

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.”

[Table of Contents](#)

Lucius Falkland is the *nom de plume* of a writer and academic from London. His first volume of poetry *The Evening the Times Newspaper Turned Into Jane Eyre* was published in 2025 by Exeter House.

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