

Wilderness House Literary Review 21/1

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MACY

i'm down at the bar, embroiled in the usual mess. up to my old tricks, as it were. crouching in the weeds, trying not to get shot, huddling in place, waiting for the sky to fall. i'm at the place on glenwood, the german beer garden at the far end of the street. across the bar from me stands macy, the bartendress. she is dressed down but still looks good in her loose-fitting top and bluejeans and boots. this girl would look good in a garbage bag. her hair is dyed blonde and she has a little ring in her nose and she is way too young for me, and yet i can't stop ogling her and telling myself 'what if'. she is mousy, thin, with a slightly hawkish visage. she looks like one of those street urchins who would kill you for a quarter and not think twice about it. she is talking to me because she doesn't have a choice, i'm the only customer sitting at the bar. it is three o'clock in the afternoon and way too early to be drinking but somehow i didn't get the memo. i drink my beer and watch macy as she stands there being bored and shooting the breeze against her will. i wait without hope, as always.

four o'clock rolls around and no one else has arrived, save a few hipster employees who pass through on various errands and say various hipster things. macy and i have had ourselves quite a chat, although i have no idea what about. her beauty has both blinded me and rendered me ineffectual; i am speaking but making little sense, some sort of autopilot that is just maintaining itself over a course of minutes and hours. i have no idea what i'm saying and it doesn't matter. all i know is that macy is there and has been staying there and i am close enough to touch her and the proximity is absolutely mesmerizing. intoxicating, even apart from the beer. which is going down way too easily, i might add.

five o'clock and now a few patrons wander in. macy's shift is over and to my surprise she comes around to join me at the bar, to have her free employee drink. no one there she knows, otherwise the drink would have been shared elsewhere, but hey, i'm a warm body and have been fairly receptive and well-mannered and all and why not, why not indeed. she orders some mixed drink and it is placed in front of her, she imbibes. i try not to watch. i do not want to be a creep, even if that is the way i am now being perceived as i lurk along the fringes of the bar scene at the ripe old age of fifty, perpetually waiting for action that never arrives and never will again. and yet there macy is, and remains. we drink and chat, continuing where we left off. she finishes her drink and orders another. i am surprised she hasn't buggered off yet. i am rancid meat but the smell hasn't disturbed her enough to flee. six o'clock rolls around. i have lost count of the beers, it's been quite a few. the sun goes down, the douchebags multiply. it is friday night, time for them to make their weekly appearance, time for them to crawl from their holes and announce their douchebag presences with authority, in the hopes that the doing of same will somehow get them laid. i assume they do get laid at least some of the time but i'm not really sure; maybe it never works and they always go home alone and drunk and frustrated. i actually hope this is true, truth be told.

it's some time later in the evening. i am too drunk to be able to consult my phone. by some miracle or wacky twist of fate, macy is still there, sit-

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ting next to me. she's on her third or fourth drink, she's been nursing them for the most part. she's consulted her own phone on numerous occasions and the little fingers have been fluttering away but she hasn't scrambled and it's almost weirding me out at this point. i ask her why she hasn't left yet. she tells me she's waiting for a friend. i ask her what her friend's name is, my voice slurring and words all sloppy. it is the wrong thing to say, she looks at me with distaste. kathy, she says, then returns to her phone. it occurs to me that she is now waiting for me to leave. i do not, she is too beautiful. i am caught in her gravitational pull and am orbiting involuntarily, a second and larger sun couldn't possibly pull me away. the persistence of her proximity has left me helpless and i am in that pitiful drunken state (which i know only too well) where my desperation is no longer peeking through the curtains but is rather flooding through the gates and this is the most unwise thing possible to show to a girl but like i said, i am helpless and without options of any kind. i was not meant to procreate, i was not meant to interact. i was probably not intended to live this long.

but anyway, the night proceeds. i don't go away and macy's friend kathy doesn't arrive. i ask her why and she shrugs her shoulders. she's had enough of me and is about ready to start ignoring me entirely, to give me the old cold-shoulder-and-turned-back routine, even if the guy on the other side is satan himself she's prepared to do it. me blinky eyes is blinkin too much and the anxiety of the scene is exacerbating the problem. the wheels be comin off, and fast. with my heart hanging open i ask macy if she'll go home with me, she dutifully declines. i tell her i'll do anything she wants and she smirks. she's heard this sort of shit before. she probably hears it on a nightly basis. i am an old man now and the whole thing is just absurd. i am drunk and don't care. 'please, macy,' i beg. 'please.' 'sorry,' she says. 'i'll be your sex slave,' i offer, temporarily trying for humor. the humor is entirely lost on her. 'what?' macy says. i stop dead in my tracks. the offer isn't rescinded but the inappropriateness of the comment hits home, drives through the drunken blur like a foul ball dropping into the stands and plunking me on the noggin.

macy sucks down the remainder of her drink and makes to leave. 'please, don't go,' i say with pleading eyes. she's sneering now, the alcohol has finally caught up to her and it's no more missus nice girl. i've thoroughly worn out my welcome and she's going to give me a piece of her mind. she may even hit me.

'look, you idiot, you're seriously lucky i'm even talking to you, do you know that?' she says. i inform her i am in fact aware of my serious luck. 'i wouldn't go home with you even if you licked my feet.' i inform her that this is an act i am in fact willing to perform. she sneers again. she's buzzing and her vodka breath is flowing out in front of her as she speaks.

'what a fucking loser you are,' she says.

'yes ma'am, that i am,' i say.

she gathers her things. 'i'd gladly do it, i really would,' i say, a limp last-ditch effort sure to produce no results, at least none of the positive variety. and yet she pauses and reconsiders. there's a perverse gleam in her eye, one i've never seen there before. 'come on,' she says.

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i jump up without paying my tab and follow her out. 'god damn it,' she curses, she's fumbling with her phone and having trouble calling the uber. she straightens it out and the uber arrives momentarily; pretty damn quick for a friday night, what with all the livestock milling around and all the brightly-lit hustle and bustle. we pile in the car and take off. there is little conversation on the way over. macy's apartment is just around the corner, a left and a left and a few rights more. there is more grumbling as she scrounges around in her bag for her keys. 'can't believe i'm actually doing this,' she says. neither can i.

we go inside. it is a small apartment but has two bedrooms and both look habitated. i ask her if she has a roommate and she tells me that it's kathy, she of the earlier no-show. i ask her where kathy is and she says she has no idea. i ask if i can go to the bathroom and she points me to the door. when i come out she is sitting on the couch with a wine cooler in her hand. she has her feet splayed out in front of her and is lounging back into the cushions and looks both exhausted and annoyed. i tell her it's a nice place she's got here and she tells me to shut up. i shut up.

'okay, so?' she says, glaring at me from across the room. i don't answer, i'm confused. 'i'm waiting,' she says. light bulbs go off, aha, she'd been taking me at my word earlier. gotta do what ya gotta do. i move to stand before her. she points down at the floor with one dainty little finger. i kneel.

'take my boots off,' she says. i pull her boots off, with some difficulty, as they fit her quite tightly. they are hard-shelled, black, the kind that almost look like men's boots but are somehow alluringly feminine as well. her feet are bare beneath the boots, no socks, and they are hot and perspiring. she has painted nails but the paint is chipping and peeling and she is due for a new pedicure. her feet are as shapely and curvaceous and as miraculously gorgeous as she herself is. you'd expect nothing else. and yet the audacity of the situation is giving me pause. she is in no mood to argue or cajole or do anything else of the sort, she rests one foot heavily on my shoulder and presses the other one into my face.

'lick my feet,' she commands, with hooded eyes. she knows i'll do it and now appears to be looking forward to watching what comes next. it appeals to a certain type of woman to be able to twirl a man around by a string, to make him jump about and do as she pleases. my tongue comes out and runs along the sweaty sole of macy's beauteous foot. she waits and i do it again, then again. 'i should make a video of this, put it up on instagram,' she says, toying with her phone. 'please, don't', i say, licking away. she ignores me. 'show all the girls out there what pathetic pieces of shit men really are.' my desperation and desire are such that i am now taking perverse pleasure in the task appointed to me; i am running my tongue all over her warm sticky soles, along the heels, up the arches, the balls of her feet, across her petite girly toes and even wriggling between them, trying to satisfy her, trying to provide her with pleasure as well. i wonder if she's ever done this before but am too afraid to ask, afraid i will be told to shut up again or get kicked in the face or some such thing. i ponder inwardly, imagining submissive boyfriends, cringing and grateful, grade school girlfriends over for sleepovers, curious and playful. macy waits through my diligent service, switching feet a few times, forcing me

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to repeat the exercise once or twice. 'you could never dream of anything more than this,' she says. it appears to me that she is enjoying the sensation, but more than that is enjoying the mere idea of being able to make someone do it. beautiful girls live interesting lives, they are on constant power trips. they request what they want and watch it fall into their laps, whilst the rest of us lay cringing and fawning, waiting for scraps.

macy has me lick her feet for a while and then gets bored and withdraws them from my embrace. i am in a strange servile daze. 'may i thank you, ma'am?' i ask. 'you may,' she answers, most altruistically. i crouch there on the floor, waiting to see what comes next.

'you can leave now,' macy says, never looking up from her phone.

i know it's pointless to argue. i get up off the floor and show myself the door and then disappear into the night. that cold, cruel night, the one forever intent on ripping you to shreds, the one that always loves to kick you when you're down. i wander lost for a time expecting to remain lost and yet my drunk has worn off and i am now surprisingly capable and alert. i find glenwood again and weave through the drunks and the flashing cop lights and the late night revelers and find my car and pile into it and drive myself home. it had been a nightmare and utterly humiliating and one of the best nights in recent memory. the beer garden was now going to be a lot more interesting than it was before.