

# The Unmagical Adventures of Tess and Dunny

Friday November 12  
Tess,

It's raining. It's been raining for fifteen days straight. I thought the image of a rainy London was just a stereotype, but no, it actually more closely resembles Bangladesh in the monsoon season. I'm thinking about getting some malaria pills just in case. It's been so long since I've seen the sun, I'm afraid that my melanin has gone into hibernation. I had a nightmare last night that I looked as sallow and pasty as all the other Britons I pass on the streets everyday. Scary.

Last weekend I got away from the drizzle for three days. It was a bank holiday (aka long weekend), so I took a Travel CUTS tour of Wales. It was spectacular! There were slate mountains and green hills and tons of sheep. It was definitely pastoral (I owe Dr. Murray back at UPEI for that word!). The first day we spent in Cardiff, and that was cool, but the next day we toured the countryside. I didn't know how much I missed PEI until that day. We stopped in a little village for lunch and I can't remember its name exactly, but it was something like "Gwinfydd" and I really have no idea how to pronounce that, but I know I'd be mangling a really beautiful language. I really can't understand how words so long can be pronounced if they don't contain any vowels!

Anyhow, in the village, we went through a market, which was a lot more old-school than the ones in London. There, I got my first Pasty. It rhymes with nasty, but doesn't taste it. It's a folded-over pastry pocket with meat and veggies. The lady told me that the minors in the slate mines used to bring them underground from lunch because they are so compact. It was hot and peppery and dense, and a nice change from the ready-made sandwiches I buy every day for lunch from the drug store.

But now I'm back at work. Boo-urns. I have to put a whole bunch of legal papers in chronological order today, so obviously I'm procrastinating. I don't know how my boss (Henry) keeps his job. Remember that case I told you about with the guy who

wanted to change his name to "Dr."? He fired Henry because he planned to defend the case with the argument that one of the Seven Dwarves names was "Doc." I'm embarrassed to be around the office. They all know I'm his assistant.

I'll write more about Michelle later; the lack of sunlight has sucked my will to live, let alone write this letter. Suffice to say, she's a monkey. Tell your students the British stereotypes are true. It rains all the time and the plumbing really *is* as bad as they say! Warn them!

Your friend, Duncan. I'm pruning like I've fallen asleep in the tub. Damn rain.

Wednesday November 24  
Duncan,

Hey dude! I think the rain sounds nice, because in order for rain to fall, the temperature is usually above the freezing mark. If you forget what the sun *looks* like, I forget what mild weather *feels* like. Everyday is about -10 C with a wind-chill at -30 C. It's bitterly cold already and still a month to go until winter officially kicks off. Sometimes, if the sun comes out, it warms up to about -5 C. Those are the good days. Where are those damn Chinook winds, anyway?

Good news! Urs Meyer gave me a job at his coffee shop. It's called the Hepburn Café, which isn't very imaginative, but it doesn't have to be, since Urs has a monopoly on the Hepburn coffee shop market. Since this is the case, he also doesn't have to provide Hepburn with especially *good* coffee or selection. Basically the choices are plain ground coffee with or without cream. It's a gourmet coffee lover's nightmare, but it makes my job so much easier so I like it.

I work Wednesday evenings after Huddelite school and days on the weekends. It works out well. I have a little extra cash, am meeting more people in town, and am also hearing all the latest Hepburn gossip. I guess I just assumed that since people in this town are so religious, they would refrain from being so judgmental and

nasty. Not so. In this town, there are two churches: The popular Mennonite church and the not-quite as popular Bible church. On my last shift, I heard some Mennonite woman refer to the Bible church as "Satan's church." That was really ugly. Can't we all just get along? Oh, and some girl named Jill is pregnant O.O.W. (code for "out of wedlock").

Wales sounds great. Sigh. Someday...

Well, I've got to get back to grading some Gr.1 tests. They're learning how to add so I think it's a little too early to be exposing them to the horrors of British plumbing. Take care,  
Tess.

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