

Grace Gladys Gibbons

by Matthew Temple

You had a monkey. Her name was Grace. Her middle name was Gladys. Her last name is Gibbons. And we ate vegan grain sausages and stained our fingers with the casing which was plastic. Grace Gladys Gibbons sang a prayer. And everyone got counselling, from the top on down. And you lost your high-powered job, which is the only way to come human. The lucky ones do it. And it is only luck, because no one wants to lose their high-powered job. Almost no one. You brought along your iPhone and instead of us talking you played Angry Birds the whole time. You had to play a game with the form! You had to! Well: I did. It was meaningless not to, to let it sit.

And trips to India. You can ride a bicycle there too, I've heard.

Unemployed. Grace Gibbons was in my bathroom. Grace Gibbons wrote #micropoetry on her coffee table keyboard and smoked.

Grace Gibbons was there. Grace Gibbons understood me. Grace Gibbons had multinational fashion sense. Grace Gibbons doesn't have a problem with gluten. Grace Gibbons was never on the cover of Time Magazine. Grace Gibbons had more class than that. Grace Gibbons would know what to do. Grace Gibbons, Grace Gibbons, Grace Gibbons. And the whole time forgetting that Grace Gibbons was 'just' a monkey. But that made no sense so I forgot it instantly.

Grace Gibbons would have come to my birthday party. Grace Gibbons would have known what to wear. Printed on the side of my headphones it said CHINA Dyg11. As if that explained everything.

And in my backpack is a hand, it's been severed neatly at the wrist and cupped with a water bubble to preserve freshness. I type with one finger. Sometimes two. Grace Gibbons would have known.

Grace Gibbons would have remembered her name. Grace Gibbons is an asshole. Grace Gibbons knew how to ride a bicycle. And from the worst possible soil came the best possible plant—does that mean to keep putting down the worst possible soil? Grace Gibbons would know. The hand represents stolen—something stolen, a stolen idea, a stolen moment perhaps. The fact that it's severed represents

Available online at *«<http://fictionaut.com/stories/matthew-temple/grace-gladys-gibbons>»*

Copyright © 2012 Matthew Temple. All rights reserved.

stolenness, again, and the fact that it's in a backpack means it's a secret I'm keeping from someone. I googled all that. Did I spell Google with a capital G earlier? I think it's emergent. Lowercase g as a verb, uppercase G if it's a company name. They lost their trademark. Lego. Tissue. Kleenex. You know what I mean. Of course you do. I knew it. I knew your hipster twitter photograph meant more than expected, meant you had skill and knowledge and it was more than just knowing how to pick out a tshirt. Overvision. Viewing the screen and the keyboard at the same time. That's all to look at, all there is anymore. You might have seen an elephant. You might have seen a rose. You might have seen Grace Gibbons dressed up in her underwear. That's the circus. I saw Grace Gibbons dressed up in her underwear. Grace Gibbons is a way of life. Grace Gibbons has the golden ticket. Grace Gibbons gnaws her way through problems. Grace Gibbons owns a pair of padded handcuffs. We found the key. But you had a hipster eyecon in my eyelash and I can never unstick you. There's a copy shop at that train station. Ditmars, I believe, in Astoria. Across the street is a place that buys used PlayStations. That copy shop sells orange juice and you can use the computers for free. Grace Gibbons works there. Grace Gibbons has a fake ID. Grace Gibbons just moved to Portland. Grace Gibbons has a degree. So plant the worst dirt, that's the way to do it. Plants grow anyway. That's their thing. They'd grow on concrete if you'd let them. The seed is everything, the dirt is nothing. Grace Gibbons has a degree in biology. Grace Gibbons has a furry hat. Grace Gibbons has a fuzzy hat. Grace Gibbons has a funny name. Grace Gibbons has a strap tied to her face that lets the crumbs in. They tied it in space and she hasn't let it out since. A door was opened. A family went to Hawaii. They had never been before. And now they play on the rope swing on the side of the house and make a chicken run. Grace Gibbons likes chicken. I had unopened mail. She promised to send a package but I think she was just sussing out my new address. Stalker. Anti-stalker. To call the police. A movement. Afraid of it being over. Afraid to take another step. Afraid we're heading for a cliff. Cliff of completeness.

Every brick put in place and someday it'll be over, I don't want to work anymore, never wanted to work on it and seeking to not be here (chemically) actually does work while it's working and actually doesn't work while it's not. Grace Gibbons tried it, once. She knows how good it is. Severed hand in a bookbag. Grace Gibbons carries the bag, she sashes up to a mailbox, opens the door, drops the bag in. Grace Gibbons helped me dispose of my dream symbol. What will I do with the rest of my day? What will I do when it's done? I will be empty, will lack, will need, will want something to do. I wish I could be involved all the time, wish energy was infinite, that there would never be a break, that Grace Gibbons was always on duty. Could eat grain sausages and tear the heads of beetles and take away your love constantly, with Grace Gibbons there like a drill sergeant, making us. Making us. Making us. Organize our files. Grace Gibbons has a dongle. They should make email more effective. And do the redesign. Product effectiveness. Grace Gibbons is a PM. And a CEO and an MBA. Grace Gibbons does it all. I wish I'd never heard of Grace Gibbons. She sang a song to me when I was in middle school, I don't recall the words, but it was one of those dirty sexual songs that children sing in little children-culture and she sang it to me and it taught me a few things, that I learned in Georgia font in twelve point knowledge. Like the Zen Buddhists. They were singing songs, too. And Elmo was there, doing his little dance. And Tori Amos sang along with god and there was only one way forward. It had been laid out, time in turning, pebble by pebble by stone. You took one step. It moved you. Ending. You placed a word. Grace Gibbons came in on the horns. Then Confucius dolloped an aphorism and we all grew fat on philosophy. I had something in my eye; I think it was Grace Gibbons. And it really did come from the worst dirt. I was floored to see how the seeds grow. But I wasn't much of a gardener, clearly. What did I know? I know you think it's time for me to say something else about Grace Gibbons—right there—but it's not time for that. It's time we put Grace Gladys Gibbons to rest, and warded ourselves away for the present. For it is ending. The dome will slide back and there

will be a constellation inside. Grace Gladys Gibbons will be singing you a song about the dirty little things that young boys and girls want to do to each other, lifting dresses and sticking fingers in here and touching up there. And Grace Gladys Gibbons will have no grace, no patience. Grace Gladys Gibbons will punish us, uselessly, microphone will be a keg stand, GGG's name will be truncated on the way to the pipeline, associations will be multiplied, and the technique will be buried under years and years of sand. A central Pennsylvania bank teller will scratch my balls. She'll turn twenty-one in my bathroom. Grace Gladys Gibbons will pony us all; she will preside (over it). And GGG will be your name, Dear Reader, when you go to sleep at night. The fairytales will tell themselves to Grace Gladys Gibbons, whatever your name used to be. From now on (for the rest of the day) I dub thee Grace Gladys Gibbons, to have and to hold, to be and to remember, to sink and to swim, you are now G, G, G.

