THE WOMAN WHO CAME AT SIX O'CLOCK

Adapted from a short story by Gabriel Garcia Marquez

SCENE. Jose´s restaurant, located in barrio Santa Fe, Bogota. We see Jose, a bear of a man with a huge head. He is wiping down a counter. The restaurant is empty, as it always is at this hour, until at least 6.30 when it fills up. Jose pauses to check the time on the clock, which is plainly visible. The hands show the time to be six o'clock. He resumes wiping with slightly more haste. A woman enters. She has an unlit cigarette between her lips. She sits in a swivel chair at the end of the counter

**JOSE**

**Hi queenie, what will it be today?**

**REINA**

First of all I want to teach you to be a gentleman

(She is sitting at the end of the bar and opens her mouth to show the cigarette is still unlit.)

**JOSE**

I hadn’t realized..

**REINA**

You don’t realize shit.

(Jose moves to the end of the kitchen to fetch matches, then lights her cigarette.)

**JOSE**

You’re beautiful today queenie.

**REINA**

Cut the crap. I’m not paying you ..

**JOSE**

I didn’t mean that. I’m going to make you a nice steak.

**REINA**

I still don’t have any money.

**JOSE**

Three months you haven’t money, and I always make you something good.

**REINA**

Today is different

**JOSE**

Every day is the same. Every day you come in here at six o’clock and say you’re hungry as a dog. And then I make you something good. The only difference is that today you don’t say that, so today is different?

**REINA**

…and it’s true. It’s true Jose, Today is different. Today I didn’t come at six, that’s why it’s different Jose**.**

**JOSE**

I’ll cut off my arm if that clock is behind one minute.

**REINA**

It’s not that Jose, It’s that today I didn’t come at six. I came at a quarter to six.

**JOSE**

It’s already past six queenie. When you came in it was already six.

**REINA**

I’ve been here a quarter of an hour.

**JOSE**

Let me smell your breath.

**REINA**

Cut it Jose. You know I haven’t had a drink in six months.

**JOSE**

You can say that to someone else but not me. I bet at least you’ve had one litre. Maybe two..

**REINA**

I had a couple of drinks with a friend.

**JOSE**

Ah, the truth at last.

**REINA**

There’s no truth to tell. I’ve been here a quarter of an hour.

**JOSE**

Ok if you like. You’ve been here a quarter of an hour. After all, who cares about a few minutes more or less.

**REINA**

Yes, it’s important Jose. And not just because I want it. I’ve been here a quarter of an hour. (She looks at the clock). There, I’ve been here 20 minutes.

**JOSE**

Ok queenie. I’ll give you a whole day and the night too if it makes you happy. I want to see you happy. You know I’m in love with you.

**REINA**

Siii…what a discovery. You think I’d go with you for a million pesos?

**JOSE**

I didn’t mean it like that. Let me make you a good steak.

**REINA**

I didn’t say it because of that. It’s that no woman could stand a face like yours for a million pesos.

**JOSE**

Ufff… you’re impossible today Queenie. I think it’s best if you eat your steak and go home to bed.

**REINA**

I’m not hungry. Is it true that you love me Pepillo?

**JOSE**

Yes, it’s true.

**REINA**

Despite what I told you?

**JOSE**

What did you tell me?

**REINA**

…that about a million pesos.

**JOSE**

I’d already forgotten it.

**REINA**

Then you love me.

**JOSE**

Yes

**REINA**

Even though I wouldn’t sleep with you?

**JOSE**

I love you so much that I wouldn’t sleep with you. I love you so much that every afternoon I’d kill the man who goes with you.

**REINA**

You’re jealous Jose! Que rico, you’re jealous.

**JOSE**

Today you don’t understand anything queenie. This life is making you hard.

**REINA**

Then no? You’re not jealous?

**JOSE**

In a way, but not like you say.

**REINA**

Then?

**JOSE**

What I mean is, I love you so much I don’t like you having to do – what you do.

**REINA**

What?

**JOSE**

Going with a different man every day.

**REINA**

So … you’d kill someone so they coudn’t go with me?

**JOSE**

So that they couldn’t go with you? No. I’d kill him because he went with you.

**REINA**

It’s the same.

**JOSE**

Yeah, I guess it is.

**REINA**

Oye, Jose… you’re capable of killing someone?

**JOSE**

In that case, yes.

**REINA**

Que horror! Jose killing a man. Who would have said Mr. Fat Gross Jose who never charges me, who feeds me a steak everyday, and stays talking to me until I find a man, is a murderer. Que horror! I’m frightened Jose. Really!

**JOSE**

You’re drunk. Go home and sleep it off. You can’t even eat something.

**REINA**

Is it true that you love me Jose?

Jose?

Jose!

**JOSE**

Go home and take a bath before you go to bed. Sober you up.

**REINA**

Seriously Jose. I’m not drunk.

**JOSE**

Then you’ve gone stupid.

**REINA**

Come here, I want to talk to you. *Acercate Jose!* Tell me what you said from the beginning.

**JOSE**

What?

**REINA**

That you’d kill a man who went with me.

**JOSE**

I’d kill a man who went with you queenie. True.

**REINA**

Then you’d defend me if I killed him? Answer me Jose. Would you defend me if I killed somebody.

**JOSE**

That depends. You know it’s not as easy as you say.

**REINA**

No one would believe you more than the pólice. It’s true Jose. I bet you’ve never told a lie in your life.

**JOSE**

That’s not going to get you anywhere.

**REINA**

Whatever. The pólice know you and believe everything you say without asking twice. Would you tell a lie for me Jose?

**JOSE**

What kind of trouble have you got yourself into queenie? I’m serious. What did you do?

**REINA**

Nothing. I was just asking to entertain myself. You don’t have to kill anyone.

**JOSE**

I’ve never even thought of killing anyone.

**REINA**

No *hombre*! I said someone who went with me.

**JOSE**

Ah now you’re making sense. You don’t need this life of yours queenie. I always believed that. If you leave off I’ll make you the biggest steak in the world, free of charge.

**REINA**

Thanks Jose. But it isn’t that. It’s that I *couldn’t* go with anyone.

**JOSE**

Now you’re starting to complícate things.

**REINA**

I’m not complicating anything. Tomorrow I’m going and I promise I’ll never return to bother you again. I proimse I won’t go with anybody ever again.

**JOSE**

…and where are you going in this fever?

**REINA**

I made up my mind awhile ago. I just suddenly realized this is all bullshit.

**JOSE**

Sure it is, what you do. You must have known that.

**REINA**

Yeah I have, for awhile now. But just recently I got convinced of it. Men disgust me. Don’t you think they should leave a woman alone who killed a man because after being with him she felt disgust by him, and everyone she’d ever been with?

**JOSE**

Well you don’t have to go that far.

**REINA**

…and if the woman tells the man while she’s watching him dress that she’s disgusted by him, because she’d been wallowing around with him all afternoon and she felt that even soap and wáter wouldn’t get his smell off her body?

**JOSE**

That happens queenie. There’s no need to kill him. Just let him go.

**REINA**

…and if the woman tells the man she feels disgust by him, and the man stops dressing and runs after her again, tries to kiss her again, and …

**JOSE**

No decent man would do that.

**REINA**

… but if he did. If the man isn’t decent and did it, and she knows the only way to finish it is to stick in a knife? Down below?

**JOSE**

That’s horrible queenie. Fortunately there isn’t a man who would do what you say.

**REINA**

Fine. And if one did? Suppose one did.

**JOSE**

Anyway it’s nothing … means nothing.

**REINA**

You’re a savage Jose. *Un salvaje*. *No entiendes nada*. Go ahead, tell me if she should kill him.

**JOSE**

Ok, anything you say queenie.

**REINA**

Isn’t that self defense?

**JOSE**

Almost, almost.

**REINA**

Would you tell a lie to defend a woman who did that?

**JOSE**

It depends.

**REINA**

*Depende de que?*

**JOSE**

*Depende de la mujer.*

**REINA**

Suppose it was a woman you loved very much. Not to go with her, but to love … like you said …someone you loved.

**JOSE**

Well, whatever you like queenie.

**REINA**

Jose? I told you I’m leaving tomorrow and you haven’t said anything.

**JOSE**

Yeah. What you haven’t told me is where.

**REINA**

Anywhere. Where there aren’t men who want to go with you.

**JOSE**

Seriously? You’re leaving?

**REINA**

That depends on you. If you say when I came, like I asked you, I’ll leave tomorrow and never again think or talk of these things. Would you like that? And if some day I return and find you talkingto another woman here in this chair, at this hour, I’ll be jealous as hell.

**JOSE**

If you come back here you have to bring me something.

**REINA**

I’ll look over the entire world to find you a teddy bear, made of leather.

**JOSE**

What?

**REINA**

If anyone asks you’ll say I came at a quarter to six?

**JOSE**

What for?

**REINA**

That doesn’t matter. The thing is that you do it, that you tell them, yes?

**JOSE**

Ok queenie, whatever you like. I always do what you ask, you know that.

**REINA**

Good. Now make me a steak…

**JOSE**

I’m going to make you a farewell steak queenie.

**REINA**

Thanks Pepillo.

(UNA PAUSA)

Pepillo?

**JOSE**

Ah?

**REINA**

What are you thinking about?

**JOSE**

I was wondering if you could find somewhere in the world this leather teddy bear.

**REINA**

Of course! But what I really want you to do is do what I ask, as a farewell gift.

**JOSE**

You want something more than the world’s best steak?

**REINA**

Yes.

**JOSE**

What?

**REINA**

I want another quarter of an hour.

**JOSE**

I don’t get you queenie. *En serio, I don’t*.

**REINA**

Don’t be a fool Jose. Agree that I was here from five thirty.

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