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Linden in Lincoln: Sylvia, Linden leave

"Everyone's so negative here," Edlin said.

"That's not true. Fred, pass me that syrup," Cute Peter said.

"Why do you think that, Edlin?" asked Max.

Drew, Fred, Cute Peter, Piper, Edlin and Max were at the popular weekend breakfast club, Diner on the Street. Everyone was eating pancakes, mostly Max's. Max had the best paying job, and his pan-cakes were good. Fred had a pretty good hash brown. Everyone had

The connections between the different people in the six tables of the diner were layers of local histories, personality traits, opinions and sex. Social problems in Lincoln were apt to be incompatible cliques; social consciousness was there for those who wanted it.

Cute Peter had wanted it, had it, and was still attracted to its interwoven perversity. Philosophy, religion, politics and sex were brought up at many of the tables Cute Peter ate at.

At the two tables nearest Fred were the nine university students that would be arrested on Monday. There were four speech communications majors, three classics majors, and two Teachers College members

One of the three classics students, Chevec Weinberg, arguing with no one, rallied the eight oth-ers with cries like, "Too many times administrators think they know what's going on.... This is the last straw." Chevek was fast becoming the group's representative.

At the table nearest one of the eech communication majors, Julie "I can't. I've got to study." "You always say that," Sylvia to talking: Alex Walter and said. "Come on!" speech communication majors, Julie Crueler, were two woman eating but not talking: Alex Walter and Stephanie Cordless.
The table next to them was empty.

Everyone complains about local cultural doom and does nothing about it," continued Edlin, "except go to the grug bars."

"Is there a band playing tonight?" Piper asked as he looked up from Fred's hash brown.

Fred sat across from the window facing the street and watched as a

bird flew confidently into a tree.

Cute Peter got up for more cof-

"Hey CP," yelled Julie Crueler. Cute Peterturned around, yelled "Hey," and got more coffee. Every-one at all the tables subsequently

began greeting each other.
"What's up Julie?" Cute Peter

"Well you know the budget cuts

they're planning?" asked Julie. "Right," said Cute Peter.

"They want to cut the speech communications department, and they don't even know what it is. We applied for permits to put booths out yesterday and were turned down, so we're going to do it anyway on Monday.

'Cool," Cute Peter said. "Spread the word, CP. This is my

career they want to cut."
"Right, I will. Good luck."

"Thanks. Stephanie Cordless was telling

Drew and Max that she and some friends were driving to San Francisco the following weekend.

"I've been reading about Berkeley," Drew said. "And I fig-ured out that the last four months of my mom's pregnancy went on during the free speech movement. was born, and it was over."

Stephanie laughed.

Soon everyone in the diner was talking about the department cuts.

"Corporations fund universities, thus indirectly control what is being taught," Fred said.

Diner on the Street stayed political that morning, with talk ranging from Tiananmen Square to the occupation of the Administration Building.

Fred wished Sylvia were there, but she was blowing a bullhorn outside Linden's bedroom window.

Van Morrison was singing, "You breathe in, you breathe out," and Linden was opening his front door, walking outside, toward the cor-

Sylvia was blowing a bullhorn and beautiful; she stopped when she saw him.

"Hey Sweetie!" She laughed, and he was a little frightened. "Do you

And so they drove to Minneapo-lis, talking and touching. "Are you in love with Jill?" asked

Sylvia in the car.

"It's pretty easy to love. Are you in love with Fred?" asked Linden. The lyrics from a Mathew Sweet cassette intertwined in their minds with their conversation: "Waiting for love to appear when I feel again.'

"Are you happy?" asked Sylvia. "Are you?" asked Linden. "I have fun," she said.

F. Scott Fitzgerald once said that the greatest successes in life come not from the pursuit of happiness, but from the survival of

personal hells," Linden said.
"Fitzgerald said that?" Sylvia

"Well, not exactly. I'm paraphras-

ing," Linden said.
"OK, right," Sylvia said. "That's why I personalize and internalize

the world and it's problems - for the high. "I woke up this morning and

decided I needed to see a therapist. Have you ever done that?" asked Linden

'No. What's wrong?"

"I just feel a little overwhelmed, off-balance," he said. "I haven't been enjoying moments lately.

Sylvia kissed Linden wetly on his lips. "Careful," he said. She was driv-

Jill woke up late and sweaty, with dried mucus in her eyes. She washed her face, and feeling it necessary to do something else, poured herself a bowl of Wheat Chex and

went out the kitchen door to her

Atop the railing, Jill was leaning against the roof-supporting pillar, her awareness of the dirt below her fourth-floor porch skirting freely with that of the bowl of Wheat

Chex in her hands.

Eating slowly and allowing her mind to organically step through thoughts of resolution, she was about to get up, thinking she'd finished the Wheat Chex. She blinked when she saw the layer of milk and cereal, raised the bowl and freshly filled spoon to her mouth, and resumed the rhythm.

"People are so complacent," she

thought.

Jill's dream entered her mental rhythm: Georges Bataille shovel-ing through wheat germ with a spoon, and her inability to center

Jill left her porch and decided she needed to see a therapist. (fourth in a series)

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