

Chapter 3

Friday dawns with another bout of crushing tiredness. I roll out of bed, pondering my existence with too much clarity. I reach towards my personal fridge, grab the whiskey and suckle the neck before I realize it is emptier than my dreams.

Fuck.

I dive under the bed and dust off a case of Big Daddy IPA, opening the second bottle seconds after I've slurped down the first one. An exceptional night of poor sleep has me resorting to a morning line of blow, the rush of adrenaline bringing along a stab of regret as it burrows its way into my brain.

I stumble through the motions once again, out the door just as Mike awoke. Radiohead's "There There" fills my car's speakers during the familiar drive.

Just cause you feeeeeeeel it, doesn't mean it's there

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Amen Thom.

And then it was back to my both welcome and dreaded bed. Seems I have nothing to do till this fucking "agent" shows up. Nobody tries to contact me through any of the regular means, neither Frank and any of his underlings nor Detective Burns and his law enforcement cronies. I grab a tissue and wank myself off to sleep. Have to get rested for Mike's party. I think it's tonight.

I oversleep. I am awakened by the sound of multiple footsteps in the apartment. I toss the cum-sodden tissue behind my bed post, stumble over and follow a beer chug by a swig of mouthwash and then a brisk stride out.

"Lucas! Off work early, again? Christ man, are you trying to tell me you're unemployed?" A screeching, annoying laugh. "Come meet some of my old frat bros I was telling you about."

"Had to make sure our place is looking ship-shape instead of ship-wrecked," I quip striding over and nodding at my new acquaintances. Awful joke.

"Lucas."

"James, nice to meet you," intoned the first of Mike's fraternity brothers. James was a stringy Asian with a sniffy face, a loose polo and fastidious manicured fingernails. His grip was clammy and cold.

"Lucas."

"Roberto, pleasure." Roberto was of middling height and middling paunch, his Hispanic background hidden behind a white-washed wardrobe, his beady eyes set under a retreating hairline. His grip was sweaty and lingering.

"And this is Tommy," interjected Mike, maneuvering the last introduction. I grip the third brother's hand, his Caucasian roots and tall and spare frame filling out the trio like some kind of diversity pamphlet. His grip was sure and strong and his eyes hovered over mine for an unnecessary moment. The eyes do not look so dissimilar from mine.

"Lucas, nice to meet you."

"Pleasure is mine."

An excitable Mike pressed matching Guinness lagers into our hands and couch cushions under our rears, determined to invoke good cheer between his old running mates and his aloof roommate. I grow frighteningly sentient listening to the prat James launch into what sounds like a well-rehearsed play by play account of how he'd managed to strike gold in his latest bar-hopping foray and "land" what he was calling "at least a solid eight." No doubt, it had followed a fruitless year plus dry streak.

"Excuse me?" An affronted James and a lull in the conversation as all heads turned towards me prompt me to realize I had muttered that last thought out loud.

"Uhhh, I mean...I'm...just kidding, man." A dismal effort, but I lack the motivation for a better one.

James was as red as a dog's erection. "Give me a break," he interjected with heat. "This is coming from the guy Mike says he's never seen with a girl!"

Mike blushed and started stammering out a denial, but, amused, I cut him off, this time more composed and more bored, much more bored. "Look James, I'm sorry. You're right, I enjoy such a paucity of female companionship that I'm easily provoked to jealousy at the thought of other people's superior success. Go on though, I want to hear how many times you made her cum."

James's eyes narrowed into nothingness as he listened for the sarcasm. I look at him with the cool disdain of a condescending murderer and he settles for a graceless acceptance of my apology.

I lean back into the couch cushion as he droned on, the conversation flipping between girls and work and then working out, Mike trying to appease me about his previous indiscretion by asking how I manage to stay in such trim shape.

"Coke body," I smile. A brief pause, then a raucous row of laughter from the boys.

"Too funny," he gasped. "Man, you are a funny guy when you're...uh, social..."

Mike trailed off again, hesitant of saying anything that could be interpreted as even remotely offensive. He was saved by the bell, the peal ringing through the apartment and the rush of footsteps at the door jerking him to his feet.

The next hour or so blurs into a stream of feigned socializing and alcohol, the former an alien enough element that I am on a perpetual edge. However, I surprise myself by easing up and relaxing, and starting to enjoy myself, and by starting to enjoy myself I mean talking and flirting enough with one of

Jackie's friends that I can start to visualize about fucking her, fucking her tonight. I'm discreetly placing empty beers around various locations, but even so I'm wrapping up my first dozen and Charlotte, the woman I'm planning on sleeping with tonight is a little alarmed by the thin sliver she's seen of my alcoholism.

"Lucas," she laughed and felt my upper right arm through my shirt. "You are really going through these beers. You're not one of those guys that needs to drink to talk to ladies, are you?"

I leer at her, my body feeling the lighting of that kindle, the ember of horniness that sweeps and jumps and flares and fills up my body.

"No, of course not." I pause. "I only need to drink to talk to really, really pretty ladies, so excuse me for a second," and I gulp down the last of my bottle.

She giggled. "So, you live with Mike? How is that?"

"Yeah, he's alright." I make a fake sarcastic face and she laughed again. "My room's way bigger."

"Oh really?"

"Yeah let me show you. I'll give you the tour." I ease off the wall and start towards my room, not waiting for her to agree.

She followed.

I push into my small bare room, and the baggie of cocaine on my nightstand reminds me that I am not expecting visitors. I move to block the view but Charlotte the Harlot sees it and gives out a bird like chirp of excitement as I try to shush her up.

"Lucas!" Her eyes sparkle. "I didn't know you were such a *bad* boy."

And with that she drops to face the coke and turns her cock-hungry mouth towards me. "You have a surface?"

Impatient and bewildered, I close the door and scavenge for an old empty flat handle of Jack Daniels. I am not used to social cocaine. She blinked then winked at my proffered choice.

She dumped a liberal amount on the surface, and started carving up thick, long lines. Her breasts plopped and strained against her halter top as she sat down on my bed and offered me the surface, holding it close to that copious chest.

I take a quick breath, and say "ladies first," as I start to fantasize about how I'm going to chase my line. She hooked a strand of auburn hair behind her ear and inhaled her line with a voracious appetite that stoked my own carnal one.

She sniffed once, twice, thrice as she combated the drip and gave a quiet little hiccup as I take the handle. I hover over it and make the snow disappear. I put it down and then grin at Charlotte who was waving at her nose, almost looking like she's missing her face on purpose, in a bad pantomime.

I know something is wrong for about a split second before the rush of blood welled up and burst out of her nostrils and her body gave a little seize and she gave a small breathless cry and then she jolted back onto my bed her arms seizing back and forth, carving patterns in the air and keeling over while her pouty face leaked red like a smashed up tomato and her eyes rolled back into depths of eternity.

And I know she is dead a split second before I check her pulse.

I am thankful I'd taken the line before, at least, because I welcome the rush of calm I feel. I double check that the door is locked, then I truss her up quickly in my bedsheets and then roll her up under my bed. Then I sit down on my bed and start thinking hard.

The ebb and flow of the party outside came and went. Around two hours past midnight, there is nothing to be heard. I am relieved, but not content. Now it is time to make moves; I can not be spared more than a thought of unfulfilment for the dead woman under my bed.

Then someone knocked on the door.