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Jig, a young American, sat outside the café, fascinated by the palm trees swaying in the warm breeze. In front of him was a sun-baked cobblestone street that led to the beach. The ocean was just out of view, but he thought he could hear the piping of the little shore birds playing tag with the waves. The older man, Corbin, slowly walked to the table to join him.

“Our train to Madrid is late. Another forty minutes.”

“Good,” Jig said, “we have time for another drink.” Jig waved down the waiter, disturbing the flies on the table.

The older man raised an eyebrow. They’d already drunk a lot. On the other hand, it was very hot. “Dos cervezas,” the older man said.

“What kind?” the waiter asked.

“Something local. Something Catalan.”

The waiter went back to the bar. Jig pointed to the palm trees.

“I think I should have been a palm tree. Palm trees are so calm. Palm trees never hurt anybody.”

“No, not even themselves,” Corbin said.

Jig frowned. “You don’t think I’d make a good palm tree?”

“I don’t know. Maybe if you didn’t drink so much.”

“Palm trees drink a lot. Every palm tree I’ve ever known is a lush.”

Corbin looked confused.

“Well, for water, I mean.”

“Yes, water. Maybe you should switch to water, Jig.”

The waiter brought the beers and cleared the empties off the table. Jig downed half of his beer before the waiter withdrew.

“You know, Jig. I’m glad you told me. But I just wish you had told me earlier.”

“I’ve learned you have to time honesty just right, Corbin,” Jig said, swallowing more beer. “Too early and they won’t risk knowing you. Too late—”

“And they won’t trust you. I know, Jig.”

“Do you know? I was going to say ‘too late and they hate you.’” Jig swirled his beer. “We didn’t do anything that could...you know...”

“I know. You’re right. I guess, you’re right.”

“I’m right. You’ll see I’m right.”

“Jig, I want you to think for a minute.”

“I am thinking. I think those palm trees look like cats’ tails. Don’t they remind you of cats’ tails? The way they sway?”

“Sure.”

“You’re not even looking, Corbin.”

The older man turned his head. “Well, no. Palm trees are too...stiff. Jig, about the medicine—”

“Drink some more, Corbin. They’ll look like cats’ tails.”

“Jig, it’s really quite simple. The schedule isn’t that hard.”

“There’s something wrong with the concept of pills that make you sick.”

“It will get better if you stick with it.”

“I feel fine.”

“But you’re not, Jig.”

“Let’s not talk about it.”

“I know. I know. But I mean...for you...”

“For me.”

“Yes, Jig.”

“I’m doing great,” Jig said, finishing the beer. “Hey, here comes a cat now. Let’s ask his opinion.” An orange tabby sauntered into the shade under the neighboring

table and blinked at them.

“Ask the cat’s opinion about the meds?”

“About the palm trees looking like cats' tails. You know, an expert opinion. What would a cat know about pharmaco-whatsiwhosit?”

“Pharmacodynamics, Jig. They’ve really improved. The side effects aren’t nearly so awful as you think.”

“I meant I’d ask the cat about the palm trees.”

“Actually, you can’t ask cats anything,” Corbin sighed, shaking his head. “You’d think by now I’d figure out when you’re being silly.”

“Of course, I’m being silly. You used to think it was charming.”

“Of course, I think you’re charming,” Corbin said, “If I didn’t think you were charming I wouldn’t be in this...”

“Predicament?”

Corbin warded off a pair of flies with his hand. “I wasn’t going to...Jig, you need to stick around and be charming some more.”

Jig brightened. “So if I stick around, then you’ll...stick around? That would make a difference.”

The older man frowned down at the cat. “You know, I’ve waited so long for something like this.”

“I know. There’s always a catch, like all the things you’ve waited for.”

“The nausea won’t be so bad.”

Jig looked around for the waiter. “I think I’ll name that cat, Ernest. Don’t you think he looks like an Ernest?”

“You already named the cat in Sitges Ernest.”

“That reminds me. I wanted to try that new drink they had in Sitges. The one with grenadine. Could you ask the waiter if they can make that here?”

“You’re already very drunk, Jig.”

“They don’t have good grenadine back in the States. And it’s very hot.”

“Water would be best.”

“Would you please, please order it?”

“Jig, At least get something with juice in it. You need vitamins.”

“Or I could rifle through your luggage for the dictionary you weren’t supposed to

pack and I'll order it."

Corbin stroked his chin and called out to the waiter. He ordered Jig a barba roja

"Thank you," Jig smiled sweetly. He leaned over in his chair, offering his hand for the cat to sniff.

"So, you can tell the doctor that sticking with it is difficult so he knows it has to be simple."

"Are we staying together?" The waiter handed Jig a red drink in a martini glass.

"We should get the bill," Corbin said. "It's about time to get the train."

Jig looked away. "My timing still isn't perfect."

"You did fine. You did great. That's not the problem."

"I should stick with my own kind, right?"

"You should do this for you."

"I see. You're leaving."

"Jig, there are so many people who want you to be well."

Jig gripped the martini glass tightly and it shattered, sending the cat darting across the cobblestones. The waiter rushed out to help.

"Don't touch his blood!" Corbin barked, "No toque la sangre." The waiter balked and looked at Corbin. "Jig, you're bleeding."

"No, no it's grenadine. I just need to change my shirt."

"Are you all right?" the waiter asked.

"Jig, that's...not grenadine."

"I'm fine," Jig said, "That's the point. Everything is just fine."

David Mohan graduated from George Washington University where he studied creative writing with Faye Moskowitz, Bil Wright, and Mary Truitt Hill. He is working on a novel and a collection of humor pieces entitled "The Silliest Stories Out of Bustleburg: America's Worst City."

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