

# Dialogue about croquet in a library

By Cliff Watson

We meet again, you and I

Not opponents, but neighbors in a paged land

Where my chapters lead me down different paths than yours

Curled up with a book I absorb the words and fling myself into the story

Plot twists are satisfying, no matter if the author sometimes overreaches her metaphors

His character is kind of charming, she says something audacious, he responds with venom

Wait – do I like this agonistic protagonist?

There is something to be said for reading the rules of engagement for croquet

One, each point clearly moves the afternoon's plot forward

Two, should you become confused, you can easily circle back to what came before,

As many times as necessary, and then continue in a logical manner to the subsequent point

Three, portions of the text may be repeated as necessary

For a clear understanding of the nuances of the instructions

Four, when complete, you are ready to lead others in a satisfying game

Without quibbling over misunderstandings of minutiae

I too enjoy a good game of croquet – really, I do!

But I think it would be better if we played inspired by our favorite creatures

What if I hit the first shot as an armadillo?

Would I uncurl and give chase, or, laughing, roll alongside the ball?

Or perhaps I could show how my aim is true

As a seal at the water park

Balancing the ball on my nose's single point

While I, myself, am balanced in a precarious position

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What would most excite me would be to embody a snarling, tail-whipping dragon

With gnashing teeth and a baleful glare

Breathing fire-propelled croquet balls through the gates down the back stretch

I do see your point as well, but I might suggest a few things

One must be careful with colorful language when learning new skills

While one could say one was “spinning like a spider, giddy from a tangy fruit fly snack”

It really would be more accurate to say one was “rotating under one’s angular momentum”

Also, demonstrating one’s physical prowess by being

“Strong as an ox. No, stronger. Strong as a blue ox. Strong as a steam-huffing, throat-rumbling 10-foot tall blue ox named Babe”

Could be confusing for some amongst us

Who might better expect an expression of a pushing force overcoming oppositional resistance.

Is it possible that we could reach greater heights by joining our understandings?

A clear thesis combined with an emotional appeal may encourage more readers

To follow our ideas

Counterbalance, a bridge across time

A wooden-strutted connector from the past to the future

Allowing a family caravan to motor on towards their next camp

With one eye on the adventures of tomorrow

And the other drawn down between each end’s flaming precipice

To the gaping chasm of now

Structural stability, raising our bodies and spirits

Towards the never-ending cosmos

Small people, before buried beneath the moon’s shadow

Now lift themselves skyward seeking the dreams

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Of the night's thousand glittering points of mystery

Interconnected forces, building a basket

A resilient wicker web-work

Holding the succulent pluots and apriums of a farmers' market

To keep them safe from harm

And their very grit shall keep safe

The bodies now, and the potential, of two persons

Together we can create joyful opportunities for expression

What do you say?

If not today, then maybe tomorrow

I'll be here

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First performed by acrobats Saffi Watson and Sam Wilk, with music by Lili Kung, 2017