

I drink a few beers before Kara picks me up this morning. She comes in, we have a cup of coffee, then routine sex on the futon pad on the floor of my bedroom. A feral cat stands vigil - jealous of any attention I get ever since I scooped her from under the bar patio and dunked her in a flea bath (the last of a litter we'd seen tramping around the allies. She sleeps clung to my shoulder with her claws dug in.) Kara feigns distress as always. "I don't think I can keep this up. My husband is suspicious." You will tell him. That's the sort of drama you require. Meanwhile, she assumes the three beer bottles on top of the trash are from last night. I drank them warm and there is no condensation on them. I transition still naked directly to the bathroom. She puts her panties back on - a g-string that has a snap on the side for easy removal. Tramps have accessories to play with, too. Her husband is a fit, attractive Albanian. I am not. I am not a sought after man, sexually, though if he finds out who I am I will certainly be sought after. (Is my engagement in this scenario simply an ego boost? Surely a secretive romp in the mornings and stolen elevator gropings can only raise my stature internally. Granted, when the statute of limitations runs out, or enough booze is in me I will disclose such an exploit with aplomb.) She, however, is sought after. Ogled. Lusted. She is a few rungs above me in physical attractiveness - in my opinion. My self-esteem shouldn't affect objectively agreed-upon allure. Regardless, I slip off the rubber and hop into the shower while she sips her coffee with flavored creamer that I bought for her.

We get in her car where she re-assumes the lead after my fleeting dominance on the home turf. Her car, her music. Her saccharine air freshener. Once at work we adopt our relatively different level of responsibility. Objectively, I am more critical to the overall goings on of the company, but the may be debatable as far as the man she works for is concerned. The couple of beers I had get me past the 10:00AM mark for a change so instead of slipping out for an early retox, I push until 11:30. A half hour before lunch and a half hour after can easily be accounted for so I can make this a two-hour respite. I send a few well-crafted emails concerning status updates and expected progress on several docketed items for day's close. I take the stairs and step out for, as far as anyone is concerned, what is likely a cigarette break. (Some days around 10:00AM, I walk a block to the park and lie down on the steps to rest my eyes for fifteen minutes. Today, I have not.)

I walk to the Mill. Wendy Barnes may not be a whore but she may give the impression of one by day's end. That depends on your scruples. I see her a few times a week on my mid-morning trip to the Mill. The Mill is pit leftover from the days long ago when a downtown bar was across the street from the courthouse for well-to-do business folks and lawyers and criminals coming and going. The horseshoe shaped bar in the front is lined with stools and an altar of tiered liquor from top shelf to well arcs the center. There are televisions on either side and a Megatouch video game machine on the corner. The open floor is scattered with wobbly tables, all with ashtrays and torn vinyl chairs. The walls are painted pale blue but are the color of a moldy turquoise, tinged with the jaundice yellow from the years of caked sticky nicotine.

"Mornin', Jennie."

"Whatcha havin' darlin'?"

"Gimme a Bass and a Makers, neat."

"Will do."

"You behavin' yourself?"

"Never."

Wendy is at the bar sipping a Red Bull and vodka through the little red drink stirrer - her left arm draped over the purse in front of her, a cigarette resting in a black plastic ashtray to her right. She wears a short linen skirt and a white silk blouse open to her cleavage. Sexy but work-appropriate sexy. Her hair is up in a pony tail and the little freckles and moles on her neck are snaked with a delicate gold chain-link necklace holding a crucifix that bounces between her breasts when she turns to acknowledge me.

"Morning kiddo. You behaving yourself?"

"Always," she smiles.

I slide my drinks next to hers, grab the Bass and walk to the jukebox. Everything from the Circle Jerks to Patsy Cline on it so I play a cross-section of tunes illustrating eclectic, refined taste and walk slowly back to my stool.

'Swinging on a Star' - Sinatra version.

"How's your day?" I said

"Ugh, my boss just had me run all the way to Franklin to pick up some documents that weren't supposed to be ready til 11:30 but they were so it turned out to be a quicker trip and he isn't expecting me until after lunch."

"Cool."

"You?"

"Nothin' much. Same day, different shit," I quip.

The Price is Right is on. Bob looks old, finally. I have plenty of time to kill and she will push her timeline out for sure once we get chatting - and drinking. After a few minutes of work talk she unveils a little vial of cocaine in her palm under the bar. I smirk and cock my head, nodding to the side affirmatively - it'd be rude not to. I take it - my fingertips gingerly grazing her palm and go to the brutally used but morning-Chlorox/pine-fresh toilet. I step into the last stall. I take the vial and my keys from the left pocket of my pants. I unscrew the cap, dip a generous bump of white powder onto the tip of my house key, plug my right nostril and inhale with the left. Change sides; Repeat as needed. A deep lugie-conjuring snort and swallow. My throat numbs immediately with a lump like a choking cough drop. I check myself in the cracked mirror over the rust-dripped standalone sink and step coolly back out onto the floor.

The last minute of 'Cure for Pain' - Morphine.

Plinko! "Plinko is always a harbinger of a good day," I observe.

"Oh, is it? And how do you think your day is gonna turn out?" I slip my hand into my pocket. I pull out the little vial, graze her thigh with the brush of my index finger and she responds with her palm. Alcoholics mistake secrets and honesty for intimacy." So far so good." We tip drinks and each light a cigarette.

'Streams of whiskey', the Pogues.

"Aw, I love the Pogues." "Did you ever see Straight to Hell?" "I don't think so. What is it?" "Dude, it is stellar. Alex Cox direct-. Did you see Repo Man?" "Of course," she blows out a drag. ". . . Love that movie." "Well, Alex Cox directed it. In like '87 he was trying to put together a concert film with the Clash, the Pogues and Elvis Costello but couldn't get it worked out so he cast them all in a movie instead. Dennis Hopper's in it. A young Courtney Love, fuckin' Grace Jones. It is a fuckin' shitshow." "What's it about?" "It's a mock spaghetti Western like Chopper Chicks from Zombie Town meets Yojimbo. Joe Strummer is one of three hitmen hiding out in this nowhere desert ghost town. The Pogues play a gang of espresso addicted pistoleros. Dennis Hopper is a real estate developer and weapons broker. Everyone dies. It's fuckin ridiculous. You should check it out." "Doubtful," she smirks.

That's how the time went: Drink, babble, check the phones for work, off to the toilet. We wrap up around 1:45 PM and arrange to meet back here at 4:30PM. Nobody notices if you dip out a half hour early on occasion. We meet up as planned and after a couple of drinks walk to her little MG convertible to head to her house. The time has passed when a reasonable decision to halt this day can be made. Too much effort in laying the groundwork for an extended session has been expended. I could pass out happily by now but the brain aches for more. More stimuli. More cocaine and more booze. More fuel and more to rationalize the otherwise waste of a day. Sport drinking. She calls a friend for more white powder and we drink drinks and she puts on music and twirls.

We get restless and walk to the 7-11 for cigarettes and beers and cheap wine while we wait for her guy. He shows up with a bag to sell and a bag to share. He has done this before - bartering for

future good graces and cordiality to grease the sheets. She palms her baggy and slips it into her bra. We all indulge in his stash. He sets it on the counter and gets distracted by drinks and a twirling girl. I slide some mail over concealing his little bag on the counter top in the kitchen. I don't even care about coke normally but I am in the middle of it so I am trying to hoard and this is wiser than getting caught with it in my pocket. This guy doesn't look like much but he is a fucking drug dealer so I err on the side of good measure. He gets ready to leave after a few more drinks and can't seem to find his misplaced drugs. It wasn't much and he shrugs it off. She will surely find it and work it off in the future. He leaves.

"You guys used to date?" A predictable hint of jealousy. "Kinda. He's a weird dude. Has ferrets and a guitar collection." "I'll give you ferrets but guitars? What's the problem?" "He can't play. He just talks about them but couldn't tune one or play fucking Michael Row Your Boat around a campfire if you begged him to." "Fair enough. Fuckin ferret people though. . .Ferrets, birds and snakes are the three pets that definitively point to certain character types. They're usually Ren-Fest-ers and way too intimate with their animals." "Good point. He sleeps with them. I think he has a sword." "Told ya. I'm gonna smoke." "I'm gonna change."

Here we go. We are recharged but gritty in a zone of hyper-delirium. I open a beer and go through her bedroom out the sliding glass door to the patio out back. I light a cigarette and should know better but I lie down on a lounge chair. I look at my phone and no emails of substance have come in. It is about to begin. The sun has been down for about an hour. Of my generation, two relatively attractive intoxicated people having spent hours indulging together are going to fuck. That is the social contract. There is no polite way to avoid such an outcome. It is a deranged appropriation of the manners we were raised with. I turn my head to the left and see her walking through the sliding glass door in a calf-length, nearly transparent hippy sort of dress or negligee. The light behind her shadows her form and as she turns to her left to light a tiki torch I can make out a nipple and the mound of her mons.

She walks slowly over toward me and addresses me from the side taking my cigarette and stabbing it out. She runs her right hand through my short hair and swings her leg over the chair and sits on top of me. She pulls my shirt up and runs her lips over my chest. Her head moves down and stops at my waist, kissing the tender top of my hip bone and I shudder, trying not to jerk my knee into the side of her head. She tugs fiercely on my belt and the button behind it. Unzips me and takes me into her mouth. This lasts for a few minutes, my hand caressing the back of her head and stroking her cheek and she slides back up to kiss my mouth, resting her pelvis on mine. She reaches down and maneuvers me back and forth, side to side teasing the moisture of her lips to guide me; she sets down slowly. She rises and falls to a rhythm in her head. My hands fall down her back on onto her hip bones like a ship's helm. I sit up and swing my legs around and stand. I walk us back through the sliding glass door and fall to the bed.

Our tryst has little to do with lust and carnal cravings. Those become a factor in the act but are not a causal component. I will not climax; I never do in this situation. If it were a performance issue I would attribute it to the booze but my reticence is a flawed sense of ego and ethos. Not morality- that would involve discipline which I neither falsely exhibit nor purport to have. It may be a power thing but I am more and more convinced that it is the transactional nature of the social contract that focuses on the act. It is mere labor and her completion is of concern. Do not mistake this for prurient chivalry. Completion completes the task. She is welcome to fake her pleasure, that too is part of the contract - mutually agreed upon satisfaction insofar as courtesy is concerned. We roll around wildly for an hour or so, uninhibited and savage until it we are exhausted or sore and resolution has been achieved. We get up and have more drinks and more cocaine and will crawl back into the bed several times in this cycle until we fall asleep finally in the early morning.

We wake up naked, covered in bite marks and scratches. I go down on her before she wakes and instigate another bout of salacious indulgence. However, in this instance it is pure survival of the species. When the body awakens from being poisoned as is the case in such gross intemperance as the

night prior, the result is an instinctual last gasp at procreation. The urge in that state is so unrelenting it will happen whether she likes it or not and I will probably come - mankind is counting on it.