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The B Side of Life

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Two Seam Fastball

Monday mornings make me want to throw my David Wells autographed baseball at the alarm clock and explode the damn thing off the dresser into a thousand pieces. A high, hard bullet right down the middle. But I don't and the cheap piece of junk keeps *buzzing* at me nagging me to get up.

Ugh, 10am, I think. Batting practice in an hour. I hate batting practice. I'm a pitcher for God's sake.

The clock is still *buzzing* and won't stop till I cross the room and physically turn it off. A trick my batting coach suggested I try after I showed up late to practice one too many times and the head coach started talking about sending me down to the Richmond Flying Squirrels to prove a point about tardiness and professionalism. Which I certainly wouldn't like. Losing my triple-A pitching slot in Sacramento to be sent down to double-A Virginia ball would suck big time. And could delay my future turning pro with the San Francisco Giants.

"If you'se can hear the alarm, but cain't touch it," suggested Coach Finn, the team's resident batting coach and Yogi Berra sage, "Then you have-ta' get up and shut it off. And since you'se is up anyway, you might as well get to practice on time."

Bronx logic. Go figure. Way out here in California if you can believe it. Still Coach Finn's been around a long time and makes a certain amount of sense.

“Sure thing, Coach. I’ll get one right away.”

I found an old fashioned “Sonic Bomb” alarm clock with digital red numbers and manual kill button just like Coach said. Two dollars and fifty cents at the Econo Thrift on Franklin. And I haven’t been late since. Check.

“Don’t get up, sugar, I’ll turn off the alarm,” cooed what’s-her-name, the waitress I picked up last night from the Maple House Lounge over on Arden. She walked into the room holding two cups of coffee and a plate of bacon balanced on one arm before slapping the alarm with her other hand like it was an offending fly perched on the counter. “There, all quiet for my super-star pitcher-witcher. You must be hungry after the work you put in last night. I got us a little breakfast, sugar, to re-charge those batteries. You didn’t have much but thank God you had some coffee. My ass would’ve been dragging for sure if you hadn’t.”

“I could eat a little bacon, sure. But would you mind taking off my practice jersey first. I have to wear that later.” *Frickin’ what’s-her-name. Pretty ballsy to wear one of my jerseys without asking. She must’ve picked it up off the floor. I don’t care if we did bang one out last night, that doesn’t give her squatting rights to my stuff.*

“Sure, baby. Whatever you want. If you want me to get naked and back under the covers, all you had to do was ask.”

I didn’t ask, I thought. And you don’t look so good in the morning. Older than you pretended last night, huh? And what’s that, cellulitis? Time to do a few squats at the gym, darlin’. You got nice tits though and a decent face, but, you’re still just another low rent waitress looking to get dicked down by a super star stud. Oh, shit, 10:05. I gotta get up. I’m gonna be late. How much did I drink last night to celebrate my tenth straight win and 1.25 ERA? Obviously enough to go blinder’s deep and invite the worst ass draggin’ waitress back to my flat. How cliché can I be? Now get up, get her outta here and get to the ballpark.

I got out of bed, ordered an Uber, and started dressing. "Sorry, babe, its check out time."

"Hey, sugar, what's the rush? I thought we could climb back under the covers and pitch a few extra innings? Whadya say? If your jimmies too tired, I have a few blue pills in my purse that'll give your bat some extra oomph. I mean, last night was nice and all, but you were a little...fast for my taste. Fine for the minor leagues, but a gal has standards. How 'bout you take one of my little blue helpers here and see if we can't hit it out of the park and make the morning shine a little brighter."

"Oh, hey, uh...uh...you. I'd like to. I really would. But I got to get over to Sutter Park. Batting practice starts in forty-five minutes and I can't be late. Too much trouble if I am. That's what the alarm clock was going off for. To make sure I get there on time."

"Alright, sweetie. I get it. I'm a little disappointed, but that's okay. Maybe we can finish up later tonight? Mondays are my night off and I don't live too far from here. You can come over and I'll fix up a nice home cooked meal. Then maybe we can jump back in the sack for a double header. Whadya say? Sound good to you, sugar?"

"Oh, hey, it's tempting. Really. I mean I would, but I have practice all afternoon. And then I have to go see with my agent later. Then I'll have to ice and rest my pitching arm. We go on the road tomorrow for an away series against the Aberdeen Iron Birds out in Maryland and I'm pitching most of the week. I don't want to muck it up or be too tired by staying up too late tonight. I got an early call. You understand, right? My team flight leaves from SMF at 9am and I won't have much time to fool around."

"Sure, sugar. I get it. I been around. It was fun. Let me leave you my number in case you change your mind."

What's-her-name puts down the bacon and coffee and punches in her number in my cell phone. Then she starts getting her things together without any fuss. Which

surprises me how easy she's making it. Most girls you practically had to steam roll out the door with apple pie promises. And then ghost them for a while before they "got it." Or else put up with a little drama over bad feelings about being "used" and treated like a "ho." Which wasn't exactly fair because most girls dropped their panties the minute they discovered you were going to be a major league, all-star baseball pitcher when your contract came in. Baseball groupies, right?! What were they expecting? Marriage and an all-expenses paid ride to the majors instead of just letting you get your nut off?

"Yeah, kid." Coach Finn advised when I explained why I was fifteen minutes late, "That's exactly what they expect. I know they's hard to resist, especially when they throw their assets at you like that and all. But you ain't doin' yourself or your Johnson no favor sleeping with girls you barely know. Take it from someone who seen it a million times. No good comes from such girls. Or such shenanigans."

"Shenanigans Coach? Really? What are you from the 1940's? This is the modern world. They're all like that. Even the good girls. Trust me, I got it handled. I appreciate your advice though."

"Bull-puck, you do. I may not be a brain surgeon, but I ain't dumb. You cocky little boys of summer don't appreciate nuthin' that don't center around your stats, your phone, or your Johnson. In that order. But you right, that ain't my concern. What is my *bidness* is getting you to *hit* proper – and figuring out why you got the yips all a sudden. So let's succeed at that this morning."

"Sure, Coach. Whatever you say."

I spent an hour hitting while Coach Finn made suggestions, but the yips kept interfering and I didn't feel like I accomplished much. Coach Finn all but confirmed it when he walked off saying, "Don't sweat it kid. The yips got no rhyme or reason. Your

mechanics look fine. Fer all you'se know, tomorrow you'll be hitting dingers off the left field bleachers."

Doubtful. I mean I was never a homerun king or put up the big numbers, but I could hit regular, averaging around .205 a season. Not bad for a pitcher who throws a two seam fastballs in the 102mph range and has a curveball that falls off the shelf. But now I'm swinging like a bush leaguer and haven't had a hit in what, like, twenty five at bats. All because my agent told me he was fielding offers from San Francisco and wanted me to raise my battering average to above .250 so he could take advantage of a few incentives being offered in my contract. And now I been hitting a big donut ever since. Yeah, no psychology at work there.

I went off to my afternoon pitching session feeling pretty dejected. But pitching was my wheelhouse and I knew it would lift my spirits. Only, for the first time in a long time, I didn't throw well. I felt awkward and couldn't find my rhythm. Not good at all.

"Banksy. What's up? Where's that nice smooth release we worked on. You had it all dialed in last week. Now you're over correcting. Relax your shoulders man. Loosen up the arm. You'll pick up extra speed when you level your lead foot and step forward without over rotating your hip, right? So why aren't you? You feeling okay today?"

"Sorry. I'm having a bit of a day. I guess I stayed out too late last night and it has me feeling run down."

"Alright. I gotchu. Don't sweat it. Lots of vitamin C and get a good night's sleep tonight. Check in with me tomorrow before the game and we'll get you dialed back in. Don't sweat it. It happens to all of us every now and then. Man, you got the golden arm so don't sweat it."

"Thanks, Coach."

"Hey, this outta pick up your spirits. Rumor has it you're gonna be called up to The Show for a cup of coffee the minute you step foot off the mound in Aberdeen. The Giants need a power closer for their weekend series against the Yankees. You know what I mean? How about that?"

"That's great news coach. Thanks, I'll keep that in mind, but right now I just need some rest and to focus on Aberdeen. Knock out some of the nerves."

"Sure thing, kid. I understand. Don't sweat it. Go hit the showers. You're done for the afternoon. See you on the plane tomorrow morning. Nine a.m. bright and early, right?"

"Right."

I showered, shaved, and headed off to see my sports agent at the Bryson Building downtown feeling pretty bad. But I knew my agent would find a way to lift my blues. James Allen McGee, Esquire. Sports agent extraordinaire and a real mensch, as he liked to remind me.

"Banksy," James called out, "bout time you got your hairy bottom into my office. I been getting calls on you all morning. Half from coaches who heard your fastball is clocking in at one-oh-four and can't stop salivating like you was steak. The other half wondering if you're gonna fall on your ass wind milling every at bat this season."

"What can I say, Jim. I've been working out the kinks in batting practice. What else am I to do? But that's not what the Giants want me for right. They want the old arm cannon."

"What they want is Ty Cobb, Nolan Ryan, and Derek Jeter all rolled into one. Not just the Giants either. They get *prima nocta* for sure, but if they don't advance your contract

by the end of the week, we can register free agent. The Rockies have been calling. And the Marlins.”

“Well, I can deal with Colorado, but Florida sucks. Way too hot.”

“There might not be a choice. There’s good money on the table and this week will point us in the direction we’re gonna go. Sit down, Brian, I have to talk to you serious.”

“Okay.”

“Look, I think you’re a great ballplayer. Arm like a golden god. But you’re going to be a major league ballplayer soon and there are a few things we need to start dialing in. Professional expectations and the like.”

“Such as.”

“Well, first is your hitting. You have to pull a rabbit out of your hat tomorrow and get a few hits. Nothing major. You don’t need a homer. A dying quail or a grounder with eyes will do. Some ball contact. Anything to reassure the Giants. Another big donut this series and questions begin to surface. Your stock will take a hit.”

“So no pressure then,” I sighed.

“Hey, that’s the business Banksy. You need to think like a professional now. A franchise player. Pitching’s just part of the package. You should be able to deal with adversity and still play well. Hit when you need to and not go off the rails. Especially if you expect to pitch in the rotation full time in the majors by next season. You don’t want to be cast out of triple-A without a contract. Fastball or not, every ballplayer has an expiration date. Let’s make sure this isn’t yours.”

“I hear you.”

“Do you? Good. Cause your golden arm will open the door, but its hard work that will walk you through and let you stay.”

“I hear you, Jim. I do. I’ve been putting in the work.”

“Good. Now to point number two.”

“There’s more?”

“Yeah, there is. Now listen, this isn’t something I normally discuss, but we have to talk about your, shall we say, extracurricular activities.”

“You mean the girls.”

“I mean the shitty way you’ve been dumping girls publicly after your night with them. The girls are a perk to the profession for sure, but you’ve been lighting a few fires lately. Pretty big ones which I’ve had to put out here and there. They’re starting to notice the smoke signals all the way across the bay in San Francisco. Don’t worry, I reassured the Giants GM it was all growing pains. You know young man, lots of temptation, getting adjusted, that sort of thing. But, damn Banksy, do you have to pick up every drama queen, borderline stripper out there and treat her so bad she wants to piss on you even when you’re not on fire?”

“That’s not fair.”

“Who said anything was. Don’t worry, it’s nothing super serious yet, but I am starting to see a pattern emerging. Detect a trend. You seem to have a knack for choosing women who, shall we say, aren’t the best investment for the return. You know what I mean? And it doesn’t help you posting such blunt reviews about how they look in the morning across all your social media accounts. I mean, damn, does everyone on Twitter really need a play by play as you kick them to the curb?! It’s unnecessary. And it’s starting to create problems. I think we need to tone down your social media presence.”

“Hey, branding is part of the business now. Being visible gets the bigger bucks. And controversy sells. *YOU* told me that.”

“I did. I know I did. But I didn’t think you’d go all Steve Garvey on me. I was looking more for bad baller Babe Ruth who still visits sick kids in the hospital. Giving back. That sort of thing. Not “*Bad Boy*” Albert Belle with a personal agenda to take down every “coyote ho and no-go girl” out there. You’ve been posting a lot of not nice things and it comes across as misogynistic. Even toxic. Like you have an axe to grind.”

“Hey, I’m just having fun. They’re all big girls who know what they’re signing up for. It’s part of the game. You should see all the comments. And how many hits I get on the daily when I post. I always trend heavily when I give the deets.”

“Well, I want you to hold off for a while. Turn it off. We need to scrub all your past content clean and go dark on social media. At least till after we get your pro contract signed, dotted, and sealed. Then we’ll re-brand and re-launch. You’ll be a shark swimming in a pool full of the hottest minnows this side of the Bay. But for now, you got to go submarine. Total blackout. Got it?”

“Shit. Alright. If you say so.”

“I say so to the tune of a million dollars. That’s what I’m gonna get you for your first year contract if you listen to me. Then when you win the Cy Young at the end of your rookie year, we’ll be jumping into Justin Verlander territory. We’re talking eight figures my friend.”

“And then they can’t touch me?”

“Banksy, listen to me. You’re going to get everything if you listen to me. The brass ring is there to grab if you don’t screw it up. That said, I need you to do something for me.”

"Anything, Jim. You know that."

"I'm going to set you up with a psychiatrist before the weekend. Don't worry, she's very discreet and very good at what she does. You'll meet with her out in Maryland. I've used her before and she writes excellent reports. She's on our team, okay?"

"For what, my batting? I told you that's just the yips. Everyone gets them now and then. I'll be hitting fine by tomorrow."

"It's not the batting, Banksy."

"What? The social media stuff. I just agreed to go dark. What more do you want. There ain't nothing wrong with me."

"I'm not saying there is. This is sports medicine 101. The Giants have asked for a psychological work up on you before they invest."

"Is that normal?"

"Well, hey, don't look at it like that. It's not a question of normal or not. It's just a hoop to jump through so the Giants feel better and we get you your first year contract. Don't worry, you'll pass cause the doc is a friend and I got your back."

"It doesn't feel like it. I never heard of anyone else having to do this. Why am I being singled out?"

"Truth? It's not just the hitting. And it's not just the social media. It's the way you....I don't know how to say this....it's the way you go the extra mile to insult these women after you sleep with them. I mean, I'm not down with all the "woke" attitudes out there, but even I know the way you denigrate these women across your Instagram feed is a time bomb for disaster. Toxic is what they call it. Big ball clubs don't want toxic and they're checking closely for that stuff now. They have morality clauses built into contracts now to prevent liability concerning old school crap like that. It affects your

marketability. They want choir boys who improve the image of the franchise, not fuck boys.”

“And that’s why I have to see a shrink?”

“Look, Brian, do you trust me? Cause I have your best interest at heart. I do. Let me be your father here. It’s my job to get you the best contract possible for the money you deserve. But that means we still have to give tithes to the boss. I’m here to get you ready to step into your major league professional shoes. I know what I’m talking about. And bad boys are out! Toxic masculinity is no longer acceptable and managers aren’t turning a blind eye anymore. They’re acting accordingly. You need to learn how to protect yourself. The Commission has a Pete Rose complex. And their Mark McGuire, Sammy Sosa, Barry Bond steroid days are long over. They’re not gonna tolerate a rookie coming in trying to give the league another black eye. We need to change up your image. Maybe find you a girl and stick with her for a while to quell the concerns. Preferably a girl-next-door beauty queen with a degree in marketing. And having a little psychological interview is step one.”

“You’re over exaggerating a bit, aren’t you?”

“Not in the least. Look, I’m gonna level with you. I had a long talk with your head coach this past weekend and he’s not a fan of yours. He’s considering a vote of no confidence on you and wants to tank your prospects with the Giants. He’s also talking about an outright release of your contract and wants to end your career altogether. Thinks you’re bad for baseball.”

“He can’t do that! I’ve been putting up solid pitching numbers. No one’s throwing heat like I am right now. So my bat’s been a little shaky. But that’s not what they pay me for.”

“Yeah, well, it’s different now. They don’t want a specialist. They want the full deal. Hit, throw, catch, run and that’s only part of the package. They want the mental fortitude and behavioral analytics of a Lou Gehrig right now, not Darryl Strawberry. And the way you’ve been behaving lately implies more liability than likable.”

“So, what are you saying? I’m out?”

“No, not necessarily. But you might not want to take Florida off the table.”

“Okay, so screw them. I go to Florida. Or Colorado. Forget San Francisco.”

“Look, Banksy, I’ve thrown a lot at you. I know it’s tough, but don’t worry about it tonight. We have a few days to figure it out. Nothing’s set in stone yet. Focus on the game in Aberdeen. You’re the starting pitcher tomorrow, right? Pitch like you do, get a base hit or two, and lay off the strip club waitresses. Go meet with the psychiatrist and we should be golden again.”

“Man you’re really putting the pinch on me, you know.”

“I do. I’m sorry. But it’s big boy time. Hitch up the pants and let’s get to work. I’ve got a million dollar contract waiting for your rookie year. And this will all be a distant memory if you do well.”

“Like I have a choice.”

I left Jimmy’s office feeling even lower, if that was possible. Rather than being determined, I felt myself dropping into a dark place. Black even. And I knew that wasn’t good. I couldn’t function in the dark and needed an immediate pick-me-up. But what? Or whom? As I started to head back to my flat, I realized I was way too angry to go home and hadn’t eaten anything since those few strips of bacon this morning. I was about to head to Bonnie’s Bar and Grill when it occurred to me. How about killing two birds with one stone without exposing myself to trouble like Jimmy warned. I still had What’s-Her-Name’s number saved in my cellphone from when she punched it in. And

she had asked me to call her so she'd be home waiting. Maybe I would. Maybe give her a call, go over for a little dinner followed by a little fun, and then sprint home to catch a couple of zzz's before the flight tomorrow. She did have nice tits. And a little rough and tumble would be something good to turn this frown upside down. Get the endorphins firing.

Five minutes later I was pulling up to What's-Her-Names' apartment on South Camden after a brief text exchange. I couldn't find her number initially and had to look under recent entries, but there she was. "Rachel" with two stars after.

"Hey sugar!" Rachel greeted opening the front door, "I had a feeling you'd come over tonight even though you was gonna be busy. My Mama always said I had a bit of the divination and could read minds. Sure enough, here you are. Come on in. Momma likes to take care of her star pitcher."

I still couldn't stand the baby talk, but there she was wearing a tight halter over cutoff jeans standing all provocatively in the doorway with her hip jutting out like that chick in *Black Snake Moan*. Oh man, did I want to moan. And I admit I got hard fast just looking at her. Before I knew it, I was pushing her hard back into the apartment, slamming the door shut behind me, and surprising even myself by foregoing the niceties and grabbing her ass. Followed closely by a no-fuss, open mouthed, lustful kiss. I don't know what came over me exactly and didn't feel in control at the moment, which had never happened before. But I mean, damn, she looked good enough to fuck. And I was more than sure she liked all that caveman stuff. They all did. So, I forged ahead lifting her up under the ass, backing her in, and slamming her hard into the wall ramming my groin into hers. A little harder than I meant, but still.

"Oh, hey, sugar," Rachel cooed, untangling herself. "Slow down a bit. I like the enthusiasm, but I don't want the game to be over too quickly. Let Mama catch her

breath and go get you one of her little blue pills. Then we can pitch a full nine innings and have some real fun.”

“Sure thing,” I replied. “I’m game.” I hadn’t planned to make it a long night, but now that I was here, I figured I could get in some last minute real fun before I had to straighten up and go legit for the pros. And still get home before midnight.

I swallowed one of the little blue pills which she first retrieved from her purse nearby. And then I followed her to the bedroom watching her strip as I followed.

When the *bizz bizz bizz* of the alarm clock went off, I opened my eyes and got the strangest sense of déjà vu. Like I wanted to sit up and throw my David Wells autographed baseball across the room at the alarm clock. Then I realized I wasn’t lying in my own bed in my own place but was still at What’s-Her-Name’s apartment lying in her bed. And it was Tuesday now, not Monday.

“Shit,” I said sitting up fast and looking for my cellphone, “What time is it?” Only then did I notice I couldn’t sit up fully cause my hands were tied to separate bed posts and my feet to the bottom of the bed frame. I tried to yank free, but the knots were tight and the bed frame solid. “Hey! Hey...uh...uh....” I called. *Shit*, I thought. *What’s her name?* “Hey, can you hear me? Are you here?”

Rachel walked into the room fully dressed holding a cup of coffee. “Hi, darlin’. You’re finally awake. How you feelin’ baby?”

“Hey..uh...uh,” *Shit! What IS her name?!* “Can you untie me? I gotta go. What time is it?”

“I’ll untie you if you can tell me what my name is first,” Rachel teased.

“Come on now. Stop playing games. It’s...it’s...uh...” *Rachel with two stars!* “Rachel. Rachel with two stars.”

“Now that wasn’t so hard, was it sugar?”

“Okay, but can you untie me now. What time is it?”

“It’s six thirty, sugar. Six-thirty-five in the afternoon to be exact. You passed out last night and been sleeping ever since. Guess that little pill I slipped you hit you faster and harder than I expected. I had to call my brother in to get you on the bed. You really should eat more and drink less.”

“What? Holy Shit! You’re kidding right!? Tell me you’re joking and it’s not six-thirty. What kind of pill did you give me exactly?”

“Oh, sorry sugar, it might have been a roofie,” Rachel laughed sipping from her coffee and sitting down on the edge of bed.

“Rohypnol! The knockout drug? You drugged me? Why!? What for!?”

“Revenge, sugar. Sweet revenge. Pure and simple. Is there any other reason?”

“No, no, no! You’re lying right! You’re just pulling a prank on me. This can’t be happening.” I tried to yank myself free, but the ropes only cut deeper into my bare wrists and ankles.

“No prank, sugar. It’s for real. And those ropes aren’t gonna give. I had my brother tie them. And as a practice, this gal don’t lie. Not good for business if you know what I mean. You should have taken a moment to consider that.”

“Consider? Okay, okay,” I say trying to breathe and slow my heart rate so I could think. “Whatever this is, I can fix it. But right now I need my phone so I can make a

few calls first. Then I gotta get to the airport. I wasn't kidding when I said the game in Maryland tonight is real important."

"Sorry, sugar, I don't think that's gonna happen. We're gonna have a chat instead."

"I don't have time for a chat."

So you say, but you've been talkin' all night. The interesting thing about roofies, if you wasn't aware, are people like to talk a lot when they're high on them. Like truth serum. Like the stuff they use in the CIA or something."

And here Rachel picked up my cellphone from the bedside table.

"It's interesting all the information you can learn about someone when they's high and feeling honest."

"Come on Rachel. You've had your fun. Good joke. Can you untie me please? It's important."

"Like people's passwords," Rachel continued. "Your pretty vain as a downright rule, but it's pure ego to save your own name as your password code. I probably could've figured that one out on my own without you telling me though. Still it's nice how you volunteered so much info about yourself. You're pretty fucked up in the head, sugar, if you don't mind me telling you."

"I do mind! Now look, Rachel. You're in some serious trouble right now if you don't let me go. This is kidnapping and when I talk to my lawyer, he's gonna put your ass in jail for this. You're gonna do a lot of time. But it doesn't have to be that way. Let me go now and I'll just forget the whole thing."

"Oh, baby, your threats are as hollow as your promises. But you're awfully cute. I almost feel sorry for you. You haven't figured it out yet, but you're having the worst day of your entire life. And it ain't gonna stop here. There are a lot of people pissed off

at you right now, including your coaches with the Sacramento Cats. I can't imagine they like being called such horrible names on your Twitter account. Or all those bad things you think of them. And your recent 'fuck everyone' attitude is getting some pretty nasty responses on your Instagram feed right now. You're trending as #toxicpitcher/fuckhim/cancelhiscontract. Isn't that cute?"

"You're lying."

She wasn't. Rachel showed me my phone and scrolled through several pages letting me read bits here and there. She wasn't lying. I was fucked. She had truly, royally fucked me. It was 6:45pm and all the voicemails from coaching staff, dozens of texts from teammates, and about a hundred missed calls from my agent were left unanswered. Oh, boy, this was bad!

"Do you know what you've done to me!?" I yelled, "I'm totally screwed. You might have cost me my pro contract! I'm gonna so have you arrested and thrown in jail for a very long time! I'm gonna end you."

"How you gonna do that, sugar? Especially after I tell them you raped me."

"What? No! I did no such thing!"

"Oh you were pretty rough on me coming through the door last night. I have the bruises on my arms and legs to prove it. And a walnut sized knot on the back of my head where you slammed me up against the wall. Not to mention we had sex together within the last twenty-four hours so you're DNA is still all over me. As far as they'll know, it wasn't consensual."

"You wouldn't! Come on, that's serious. I could go to jail for a long time if you lied like that."

"Who says it's a lie?"

"No, you wanted me. You asked me here. I have the texts to prove it."

"Do you, sugar? I don't see any such texts in your phone. I do, however, see several pictures of me tied up with a blind fold on."

"Why are you doing this to me? I never done anything to you. I barely know your name."

"Well, sugar, everything has a cost and your bill has come due." Rachel walked over to the dresser and took a framed picture down. "See this," she asked showing me the photo.

"Yeah."

"Recognize anyone?"

"It's you. A little younger and skinnier maybe, but it's you. I'm not a moron."

"No the other girl. The one I'm standing with."

"Yeah, I see her. She looks like you. So what. She your sister?"

"Yes, my little sister. My younger sister. My only sister. My DEAD sister. Do you even remember HER name?"

"Why would I know her name? I've never met her."

"Look at her. Try again. You know her."

"I don't. I'm sorry, I meet a lot of people. That doesn't mean I know her."

"Well let me help you out, sugar. You know her because last summer you had sex with her. You picked her up at Bonnie's, promised her she was special, took her home, and fucked her. Then you kicked her out the door like she was nothing but a piece of trash."

“Oh, hey. I’m sorry. A lot of girls throw themselves at me. Including you. And I treat them nice. I treated you nice.”

“Don’t lie. You couldn’t wait to get me out the door this morning. But that wasn’t your biggest mistake. Not with me or her. Do you know how old my sister was when you fucked her? Don’t look so surprised. It’s not like you would’ve cared. She was seventeen. My sister Jamie was seventeen years old when you ‘dicked her down’ as you like to say.”

“I didn’t know. Honest. If I had, I wouldn’t have messed...I wouldn’t have been with her.”

“Well, sugar, that’s not the worst of it. You did much worse. She was too young and naïve to be treated like you did her. But she would’ve gotten over it. She was a strong girl. Only, after, when you posted all those nasty comments after about her - on Twitter and Instagram, rating her, posting those naked candid’s, calling her a wet dishrag, and comparing yourself to a coyote who had to gnaw his own arm off just to get away from her - you went too far. You made her a laughingstock in front of her friends and family. Everyone in town knew what happened. And you embarrassed our entire family. Our Dad read your posts and saw those ugly photos you took – the naked ones while she was sleeping. He couldn’t look at her for a month without seeing that shit! And she tried to call you after. Just get you to take those things down off social media, but you ghosted her like she was nothin’! She wasn’t nothin’! She was a beautiful, sweet, naïve girl whom you crushed with all your bullshit! And not even two months later she killed herself because of you.”

“No, no, NO! NO! This can’t be happening. You’re lying! I don’t deserve this! I didn’t do anything to you or your sister! I’m a star pitcher being called up to the majors. You can’t do this to me. I’m sorry about your sister, but that wasn’t my fault!”

“You better believe it was, sugar! And you deserve every ounce of what I’m about to do to you.”

“What are you going to do?”

“Well, I was going to kill you. But after you talked so much in your sleep, I realized how much worse it would be for you had to live with all your mistakes. Once I had helped you burn all your bridges and lose your chance at being a pro baseball player. So that’s what I did. You’re gonna have nothing! You’re screwed. And you’re gonna have to live with it all and be a total nobody like the rest of us now. No one is ever gonna touch you again.”

“You stupid cow! All I have to do is prove you did this to me.”

“Maybe, but I doubt it. Or you’ll be in prison for rape while you try. And I’ll have made sure everyone knows what you did to my baby sister cause I still have her cellphone saved with all those things you wrote. You’re done. You’re fucked no matter what.”

“Oh, geez.”

“Now, sugar, listen up and listen up good. In a few minutes, my big brother and his friends are gonna come in here and cut you free. Let you go. I suggest you be nice, get dressed, and get the hell outta here before my brother changes his mind and beats you to a pulp. I convinced him to try it my way first, but it wouldn’t take much to tip him over the edge. He loved Jamie and would gladly go to prison for murdering you. Bye-bye, sugar. It’s been real special meeting you.”

The End.

