

Biker Queen Fishing Story

My neighbor dragged me fishing, like bait. He wanted me to do business with his “best buddy,” an attorney out west where I maybe wanted some land. I didn’t know what I wanted. The guy was a Mormon or something. The whole thing was weird. I didn’t get to know him. But I could tell he had problems. We all have problems. And it turns out fishing was mostly waiting and drinking, which was pretty much what I expected but worse. I would’ve given a fortune to have ants injected in my veins, if only for the excitement. The only thrill on the water was an emasculated ranger threatening a group of teens who were throwing themselves off a cliff like members of a suicide cult.

When we were done trying to fool the fishes, I insisted we have another drink before the long ride back home. Part of me hoped I would pass out before then and they would just tuck me into the backseat of my neighbor’s SUV and wake me when we were in my driveway. My neighbor and his buddy were reluctant but they finally agreed to stop at a bar and grill near the reservoir. The parking lot, bar, patio, and surrounding territory was full of bikers and their girlfriends. It was a rally! They all looked like they were having a great time. Like they had been having a great time all day. A much better time than we’d had sitting out on that mud-filled lake.

At the bar, I drank a lot very quickly it felt like. It’s hard to tell. The sun had been so hot out there; I really was in a daze. I told my companions I was stumbling because of the rocking of the boat on the reservoir, which was basically the city’s glass of water and no choppier than a puddle.

I admired the bikers. They didn't have to go home to their nagging wives or dull girlfriends; their fun wives and party-hearty girlfriends were right here with them, egging them on. Hitting the open road. Grilling chunks of dinosaur meat. Dancing to loud rock 'n' roll music. But mostly drinking outside on picnic tables.

The prettiest of the girls at the rally was barely 18. Her lips were like raspberries about to spoil. I disgusted myself just thinking about her. I have two daughters. One of them is dead. The other is all grown up. We're all all grown up.

I wasn't interested in raspberry-lipped infants, I wanted to meet a real woman. A woman my age. A woman I could have conceivably married years ago if we both had lived different lives. I ordered a large steak and another shot—my second and the food hadn't even come yet, my neighbor pointed out.

"I need it," I told him, and mumbled something about "sea legs."

I scanned the party like a sailor desperate for the temptations of a harbor town. My neighbor's buddy, the attorney, noticed me.

"Watcha lookin' for?" I don't mean to write him so hickish, but that's the closest I can get to what he sounded like on paper. I sound like water being sucked down a drain. Why fight it?

"I'm searching out the Biker Queen," I said. "The Matriarch."

I looked deeper into the party. A mass appeared on the horizon. Flesh. And leather. And smoke. I hopped up from the table.

I'd found her.

She was holding court in back.

She was not the oldest at the bar, but she was close to it and she was by dog shits the meanest-looking. The alpha female. That's what I was looking for. I wondered for a second if she had gotten her status from being the alpha male's woman, but I pushed the thought from my head and with tipsy aplomb sort of danced in her direction, too drunk to be embarrassed about my Hawaiian shirt. A gift from my wife's awful mother.

The Biker Queen was about 12 feet tall it looked and as wide as a tank. Motorcycles zipped around her like flies around a record-breaking bovine turd. The sexy old hag had long hair, black and white like the movies. Young blonde wet T-shirt contest losers clung to her Viking braids like burrs in a golden retriever's mane. Her tattoos were ancient runes and vomiting bald eagles, battleships straddled by the Grim Reaper, swastikas dining on elves' blood. She wore a crown of barbed wire and a ripped tank top that read: "I don't need a helmet, YOU DO!" If I'd had better judgment or wasn't so dissatisfied with my life on Earth, I would've worn one to approach her.

I pushed across the tented dance floor and covered myself with biker sweat in the process. At the far end she sat on two oversized picnic tables, flanked by a pair of salivating gray wolves. Heat radiated from her leather pants and nearly blew me back to my table where I was supposed to be waiting for a shitty steak I didn't even want. I was supposed to be back there dreading the prospect more than death of the long drive back with my neighbor and his Mormon (?) to see my wife, a wife that felt more like a genetic condition than someone who wanted to share her fleeting time on

Earth with me. The feeling was mutual. I fought through the crowd, still dancing, now holding two light beers.

When I got up close, the Biker Queen turned out to be three times as big as she had looked from across the dance floor. I had to borrow a microphone from the deejay who was too busy bonging beers and blowing the foam out on the bare tits in the crowd to notice. I could only imagine what my neighbor was thinking.

“Hello!” I screamed, tugging on one of her leg hairs. Boy, was I feeling ballsy. “I am a lonely fisherman!”

“Did I hear something?!” Tables turned over when she spoke. “YES! You heard ME! A lonely fisherman who hates to fish and is dissatisfied with his current and longtime situation in life!”

She now saw me and scooped me up in her palm, brought me close to eye level.

“Little Man,” she said. She scratched me on my bald, sunburned head with one of her spiky rings. “You do not look like a fisherman.”

“Well, thanks,” I said. “I’m not really.”

“You look like a fish. You don’t even look like a fish. You look like a tadpole, blind to the murky world around you.”

“That’s true!” I said. It was hard not to agree with her. “I loved my life at one time! But I was only a little boy and many years have passed since then! Now I am old and blind! And bored and boring! Marry me!”

The Biker Queen laughed so loud that for a second I was afraid her mate

would hear and come stomping through the forest from wherever he was and skin me, then use my bones as toothpicks. But I was too caught up in the moment to give fear a chance.

“So . . . is that a ‘No?’” I asked.

“No!” she roared. I nearly fell off her hand. “That’s a YES! Take me home and bed me now or regret this moment and the rest of your life forever!”

If this had been a cartoon and not real life, I would’ve gulped or at least said, “Gulp.”

Instead, I said “Fuck.”

This is why I said “Fuck”: I love my wife. In fact, after 25 years, it would be impossible to love myself, or even tolerate myself, without loving my wife. I know that. And I know that I am afraid to be anything but plainly unhappy because I don’t know how. I would rather be comfortable than change. If the grass is green, it turns brown when I get near it.

What I didn’t know was how to marry a biker queen, let alone have sex with one, or live in her sidecar and make her happy. I wanted to though. Or, part of me did. I wanted to crawl in her earlobe and build a nest, hoist my pirate flag and sleep on a bed of golden wax with the sound of engines roaring and the wild country whipping past like outside an open freight car. Not because I loved her, but because I hated what I had become.

“Are you okay, Little Man?”

“I’m not sure.” I had to admit it.

All she did was laugh, long and slow, careful not to let me fall even though the earth was shaking.

“Could you give me a ride home?” I asked. “I can’t stand the guys I came here with.”

“You don’t have to marry me, Little Man.” Her smile let me know that life would continue whether I had anything to do with it or not. And everything was back to normal again. Until her husband rolled up on top of an enormous dust cloud, followed by what looked like some lost tribe of Neanderthal warriors. Then I truly wished that I had not gone fishing, but had stayed at home where I belong.