

Towards the Perpetuation of the Human Species

by

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Setting

A bar.

Time

Now.

Cast

KAREN - A woman in her 20s-30s.

JEREMY - A man in his 20s-30s.

(KAREN sits alone at a small table nursing a drink that she stirs occasionally as she gazes about the room. JEREMY approaches, a tall drink in his hand.)

JEREMY

Hi.

KAREN

Hi.

JEREMY

Do you mind if I join you?

KAREN

No, not at all...please.

(KAREN indicates the other chair and JEREMY sits down.)

JEREMY

I'm Jeremy.

KAREN

Karen.

JEREMY

So, what brings you here this evening?

KAREN

You know, I was just wondering that myself. Do you want me to be completely honest?

JEREMY

Sure.

KAREN

Well, I suppose in a general sense I'm here out of a basic need for human contact. More specifically, there's the appeal of having strange men approach me and ask to join me, and who knows where that might end up? Perhaps my one and only true soul mate is here tonight--the man with whom I can be happy for the rest of my life, the man who will father my children, share my dreams, and adore me with a deep and abiding passion that will only grow over time.

JEREMY

Huh.

KAREN

Not that I expect that to happen, of course. On the contrary, I'll settle for some mild flirtation to boost my self-esteem and maybe a couple of free drinks before I remark that it's getting late and gracefully disengage myself from a man that I have no intention of ever seeing again.

JEREMY

Well, that's...that's refreshingly candid.

KAREN

So, what made you want to come over and join me?

JEREMY

Well, let's see...it's been, oh, probably six months or so since I've had any kind of sexual relations with a woman. I happened to notice you from across the bar and your superficial appearance pretty much falls within the range I normally consider acceptable, although, let's face it, the light in here isn't exactly the greatest.

KAREN

True. And the alcohol may be affecting your judgment too.

JEREMY

Oh, I don't drink. Never liked the taste. This is just ginger ale. But yeah, you're right. There is something to be said for being in an environment with women whose sense of morals and propriety is somewhat or even severely impaired.

KAREN

Because you don't feel sufficiently confident in your appearance, intelligence, or social skills to attract a woman otherwise?

JEREMY

Absolutely.

(They both concentrate on their drinks for a moment.)

So, if you don't mind my asking, in terms of moving towards a physically intimate liaison in the near future, what kind of behavioral patterns or conversational topics should I pursue?

KAREN

Well...

JEREMY

There's always dancing.

KAREN

Do you like dancing?

JEREMY

No. But like most men I'm willing to endure it as a prelude to sex.

KAREN

I'm sorry, I've never been much on dancing either. It seems like too much of a prelude to sex.

JEREMY

Oh...so you don't like sex?

KAREN

It's all right...I mean, it has its moments. But give me ten years and a couple of kids and I'm going to be way more interested in cheesecake and back rubs.

JEREMY

Yeah...yeah, I've heard about that.

KAREN

Would that be a problem?

JEREMY

Oh no...no. If you're more into cheesecake and back rubs, you're more into cheesecake and back rubs. It's not really that big a deal. I could always look for some other sexual outlet, I guess.

KAREN

What do you mean? Like with a prostitute?

JEREMY

God no! Are you kidding me? Regular women are plenty scary enough.

KAREN

So, you'd wind up in a place like this, with your wedding ring in your pocket, hitting on single women?

JEREMY

No, of course not! You get involved with a single woman, she's always going to want more than you can give. It's just not practical.

KAREN

Then...?

JEREMY

I think I'd probably try to find myself a nice married woman, you know, maybe with a couple of kids...someone who's looking for a little more attention than her husband gives her.

KAREN

And would you do this openly or behind my back?

JEREMY

Which would you prefer?

KAREN

Well, if I knew about it, I'd feel betrayed and hurt.

JEREMY

Really? Even though my behavior was caused in part by your behavior?

KAREN

I don't think I'd be looking at it that rationally.

JEREMY

I see your point.

KAREN

In fact, to maintain my self-respect, I'd probably insist on a divorce.

JEREMY

Well, wait a second. What about our kids?

KAREN

Mmm, I'm pretty sure that I'd be able to convince myself that whatever made me happy would be best for them too.

JEREMY

Okay then, it's settled. Any extra-marital affairs will be kept totally secret.

KAREN

You think you could do that?

JEREMY

I'd do my best. Of course, it would help a little if you were preoccupied with the kids and maybe--

KAREN

--obsessed with acquiring material possessions?

JEREMY

Exactly! That would be a big help.

KAREN

You know, I just might be able to do that.

JEREMY

You think so?

KAREN

Well, same as you, I'd do my best.

JEREMY

Because you'd want us to stay together?

KAREN

Of course! Wouldn't you?

JEREMY

Absolutely!

(They smile at one another, genuinely attracted.)

KAREN

You know, this may sound like a cliché, but I've never met anyone quite like you.

JEREMY

Hey, coming right back at you on that one.

KAREN

Then maybe...maybe we should go out sometime.

JEREMY

No, it's too late for that now.

KAREN

Too late?

JEREMY

We know each other too well.

KAREN

Oh, I see what you mean. True love is unsuspecting.

JEREMY

Clueless, even.

KAREN

It ruins everything if you really know the other person.

JEREMY

The magic is gone.

KAREN

And here it's only been five minutes.

JEREMY

It's too bad.

KAREN

It's tragic.

JEREMY

I really wish things could have turned out differently.

KAREN
Me too.

JEREMY
Well...

(JEREMY rises to leave, but KAREN grabs his wrist.)

KAREN
Wait! I've got an idea.

(JEREMY retakes his seat.)

JEREMY
What?

KAREN
Okay, I'm going back a few years now, but when I was in college I once drank a fifth of tequila in, like, two hours.

JEREMY
Uh-huh. What happened?

KAREN
I don't know! I passed out! My roommates had to carry me back to the dorm and when I woke up the next morning I couldn't remember anything!

JEREMY
You had a...what do they call it--a blackout!

KAREN
I had a blackout! The whole night was just gone! Pffft! Like it never even happened!

JEREMY
You're saying--

KAREN
I'm saying, let's drink ourselves senseless!

JEREMY
So we can go back in time...

KAREN
So we can start anew...

JEREMY
A clean slate...

KAREN
A new day...

Innocent...
JEREMY

Unsuspecting...
KAREN

JEREMY
But wait. Wouldn't we be killing millions of brain cells?

KAREN
Yes, yes we would. But that's a sacrifice I'm willing to make...for you, Jeremy.

JEREMY
Oh Karen...I'm willing to make that sacrifice too!

(They hold hands and look at one another in pure adoration.)

KAREN
Then what are we waiting for?

(They raise their free hands in unison.)

JEREMY AND KAREN
Waiter!

(Lights fade.)

THE END.