

THE MALE CURFEW

written by

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FADE IN:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

A nice suburban bar is busy at early evening. Couples sit at the bar, and at tables, talking. The TV is on with a baseball game. MUSIC plays quietly overhead.

The BARTENDER is a early thirties white woman. She is busy taking care of all the assorted clients.

A MAN, sitting alone at the bar, has been overserved. He is mid thirties, white, tall and well built. He starts to get angry at the TV, bothering those around him.

MAN

Did you see that call? My god, that was awful.

The others politely nod his way, then turn to block him out a bit and return to their conversations.

Undeterred, he continues to rant.

MAN (CONT'D)

I mean, is the fix in or something? How can he make that call? He was so out it wasn't even funny. Bunch of shit if you ask me.

The bartender comes over.

BARTENDER

OK, I think you've made your point. Let's not bother the other people who are having a nice evening.

MAN

Who am I bothering?

He taps another PATRON on the arm.

MAN (CONT'D)

Am I bothering you? She says I'm bothering you.

The man looks horrified and takes his drink and moves. This leaves, MARIA, a vapidly pretty young Hispanic woman that the man notices.

MAN (CONT'D)

Well, hi there. You come here often?

She tries to ignore him, but he continues.

MAN (CONT'D)
Let me buy you a drink. Bartender,
I want to buy her a drink.

MARIA
I'm fine. Thank you.

MAN
What's the matter? Too good to
drink with me.

She is uncomfortable.

MARIA
Don't make this into a big deal.
I'm just here waiting for a friend
and...

MAN
Maybe I could be your friend.

She shakes her head.

MARIA
No, not that kind of friend.

MAN
Oh,
(imitating her)
Not that kind of friend. I see.

Maria looks to the bartender for help.

BARTENDER
Come on, it's almost Curfew anyway.
Why don't you just finish up and
head on home?

At that moment, two female POLICE OFFICERS enter the bar and look around. The men in the bar especially notice them and start to check their watches.

A large clock in the front clicks over to nine o'clock.

OFFICER 1, a tall, young white woman, steps into the room.

OFFICER 1
Curfew time. All men out. Time to
go home.

The men all get up, finish drinks, kiss their dates good by, and leave quickly. Except for the man at the bar. He continues to work his drink, slowly.

The two officers walk over to him.

OFFICER 1 (CONT'D)
Come on buddy. Time to leave. You know the rules.

MAN
I'm not going.

OFFICER 2 steps forward. She is a black woman, early twenties, stocky but strong.

OFFICER 2
Oh, you think not?

MAN
Yeah, I think not. The Curfew is dumb and I'm not going.

OFFICER 2
Oh yes you are. You're leaving, one way or the other. You can just decide if you're going to spend the rest of the evening at home, or in jail. Your call.

He refuses to move. Officer 1 takes his arm.

OFFICER 1
Last warning.

He looks at the two of them, then at Maria and the bartender.

MAN
Fuck it! Fuck you all.

He gets up and stagger to the door.

OFFICER 1
We better follow him, make sure he gets home. I have a feeling he's going to violate Curfew.

They follow him out.

The bar is now populated by only woman. The bartender turns off the TV, and the music becomes more pronounced. Several of the woman shift to talk to each other.

The bartender gets back to work, coming over to Maria.

BARTENDER
Get you anything?

MARIA
Little more wine please.

She watches as she pours.

MARIA (CONT'D)
That guy. Something huh?

BARTENDER
Pete? He's a regular. Usually not so belligerent. Guess he was having a bad night. Mostly harmless though.

MARIA
Harmless as any guy can be I guess.

BARTENDER
That's true. God bless the Curfew, huh?

MARIA
I'll drink to that. Remember what it was like... before?

BARTENDER
Before the Curfew? Oh, it was awful. I used to hate work more and more as the night went on, and they got drunker and drunker.

MARIA
I know. There was so much we couldn't do, you know, before.

ALLISON comes over to join them. She is a tall, middle age white woman, but still very attractive.

ALLISON
Well ladies, what are we talking about?

MARIA
Before the Curfew.

ALLISON
Yuck. Don't remind me about that. It was awful. You know, I couldn't even go for a walk, alone, at night. Always had to look over my shoulder.

BARTENDER

I know. And I had to watch every woman's drink if they went to the washroom. Savage time.

MARIA

You know, before the Curfew, I had to keep a car, just so I would be safe you know. Now, I got rid of it. Take public transport everywhere. So much nicer.

Allison lifts her glass.

ALLISON

To the Curfew. And how much better life became once we made all the men be safe at home. Best law they ever passed.

MARIA AND BARTENDER, TOGETHER

To the Curfew.

They all take a drink, and ponder for a moment.

ALLISON

Really, how did women live before that? Always living in fear. What was wrong with people?

MARIA

It's not people. It's men. They're animals, and we just finally realized it and did something about it.

BARTENDER

I have to admit, it was like a meat market in here. Now, we can all just talk, and enjoy ourselves. It's nice.

Again they think.

ALLISON

Although, to be honest, not all men are animals. I've dated a few that were downright polite.

MARIA

Maybe, There's always a few exceptions. But too many bad ones ruined it for everyone. We just finally reached our limit.

ALLISON

We did. We did. Still, I sometimes miss being out with a man, you know, in the evening. Having them all leave by nine is a mixed blessing.

MARIA

Maybe. But I'll take feeling safe any day. In fact, I think I might just go for a walk. Maybe go down to the beach. I have the right to enjoy the evening, and I'm going to go do so.

She takes one last gulp of wine.

MARIA (CONT'D)

Ladies.

She heads out, leaving Allison and the Bartender.

ALLISON

I understand what she's saying, but still. I miss those days. Don't get me wrong, I wouldn't want to go back. But I do miss them.

BARTENDER

I hear you. It is different, to be sure.

She wipes the bar a bit, and looks around. Seeing no one close she leans in.

BARTENDER (CONT'D)

Tell you a secret?

ALLISON

Sure.

BARTENDER

I miss them too. I liked being able to stay out, you know, after nine.

ALLISON

Stay out? You always could have stayed out. Just men who had to honor the Curfew.

The bartender gives her a long stare, until realization dawns on Allison.

ALLISON (CONT'D)

NO!

The bartender nods.

BARTENDER

Don't say anything. I'm not sure if everyone would understand. But as I saw it, I had two choices. I could honor the Curfew, or join the resistance. I choose the later.

ALLISON

So you... I mean... you were...

The bartender nods.

BARTENDER

Yep.

ALLISON

Wow! I would never have guessed.

BARTENDER

It was for the better. I like my life better now.

Allison raises a glass.

ALLISON

To your better life. And yet another benefit of the Curfew.

They clink glasses, and laugh as they drink a toast.

FADE OUT.

THE END