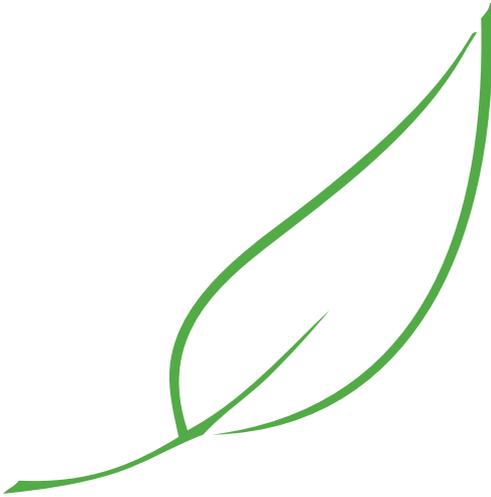


# The Author Makes No Difference

By Philip Vassallo



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**SYNOPSIS:** When Viviana is not ready for her double date with her friend Berta, she explains that she is writing a letter to the editor of the local newspaper. The content of her letter is six notes left by a mysterious male guest where she works as a chambermaid. His notes include apocalyptic passages from six major religions. After Viviana explains that she is writing the letter to the editor at the stranger's request, Berta attacks her common sense before slowly unraveling in doubt and longing to believe in something as much as her friend does.

**CAST OF CHARACTERS***(2 female)*

BERTA (f) ..... 19, neat, dressed formally, a waitress  
*(61 lines)*

VIVIANA (f) ..... 19, disheveled, dressed casually, a  
chambermaid *(60 lines)*

**SETTING:** VIVIANA's apartment.**TIME:** Present*To John Hitz*

**AT RISE:** *In VIVIANA's apartment. Two folding chairs are DOWN CENTER. VIVIANA sits on a chair at the table, anxiously writing on her laptop, occasionally moving around post-its on a sheet of paper on side of her laptop and scribbling notes on another sheet of paper on the other side of the laptop. A knocking door gets no response from her. The door knocks again. No response. BERTA enters.*

**BERTA:** Are you deaf? I been knocking on the door like crazy. You ain't ready? We gotta go.

*BERTA stands across stage, arms folded, waiting impatiently. Hold ten seconds. VIVIANA remains obsessively focused on her task.*

**VIVIANA:** Just another minute.

**BERTA:** A real minute or a Viviana minute?

**VIVIANA:** Very funny.

**BERTA:** You're not even dressed. You're a mess.

**VIVIANA:** Then two more minutes.

**BERTA:** It's a quarter to.

**VIVIANA:** It's only a five-minute drive.

**BERTA:** I wanna get there on time.

**VIVIANA:** Why can't they wait? It's only a date.

**BERTA:** Only a date? What're you doing that's so important?

**VIVIANA:** A letter.

**BERTA:** A letter? It ain't worth being late for that.

**VIVIANA:** To the editor.

**BERTA:** A letter to the editor?

**VIVIANA:** That's right.

**BERTA:** Since when do you write letters to the editor?

**VIVIANA:** Since now.

**BERTA:** What could you possibly be writing about? It's not like you ever read the newspaper. You ain't got a political bone in your body. Nor a creative thought in your head. Viv, you're wasting your time.

**VIVIANA:** I'm almost done.

**BERTA:** Let's go.

**VIVIANA:** I'll be done a lot quicker if you'd hush.

**BERTA:** What *are* you writing about, anyway?

**VIVIANA:** Remember that guy I was telling you about? In Room Two-o-one?

**BERTA:** Yeah?

**VIVIANA:** It's by him.

**BERTA:** About him? What could you be writing about him?

**VIVIANA:** I didn't say *about* him. I said *by* him.

**BERTA:** Huh?

**VIVIANA:** Like you said: I don't have a creative idea in my head. So I'm letting him do the writing.

**BERTA:** What're you talking about?

**VIVIANA:** (*Holds up two sheets of paper with large post-its tacked on them.*) These post-its: They're the actual ones he left behind each morning.

**BERTA:** What're you doing with them?

**VIVIANA:** Just putting them in some kind of sensible order. Then writing them down.

**BERTA:** And sending them out to the newspaper?

**VIVIANA:** Exactly.

**BERTA:** You can't do that.

**VIVIANA:** Why not?

**BERTA:** That's plagiarism.

**VIVIANA:** How would you know?

**BERTA:** It's against copyright law.

**VIVIANA:** What are you, a lawyer?

**BERTA:** Better—I'm your friend. You don't have to be a lawyer to know that.

**VIVIANA:** You're a waitress.

**BERTA:** *Server.* And like you know? A room cleaner?

**VIVIANA:** *Chambermaid.*

**BERTA:** Whatever. Those ain't your ideas. They're some stranger's that left you a note with a tip.

**VIVIANA:** He's not a stranger. I know his name: Peter Simon.

**BERTA:** Big deal. You looked up his name on the guest register. Most normal people leave a tip with a note saying, "Thanks for the service." This Jesus freak leaves you a note about the end of the world.

**VIVIANA:** It wasn't just one note. Each of the seven days he stayed in the motel, he left behind one of these notes with a five-buck tip.

**BERTA:** So you're thirty-five bucks richer.

**VIVIANA:** And seven messages wiser.

**BERTA:** You mean seven days dumber. There's nothing worth a darn in those messages.

**VIVIANA:** Let the newspaper be the judge of that.

**BERTA:** It's still theft of property. A breach of trust.

**VIVIANA:** It is not.

**BERTA:** They're just stuff right from Bible. There's not an original thought in there.

**VIVIANA:** Then it can't be theft of property.

*BERTA stands over VIVIANA's shoulder, reads the post-its. VIVIANA continues typing.*

**BERTA:** Revelation twenty, twelve to fourteen: "The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire." Please provide one extra pillow. Did you give him the pillow?

**VIVIANA:** Two. That was Sunday morning. See Monday morning. I've got them in order.

**BERTA:** (*Sits, reads another post-it.*) Isaiah twenty-six, nineteen and twenty: "Your dead will live, Lord; their bodies will rise—let those who dwell in the dust wake up and shout for joy—your dew is like the dew of the morning; the earth will give birth to her dead." Thanks for the pillow. The TV is stacticky. Please check.

**VIVIANA:** That was from Judaism. So you can't call him a Jesus freak.

**BERTA:** Will we be getting to a point here?

**VIVIANA:** Keep going, Senorita Skeptic.



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*by Philip Vassallo.*

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