

THE VILLAGE BOY AND THE BARTENDER:
An Unremarkable And Moral-less Fable Of Sex And Violence

Things were getting hot, and the boy took a condom out of his backpack. But she would rather read a book than have sex with a condom, and she made this known to the boy, by telling him just that. "You ladies you!" The boy ejaculated, verbally, and with frustration, "all of you, it is like you are allergic to condoms. You say you would rather read a book. Another wants only the pull-out method. And another says not to put one on unless I have a disease. Don't you get how terrible it would be if..." She smiled, because she found the boy's incredulity a little more than charming, and she admitted she found him all the more desirable for having had other women, but having made no effort to make this known to her until now. "Shut up or I will turn you back into a hedgehog," she said. "You can't do that, the magic is not within your power," the boy said. "Oh?" She said. And she paused to make the boy uncomfortable, and looked at him with an air of dismissal which might have sucked the air straight out of his lungs, and again said, "Oh?" And with that, the boy was convinced, for she seemed so sure of herself. So sure that she had complete power over him, and the world, and of the magic. And the boy did not put on the condom. And he fucked her with a tinge of regret, which made him last longer, and so she enjoyed the sex a little more than he did, which was the goal they both had in the first place.

She did not like the sex that much. But she liked it enough to want to have sex with the boy again, at a later time, and not turn him back into a hedgehog. She could even say she was *excited* to have sex with him. In fact, in a few months she would even tell him over the phone how much she looked forward to having sex with him when he hinted at wanting some distance, but was too cowardly to be direct about it. And finally, when he flipped her over and took her in spoon, she would blurt "that was hot." And then she'd still feel weird that he handled her that way. And she'd make him feel weird about it too.

And she knew she could not turn him back into a hedgehog, for in fact, he was once a hummingbird and not a hedgehog. She remembered he was rather beautiful as a hummingbird, and perhaps next time she would consider turning him back into one. But after having had sex with him, at least one or two more times. She was pleased the boy did not try and correct her mistake, for it was obvious he of all people would know what he once was, but he did not attempt to explain anything to her like a typical man would.

"Go away now," she said. "But this is my house," said the boy. "Do you think I care?" she said. And the boy could see that she did not care, and said, "Ok, I will go crash on Max's couch then." The boy went to the door, and stopped and turned around as though he forgot something. He approached her awkwardly and gave her a soft kiss, which she found sweetly out of character. Finally the boy said, sincere as ever, "I had a nice time tonight. I hope you did too." He did not wait for an answer; he left, with a strange confidence in his step.

She did have a nice time. But she was glad she was alone now. But she knew all of a sudden that she could not stay in this house. Not because it wasn't her house, but because she began thinking about her mother, and she did not like thinking about her mother. Her mother was such a jealous and vengeful creature, and did not let her husband show his daughter as much love as he could. And she did not like that. And did not want to think about it. So she went out to have a drink.

She got into a car that would take her to the bar. All of a sudden she missed the boy. Another woman was sitting next to her in the car and she asked her if she was going to the same bar. The woman next to her said, "I go where you go." And our hero, let's call her Mindi, did not understand what the woman next to her meant by that. She thought it a strange and rude thing to say. "Don't you understand," the woman said. "How else are you going to survive without me? Without another woman to validate your volatile outlook towards creatures with a penis?" "Don't get all political with me," Mindi said, "the world is different from what it was when you were young. Everyone understands now that it is impossible for women

to hurt men.” She said this before she knew what she was saying, as though it were pre-scripted by an invisible force, because there was no way the woman could have known Mindi was just with a boy. “See,” the woman next to her in the car said, noticing with delight Mindi’s astonishment, “I know everything there is to know about you. And this world. And the magic. Yes, the world has changed, and will continue to change. In some parts for better; in some parts for worse. There will always be angry men who know how to manipulate things to make it seem as though women are the aggressors; the only way to survive is to keep bitching about them. Don’t you see? I am your only true friend.”

“Don’t try to manipulate me!” Mindi yelled, finally, and before she knew it she opened the car door and flung herself out and tumbled down the street. She stopped rolling and sat up feeling dizzy. She dusted herself off and saw that she was covered in many bruises. She felt much pain but was glad to have escaped such an intolerable woman. Mindi was tired and had to go to the office in the morning, but didn’t want to go home, so she went to the bar across the street. She liked living in a city with so many bars.

“We already did last call,” the bartender said when she entered. “Please can I have just one drink,” Mindi pleaded, “I just had sex with a boy who didn’t know what he was doing and talked to a scary woman and tumbled out of a car.” “I can’t have you sitting in here looking like that,” the bartender said. “But you are a woman!” Mindi said at the top of her voice, “You should understand these things. You should understand that beauty has its off days.” “No get out of here and go have a cigarette or something, that is my last word on the matter,” the bartender said.

Mindi went outside. As she lit her cigarette an Oliver Twisty looking sort of child approached her ominously. It was not the boy from earlier in the evening, for this boy now was certainly not of legal age. He was covered in dirt and ripped clothes, and had only one arm, and looked as though he had swallowed half a bottle of hand sanitizer, but his blue eyes and dark blonde hair were the most glamorous and gorgeous she had ever seen. He approached her, shivering; eyes wide, and she could not tell if she should feel sorry for him being so small and cold, or if she should fear the boy for approaching her so brashly.

“I live in a village far away from here,” the boy said, in a high-pitched lilting fever of a voice, that sounded like one used for the singing of ancient songs. “We were invaded by soldiers and all the men were killed and all the women and children sent away. Eventually all the women and children died of starvation and cold. I am the only survivor. Can you help me find a home?”

“What village?” Mindi asked baffled. She grew up middle class, and had been able to use a computer since she was eleven years old, and could never fathom her hometown being invaded by soldiers who killed men and forced women and children to leave. She didn’t watch the news, because she thought it was a bunch of propaganda and hogwash. And she did not have the mental capacity or the time to consider the suffering of those who seemed so distant. She had worked hard to climb the ladder, and was doing important work. Work that moved the world forward. It would not be right to worry about anything else; it wouldn’t even be right for this boy for her to worry, or his dead family. “How did you get all the way over here?”

“I walked for so long I forgot I was even inside of my body; it became automatic, like a dream. You are the first human being I have seen in three years. I do not even know if I am alive. But you are not hallucinating. I am alive. I am just a shell, that is all. Actually, I don’t even remember if I was in a village that was invaded by soldiers. I think I also might have just been in a normal house like you, but in one where we did not tell stories. Did you tell stories in your house?”

“Sometimes,” Mindi said, she was so confused. “But not always. Only when we had time.”

“Can you help me find a home where people tell stories?”

“I... I...” Mindi didn’t know what to say. “Did your parents ever beat you?” The boy asked. “I don’t remember,” Mindi said. “Then they didn’t,” the boy said. “When your parents beat you, that is all you ever remember,” he said, swinging his one arm like he was playing invisible horseshoes, “I admit though. I am just a boy. And can never know the suffering of woman.” He paused, and took out a piece of candy. “My

great grandfather gave this to me, before the soldiers came. They definitely came, the soldiers, to my village. This piece of candy is the last thing I have to remember my family by. And it is already rotting.” The boy paused and became shifty eyed, before fixing his gaze back onto Mindi. “Would you like it? I will give it to you in exchange for a home.” “I don’t know how to help you,” said Mindi, “I am sorry.”

The boy pulled down his pants. “What are you doing?!” exclaimed Mindi. “I am making my highest offer,” said the boy. “I will give you my chastity, in exchange for a home.” Mindi gazed wide at the boy’s penis, which was growing slowly... she had to admit to herself silently that she couldn’t take her eyes off the boy’s cock, but she checked herself and began to cry. “I am sorry, I am so sorry I cannot help you. Please... please... put your pants back on.”

Just as Mindi was pleading with the boy to put his pants back on, the bartender from earlier came outside and began lighting a cigarette. At first, the bartender was not aware of the situation, but when she noticed the bottomless underaged boy and Mindi’s wide tearful eyes she gaped her mouth and the lit cigarette fell inside and burned her hard palate. “Shit! Fuck!” She exclaimed, spitting the cigarette out. “PPFFFF, PFFFF, fuck fuck that hurts!”

“Do you not like what you see?” said the boy. “What the fuck is going on?” said the bartender, “Why does this one-armed Oliver Twisty looking boy have his dick out?” Mindi shivered, and did not know what to say. “Even while I was a panda bear,” said the bartender, “I did not see such things.”

“Do you think *I* am crazy?” said the boy, “point at any person who comes by this block on any given day and within a week I can gather enough selective anecdotal evidence to convince the government that they are a dangerously unhinged threat to society.”

“*Listen you silly boy!*” Mindi screamed, “I will not be made to feel guilty about your problems which have nothing to do with me. I feel sad for you and grateful for what I have but I am *not* in a position to help you and you are being very disturbing to me so just *leave*.”

At this, the boy drowned inwardly beneath a river of shame; he pulled his pants back on and sauntered away, disappearing into the dim cold of night until the darkness swallowed the last little speck of his golden hair as though he were in a Looney Toons epilogue. There was a silence as the bartender handed Mindi another cigarette and lit one for herself, as though nothing happened. “That was impressive,” the bartender said, finally, “It’s like men are all born frightening, right out of the womb. When they’re not frightening, they are useless. I dated a man who did nothing but drink beer all day and watch porn; I would rather he had at least enough life in him to try and beat me up if nothing else.”

“Still,” the bartender continued, “I dated a woman who used to always tell me, *‘the definition of insanity is...’* every time I did something she wanted to make me feel crazy about. Later a regular at the bar, a lawyer, told me that actually the term *‘insanity’* has no meaning outside of a legal context, and it is used as a *defense* for an accused perpetrator at that. So she was making me feel as though I were crazy without even using the correct term! She would also say things like *by your own admission*, taking desperate concessions on my part made to let her win arguments as further evidence of my instability. She would also act like I was the one pursuing her all the time, and invent reasons to reject me, to make herself feel powerful. You know what the worst part was, though? This’ll make you laugh. I wanted to be an actor; she didn’t think I was that good. I was working so hard, and getting cast a lot, but she thought I was riding on a pendulum swing, since I’m half Indonesian. And she kept saying things like “I can’t recommend you.” I was in my twenties and she was almost forty and had been around and knew a lot of people. I felt like my whole career rested on her good opinion. It was debilitating. But I was such an idealist I thought I could make it through. Thought I could be a true artist. But love always does you in, in the end. God, she was so beautiful though. You are too; you just need to clean-up. She knew how to be generous and kind too; that always seems to make it worse, though. Women can do you in like that; convince you that you have no place in this world. I pay my mother’s rent and my father taught himself piano in the basement of a Baptist church and never made me want for anything. He died when I was sixteen. It is easy to say which of the two I respect more. I have

worked all of my life. I *actually* grew up poor. It's popular now to be poor, so everyone lies about being poor. I was actually poor. People used to want to be rich, and show that off. But now all people want to do is talk about how poor they are. I was actually poor. I was independent since I was sixteen years old. I came to this city because I wanted to be an actor, but I had no money. And you know what? I am pretty sure it took as much work to get this bartending job as it would have to get a recurring role on a popular series. I stopped wearing pajamas or even bothering to change my clothes before bed."

"Why are you telling me these things?" Said Mindi. "It's not like your experience is a blanket expression for all existence. All you bartenders think you know everything and that you are better than everyone else! Why are you telling me these things?" "Because watching you handle that boy like that," said the bartender, "It made me trust you. You may be ugly and selfish, but you tell the truth. And isn't that all that is really within our control?"

"No! No!" Exclaimed Mindi, "We have the power to *do* things. We don't just have to lie or tell the truth around what we can't control. All this 'truth-telling' and 'truth-seeking' is the biggest scam of all. A confessional attitude has been forcibly induced into our generation so that we may be warped into perfect human capital for the online social media companies."

"*One may say the eternal mystery of the world is its comprehensibility,*" said the bartender. "If you quote one more famous scientist I will slap the shit out of you!" said Mindi. "Listen, listen," said the bartender, "I used to be a panda bear, ok? I did not choose to become human, something else made me that. None of us have chosen this so what makes you think we can *choose* to do anything within it? What do you *want*?"

"I'll tell you what I want!" said Mindi, "I want that twelve-year-old boy's beautiful cock... I want his whole body! But I *chose* not to have it. Because it would have been so *wrong*. I just had sex with a barely legal boy less than an hour ago. And already I wanted this kid's cock... I am *so fucked up* but I *can* choose to not destroy things."

"Tell you what then," said the bartender, "I want breakfast for dinner. And do you know what I usually love to have for breakfast? Cunt sandwich. I want your cunt for breakfast for dinner. How does that sound? When is the last time you interacted with a human being in a raw authentic way? We all talk to each other over these computers thinking we are benefiting one another but all of that talking over the computers is only ever benefiting the computers! There is only so much time left to be able to have human cunt for breakfast for dinner!"

Without registering herself Mindi all at once attacked the bartender with a vicious blow to the face. And another. And another. And another, until the bartender's face was so bloodied up Mindi could only witness herself with that kind of astonished and horrible recognition fit for ancient tragedy. And through a wide, sparkingly red-brown smile the bartender spit a hot blood loogi right into Mindi's face and said, "Now. Tell me. Did you *choose* to do that?" The bartender was laughing hysterically now, "Did you *choose* to do that? Or do you see now that it *just happened*?"

Mindi had nothing to say. And she began walking away briskly, as the bargoers began trickling out, hardly noticing the event. The bartender lay there, making invisible angels on the cement and licking her lips, smiling, and she said "You might want to get tested in a few weeks! Haha! Who knows where I've been! Haha! Hahaha!" The bartender began gagging on her own blood, and all at once she registered the pain that her body had denied her out of sheer fright. And she screamed like a siren, before finally whimpering, "Dear god... Oh dear god, please just turn me back into a panda bear." The bar customers began circling around her and her bloodied face, but Mindi was already far gone.

Mindi did not look back, as though the monstrous ghost of Eurydice was on her tail. The night grew hollow around her, and through its depths she heard the call of terrible animal cries wailing and mingling with the horrendous pounding of her deafening heart.

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