

Pretend you're a retard.

"What do YOU want?" Codell stared at his little brother Wilson who aped the stare back at him. They wiggled until they freed themselves from the bed covers.

Their mother had already left for work. How could she go to bed after them and get up before them, day after day? Codell lazily swung his fist at Wilson and play-punched him in the mouth. "Hey!" Wilson objected.

Codell padded to the kitchen and poured orange juice and cereal for himself and Wilson. Wilson wandered to the toilet and then to the kitchen. "Go back and wash your hands," commanded Codell. He poured milk on their cereal and sat down to slurp up breakfast.

Wilson joined him at the table. "What we going to do today?" asked Codell. "Can't do much in the rain." Wilson shrugged and slumped.

"Feel like seeing a movie? I was by the theater, there's a movie, *Planet of the Apes*. It sounds good. The apes talk like humans and treat the humans like animals." His brother sat upright, eyes agleam.

"Too bad, I'm going alone."

"AAGH!" Wilson smacked his spoon into the bowl. Milk splashed on his face.

"You really want to go? Oh, alright. Finish your cereal." Wilson fished his spoon out of his bowl and ate.

They dressed and ran through drizzle to the bus stop. At the rear doors they snuck onto the bus and crouched out of sight of the driver's mirror view.

The buildings raced by the bus's windows. A couple of blocks from the theater, Codell pulled the cord to exit and grabbed his brother by an arm. Wilson looked as if he would scream again.

"Don't you say a word." Codell tightened his grip on the arm. "This is where we get off." The pair exited; the drizzle had stopped.

"Walk right next to the buildings and stay way back from me," Codell said. "When I get a ticket, sneak up to the ticket booth when I tell you to. You got to sneak up. By the time you're in front of me she won't see you because you're a punk. Understand?"

"I'm not a punk!"

They approached the ticket booth, Wilson hanging way back and hugging the buildings out of sight of the ticket booth.

At the ticket booth Codell stood on his toes. "Good morning, ma'am. *Planet of the Apes*, please."

"It's just starting. If you hurry, you can make it before the doors close."

She punched a button; a ticket popped from the metal slit in the counter. Wilson bounced to the doorway of the adjoining building. Codell put down a five dollar bill, and the woman swiveled to a cash drawer. Codell glanced sidelong at Wilson and fluttered his hand at his hip like the wings of a sparrow. Wilson scurried, water from the building's roof dripping on him, and squished himself between Codell and the ticket window. With his legs and belly, Codell pressed Wilson against the booth.

The woman swiveled back to the window with the change and looked left and right. "Did someone just run by here?"

"Someone run by here?" Codell pushed his knees into Wilson's back. "No ma'am."

Change and ticket in hand, Codell stepped to the lobby door, Wilson caterpillaring along the wall in the same direction. Codell opened the lobby door and turned back to the woman in the booth. "Do you have the time, ma'am?"

She looked at her watch. Wilson scooted through the door. "11:15."

"Thank you, ma'am!"

Past the concessions in the lobby stood a resolute young ticket-taker in a pasted-on smile. "Pretend you're a retard," Codell whispered to Wilson.

"Aagh," croaked Wilson. "Better than that," Codell whispered imperatively. They closed on the sentinel and Codell presented his ticket, Wilson two steps behind, dragging a foot.

"Wait a minute," said the ticket-taker. "Where's his ticket?"

Wilson raised an arm in front of him and dangled it at the elbow. He contorted his fingers and limped his hand at the wrist. "Ouoh-ouoh-ouohg," he drawled, dribbling spittle. The ticket-taker's face wrinkled.

"Ticket! Are you making fun of my brother? Can't you see he's not right?" Codell tried to make himself cry.

“No, no - I didn’t know.” Codell and Wilson kept walking into the theater like they belonged there.

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The lights were down, *Planet of the Apes* was rolling, and the two boys struggled to constrain their laughter. “Did you see him look at you? I can’t believe it! That was perfect!”

Wilson raised both of his hands and dangled them from his wrists. “Ouoh-ouoh, ouohg,” he drawled, pushing out his lips like some kind of primate.

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