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The B Side of Life

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Two Seam Fastball

Waking up early makes 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 screaming 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, batting practice. I HATE batting practice. I'm a pitcher for God's sake.

The clock continues *buzzing* and won't stop till I get up and cross the room to physically turn the damn thing off. A trick my batting coach suggested after I showed up late to one too many practices and overheard the head coach threatening to send me down to the Richmond Flying Squirrels, if only to prove a point about tardiness and professionalism.

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

Getting up early sucks, but not nearly as bad as losing my triple-A pitching slot with the Sacramento Rivercats -- or being sent down to double-A ball in Virginia for the rest of the summer. That would surely grind my nutsack!

"I'll get an alarm first thing, Coach," I told Coach Finn.

And I did. I found an old fashioned *Sonic Bomb* with digital red numbers and a manual kill button that very afternoon. Two dollars and fifty cents at the Econo Thrift on Franklin. And, believe it or not, it worked cause I haven't been late to practice since.

But before I could get up, *what's-her-name*, the waitress I picked up last night at the Maple Lounge over on Arden, walked into room. She was holding a plate of bacon and two cups of coffee in one hand while using the other to slap the shit out of the alarm clock like an offending fly perched on the counter. "Don't get up, Sugar. I'll turn it off. There now," she cooed, "all quiet for my super-star pitcher-witcher. I got us a little breakfast, Sugar, to re-charge those batteries. You didn't have much in the kitchen to cook, but thank God you had coffee cause my ass would've been dragging if you hadn't."

"Sure, a little coffee and bacon sounds good," I replied reaching for a cup. "But would you mind taking off my baseball jersey. I have to wear that later." *Frickin' what's-her-name!* I thought. *Pretty ballsy to wear one of my jerseys without asking. She must've picked it up off the floor after I fell asleep. I mean, I don't care if we did bang one out last night, that doesn't give her squatting rights to my stuff.*

"Sure, Sugar. Whatever you say. If you wanted to get me naked and back into bed, all you had to do was ask."

I didn't ask, I thought. And you don't look so good in the morning, either. Older than you pretended last night, huh? And what's that, a little cellulitis around the hips and thighs? Time to do a few squats at the gym, darlin'. You do have nice tits though and a decent face, but you still look like just another low rent baseball groupie dicked down by a baseball stud.

"Sorry, babe," I say jumping out of bed and starting to dress, "but 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? Whaddya 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 and see if we can’t load the bases for a grand slam?”

“Oh, hey, uh....uh...you. I’d like to. I really would. But I have to get over to Sutter Park. Batting practice starts in forty-five minutes and I can’t be late. That’s what the alarm 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. Whaddya say, Sugar? Sound good to you?”

“Oh, hey, that’s super tempting and all. Really. But I have practice and then I have to go see with my agent downtown. He’ll want to take me out to dinner too. And then the team’s scheduled to go on the road tomorrow for an away series against the Aberdeen Iron Birds where I’m slated to be the starting pitcher, so I need to get some rest. We fly out in the morning and I don’t want to be too tired for staying up late. The bottom line is, I’m booked. You understand, right? I just don’t have that 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. I hope you do.”

What’s-her-name puts down the bacon, grabs my cellphone from the end table and punches her number in. Then she starts getting dressed without any further fuss. Which surprises me with how easy she’s making it. Most girls you practically had to

steamroll them out the door with apple pie promises. Or ghost them for a while before they “got it.” All while putting up with a little drama about “bad feelings” over being “used” and treated like a “ho.” Which wasn’t exactly fair because most groupies couldn’t wait to drop their panties when they discovered you were an all-star baseball pitcher heading to the pro’s by the end of the season. Baseball bunnies, am I right?! What else were they expecting? Marriage and an all-expenses paid trip to the majors just for letting you get your nut off on them?

“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 girls throw their assets at you like it was Christmas morning 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 shenanigans.”

“Shenanigans, Coach? Really? Who are you, Lou Pinella? This is the modern world. All girls give it up now. Even the good ones. 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 social media, or your Johnson. In that order. But you right, that ain’t my concern. What is my *bidd-ness* 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 the next hour hitting while Coach Finn made suggestions, but the yips kept interfering and I didn’t feel like I’d accomplished much. Coach Finn all but confirmed it when he walked off saying, “Don’t sweat it kid. The yips ain’t 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."

Maybe. I mean I never put up big batting numbers, but I could hit regular, averaging around .205 a season. Which was quite respectable for a pitcher who had a slider that sunk faster than the Titanic, a curveball that dropped off the shelf and a two seam fastball clocking in at 101.5 miles per hour. But over the last two months, I'd been in a bush league slump and hadn't gotten a hit since May. All because my agent told me he was fielding offers from San Francisco and asked me to raise my battering average to above .250 -- so he could take advantage of a few incentives offered in my contract. And I been whiffing a big donut ever since! Yeah, no psychology at work there.

I went off to my 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?" Coach Turner, the pitching coach, asked. "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 shoulder. So why aren't you? You feeling okay today?"

"Sorry, Coach. 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 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 and want you. You know what that means? You’re going to *The Show!*”

“That’s great news coach. Really is. But right now I need to focus on Aberdeen and get some rest. So don’t tell any of the guys, okay?”

“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. sharp. Get there bright and early, right?”

“Right.”

I showered, shaved, and headed off to see my sports agent at the Bryson Building – Joel E. Coen Esq., sports agent extraordinaire and a real mensch. I knew he’d find a way to lift my bad feelings of doom and blues.

“Banksy!” Joel greeted me when I walked into his office. “About time you got your hairy bottom over to see me. 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, Joe. 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. But that’s my worry, not yours. What they get is YOU, you super stud! And not just the Giants either. Sure, they get *prima nocta*, but if they don’t advance your contract by the end of

the week, we can register you free agent for next season. And the Rockies have definitely 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. The best! Arm like a golden god. But you’re going to be a major league ball player 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. 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 baseball player 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 your triple-A contract without an offer on the table. Fastball or not, every ball player 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, Joe. I do. I've been putting in the work! We're on the same page."

"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 setting a few fires lately. Pretty big ones too which I've had to put out at some expense to your and my wallet. They're starting to notice the smoke signals all the way across the bay in San Francisco. But, don't worry, I reassured the Giant's 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 a fight with every damn waitress and stripper out there and treat them so bad they want to piss on you even when you're not on fire?"

"That's not fair."

"Who said it was?! Don't worry, nothing is terminal. But I am starting to see a pattern - a recurring trend. You seem to have a knack for choosing women who, shall we say, aren't the best investment for their return. You know what I mean? And it doesn't help how you blatantly post bad reviews about each girl across your social media. I mean, damn, does everyone really need a play by play about how you kicked each girl to the curb and what her body flaws were?! It's unnecessary. And not very good for your

image. We're getting blow back. To the point I think we need to tone down your social media presence."

"Hey, branding is part of the business. 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 a bad boy Babe Ruth type who visits sick kids in the hospital. Not 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 cruel things and it's coming 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 I get on social media. And how many subscribers I have. *THEY* don't seem to mind. In fact, I always trend heavily when I give out the *deets*."

"Well, I want you to hold off for a while. Turn it off. Turn it all off. We need to scrub all your content clean and go dark on social media. At least until we get your pro contract signed, sealed and delivered. 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 when that day comes. But not now, okay? You gotta go submarine. Total blackout. Are you hearing me on this, Banksy?"

"Shit. Alright. If you say so."

"I say so to the tune of two and a half 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 and an eight figure contract my friend."

"And then they can't touch me?"

"Banksy, listen to me. If you do what I say, you're going to get everything you ever want. The brass ring is there to grab if you don't screw it up. That said, I need you to do something for me. Trust me and do something."

"Anything, Joe. You know that. I trust you."

"Good, 'cause I've set you up with a psychiatrist, Dr. Sheila Mendell. Don't worry, she's very discreet and very good at what she does. You'll meet with her out in Maryland between games in Aberdeen. I've used her before and she writes excellent reports. She's on our team, okay?"

"You want me to see a psychiatrist? What for! 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 then? 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 asked for a psychological work up on you before they invest in a two and a half million dollar contract."

"Is that normal?"

"Well, hey, don't look at it like that. It's not a question about 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, the doc will give you a glowing recommendation. She's a friend of mine. She's got my back, and I've got yours. You hearing me?"

"I don't know. 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 if you denigrate these women across your Instagram feed, you have to expect a reaction. 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 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 who create scandal.”

“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 offer up tithes to the emperor. I’m here to get you ready to step into your major league professional shoes. I know what I’m talking about too. 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 who’ll give the league another black eye. We need to change up your image. Maybe find you a proper girl and stick with her for a while to quell the concerns. Preferably a girl-next-door beauty queen with a degree in marketing. Get your image on solid ground. 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, and 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 want to keep Florida on the table for right now until we know how things shake out."

"Okay, so screw them. I'll 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. 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 by the end of the week we'll 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 multi-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 low. More than I thought possible. Rather than being pumped up and 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 to set things in a more uplifted, confident direction. Otherwise, tomorrow was going to be a grind. But what to do?

Then it hit me – the best pick-me-up I knew was a little rough and tumble. Always has been. Get a cute little thing to light my fire and take my big, high hard fastball right down the middle for a strike. That would give me the boost I needed. But did I have the time tonight? Then I realized I still had *what’s-her-name’s* number. And she had asked me to call!. She wanted me and was already primed and ready to go. So maybe I go over for a little dinner, have a little fun in the sack, and sprint home after to catch a couple of zzz’s before tomorrow’s flight. She did have nice tits after all.

I reached for my cellphone, locating her contact in recent entries under “Rachel” with two stars. Five minutes later I was pulling up to her apartment on South Camden.

“Hey sugar!” Rachel greeted opening the front door, “I had a feeling you’d come over tonight. My Mama said I always had a bit of the divination and could read minds. Sure enough, here you are. Come on in. Momma wants to take care of her big boy star pitcher.”

I still couldn’t stand the baby talk, but she was standing in the doorway wearing a tight halter over cutoff jeans 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 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, hard ass, lustful kiss. I don’t know what came over me

exactly and didn't feel in control at the moment, but I mean, damn, she looked good enough to fuck. And that's what I intended to do -- caveman style -- which I knew she'd liked. Didn't they all? So, I forged ahead -- picking her up and slamming her hard into the wall while ramming my groin into hers. A little harder than I meant, but still. She was a big girl, I figured.

"Oh, hey, sugar," Rachel cooed back, a little surprised, rubbing the back of her head.

"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." And I was. I mean, I hadn't planned on taking her blue pill or making it into a long night, but now that I was there, I decided it might be worth it. One last lowdown and dirty romp before I went legit for the pros.

Rachel went for her purse and took out a little pill vial -- then handed me one with water. I swallowed it whole and followed her to the bedroom, watching her strip along the way, and feeling like I was gonna pass out from the blood rush. I don't think I even made it to the bed with her.

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. Or even at my own place. And it was Tuesday now, not Monday.

"Shit!" I said sitting up fast and looking for my cellphone, "What time is it?" Only I couldn't sit up -- my hands were tied to the corner bed posts and my feet to the bottom of the bed frame. When I tried to yank free, the knots tightened. "Hey!" I called out.

"What gives? Hello?" *Shit*, I thought. *What's her name?* *Shit!* "Hey, can you hear me? Is anyone here?"

What's her name walked into the room fully dressed holding a cup of coffee. "Hi, darlin'. You're finally awake. How you feelin,' Sugar?"

"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," she 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? I've got to get going. I have a plane to catch."

"It's six thirty, sugar. Six-thirty-five in the evening 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 even had to call my brother to help get you onto the bed -- you were all dead weight."

"What? Holy Shit! You're kidding right!? Six thirty!? Tell me you're joking! What kind of pill did you give me exactly?"

"Oh, sorry, Sugar, it might've been a *roofie*," Rachel laughed sipping her coffee, perched on the edge of bed.

"Roofie?! The knockout drug? You drugged me? Why!? What for!?"

"Revenge, Sugar. Pure and simple revenge. 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 again, but the ropes cut deeper into my wrists and ankles.

"No prank, Sugar. It's for real. And those ropes aren't gonna give. I had my brother tie them. He was a boy scout once upon a time. You should've taken a moment to consider that before you came over."

"Consider what?!"

"The people you've hurt."

"The people I've.....Okay, okay," I say breathing slow, trying to get my heart rate to slow down 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 I had an important game tonight and would be flying out to Maryland."

"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 here you are. You'll talk."

"The hell I will. Untie me."

"You know, the interesting thing about roofies are they turn people into chatterboxes -- even after you pass out. It's like truth serum. Like the stuff the CIA uses." And here Rachel picked up my cellphone from the end table. "For example, it's interesting all the information you can learn from someone when they're high on roofies and feeling honest. Passwords, skeletons in their closet, fears, secret vices, all kinds of things."

"Come on Rachel. You've had your fun. Good joke. Can you untie me please? This is feeling a little too serious."

“Roofies reveal the true essence of a person,” Rachel continued. “And let me tell you, you’re one fucked up puppy. Seriously. I mean, it must be pure vanity to make your own name and jersey number your password code across all your social media accounts. Not many people would do that. But you did. I don’t think I ever would’ve thought to try that. But luckily, you were extra honest and all too willing to volunteer such info about yourself. By the way, Sugar, you were very active on social media last night and I don’t think people will be happy about it. Okay, I helped a little. I hope you don’t mind.” Rachel laughed.

“I do mind! Now look, Rachel. You’re in some serious trouble. 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, your agent, your teammates. I don’t imagine they like being called all those horrible names you’ve been tweeting. Everyone thinks you’ve had a nervous breakdown. And your ‘fuck everyone’ attitude is getting some pretty nasty responses on your Instagram feed. You’re currently trending as *#toxicpitcher/fuckhim/cancelhiscontract*. Isn’t that cute?”

“You’re lying.”

“No, Sugar. I don’t lie as a matter of habit.” Rachel opened my phone and showed me the things she’d posted, scrolling through several pages, and letting me read to my heart’s content. No, she wasn’t lying. She’d fucked me but good. Truly, royally fucked me. It was 6:45pm and all the voicemails from coaching staff, teammates, and a hundred

other missed calls from my agent were left unanswered. Oh, boy, this was bad! Epic-ly bad!

“Do you know what you’ve done to me!?” I screamed, “I’m totally screwed! You just cost me my pro contract! I’m as good as out! Oh, I’m gonna so have you arrested and thrown in jail for this! For a very long time!”

“No, Sugar, that’s not going to happen. Not to me at least.”

“The hell it isn’t. When I get free everyone will know you did this, not me. Everyone will know I was abducted by a crazed stalker and none of what you said or did on my social media will be held against me. I’ll end you cause everyone will believe me.”

“You sure, Sugar? No one will believe you, especially after you raped me.”

“What? What! No way! I did no such thing!”

“Who do you think they’re gonna believe? You were pretty rough on me last night coming through the door. I have the bruises on my arms and legs, the torn panties, and a walnut sized knot to the back of my head where you slammed me against the wall to prove it. Not to mention all the rough sex we had within the last twenty-four hours. Oh, Sugar, you’re DNA is still all in me, on me, all over me. And none of it was consensual. At least as far as what I’m going to tell the police.”

“You wouldn’t! Come on, that’s serious. I could go to jail if you lied like that.”

“Who says it’s a lie?”

“No, you wanted me. You wanted to have sex with me. You even asked me to come to your place. I have the texts to prove it.”

“Do you, Sugar? I don’t see any such texts like that here in your phone. I do, however, see several pictures of me tied up with a blind fold on. And several more with you taking advantage of me last night. Along with several social media posts talking about

how I refused your advances and how you were going to exact some measure of revenge as a result."

"I didn't do any of that!"

"Didn't you though? The evidence suggests otherwise."

"Why are you doing this to me? I've 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 to be precise. My younger sister. My only sister. My DEAD sister. Do you remember HER name?"

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

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

"I don't, I'm sorry. I meet a lot of people, but that doesn't mean I know everyone."

"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 like you do all the

girls, took her to your place, and fucked her. Didn't even ask if she was a virgin or anything. 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 nor with 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 posted across all your social media accounts."

"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. But she would've gotten over it. She was a strong. Only, after, when you'd posted all those nasty comments about her – all over 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 still she tried to call you after – she was crazy about you and just wanted you to take those things down off social media. She wanted to forgive you. But you ghosted her like she was nothing! Nothing! She wasn't *nothing*! She was a beautiful, sweet, naïve girl and you crushed her with all your bullshit! 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. You're sick! And crazy! I didn't do anything to your sister and none of what she did was 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 just going to kill you and claim it was self-defense. But my brother convinced me there was a better way to punish you -- by sending you to prison and giving you a taste of your own medicine, so to speak. You had to know WHY you were in prison -- lose everything, be completely humiliated, know the truth and still be powerless to do a damn thing about it. All while getting raped in prison. That wouldn't grant absolution for what you did to my sister, not even close, but it would help us to know you were suffering. So I agreed. I gave you the roofie and helped you burn all your bridges last night. I ruined your career and plan to ensure you never hurt another girl. You're gonna have nothing! You're screwed. You *ARE* nothing. And you're gonna have to live with the consequences of what you did for the rest of your life. No one is ever gonna love or trust 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 while you try. I'm gonna make sure everyone knows what you did to my baby sister and everything you did to me. You're done. You're fucked no matter what."

"Oh, geez."

"Now listen, Sugar. Listen up good. In a few minutes, my brother and his friends are gonna come in here to cut you free and let you go. I suggest you be nice, get dressed,

and get the hell outta here cause it's not too late to just kill you. But after you leave, I'm going to call the cops and have you arrested for kidnapping and rape. So, bye-bye, Sugar. It's been real special. I wasn't lying when I said I was a fan and your two seam fastball was something to see."

The End.