

Stevenson's young man with the creme tarts



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Grant Engl 156a Tara Dankel Spring Fourth Thought Paper Stevenson's "Story of the Young Man with the cream Cakes", is a narrative that reveals a rapport between the author and the reader, wherein Stevenson after gaining the reader's attention moves in and out of the story as escort. As narrator, Stevenson entices the reader into the story by introducing the main characters, Prince Florizel, Colonel Geraldine and the young man, and provides the scene that sets them on their journey. He provides a clear description of Florizel as a prince who "was not without a taste for ways of life more adventurous and eccentric than to which he was destined"(1), and endows Florizel's best friend Geraldine, as a "young officer of a brave and even temerarious disposition" (1). The scene is set and Stevenson embarks his two characters on their escapade that begins in the "Oyster Bar" near "Leicester Square" (1), wherein he presents the young man and his two servants, each donned with "a large dish of cream tarts". The author then leaves the story as narrator but continues to intertwine the tale of the 'Suicide Club' by giving the reader clues and guiding them through the story. He helps the reader to maintain visual representations of the moment by providing descriptions of people and places and explanations of what people are doing. He steers the reader from the "Oyster Bar" (1) to visit "other taverns" (3) with his characters but once leaving the "third saloon" (3) he disappears again. The author reappears with another clue and lets the reader know that his characters then frequent a "small French restaurant in Soho" (3); this coming and going as narrator providing the context continues throughout the story, as too does his descriptions of events, characters and their activities. For instance, the reader is made vividly aware of the interior of the club within which "voices were audible in the cabinet" (8), its

members “ stood leaning on tables and shifting on their feet ... there was little decency among the members of the club” (10), and later he creates a sense of expectation and fervor in the reader by telling us that “ nearly everyone hesitated ... and still Death’s card did not come out” (13), but when the prince “ saw his fate upon the table” “ his heart stood still” (16). At this point he continues to provide further portrayal that serves to instill connotations of anticipation and dread. When Stevenson moves out of his role as narrator he leaves the young man, Prince Florizel and Geraldine to assist the reader to fill any voids in the narrative. Each character is allowed to narrate their personal stories. The reader knows for instance that the young man was not there “ to expound” his “ philosophy but to distribute the cream tarts” (2), and later it is evident again in his own words “ how bitterly” he wished that he had “ never brought” his new friends “ to this infamous abode” (15). Geraldine relates his story such as making the reader aware that he “ rejoiced ... to know that he [Mr Malthus] is dead, but that his “ heart bleeds’ for the “ young man of the cream tarts” (14). Florizel takes the reader on his roller coaster ride of emotions by illuminating his thoughts and feelings to the reader. The reader is made very much aware that he seeks excitement when he says that “ we, too, like yourself, have had enough of life, and are determined to die” (5) whereupon his exploits with the Suicide Club begin. In summary, Stevenson as author of this narrative provides the backdrop for the story, introduces the characters, and repeatedly moves in and out as narrator, leaving the reader featured by the characters to complete the narrative and wad any holes.