Sealing off the Exits

by Smiley McGrouchpants, Jr-Esq-III

"Oh, they called you 'Prem' in high school?" Ben Reign laughed. "I'll call you that, then, too!"

But it's college, I wanted to say. *I want to leave high school behind*. But the conversation had moved on, already.

It was time to go see a movie.

My name's Mike Preminger. I'm 21 years old, and I'm trying to figure out who I am.

Mikey Seigheilin said that he was a nice guy. He assured me he was. Ayn Rand Gives Me a Boner, he said, in a weird, intended-to-be-half-ironic voice, and chuckled, then opened his hands, as if to say, You see? Just kidding!

I didn't know how to get out of there. I didn't know how I got there. I didn't see the door.

Merry Eddie stared me in the eyes, drank up, then talked. Then waddled away. I couldn't tell if he/she was male or female.

S/he stole my friend, after looking in my eyes, while I sat there and watched, unable to do anything, unable to break in the conversation. It was like being in college, when you just sit a few people down from where the happening conversation is happening, and you want to get involved, but you're too far away, so you have to sit there and listen, envying the few-seats-over people. The people near you, apparently, have nothing to say. And all because you chose the wrong seat for lunch.

Try again tomorrow. Try again next time.

(But how? How to do it on purpose? And you can't just run out of chances, eventually, always sitting there with the not-talking people and never hearing your own voice, never hearing yourself talk . . . can you?)

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Jasmine invited herself over and plopped herself on my futon. "Let's fuck," she said, bluntly. "I want to."

I didn't know how to say no. It's hard, if you're a guy, even if that sounds ridiculous. Guys don't say no . . . right?

I almost vomited later, but had to keep it inside (as always).

Viko Lunatic was eyeing me from across the room, waiting to make his move. He thinks I'm gay. He thinks he's bi, so he thinks all people are bi, so I must be bi -- I just "don't know it" yet. I'm "inhibited." I don't have a "trust fund."

(I actually don't . . . and he actually does. Which is why I don't need this shit . . . and why he doesn't give a fuck, 'cause if time is money, and he never has to worry about money, he doesn't have to worry about time, either, so he can spin his wheels indefinitely . . . unlike moi.)

Personally, I don't believe in bi guys. I just don't. (Marco Vassi seems to me to be the only exception.) John Waters doesn't strike me as ambivalent on the matter. Nor Stephin Merritt. Nor Dan Savage (who's gone, erhm, on record to that effect).

Guys are what they are, either/or, and emphatically that. Anything else's just too complicated. Or so it seems to me.

(But: I'm only 21! Give me a break! I'm doing the best I can! How'm I supposed to know everything?)

Marcia Shorn sat down next to me, whipping her long blond hair back, lighting two Marlboro lights, and handing me one. "Call me Marcia Brady," she said. "Everyone does." She looked into my eyes, bewitchingly.

But, aren't you my sister's friend? I thought, confused. Why are you here? These are my friends. How many people am I supposed to be a friend to, at once?

"I'm having a great time," she said, moving closer. She batted her eyelids at me. She had written, HINT HINT, on them.

for Rachel B. Glaser,
a Real Team Player