

1: Perfection short story "The Struggling Writer"

Struggling for Perfection is the story of the famous pianist, an enigmatic figure who made some of the most acclaimed classical recordings of the last century. A former child prodigy and an unpredictable, passionate man, Glenn Gould was known as much for his eccentricities as his vast musical genius.

Somerset Maugham, hence the description-heavy opening and dialogue-heavy development. I tried to get this published in a number of general and Western-themed fiction magazines and e-zines, but without success. As always, let me know what you think in the comments. Perfection by Gillan Drew Colonel Horrigan reined in at the mouth of the valley, running his eyes down the gentle western slope, past the river, and up the steeper eastern rise. In the evening light, the forest lining the ridge to the left cast long shadows down a lush meadow that drank at the banks of the river. To the north, beyond where the valley curled out of sight, snow-capped mountains climbed up into the sky. Already a plume of smoke was rising into the sky, the wagons circling for protection and comfort, his boys climbing down wearily from their saddles to catch some precious sleep around the campfire. A single dot broke from the blur and approached across the grassland, a dot that soon resolved into a stocky, one-armed man riding a palomino, his black hair streaked with grey. The rider pulled his horse short alongside the Colonel and whistled through his teeth. The Colonel said nothing. He stared transfixed at the mountains. Same as every day. I got no truck with any man wants to leave, but he works for me then he follows my orders. Mountains nearby for miners and prospectors and whomever else. He looked into the fire and took another large swig of the alcohol, feeling it burn down into his belly. Over at the other end of the campsite, the settlers were making one hell of a racket. Waterstone raised his hands for silence. Seeing it was not working, the doctor loudly cleared his throat and the hubbub fell and then rose again like a wave on the shore. He studied their faces in the glow, the anger, the fear and frustration. I assure you that the Colonel knows what he is doing. They were a rag-tag bunch, some dressed in dirty smocks and tatty dresses while others were bedecked in smarter clothes, albeit dusty and starting to wear thin. In the darkness they were barely distinguishable, a writhing mass of shadowy figures tinged with the touch of the flames. Many were on their feet, standing in clumps; some were pacing endlessly back and forth, kicking at the ground, while others simply stared despondently out into the night. And winter comes awful quick in these parts. How you gonna reassure us about that, doc? What would you have us do? They fell silent as a voice called out of the night. The settlers backed away from him as though he were a snake. He gazed around at the people, daring them to meet his eyes. There was total silence around the fire. She stood nobly erect, held his eyes by the fire. A child clutched at her legs, looking up at her with tears on its cheeks. Waterstone took a step closer to the fire so that they could all see him. The settler lifted a young boy in his arms. Yes, we agreed to come with him. The one-armed Captain, glaring around into their angered faces, pointedly rested his hand on the butt of his pistol. The meaning was not lost on the settlers, but it was several moments before they were ready to listen once again. Now go to bed, all of you. Go on, be off with you. He slid back around on the rock he had taken for a perch, raised his pipe and placed it between his teeth. Slowly, deliberately, the Captain eased himself onto the rock alongside him. He took out his tobacco and pipe, stared out into the dark as he tamped it down into the bowl. Overhead there was a break in the clouds, and a vast array of stars pierced the gloom like pinpicks in a sheet of satin. Out in the valley he could just make out the river, a shade of deeper darkness flowing into the night. Lighting his pipe, he shook out the match and flicked it into the long grass. They smoked in amiable silence, the only sounds the wind sougning through the grass and the gentle fizz of the smouldering tobacco. The Captain sighed out a mouthful of smoke. That little farm with the pastureland, where Jenny lived? Way the sky looked, so big you could get lost in it? She was a fine woman. Best time of my life. You still had your arm. I was young and Jenny was the sweetest kisser in the world. I loved them days, Jack. He finally understood what the Colonel was looking for. Slowly at first, and then more quickly, like a stream suddenly bursting its banks, the travellers emerged from their many wagons. Here and there, men clutched rifles and pointed them about with worried eyes; women clutched their children to their breasts, and somewhere a baby whimpered in fright. But there was only one shot. The Captain told them it was self-inflicted, though few

believed that. For the first time since losing his arm, Jack wept, screamed out his rage into the night sky. In the morning, the settlers buried the Colonel, and in the afternoon they began to build Perfection around his bones.

2: The Struggle For Academic Perfection | HuffPost

Struggling for Perfection: The Story of Glenn Gould (Stories of Canada) - Kindle edition by Vladimir Konieczny. Download it once and read it on your Kindle device, PC, phones or tablets. Use features like bookmarks, note taking and highlighting while reading Struggling for Perfection: The Story of Glenn Gould (Stories of Canada).

However, from what I can see in the most populated city in America, students seem to be taking it to a new level. In the private schools of New York City, school has been in session for just about a month. They begin to compete exhaustively with one another. Students strive to be the best. They strive to do more extracurriculars and sports than their friends do, to get better grades than their friends get, to win more awards than their friends win, and to be more involved than their friends are. Students even see who can get into the best high schools by applying out of their already top-notch private school into another. But why does this need to outdo one another even exist in the first place? People whose grandparents have attended Harvard or Yale feel that they should go there, too. What they do not understand is the huge difference between getting into an Ivy League then and now. They think that the more you do, the better a chance you have at getting into a better college than the next person. One freshman attending an NYC independent school even told me, "My goal is to get my name on at least four plaques in the school by the end of my high school career. In my point of view, as a freshman, this is the one year we have to enjoy things, free of standardized tests. They overwhelm themselves hoping their efforts will all pay off when an acceptance letter comes to their door. Some say that it comes from the pressure of parents and even schools as a whole. After all, private schools in New York City are competing with one another. Parents may also be competing among themselves. Whose kid does the most, and whose kid gets the best grades? Parents glow when they know that their children are at the top of their class, possibly to relive a dream of being top students themselves. What if I fail this test? What will my parents say? Will I get into college? High school students are afraid of their future, and afraid of judgment. What will my friends say? What will my teachers say? This will all stop if students can learn to pause and worry about the present moment, give or take a week or two! I believe that the fear of what is to come makes students compete so vigorously.

3: Struggling for Perfection: The Story of Glenn Gould | Quill and Quire

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But as he writes in his new book *Rebel Dad: Triumphant Over Bureaucracy to Adopt Two Orphans Born Worlds Apart*, his battle to adopt children as a gay man quickly turned into a years-long fight with the Canadian government, social workers and adoption agencies. The following excerpt features David in India in January, as he visits adoption agencies while keeping his sexuality a closely guarded secret. Vinod [my guide while I was in India] was standing outside my bedroom door when I emerged looking ashen. I handed him the list of five orphanages I had scheduled appointments with that day. The building rose up in front of us as we drove into an upscale neighbourhood with white stucco houses, each lot divided by rows of foot-high trees. The narrow streets of this cul-de-sac were cobblestoned; the labourers who swept the streets spotless would take home only a few rupees for their daylong effort. Nisha, the director of this facility, was a stunningly beautiful thirtyish woman with a kind and gentle manner as she greeted me and then led me to her office. She had just placed a child the previous month with a family in Ottawa and she was happy to see another Canadian inquiring about adoption. Scanning through my file, Nisha asked me thoughtful questions while frequently making encouraging observations about my readiness to adopt children. A garden worker opened the gate for the taxi to enter and 50 preschool children and two nuns instantly surrounded us. Vinod spoke to the first nun, who motioned him to move the car forward and for me to follow her to the office. The taxi drove slowly through the crowd of excited children playing tag with the car. Once inside the building, I was directed to sit in a small waiting room at the far end of a dimly lit corridor. As we entered the hallway leading to the waiting room, I gazed into a large room on my right filled with cribs housing at least 50 cooing or crying babies. The dank, cool air of this old cinderblock building was a relief from the oppressive heat outside in the courtyard. I was left wondering if these babies had ever seen the moon and the sun or had the chance to breathe fresh morning air. They were excited at the prospect of being adopted. She motioned for me to follow her into an office off the open-air courtyard. I was a widower, and my late wife, Nicci, had begged me prior to her death to go ahead with plans to adopt children from India. I told Sister Joyce that I loved children and was able to afford to give children a wonderful, loving home in Canada. After 20 minutes talking about my reasons for wanting to adopt she began to loosen up. However, she said that being a widower still meant I was a single man in the eyes of the Indian judiciary and very few orphanages would give me a child. I just shrugged and handed her photos of my home, Woodhaven, and my life in Canada. Want to see children? Sister Joyce informed me that three helpers were preparing lunchtime formula and Pablum for 60 babies and if I wanted to help feed one or more of them I could. I was overjoyed at being asked to help care for these youngsters. Would I be able to adopt one or two of your babies? Maybe you like one of these children? I had no idea it would be this easy. One of the helpers motioned for me to follow her into the kitchen and she put a bowl of Pablum in my hands. Sister Joyce handed me a baby from one of the cribs and told me to feed this little boy. I spent the next hour feeding children from the cribs amid the smiles and chuckles of the nuns and helpers. I wondered what they were saying to each other about this Canadian man who wanted so fervently to adopt children. McKinstry hopes his new book will inspire Canadians from coast to coast to consider adoption. Supplied Article Continued Below Vinod was brought into the nursery by the nun who had greeted us at the gates of the compound. While he stood there watching me, I had two or three youngsters crawling up my pant legs and another two scrambling up my arms. As I fumbled to balance all the children, the supervising nun walked past me toward a young boy, who looked about 3 years old, trying to escape from his crib. She smacked him across the face and pushed him back into the crib. I was horrified but knew if I confronted the nun, I risked being asked to leave and not return. Vinod smiled as he stood beside me in the nursery and asked if one of these children was going to be mine? I could feel my smile widening from ear to ear and whispered that I thought Sister Joyce liked me because she had invited me to visit the children and help feed them. As I placed the children back in their cribs, they shrieked and cried while reaching up to be held again. I walked

back through the long inner hallway past an office where Sister Joyce was talking with a blond-haired Caucasian man and woman. I told her I had to go to another appointment but asked if I could come back later to help with suppertime. As I left the building and entered the compound, I was swarmed by children all looking to be less than 5 years of age. They were playing in the dirt piles of the compound and when they saw me they rushed over and grabbed at me to pick them up. On one hand it was exhilarating to have all this attention from so many adoptable children, but Vinod came over and pulled them off, so I could get into the taxi. I wondered how the nuns and helpers managed to be calm surrounded by orphans clamoring for constant attention. At one of the orphanages David visited on his trip to India, a celebration complete with a cake is held in honour of each child when they are placed in their new forever home. Supplied By 6 p. I had visited five institutions. Only the Missionaries of Charity orphanage had given me any indication I might be considered as an adoptive parent. Two Catholic missions had curtly refused to consider me because I was single and male. Another state-run group told me that due to infertility on the rise in India, Indian couples and Indian nationals living abroad were given first right of refusal. I entered the nursery and found several older nuns feeding the children and changing the diapers of those standing at the sides of the cribs. Some cribs held two or three babies. Without delay I grabbed a bib and a bowl of paste-like stew from a large pot in the adjoining kitchen area and began to feed babies in the row nearest me. Some of the nuns were quite brusque in handling the children. I watched one nun walk down a centre aisle of cribs and slap month-olds on the cheeks for standing up in their cribs. Appalled by this abuse, I again had to grit my teeth in silent indignation. I cradled and sang to a pair of crib-sharing babies simultaneously. Two nuns walked by and smiled like angels looking down from on high. I was desperate to make a good impression on the nuns and Sister Joyce. My cause being to return to Canada with multiple orphans from India to raise as my children. Imagining myself arriving home with children, greeting Michael and us becoming a family was the fuel that fired my defiant determination and had been at the root of my recalcitrant attitude toward changing the system for decades so I, as a gay man, could live out my dream to become a parent. My journey to fatherhood was not going to be a quick, easy sprint to the finish line, but instead a lengthy mountainous marathon. Adapted from Chapter 1:

4: Struggling for Perfection: The Story of Glenn Gould by Vladimir Konieczny

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5: Orphan Train Stories

â... Struggling for Perfection: The Story of Glenn Gould. by Vladimir Konieczny, Chrissie Wysotski, illus.

6: Struggling Readers

Struggling for Perfection is the story of the famous pianist, an enigmatic figure who made some of the most acclaimed classical recordings of the last century. The book is illustrated with sketches and archival photos.

7: Struggling for Perfection : Vladimir Konieczny :

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