

“COME ON! TRY IT! YOU JUST MIGHT LIKE IT!”

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SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

SEPTEMBER 10, 2012

Although the Chit-Chat Club is not the place where one usually comes to confess a private addiction, I shall, with your gentle sympathy and kind indulgence, break that very time-honored and noble tradition this evening. Are you ready? Tonight I freely and openly confess that I am an addict, not to cocaine or alcohol, but to a wonderfully satisfying, delightfully intoxicating, and incredibly addictive magazine that arrives every week called *The New Yorker*. Like an addiction to cocaine and alcohol, its possession and consumption gives me an exhilarating “high” for a short time, but, like all addictive drugs, it leaves me craving for more. Thank God, I need wait no longer than 6 days or so between “highs.” And fortunately these “highs” that I require weekly are not too dear for, if that were not the case, I would surely have been in financial ruin a very long time ago.

It is hard to say just when, exactly, my addiction actually started. But, I suppose, like all addictions, it started innocently enough. You know, the old, “Come on! Try it! You just might like it!” Although I do not remember those exact words spoken to me, what I do remember as a child is seeing my soon-to-be-drug-of-choice strewn on a coffee table or in the hands of my parents, Swarthmore and MIT educated, who were either chortling hysterically or ravenously consuming it with the very clear-cut mien of “Do not interrupt me at this moment or else” that only parents can impart with such authority. In retrospect, now that I really think about it, perhaps my parents were addicts too! If that is indeed the case, I can blame my addiction on a genetic predisposition and not to moral failings or weakness on my part.

You might ask if I have ever tried to determine the underlying genetic defect of this addiction? No, I have not, but I have given it some thought. I suspect that I, and other *New Yorker* addicts like me, actually suffer from a touch of logophilia or, more simply put, a love of words. But to date, I have not found any scientific study to confirm this.

Now I have had my remissions from time to time, either out of necessity or through perverse circumstances. What, you may ask, were those? Most were monetary. During my prep school, college and medical school days, I was often cash strapped. Since public nudity is a crime and starvation is not terribly conducive to learning, my sartorial and caloric requirements shunted my short stack of shekels away from my addiction. And then there were those monetary requirements always nicely packaged

in the three-word phrase of all institutions of learning: “tuitions and fees.” My mother, bless her heart, seemed wise to my addiction because she gave me a subscription to *The New Yorker* for a short time in college. But it lapsed, and I was unable to renew it. And then, I must admit, there were the hormonal surges during my adolescent years that, without a doubt, affected my reading habits from time to time making me succumb, no pun intended of course, to such literary notables as *Playboy* and *Penthouse*. “Read,” of course, in private, I must confess they did satisfy in departments that *The New Yorker* could not during those very turbulent years of self discovery. Finally, due to my father’s occupation, I lived in parts of the world where even *Time Magazine* did not reach.

Now, having gotten the guilt of my addiction and unsuccessful cures out of the way like any good Freudian or postmodernists would have me do, let me bring you into my secret world and, being the rational person that I am, try to explain this craving that I confess to you gentlemen tonight.

It started, I believe, when I was a child. I would gaze at the wonderfully illustrated covers of *The New Yorker*. They were always bright and beautifully drawn and distinctly different from the boring covers of *Look*, *Life* and *Time*. Even though my child’s mind could not understand their timely references, I was convinced that a package so wonderfully rendered on the outside had to hold great treasure inside. I perceived them as Disney-like but much more interesting. It was always clear what Donald Duck, Mickey and Pluto were up to, but *The New Yorker* was more mysterious and, as a consequence, more captivating. The covers were always drawn differently every week unlike what old Walt was doing on a weekly basis. Seduced by the cover, I would leaf through the magazine where I would encounter cartoon drawings that, like the covers, were each drawn differently and sprinkled throughout the magazine like the gold flakes one sees in that wonderful liquor from Germany called Goldwasser. I might add that even the advertisements were captivating to my young eyes. No Gillette or Chesterfield come-ons, but beautifully photographed enticements to acquire crystal from Steuben, gems from Tiffany, or haute couture from Bergdorf Goodman. Interestingly, the founder of *The New Yorker*, a man named Harold Ross, wrote a mere eight months after the first issue: “Everybody talks of *The New Yorker’s* art...it has been described as the best magazine for a person who cannot read.” (Yagoda, p. 65) I could read, but my very limited vocabulary in those formative years could not fathom the literary joys to come as an adult reader. So I suppose, in retrospect, it was the visual allure that started me down my road to addiction.

As my vocabulary and reading skills developed, I began to increase my dosage of this fabulous drug. The cartoons came first but often left me a bit flummoxed, scratching

my head in confusion. “Why is that one supposed to be funny?” I would ask myself because I just didn’t get it. But as my world expanded and I became better informed, I was less confused. And then I started reading the text and it is at that time when, I guess it fair to say, I became a full-fledged addict. Of course, the subject matter captivated me, but there was more to it than that. It was the wonderful word play that gave me such a rush that, ultimately, would require another “fix.”

But that was not the end of my sordid path. Not being content to just be an addict, I crossed the ultimate line one day and became a pusher of my drug-of-choice, forever damning me, sure as I am standing before you this evening, to an eternity of fire and brimstone. In college, I would leave *The New Yorker* on my desk in my dorm room tempting the non-addicted, and today I shamelessly push my drug-of-choice in my medical office’s waiting room. There you will not find magazines like *Field and Stream*, *Newsweek*, *Oprah*, *Sports Illustrated*, or, as I once encountered to my horror in one colleague’s office, *Guns and Ammo*. No, in my office you will only find the latest four editions of *The New Yorker* displayed on a table to either seduce the untainted or to give a quick “fix” to the addicted. Of course their display telegraphs in no uncertain terms to my fellow addicts that they are in the company of one who is hopelessly hooked and in sublime sympatico.

I suspect by some nods of the non-drowsy sort I see in the audience right now that there are some *New Yorker* addicts here tonight. But, for those not hooked, may I try to seduce you into taking that first step down the slippery road to addiction by telling you a little bit more details about my drug of choice. You know, the old, “Come on! Try it! You just might like it!”

Unlike heroin and alcohol, my drug of choice is not an ancient one nor was it to be a drug for everyone. It first hit the streets of New York City on February 21, 1925. It was a concoction invented by a man named Harold Ross, who got \$25,000 financial backing by his card playing friend and baking goods heir, Raoul Fleishmann. It was given its simple but soon to be famous name, *The New Yorker*, by John Peter Toohey at a lunch at the Algonquin Round Table. (Yagoda, p. 38) The prospectus for this new magazine, penned by Harold Ross shortly after a Round Table luncheon in the fall of 1924 read as follows:

The New Yorker will be a reflection in word and picture of metropolitan life. It will be human. Its general tenor will be one of gaiety, wit, and satire, but it will be more than just a jester. It will not be what is commonly called highbrow or radical. It will be what is commonly called sophisticated, in that it will assume a reasonable degree of enlightenment on the part of its readers. It will hate bunk.

As compared to the newspapers, The New Yorker will be interpretive rather than stenographic. It will print facts that it will have to go behind the scenes to get, but it will not deal in scandal for the sake of scandal nor sensation for the sake of sensation. Its integrity will be above suspicion. It hopes to be so entertaining and informative as to be a necessity for the person who knows his way about or wants to.

The New Yorker will devote several pages a week to a covering of contemporary events and people of interest. This will be done by writers capable of appreciating the elements of a situation and, in setting them down, of indicating their importance and significance. ...Amusements and the arts will be thoroughly covered by departments which will present, in addition to criticism, the personality, the anecdote, the color and chat of the various subdivisions of this sphere. The New Yorker's conscientious guide will list each week all current amusement offerings worthwhile—theaters, motion pictures, musical events, art exhibitions, sport and miscellaneous entertainment—providing an ever-ready answer to the prevalent query, "What shall we do this evening?" ...readers will be kept apprised of what is going on in the public and semi-public places—the clubs, hotels, cafes, supper clubs, cabarets, and other resorts.

Judgment will be passed upon new books of consequence, and The New Yorker will carry a list of the season's books which it considers worth reading. There will be a page of editorial paragraphs, commenting on the week's events in a manner not too serious.

There will be a personal mention column—a jotting down in the small town newspaper style of the coming, goings and doings in the village of New York. This will contain some josh and some news value.

The New Yorker will carry each week several pages of prose and verse, short and long, humorous, satirical and miscellaneous.

The New Yorker expects to be distinguished for its illustrations, which will include caricatures, sketches, cartoons and humorous and satirical drawings in keeping with its purpose. (Yagoda, pp 38-39)

And then, gentlemen, Ross ended the prospectus, with the following famous words that would echo even to this very day:

The New Yorker will be the magazine which is not edited for the old lady in Dubuque. It will not be concerned with what she is thinking about. This is not meant in disrespect, but The New Yorker is a magazine avowedly published for a metropolitan

audience and thereby will escape an influence which hampers most national publications. It expects a considerable national circulation but this will come from persons who have a metropolitan interest. (Yagoda, pp 38-39)

Well, big words and noble goals indeed! And who was this Harold Ross whose magazine would epitomize New York sophistication in its many faceted splendor? By all accounts, he was a man who neither impressed in appearance or conversation. In fact, he was not even a New Yorker. Born in 1892 in Aspen, Colorado, he led a peripatetic life after high school as a newspaper reporter in western towns, one of which, I hasten to add, was San Francisco. But America's entering World War I in 1917 interrupted his fledgling career on the San Francisco's newspaper entitled "Call." Fortunately for Ross, he ended up not in a muddy trench shooting a rifle but in a Parisian office scribbling with a pen as the editor for the "Stars and Stripes," a weekly magazine for American soldiers. It was there that Ross met another writer for the "Stars and Stripes," one Alexander Woollcott, the former New York Times drama critic. Woollcott introduced Ross to his friend, New York Times reporter and avowed feminist, Jane Grant. Ross and Grant fell in love, and, when the war ended, they married and moved to Manhattan in 1919 despite the objections of Ross who called it "...a terrible place." (Yagoda, p. 26)

Both Alexander Woollcott and Jane Grant would be Ross's entrée into the wittiest of the New York literary set after the war. In 1919, a group of New York writers and columnists started meeting for lunch daily at a hotel on 59 West 44th Street. The name of the hotel was the Algonquin and those literary luminaries who lunched there together would be forever referred to as the Algonquin Round Table, and Ross was included in this elite group. Seated with him were men and a few women who knew how to turn a phrase, write a humorous column, play or book, or give insightful critiques of all the important comings and goings in New York City. They were never at a loss for words, sometimes vicious, but most times funny. They were connected to the New York creative scene because they were either documenting it in their newspapers and magazines or creating it themselves. The group included Alexander Woollcott, Dorothy Parker, Franklin P. Adams, George S. Kaufman, Robert Benchley, Heywood Broun, Gerald Brooks, Marc Connelly, Bob Sherwood, and John Peter Toohey. I might add that Harpo Marx frequented the group too, and he actually spoke! Raoul Fleishmann, heir to the Fleishmann fortune, also joined in, and it was he who would ultimately give the financial backing to Ross for the new magazine. Ross's access to this incredible circle of intellectually talented and connected friends proved to be essential to the success of *The New Yorker* in its early years.

Now that you know a bit about the origin of my drug, let me get back to its addictive hold on me. The early rush—as I mentioned before-- came from the covers of the

magazine. The very first cover of *The New Yorker* was illustrated by a man named Rea Irvin (1881-1972), a graphic artist born in San Francisco. In fact, he started his art career as an unpaid cartoonist with the *San Francisco Examiner*. He soon moved to the East Coast where he worked for *Look Magazine*. When he was fired from *Look Magazine*, he joined *The New Yorker* despite thinking that it would not last more than a couple of issues. He was definitely wrong on that score but so right when he picked up his pen to illustrate for the magazine. Inspired by the work of an American etcher named Allen Lewis, Irvin invented the typeface for the magazine. With its deco touch, it would later be referred to as the “Irvin” font, and it remains unchanged to this day. But that was not all. For the first cover he drew a picture of a dandy peering through a monocle at a butterfly. This cartooned character was later given the name “Eustace Tilley,” and the character eventually “wrote” humorous columns in the early years of the magazine. In fact, Eustace Tilley became so identified with *The New Yorker* that founder Harold Ross took out a phone number in the Manhattan directory for the character. In addition, Irvin’s drawing of Eustace Tilley would mark every anniversary issue of the magazine from 1925-1993 with the exception of 1974. After 1993, the covers often parodied his iconic image. For example, in 1996, to the delight of many readers, Eustace Tilley was drawn as a woman. (Hertzberg)

Rea Irvin also created another iconic image, namely, the drawing that appears in every issue above “The Talk of the Town” section. All addicts know the drawing well. Eustace Tilley appears in profile holding a large quill pen while looking at a manuscript through his monocle. To the right of Eustace is a metropolitan skyline and, important to note, an owl that is winking at the viewer. Clearly, this drawing is telegraphing urbanity, sophistication, and humor. (Hertzberg).

Although all *New Yorker* covers delight the addicted, some became very famous to all. The March 29th, 1976 Saul Steinberg’s cover “View From 9th Street” captured, in no uncertain terms, many New Yorker’s world-view. You know the one showing a birds-eye view of the world looking west from 9th Avenue across the United States to Asia. One delightful parody of the Steinberg’s iconic image used for the cover of an edition of *The Economist* in 2009 was entitled, “How China Sees the World.” The view is from Chang’an Street looking east to America where there are clear signs of financial decline!

Of course, it is hard to pick one’s favorite *New Yorker* cover. However, one of mine was the wonderful “New Yorkistan” cover by Kalman and Meyerowitz of December 10, 2001. It is a cartoon map of Manhattan and its surrounding boroughs. But the familiar districts and boroughs are given delightful names for their inhabitants. Three that come instantly to mind are: The Moolahs on Wall Street, the Pashimas and Botoxias on the Upper East Side, and, of course, the Badassins above 120th Street.

If you go to *The New Yorker* website you can see the fabulous graphic art of *The New Yorker* covers because every one, since the birth of the magazine, is available to delight your eyes, your intellect, and your “funny bone.” So, “Come on! Try it! You just might like it!” (www.newyorker.com)

If you’re not a fan of art, how about humor? The magazine’s cartoons or “drawings” as they are credited in the *New Yorker’s* Table of Contents are, hands down, world class. In 2004, Robert Mankoff, the cartoon editor of *The New Yorker*, published a large tome entitled The Complete Cartoons of the New Yorker. It is a treasure chest of humor!

We addicts admit to having our favorites that we can bring to mind when we need a quick fix and each issue brings more favorites to add to the list! I can still remember the one from the late 50’s: an older couple is in a convertible looking at the now iconic Guggenheim Museum by architect Frank Lloyd Wright. The caption reads: “*Are they allowed to do that on Fifth Avenue?*” Or how about the one showing a father walking with his very young son in Central Park and pointing to the setting sun and, educating him most authoritatively, he says: “*The sun rises on the Upper East side and sets on the Upper West Side.*” Of course, I could go on all night recounting favorites.

What some of you may not know is that it was *The New Yorker* that actually set the standard for the modern cartoon. Most cartoons prior to the publishing of *The New Yorker* utilized several lines of dialogue. And the dialogue and the artwork were often stilted and not terribly funny. *The New Yorker* changed all that. The dialogue was reduced to one line. And it sounded real. As Ben Yagoda states in his book About Town, “The most resounding and almost immediate success of *New Yorker* cartoons was ... captions ... the way people actually spoke.... you could almost hear the ... dialogue, as they picked up on the cadences of the streets and the living rooms, the nightclubs and the boardrooms.” (Yagoda, p. 69) And, to give credit where credit is absolutely due, it is *The New Yorker’s* Rea Irvin who decided to italicize and put quotation marks around the cartoons’ caption making it signify real talk. (Yagoda, p. 70) And Irvin’s format persists to this very day. Take a look if you don’t believe me.

To the delight of its many readers, a few years ago *The New Yorker* made a bold and brilliant move in the cartoon editorial department. The magazine introduced “The Cartoon Caption” contest. It is found on the last page of every magazine. The contest reads as follows: “Each week we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite....the winner receives a signed print of the cartoon.” Of course, much better

than getting a signed print of the cartoon, the winner gets instant literary immortality because his name and his caption are published in *The New Yorker*! Well, gentlemen, I shamelessly confess that I have strived for that very special kind of immortality but, sad to say, I have an acceptance rate of exactly zero percent. But hope springs eternal, so I shall continue to submit my one-liners in the hope of joining the ranks of the very few who can boast of having been published in *The New Yorker*. Might I entice those of you not addicted to do the same? You know, “Come on! Try it! You just might like it!”

Now, enough of the visual enticements of my drug-of-choice! Let us move on to the wonderful writing in *The New Yorker* for it is there where one really gets the drug high! It is, gentlemen, heaven come true for those afflicted with logophilia!

The New Yorker is divided into sections and, incredible as it may seem, it was only in 1969 that a Table of Contents was included in each issue. (Yagoda, p. 43) “Goings on About Town” is essential to all those either visiting or living in New York because it lists the important events in the realms of arts, theater, museums, cinema, auctions, night life, dance, readings and lectures current that week. In it you will also find short reviews of those cited events.

Following “Goings on About Town” is the iconic “The Talk of the Town” section, of course, under the famous drawing of Eustace Tilley and the winking owl. In “The Talk of the Town” section, you will find four or five short essays on a myriad of subjects. They are always a delightful, quick fare when a *New Yorker* addict is in need of a quick “high.” And, I hasten to add, these little literary gems are no diamonds in the rough.

These gems are actually referred to as “talk stories.” Lillian Ross, a contributor of over 50 years to “The Talk of the Town,” recently published a collection of selected essays from that section spanning the 85 years of the life of *The New Yorker*. In the Editor’s Preface of that collection, entitled, The Fun of It, she writes, “As a literary form...the Talk story was *sui generis*. It was not an abbreviated version of something else” and she goes on to emphasize that the format, “...imposed ... ‘demands on the writer, among them discipline, technical agility, swift movement, the power to make every word and every touch count, a feeling for facts, a warm response to people, and a sensitiveness to the particulars of place, situation and events.’ ” (Ross, Editor’s Preface)

“The Talk of the Town” originally used just the first person plural “we” format. In doing so, it immediately created an intimate and conversational tone by making the reader feel as if he or she were having a conversation with or eavesdropping upon the

witty and very well informed editors at *The New Yorker*. But the “we” format was finally dropped in 1992. (Yagoda, p. 43) I urge you to take a look at Lillian Ross’s collection as you will find the writings of the masters of this literary art form originated in *The New Yorker*. They are, of course, E.B. White, James Thurber, Robert M. Coates, and, Harold Ross. Later notables include John Updike, William Shawn, Garrison Keillor, George Plimpton, Steve Martin, and, of course, the long time contributor, Lillian Ross to name a few. If time permitted, I would read you one or two. However, the clock ticks so I shall not. But suffice it to say that “The Talk of the Town” pieces are wonderfully delicious treats for all intellectual appetites. I say again to those of you who are not addicted to *The New Yorker*, “Come on! Try it! You just might like it!”

Without doubt, the Fiction section of *The New Yorker* can boast the who’s who of American 20th century authors. Do you need a list to entice you? Here’s a short one for you: John Updike, J.D. Salinger, Shirley Jackson, John Hersey, John Cheever, Woody Allen, Truman Capote, John O’Hara, Vladimir Nabokov, Irwin Shaw, Sally Benson, and Frank O’Connor. You need more? OK, how about Philip Roth, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Robert Benchley, and Dorothy Parker. And the list can go on and on. Their contributions can range from the very funny to the deadly serious. Two in the latter category are notable.

Arguably the most famous piece ever published in *The New Yorker* was John Hersey’s Hiroshima in the August 31st, 1946 issue. The cover of that historic issue, a drawing of children innocently playing in Central Park, did not foreshadow the issue’s content. Perhaps that was the intent of the editorial board because surely the Japanese children playing in their parks were equally unsuspecting of what was to come on that momentous day. In the space that usually featured “The Talk of the Town,” a box entitled “To Our Readers,” had the following editorial comment:

The New Yorker this week devotes its entire editorial space to an article on the almost complete obliteration of a city by one atomic bomb, and what happened to the people of that city. It does so in the conviction that a few of us have yet comprehended the all but incredible destructive power of the weapon, and that everyone might well take time to consider the terrible implications of its use. (Yagoda, p. 192)

The issue had no cartoons, just the Hersey piece. Parenthetically, the only other issue of *The New Yorker* that did not publish cartoons was the issue that immediately followed the terrorist attack on the Twin Towers on 9/11/2001. The Hiroshima issue was sold out on the first day of its release. Albert Einstein asked for a thousand copies of the edition but could not obtain them. (Yagoda, p. 192) With that single article, *The*

New Yorker would, in the words of historian Ben Yagoda, "...never again be thought of as primarily a humorous magazine." (Yagoda, p. 193)

A very famous, but much shorter piece of fiction in *The New Yorker* was Shirley Jackson's short story called "The Lottery." In it a woman from a small New England town is selected by lottery and is stoned to death by her neighbors for no reason whatsoever. The narrator of the story informs the reader that this ritual is enacted every year. The lottery winner's dying words are: "It isn't fair. It isn't right." Of course the reader knows that the victim this time around was casting stones at victims in the past years. Did she think "It isn't fair. It isn't right" when she had cast stones in years past? The reaction of the readers of *The New Yorker* to this nightmarish story was palpable across the country as evidenced by the flood of mail to the magazine.

So for you fiction lovers who are with us tonight I say again, "Come on! Try it! You just might like it!"

For those of you who are not lovers of fiction, may I suggest two wonderful sections of *The New Yorker* called "Profiles" and "Annals" for your potential addictive pleasure? In "Profiles," the famous and not so famous are featured in very well researched and thoughtful essays. Here you will meet people who range from the likes of the Dalai Lama to actress Roseanne Barr, and everyone in between. I carefully chose the word "meet" because after your reading the "Profile," you will feel like you know the person featured. And the visual portrayal of those featured, mostly in photographs but sometimes in drawings, will sometimes surprise you. In the October 4th, 2010 edition, the Dalai Lama is "profiled," and the photograph shows him, to the reader's delight, working out on a treadmill, of course in his robe and bare feet.

The "Annals" section covers many areas of interest ranging from law to medicine, science to art. I promise that after reading a piece or two in either section, you will shine at a dinner party should a lull in the conversation occur.

For the literary one-ups-man, *The New Yorker* can be just the ticket! Why? The answer is that *The New Yorker* editorial board is often privy to important works that they preview and publish, sometimes in serialized format, before the work actually comes out in book form. Two examples come immediately to mind. In 1965 a four part serialized piece of unusual writing about a brutal killing of a family in Kansas was published by *The New Yorker*. It was unusual because it was an account of a true event that was written in a fictional tone. Its publishing started a new genre of writing called the "fictional novel." The author, of course, was Truman Capote and the book, when published, was titled, In Cold Blood (1965). Another example is Rachel Carson's book, Silent Spring. Prior to its publication in 1962, it was serialized in *The*

New Yorker and was brought to the attention of the world when President Kennedy referenced it in one of his press conferences months before its publication. As we all know, Carson's book was instrumental in both the banning of DDT and the creation of the Environmental Protection Agency.

The Critics' Sections are always lots of fun. Past critics read like a who's who of observers of culture: Pauline Kael and Dorothy Parker jump to mind. On the contemporary scene you will find Peter Schjeldhal in art, Anthony Lane and David Denby in movies, Joan Acocella in dance, Sasha Frere-Jones in pop music, Alex Ross in classical music and John Lahr in theater. Not only do these authors inform, but their reviews are written in a refreshingly witty style that is always a treat to read even if you happen to have no particular interest in what is being reviewed. Like the pieces in "The Talk of the Town," the critiques are short and conversational in tone. I can tell you that after reading them, I have found myself partaking of some venues I might not had when visiting Manhattan and feeling the richer for having done so.

Finally, let us not forget the poems. Sad to say, for my tastes, contemporary poets, including the ones published in *The New Yorker*, eschew rhyme. For the logophiliacs assembled here tonight, let me delight your ear with this alliteratively acrobatic word play on the two words "new" and "knew" in an untitled poem written by Herman Alpert and published in *The New Yorker* in 1926. Are you ready? Here we go!

*That old New York
That old New Yorkers
Knew, that knew New York,
Was no New York
As now New Yorkers
Know, that know New York.*

*But no New York
But new New York, New
New Yorkers ever knew;
For that New York
That old New Yorkers
Knew, to them was new. (Yagoda, p. 55)*

With that word play, I shall end my frank and very open confession of my life long addiction to *The New Yorker*. Time does not permit me to discuss the pros and cons of the five editors who guided the magazine over its eighty-seven years, or the magazine's obsession with accuracy as noted by its having a staff of 16 fact checkers

and its fastidious use of correct grammar, or to try to answer a commonly asked question: “What are the quintessential elements that make a *New Yorker* short story?” No, time does not permit. However, you can see that I am helplessly and hopelessly hooked. But I want to bring others into my den of delightful iniquity. It is a delicious addiction that afflicts me, and it is not a costly one at that. So, to those assembled here tonight who are addicted, I say, “Bravi!” To those who are not addicted to *The New Yorker*, let me, again, entice you with whispered words you have heard me say so often tonight, “Come on! Try it! You just might like it.”

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