

The Impermanence of Youth

A short torture

By Jarred Corona

AT RISE: An interrogation room. A table. Some chairs. On the table sits a device you stick one's fingers in. It can look like anything so long as it gives off the basic idea: there's a lever, and you slam it down.

A woman, MOM, sits at the table. There's a bag over her head. Her wrists are bound.

An INTERROGATOR enters. Perhaps they're young or perhaps they merely represent the powers the young dream up.

They remove the bag from Mom's head and free her wrists.

MOM

What do you want with me?

The Interrogator puts one of Mom's hands in the DEVICE.

INTERROGATOR

Answers. Your name is Francine, correct?

MOM

Yes.

INTERROGATOR

The artist formerly known as Mother, AKA Mommy. Is that right?

MOM

I was once called that name.

INTERROGATOR

No longer?

MOM

I'm no longer a mother.

INTERROGATOR

Why do you say that?

MOM

Because you asked me a question, and it seems like not answering might put me in a pickle.

INTERROGATOR

I don't understand.

MOM

Sure you do. You've put my finger in some sort of contraption.

INTERROGATOR

A device.

MOM

Same thing

INTERROGATOR

Next you'll be claiming a doohickey and thingamajig are the same thing when only one of them is a thing at all. It's in the name. Back to your name. You're no longer a mother.

MOM

That's right.

INTERROGATOR

And you won't tell me why because... you're afraid of getting placed inside a giant pickle? That's a very specific fear.

MOM

Pickles are disgusting.

INTERROGATOR

I can agree with you there.

MOM

What about you? What's your name?

INTERROGATOR

I DON'T HAVE A NAME.

Geesh. Okay. Touchy.

MOM

I'm not touching you.

INTERROGATOR

I didn't say you were.

MOM

What? You said, "Touchy."

INTERROGATOR

Yes.

MOM

I'm not touching you.

INTERROGATOR

If you hover a finger in front of my face and start the "not touching you" game, I'll bite it off.

MOM

Like a pickle?

INTERROGATOR

I'd never do anything like a pickle, least of all bite people like a pickle.

MOM

Would you say... pickles are evil?

INTERROGATOR

Pickles are evil.

MOM

Right. Well, "Francine," you're here to divulge the secrets of your kind.

INTERROGATOR

I don't have any secrets.

MOM

INTERROGATOR

No? Let me list them for you. Ahem. You see things when you aren't looking.

MOM

I have eyes in the back of my head.

INTERROGATOR

You will tell me how you grew them!

MOM

They just appeared one day, dry, astigmatized, and in need of special contacts!

INTERROGATOR

You can transform spoons into airplanes.

MOM

So we made the Transformers real, beat them into submission, and forced them to be nothing other than forks and spoons. Is that such a crime?

INTERROGATOR

No. I was just curious.

MOM

Curiosity killed the cat.

INTERROGATOR

So you're a liar!

MOM

What?

INTERROGATOR

Sir Girafflecakes did not retire to a cat farm upstate that doesn't allow visitors. He was killed by some monster named "Curiosity."

MOM

Darn.

INTERROGATOR

So you admit it.

MOM

I do! I lied. You caught me. Good job.