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Staring at Grass

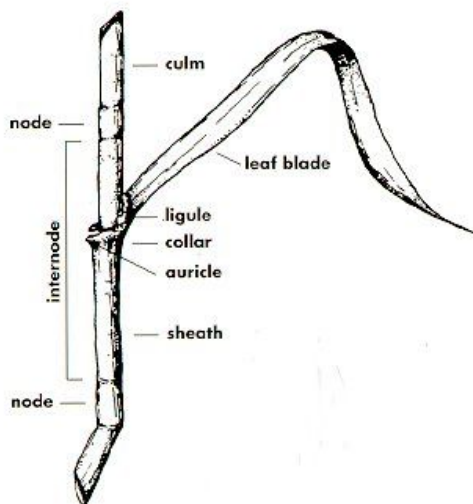
I would like to share a bit about some gorgeous grass I stared at not too long ago. My audience does not need to be all that aged nor educated to be able to understand and appreciate what I have to say about this grass. I expect that my readers will consist of anyone at or above middle school age. But honestly, as long as you have an appreciation for the simpler things in life, like grass, and basic reading skills, I think you'll be alright.

It's six o'clock in the evening on a Sunday; late August. The sun is making its way towards the horizon. I'm sitting in a grass field lined with trees. Some fraternity guys are playing football about twenty feet away and making all kinds of noise. But I can still hear the wind blowing through the trees. I'm sitting in the small patch of shade one particular tree is providing me. It's the only thing keeping me from sweating in the summer heat. Being from the drab deserts of Las Vegas, Nevada, no ounce of greenery goes unnoticed by me. I'm sitting here very content with the nature around me.



Something catches my eye when one particularly large gust of wind comes along: the way it moves the grass like waves in the ocean, and suddenly I'm completely fixated on the grass that I'm comfortably surrounded by. It is such a gorgeous shade of green; so bright that it is almost neon. The sun, being at the angle which it is, shines through the blades of grass and illuminates them, the same way sunlight does to stained glass windows. I know from sixth grade science that this is because of the green chlorophyll within the plant cells that comprise the blades of grass. The field's kelly green hue combined with the soft ripples sweeping across it are a mesmerizing and relaxing sight. Some areas of grass are shaded, and have a more forest green tone to them as a result. I pay less attention to them because I favor the color of the sunlit grass, however the contrast between the two is nice and mutually complementary.

I want a closer look. So, I yank a piece of grass from the soil. Some of the root comes out with it. I haven't pulled grass from the ground since I was a child. I forgot that grass isn't always



one single blade attached to a root. My blade of grass has a stem with two blades branching off of it. The part of the stem directly above the root is brown, thick, more brittle-feeling than the blades themselves, and cylindrical. This is called the sheath. The blades themselves have tiny striated fibers running down them. At the ends, the blade comes to a nice clean point. This detail, along with the length of all the grass in the field leads me to believe it is overdue for a trim. I

remember playing in the grass in my yard as a child, but it was a different kind of grass than what is in this field. My grass was thicker, stiffer, and even felt sharp to the touch. This grass is

thin, soft, and flowy. My grass had jagged and dead ends from being mowed. This grass has nothing of the sort. I like this new grass.

The breeze has calmed down a bit, but not enough for the wind waves over the field to stop. It almost looks as if the field is underwater, being moved back and forth by ocean currents. The sounds that come from the grass blowing into itself is faint, but it's there. There is also a slight scent in the air that I would describe as earthy and a bit muggy. The humidity keeps it from smelling fresh. I wonder what kinds of bugs live in this grass. There are probably some species of ants. I haven't seen any, but I feel like ants live in all grass. Three different winged bugs have landed on me that were not mosquitoes. One was black, one was green, and one was brown. The black one had black wings, while the green and brown ones had clear wings. They all had similar shapes, so maybe they were close to each other in species. I'm also curious about how this grass changes with the seasons. Does it turn brown and die? I would expect that to be the outcome, but I've only ever experienced dry desert winters, so maybe the grass doesn't die in places where there is moisture throughout the year. One of my friends playing football just ran over and took off his shoe. His toe was hurting, so he took his shoe off to take a look, and it turns out he popped a big blister on his toe. Now some of his blood is in the grass, and I can't help but wonder if it will act as a nutrient to the soil. I think it will because of the organic compounds in our blood. Or maybe a mosquito will find it and have it for dinner. I'll really never know. I just know that it feels nice to sit here and ponder my seemingly simple surroundings.

After my day in the grass and the quandaries it brought to mind, I learned a few things. First of all, the green and brown flying bugs that landed on me were indeed the same bug, just in

two different colors, and they are called lacewings. When they are larvae, they are great at controlling the populations of a variety of grass pests, such as aphids and mites (SodGod). Additionally, my roommate has informed me that the grass does turn brown and die when it gets colder outside, despite the moisture it receives from snow melt. Now for the interesting part. It turns out my friend's toe blood actually did act as a nutrient for the grass that absorbed it, and that is because blood happens to be made up of the elements phosphorus, iron, potassium, and magnesium, along with some other elements (Keitel et al). These four elements are all essential plant nutrients, with phosphorus, potassium, and magnesium actually being three of the six major plant nutrients (DPI). I find it interesting what one can be inspired to learn after taking a good, long stare at a patch of grass.

I encourage whoever reads this to find a seemingly simple aspect of their own surroundings and take a closer look at it; pay it more mind than usual; question everything about it. Through deep observation, questioning, and investigation, you can always find something you were not aware of before. There is always more to be learned. By taking the time to analyze your surroundings and understand the true intricacy and complexity of them, you can find a sense of appreciation and wonder for everything that exists around you. Recognize everything this life has to offer from the smallest of scales to the largest, and enjoy it.

Works Cited

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