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## An Examination of Habit

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# An Examination of Habit

## Victor Wasserman

A young man of a familiar type was sitting in an open-air café in Boulder. As he was hurriedly downing an oversized cheeseburger with all the toppings, including but not limited to American cheese, an additional meat patty, an additional square of cheese, lettuce, tomato, onion, olives, bacon and more mayonnaise than any one person has any right to even look at, much less consume, a young woman with a lettuce wrap sat down across from him at the little table.

As anyone does when confronted with a strange situation, he continued to eat, but had slowed down some: the universal sign of rumination. It is odd how important time can become when one is in a hurry, how little we do to conserve it when we need to think fast. Meanwhile, the young woman smiled simply at him.

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He was still very confused when he put down his hamburger and swallowed, cleared his throat and said, "Can I help you?"

The lady replied sweetly, "No."

The fellow with the burger licked his lips here, and did the best he could to articulate politely that he wished to eat alone. "Oh?" she said, sounding neither surprised nor deeply moved by the young man's plea. Suddenly she twisted around in her chair, glancing first over one shoulder and then over the other, searching for something in the crowd of tables around them. Then she raised an arm high in the air and waved it quickly but powerfully about. Then, without warning, she returned peacefully to her original position at the table, considering the lettuce wrap sitting in front of her.

Agitated, perplexed, the young man asked what that was all about. The girl returned a gesture of no real descript form or meaning and took a bite of her food. "I mean all that waving!"

"Oh," again she was not surprised, only going through the

motions, "I was just looking for someone."

"Did you find them?" he stammered.

Slowly, intently, and with closed eyes, she slid her tongue back and forth across her teeth inside her closed lips, hunting out stray strands of green. After a pause, she nodded.

"Would you mind going to sit with them, then?"

She said, "Oh," as she always did, "but I am." And with that, her hands dropped below the table and deftly undid her button and fly. She raised her bottom slightly and whisked her jeans down to her ankles where she fumbled as skillfully as one can before stepping out of her bellbottoms completely. The young man's jaw fell open. She crossed her arms at her waist and had her tank top off in a flash; her long hair cascading down her back to her fanny and the delicate red cloth that hid it from the world.

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Bewildered, the young man coughed out the obvious question, "What are you doing?!"

The young woman was reaching behind her back for her clasp when she paused. "Ted Bishop, right?" The young man jerked back in shock. The young woman nodded knowingly. "You really should pay your bills, Ted." She undid her bra, and the young man's head exploded.

A mile and a half away, in a high and hidden place, a grumbling and aging man was laying supine, staring down his rifle's sight in reflection, job done. He reached into his pocket, no easy task at his age in that position, and once more examined the folded yellow paper therein. "Objective: male sitting with naked woman, Boulder café, 2:40 p.m." He sighed deeply to himself, "This used to be fun."