

Drinking with Caliban

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A rocky and desolate island. Patches of stunted life grow here and there. The sun is too large, the light bloody. A boat arrives. MIRANDA comes ashore. She is in her mid-50s, stout but still strong and healthy. She is dressed for hiking and carries a large backpack and a walking stick that appears to have been broken and repaired. She sets the boat adrift, takes her pack off, sits, and has a small meal of trail mix and water.

There is movement. A shadow. Barely noticeable.

MIRANDA

Hi.

There is a growling sound.

MIRANDA

I know. It's been a long time.

More growling. Movement.

MIRANDA

Still. I . . . I . . .

Silence.

MIRANDA

I had it all planned out. What I would say. How I would say it. Now. It just seems . . . in sufficient. I'm . . . I am sorry.

An explosion of movement and CALIBAN, a large, animal-like and ferocious shape moves fast toward her, stopping just inches from her face. He is grey and scaly, with predator teeth. A poised and contained violence hangs in the air between the two. Miranda holds a knife aimed directly under Caliban's sternum.

Not. Enough.

CALIBAN

The two take stock of each other for a long time.

Feh.

CALIBAN

Caliban backs down, moves several feet away and sits, picking at a small clump of grass. Miranda sheaths her knife.

Alone. So long.

CALIBAN

Yeah. I . . . I'm-

MIRANDA

Don't say you are feckin' sorry, ok? Just don't. You aren't. Not really.

CALIBAN

I am-

MIRANDA

Not in any way that counts.

CALIBAN

Long silence.

MIRANDA

I . . . I brought you something.

She digs in her bag and pulls out a 3 Musketeers bar.

CALIBAN

You think you can buy me with chocolate? Keep it.

She sets the candy bar down on a rock nearby rather than putting it away. She digs again and pulls out a bottle of Jamesons whiskey.

CALIBAN

Mir, I don't. This is just . . . it's been centuries gods damn it and now you offer some . . . I've been alone.

MIRANDA

I know. I . . . look, these aren't, I mean, I'm not trying to buy you, to atone with cheap gifts, I just. I thought you might like them. I didn't . . . I don't . . .

Long pause.

MIRANDA

I want to have a drink with you. We didn't get a chance to do that before I left. Just you and me, a bottle. We don't have to talk if you don't want. I know its selfish, stupid maybe. Too much history and too much pain. But lately, I just . . . I've been thinking about this. Us. Sitting here, sharing a drink. Sometimes talking. Sometimes silent. Sometimes . . . laughing. I'm . . . I'm not that girl anymore. I wouldn't leave like that again. Wouldn't. So many things I wouldn't have done. Would have done. Wanted, was too scared and now . . . have a drink with me. Please.

CALIBAN

Mir. I. Fine. But I don't forgive you.

MIRANDA

I don't expect you to.

She pulls out some plastic cups from her bag and pours them both four fingers of whiskey and hands one to Caliban who has come to sit closer to her. Caliban starts to drink but Miranda stops him.

MIRANDA

Wait. Here's to . . . to . . .

CALIBAN

Here's to survival.

Pause.

MIRANDA

To survival.

They tap cups and each drink.

They do not talk.

Caliban refuses to look at Miranda.

After a long while, they finish their whiskey and Miranda pours them each another.

MIRANDA

Do you think . . . maybe . . . it might happen. Someday?

CALIBAN

What?

MIRANDA

That we might laugh again? Together?

Silence.

Silence.

They drink.

CALIBAN

It'll take a long time, Mir. A long time. Even then . . . truth? I don't know.

MIRANDA

Ok. That's . . . I . . . ok. I can . . . I mean, we have the rest of my life. No escape. No rescue. No running away.

They sit for a long time. They drink. Miranda reaches out to lightly touch Caliban's arm. He flinches but does not pull away.

Long, long fade to black.