

Kite

by Matthew Simmons

One year, she got a kite. It was a box kite, rainbow. It had long tails. The sides had faces. Angry, angry faces. Eight faces. They seemed to object to one another, and when she would take the kite out to the park to fly it, the faces would begin to bicker with one another.

You shut up.

No, you shut up.

No, you shut up.

No, you shut up.

No, you shut up.

No, you shut up.

No, you shut up.

No, you shut up.

Around and around it went. She tuned the kite out as well as she could, but the endless angry incantations circled and circled and circled in her brain. And it got shriller and shriller and shriller. Always the faces fought with one another. Continually, they bickered like brothers. (Or like she was led to believe brothers bickered. She was an only child and preferred the company of other only children. On rare occasions, she would befriend someone with a single sibling—never more than one. But those relationships were doomed. She felt teamed up on.)

I would like to face front.

No, I would like to face front.

You always face front. I think it is my turn to face front.

I'm sick of facing front upside down and would like the kite turned over.

The kite can't be turned over because the tail is on your end. You and the other four are the bottom.

How dare you use the word 'bottom' to describe where the four of us are. It's that kind of subtle hierarchical language use that proves what a classicist you are.

This is precisely the kind of conversation that gets us nowhere, gentlemen.

Always trying to play the peace-maker. Always trying to suggest that you are somehow superior to the rest of us intellectually and spiritually because you manage to see through our 'petty' squabbles. This is why we all hate you the most.

And where do you get off calling us 'gentlemen?' We have no primary or secondary sexual characteristics and could well decide we want to self-identify as either gender. I'm sick of you oppressing me.

I'm, frankly, sick of all of you and all your worthless talk. Why can't we have a day, an hour, even a moment of silence?

Yes, right. So you can 'meditate' on some sort of important conceptual framework for your manifesto.

I'm sick of that manifesto. You can't even put it down on paper. You can only deliver it and hand it down through the oral tradition, and since we are the only kite this little girl owns, there's no chance you'll be able to propagate it. No one will hear it. None of us care to memorize it.

At least I am trying to do something with my time. At least I have goals. At least I feel like my life has meaning!

Enough, she screamed. Enough, enough, enough. And they would quiet down for a short time. But soon they would be back at it.

The kite's eight faces wouldn't even stop to enjoy flight! It was remarkable. A tragedy. They floated above the park on beautiful Spring and Summer days, over the green fields and the trees, and they floated near the gentle cloud cover, but saw none of it. Fought and bickered and huffed. It was too much to bear. Eventually, she flew the kite in a strong Autumn windstorm, and when a gust pulled it from her hand and out into the trees where it was torn to shreds by the bare branches, she did not once feel regret.

