

# Fair's Fair & More

by [Lucius Falkland](#) (February 2025)



Before Dinner (Pierre Bonnard, 1924)

## Fair's Fair

We're always taught as children we should share:  
Be it Golden Wonder crisps or He-Man toys.  
"He let you play with Panthor, now. Fair's fair.  
"Don't be a meanie. Please play nicely boys!"

But adults, so it seems, can "over-share."  
How strange that when she's with her past effusive  
We say she's *like* a child. It's hard to bear,  
Her stating that her mother was abusive.

Why does she announce this? Can't she tell,  
Being strangers (we just met her at the bar),  
That crying out for help, that she's in Hell,  
A part of us will scream, "Run! Run, quite far!"?  
But then another part says, "Hold her tight.  
"She needs you. Share your own life, your concern."  
Even though another warns, "This cat will bite!  
"She's a broken toy." But somehow it's your turn.

### **The Parable of the Young Woman and Her Old Man** *Judges, 19.*

In the days when Israel had no king  
The father taught his progeny-princess  
She was the Holy One. Just like God she  
Was that she was; she anything could be.  
One day the father took his little girl  
To Gibeah, so far from forebears' lands,  
Where one man very kindly let them in  
To stay the night and wash their feet and drink.

Then whited women banged upon the door:  
"Bring out the girl from Judah so we may  
"Bring out of her a sense of self that's true,  
"The Holy One beneath the olive skin."  
The men, feet washed, refreshed with bread and wine  
Feared not the Lord; content, their bellies full,  
But only Man, their status in the tribe,  
So gave her to the women massed outside  
Who also knew she was the sacred child.

The wicked fell upon her. Morning dawned.  
She told her father she had changed within:  
A "him" was now imprisoned in her skin;  
Shackled in the dark; desiring death.  
The father took a knife, as princess wished,  
Cut out her ovaries; sliced off her breasts.  
But later, when the scales fell from her eyes,  
Her father cried, "What have I done to thee?!"  
"I made thee thy own father and not me!"  
Burnt offerings to the forefathers they made  
Whose struggles, wars and tears they had betrayed.

## **The Victorians**

As I spoke to her in Spanish about you,  
The obsessive, quirky lady; the enticing, poignant new  
Muse, from your faux-Victorian face I just caught sight  
Of that stare, like quartz in dark-slate coloured granite  
Hardened by a childhood so much stonier than mine  
So that accent, dress and humour were quarried from a distant  
time:  
You've got the role; young spinster, pre-Great War,  
But life had you method-act it more than any girl before.

At twelve, her belt, your knickers down, until your buttocks  
swelled grey-blue,  
At Mother's time-warped hand, as that granite you pierced  
through  
In that second where you dropped your Victorian pantomime  
To glare at her and me as if to say, "He's mine! He's mine!"  
"And do not speak to her in that tongue from beyond the brine,  
"Because you're mine, Victorian gentleman, so dapper, fit and  
fine.  
"We will melt into Empire-fairing waves as they undulate and

climb

“And you’ll rescue me from Sepoys, Thugs, until the end of time.”

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