Why Can't We Be Friends?

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Why Can’t We Be Friends?

by addledwalrus

Summary
The end of a school year in 1975, as experienced by various students of the same class.

Notes

Title credit goes to the song by Deep Purple.
Bruce woke up on Monday morning with a smile after an excellent weekend during which his Daddy had finally brought home a brand new car.

He leapt out of bed and carried out his usual routine as if life were a upbeat movie before eventually heading outside to lay eyes on his prize.

Running his fingers along the vehicle's glossy surface was almost enough to make Bruce soil himself in pleasure as he got into the driver's seat and produced the keys.

"That's right. Purr for me, baby..." He whispered with an orgasmic sigh upon starting the engine and confidently leaving the driveway, ecstatic that he was about to solidify his status as the eleventh grade alpha male.

He picked up his eager girlfriend Cheryl and best friend Randy on the way to school, the latter of whom displayed visible bitterness at having been displaced by a worldly female.

"You've gotta start giving me quality time again. I've had your back since preschool." Randy spoke up, though his words were drowned out by Cheryl's laughter and the deafening rock song on the radio.

A plume of dust left several bystanders coughing as Bruce screeched into the schoolyard and boldly parked in the largest space he could find.

"Alright, you two know the drill. Don't follow me outside until I've given the cue."

He then lit a cigarette and cranked the music up even more to attract attention before slamming one boot hard against the gravel.

So-called good girls Linda and Joanne immediately noticed his imposing presence and began to fan themselves while he ground the cigarette underfoot.

He gave an inconspicuous wave to signal to Randy and Cheryl that they could now show themselves.

Collective interest had largely faded by the time they scurried out and caught up to Bruce, whom continued to stride confidently ahead as if indifferent to their existence.

Bruce took advantage of his parents' absence on Saturday by taking Cheryl out on a ride into the distant countryside, with Randy accompanying them as a cameraman in case they came across anything remarkable.

They stopped by the edge of a dirt road after a whole morning of driving.

"You see that old barn over there?" Bruce exclaimed, getting out and pointing ahead while a daring idea came to mind. "Let's see if it's empty."

"What? Why?" Cheryl asked in confusion.

Bruce ignored her and turned to face Randy.
"Bring the camera. You're going to film us together."

The three of them convened in the seemingly abandoned building minutes later and Randy began setting up the camera while Bruce laid a large blanket out on the creaky floor.

He and Cheryl disrobed so that their repeated acts of coitus could be captured on film.

Randy stopped recording altogether after an hour and having finally lost his patience, lashed out at Bruce for relegating him to the position of third wheel.

"But Randy, you *can* join us if you're that desperate." Bruce replied, pulling out of Cheryl and shamelessly turning around to show off his manhood.

"I don't know what you're talking about, Bruce! Get that thing out of my sight!"

Bruce frowned in supreme disappointment and reached for his crumpled jeans.

"If you're not up for a three-way, then that's fine by me."

"Wait, a three-way?"

"Yeah. That's what I said."

Randy stared hesitantly at the topless forms of Bruce and Cheryl before making his decision.

"Alright, count me in."

The trio of seventeen year olds spent the next twenty minutes getting frisky and eventually having their business interrupted by the arrival of a hapless local farmer.

"Goddamn city kids! This barn is my property!"

None of them bothered to get dressed as they pushed past the old man and fled back to the car to return home.

It was only until half an hour later when Randy had his pants on again, that he realized they'd left behind a very important piece of equipment.

"Shit, we forgot the camera..."
Tell Me Something Good

Chapter Notes

Title credit goes to the song by Rufus and Chaka Khan.

"Bruce?" Cheryl simpered as she leaned head against hand and shifted into what was meant to be a seductive position.

"Yeah, baby?" He asked wearily, lying beside her and staring directly up at the ceiling.

"About what happened on Saturday with Randy..."

"What about it?"

"You'd gladly share me with any one of your friends, wouldn't you?"

"No, but Randy's different. He's been my best friend for such a long time, it's like he's a part of me. So when you make love to him, it counts as making love to me."

"What?" Cheryl immediately countered in disbelief. "That is the dumbest reasoning I've ever heard..."

"It doesn't make sense to you?"

"Of course not, idiot."

She slipped out of bed and subsequently searched for her socks before slipping them back on. She then turned to glare critically at her boyfriend's face while continuing to speak.

"Think of it this way. I wouldn't share you with another broad, no matter how sweet and nice she is."

"Why not? I'd be totally fine with that."

"Seriously?!

"Hey, if you didn't want to get it on with Randy, you could have told me instead of acting all selfish now."

"Me, selfish? You're the one whose Daddy gets him everything he wants!"

She stood up and slid back into her dress with one fluid motion, then headed straight for the door.

"Cheryl, where are you going?!" Bruce demanded to know while finally mustering the energy to sit up in bed.

"Off to share myself with other guys. It's what you want, right?"

"No, you get back here right now!"

Cheryl slammed the door shut before Bruce could even give chase. He stepped on to the floor and in
frustration, yelled out the harshest comeback he could think of.

"Go ahead! I can always find another girl at the end of the day!"

Cheryl lingered around the school grounds long after classes had ended in the hope of securing a sexually frustrated boy or two.

It took a further few minutes for her to remember that football tryouts were being held on the field and in excitement, she set out in that direction while thinking of the athletic males bound to be present.

Once there, she took a seat on the bleachers and waited for the first boy to come her way.

They turned out to be none other than tall and well-built hunk Scott, whom wiped the sweat off his face with a towel before sitting down in exhaustion.

Cheryl pulled her already short skirt up even further as she inched towards him, ready to make a move. He felt her presence and discarded his towel while turning around.

"Cheryl?"

"Hey, Scott..." She whispered breathily, placing her soft hand against his rough one. "You sure look like you've been through a lot. Let me guess, the coach was really hard on you?"

"Tell me about it. The season hasn't begun but I already feel like my life's on the line. My Dad might actually kill me if I don't get in..."

Cheryl was taken aback by such a pessimistic claim and convinced herself that Scott was just exaggerating to gain sympathy, despite him beginning to tremble while staring into her eyes pleadingly.

"I...really need someone right now, so I guess you'll have to be it..."

"You know what, Scott? How about we go behind the gym and I relieve some of your tension there?"

"Wait, relieve my tension?" Scott questioned in hesitation, breaking his hand free from her grasp. "You just want to get into my pants like those other girls, don't you?"

"Huh? Why would I do that?"

"You can't fool me. I guess you're known as a slut for a reason..."

Scott got to his feet and stormed away to find a genuine friend to talk with, leaving Cheryl alone to plot out her next strategy.

After lying to her parents about attending an evening study session, Cheryl left the house at eight o'clock and followed some written directions until she was approached by a lone teenage boy.

"Hey Steve..." She greeted with a wave as he stepped out into the street light. "It's me, your number one customer."

"I don't care. You're late." He replied coldly before beckoning her forward so that they could make their exchange in the shadows.
"Hey, is that a knife in your pocket or are you just happy to see me?" She asked suggestively upon finding herself mere inches away from him and noticing a bulge in the side of his jeans.

"No, it's a switchblade and I will use it if you make things hard."

"Oh..."

"Now hand me the ten dollars. A cop is going to show up here any minute."

Cheryl had no choice but to comply and provide the required amount of cash before Steve gave her a fresh brown bag in return.

"Thanks, this is just what I'm after..."

"Great."

He then muttered something about his mother and bolted away at an impressive speed while she clutched her latest purchase.

She couldn't help but feel a little admiration for what he did and how he seemed to be completely devoid of the sexual urges found in most adolescents, though the arrival of a police car soon caused her to grow tense.
Monday morning wasn't exactly a comforting experience for curly haired Janice Murray, as she entered homeroom to feel the critical stares upon her again.

Strawberry blonde vixen Cheryl rolled both eyes before turning to whisper to friends about Barbra Streisand's so-called 'hideous cousin'.

Cruel giggles erupted while Janice sat down and tried instead to focus on those classmates whom were more indifferent to her presence.

There was Linda seated in the front row between the other two J's Julie and Joanne, as well as ray of sunshine Barbara gazing inconspicuously at Stoner Steve while Bruce and Randy were engaged in man-to-man conversation.

The one whose presence never failed to make her feel glad arrived just in time for the bell. He walked straight past without so much as a glance, though that did not bother her when there were so many pairs of eyes present.

"Kevin Hale..." She uttered in her mind while watching him sit down to stare restlessly at the blackboard.

His less than handsome looks didn't bother her at all when he was perhaps the only boy within her league.

Unfortunately, Kevin's attention soon turned to the stylish Gloria and Janice became resigned once again to the lonely future she was sure awaited her.

Janice stopped at the local park on Saturday morning to do some sketching for art school while humming a song by the Carpenters.

The arrival of Barbara and Stoner Steve put an end to her attempts to concentrate. She watched as they stopped to talk with each other like some married couple.

"They're...dating?" She thought while seeing the love in Steve's eyes and believing that no boy would ever look at her in such a way.

Unable to take it anymore, Janice gathered her belongings and left just as they finally became aware of her presence.

"Was that Janice?" Steve asked in curiosity once the mousy girl was out of sight. "She wasn't spying on us, right?"

"I hope not..." Barbara replied before producing a hairtie and pulling her long hair back. "You up for a game of frisbee?"
Janice stared down at the picture she'd drawn of an embracing couple before tearfully crumpling the page up and tossing it aside in frustration.

She put on and listened to some happy music until her mood improved, upon which she grabbed another blank piece of paper to begin sketching the scenery in the park from memory.

Not even Mr and Mrs Murray returning home from work could distract Janice as she filled the picture in with various colors until it was complete.

She wearily stood up and turned right around to see her concerned mother standing in the doorway.

"Honey, are you alright? I called you for dinner twenty minutes ago, but you didn't come down."

"I...I was just caught up in homework..." Janice explained as she slowly stood up to approach her mother and realized how hungry she was.

"I can see that, but you're already a hard worker as it is. Try to take it easy for a while, alright?"

"Alright..."

She attended junior prom alone in a dowdy hand-me-down dress after a hectic day during which she had to be driven to the city for an art awards ceremony.

Watching her more attractive classmates enjoying themselves proved depressing as always, so she opted to spend the evening sitting and minding her own business.

Something unexpected happened halfway through however, in the form of Kevin nervously approaching to ask her for a dance.

"You're joking..." She muttered, looking up at his smile and at a loss as to whether it was genuine.

He didn't respond and instead kept his hand extended until she felt inclined to take it.

They held each other on the floor for no more than a couple of minutes before his original partner came to steal him back.

Janice watched them walk away with a feeling of melancholy that soon enough gave way to gratitude that somebody finally considered her company to be anything but undesirable.
"Now if you'll excuse me, I have a date in an hour..." Kevin announced matter-of-factly to his friends upon checking his watch. He stood up with a proud smile and awaited their reactions.

"You're a liar, Kevin. You just want to bail on this study session."

"Yeah, Eric's right. You're so ugly, not even Janice would agree to go out with you."

"Guys..." Kevin found himself having to counter in response to their unsupportive words. "...it's not my fault you're all too chicken to even take a chance. Maybe those girls aren't as uptight as you think..."

"Oh yeah? Who is she then?"

"Gloria Jackson."

Mitch, Eric and Jeffrey abruptly went quiet before turning to stare amongst each other in disbelief. Kevin took advantage of their straying attention to depart from the library and his absence wasn't noticed until after the other three boys had shared a hushed conversation.

"Gloria? No way, she's too much of a queen..."

"Not to mention, she's black. That can't possibly end well..."

"Well, I have an idea..." Mitch reassured while he shifted away to present a special request. "Hey Kevin, take a picture as-

Awkward silence greeted the trio as they realized it was already too late to intervene.

Gloria and Kevin were only barely able to ignore the occasional puzzled stare on the bus into the city, though the sight of other teenagers outside the arcade an hour later was enough to weaken their doubts.

They got off the bus and were soon inside the building queuing up to pay the admission fee.

"I guess we have plenty of time to talk, right?"

"Whatever..."

"Well, there's this great game called Pong. You and your opponent hit a ball to each other across the screen. It's like tennis without the running."

"I don't get it."

"You will when I show you."
They reached the front of the line and Kevin paid the exact amount required before they were allowed further.

He wasted no time in locating the nearest Pong machine and rushing up to it, so that he could begin demonstrating how to move the paddles.

"See, like this..."

"It's okay. I understand."

"You do?"

"Yeah."

They positioned themselves on either side of the machine and began their match. Kevin was able to catch and hit the ball with ease, which led to a beginner like Gloria losing consistently the first few times.

They left the arcade an hour later and Gloria sighed in relief upon feeling fresh air once again.

It was on to the nearby bowling alley as soon they'd had some refreshments, where they took two adjacent lanes and exchanged competitive glares before each picking up a ball.

Kevin lobbed his one along with some difficulty much to Gloria's amusement after she'd knocked nine out of ten pins down without much trouble.

He tossed the ball and it bounced down the aisle, momentum decreasing rapidly until only a single pin fell.

"You're doing it wrong. Here, let me show you."

Gloria handed Kevin a second ball before stepping back to correct his stance and wrist position.

"Alright, that's better. Try it now."

Kevin tried again and found that the ball's path was much smoother this time around, with five pins soon being knocked over.

He finally succeeded in gaining a perfect score after attempting to do so for over an hour. Excitement overwhelmed him and he jumped up in the air while shouting about the accomplishment.

"I did it, Gloria! I did it!"

"I know. Now calm down before you slip-"

"Will you come to the dance with me?!" He blurted out without so much as a second's thought, only to immediately regret it as Gloria opened her mouth in shock.

"Um, Kevin..."

"Wh-what?"

"That's not the real reason you asked me out, right? Because I've already found somebody..."

"No, 'course not. My tongue just slipped."
"Sure..."

They avoided eye contact on the trip back and Kevin didn't feel any more comfortable when Gloria departed at her stop.

Now that she was unavailable, it was clear that his options were severely limited.

Only two girls were still looking for partners from what he'd last heard and it was clear that Barbara had a thing for Steve, even if she were reluctant to admit it.

That left frumpy Joanne Krupowski, whose known moodiness and icy demeanor was enough to make him shudder.
"This is like that time Kevin dared me to wear roller skates for twelve hours..."

Barbara went over the list in her hand a second time before staring once more at younger cousin Christopher. He frowned and exhaled to show how dismayed he was to have her as a babysitter.

"Alright, Chris. What would you say to some fruit salad?" She asked politely while her head still throbbed from toking with Steve the previous day.

"Sure..." The boy answered dejectedly before staring off into space.

"Coming right up."

She grabbed an apple from the fruit basket first and sliced it carefully into bite size pieces. The orange was next and after peeling off its thick skin, her sudden loss of coordination coupled with the slippery flesh resulted in the knife slicing straight across her left palm.

"Oh, shi-" She gasped in pain, dropping the orange and inadvertently spilling dark red droplets into the sink.

The noise startled Christopher and he spun around just in time to see her frantically sucking blood from her own palm, a sight that made him quiver in fear.

"I'm okay..." She tried to reassure through clenched teeth. "I just need to use the bathroom..."

The already traumatized seven year old remained completely still while she rushed off in search of bandages to stop the bleeding.

Barbara discarded all plans of preparing a healthy treat for her cousin and returned to the kitchen several minutes later to find Christopher seemingly paralyzed.

"Hey, Chris?" She spoke up in concern, stepping around to observe his frozen expression. "Are you alright?"

He didn't respond and continued to sit completely still, much to her growing feeling of worry. She decided to resort to emergency measures and grabbed him by the shoulders.

"Chris!" She cried while shaking him slightly. "It's alright. You can have ice cream instead..."

Christopher's senses abruptly returned at the sound of those two pleasant words. He began struggling to break free and she let him go so that he could charge towards the fridge.

Once he was busy sitting and enjoying his frozen snack, Barbara headed to the living room to complete the second of her responsibilities.
A loud bang from the basement coincided with her plugging the vacuum cleaner into the wall and knowing that something was amiss, she slowly trudged downstairs to investigate.

Nothing seemed out of the ordinary when she first opened the door and glanced around, though her eyes eventually noticed the figure sprawled out on the floor.

"Steve?!" She shouted in disbelief as many more unspoken questions raced through her mind.

Barbara guided her childhood friend back upstairs after the shock of seeing him had faded, so that Christopher could experience a proper introduction.

"This is Steve, one of my friends that I've told you about. We're in the same class and he's pretty good with tools..."

"Hi, Steve..." The young boy greeted with suspicion in his eyes. "Did she kiss and cuddle you last night?"

Steve gaped in horror while Barbara struggled to dispel such ideas from her cousin's mind.

"I told you, he's a friend. Someone you help when they're in need."

"Like when he needs love?"

"No!" Barbara and Steve yelled in unison, realizing there was no shaking the notion that had rooted itself in the child's thoughts.

The two teenagers spent the rest of the morning making leftovers look appealing and settled with Christopher in front of the television that afternoon. Both tried to avoid eye contact and touching each other in fear of it being interpreted as a romantic gesture by the boy's innocent yet precocious mind.

"You can't trick me." Christopher spoke up during a commercial break. "I can still feel it..."
"Barbara?" Steve asked her while they sat together on his bed during a quiet Sunday evening.

"Yeah, Steve?"

"Do...do you still feel anything?"

"What do you mean?"

She turned to face him and the sight of her innocent blue eyes were enough to make his pulse quicken. It occurred to him that she still greatly resembled the little girl he used to know, even if her body was taking on a more womanly shape.

A hint of restlessness became apparent on her face and he swallowed before attempting to speak his mind.

"That time I was at your place and you..."

"I know what you're getting at, Steve. Truth be told, I still like you. I just want to know if you feel the same."

"How couldn't I? You're beautiful..."

Barbara smiled in relief as she reached out to feel his sturdy arm and shoulders. Her gentle touch made him quiver all over before they fell into each other's embrace and lay down upon the matress.

The act of caressing her tender skin and slender curves was interrupted when the bedroom door abruptly swung open to reveal his mother.

"I've failed as a parent. You're a whoremonger just like him."

Steve awoke on Monday morning to realize that he had only twenty minutes to get ready and head to school.

He frantically got dressed and skipped breakfast again in lieu of running faster than he did when dealing pot, all the while pushing past hapless bystanders with little regard.

It so happened that regular customer Cheryl was having a smoke nearby when he arrived at the school gate. She tossed away her cigarette and approached to no doubt make another request.

"Sorry, no time." He bluntly rebuffed while shoving her aside and praying against another detention.

Initial plans to make his dream about Barbara start coming true had to be put on hold when Randy came at lunch time to request his company.
"It's Cheryl." The other boy began once they were out of earshot. "She's gone crazy and says you tried to molest and rob her."

"No, I didn't." Steve firmly defended himself without much thought while Randy sighed and continued.

"Hey, I'm just trying to warn you in case she starts spreading it around as a rumor. Anyway, she's mostly just upset about breaking up with Bruce and thinks all of us boys need to suffer her wrath."

"All of us?"

"Yeah. You don't want to know what she did to Jeff..."

Randy excused himself as soon as the hulking Bruce strode past. He left Steve's side to instead accompany the larger male towards the cafeteria.

Steve watched them leave before opening his locker and seeing a large photograph fall out. He picked it up to find in horror that it depicted a completely nude Cheryl.

He blinked and hastily flipped it over to discover messy words scrawled on the back.

How do you like me now, son of a bitch?

He borrowed some oregano from Barbara's house that weekend and got to work clumping it together with hairspray, in preparation for the deal that took place each Saturday night.

She met him at the designated spot and flashed an inviting smile as if she possessed no ill will at all.

"Here's my ten dollars. I never fail you, don't I?"

"Yeah, sure you do."

Steve collected her cash and handed over the bag of fake marijuana before making a run for it as usual, reluctant to consider the potential results of such a practical joke and whether it would get him into more trouble.

"Hey, Steve?" Barbara piped up while they watched television after they had spent the day studying.

"What?" He asked good-naturedly, turning to admire her lovely eyes and tender smile.

"You know the junior prom? Well I've been thinking, what's the point? There's no one I'd rather go with than you."

"Wait, you'd really miss out on it for me?"

"Come on. It's not that big a deal and you know it."

"I can't believe you..."

Steve leaned forward slightly and noticed that he had unconsciously intertwined his fingers around her's.

She soon realized it as well and moved in to kiss him for the second time that year. Their lips brushed against each other for no more than a second and he blinked in surprise when it was over.
"That felt weird." He remarked, turning away and feeling foolish for idealizing her as if she were some angelic being.

"Agreed..." She muttered before clasping both hands together in discomfort.
"Rat..." Julie uttered in her mind after much consideration. She had decided to occupy herself during class by comparing those around her to animals and naturally, inexperienced English teacher Mr Caruso was the first person she noticed.

Being of Italian descent herself, she found his features to be characteristic of a typical Sicilian. In other words, a man such as him would have been right at home being an extra in one of The Godfather movies.

If those films were any indication, such people were clearly capable of great destruction and chaos when subjected to harsh conditions. However, they could also be the complete opposite if given a good home and plenty of love. After all, domesticated rats could be quite delightful creatures from what she'd seen in pet stores.

"Alright, on to my first classmate..."

She glanced to the left to see Linda Wilson sitting quite still beside her. The girl's delicate frame and wispy bangs somehow made it all the more surprising that she was the class president.

"Sparrow."

Joanne Krupowski was seated two tables away and it didn't take Julie long to come to a conclusion.

"Cow."

Barbara Sullivan appeared to be focused on taking notes. If one didn't know the girl at all, they would have assumed her to be a proper young lady rather than a fledgling anarchist.

"Goose."

Kevin Hale, the boy sitting next to Barbara, had an interesting face to put it kindly. However, he made up for it with his kindness and infectious enthusiasm.

"Ferret."

Steve Donovan was the third in an odd trio that also included the previous two students. He had done well so far in keeping up an air of mystery, though it was known that he had a terrible home life. He wasn't an ugly boy, yet Julie and other girls had reached a consensus that bulking up would make him reasonably more attractive.

"Cat. Maine Coon."

Would-be casanovas Bruce and Randy were joking with each other in the back row. Mr Caruso noticed and tried unsuccessfully to get their attention.
"Pigs."

Cheryl's strawberry blonde hair was what helped give her such a seductive appeal, but that was somewhat ruined by her spiteful personality.

"Fox."

Shy and homely Janice had the misfortune of being Cheryl's favorite victim. People either felt sympathy or relief when the girl was targeted and much to her own guilt, Julie realized that she more often belonged to the latter group.

"I take it back. Maybe guys like Bruce aren't such pigs after all. That said, she's definitely a mouse."

Julie met up with thirteen year old Rita, eight year old Pete and seven year old Andrew, before they walked home together as a group.

They were four of six siblings. Nineteen year old Paolo was at college and expected to come back home in a fortnight, while two year old Carla was still dependent on their mother Angela.

Needless to say, it could get rather noisy in their house and Julie often envied the peace that the Russo family enjoyed as a result of having only two children.

Her and Rita's hopes of having some quality sisterly time together were dashed when Pete came running in with a football.

"Jules, it's not fair anymore! Michael just got Sharon on his side!"

Julie sighed in disappointment, for she knew that not many young boys were strong enough to overpower the older Russo kid. It was clear that reinforcements were needed, though she wasn't about to risk bruising any part of herself when she was beginning to blossom into a beauty.

She turned to look at Rita expectantly.

"Why me?" Rita said while pointing at herself in alarm. "What about you?"

"We've been over this already. I'm getting too old for this rough and tumble stuff."

Rita frowned and made a quiet grunt to show her dismay.

"Who do you think you are, princess?"

"Yeah!" Pete exclaimed in agreement. "We really need all the help we can get!"

Julie leaned her head against one hand wearily.

"Fine, I'll join in. But only as a referee, you hear?"

The kerbs on either side of the street were used as makeshift boundaries while Julie watched them play on the now empty road.

Having Rita on their side seemed to give Pete and Andrew an advantage, though it was hard to say whether this was more due to Sharon deciding to be merciful.

In the end, Julie declared that the game was a draw simply so that there wouldn't be any fighting.
She had to be as firm as Angela when ushering her three exhausted younger siblings back inside, where they would no doubt be urged to take a shower each to wash off the sweat.

This resulted in her being saddled with dishwashing duty and she tried to make the task feel more enjoyable by wondering what animal to liken herself to.

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