

A Novel Short Story About A Long Novel App

A young woman, lounging on the over-size bolster at one end of the long ottoman, is reading an almost impossibly thick novel; a heavy puckering of her forehead marks her concentration. A mix of massive dictionaries makes a mini-high-rise on the floor, beside her. A young fellow saunters in, slouches on the couch at the southern slope. His finger taps her ready-at-hand foot. She looks up, a runaway smile, carries on with her apparent self-torture.

He: 'So ... whatcha readin', huh?'

An annoyed grimace skewers him.

She: 'A *book* already ... a novel ... a *long* one. Shuddup, okay!' Her eyes drop.

He: 'Lemme see, eh?'

Her hand obscures the title.

He: 'Please, *pretty* please.'

A slight hand movement, still reading.

He, grinning: 'Ha! That one, *Ulysses*. Well ... now ... that's a *dirty* book, y'know.'

She glances up, arches eyebrow, purses lips, continues reading.

He: 'For your study, er ... right?'

She pauses, flips over on her lap the still open novel, reaches for the top dictionary.

She: 'What else?'

She riffles through pages, searching, ignoring him, stops, finger tracing down the page, then to the next, facing.

She: '*Fuck* it!'

Drops it, hauls up the next, grunting with effort.

He: 'Sooo ... what's the word?'

Still grinning.

She looks at him, pauses, one shake of her head, continues with the second dictionary, smacks it away after thirty seconds, disregards the now she-quaked pile. Grabs her smartphone, gets zero from her dictionary app after *another* thirty. Drops the phone, starts rubbing her eyes.

He, lips drooping, floor gazing: 'Been at it for a while, right ... *tsk, tsk* ... and all those weird *Ulysses* words, huh?'

Silence.

Shifts his butt to turn, one leg up, directly facing her.

He: 'C'mon - *what* word?'

She, scowling: '**Plappering**.'

She spells it out.

He licks his lips, raises both eyebrows, pulls out *his* smartphone, finger-flicks over the screen for several seconds. Then, his eyes meet hers.

He: 'Catch!'

He tosses; she grabs, deftly.

He: 'Hit it.'

She looks at the screen. Eyes widen, looks up to him.

She: 'Wha ... where did ... *WHEN!*'?

He: 'Just *do* it. Enter **plappering** in SEARCH box. See what yer get.'

Moments later, their eyes wide lock.

She: 'Holy shite!'

He: 'So hit the BROWSE button, use the alphabet carousel, select P.'

Her finger blurs, almost; then slows as she scrolls. Up. And down, eyes scanning words and meanings.

She: 'This - is - far - kin' - fan - tas - tic!'

He: 'Now hit the MENU button, choose another title.'

She screeches.

She: 'There are *more*'?

Surprise, disbelief, delight in her voice. Scrolling again, quietly giggling, she checks the list.

She: 'Oh, ah, *Lolita* also ... wow! - *Naked Lunch* ... *Under the Volcano*, hmm, don't know it ... aw, *The Odyssey* by Homer ... *Blood Meridian*, hmm, McCarthy ... *Madame Bovary* - yip-PEE! for next semester ... hey, Fitzgerald's *Tender is the Night* ... huh, *Gulliver's Travels* - mebbe ... *A Tale of Two Cities*, right on! ... and, yeah, *Ulysses*.'

He: 'Okay ... choose *that* again. Now, flick to *any* random page in *your* copy, select *any* word you don't know ... whatever....'

She again flips the novel, selects a middle-plus page, finger scans, impales a word, an askance peek at him.

He: 'Yes...?'

She: '**Invercund**'.

He: 'Well ... you now *know* what t'do, okay!'

Her thumbs ripple across the phone face. Seconds later, her smiley gaze meets his.

She: 'A rare word. **Shameless; unabashed.**'

He: 'And *not* in your dictionaries. Same with **plappering.**'

He chuckles. She studies him.

He: 'Finger-flickin' good, eh! Thousands of words.

For *every* title listed.'

More silence - for seven seconds. Eyes working at each other.

She: 'Okay, how much?'

He, brightly beaming: 'A coffee or soda, is all. And free updates, of course!'

She: 'Where - [Google Play](#)? Updates when?'

He: 'Yeah - and [The App Store](#) - more titles whenever ... as usual, I guess.' A momentary pause. 'And *no* adverts, no in-app buying.

Ever!' He raises an eyebrow. 'So ... what next...?'

She snatches up her smartphone.

He watches as she downloads and installs **NovelWords® Collection.**

Minutes later, she smiles serenely, sweetly.

She: 'Thanks. You're a doll, y'know.'

He: 'Yeah ... I know.'

Lolling back, crossing arms, Cheshire-copying....

She: 'Okay - now *shuddup*, lemme get back to this humungous ... grrr!'

In her left hand her smartphone, as she reads on ... and on....

The logo for NovelWords features a large, stylized 'W' in black with a red outline. To its right, the word 'ovel' is written in red, and 'ords' is written in black. A registered trademark symbol (®) is positioned to the upper right of the 's'.

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