

Learning about how to use sentence structure to improve
your writing

Matched by Ally Conde

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A very long sentence strings together description. However it's framed by short ones.

Now that I've found the way to fly, which direction should I go into the night? My wings aren't white or feathered; they're green, made of green silk, which shudders in the wind and bends when I move—first in a circle, then in a line, finally in a shape of my own invention. The black behind me doesn't worry me; neither do the stars ahead.

I smile at myself, at the foolishness of my imagination. People cannot fly, though before the Society, there were myths about those who could. I saw a painting of them once. White wings, blue sky, gold circles above their heads, eyes turned up in surprise as though they couldn't believe what the artist had painted them doing, couldn't believe that their feet didn't touch the ground.

Those stories weren't true. I know that. But tonight, it's easy to forget. The air train glides through the starry night so smoothly and my heart pounds so quickly that it feels as though I could soar into the sky at any moment.

"What are you smiling about?" Xander wonders as I smooth the folds of my green silk dress down neat.

"Everything," I tell him, and it's true. I've waited so long

Notice how the author strings these sentences together.

taking place. I can't see the marble stairs in front of the Hall yet, but I know that they will be polished and shining. All my life I have waited to walk up those clean marble steps and through the doors of the Hall, a building I have seen from a distance but never entered.

I want to open the compact and check in the mirror to make sure I look my best. But I don't want to seem vain, so I sneak a glance at my face in its surface instead.

The rounded lid of the compact distorts my features a little, but it's still me. My green eyes. My coppery-brown hair, which looks more golden in the compact than it does in real life. My straight small nose. My chin with a trace of a dimple like my grandfather's. All the outward characteristics that make me Cassia Maria Reyes, seventeen years old exactly.

I turn the compact over in my hands, looking at how perfectly the two sides fit together. My Match is already coming together just as neatly, beginning with the fact that I am here tonight. Since my birthday falls on the fifteenth, the day the Banquet is held each year, that's the day I

my

repetition

"Dinner is about to be served."
It's almost comical how quickly we all take our seats. Because we might admire the china and the flowers, and we might be here for our Matches, but we also can't wait to taste the food.

"They say this dinner is always wasted on the Matchees," a jovial-looking man sitting across from us says, smiling around our table. "So excited they can't eat a bite." And it's true; one of the girls sitting farther down the table, wearing a pink dress, stares at her plate, touching nothing.

I don't seem to have this problem, however. Though I don't gorge myself, I can eat some of everything—the roasted vegetables, the savory meat, the crisp greens, and creamy cheese. The warm light bread. The meal seems like a dance, as though this is a ball as well as a banquet. The waiters slide the plates in front of us with graceful hands; the food, wearing herbs and garnishes, is as dressed up as we are. We lift the white napkins, the silver forks, the shining crystal goblets as if in time to music.

My father smiles happily as a server sets a piece of chocolate cake with fresh cream before him at the end of the meal. "Wonderful," he whispers, so softly that only my mother and I can hear him.

My mother laughs a little at him, teasing him, and he reaches for her hand.

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Lists

He whispers rise soft around me like birds beating their wings under the dome of City Hall. "Your Match is here this evening," the hostess says, smiling. The people around me smile as well, and their murmurs become louder. Our Society is so vast, our Cities so many, that the odds of your perfect Match being someone in your own City are minuscule. It's been many years since such a thing happened here.

These thoughts tumble in my mind, and I close my eyes briefly as I realize what this means, not in abstract, but for me, the girl in the green dress. *I might know my Match*. He might be someone who goes to the same Second School that I do, someone I see every day, someone—

"Xander Thomas Carrow."

At his table, Xander stands up. A sea of watching faces and white tablecloths, of glinting crystal glasses and shining silver boxes stretches between us.

I can't believe it.

This is a dream. People turn their eyes on me and on the handsome boy in the dark suit and blue cravat. It doesn't feel real until Xander smiles at me. I think, *I know that smile*, and suddenly I'm smiling, too, and the rush of applause and smell

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lists of
participles

out for long.

In fact, I've never seen him finish first in anything before, and I speak before I think. "You beat us all today," I say, as if that fact weren't obvious.

"Yes," he says, looking at me. "Exactly as predicted. I grew up in the Outer Provinces and have had the most experience with activities like this." He speaks formally, as if reciting data, but I notice a sheen of sweat across his face; and the way he's stretching his legs out in front of him looks familiar. Ky's been running, too, and he must be fast. Do they have trackers in the Outer Provinces? If not, what did he run to out there? Were there also things he had to run from?

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List of
questions
to build
suspense