

## From Party Pooper to Diaper Pooper

July 2022 – Commission

### Chapter One

"Hey, girl! Damn, I love your outfit! You totally rock that top, y'know? You've *gotta* tell me where you found it!"

I'm practically yelling myself hoarse over the thumping music that's currently blaring out from the turntable beneath my hands. But you know what? A bit of hoarseness doesn't really matter. What matters is that I – Sarah Wilmington, the best bitch, the queen of parties herself – am living up to my reputation. I'm having a blast rocking the place down tonight, and every one of my fellow college students around me seems to be having a blast, too.

We're young. We're energetic. And now that it's Friday evening, we're gonna live it up and let all those stupid classes drift away into the blissful, self-medicated haze of weed and alcohol and adrenaline.

I catch sight of my friends milling about in the crowded room, and I can't help but grin behind the Jägerbomb I'm currently swigging. There's Brian, the gorgeous hunk whom I see more often than not in my medical classes. He's over by the food – of course – alternately stuffing his face with chicken skewers and awkwardly chatting with my best friend Cassandra. Oh, those two have history, I know well. Cassandra filled me in plenty last year – how she'd fished the poor guy in, then had her usual fun with him before kicking him out of bed the next morning. Yeah, that was textbook Cassandra, all right. Fuck 'em and leave 'em, no matter how much they whine...

*Maybe that's why Brian looks so uncomfortable? And why he's glancing past her? Wait... is he staring at Jessica?! No way-*

"Uh, hey. Hey, Sarah? I- I was wondering-" It's Michael, of all people. The law guy, peering shyly through his glasses at me and motioning toward the speakers. "Hey, Michael!" I smile, with a toss of my blonde hair. Not that I'm really interested in this nerd, smart as he is. But y'know... the Jägerbomb has me feeling kind of frisky. "Wassup, dude? Having fun yet?"

"Um, well, yeah! It's great to be here," he begins, clearly struggling to raise his mild voice above the cacophonous dubstep. "I was just wondering- you know, I was reading the other day about a class-action case involving hearing loss in young adults-" "Hearing loss? Huh?" I'm only partially kidding – because it's genuinely fucking hard to hear his soft-spoken voice over the music. "And maybe, I

was thinking- I mean, if you think it's a good idea- that we could maybe turn down the volume a bit-"

The bass drops, and as my shoulders start grooving to the seductive rhythm I burst into a wry laugh... even as I reach for the volume knob. I'm not a total asshole, after all. "Look, don't worry, dude! I'm a professional, you know. I never play anything over 100 dB unless they tell me to, I swear..."

And then I pause and flash him a brilliant smile. "But y'know what? I'll turn this one down a bit – just for you." I gesture expansively past him at the milling crowd. "And if you're worried about the neighbors minding... I mean, fuck. Half the folks who live around here drop in for a drink and a smoke anyway, remember? Look – there's Mrs. Adams over there right now! Seems like the neighbors love having a lit Friday night as much as we do!"

Then Cynthia – she of the awesome top – rocks past, twerking her gorgeous ass and absolutely feeling the beat... and Michael retreats back into the crowd, and I let the vibe and the overall ambiance of the party swallow me up once more. What can I say? I'm an extrovert, after all, and it's nights like this that give me an absolute charge. No more thoughts, no more worries about grades and term papers and fucking group projects. Just music and alcohol and the thrill of everyone else vibing around me...

"Hey, Jane! Long time, no see!"

"Yo, Brian, leave some for us, how 'bout? You carb loading again or what?"

"Thanks, babe! I picked this track just for you!"

It's a perfect night... Or at least, it is until it's not.

The first I hear of the approaching storm is the angry thudding. I'm a DJ in my off time, you know; my ears are primed to hear everything from distortion to feedback to clipped audio, so it's super easy to pick out the off-beat thump of what sounds like a fist on our wooden door.

Michael's nearest the door – probably not a coincidence, knowing his predilection for leaving parties early – so he's the first to reach out and tug it open. Which brings him not only face to face with the owner of that pounding fist, but with... well, with the fist itself.

You know sometimes when bad shit goes down, everything seems to grind into slow motion? Yeah, it's nothing like that now. Hell – if anything, everything is moving faster than usual! Even afterward, I can scarcely recall whether I actually saw the fist connecting with Michael's unsuspecting, owlsh face. But I do catch sight of him stumbling backward. I hear the shriek from Jane, who's standing almost directly behind him... and then the irate bellowing of the fist's owner.

Talk about a slob of a guy, too! I know you're not supposed to judge folks by their looks, but... Jesus Christ. How many beers and greasy pizzas does it take to make a fellow as fat and filthy-looking as this guy? Not to mention those dirty sweatpants and that ratty shirt aren't doing him any favors-

"Stop your fucking party already!" he's screaming – and maybe two seconds later, my stupid brain finally unfreezes and sends my hands jerking out to turn down the music. "I'm fucking sick and tired of your stupid fucking noise!"

Michael is scrambling up from the floor, still clutching his nose and what I think are his glasses – whether broken or not, I can't immediately tell. But our visitor doesn't seem to notice, let alone care. "Make *one* more bit of noise, and you stupid kids are gonna regret it!" he continues, glaring around the room at us all with beady, pig-like eyes filled with hate. "Believe me, I know how to make you brats shut up-"

"Oh, really?" It's Cynthia – and of course it's Cynthia, quite possibly the mouthiest and nerviest of us all. "Like, dude. What're you gonna do? Call the cops?" Cassandra is already motioning, mouthing desperately at her to shut up, but the guy cuts them both off. "You better fucking believe it!" He laughs – a short, wheezing laugh that sets his double-chins wagging. "Or maybe I'll just take care of things myself..."

*What the actual fuck? Is that a- a gun?! Holy mother fu-*

"Yeah? See, I don't mess around!" the guy gloats, waving what appears to be a most decidedly real pistol in his pudgy hand. "My little friend and I know how to get a point across. So tell me now, ya little shits! Ya gonna keep on partying? Or do I need to-"

"We're- we're sorry, sir." It's Brian, stepping forward and pulling Michael protectively behind him. Brian may be a bit of a jock, but damn, if I'm not grateful to see him there! "Please- there's no need for- uh, violence. More violence, I mean." He motions awkwardly toward the rest of us. "I'm sorry if we were being too loud. We'll- we'll make sure not to disturb you anymore. No more parties-"

"Yeah?" The guy seems taken aback – almost as if he'd *wanted* us to put up a fight. "I, uh- Okay! Yeah, well, you better not! I'll be watching, you know!" He backs – or perhaps the better term is "waddles" – toward the door, the squeak and thump of his atrocious Crocs sounding unnaturally loud in the sudden stillness of the room. "Make any more fucking noise, and mark my words: your neighbor Bob Richardson will be *back*!"

The thud of the door slamming behind him echoes through the house. And in the seconds that follow, it's as if time has stood still.

Until Cassandra breaks the silence, that is. With an incredulous "What the fuck was *that*?"

*(To be continued!)*