful state fueled the muse in me and that muse lifted me to the peak of my acting career. It was as if Puck had sprinkled me with his precarious love potion thereby averting my eyes from Ursula and solely to the stage. And so I took helm of the Fertile Thespian company and, in so doing, landed us gigs at The Theatre, Blackfriars, The Rose, and alas, The Globe Theatre! I knew I was destined for greatness, and there in London my dreams had at last

materialized. I was so impressed with myself after playing the role of Lysander that I aspired to play heftier roles such as those of Hamlet and King Lear. My ambition had got the best of me, though. My shortcomings were revealed to all the world when I butchered our poor Hamlet at The Swan Theatre one autumn eve in the year '88.

And there you have it: my peak. My brief snippet of transcendence, and poof!—like that, gone. Vanished. Pried from my grip by vicious, sadistic critiques. But fear not, dear reader, there are summits yet to be scaled by your goodly hero, Skyler Bingsworth!

\*

Ah, we are at our midway mark. As a reward to my cherished readers who have endured my struggles with such patience and cordial empathy as if they were their own, I provide my address:

Skyler Bingsworth

Kronburg Castle 666

DK-3000 Helsingør

Denmark

As I have aforementioned, send libations only—do NOT visit!—save your presence for a party more beggarly of your purported

◆

purpose. Simply put, I work best alone, wallowing in the marsh of my terrible solitude. Something so pure must remain untainted, you see. For the sake of my health, and for the sake Art itself!

Although I am one who holds strongly to his values, I am not a stubborn man. Virtuoso that I am, I knew in mine heart that if I was to reach divine providence wherein I was destined to reign I would have to adapt to the times. No more could Skyler Bingsworth parade himself through the narrow streets and alleyways of Europe, crying out my craft over the caws and calls of begrimed vendors and foul merchants. No, such was a lowly and pathetic role for a man of my stature.

And so, as those of the Bingsworth breed are marked by their dynamic inclination, a legend of the World Wide Web was born. I compiled all my manifestos and manuscripts and other various documents into severely organized files, and little by little have been releasing them unto the world via social media—yes! I said “via” (see how your boy hath grown!)—in such an organized manner that, once the entirety of my grand gem is at last discovered through the haphazardly lain maze I led them through, my message will be

successfully inoculated in the minds of the masses, and so will begin the revolution.

This revolution will not involve any weaponry or savagery; rather it will be fought with portraiture and poetry. Reason hath rung man's heart dry. It is time we delve back into that rotting organ with not a scalpel but with a warm embrace and see not only *what* stirs it to beat but also *why* it beats at all. Why, in the vast vacuum of space, in the grave enormity of the abyss, does this vein pulse against mine finger? To what great work can we put these pulsating hands? The only answer I could fathom that could put all the fragmented pieces of life into place: Love.

My Ursula hath found another man. So I discovered by her profile photograph. They, lying on some generic idyllic beach in the Caribbean, smiling so brightly my soul seared upon seeing their clearly in-love eyes. Eyes do not lie. People lie, but their eyes, they do not.

Years passed. I watched her life from afar. The marriage. The children, who should have become by my seed but did not. Her success in theater. All the while I sunk deeper into my study, my harrowing solitude. Although not once since the day I first beheld her



in mine eyes standing there in her father's field with her great seashell by her side had I ceased loving her, unrequited love will make any man bitter.

I had had it! No longer could I present myself seriously to the world only to be made a mockery of. And so I decided I would change my approach quite radically: I vowed to present myself as a mockery in the hopes that I would be taken seriously by this bleak, backwards world. Thus began my descent (or ascent?) into the abysmal whirlwind of absurdity.

Here is an excerpt from the first post of mine to achieve any validation from my first few followers:

Regret can be fun; if you ever sought a simple salad in a slaughter factory run by your best friend's uncle's godson, who eats snow and freezes his insides on command, then you know what I'm talking about, you dirt daddies. Let's talk about children. Never underestimate the magical mind of a young son: give him time and the earth will tell you when. Is circumcision still legal? Bathe him in the good water and his prospects will be many, and desire will seethe his being until the end of time. THE GYRE! THE SECOND COMING IS UPON US!!!

Hope you're all doing  
well,  
Sky

Cacophonous insanity, I know. But it sure did get a rise out of the people! Or at least it seemed as such from my limited and isolated

vantage point. Was Ursula really happy with her new fool? How could one tell from but a picture? We're all divas—we all put on some pose or other for the flashing of the cameras. 'Tis oft fallacious indeed. Such is the way of the Internet; such is deceit.

Yet, in the arena of the World Wide Web one must choose either to become a master of deceit or to be mastered by it. I, of course, chose the former:

A woman, unbeknownst to me, but all the same quite wise, once asked me, 'Skyler, what is the square root of a squid?' Now, I was quite appalled by this question because, A: she asked me it as I was chewing a wet biscuit; and B: her nostrils were flared quite ludicrously. I coughed up some of the biscuit on some documents, as I filed through my repertoire of Victorian peppercorn and miscellaneous squid, and to my amazement, discovered (between two islands of biscuit bits marked across the page) that the square root of a squid is, indeed, squid squared!

To make such nonsense appear as truth—why, such is the essence of fiction laid bare at its very foundations! Your dear bard had taken the stage of the whole wide world!—digitally, that is. Followers came by the plenty at such an exponential rate that I had accrued quite a sizeable plethora in only three months' time. A cult had been formed, a way of life had found a groove in the aimless earth—a star



had been born! *Burn on, Skyler!* roars the multitude of fans in the silent solace of their screen-glazed eyes. *Burn on!*

Many peers used to scorn me for my ill performance during field hockey. You know what I would tell them? I'd tell 'em, 'Hey. Buddy(ies). If you're not first, you're last!' And then I'd point at them with my forefinger and furrow but one brow to let them know that I meant business. Now I do not his breasts would never surmount his father's. But I severed those ties long ago, back when I received my first vasectomy from that pregnant Scottish Nun. O god, those were the days. Phew, what I wouldn't do for a communion tablet and a meat-shake!

After discovering how my approval rates would increase correlatively with how vulgar and grotesque my posts became, I saw my opportunity and I seized it! The court was in my favor and I had achieved, by mine own merit, jurisdiction to explore and experiment. And so, gleefully in my glossings, tucked away in my vaulted chamber, I did unfurl such scandalous sentiments designed to shake my disciples from their silk skivvies of comfort. Sentiments such as this:

Wanna know a little something about dog treats and shame?

And this:

Wanna know what puberty smells like?

And this:

Wanna see a baby's worst nightmare?

I was having a ball, you see. But, as it is, we live in a sensitive time—rather it is not the time that is sensitive, it is that the inhabitants of this particular era in time are overly sensitive. I remember back in the 80s if someone were to slip a little skittle in your drink and snort a line of the good stuff off your senseless arse, we'd think nothing of it. Nowadays little baby men and women pout and cry if you so as pronounce their names without intonating certain lilts of their titles perfectly fit to their preference. Well, goo-goo ga-ga. We are meaningless beings and individuality is the grand illusion that doth propel the gears of consumerism. We are blind! We hath sacrificed our liberty in the name of political correctness. Now, these are the posts that got me into quite a bit of trouble:

Sprinkle some butter on my burger and tell me what you've really learned in grade school.

And:

Happy Bingsworth Day! Pardon your friars! For the boys were willing and avid!

I can see why the last one might worry a fearful mother, but were one to fully consider the context of my character she would see that humor was my only intention, and not the untouched bottoms of her slippery sons. I began to receive hateful emails—the likes of which



I am too gentle of a man to retell—mostly from parents in distress over my ostensible air of pedophilia, and one day I even received a note from Sir Mark Zuckerberg himself. *Humbert Humbert!* he referred to me in what I can only presume he intended to be an insulting and threatening tone. But I was not insulted; rather I was quite flattered actually. Despite his risqué obsession with his nymphet, Humbert possesses one the most lyrical and beautiful voices in all of literature. If the creator of this monumental digital platform is too feeble-minded to consider context, I suppose neither can you expect any of his docile, millionfold herd of cattle to. I gave Mark a cool reply and lightened the content of my posts for a while. For example:

The sky(ler) is the limit. Dream it. Do it.  
...Stay skinny. No matter what.

No, as it was, I had birthed a beast too mighty to cage. I could not restrain the muse. It seemed to have a life of its own. I was but the medium, the vessel to channel such abrasive ruminations. But then I realized: what divine tracker could possibly hunt me down, all cloaked from society and stowed away in my chamber? The information I did provide on my profile, that I was an employee at Victoria's Secret from

Massapequa, was false and purposefully misleading. So, once I faded from Zuckerberg's radar I unleashed my most fierce forces yet.

Any boys with highlighted tips and a rapist's wit, please meet me and (this person chose to remain anonymous due to legal bindings) at the gymnasium. I think the group dynamic provides a growing boy with the development. There's no reason to feel coy, for I will have a second set of eyebrows drawn above the original set.  
Bring \$5

Quoth:

Leg warmers confuse me, especially in the summer when the heat waves tickle your tender parts. What I mean of course is your undercarriages. People! Protect yourselves with powder. I warn only those who I think are at least one spatula's worth of picnic cream.  
You lowlife sons of glitches don't even know what the matrix is.

Quoth:

I was once a barber shop boy. The days were filled with shed skin and lacerations of all sorts imaginable. Whenever hair hit the speckled checkered floor I would almost always lap up the stragglers as a minister would attend to his rosary. O, I was once a barber shop boy...

Quoth:

Moss that grows to the north side of trees is more moist than any turkish banana that has had the pleasure of swelling up before me.

Quoth:

Whose world is this? The world is yours.  
Whose world is this?  
Uh, uh. I don't think it's mine.  
Solipsism, egotism. Sounds like fun.



You are all holograms, right?  
I'm the only real boy in this puppet factory.

And quoth:

If anyone so as touches the little prickly pears  
in the nether regions of the fridge I will cast a  
soul-searing hex on your kin! There is nothing I  
detest more than a sticky-fingered sour sucker  
duck-faced whoremonger. Let us be decent, let us  
keep our phalanges in our own  
pantaloons/diapers/girtgowns. Yea, let us be  
decent and live merrily. O what joyous day it will  
be when I no longer have to skin the undergirth of  
these filthy schmoozers parading my lip balm on  
their sprinkled lips like tawny dirtgrove  
believers. O how the good times of yore have  
faded, and O how the legs of women have lost their  
clutch!

And there you have it.

Here you have a lens into my present, private life, and here,  
dear reader, do we depart. Why, until my biography is written in full,  
by the then-nation's Nobel laureate, shortly after I depart from this  
world and pass onto the next. I promise you this, but on one  
condition: See to it, one of you goodly Samaritans, that my body is  
stowed away properly in my father's lofty crypt in Nebraska. Consider  
this a sentiment of my will, and consider your reading of my memoir  
your acceptance of such liability.

Thank you.

Forever yours,

Sky—O! What now! What rapping at mine door! What could  
be the cause of this rapping at mine chamber door?

They have found me at last. The authorities. But how? I have  
changed my address many a time, and my identity legally twice—no,  
thrice! And my only admittance of my true address is contained in this  
here chronicle, which, at this very present moment, hath not yet been  
released unto the world. This, I fear, may be the end of me.

The rapping ceases.

O! What's this?

What celestial timbre doth tender mine heart's creases?

O, could it be?

Love like the trap of the Chinese,

worse to coerce than to let ease.

Let loose, let lost that with the highest cost

and see: Beyond mine chamber door a swell—

of warmth, moist and pure, surely breathing forth

from my love's seashell.

