

Once upon a time in a land far away, there was a huge rushing river that ran between two small villages. There was a bridge that connected the two villages.

In the villages lived two lovers – Alex and Leslie. Now Alex and Leslie were deeply in love – they were rushing across that bridge at all hours to be with one another.

One year, a terrible thing happened. After days of rain the river flooded and washed out the bridge. The villages were very poor and it would be quite a long time before they would be able to afford to repair the bridge. Alex and Leslie were distraught – pining and broken hearted at the separation. Finally, one day, Alex could stand it no longer and decided to find a way across the river.

Alex decided to seek help in the quest to see Leslie and approached Pat the Sailor, a riverboat captain. Now this was very fortunate for Alex, because Pat's boat was exactly what was needed to get across the river. Alex explained the situation to Pat and asked to be taken across the river. Pat thought for a moment, and then replied: "Sure, I will be happy to take you across the river. I ask for but one thing in payment – that you sleep with me first."

Alex was appalled! How could Pat ask for such a thing? Alex stormed away – "What kind of a person does Pat think I am?!" Alex couldn't believe someone would ask something like that!

After Alex told Pat "no deal" Alex wandered down the road, wondering what to do, and ran into an old friend, Morgan. Alex told Morgan the terrible story about Pat and was getting angrier every minute in the retelling of the story, until Morgan stopped and said: "Alex, I have known you and Pat for a long time – you are both friends. I really don't want to get in the middle of this."

A despondent Alex, feeling all options exhausted, finally decided to go back to Pat and accept the offer. Alex slept with Pat that night. The next morning, true to Pat's word, Pat took Alex across the river.

Alex sailed across the river and saw Leslie. After spending a few delightful hours together, Alex felt compelled to tell Leslie what had happened. After Alex had related the whole story, Leslie completely blew up: "You what? I can't believe you did that. I can't believe you slept with Pat! That's it! It's all over! You cheapened our love!" Leslie slapped Alex and said: "Just forget the relationship. Get out of my life!"

Then Leslie stormed away.

Distraught, Alex wandered off and by coincidence, came upon an old friend – Chris. Alex cried in misery to Chris, explaining the whole sorry tale. Now Chris had never really liked Leslie – the local "all-star" who had an exaggeratedly high self opinion, – and Chris immediately stomped away, happy to have an excuse to find Leslie. Upon finding the culprit, Chris proceeded to beat the stuffing out of Leslie.

The story ends with Alex and Chris walking off into the sunset, hand in hand... laughing!