

MOTELIER

Written by

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**EXT. MOTEL - EVENING**

The facade of a tatty beachside motel; the weatherboard cladding is streaked with seagull shit, the sign that reads 'Ocean Breeze Motel' in stylised blue script is peeling all over, and someone has graffitied nipples onto the curves of the 'B'.

**EXT. MOTEL POOL - EVENING**

A small, kidney shaped pool, scum accumulated around the edges, a scuffed foam paddle board floating on the surface of the water.

**EXT. MOTEL PATIO - EVENING**

White plastic lawn furniture is arranged in clusters and a rust-streaked lamp-post stands in each corner. The ocean is visible beyond. KATRINA (late 40s) walks through carrying a cask of Chardonnay. She is attractive, but styled brashly - bleached blonde hair, red nail polish, coral lipstick. Behind her, one of the flimsy deck chairs tips over in the wind.

**INT. MOTEL BAR - EVENING**

Motel guests, mostly men and all middle aged, sit in clusters around bar tables. Porthole shaped windows look out onto the back patio and a sliding door with moth-eaten fly-wire connects them. The interior is dated and kitschy.

Katrina emerges from the door behind the bar, pushing it open with her hip. Two clear dispensers sit on the bar, one full of red wine and one with only a few inches of white left. JOHN (middle-aged, red-faced) stands waiting with his empty glass under the spout.

Katrina heaves the cask of Chardonnay onto the bar. She opens the white wine dispenser, pulls the cap off the cask, and tips it in.

JOHN  
Is that Riesling?

KATRINA  
Chardonnay.

JOHN  
There was already Riesling in there.

Katrina raises her pencilled-in eyebrow at him as the last of the wine glugs into the dispenser.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
You can't mix wine.

KATRINA  
It's not really wine, is it?

JOHN  
So no more Riesling? Can you check  
the back?

KATRINA  
What're you drinking white wine for  
anyway? Are you a Real Housewife?  
You want two ice cubes and a  
fuckin' cocktail umbrella?

JOHN  
(murmuring)  
Bitch.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)  
What's that, Johnny-boy?

RAFE (mid-50s, balding, wearing thongs) emerges from the  
door behind the bar. He circles around to clap John on the  
shoulder.

JOHN  
Just saying that your wife here  
seems to be on her period again.

RAFE  
Probably one of her last, let her  
enjoy it.

Rafe and John laugh. Katrina stands with her hands on her  
hips. She points at the now empty cask.

KATRINA  
Didn't I ask you not to leave  
deliveries in the alley-way?

RAFE  
(stage-whispering to  
John)  
Always telling me where to put my  
package.

KATRINA  
(also to John)  
See, that's a very clever entendre  
for all the times I've asked him  
not to stick his cock in other  
women.

Rafe laughs sharply, then slaps John's shoulder again, too hard.

RAFE

That—she's a *funny woman*, isn't she? Sit, I'll bring you over a beer. On me.

John looks between them and, then nods and walks away from the bar.

KATRINA

He doesn't like beer. Mix him a Cosmopolitan.

Rafe leans on the bar. Katrina begins wiping it with a cloth. Rafe watches her as she circles the same spot; wipe, wipe, wipe.

RAFE

Kat?

Katrina sets down her cloth, picks up a pint glass, and shoves it under the beer tap.

RAFE (CONT'D)

Kit-Kat?

Katrina releases the tap and slides the glass over to Rafe, meeting his eye. They look at each other, Rafe with his lip quirked, like he's waiting for Katrina to return the smile. She doesn't. Rafe sighs and picks up the glass.

**EXT. MOTEL PATIO - EVENING**

Katrina leans against the back of one of the flimsy deck chairs, smoking a cigarette. Her arms are folded tightly across her chest and she is looking out at the ocean. The sky is dusky blue.

A MOTEL GUEST (20s, brunette, tall) approaches. He has a packet of cigarettes and a slim paperback in his hand.

MOTEL GUEST

Mind?

Katrina waves her hand to indicate that she does not. The Motel Guest sits in one of the deck chairs, folding his legs in front of him, and lights a cigarette. They smoke in silence for a beat before he speaks.

MOTEL GUEST (CONT'D)

Should've sprung for a balcony room.

Katrina ashes her cigarette.

MOTEL GUEST (CONT'D)  
It's an aspirational thing for me,  
you know? I'm like, I'll book a  
room without a balcony so it'll be  
too inconvenient to smoke.

Katrina looks at him briefly, and then away again.

MOTEL GUEST (CONT'D)  
And then, course, I end up feening  
so hard I just come down here  
anyway. You the same?

Katrina exhales a plume of silvery smoke directly above her head.

KATRINA  
I work here.

MOTEL GUEST  
Oh? Like, what, front desk?

KATRINA  
Like, owner.

MOTEL GUEST  
Owner?

KATRINA  
Uh-huh.

MOTEL GUEST  
I thought that guy Rafe was the  
owner.

KATRINA  
Rafe. Co-owner, then.

MOTEL GUEST  
Is he your husband?

KATRINA  
Yes.

A wave crashes loudly. Katrina puts out her cigarette.

**INT. MOTEL BAR - EVENING**

Katrina collects empty glasses from the bar. It is loud inside; tinny music and rowdy divorcees. Rafe holds court at one of the tables, beer in hand. The group surrounding him laugh uproariously as he speaks. They all look alike.

Middle aged men, balding and greying to various degrees, polo shirts over beer guts. Katrina stands, holding the glasses, watching. For a second, as she watches, it is a crowd of Rafe's, guffawing and slapping each others' backs, red-faced with laughter, tripping over themselves with it.

**EXT. MOTEL PATIO - NIGHT**

Katrina stands at the edge of the patio again. The sky is noticeably darker – the smouldering tip of her cigarette is fire-bright in the dimness. Ash falls away as Katrina stares out, her gaze unfocused, her face tight. Her thoughts are far away. She does not turn around at the sound of the sliding door between bar and patio opening and closing.

MOTEL GUEST (O.S.)  
Finished for the night?

KATRINA  
(holding up her  
cigarette)  
Fag break.

The Motel Guest comes to stand at the edge of the patio too, leaning on the low railing, about three feet between him and Katrina. The paperback is in his back pocket.

MOTEL GUEST  
Again?

Katrina looks briefly at him, then back at the dark beach. The lamp-posts blink on all at once with hazy, yellow light.

KATRINA  
You spend ten minutes in that bar,  
and then tell me if you need a  
cigarette.

The Motel Guest lights a cigarette with his hand firmly cupped around it. He speaks as he does it.

MOTEL GUEST  
I just passed through on my way out  
here. It's an interesting crowd.

KATRINA  
Collection of fucking idiots.

The Motel Guest gives a small, surprised laugh. Katrina flicks her cigarette over the railing, onto the sand. She turns to face the Motel Guest and points towards the bar.

KATRINA (CONT'D)  
That sound?

The raucous laughter and chatter increases in volume, a sudden eruption of unintelligible cheering and riotous guffaws.

KATRINA (CONT'D)

That's the sound of misery. Fucking miserable cunts who forget they're miserable cunts after a few pints.

MOTEL GUEST

It's loud.

**INT. MOTEL BAR - NIGHT**

Rafe has his arm around a WOMAN WHO LOOKS LIKE KATRINA. She has the same shoddily-dyed blonde hair, pencilled-in eyebrows and acrylic nails. She is clutching a glass of red wine and Rafe, gesturing wildly, knocks it with his fist. The wine spills. The Katrina look-alike jumps. Her camisole is soaked.

RAFE

Oh shit! Fuck, love! My-clumsy fucker, aren't I? So sorry about that, come. Let's get you changed-and another drink, on me.

He leads her away from their table, past the bar where Katrina stands, watching.

RAFE (CONT'D)

Pour her a new red, would you?

**EXT. MOTEL PATIO - NIGHT**

Katrina sits at one of the rickety patio tables, her back to the beach. There is an ashtray on the table in front of her.

KATRINA

I was a teacher.

MOTEL GUEST (O.S.)

Really?

KATRINA

Yeah.

They tap their cigarettes on opposite sides of the ashtray. The Motel Guest sits across from Katrina, his back to the bar.

MOTEL GUEST

Highschool?

KATRINA  
Primary.

MOTEL GUEST  
You like it?

KATRINA  
No.

MOTEL GUEST  
No?

Katrina inhales and exhales loudly and slowly on her cigarette.

KATRINA  
Nope.

MOTEL GUEST  
Why not?

KATRINA  
Don't like kids. You have kids?

MOTEL GUEST  
I'm—I'm twenty-two.

There's a sudden, grating sound as one of the porthole shaped windows judders open. The Motel Guest looks over his shoulder. Rafe's head appears through the window.

RAFE  
Kat? Need you on the taps, alright?

Katrina holds up her cigarette, meeting his gaze evenly.

RAFE (CONT'D)  
(sighing)  
Just—fuckin' hurry, yeah?

Rafe draws his head back in. His hand appears. The fuzzy yellow light of the patio lamps glints off a gold wedding band on his ring finger. He pulls the window closed. Katrina flicks her eyes back to the Motel Guest.

KATRINA  
Don't have kids, okay?

MOTEL GUEST  
You don't have any of your own, then?



KATRINA

God no. At least I could walk out of that classroom and never have to see any of those—you know I taught a Hermione? This fucking generation of parents—the last year I ever taught, I had two Hermiones, fucking bullshit. The last fucking straw.

Katrina puts out her cigarette. The ash-tray is full and spilling onto the table.

**INT. MOTEL BAR - NIGHT**

Katrina stands behind the bar, hand on one of the beer taps, filling five glasses, one after another. When she is finished, she slides them across the bar where a flock of several hands collect them. Katrina stands still for a moment, then reaches under the bar. She retrieves a notepad and a Sharpie, scrawls on the top page, caps the Sharpie and sits the notepad up against the bar taps. It reads 'ASK RAFE'.

**EXT. MOTEL PATIO - NIGHT**

A packet of Marlboro Reds sits on the table atop the Motel Guest's paperback, which is facedown. A hand removes two cigarettes. The Motel Guest puts both between his teeth, lights them, and hands one to Katrina. They sit at the same table, Katrina with her back to the bar, the Motel Guest with his to the beach.

KATRINA

What is it?

MOTEL GUEST

Hm?

Katrina nods at the book.

KATRINA

What're you reading?

MOTEL GUEST

Oh.

(picking up the book)

On The Road. It's Jack Kerouac. It's *roman à clef*, it's about—

He stops with a small laugh at Katrina rolling her eyes.

MOTEL GUEST (CONT'D)

You're not a fan?

KATRINA

Depends. Do you actually enjoy it,  
or is it all part of-  
(gesturing at him)  
-this.

MOTEL GUEST

What's 'this'?

KATRINA

Smoking Marlboro Reds at some  
shithole on the coast with an old  
fucking woman. Is this going in  
your memoirs? Do you have a  
typewriter up in your room?

MOTEL GUEST

You're not old.

KATRINA

That's very sweet.

MOTEL GUEST

I do like it. I've read it like,  
five times.

KATRINA

I believe you.

The Motel Guest leafs through the book, cigarette between  
his teeth.

MOTEL GUEST

I think you'd like it.

KATRINA

I don't read.

MOTEL GUEST

Ever?

KATRINA

You see a bookshop around here?

The Motel Guest takes his cigarette out of his mouth. He  
puts the book on the table and pushes it over to Katrina.

MOTEL GUEST

Here.

Katrina raises her eyebrow as she exhales smoke.

MOTEL GUEST (CONT'D)  
 Keep it. Try it, it changed my  
 life, really.

KATRINA  
 You think my life needs changing?

MOTEL GUEST  
 Whose doesn't?

Katrina picks up the book, tapping it against her clavicle.

KATRINA  
 This was the change.

MOTEL GUEST  
 What d'you mean?

KATRINA  
 This. This *endeavour*.

Behind her, the sliding door clatters - through the frosted glass and fly-wire, it appears someone has fallen against it. There's a swell of bawdy laughter.

MOTEL GUEST  
 What, like, when you were a  
 teacher?

KATRINA  
 Mm.

MOTEL GUEST  
 Teacher to motelier is a sharp  
 pivot.

KATRINA  
 Not sharp enough.

Katrina sets the book down on the table. She stands up.

MOTEL GUEST  
 Back inside?

KATRINA  
 No.

She walks towards the railing at the patio's edge and swings her leg over.

KATRINA (CONT'D)  
 Been for a swim yet?

The Motel Guest stands too, watching her.

MOTEL GUEST

Er-no, not yet. You're not-isn't it  
way too cold right now?

KATRINA

It's not as cold as you'd think.

Feet on the sand, Katrina begins to walk down the dark beach. The Motel Guests is still for another second, and then he hastens to follow her, climbing over the railing. As they walk, the two figures melt into the darkness of the beach, the inky black sky and water, their voices echoing back.

MOTEL GUEST

I don't-I might not go in. I get  
cold really easily.

KATRINA

That's okay. Just a quick swim,  
then I should get back inside.