

Senior Division, Short Fiction
Jenina MacGillivray, St. John's
The Butterscotch Palace (an excerpt)

The miner has black hair the color of soot. His eyes are large and brown and remind Christine of the brown velvet on the Elvis painting and he wears an apron that says Kiss the Cook! in large, red letters. He takes Gale's hand and leads her into the house.

I'll just, Delores says, and follows them in.

The cooking smell is strong inside. Cloves, for sure. Cinnamon. They follow him through a maze of hallways, so many Gale thinks how can they possibly all fit inside this tiny house and finally they come to the kitchen. A red card table, four beiges chairs with brown elks and faded green trees. The miner whips off his apron and gestures to one of the chairs.

It's probably better if you don't talk. The miner is pouring a swampy green tea into the cup. The smell is pungent but not unpleasant, like rotting grass. He's graceful. His fingernails are dirty. It's hard to tell his age. He could be anywhere between forty and sixty.

If you talk, I might be able to tell something about you, he says. And you've given away too much already.

She nods. I have, Gale thinks. I have given too much away.

She rubs her hands over her jean skirt and crosses her ankles. Finally in the presence of the Glace Bay oracle Delores looks slightly uncomfortable, shifts in her seat, tries to dislodge a white feather that's stuck to her foot, but nods encouragingly at Gale.