

Hannah Allen

Carlyle Campbell

It is not a big library. It is not the towering citadel of NC State, with the tiny windows like arrow slits; nor is it the meandering maze of ECU, where the students literally have to have lights on the ceiling to show them the way out of the stacks. It is a small building with big windows and a satisfied smile in the sign “Carlyle Campbell Library” that for so long read, more like a gap-toothed grin, “arl le ampb ll Lib y.” I love this library.

Granted, I am a bookworm. Give me anyplace with books, and I’m likely to fall in love. But Carlyle Campbell and I have a special relationship. I go there when I need a novel fix (the dollar-book sale shelf is a gift from the gods!), when I need to print a paper or two or three (my dorm room printer is as temperamental as a grumpy alligator), and, most especially, when I need to research a topic for one of my classes. Many are the moonlight rendezvous I’ve had with my dear old library, perusing the stacks with a notebook in hand and squinting at the numbers of the books on the highest shelves...an acolyte wandering the halls of Knowledge in a temple perfumed by the incense of old-book-smell.

Time seems to have no meaning there. I will venture upstairs with the firm intent of finding my one little book for my world literature class and will find myself, forty-five minutes later, dreamily dawdling my way down the row of Mark Twain’s work, nowhere near where I need to be for African religions. The most tempting shelf of all, for me, is the one holding the dance books. I physically cannot walk past that shelf without stopping to look at all the tantalizing and wonderful works. “Surely you can just pick out

*one* to check out, while you're up here!" the little bookworm-devil on my left shoulder will whisper.

"No! It's already 11:45, almost midnight! And when will you have time to read it with all your homework!?" the little student-angel on my right shoulder will retort. I can't refuse either of them, so midnight will find me sitting on the floor between the shelves, flipping through the pages of Margot Fonteyn's biography...

But most of all, I love the excitement of the library. At this point, you are going to sit back in your chair and think that I must be mistaken; I can't be writing about the *library*! But it's true. Yes, it is relatively quiet, but that only lets you hear the ideas all the better. To me, the books on the shelves seem to be quivering with eagerness and shouting, "Read me! Read me!" There is so much knowledge in among those shelves, and so little time! All the wonderful people who have done great things with their lives are sitting there waiting to tell their stories. And who knows, maybe they started out like me, coming in a library and wondering about all the famous people whose deeds are chronicled there? So much fascinating history, and culture, and language, so much there is for me to learn! I wish I were like Milton, and could retreat to the library for five years, not to hurry to run off papers or hurry to study, but simply to sit and *read*!

Right now, though, I am a busy college student, who has no time for fun and games. No, I must dutifully print my papers, research only those sources useful for my papers, and diligently locate them among the stacks. And...grab an extra 15 minutes, with a guilty glance at the clock, to spend cross-legged on the floor with my dear Vaslav Nijinsky, Anna Pavlova, and Diaghilev!