

I ran into her on the subway platform. She caught my attention because the blouse she was wearing had only one button holding it closed, the one just below her breasts. If she'd been anything larger than the A-cup (or maybe low-end B-cup) she was, then it would have been extremely noticeable. As it was, it was only my sharp eyes and membership in the Girl Watchers Club that caused me to notice. I was about to mention it to her when she looked down at her blouse and pulled the top closer together, slightly. However, she didn't use any of the existing buttons, so it became obvious that she was hoping people would notice. I smiled, more to myself, and got winked at as she saw my smile.

"Beauty and humor," I laughed. "A devastating mixture."

"Thank you. You'll forgive me if I don't exactly bow."

I couldn't help but laugh as the doors opened. She sat in an available seat, and motioned me to sit beside her. "Keeps you from looking down my ample cleavage," she laughed.

I chuckled. "What, did my GWA card fall out of my wallet again?" As her eyebrows sketched the question, I answered, "Girl Watchers of America. Founding member. Have to be; I created it when I made the cards."

She giggled, and then got a little more serious. Still with a smile on her face, she said, "You're out of luck, though, fella. I'm a lesbian."

"Gasp," I said. "Does that mean that the spell is broken, and you'll suddenly turn ugly on me? If so, how much time do I have?"

"No, I'm just telling you not to get your hopes up. It's not going anywhere." The look on my face as she said that, as a large number of terribly raunchy humorous responses ran through my head, made her laugh again. "Gods, you're a paranomasiac, aren't you?"

"Acquitted, I'll have you know," I laughed back at her. "In serious answer to you; yes, I am an invertebrate punster. I also understand what you're trying to say to me, and I appreciate it. Would you complain if I asked to try to strike up a friendship with you?"

"As long as you realize that I'm not spreading for you."

I looked at her for a long while. She was not terribly tall, nor, as I've said, big busted. She was pretty, but not a striking beauty. Somehow, though, she exuded something that I knew drove guys crazy. "It's been hell for you, hasn't it?"

She snorted. "What makes you say that?"

"Well, it's the conflicting messages. You seem to try to drive people off, but you dress to make them notice you. Somehow, you don't see yourself as pretty, so you dress to attract, but you also know the effect you have on guys like me. Being a lesbian on top of that, with guys coming to you and trying the 'Well I'll change your mind about men' crap can't help either."

She blinked at me. "You aren't real. No one says that sort of thing in conversation with someone they just met."

“Well, I have no hopes of sleeping with you, so I don’t have to worry about expending testosterone that way. Plus, I tend towards empathy with people, whether or not you believe in psychic phenomena, and I just got a sense of your conflict. I’d like to get to know you better as a friend, but I thought it needed to be said. How’d I do?”

“Pretty fucking close.” Her laughter surprised me after that comment. She turned to look at me. “Were you going anywhere special?”

“Nah, just uptown to get drunk, probably.”

“Want to get drunk with me, then?”

“Let’s see: hang around with a pretty girl for however much of the night she’s willing to sit and talk to me, or go out and get drunk while failing to pick up girls. I know which side my cat’s buttered on.”

She laughed again as she said, “Then come with me to my apartment, since I really want to change before going out.”

My eyebrow rose. “You’re going to trust someone you just met to know where you live?”

“Well, given the rottweiler I own, I doubt I’ll have too much of a problem.” Pursing my lips as I thought, I finally conceded the point with a chuckle and a nod.

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She surprised me again by starting to shuck off her clothes the second she entered the apartment. Skirt followed blouse into the hamper just inside the kitchen, as did the bra a moment later. “You know, you’re not making it easy on me,” I said.

She spun, and before I got my eyes slammed shut, I got a glimpse of what appeared to be flawless skin. “I’m surprised you didn’t say that I’m making it hard for you, given your love of puns.” I knew my reaction was obvious.

“Puns that obvious are below even my threshold,” I replied with an air of mock haughtiness. “And my belt,” I added, unable to resist.

“You can open your eyes again,” she chuckled, her voice a little closer to me. “I’ve got my breasts covered again.” A moment later, “Sorry for lying, but you should open them again. I don’t mind you looking at me, and I’m something of a nudist, anyway. Besides, I may be lesbian, but it doesn’t mean I don’t get a warm glow knowing I’m appreciated.”

I opened my eyes for the third time, and carefully focused on her face. I hadn’t noted before that she had brilliantly blue eyes, and that her haircut perfectly framed her face. Gods, she was more beautiful than I’d first realized. “What?” she asked in shock as she noted the look on my face.

“You are an astoundingly beautiful girl,” I replied, “and the woman who gets to wake up

next to you in the morning should get on her knees and thank whatever deities exist that they were given that privilege.”

Her jaw dropped. “Where the hell did that come from?!”

I shook my head. “I’m sorry. That was over the top, and should have stayed inside my head. I apologize.”

She laughed. “You’re apologizing for calling me the next best thing to a goddess? I’d ask you if you’re nuts, but you must be, to think that of me.”

“When you go into your room to get dressed, look in the mirror, and for just a moment, try to see yourself as others see you. It’s a damned tough thing to do, but you might see why I said what I did.”

“Should I do it while still naked?”

“If you do, and you’re successful, I doubt I’ll see you for a while,” I smiled.

She shook her head, turned, and headed into her bedroom. I’ll admit that I let my eyes fall as she walked away, and wasn’t disappointed. Pleasant view, indeed.

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When she walked out later, she was wearing a velvet dress in exactly the perfect shade of red to make her blue eyes even more striking. It had a turtleneck type collar, and an offset diamond keyhole that started just below that little divot in the throat. The diamond continued to just below her navel. It was backless down to her waist, and had this cute little frilly skirt that was obviously expertly designed. It looked as if you should be able to tell what color her panties were if she bent over, but when she actually did bend over to pick something up a little later, I discovered that the skirt fell in such a way as to always keep her covered. As I noted that the lateral points of the diamond were at nipple level, I also noted that, as a friend of mine once quipped, her headlights were on. With a look of wonder on her face, she said, “I think I saw what you were talking about.” She shook her head. “Well, I’m dressed, as you can tell.”

“To kill. You ever get complaints about the dead men you leave behind you?”

She cocked her head with an obvious question ready to be asked, if only she could figure the exact wording. “Well, if you go out on the town dressed like that, then there are a lot of guys who have blood not making it much above their waists. That being the case, the brain dies for lack of oxygen.” I grinned at her, and she actually blushed at me. “I’m sorry, I just never have the courage to say some of these things I come up with. I think the fact that you’re safe is letting me say these things.”

“Safe?” she asked me. “Should I feel offended?” She punctuated that with a laugh.

“Perhaps the wrong word. If you remember, you’re the one who really started this, by talking to me.”

“Actually, you said the first words.”

“True, but it was in response to your unspoken comment.”

“I’ll accept that.”

“Okay, we talked, and fairly quickly on, you told me your orientation. That opened a few things in my head, I guess, and told me I wouldn’t have to worry about rejection, because I wasn’t even in the running. That being the case, I could just say what came to mind, and not have the stress of trying to impress a potential girlfriend, even if she was just a girlfriend for a night.”

“Interesting scowl on that last comment. Am I prying if I ask you to elucidate?”

“Pretty, sense of humor, and smart. You’re making me wish I was a woman,” I laughed. “In answer to your question - I’m not a ‘wham-bam-thank you ma’am’ kind of guy. Between wanting a relationship and being too scared of rejection to even trying meeting someone...”

She nodded. “I think I understand. Shall we go? I’ll even walk ahead of you so you can watch my ass.”

I laughed. “I take it you felt the weight of my eyes on you as you headed in to get dressed?”

“I had to turn slightly, remember? I saw you looking at it.”

As we reached street level, I chuckled. “Have you realized the pleasant side effect, at least from your point of view, of our being together at the bar? You’ll be there with a guy, so the only ones who’ll come to hit on you will be the drunk and the truly committed.”

“And I promise you, I’ll tell the truly committed where to go.”

“Oh, by the way, I forgot to ask. Gay or straight bar?”

“Would a gay bar bother you?”

“Nah. I promise to disappear, though, if a promising option shows up for you.” I paused. “Did that come out right, or did I just offend?”

“You’re telling me that you won’t have a problem if I want to leave with some girl, right?” I nodded. “Then you said it right, and I’m not offended. Let’s do straight, though.”

We walked toward one of the clubs, and were almost there when I burst out laughing. “I love it! Do you realize we’ve gotten this far with each other - hell, I’ve seen you nearly naked - and I have no idea what your name is?”

She stared at me for a moment, and a moment later, she had her arms around me as I held her up, she was laughing so hard. “I’ve had you to my apartment, you’ve met my nott-weiler, and we never told each other our names? You’re right, that is hilarious. My name is Miranda

Walker.”

“Terrence Gallagher. My friends call me Galley, for some reason. Nott-weiler; I like that. That was part of how you judged me safe, wasn’t it? Tell me you’ve got a dog that doesn’t actually exist, assumed vicious based on the breed, and see if I still want to be with you. Interesting thinking, Miranda.”

She nodded a bow. “Call me Randy; my friends do.” She wiggled her eyebrows lasciviously.

“Would you prefer that?” I asked, applauding with my laughter. “I happen to think Miranda suits better; it’s as pretty as you are.”

She stopped. “Are you working hard at this, or is this natural for you? You compliment at the drop of a hat.”

“I see it as telling the truth, but I think it goes back to that safety issue. These kind of comments are always internal; I never vocalize them. I think it’s the fact that rejection isn’t an option. Do you want me to stop saying them? It’s a fairly natural thing for me.”

“I just have never come across anyone who says such nice things so often. Keep doing it. It’ll help us at the bar, Terrence. Or would you prefer Terry?”

“I really don’t even have a problem with Galley, to be honest with you. Call me what you will, just don’t call me late for dinner.”

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Twenty minutes later, we were seated at a table. Almost as if that were a stage cue, some guy came swaggering over to the table, and sat down, rather obviously dismissing me. “What say we ditch this loser and go have some fun?” he said in what I can only assume he thought was a bedroom voice. I thought he sounded more like a bad lounge singer, myself.

“Only way I’d end up with a loser is if I ditched him for you,” she responded.

He was either too stupid or had too much momentum in his pitch to be frozen by the icicles she’d shot at him. “Nice one.” He turned to look at me. “You heard the lady. Get lost.”

“Ah. Stupidity,” I responded.

“Apparently,” Miranda chuckled.

His brain cells knew each other well enough to know when he was being insulted, especially by a rival. (At least, he assumed I was a rival.) His face darkened and he started to turn, but he suddenly stopped and looked at her in alarm.

“I thought that would get your attention. Are you aware, while I have your full attention, that I am permitted to use deadly force to subdue you if I honestly believe that you have every intention of possibly killing my friend?” He shook his head ‘No’ in a very frightened fashion. It

was then that I followed the line of her arm, and realized that she did, in fact, have his complete attention well in hand. “Since I don’t want to have any reason to contemplate hurting you by, oh, say, making a fist right now, I’m thinking we can all be a lot happier if you simply leave the bar, since I don’t think any of the women around here are going to be interested in you right now, and rumor does travel fast.” She leaned closer. “Scram.” She let go, and he stood.

He took a step or two away, and apparently his testosterone kicked in, or his pride, or something, because Miranda was suddenly grasped by her hair, rather tightly and obviously painfully, and he leaned down and hissed, “This ain’t the end, you little bitch.” He let go again, and stalked away. He was, I’m sorry to say, the stereotype of the young, Italian, New York City male, something that actually is almost non-existent.

She rubbed her head and moved to the chair opposite from the one he’d been sitting in. “Would you mind holding me for a bit? I find that his reaction scared me just a little.”

I let her lean against me, and I put my arm around her waist, pulling her closer. I kissed the top of her head a couple times, and when she didn’t wince or say anything, then I began stroking her hair. After a few moments I heard a quiet, “Mmm, that feels nice, Terrence. Thank you.”

“Have you calmed down?”

“Will you stop stroking my hair if I say yes?” she chuckled.

“Well, that was my thought.”

“Then I’m not calm, and I don’t expect to be calm for a while,” she laughed. She disengaged from me and sat up. “Thank you. I needed that.” She cocked an ear to listen to the music that I’d forgotten was in the background. (Hey, when you’re holding a beautiful girl in your arms, even if she is a lesbian, you don’t tend to pay a huge amount of attention to the surrounding environment.) Standing, she grabbed my hand and said, “Let’s dance!”

“I dance like an epileptic hippopotamus on Quaaludes, Miranda.”

“So do they!” she laughed, pointing at the dance floor. Taking a good look, I couldn’t argue with her.

We made our way to the floor, and got there just as that number ended. It was replaced by a slow one, made for romantic dancing. She put her arms around me and murmured, “Just move me around the floor.”

I put my arms around her. “Don’t have to tell me twice. I’m the envy of half the guys in here right now. Luckily, that little scenario back at the table should have driven off all but the most incredibly soused mashers.”

“Let’s not talk about him. Let’s just enjoy the music.” She put her head on my shoulder, and an ineffable pain tore through me as we gently swayed to the music. We left the floor when the next song started, though. It was the latest dance hit, and she made a face. “I may have to listen to it, but I won’t dance to it.” We headed back in the direction of the table, knowing

someone else would have taken it. We were surprised when the couple at the table vacated for us.

“We just thought we’d hold it for you until you got back. That jerk’s been needing to come down a peg for a while,” the girl gushed. “I’m just glad I got to see it.”

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A couple hours passed, with us hitting the dance floor occasionally, and always coming back to the same table, each time held by a different couple for us. It was an enjoyable time, except for the fact that we had managed every single time we went to the floor to get there in time for a slow song to start. I was damned if I was going to fall for a lesbian, but my heart obviously had other ideas. Finally, after the last of the slow songs, she looked up and saw tears in my eyes.

“You want to leave?” she murmured to me. “Smoke getting to you?”

“No, just some sad thoughts,” I answered slowly, not wanting to lie to her. “I wouldn’t complain about going somewhere for something to eat, though.”

The paranomasiac in her jumped into her eyes for just a moment, but she quashed it. “If you don’t think it’s too forward, you could come back to my place. We could have a little nosh, maybe watch a little TV, or just talk some more. It’s nice to finally be around a guy who isn’t fighting like crazy to get into my pants.”

“Wouldn’t fit me anyway,” I joked. “You’re a petite; I’m a large.” She grinned, and we left the bar.

...and I walked right into a fist.

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I think he had expected that my looking like a geek meant that I never work out, and had no idea on how to roll with a blow. So, rather than being unconscious, which I think was his plan, I was merely stunned for a little bit. This, unfortunately, was long enough for him to drag her into a nearby alley. I heard a ripping noise and “Now, bitch, I’m taking what’s mine.”

I saw red for only a moment, because I quashed the impulse to go in and rip his throat out with my teeth. Instead, I reached down at the end of the alley and grab a piece of brick that looked like it might have fallen off something. It was about the size of my closed fist, and heavy enough for my purposes.

I actually got banned from a carnival once, because of my deadly aim with thrown objects. I was even winning at some of the rigged games. This being the case, I chose to give the brick a flying lesson, knowing that the lesson would be cut short by the impact with the creep’s head.

He fell heavily to the ground, and I thought for a moment that I’d killed him, but then I heard him moan. She worked herself free of him and headed toward me, shakily. She stopped a

short distance away from him, then turned around. She picked up the torn underwear from the ground, and then placed a kick squarely in that unnamed area that falls behind the testicles but in front of the gluteal muscles. His moan took on shades of screaming, but with a strangled higher pitch. She then spun back around and walked over to me. Throwing her arms around me, she shuddered, "Take me home, Terrence. Please." We walked with me almost carrying her for a short distance before she got her bearings and her composure back. "Thank you for saving me back there," she said in earnest.

"It was the right thing to do. If it weren't for all the damned paperwork we'd have had to have filled out, I'd have killed him, to be honest with you. We'll probably see this in the newspaper tomorrow, by the way. 'Unknown assailant hits local man with brick', that sort of thing."

"We'll worry about that tomorrow. Tonight, we're safe, and no real problems." She shook her head as if to clear cobwebs. "So what do you want to do when we get back to my place? TV? Movie? Talk? Screw?"

"Well, after we figure out something to nosh on, I figure I'd like to talk to you for a little longer. I like what I know of you, and I'd like to be able to tell people you're my friend. And that's not a term I toss around lightly." Yeah, I was ignoring her last choice.

She looked at me and smiled. "I can see that, Terrence. I hope that I measure up to your standard. You already measure up to all mine."

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Back at the apartment, she did her previous schtick, only this time I discovered that her hair was naturally red. "Doesn't it bother you, after what happened?"

"Surprisingly, no. You're not him. If you were like him, I'd have been raped here in my apartment a few hours ago." She chuckled. "So, ignoring the obvious answer, what would you like to eat? I can do anything from simply spaghetti to a fairly detailed dinner, although it's a bit late for that, I think."

"I agree. Please forgive me, by the way, if you catch me staring. It's not often I get the chance to look at beautiful nude women, other than in Playboy. As for food, cook whatever you're interested in. I have no allergies to any foods that I know of, and no real dislikes." I paused. "Correction. No eggplant, please. Can't stand the stuff."

"Stare all you want, Terrence. I'll take it as the compliment I know you mean it as. However, for now..." She opened the refrigerator and bent over. I averted my eyes. "I'm not all that hungry. How about a simple broccoli with cheese sauce thingy? Maybe over some quick cooking rice?" At my nod, she began boiling water. "I'm actually allergic to eggplant, so you won't find it here. Not allergic to anything else in that family, oddly enough." She shook her head in amusement.

Twenty or so minutes later, we were seated on her couch, munching happily. I had stripped down to my boxers, because it struck me that it was rude to be so dressed when she wasn't, but I also felt it was rude to be 'waving' my reaction to her in her face. I was sitting

against the arm of the couch, and after we had finished our snack, she sighed and leaned up against me. Somehow my brain went both into overdrive and stopped working simultaneously. It felt that way at least. As an extremely successful virgin, I had never in my life had a naked woman snuggled up against me, especially not against my own bare skin, and I was working very hard at not letting that notice get below my waist. It got especially difficult when she absently laid her hand on my groin.

After another contented sigh, she said, “Terrence, I have a confession to make, and an apology to tender to you.” She sighed deeply. “I lied to you earlier today, because I thought you were hitting on me, and I wanted to head that off. I’m bisexual, rather than a lesbian.” She slid her hand ... well, do I really have to explain? I completely lost the battle to not notice her nudity. “Ah, I can tell you’re interested in that revelation,” she said with a throaty chuckle that only served to make the situation worse. “I hope you can forgive the lie. In my defense, though, I can say that it helped me find an absolutely wonderful man who I will be proud to call my friend, if he forgives my earlier...prevarication.”

“Nothing to forgive, Miranda. I understand it completely, and absolve you of all guilt.” Now, that sentence above doesn’t even begin to skim the surface of just how difficult it was to concentrate on what I wanted to say, given the placement of her hand. Finally, I reached down and reluctantly regained my senses. She sat up and gave me a mock pout, now that she had her hands to herself. “I don’t think I should take advantage of where this seems to be leading, though. Especially after what almost happened to you.”

She stood and stamped her foot. It might have been something other than cute if she hadn’t been nude, with her arms crossed under her breasts. “I’ll have you know that I had decided to beat you to the carpet before we left that bar, Terrence, and I’ll be damned if I’m going to let that sonuvabitch decide my sex life by proxy! He didn’t do any real harm to me because you were there, and I wouldn’t have been in such a position if he hadn’t been such an ass in the bar. He was getting revenge because I humiliated him before a rival.”

I blinked at her. “Still...” I said feebly.

She put her hands on her hips and sort of huffed at me, and I marvelled to myself that breasts that small could still jiggle so pleasantly. “I’m going into my bedroom. If you want to keep talking with me, you can take the risk and follow me in and we’ll keep talking, and maybe do more than talk. You can sleep on my couch, if you’re not feeling quite that brave yet, or if you really feel bothered, I won’t think badly of you if you decide to head home. All I ask is your address in return.” She walked over and kissed me on the lips, prolonging it just long enough to make the blood roar in my ears. “My door is open to you, Mr. Gallagher.” She turned and headed into her bedroom.

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You know something? She was even more beautiful by first morning light.