



I rolled over in bed and something wet soaked into my arm. Urgh, I'd drooled on myself again.

Only drool wasn't normally brown. I blinked and shuffled back, wondering why my breath smelt like Jack Daniels.

Even though he was facing away from me, I could tell that Sam also smelt like Jack Daniels. And he was wearing cologne with strong after notes of onion. And was that a hint of vomit?

Sam normally smelt like soap.

I lifted the sheet. I was still wearing my white lace bra and underpants, which was damn disappointing.

A headache the size of the Big Merino was starting to settle down behind my eyes but I half sat up and peered across my apartment.

Neil, my housemate, ex-boyfriend, and Sam's brother, wasn't asleep on the couch as he normally was, and there were cans scattered over the lounge floor. I squinted over at the

thick slab of mirror we used as a hall table. I could just make out his keys and wallet. Probably he was in the bathroom.

I cleared my throat and Sam rolled over.

‘Oh, fuckety fuck!’

‘Sssh!’ said Neil. ‘You’ll wake my hangover.’

Neil. With no shirt on. In my bed. Not in the bathroom.

I lifted the sheet again carefully, then dropped it with a shout.

‘Neil!’ I clapped my hand over my mouth and tried to breathe normally. Then I hit him on the shoulder. ‘You’re all...*naked!*’

‘Humph.’

‘Neil,’ I repeated carefully. ‘Why, in the name of Johnny Cash, are you naked?’

‘The bet,’ he muttered from the pillow. ‘Now shush.’

‘What *bet?*’

He rolled toward me with a sigh, his forearm over his eyes. ‘The bet that I couldn’t finish off the pizza.’

I reeled back from his breath.

I guess that explained the onions.

‘Neil!’ I shook him before he could roll back. ‘Does nudity mean you won or lost?’

‘Won,’ he muttered.

I thought about that for a second. I wasn’t the betting type. Or the sleep with my boyfriend’s brother type. And why would nudity be the prize? I was really messed up. Until I’d met Sam I really hadn’t gotten laid much at all. Now I had sex with everyone.

This was awful.

‘Momentarily anyway,’ Neil said, rubbing his eyes. ‘But then something bad happened and I lost.’

‘Bad?’ I grabbed a pink T-shirt from the fresh laundry basket next to my bed and put it on. ‘How bad?’

He was silent.

‘Neil?’

He squinted up at me.

‘Like Michael Jackson bad or 50 Cent bad?’

‘50 Cent. I sort of threw it back up again,’ he pointed vaguely towards the bathroom. ‘So I lost. Ergo, I’m nude.’

I screwed up my eyes tightly. What was the last thing I remembered? I worked a full shift at DVDWorld and then came home and...

Oh.

‘Why are you so freaked?’ he asked. ‘It isn’t like I spewed on your white satin pumps. I made it to the toilet and everything.’

‘Why am I freaked?’ I repeated, dazedly.

‘Yeah, you’re the pervy old scrag.’ He laughed and sat up next to me.

‘Huh? What am I?’ I really wasn’t sure anymore. I should pay attention.

‘I felt you lift the sheet, honey.’

I rolled my eyes. ‘I had to check.’

After a moment he patted my leg. ‘I’ll put you out of your misery. At no point did you beg me to sleep with you or even do anything sleazy. I was hurt, but I’ve put it behind me. The sheet lifting was the worst bit, in fact, which is strange, seeing you’re sober. Although you probably shouldn’t get behind a wheel for another twelve to fourteen hours.’

‘So we *were* drunk?’

‘You know how they say the body is like fifty per cent water? Well, I think we were fifty per cent Jack Daniels.’

‘Why the hell did we drink Jack Daniels?’

‘A friend gave me a box for helping him set up his stereo,’ he said, staring at the sheet.

‘Really?’ I raised my eyebrows. Something smelt fishy and it wasn’t just me. It also worried me that if the devil came in a tall glass of champagne, like a strawberry perched on the rim, then I really must be completely broke because he’d been forced to visit me via a free box of mixers in a can. I hadn’t popped champagne for ages. Nor had I had reason to. I looked back at Neil, who’d had the decency to flush a little under the pallor.

‘All that sinful alcohol just for fixing his stereo?’

‘Well, he also needed cable TV and the plug was already there.’ He shrugged. ‘Share the wealth.’

‘The wealth of re-runs of *I Love Lucy*?’ I rolled my eyes. Neil used to be a drug addict, B&E expert and I knew he had various other illegal skills. ‘If you want to really share the wealth, you could help me find a way to pay my Visa bill.’

‘You still owe a debt to society *and* the credit card company?’

I squinted over at him. ‘Unless in our drunken madness we robbed a bank, turned into leggy and luscious supermodels *and* created a totally safe version of ecstasy, then yes, I still owe them my life. And probably yours too by now.’

‘Hmm. Pity. The supermodel thing would be cool.’

‘So we really drank them all?’ I asked, changing the

subject. 'Why? Why would we drink them all?' I pointed to the floor. 'There are thousands of cans.'

Neil patted my leg again. 'That would be your vision doubling in panic and dehydration. Drink this.' He handed me a glass of water.

I swallowed it down, feeling marginally better. 'What else have you got over there on *my* bedside table?'

'No replacement brain in a jar until yours recuperates, if that's what you're hoping.'

I flashed him a look. 'I was thinking salty and crunchy snack food, actually. Why did I drink so much?'

But we both knew why.

Sam.

'Stupid boys.' I muttered.

'Yeah,' he said, opening a packet of cheese and onion chips. 'We totally suck.'



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