

1.2 Adaptation: The Three Little Pigs

It is difficult for the eldest of three pigs, Samson, to keep his younger two siblings, Solomon and Gertrude, safe from the dangers they face. For starters, they are “little.” Unlike their cousins, The Boars, who are wild and rude. Nor are they stoic and staunch like the warthogs on the other side of the world. No, they were little and weak. Growing up, they heard tales of a market that they’d never leave if they ever dared to enter. So, they chose to be piggies that stayed home. “The Home” was a beautiful Victorian made completely from brick and mortar passed down through the last three generations. However, as they grew, the house shrank and soon it wasn’t big enough for all three of them.

The brothers bickered over everything. Every day someone was wrong about about something and when The Fight happened (a cataclysmic clash of ego and stubbornness) Solomon packed up his belongings and left the house. He made it 20 steps and realized he didn’t know where to go. He put his stuff down and started building a house made of all the sticks and chopped wood nearby. Gertrude watched through the window. Once the wood home was finished, Gertrude felt envy for the first time in his life. He haphazardly packed his few belongings and walked 20 steps the opposite direction to build his own home. However, Solomon had used all the sticks and chopped wood. All that was left was the straw they used to feed their horses and chickens. Once Gertrude finished stacking his piles of straw into a small shack, the three brothers spent their first (and last) night apart.

While the brothers slept, an opportunistic wolf with great lung-capacity happened upon the compound. The door-less straw shack caught his attention. However, the wolf had hay fever. He couldn’t tear down the structure without a week’s worth of sneezing. He wondered if he could blow the straw house away from him. He took a deep breath in and let out a huge, “WHOA!” The straw bales scattered the opposite way. The exposed Gertrude ran to Solomon’s house. The Wolf impressed by his own abilities, called out, “I might be huffing and puffing, but I bet I can blow this house down!” Solomon and Gertrude huddled and cried. The Wolf released a long, powerful, “AH!” sending the wood house, with the two brothers inside, back behind the brick house. This woke the slumbering Samson. He looked out the window and saw his two brothers, and piles of debris behind their home. He ran downstairs to yell at his brothers for making a mess in the yard. However, when he opened the front door he saw the snarl of a wolf 20 steps away. He slammed the door shut, ran to the kitchen and opened the back window, and told his brothers to jump inside. The three brothers made sure to lock all the doors and windows. They were huddled in the center of the living room. The wolf yelled out, “I might be huffing and puffing, but I can blow this house down! It is old. The plaster is falling off and there are cracks in the brick. I will eat what I want of you and take the rest to market for a bit of profit.” The wolf huffed and puffed, and huffed and puffed, and realized the wind he created brought pieces of straw towards him and some landed on his shoulder. The wolf began to sneeze so much that he couldn’t see straight, got dizzy and fainted. When he awoke, he was floating down the river, tied to a raft made of sticks, with a blanket made of straw, and shoes made of bricks. While the three little pigs tried not to bicker in their brick, still-standing, Victorian home.

1.2 Conflict: Man v. Himself

This was Michael's third trip home in five weeks, and now he has his airport routine down to a T. It has been easier to come home since his dad passed. Of course, he loved him and he misses him, but he's had enough criticisms of not being man enough to haunt him for the rest of his life. When he turned 18, he was unsure of himself and his life, so he set out to conquer the Appalachian Trail, which he did in six very peaceful months. He'll be 40 next month and he is famous in the running community for his speed on top of mountains. Facing bison, rattlesnakes, and coyotes doesn't phase him. But the thought that he'll be alone on his 40th birthday, truly stings. That's when he saw her, she was standing on the opposite side of the man at the water fountain. Michael was so lost in thought he didn't see a line had formed. She gestured for him to go ahead, his anxiety completely overwhelmed him. He felt guilty and apologized profusely. "This water bottle is just so big. I'm so sorry. I had to get through security. I'm sorry." She nodded and smiled politely. Then he walked away, kicking himself for being an idiot, once again.

In the terminal and on his phone, out of the corner of his eye, he saw her walk by. He was so taken by her beauty and his anxiety that he hadn't noticed the two little dogs she had with him. He sees her doing laps and takes the opportunity to do the same. Every time they pass, they exchange looks, then pleasantries, then find out they're on the same flight. They decide to take a break and officially meet. She's Arlene, they're Spoon and Bucket. This conversation is easy. They both have jobs they don't love, but it pays the bills. They're both from Ohio but didn't stay. They both like to laugh and it comes to them easily. They board the plane and finagle a way to sit together. Once they get to Phoenix, Michael's final destination, they find out Arlene's connection is delayed. He stays with her. It's delayed again, they start to cuddle. And now it's boarding. He asks, "Do you *have* to go?" "I don't know how I'd get back otherwise." "I'll buy dog food?" "Okay, but I still have to get back. I'll stay if you drive us back to Sacramento." Of course, he would do anything for more time with her, "Deal." Being obligated to stay with someone and road trip with an almost stranger can be a terrible idea, but for these two, it was easy. They opened up, they laughed, they were up for an adventure *together*. They learned they could be honest. They even added an extra day because they enjoyed each other's company so much. But now he really had to leave her behind. During the drive back, alone, all of the dark thoughts came flooding in. He wasn't going to be man enough or strong enough and he was going to get hurt, again. So, when she reached out, he didn't respond.

The weeks went by; today he is 40 and alone. He replied to the birthday wishes from his running peers and shared the social media posts from his sponsors. He put on his running shoes to do just a light run (21 miles). When he opened the door, there was a package. It was a tiny water bottle, "So, you don't tie up the line next time. Happy Birthday :)" He set the water bottle down and left the house for his run, but this time when he'd normally go right, he went left. And he just kept going west. He started leaving his past behind him with every step he took. By the time he reached the state border, he started thinking about what *could* be. He made his way to the familiar Pacific Crest Trail and went north, imagining a different future for the next 40 years of his life. Sure, he was quiet but he was also kind. He isn't the most outgoing, but he's dedicated. There wasn't a right way to be a man, there was just a right way to be. And he had been sacrificing potential happiness because he thought he'd never be enough, to deserve it. When he got to Mammoth, he grabbed a bite to eat, found a shower and as he rinsed off, he let go of the last bits of self-doubt that he had been holding on to. In the two-hour jog to Sacramento, he felt a new kind of peace. He knocked on the door, she opened it, and they smiled at each other. He is 40 years and 5 days old today, and his life is now beginning.

1.2 Model: The Boondock Saints

Maeve was tired of learning how to defend herself from attackers. All the bits of self-protection that get passed down from woman to woman through word of mouth. It seemed like every time she turned on the news or opened Facebook, she was met with another article of a woman being assaulted by the hands of a partner or a predator attacking innocent young lives, something had to be done. But today was St. Patrick's Day, so she'll solve this issue tomorrow. For now, she dressed in her annual head to toe green ensemble and accessorized with an "anti-roofie" green scrunchie. Her and her bestie, Aine, went to Bennigan's like they did every year, for the band and the camaraderie. Six beers and three Irish Slammers later, Maeve, Aine and their three best guy friends (Davey, Mickey, and Riley) were the only ones left at the bar chatting with the elderly barkeep, Pat. Maeve drunkenly shared her frustrations with the group. An awkward silence fell, Dave and Mickey offered to walk the women home. Aine accepted, Maeve stayed behind and Riley stayed with her. Pat had a couple of "things to do" in the back but when he's done it'll be closing time. Maeve nodded.

Riley confided with Maeve that he's felt similar feelings since he started dating men at 14. Everyone turned a blind eye when he was still in middle school and adult men were taking him out on dates and buying him things. That led to a whole seedy world he was exposed to way too young, but he is still very familiar with. She hugged her friend and Pat came out saying it was time to leave. As the pair made their way down to Maeve's apartment, they saw Aine running towards them. She yelled at them to get inside. They went in and locked the door behind them. Aine recounted how Davey and Mickey walked her to a warehouse and not her home. Something felt "off" and then Mickey grabbed her arm and she knew she was in trouble. She saw a lead pipe nearby and attacked both of them with it, knocking them out. That's when she ran to Maeve's, she had no idea if she killed them or if they're going to come back for her. The three sat in silence, processing the shock, disappointment, and fear that two men they were so close to could do this to someone they were close to. The three knew something had to be done. Riley said "We have to go back to the warehouse."

When they arrived, Davey and Mickey were still sprawled out on the ground with pools of blood near their heads. Aine picked up the lead pipe, Riley found a large rock, and Maeve a 2x4. They made their way into the warehouse. They were alone, guided by work lights. There were makeshift bedrooms in corners, rooms that locked from the outside, a bathroom, a kitchenette, and an office. They decided to look for keys in the office for the locked rooms. That's when they came across an open vault of money, guns, and gear used for kidnapping. Maeve said, "This is our warehouse now." and the others nodded in agreement. They rigged the warehouse as a large trap for those that would be kidnapping the innocent, instead imprisoning the captors and helping the hurt. This worked like a charm. Soon, the locked rooms were holding dozens of mostly men, some women crying to be let out. But now, there was a lull in intake. That's when Riley proposed, "I know more bad guys." The trio set out to the clubs that society had turned a blind eye towards, and lured these older predators into their warehouse. Being locked in these rooms with each other, the bad guys started to hurt each other. The vigilantes made videos of the kidnapers pleading for forgiveness. These videos were shared anonymously on social media, with a warning, "We will spend every day hunting you down. Do not kidnap, do not assault, do not abuse, for we will do unto you what you have done unto others." The trio became known as The Guardian Angels, because of how they protected the young and defenseless. Their work was controversial, but the police never tried too hard to find them, The Guardian Angels made their jobs easier after all.