

December 29,2001

Dear Whoopi,

Hi, how are you? I'm fine. I'm a bard and so are you. I don't know what to say to you, so I'll make something up. I love your movies and I love your autobiography and I love the fact that you seem to be telling the story of my life in some ways. That's cool; I'm sure I know you better than you know me. So, when is your next movie coming out?

Maybe that's a dumb and ordinary question. Actually you're kind of telling my best friend's story too. I'm not sure how to explain correctly. *The Color Purple* is (based on facts in the story) about me and Bonnie in a lot of ways since we adopted each other as soul sisters and some other people in our lives. *Corrina, Corrina* is a similar story to mine too.

I know you probably love Mark Twain in real life too. I grew up a lot like Tom Sawyer. I'm the same size and strength as a fourteen year old boy; my family is so much like his it's insane. I would've run away at ten too, but I was caught. Bonnie's kind of like Becky Thatcher, and had I been able to legally get away with sailing a wooden raft down the Mississippi, I would have done it like Huck Finn. I probably would have met her at the end of the river on the other side in New Orleans. She grew up just like Celie did (but she had a little brother). I was molested too as a child although it wasn't rape most of the time. Her dad raped her for the first thirteen years of her life and she escaped into the arms of a couple of batterers and rapists in the projects of New Orleans at thirteen. Kelly (her first man problem) was just like Celie's husband to my understanding. Bonnie taught me to take my life less seriously and I taught her math. She's 95% sweetheart, but sometimes she acts a lot like Shug Avery. Before she met me she was attacked the way Celie was by someone just like Shug. Bonnie and I have been friends for thirteen years now. Other characters we're like is Anne of Green Gables (like me) and the Artful Dodger (Bonnie).

Anyhow, I ran away from home twenty-two hours before my eighteenth birthday so my toxic parents wouldn't phone me in as a runaway.

Bonnie's mom almost died from cancer when she was a teenager, which is another reason she ran away at thirteen when her birth mother and father divorced. Franny, her mother, is a lot like Oprah Winfrey's character in *The Color Purple*

Boys On The Side is a lot like the grown up version of us too. You play a character a lot like Bonnie again, Mandy (Bonnie's friend who was molested by her mother) is a lot like the girl whose boyfriend was tied up, and I'm like the other woman in the movie. Mandy's kind of volatile sometimes and sexually abuses her girlfriends though. Mine and Bonnie's relationship started out with me asking her for a ride somewhere, and knowing Bonnie, I bet she thought I meant out of town.

I like the work you've done with child characters who are in mourning for the loss of their mothers, too. Corrina Washington, the way you portrayed her is much like the woman who adopted me after my birth mother plowed into a telephone pole and "croaked" (as my mom (I call my adopted mother "mom" and my birth mother "my mother") would say) @ 23; I was four

years old. My mom's name is Peggy Coach, and she's of unknown tribal origin. (Her Native American father is a rapist and didn't bother to tell her white mother which tribe he was from.) She's cool, gentle, witty and dances a lot. She's the world's greatest mom. There were several similar things that happened in my life to Molly Singer's too.

My mom's favorite color is purple. Her favorite songs, when I was nine, were "Blue Bayou" and "Don't It Make My Brown Eyes Blue."

You should meet her. She's the head nurse @ a retirement home now. Her adoption of me was legal, but she had to marry my birth mother's widow to do it. For some stupid reason, it's against unwritten laws for Native Americans to adopt "white" children. (I'm ¼ French, 65% Celtic(50% Black Irish Celt), 5% Slavic and 5% mutt). Some people got all weird with my mom and bossing her around and bible bashing. People gave us funny looks in church. Her family lives in relative poverty. My girl scout leader ripped her off \$30.00 and lied and said I replaced all the candy bars with rocks. I had nibbled off one candy bar, the day before my dad kidnapped me. People don't believe that a Native American adopted me, and when they hear what Steve, her husband, is like they don't usually want to hear any more. She let him force a marriage on her at seventeen to save my life, because Steve likes his drugs. Steve liked to set me right on his crotch when I was in his lap. Steve brought her home to meet me one day, and asked me what I thought. I said "She's pretty." Steve decided to keep her. Steve built us a house. It's too late to stop a Native American from adopting a little "white" child, I'm thirty- eight.

I come from a creative/musical family, and my grandma Gena Coach (Steve's mom) just lost her husband too. She, Gena, is a little like Molly's grandmother, too. I'm still her daughter, but my birth father, a lousy sleazy two-timing drug dealing musician, who I'd never heard from before I was ten, "kidnapped" me during a visit to my blood brother (in his custody) when I was ten. He kept his porno in the only bathroom we were allowed to use the entire time I lived with him. My mom wrote a letter to my birth mother's family shortly thereafter saying, in essence, she thought I was mad at her. I saw it when I was twenty-seven. I can't find her right now, perhaps she got away from Steve. Steve seems to be the only one living in my mom's house now. She deserves a purple heart or two or three. because she saved me from at least two serious beatings. She got up in his face and screamed at him to "Stop it Steve, right now!!" I yelled, "Don't you hit my mom!" I think I added then (or maybe it was later.) "I heard you slap my mom." She's 5'3" 105lb., and he's a big ugly white man, at least 5'11". He looked defeated and quit and went downstairs to his musical equipment. He's relocating her. I have no doubt in my mind.

I have a little brother too. He's Peg and Steve's son. We're like Babs and Buster Bunny: "no relation." We're the same height. My stepdad and birth father are much meaner then Molly Singer's father as he's portrayed in *Corrina, Corrina*.

I did tell someone I thought maybe they should start smoking too, when I was little; and I said something similar to Molly about cancer to my stepdad; but I never took their cigarettes. I still play music. I also didn't do much talking after my mother died, sometimes only if I got hit, and I wasn't invited to the funeral. I don't like to talk when people I really love die, either. She never was an exotic cook either, but she did alright with simple nutritious meals. My stepdad did nothing but complain, he's a Vietnam Vet. He was always telling people it was none of their

business, and these women he told this to were awfully curious about whether she was mistreating me in baby talk. I'm not sure I minded him telling them that; I sure didn't want to talk to them if they were going to talk to me that way. He named his band "None Of Your Business." He was the drummer. A man named Munch was in the band, and I used to sing "Munch a bunch a, munch a bunch a Fritos to him" Shortly thereafter I (like three weeks after I made it up) I heard it for the first time on a commercial. Steve told me she was dead. She let me stay home from school a lot and never asked if I was playing hooky. I got to watch cartoons. She said "There isn't anybody better then you," in a different way. What she said was "just stick your nose in the air and walk right past 'em."

She's a lot like Janet Jackson, too. Her younger brother, Jim, is a child molestor. He raped me when I was seven, about eight times - all the times he babysat. He also raped Cookie's (Yvonne), her little sister's, little girl much later when she was seven too. CPS workers and others have convinced her that it's all her fault. It certainly wasn't. We argued the last time we talked for any length of time on the telephone. She kept saying "It's my fault."

I kept saying "NO, IT ISN'T"

She thinks I'm mad at her, and thanks to the JAWS club (the Just Add Water (or White) Society Club - made up of people like snooty needle wielding, potion pushing nurses, my girl scout leader, my stepmother and CPS workers who steal Native American children, the put a band aid on it, kool-aid mixers, everyone's an "undereducated barbarian" people) she's also afraid of me. I've tried to talk to her, but someone else is answering the phone who claims not to know her, or she won't talk on the telephone, or she wants to hang up. The last thing she said to me was "Life's not a fairy tale," during a five minute conversation after which she had to go.

I really wanted to disagree, because there seems to be wicked witches in every grove, goblins, frog princes, evil knights and dragons lurking everywhere, not to mention magic users galore, evil potions, and movie/fantasy style witchcraft. I blame it on rape crazies, what happens when people start poking pins in voodoo dolls of rapists or are willing to try anything that seems relatively harmless to stop the rapes.

I've tried to talk to people about my family on these help lines, crisis centers and social workers assigned to me and others, but 99.9% of women always seem to want to hang up the phone within minutes of me using the words "Native American," (or escape the conversation) unless they're Native American themselves. Then I have to prove that I know how to get along with Native Americans, usually. But, Native American women, for some "mysterious" reason in my life always seem to be there to help during my darkest hours, although they always seem to be shaking a little from fear. I'm not a violent person. I don't believe in violence, and the only times I ever did anything close to violence I was having rape flashbacks with body memories. My mom is like that too. She never harmed me, and she really only ever swatted me too lightly to hurt when she was told by Steve to spank me, honest. She couldn't hurt a fly. Therefore, it must be a total crock that Native American women are too hard on children to be allowed to raise their own kids.

Maybe it's the "white woman's privilege" myth. It's damaging. I know Black Irish women don't have any privileges, for sure. White Nazi's deceive people in public on purpose, just like White Fang's master did. They beat up black people for obeying white women too.

My mom is big on the truth. She told me never to lie. She never told lies. The only lie I ever heard her say was "It's my fault." She also told me that rainbows are a peace sign from God saying that there would never be another world wide flood, and that White Buffalo Calf Woman said that nobody should be carrying around handguns at all. They're bad for you. The first statement was saying that the rainbow is God's "bow of peace in the cloud" (like in the story of Noah) and the second statement was her agreeing with me when the cops brought me home when I got lost when I was little and the people at the house I went to called the police, and I wouldn't talk to them because I was scared of the gun. My mother had died and I knew guns killed people. He's like "oh no, it's a walky talky." My best friend doesn't believe in guns either. Her kids can't have toy guns of any kind including squirt guns. I agree with that.

When it comes to Heaven and angels, I remember thinking the same thing Molly Singer said (almost word for word) when I was fourteen or so - but I never said it. "What difference does that make" if people want to believe in such things just because it makes them feel better.

Clara's Heart might be like my blood brother's story too. He's older than me.

I'm sure you improvised a lot. I think you're the funniest woman in the world. Bonnie love's you a lot too - I'm sure you cemented our friendship. Bonnie and I are out of work funny comedienne's, so we would know. We both love your California blonde skit. You do sound like a Valley girl, honest. You really are like us. Bonnie does a yankee accent really well, and my birth mother's birth place inspired me to start talking like a valley girl when I was teenager. It's habitual speech for both of us.

You've really got to meet my mom and my birth mom (someday), Elinor Sanford the angel. My birth father's wife is a lot like Corrina Washington's rival. My father raped her and got her pregnant when she was fifteen, and forced us all to do LSD. He was dressing up like Jesus at the time. I know he forced her to do other stuff. She was our babysitter. (His name is Michael Lennon.) She was my mother's best friend. She's from the projects in LaCrosse. She's rough. Her name is Sue and she's like Lilith of the myth. She's a scrapper, and she's pretty prejudiced, but I think I fixed some of it just by not taking it well at all as a preteen. They took her mother's piano. I guess it was the JAWS club, but I can't get a clear answer. Her dad died when she was a youngster. She's Polish, and she drives a mini van and she never had more than \$5.00 in her wallet. She's good with numbers. I don't think she got to finish high school. She's honest, but withholds a lot. My father broke her leg. He's the "good son;" I think he hit his own mother and my grandmother as well.

Anyhow, thanks for reading this letter. I know you will someday. I'm a star too and I love you platonically a whole lot. I think you deserve a Nobel Peace Prize for your civil rights work. I know you saved my sanity at the least. Thanks for always being there for me to make me laugh and lighten things up, and help with your never say die attitude to break the silence. I'm glad you'll never be on the streets again - it's a nightmare out there.

Peace, love, freedom, happy endings, true friendship, honor, wisdom and sweet aisiling (Gaelic for "dreaming") to you, angel.

Love,

Theresa Marie RavenHawk.