



ABC CLARION

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The Genius of Modern Family

by Audrey Zhou

Originally, I had no plans on watching Modern Family. I was more of a crime TV show type of person so the idea of watching a family centered TV show simply had no appeal to me. But as my fellow TV show obsessed peers are aware of, when you constantly watch TV shows, you eventually run out of them. Since my new favorite show, How to Get Away with Murder, was ending soon, I realized that I needed to busy myself with other TV shows until it started again in September. So I took a leap of faith, hoping that Modern Family's many awards meant that the series would be somewhat interesting.

Despite my initial reservation,

the show was amazing. Great one liners, well developed characters, and the successful recipe of an episode long conflict that is resolved in the last 5 minutes. As I binge watched season after season, I soon realized the genius of the show. This show, watched by millions, was completely satirical.

Let's take Gloria, the Colombian mother and wife of the much older Jay Pritchett, as an example. Gloria plays the stereotypical "hot blooded" Latina woman combined with the stereotypical "Colombian" persona. She is often heard stating funny yet incorrect phrases in English and is made fun of for them every time. Viewers laugh as she confi-

dently states incorrect proverbs such as "talk a mile in my shoes". Despite constantly accepting being the butt of jokes, in one episode, Gloria gets to the heart of things. She confronts her family members and the viewers watching and shames them for laughing at her English. She tells them "Do you know how frustrating it is to have to translate everything in my head before I say it? To have people laugh in my face because I'm struggling to find the words. Do you know how smart I am in Spanish? Of course you don't." Gloria represents the struggles that every non-native English speaker faces in America. The reactions both the family members and the viewers have

towards her are revealed to be not only ignorant, but cruel and offensive. They act as if they are superior to her because they are more fluent in their first language than she is with her second.

While this is only one of the many instances, it truly highlights the satire used by Modern Family writers. They never take a solid political stance, as shown by the inclusion of the grumpy old conservative Jay Pritchett, and include common stereotypes that amuse both liberal and conservative viewers alike. It's because of these factors that Modern Family is viewed by the same conserva-

tives that are, in real life, against every type of family besides the traditional one shown in this TV show. By amusing these people with stereotypes and witty banter, conservative viewers will watch more of it and become more invested in the characters. When people such as Gloria reveal their feeling of being indignant, these viewers have no choice but to sympathize with the characters they would never think of sympathizing with in real life. Few viewers will be able to laugh as comfortably about her fluency after hearing this and perhaps will be more accepting of language mishaps in their daily lives.

The White Elephant

by Alena Zhang

James sidestepped the food cart on his left and raced through the Delhi city streets. He had to get to his grandfather's soon - he was already running five minutes late because of a surprise bathroom flood. Whiffs of street food and spice stores mingled in the sticky air. The summer heat wasn't helping him run any faster.

James escaped the hubbub of the city to the outskirts of town, where the houses had more room to breathe. When he finally reached his grandfather's front porch, he pounded on the familiar oak door and hollered, "Grandpa! I'm here! It's James!" The windows were wide open, since mesh screens couldn't stop the mosquitoes there anyway. His grandpa's heavy, deliberate steps descended down the creaky stairs inside. James leaned on the wall beside the door, hunched over, and exhaled the tension in his lungs.

His grandpa peeped his head out of the door and pulled him in for a hug. Clapping a heavy hand on his back, he matched James' heaving sigh. James stepped back on his heel and shook himself off. His grandpa hadn't hugged him in years.

"Why don't you come inside,

kid? You'll need to sit down for this."

James treaded lightly into the living room, using his shirt to wipe the sweat off his nose. The clangs of rickety fans rattled through the air and ricocheted off the walls. James sat on the old fabric couch and clicked his foot on the floor. It wasn't the heat that was making him sweat anymore. His grandpa looked at James expectantly; the sun beamed through the windows and formed a white halo in his pupils.

"Grandpa, what is it? You're killing me here."

"I've already told your parents."

"Told them what?" James' foot handed off the tapping to his finger, which now drummed a beat on his thigh.

"I'm giving you something." His grandpa stared straight at the fan blades, his eyes tracing infinite circles of wind.

"Clothes? Books? The birthday present you forgot to get me three years ago?"

"James," his grandpa chuckled. The corners of his eyes crinkled with his smile, and the scar on his left cheek - the one he had gotten in the independence riot as a teenager - looked like a dimple.

Outside, a heavy blast of water hit the ground and resonated through the house. James flinched and ended his tapping, and the fan jangled as it settled itself onto the ground again.

"I guess I'd better show you." James' grandfather slowly straightened up and led James out to the backyard.

James dried off the newly formed sweat from his forehead, and when he stepped outside he craned his neck to look up. An elephant.

"How do you like him?"

"Grandpa."

"What?"

"There's an elephant. In your backyard."

"SURPRISE!"

"Grandpa." James attempted to read his grandfather's expression. His grandpa's eyes were curved upwards with a smile, and his crooked teeth shined bright. This was one hundred percent real. James shook his head and ogled at the elephant's face. His tusks were still intact, his ears framed his face like fans, and there was a small streak on his left cheek.

"It's all yours, James. What do you want to name him?"

The Reds (Part 1) by Thomas Lynch

Cal-223 gripped his rifle wearily as he sat slumped on the wall of the building entrance. His arms jutted out unnaturally, malnourishment displacing the life from his skin as it slowly set in. Still, he held his position. He had a bit longer, longer than Kev-220 at least. Kev had been across the street for three weeks now, the longest of any of them. He claimed he knew Cal-222, and even Cal-221, but he claimed a lot of other things that Cal-223 knew weren't true. He claimed Boss would pick him up and send him back to factory if he got to four weeks. He'd used his nails to scratch the tally marks recording the days into his shoulder, where the thin skin barely gave resistance and the scars festered ominously. Currently, he lay perched on top of the rubble he'd managed to crawl on top of, his eyes scanning the street up ahead. The block had been quiet for three hours, but the blue runners would likely push Boss's runners back onto the retreat, judging from the slow gunfire in the distance.

Joel-224 waggled his finger from the top of the building Kev rested under. He was the newest (only a day old) and still had tiny reserves of fat left over from his drop-off. Grinning, he gave a low

warble that got the rest of the boys' attention. Standing up, he tossed the blue bag they passed around to Cal. Cal mustered the strength to pick up the rock, and did his best to roll it across the street to Kev, who examined it with glee. It was a rather macabre game all the boys played; betting on who would die next by throwing the ball to that person, who in turn bet on someone else. Whoever won would get a baggie of energy powder from the Boss when he dropped off the next boy. Cal had won twice already, and he stashed them in the fold of his pocket for more important skirmishes.

Eventually, the stone lay at the feet of Mica-223, who was too weak to lift it. Steve-223 laughed, a raspy sound as he tightly clasped his semi-automatic. Unlike Cal, Steve won the bets a lot. He would always take his little plastic baggie and pour it over his face triumphantly, letting its contents slowly smear across his nose and lips like tribal markings. When he didn't win, though, he curled into a shivering ball, his arms spasming haphazardly in withdrawal, vomit filling his lungs.

Up ahead, the gunfire drew closer, and Cal could spy a runner, their side.

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