

# The Unhappy Few

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



The Blue Room (Pablo Picasso, 1901)

## The Unhappy Few

With Phoebe's mum, the problem was incontinence,  
Let out of that ward, her mind as healed  
As an ulcerated wound becoming septic  
She'd just lash out, the head, or ribs or face  
Of Phoebe, just for being in her space,

She'd lose it; an emotional epileptic.

But Phoebe's dad would slowly start to plan,  
At 12 she saw the scheming in his eyes,  
Then promptly bottom bared, across his knee,  
And he'd whip her until soaked in his own sweat,  
Exhausted; only then would she be free,  
She'd cry and writhe and scream and try to flee,  
But she knew that it had hardly started yet.

Will liked her. She was Sherlock-level deep,  
And brave, just like Michelle, *La Resistance*  
In *Allo Allo*. She made him laugh but when  
She told him all about what dad would do  
He thought about his mother. Was he five?  
And that memory that was always so alive,  
Hand to intimate skin, no belt or shoe.

And Phoebe'd been through something like that too.  
"Part of her," he thought, "is part of you."  
He could contemplate, through her, his mum's "mistake"  
As his dad referred to it that drunken night  
In *The Royal Oak*, when Will explained his spite.

And doing so, through her, the pain, somehow,  
Was lessened, like a child with a doll  
Or a tribe with a totem kangaroo  
Who contemplate it all through myths and tales.  
She'd suffered so much more than he'd been through  
But she was "with him," the "unhappy few"  
United by their wits ... and childhood wails.

## **Norwegian Forest Cats**

Our Norwegian Forest cat was as jealous as a child

When we brought that tabby-moggy home that day,  
He would mount him, make him queen, leave him utterly defiled  
And then bite him on the neck, as though his prey.

When Phoebe stood up to her dad, his eyes would turn to black  
And he'd strip her and he'd thrash her with his belt  
Until sweating, ruddy-faced; not a beating, an attack,  
So her bottom was left tiger-skinned with welts.

The first time, she was seven, he so needed to feel tough  
As she struggled on the bed amid the blur,  
Her buttocks, flushed with blood, that day somehow weren't  
enough  
So he turned her round and penetrated her.

Beneath his tricorn hat and his gleaming mayoral chain  
The entrance to the forest lay ajar  
But he'd fed her while her mother was obsessed with her own  
pain  
And they used to have such fun washing the car.

My tabby-moggy cat isn't mounted anymore.  
He sleeps much lower down, accepts his fate,  
And he likes it when they hunt, their fur smeared with rodent  
gore;  
That primal bond that overwhelms the hate.

## **My Promise**

I know that I don't have the right to wallow  
In how *I* feel, considering what you said,  
But your words brought out of me not only sorrow,  
But a "me" I didn't know: I want him dead.

"At seven I was raped... " My world got colder,

When you added "by my dad" once you'd been whipped,  
Somehow, it felt just far too much to shoulder,  
Somehow, I wished you'd just been tighter-lipped.

My brilliant, witty, Sherlock-brave detective,  
Who'd risk MI5 and prison if she must,  
Was damaged-goods, genetically defective,  
Besmirched in grime; an object of disgust,

But an object of disgust with whom I'd bonded,  
And admired, one who made me laugh at pain,  
As we "understood each other;" corresponded.  
So now I just feel overwhelmed with shame.

I *want* to hold you separate from your brokenness,  
Just listen, for I know that's what you need;  
To pick the flakes of mud from off the canvass,  
Accept you love the man but hate the deeds.

Maggots in a fetid wound, incontinence;  
My forest-brain says, "Run a fucking a mile!"  
From one who was as a naked as an infant  
In front of me. It's going to take a while...

But I promise I am going to try to do this;  
To climb out of this forest-brained, dank pit  
And accept that some of the brightest tulips  
Can emerge from the most appalling shit.

## **The Cult of the Dad**

Stay there, stay in his house 'til he passes,  
Stockholm bank clerk to dad with a gun,  
Who could shoot you, or worse, again, any second,  
Squint for light through the smoke; those moments of fun.

Heartily laugh, like that evening you told me,  
Feel the spirit of English fields on your skin,  
Commune with the gods of the sky as it reddens,  
Cut in half what he did to you, then gift me your grin.

Breathe in deep, become your own corset,  
Raised worse than Dickensian, thread your own bones,  
Slay Woke Uriahs as though they're your father,  
Flee his house (in your mind) as you fight for *our* home.

Come, open my mind, Baker Street violinist,  
Play something that lets us taste honey *and* salt,  
But still lets us be Ghosts of Yule Present together,  
And lets me forget that you're trapped in a cult.

## **Edwardian Rose**

When Rose was twelve her mother made her strip;  
Rose did so as she'd learnt not to say "No."  
This usually meant that buttocks, legs and hips  
Would be belted to a satisfying glow.  
But the pain that day was of a different kind  
As, catching breaths, her clothes dropped to the ground  
For the usual treatment on her bare behind,  
Her mum began to shave her pubic mound.

"Forced haircut." That's the term that Rose advanced  
When I asked her why she was from mum estranged.  
I'd assumed the head, like wartime girls in France:  
"That's not the kind of hair she re-arranged."  
These days Rose goes to the greatest pains  
To blend into a Nineteen Ten Pavilion  
Or finishing school where vulgar girls are caned,  
And, monthly, Rose forks out for a Brazilian.

"You will always be my child forever more..."

Rose could hear her mother screech, a broke accordion.

"Your private parts are mine to strip and claw."

"Okay," thought Rose. "I shall be an Edwardian."

However, reasoned Rose, she'd take control.

Old fashioned-accent, corsets, she'd take care

Of every small minutiae of this role

And she'd direct who shaved her pubic hair.

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