



The Spoiled King

Mia Tabib

Fable

Once upon a time there was a kingdom ruled by a handsome, gorgeous young man. His luscious locks were eclipsed only by his tall, athletic physique. So radiant was he, that even the sun in all its glory could not bear to look at him for a full day, and thus needed to retreat into the night to regain composure.

The king had everything he desired: gold, riches, women, delicacies, palaces...

But the king was bored. You see, true joy can only be experienced in those deep whispers of suffering born well, a contrite heart, and righteous deeds. This king lacked these things, and instead lived only for pleasure. But who could blame him?! Pleasure was all he knew...

So one day he decided to leave his posh palace, and take a ride throughout his kingdom. "Surely there must be something new to please me", he mused.

Gathering his courtiers, courtesans, and soldiers, the young king stepped into his golden carriage, and paraded throughout his kingdom.

He was horrified.

He saw an aged grandmother struggle up a hill with no assistance at all except from a frail wooden cane. He saw a poor beggar boy clothed in rags, begging for food outside the opulent church doors. He saw ugly, scrawny, fat human beings, some without limbs, some who had not bathed in weeks... he breathed in the fragrance of death from the funerals at the cemeteries; he heard the sounds of children crying, laughing, screaming from both pain and joy. He watched toddlers push themselves back up after falling when attempting to stand.

...and he could not tolerate it.

"It should be forbidden to suffer, to be in pain... to experience hardships of any kind. It pains me to see people crying, upset, or struggle in any way."

And so the young, spoiled king sobbed. And as he sobbed, he wrote an edict that forbade any punishment, any suffering, any struggle, any hardship of any kind. “Everyone everywhere must experience happiness and pleasure at all times...” thus sayeth the king!

So you see what happens here? When empathy is twisted into something else, when pleasure becomes a tyranny of propriety, then it is not an act of righteousness that makes our do-gooder deeds beautiful, but instead a narcissistic show of our own negligence to recognize our collective sin.

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