

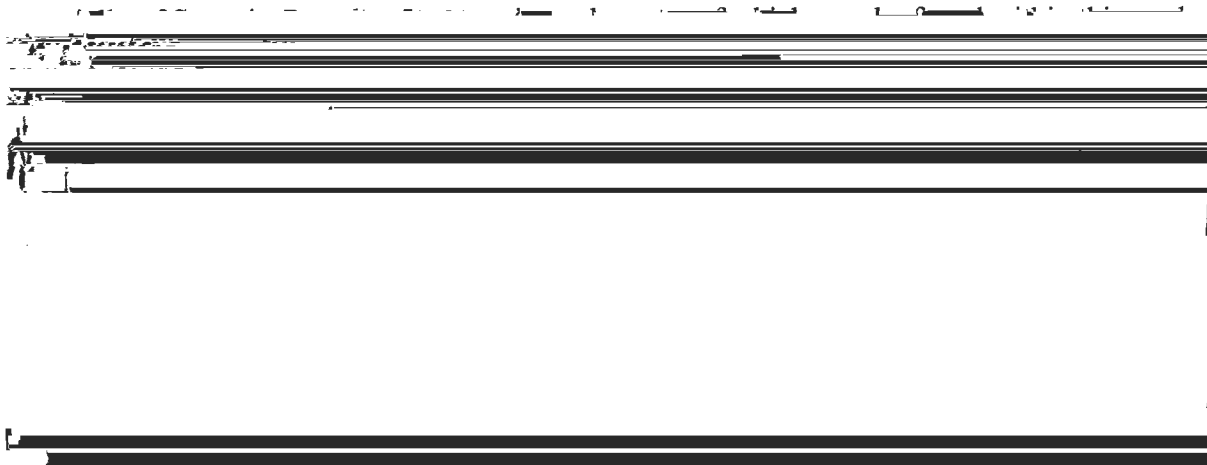
Paradise Disillusioned

By Alec J. Blaylock

Undergraduate

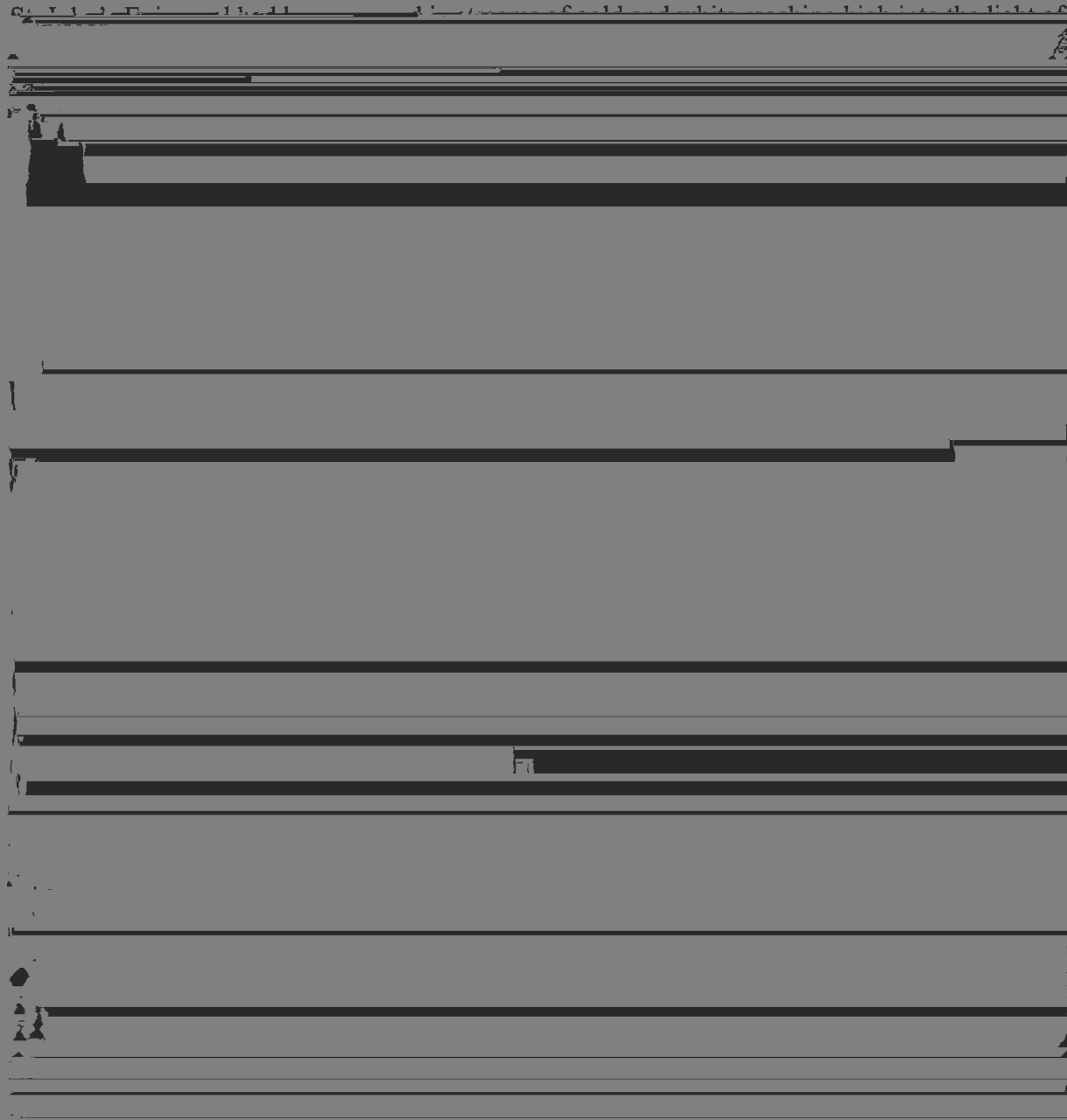
## Paradise Disillusioned Rationale

This short story is inspired heavily by Milton both thematically and formatively. The story is a modern application and exploration of original sin and the Biblical account of the fall of mankind; however, this story applies those themes to the “honeymoon phase” of marriage common to newlyweds. Their loss of pure, near-blind love for one another is analogous to the loss of perfection in the narrative of the Fall. While written in prose, “Paradise Disillusioned” attempts to mimic Milton’s heavy use of allusion, symbolism, and layered characterization,



### Paradise Disillusioned

A drunken haze of pure delight followed Allan and Ellen Parsons into the Paradise Hotel less than twenty-four hours after their wedding. The ceremony and reception had been beautiful.



“Newlyweds,” he hissed.

“Yes sir! Married yesterday, or maybe even today, I guess!” Allan replied. Ellen twittered happily.

“Wonderful,” replied their host with biting sarcasm. Other employees passed closer to the front desk on their varied travels than they normally would. Old Sam continued, “Yes, we have you a suite on the twelfth floor. if you can make it that far. Here, take this.” his gnarled hands

passed them a densely-packed fruit basket filled with a diverse range of fruits that neither of the young pair had even seen before. “Compliments of your friends here at the hotel.”

Old Sam passed Allan a shiny, gold door key engraved with the number twelve. Allan took the key, placed it in his pocket with the hand that did not currently belong to Ellen, and the

and brought it to her mouth. She had almost sunk her teeth into the delicious-looking fruit. so

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ripe and full of potential, when Allan caught her arm.

“We have dinner soon, you don’t want to spoil it, do you?” he asked lightly.

“Of course not dear, but the fruit looks so good!” Ellen replied.

“So it does, but if you eat it, you may not want anything else. Funny how something as small as an apple could ruin everything isn’t it?”

Ellen put the apple down and playfully slapped Allan’s arm. The two preceded to get ready for their dinner that night, which was to be a feast at one of the finest local restaurants. Fine dining had always been more difficult for the young couple, as they were both vegetarians and wanted to keep their bodies as clean as possible. They dressed in their nicest clothes, of which they had brought few, for the evening. Ellen wore a beige dress, and Allan donned a silk shirt and pants to match.

Our young lovers, radiant in all the glory of honeymoon excitement, headed downstairs, where they were impeded again by Old Sam, who contrasted the couple with his dark clothing, hair, and skin. If the Parsons were the embodiment of youthful purity, Old Sam personified the callousness and bitterness of hard-fought old age.

“Going out on the town, are we?” asked Old Sam with a false tone of interest.

“Yes! We’re going to The Garden!” replied Ellen.

“Oh, The Garden! That’s quite a nice place, it is. You wouldn’t want to go out without an

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“Say there, young lady, that’s a fine young man you have there,” said the old devil, baiting the woman.

“Yes, he is quite fantastic!” she replied.

“And very true, I’m sure, very true.”

“Honesty is one of my favorite things about him.”

“Funny thing, that honesty.”

“How so?” the girl asked. The employees began to draw closer again.

“Oh, nothing to concern yourself with, my dear. It’s just an old man’s ramblings.

Honesty’s just funny is all. It’s not honesty we want, it’s the appearance of honesty. Nobody really cares if someone tells the truth or not, as long as you never find out they were lying.”

“Yes, but my Allan is always true,” replied the girl somewhat defiantly.

“Oh, yes dear, of course. I don’t mean to offend. I just mean that even if someone, not your Allan of course, were to be an uncommonly good liar, and you never found out about their lying to you well that’s about as good as the truth isn’t it?” asked Old Sam.

“Maybe, but I would still prefer the truth.”

Old Sam smiled. “Of course, dear, of course. Shame we can’t know everything, isn’t it? I guess some things are just left for the Man Upstairs.”

“That’s right, and we shouldn’t pay too much attention to things that don’t concern us. I wonder what is taking Allan so long.” Some of the usual ecstasy had dropped from her voice.

tried to make it stop. Eventually, the coughing subsided slightly, just long enough for Old Sam to

accepted. Her coughing stopped, and her throat was at ease. The rain poured down outside.

“Thank you! What was that?” Ellen asked of the grinning old man.

“No problem at all, just some apple juice I had here,” he replied.

Ellen’s demeanor fell, but she knew not why. Maybe the incident wherein Allan had warned her against the fruit in their bedroom had made her cautious to anything of the kind. Nevertheless, a tinge of guilt bubbled its way up from her belly to form a lump in her throat. Before she could think about it much longer, Allan came out of the elevator, and, for only a brief

“Well, in the meantime, let’s have a drink, shall we? No, no, don’t look at me that way, nothing alcoholic, dear boy! Just some old apple juice I have here at hand. It can’t hurt a bit, can it? The lovely lady already had one while you were away, and she suffered no harm! It’s only

“...the lovely lady already had one while you were away, and she suffered no harm! It’s only  
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

swirling, golden brown liquid to Allan.



each other, or that their own individual thoughts were somehow related to the conduct of their spouse.

Old Sam stood darkly in the background, laughing silently at the two from whom he

