

Neediness, Incarnate

by Christopher J. Snyder

1

CAN'T GET ANY

Worthless Veikass paid the stripper extra to bounce her boobs back-and-forth across his nose — unfortunately, he didn't have a dick, just a clit and a set of balls, so it didn't distract him from his constant misery for more than 5 min. (and then, at that, just *barely*).

He say back after her work was done. He decided she was ok, but not *good enough!*

He scanned the room, furtively, like a nervous little jerk. He needed another Dos Equis.

His companions for the night, Colonized Mike and Basic Brad, hoisted their beers. *They have bigger dicks than me*, he perished the thought plaguing him, unbidden as a mosquito but as likely to happen — he had no will, or, rather, the barest dregs of one. (IMAGINE A FUEL TANK PERPETUALLY ON “E,” OKAY?) They can get some without driving women away with their hostile, overheated covetousness he was also plagued to think, unbidden — these thoughts bloomed like cells in a petri dish, it was all he could do to ride them out. Hence the beer and strippers and working in consulting.

2

VEIKASS HATED SUSHI

He really did, but at least this was spread out on a naked woman

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— one of those places you had to know people to get into, they served the deadly puffer fish, and shit like that.

He couldn't taste much — his palate, like his emotional range, was ground down to, effectively, sandpaper, so all stimuli, up to and, at times, including sleep, made him vaguely uncomfortable, at best — but he grabbed another morsel off the below-the-nipple area that appeared to be made of eel — or tuna, maybe.

He munched it like a kid in a TV commercial munching his breakfast cereal, and looked around the dimly-lit, hushed-tones place, run with all the focus and very, very serious deference the Japanese were known for.

Meh.

He sudden thought — he rarely had any others; it was like he was being constantly invaded, and couldn't imagine imposing anything else on persons, places, or things outside of himself, it was all he'd known since kindergarten when those cruel kids at the middle-upper-class private school in Western Massachusetts had willfully mispronounced his non-Hindu or —Muslim Indian name, branding him for life as an outsider, a loser, and a worthless piece of shit — about the Gedde Watanbe character in *Sixteen Candles*: “Long Duk Dong!”

People looked at him, their glares deafening in the silence. Even the naked woman prone on the table broke her self-imposed trance to glance at him, like she couldn't help it, an act that'd be sufficient to get her fired if observed by anyone who reported it to her superiors.

Veikass ducked his head down. *Was that out loud?*

Guess it was.

At least nobody'd call me “chink,” he thought, smirking to himself, relived, for about a millisecond, and ordered another Sapporo.

MISPRONOUNCING EVERYTHING IN SIGHT

“ . . . inroads into Laddin America — ”

Everyone stopped speaking. Veikass felt like a fool. Ice clinked in glasses.

“As we've *found out* in Peru — ” (*an interruption clearly meant to put the “shine” back on the territories Veikass had, oblivious, just derided; this guy had a lot of stake and personal belief in doing, and the opportunity'd presented itself, so he grabbed it*) “ — and finding out in other no-longer-worth-calling ‘third world’ countries in its vicinity — ”

One man, early fifties, nodded his head back and rocked on his heels a bit, thinking something which he kept to himself, clearly along the lines of *We'll see. Too soon to tell.*

Veikass couldn't get Alladin's lamp out of his head — couldn't since ninth grade.

Good thing his holdings dwarfed most — nay, half — the room's. He felt secure.

For a nanosecond . . .

“I DID SOMETHING ONCE. AND I STILL WANT CREDIT FOR IT!”

Veikass was bemused to see someone writing about something he'd done at Haverford — *dictation!*

He'd dictated a letter to himself on Maxell audiocassettes that anyone could buy at Record Town™ in 4- or 8-packs — a pretty good idea, you have to admit, or he thought you did — and sent it to some

guy at UMich Ann Arbor who'd been in his English class in high school. No response.

Jeez! ('Cept he mispronounced it, even in his head, as 'Geeze.' Don't ask me why!) Somehow this Bill O'Reilly character at FOXNews had latched onto the same idea. He almost got a hard-on — the pull of validation like a flag up a mast, at last, at last. *He was a person!*

But no. Overanxious for satiation yet again, and driving people bonkers if they couldn't get out of his range, he didn't even notice how pent up and sweaty he was getting, nor how his fantasies, no so much unmoored as overheated and reproducing themselves like cellular mitochondria, took flight from reality.

Fortunately he was alone in his office and could let his mind roam. About 40 minutes passed.

He looked at the clock. What had happened? Oh yes, he had been thinking, having some great ideas.

He shuffled some papers on his desk, and left the room.

5

WHEN THE MINOR, MAJOR AND INCIDENTAL FORKS IN THE ROAD OF YOUR LIFE DRY UP, WHAT ELSE IS THERE TO DO BUT GO ON LIVING, ANYWAY?

Veikass felt bored.

He still couldn't believe — even after applying early! — that Brown had rejected him. They must've not really wanted him. After all, if you get in, you have to go, and they take that into account, as well they should . . . and they *still* sent him the thin, “we're sorry to inform you” letter? It stung.

“Worthless Veikass?”

Oh — somebody was talking to him, that's right, he was someplace, he was supposed to be paying attention: "Ahh . . . short it, but, wait for the rush the other direction to hit."

This caused deep breaths, and wide-eyed glances back and forth.

"But . . . our *exposure*'ll be — "

"You want my advice, it's an unconventional swerve. It'll work." The weight behind his words was the hiring of him (in terms of turning all their guns, turrets and ships in this direction) and the consultancy he represented (he was on the staff of a largeness, period, entity).

The wide-eyed questioner actually reached for and unloosened his tie, before gritting out "Do it." To a subordinate in a voice so gravelly and drained of resolve you could only hear grinding bones, throat and larynx, in it. Like the human spirit had vacated.

Hopefully we'll still be here next week . . .

Or next quarter . . .

Worthless Veikass still couldn't believe he didn't get into Brown. He felt like shit about it.

6

SOMETIMES, LIFE SUCKS SHIT.

Worthless Veikass was dictating to his phone — *amazing*, the technology — since, that remembrance of his eschewed-by-a-dude college idea w/the Maxell tape just, wasn't, an idea, ready, for the times . . .

He looked down at the LED (it *was* still called an LED — *right?*) and couldn't *believe* how long he'd been talking! Wow, there'd be a lot of material there.

Making himself coffee with the \$500 (not the \$300 — fuck *that!*)

coffee make while the transcribing program ran its course, he mused over how he'd deal with his public reception as a genius, a breaker of new waves — yeah! that's the ticket! — wait, where was that from . . .

Worthless Veikass's mind was wandering.

He shook his head, as though it were a separate object, like one of those Christmas time globes he always hated because he was a kid with an obscure Indian religion (“Sufi? *Sufi sufi sufi?*” all those intolerant bigots in 6th grade used to chant at him with their shiny gold buttons on their grey uniforms, same as him, why couldn't he just *make sense to anyone?*) which was why he took up with a Jewish kid he didn't much like (nor he Veikass) because of their shared commiserative guilt about the Holidays and wanting *so bad* to not be sitting at the other table with people unable to make conversation except about protractors or whether “oral sex” was just *talking* about it . . .

There was a quiet, decisive beep from the machine. Technology had become less ostentatious and obtrusive these days.

Immensely pleased with himself, Worthless Veikass almost tripped over himself on the carpet snarls risking spilling his precious fuckin' *all over* the goddamn place only to find out:

43 pages.

That's it?

For five hours of yapping.

Jesus Christ!

And for most of a full day's meetings which were deferred — they were the only ones that were *deferrable* — and would have to be caught up on, during the rest of the week, doubling (at times) his workload to accomplish it.

And it was a barely-not-illegible mess, with the boundaries of the program stretched to the limit, hitting the usual problems with idiom, tone of voice, and inflection, mutated further with Worthless Veikass's general problems with knowing where to put commas — if not semicolons, if not end a sentence altogether — coupled with his socially-deranged problems understanding people had to make

themselves clear to *other people*, not thinking just “it's cool” and enviable as a finished product, but an ongoing practice no-one is exempt from . . . it was a train-wreck, an unpublishable mess in any form barring heavy editing and re-writing such the point that you might as well start over completely altogether, or be someone else somewhere else starting from some other point of entry with different motives and reasons and skillsets, or just shoot yourself.

7

IT'S HARD TO HAVE FRIENDS WHEN YOU'VE NEVER HAD ANY
AND ARE STILL FUCKING WHINING ABOUT IT

Once he learned he didn't “bring anything to the table,” Worthless Veikass hit on the notion of just dodging right in, before somebody'd kick him out, tackle him, or take him out back and shoot him twice in the head (a socially-unlikely possibility — at least, at most prep schools, Ivy-League comparable colleges, or business lunches).

He sighed. He never knew why people thought nerds had a better time in college than in high school — it never occurred to him he was a worthless piece of shit!

Some thought of the kind half-dawned on him, but he always shook it away. That's why he was so herky-jerky, and *tense* of a matter of course, and something to be endured — inexplicably, to others — for the duration of even momentary personal contact.

Worthless Veikass looked at the clock. It was a nice one — the \$1100 one, not the \$800 one — but the truth it told he really didn't want to hear. He really needed to get hom to his wife, and his daughter — who might have a better life than he did; she wasn't a fuckin' asshole. He resented the hell out of her, but squashed it, like he did everything.

He looked at the stack of papers printed out by the transcription program. Maybe he could edit them into something worthwhile, after all. He wished he could think straight!

He smoothed his tie. He hated women, fetishized the living fuck out of the stupid bitches, and wished he could just suck a nice, long cock for once without feeling the shame or guilt that threatened to annihilate his very being.

But nah.

8

TOYOTA-LOVING, FUEL-EFFICIENT MOTHERFUCKER

Years before he fucked the fat girl — sinking him for good into a disgrace he was oblivious about, since she had a back-history comprising both parental abuse as much as crippling, resultant social tics which drove people away with a curious mix of sadness and pity — at Haverford to get his first fuck (he was equally blind-spotted to the “nothing happens when *he's* around” effect his presence in the social circle who had been unable to dodge him w/ the end of senior year of high school, making him an inverse-innovator years before the phrase “cock-blocker” was invented), he got picked on by someone distantly related to Robert Shapiro who made fun of his Swatch™ watch and CB™ jacket, neither of which were quite color-coordinated, even with respect to the own elements of each item, God knows where did he find them, all in some way of nervously screaming “I’m not not *not Sufi!*” like that made any sense, who would they know what was motivating it, anyway, his inability to look or think or choose or act.

Man, that was a bad day.

Like many things, Worthless Veikass had never gotten over it.

He nursed his grudges. He was almost entirely comprised of mental scabs — take *that* shit out to lunch, you know?

Who'd *wanna*.

9

LIE

“Lie!”

Worthless Veikass was on the phone.

“Mm-hm. Mm-hm.” He nodded his head. *This was taking too long.*

“Lies are told where nobody's looking, anyway.” He picked up a pencil, still listening, and twirled it. What a dork.

“Right — well, then, they're not *lies*, are they?” He started thumping the eraser on the desk's inkblotter, waiting for the expected response. What an asshole.

“Wrong — ” (he grinned, like he was getting even half a hardon, like he even *could*) “ — they're *mistakes*.”

Pause.

“So . . . don't *do* that.”

Pause again.

“Try harder. Come up with something. Or let me know if you can't.”

He snapped the phone shut.

What an asshole.

He looked at the printout from the transcriptive program — a bloody mess.

His mind was shit. No doubt about it could be left.

He tossed the pages on the floor. It flashed across his mind — that scene from David Fincher's *Seven*, “a man's mind spilled out on

paper” — but he didn't want to think about it.

He went to lunch — AmEx expense account, somebody's gotta use it, so hey why not me right?

They had no naked-women sushi in town, so he went to Burger King™.

