

THE VIRGINS OF SPRING



JOHN HELD JR.

BY MICHAEL McCUSKER

"Thank heaven for little girls"
—MAURICE CHEVALIER

"When I was young the mere smell of a woman would arouse me; now it is evidently only the sweetest, the youngest, the newest who have that power. One of these days it will be little boys."

—J. M. COETZE
(Waiting For The Barbarians)

Spring. Time for the ritual festivals of fertility—the interminable spectacles of middleaged men of various fraternal orders fawning over the season's virginal young princesses while obliterating any resemblance to the age-old carnality of these annual rites of fecundity

Humanity's biological clock does not keep the same tempo as its intellectual designs. We are still pagan savages underneath our surface dust of civilized society. Our ancient fertility rituals are layered in antiseptic disguises that reflect a rigidly puritanical and sexually repressed culture (despite MTV and the movies). Our libertine male ancestors, elders of various tribes or clans, demanded first crack at every Spring's virgins, and later within reach of our own era, 'noblesse oblige' gave a local baron the right to consummate a marriage with the virgin bride of a peasant. Old bulls in the natural world fight young stags for amatory dominance over a plurality of females. Old bulls in the contrived human world compete with hair implants and sporty automobiles.

Older men have always wanted to mate with young girls, not from nostalgia for lost youth but to consolidate aging and vitiated genes with strong robust genes, maintaining a vigorous heredity by minimizing the disadvantages of worn out RNA. Although the desire for young lambs is socially degenerate, it reflects age-old lusts and determination to survive through greater genetic diaspore. However, for the same reason older men strive to preserve their reproductive vitality and biological imperative, few younger women are willing to risk impairing their own genetic possibilities with old dogs past their prime. After all, randy young men are strong and eminently virile and potent bulls yet and offer the best opportunity for sturdy stock. As a woman wrote once: "Sperm is cheap; eggs are expensive."

The sexual desire of older men and women for girls and boys is an insatiable desire, a primeval siren's call to invigorate reproductivity. However, like individual body cells, each person's purposes and depravities are their own. Children throughout history have been initiated early to sex, more often as not by adults. Only recently has society prolonged sexual abstinence, just as it has prolonged childhood itself. Laws and social restrictions are designed to prevent promiscuous older persons from debauching children, especially to keep predatory males off the bodies of young girls until they grow old enough to make their own choices of mates. Older men and women in consequence stifle their sexual desires for the young in fear of social disapproval and legal vengeance, and sublimate them in other ways. But those who do not are very often explosive with

their thwarted desires and become deviant and violent in pursuit of them. The manner in which child abuse is treated drives predators underground and into more violent acts. The strictures that attempt to protect children are quite likely perpetrators of the grotesque molestation and sexual murders of children.

Pornography, promiscuity and pedophilia are results of sexual repression (and are in turn demanded to be suppressed). A civilization out of control breeds violence and insecurity, which is taken out on children by neurotic bitter adults. Movies, documentaries, groups of parents and others throughout the country advocate for laws for greater protection of children. Yet abuse flourishes underground.

There is, as an article in *Time* magazine alluded to a few years ago, a "preoccupation with child abuse. In an age when lurid lyrics, sniggering sitcoms and trash-talking stars work hard to rob children of innocence, the sexually abusive parent, guardian or family friend is not only a predator in his own right but also a stand-in for all the gaudy malevolence of pop culture ... The public reacts with wide eyes and a bit of drool at the corner of the mouth." The public gets to be puritanical and voyeuristic at the same time, the article said — the attitude is basically, "This food is terrible, and there's not enough of it."

James R. Kincaid, author of *Child Loving: The Erotic Child & Victorian Culture*, wrote in a *N.Y. Times* OpEd piece: "The story our culture feels it deserves would allow us to speak endlessly about child sexuality and the sexual attraction of children (for others) while maintaining our distance from these lurid tales...the moving story of how parents affirm the unspeakableness of sexual interest in children by speaking of it frequently..."

For thousands of years it was acceptable for adults to have sexual relations with children, with a few exceptions such as Native American cultures which regarded child sexual abuse as a capital crime. Children have since antiquity been raised for sex, as slaves for purposes of prepubescent prostitution or more insidiously for personal sexualities such as incest. Only recently has intensifying concern (and a collective sense of shame) about child sexual seduction initiated a campaign to prevent and punish it, and in particular to warn and protect children.

The law attempts to protect children essentially because they don't have the intellectual maturity to differentiate between what "feels good" and "what is good." These laws are specific: It is against the law for any adult to engage in any form of sexual activity with a child under any circumstances, even if the child initially tried to attract the adult or assented to sex with an adult.

One woman expressed eloquently the public's enflamed anger at the surge of child molestation. "If anyone messed with my daughters," she said, "I would nail his penis to a stump in the middle of the woods, set the stump afire, hand him a rusty axe and walk away."

Child molesters do not sexually abuse children because they are depraved but because of opportunity. Prison does not change pederasts' attraction for children and eventually they get out of jail. In a number of states child molesters who have served their sentences are being kept behind bars, which is unconstitutional and which many believe addresses a flaw in the legal system through the back door. Convicted child abusers are also targeted with emblems that identify them as molesters once released from prison in the manner early American colonial puritans publicly marked sexual deviants. Yet the problem remains: what should be done with pedophiles who will commit such acts again and again? Given the choice of pardoning a child molester, the public would most likely set the serial murderer Barrabas free.

Following a long period of neglect, public antipathy toward child abuse, whether sexual or violent (or both) has swung to the extreme, making almost any adult contact with children suspect, which only severs connections between generations that are perhaps the most necessary links for human continuity other than reproduction. Hitler's policy of turning children against their parents was never as successful alienating generations as the potential suspicion between young and old is apt to be in regard to pedasty.

We seem obsessed with denying our children exposure to things they most want to know, and will eventually know on their own. We disregard our own youthful impatience to learn and grow up and inflict identical deceptions we endured upon our children. We wish to shield them from unpleasant realities and attempt to forcibly repress their sexuality — yet we expect them to somehow cope.

A recent book criticizes the fearful over-protection of children from sexual knowledge and experience, faulting the anti-sex Puritanism of our culture, and defends adult/child sex as indispensable to sexual awakening. Reaction to the book has obviously been shrill, bordering on revulsion and hysteria — the reflexive response is to ban the book. But it is meant to be controversial. There is no debate (and no democracy) without controversy. As Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said, the cornerstone of the First Amendment is the free and unfettered assertion of thoughts and beliefs, even "expressions of opinion that we loathe and believe to be fraught with death."

The mass molestation of boys (and a few girls) by Catholic priests has intensified the controversy over adult/child sex, but it has also raised the unholy specter of homophobia as a response, which distorts the real problem of adults exploiting their authority to coerce children into fornication that is equivalent to rape.

A universal dilemma is that the intense and dynamic sexual magnetism of young males and females to draw them toward each other for propagation, radiates so strongly that it pulls in many more than just a few old fools unable to resist the lure. That seductive charisma is a reason we personally and culturally not only worship youth (and baldly exploit it) once past its manic angst, but define the rest of our lives by the short period we are young.

We are middleaged and old nearly twice as long as being young (average life expectancy is 3.5 score+). Youth really has only a single purpose: to grow, mate and propagate. The rest of life is tending succeeding generations and attempting to prepare a better world for them than we currently live in, an essential goal (and hope) of every generation.

Children have much more to worry about than more recent generations of their elders: perhaps an instinctive premonition that the species might have little time left on the planet is leading to much younger sexual contact (reminiscent of the greater part of our history when the average person seldom lived past 30 or 40), or it might be a desperate measure to circumvent AIDs, which fatally attacks at the very organs of procreation. The virtually uncontaminated bodies of children who are barely mature might be subliminally designated to carry and preserve the seed of the species. This might also be a partial explanation for the rise of child molestation by adults.

So we sanitize our public sexual ceremonies in the same manner we act unconscious of the implications of dressing little girls to resemble women (and dress older women as prepubescents). Catalogues for children's apparel display girls seductively modeling sexy dresses, blouses and tight pants, as well as nightwear, which are designed and marketed by adults. We are however a contradictory species: at the same instant we arouse the ancient lust for young girls (and/or boys) we act aggressively against child molestation. We ruthlessly strip the ancient fertility festivals of overt carnality while older men pantomime with much flair and flim-flam the covert seduction of ceremonial queens selected from among virgin princesses to rule imaginary courts of *Spring*, *Scandinavia*, *Roses* or *Regatta*.

Only fools and hypocrites deny the attractions of the beautiful young. Young women and men are among the grandest creatures on earth. We all love youth, reproductively, restoratively and retrospectively. The distinctions between abusive touching of our young and caresses that reflect love and respect are necessary for all of us to know. Dreams and attractions are out of our control. Our responses to them are not.

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