

## When You Meet A Bird

Characters: An old woman and a black bird.

Place: a small, enclosed private outdoor space. A mini park.

Time: Night and very dark. Woman wanders into the “fenced” enclosure muttering:

Woman — Where the hell is the entrance to this damn thing? It’s gotta be here somewhere.  
Ooh, here...

[She pulls aside the cloth drape which keeps the place closed. Enters the enclosure.]

— Why am I so ambivalent? Middle of the fence. Is it this? Or that... attend  
or stay home? Then, I miss it. Of course I’ll miss it...

[She goes to a bench, turns around, plops down, put her bag down, sighs a big sigh. The  
large figure sitting at the far end of the bench, unnoticed, speaks:]

Bird — Good evening.

Woman [shrieks] — Sweet Jaysus! Who’s there?

Bird — What are you doing here?..

Woman — Criminies!

Bird —... It’s practically the middle of the night.

Woman — Yes, I suppose it is, practically the middle.

Bird — An odd time for an old woman to be out alone.

Woman — Who are you calling old?

Bird — S’cuse me?

Woman — Oh, rocks! Who should I be out with at this hour?

Bird — I dunno. A friend? A neighbor? Someone.

Woman — Catshit and applebutter! What neighbor? What friend?

Bird — There must be someone you could...

Woman — What makes you think that? They’ve all dried up, like prunes, or they’ve just died.

Bird — Not many ladies, Ahem, your age, would wander around at this hour. Just how old are  
you?

Woman — You don’t ask a woman a question like that!

Bird — Should I be concerned? Can I call someone?

Woman- NO! I just need to take my shoes off. (She does) Ooh, my feet! (Rubs her feet) Ah, ooooh, ah. that's better.

Bird – You seem confused... worried? Sqawk!

Woman — Well you startled me! Scared the piddle outta me. Who are you, lurking there anyway?

Bird — I'm just a humble, perhaps not so humble...

Woman- (Rubs her feet) oohf, my toes...

Bird — ...Bird.

Woman — What? What did you say?

Bird — Bird. You asked... A Bird,

Woman- How can that be?...you're speaking, is this some sort of trick?

Shape-Shifter's on my mothers side, you know- Native American. We helped that First Man out of the clamshell...

Woman —Oh! Sometimes the crows talk to me- and I answer. Neighbors think I'm cuckoo. little did they know, I would meet a trickster...have a midnight conversation with a...

Bird — Raven, in fact. Norse on my Pa's side. My great, great, great grands, way, way, way back, descendants of Hugin and Munnin, Odin's messengers. It's said they flew around the world every day, then back to his shoulders with news... He worried about them.

Woman — Do tell? How comprehensive. Come over here. Let me have a closer look at you.  
(Taps the bench)

Bird — (Gets up) At your service. (Hops over.) Here I am, Ma'am.

Woman — Odin's messengers? So what's the news today? Half a mo...my glasses.  
(She digs in the bag. Pulls them out. Puts them on)

Woman — Shite and garlic! It's too damned dark. I can't see you. Wait...  
(She fumbles, then pulls out a flashlight and shines it on him. )

-Figwit! You are a bird!

Bird — Ma'am. (with pride) As I reported.

Woman- (sigh) Are you here to help me out of my clamshell?

Bird — Are you feeling blue?

Woman — Some land between blue and... bewildered.

Bird — (scratches head. thinks) The Indigo Funks! — A great band name! or maybe 'The Cobalt Crumbles?' is better, -'Prussian Blue Stiff Uppers?'...depends on the Genre I s'pose...

Woman — A real comedian...

Bird- Just trying to cheer you up. What's eating you anyway?

Woman- If you must know- I got invited to a wedding.

Bird — Sounds nice.

Woman — Nice?

Bird — That you were asked... You *were* invited. Someone apparently wants the pleasure of your company.

Woman — Or feels a duty to include me, Why do I feel I shouldn't be?

Bird — Included? Only you know the answer to that, Madame.

Woman — It's a swank affair, the Mark Hopkins- Snob hill, in San Francisco.

Bird — Posh!

Woman —

(Digs in bag. Pulls out envelope, reads)  
We request the pleasure of your company- what you said. Here. Take a look at it.  
(Hands it to bird)

Bird — I'm impressed. (Turns it over) The paper. The embossing. (sniffs it) Scented? Exquisito!

Woman — Perhaps overdone? Brings to mind a medieval illuminated manuscript...

Bird — So, what's the problem? You *are* wanted.

Woman — Read it, I imagine you can read?

Bird — A vivid imagination... (clears throat, reads) "Black tie preferred."

Woman — See what I mean?

Bird — What? I'd love to be invited to a black tie event. I'm so ready!  
(Gets up from bench, Preens. Sticks chest out, walks in slow circle.)

Woman — Hmm! You'd fit right in if you weren't so — extremely... avian!  
(She puts her hands on her own shoulders, turns around distressed)

— But look at me!

Bird — Yes? I'm looking.

Woman — Do I appear to you fit to go to a...a fancy ball occasion?

Bird — KRwaaa....What can I say without getting knee-deep in *Çaça dwa*?

Woman — Hah! Be authentic!

Bird — (Sigh) You're rumpled, all askew. Your skirt — wrong length. Your hair — somewhere in the vicinity of... disaster?

Woman — I never wanted to get Old!

Bird — Old! authentic is one thing- you can't expect compliments, But old? P'shaw

Woman — But you do see the dilemma?

Bird — Aw, come now- buy a dress, get a haircut — a soupçon of style...

Woman — (Shrugs) Not thrilled. It De-exhilarates me.

Bird — Fine, lets talk about me and my stuff.

Woman — Your stuff? You have a problem?

Bird — If you knew the half of it...

Woman —

(right back to musing about herself)

Of course I'd have to get a dog sitter. Who'd feed my kitty? Overnight stay at the hotel — or hire a car. Do you have any idea of how much this is going to... A dress, Hair, a gift, a tip for the valet. Valet! Breakfast... Goddess!

Bird- ...My feathered family, friends- the flock — flummox me... Insomnia... Psitticosis!

Woman-

(reacting, scoots away from bird)

Perhaps we need a cup of tea?

(Reaches in her bag for a thermos and hands bird a cup, and pours)

Bird — How nice!

(sips tea)

-Oh the good stuff, Queen Vic?

Woman —

(She reaches in her bag again and pulls out a "pony" and adds a splash)

And just a wee drop?

(and takes cup as bird attempts a second sip)

Woman — What am I going to do about that wedding?

Bird —

(reaching for the cup)

Aw, just fergit about it, old thing.

(pats her shoulder).

Woman - (smiles) Or, you could be my plus one!...

Bird — (cocks head) You really mean it?

Woman- We would cut quite a figure- the two of us!

Bird- You know... we could go to Yoshi's for some jazz instead.

Woman — But that's in Oakland!

Bird — (Shrugs) ¿Un problema?

Woman —

(warming to idea)

Or, perhaps Cafè Coatlique. Do you like mojitos?

Bird — Only one way to find out- Vamonos!

Woman: There's such a gorgeous mess of a moon tonight. I feel like flying!

Bird-

( Bird lifts woman to her feet, drapes wing around he shoulder)

Jack London Square, here we come!

Fini