

Rachel's Love Potion

Today's the day! After month's of finagling and finessing, I was finally going to enact my sinister master plan. The final ingredients had arrived, and soon, my love potion would be complete! I don't care what anyone says, days like today merit sinister laughter.

Rachel Levine was going to be mine.

I snatched up my package from the front porch and waved to Mrs. Lundegaard across the street, who was out watering her herb garden. She didn't wave back; the old bitch hates me. And I her, I should add, but today I couldn't help but smile at her wrinkly old ass. Smile right through it in fact, then through the house behind her, through two more, and right at where my quarry dwelled. At least, until I had her move in as my permanent live-in love slave.

Back inside it was straight to my laboratory, where the early stages of the concoction were in full swing. Plural, actually: concoctions. That's what most people don't realize about love potions – they just think you toss some ingredients in a blender and force it down her throat. Not remotely. There were in fact three distinct portions to it, each of which need to be maintained separately until the crucial stage of the process, which with my new package in hand, I would see to presently.

The first was to personalize it. After all, a love potion given to the wrong person doesn't usually work right. Everybody experiences love differently, see, so if you go feeding a love potion to someone it wasn't brewed for, what you're more than likely to wind up with is a thoroughly confused woman staggering around trying to fuck a chair leg. Nobody wants to see that.

Thanks to modern home security systems and the neighborhood's general dislike of their warlock neighbor, it had taken me six months to find an opportunity to get close enough to dear Rachel to get a serviceable hair sample. Now that hair sample was affixed in a perfect double helix with one of my own, dissolving together in a swirl of imbued chemistry. It would work for Rachel and myself alone – none of that “whoops, she looked at the wrong person first” garbage you see on TV.

The second essential was something all too often neglected: the base. Every good potion needed a competently brewed base to empower it. Only a moron forgot it altogether, and then he didn't have a potion at all but just some expensive, foul-tasting sludge. My base had been brewing for over a month now, infused at intervals with enhancements that had, quite frankly, nearly bankrupted me. Still, when it was done, my love potion would have the most potent base of any potion I'd ever seen, much less made myself. Rachel would be so blinded by infatuation, I could do anything to her and she would only beg for more. Abuse her, humiliate her, torture her friends and family right in front of her, and she'd still be utterly besotted.

(I had less than no interest in such macabre pursuits, but still, it was nice to have room to operate.)

Finally, there were the alchemical instructions for the potion itself. This was where the alchemy could trigger the mix to cure (or cause) a disease, enable flight, induce fire breath, or – in the case of my potion – cause romantic infatuation. It was actually the simplest part of the potion. It was formulaic, and perhaps disturbingly straightforward. After an anxiety-inducing two-week delay, the ingredients had been delivered today. I tore the package open with boyish eagerness.

I did a quick inventory. Glauber's salt, caustic potash, purple of Cassius, white vitriol... On I went down my checklist, making sure everything was in place. Everything seemed to be in order right up until I got to the lunar caustic. No. No, this couldn't be right. No no no nooooo! I picked up the order confirmation, scanned down its contents. There it was, lunar caustic, 10g... wait, no. It was supposed to be 100g!

Damnit all to hell!

I had a mere three hours before I needed to be ready! Four, if I was willing to risk being fashionably late. Even if I had the silver on hand right now it would hardly be enough time! My instinct was to call the chemical supplier and raise bloody hell, but there was no time. I had the narrowest of windows to make this right.

Ripping around like a wild man, I drove around to every store I could think of, scrounging up what little I could find of use. After two hours, I was convinced I'd found all I could and raced back home to start the processes. All the while, I knew full well this was a doomed effort. I'd gotten up to 40g, and I might be able to get another 20 distilled by deadline, but still! Still. I allowed myself an exasperated sigh.

It might be enough. Everything else had been done so perfectly, and I had all the other ingredients. Insufficiency wasn't the same as a mistake. It might just... dilute it. Or maybe I'd been overly-ambitious to begin with, right? Sure, that could be. Maybe this would actually be better than my incredibly meticulous plot that I had so carefully planned, researched and perfectly executed with this one exception.

Damnit!

The block party was set to begin at noon sharp, and the love potion was done only shortly thereafter. I didn't have time to get tidied up like I'd wanted, but I was presentable at least, and with less than no time to spare. Thank the dark powers of the void that the rest of my things were already packed in the van and ready to go. As I pulled up to the strip of parking spaces alongside the park's east edge, I saw more than a few irked glances cast in my direction; there were still those in the neighborhood who were none too pleased to see me arrive.

I swear, one little story in the newspaper about disseminating aerosol toxins not approved by the FDA, and you're the neighborhood nemesis. (OK, so there were three stories.) In my defense, I was just trying to kill mosquitoes. All of them, for about a twenty mile radius. Even if it hadn't made those lacking the antidote (i.e. everyone but me) a little sick for a week or two, it was a small price to pay for not having to worry about West Nile, right? Lucky for me the

judge couldn't live without his morning coffee, and the flavor of coffee handily masked my mercy potion.

That was years ago, however, and of late I had been a model community member. Organizing the community watch, buying excessive amounts of cookies from the girl scouts, competing in last summer's home garden competition, you name it. (Fourth place, but still, all agreed my tomatoes were the sweetest!) I don't think many of them had forgotten past transgressions, but I was only looking for tolerance, not acceptance. More than a year of intensive boot-licking later, here I was, finally invited to the annual block party largely thanks to a promise to furnish the booze on my own dime.

Now to pray to all the dead gods of history that it wasn't going to be for nothing.

Things were in full swing by the time I arrived. The younger kids were entertaining themselves on the playground and the older ones were isolating themselves with phones and tablets. Three grill pits were churning out meat (and veggie burgers for the Thompsons), and tables were overflowing with the potluck offerings. There was both sullen grumbling at my arrival and fervent expressions both relief at the contents of my van.

"Sorry everyone – had something come up last minute, but rest assured, your alcohol has arrived!" I opened the back end of the truck to the sound of grudging applause and started unloading coolers, quickly joined by a few other neighbors who helped me set up. I'd sprung for beer, wine, some fruity girly things, and a not unimpressive stock of liqueurs. All told, it had set me back more than the potion itself (which had not been inexpensive).

We had a rather large neighborhood, using the term "block party" lightly, as it was really more like five blocks. There were around two hundred attendees expected, and we may well have exceeded that with friends and party crashers. In all the hubbub, it took me some time to spot Rachel, especially as I was trying to look like I wasn't looking.

She was so mesmerizingly beautiful, this whole charade might have been worth it just to see her. There she was with a dozen or so others playing volleyball in the park's sand pits. She wasn't dressed for sex appeal, or if she was, she didn't know how to do so. All she had on was a simple pair of jogging shorts and a sports bra, not even socks or shoes. Her golden brown hair was tied up in a simple ponytail; without it, it would hang midway down her back with just the slightest hint of curls. Her skin was perfectly bronzed; I couldn't detect the edges of a tan line anywhere.

It was strange, really. My appetites generally ran to big boobs and big butts on big girls, yet Rachel was the antithesis of my norm. She was on the short side, thin near to the point of skinny with petite breasts and a runner's ass. She had the face of an angel, undeniably, but usually that wouldn't be enough for a man like me. There was just something about her, something unaffected and simple and quietly unashamed, and it had sparked a need in me. A need to possess this woman.

I bided my time. Rushing over with a special drink just for her would blow the whole thing; this had to happen organically, or at least seem to. So I settled in, handing out beers,

pouring from bottles, guarding against ambitious teens, and increasingly displaying my skills as a mixologist as word got around. Within the first hour, I might have been welcomed on my own merit. Soon enough I had a small group of neighbors gathered around the bar, laughing and telling jokes, myself an equal member of the circle. It felt like I could live like them, simple people with normal lives, if I so chose.

But I didn't. I was just waiting. Waiting for my moment.

Then it came.

Rachel and several of her fellow volleyballers approached the bar, their game evidently concluded. She was walking alongside a young man who was teasing her about some of her missteps on the court; she rejoined that she'd had more fun than him, which made her the real winner. "No, I'm the winner," he said warmly, smiling with teeth so white I literally heard them sparkle. It must be a new thing; I hadn't heard of any boyfriend in my researches, though I'd not re-checked lately.

I couldn't help but smile as the couple sidled up to the makeshift bar. The poor guy would be going home alone tonight.

"Good afternoon, neighbors," I greeted them.

"Hi," said Rachel, and I detected a quick frown flash across her face at the sight of me. Guess somebody was still bitter. "You're... Knox, right?"

"Good memory!" I was genuinely impressed. I'd made sure to keep as much distance as possible, not tip her off in the least. "And if I recall, you're Rachel?" She nodded. "And this... well, you got me there." I looked to her date.

"Jim," he said, extending a hand. As we shook, he asked his variant of the same stupid question I've been getting since boyhood. "Knox like the fort, or knocks like the school of hardness?"

I wanted to make a joke about having gotten a PhD in hardness, but it was too soon. "The fort. Not that you'll need to spell it anyway," I said with a laugh I'd been practicing for months. "So, you didn't come here to make introductions. Can I get you a drink?"

"Beer for me, light if you got it," said Jim. What a pussy.

"Yeah, same," said Rachel. Good girl, watching her figure. (What, like I'm the first guy to hold his crush to a lower standard?)

"Phhhh, you can't drink some shitty beer! Knox here is a bartending god! C'mon, it's his treat – live it up!" interjected Stan Whitford, who I had been plying with free cocktails all afternoon for precisely this reason. He'd been drumming up business for me all afternoon. One of those guys who wants to share his inebriation with all present, and preferred everyone follow his lead. He was perfect.

"Oh, well, um, can you do a long island, Knoxie?" said Jim. Knox. Not Knoxie. Fucker.

"Sure can. And you?" I asked Rachel, my excuse for not being able to fulfill her request at the ready.

“Oh, I dunno, I’m not picky. Whatever’s handy for you. Something tasty?” she said uncertainly.

Man, sometimes things are just too easy.

“One long island and one mystery drink, coming up,” I said. I started with Jim’s order and took my time about it. Sure enough, the two were soon drawn into the conversation, and I was as forgotten as any regular bartender. Once his was ready, I reached down under the bar and removed the stopper from the potion. It would begin to lose strength after only a few minutes out of my specially enchanted bottle, so it was time to move quickly. I poured it into a glass, stuck a little umbrella in it, and handed the couple their beverages.

More than ever, I was wishing I could have used a simpler method, like breaking into her house and forcing it down her throat at gunpoint. Stirring it into something in her refrigerator. Veritably anything less complex than this whole charade. Yet every other way had held too much risk to me. The presence of great fear or hatred could dull or even negate the effect; there was no guarantee she’d be the only one who consumed it if left sitting somewhere, or that she’d do so in timely fashion. Plus, those plans held the added risk that I could get caught and incarcerated if things went awry, which – hot as Rachel was – simply wasn’t worth it to me.

As I put the glass into her hand and murmured a “you’re welcome” to her “thanks, Knox,” there was nothing to do but watch and wait. Seconds dragged by like hours as I watched her hold the glass, sipping (“oh, that’s yummy”) but not guzzling. Just to calm my nerves, I made another mojito for Stan’s wife Donna, who giggled and cooed her thanks to my deaf ears.

Then, for the second time that party, serendipity struck.

“Everybody! Hey, pipe down – everybody!” yelled a tipsy Stan Whitford. “I gotta say, I was on the fence about inviting ol’ Knox here, but... dammit if you aren’t the best part of this damn fine party, am I right?”

As he went on, I tried to smile at the praise rather than stare in mounting anxiety at the lip of Rachel’s mostly full glass. He took my hand and roughly tugged me into the center of the circle beside him, then raised my hand in the air. “C’mon, everybody – seriously, you make one hell of a... what did you call that thing again?”

“Dark and Stormy,” I answered.

“Well whatever you call it. So c’mon everybody, raise your glasses. To the bartender!” Stan finished, lifting his glass and draining it in a slug. I sure hoped he wasn’t driving home. Then such petty concerns were rendered moot, as the rest of the circle followed suit. Dozens of neighbors echoed Stan’s toast, lifting glasses and cans and taking long drinks.

Rachel drained hers to the dregs. My smile probably seemed like it was a response to the toast – and in a way it was – but really, I was imagining my future. Rachel Levine was going to be my love slave.

Just so long as that damn potion worked. It had to. Almost everything was perfect.

Sure enough, over the next few minutes, I watched for the subtle shifts in her behavior. She gravitated back towards my bar, then started making eye contact with me, and soon forcibly

engaged me in banal small talk. Jim had gotten roped into conversation with a few neighbors, but she seemed to take no notice. I made her another drink, then another. In fact as the evening wore on, she never refused an offer.

It had to be working. Right? Maybe “love” to her didn’t mean stripping naked and spreading her legs right off, but rather showing her interest in me, then submitting to my every desire once I stated it. With so many people around – and with the bar becoming the centerpoint of the party – there was no way to test it out. I couldn’t just say “hey Rachel, why don’t you crawl around under the bar and suck my dick while I pour?” If the potion *wasn’t* working and she was just being friendly, I’d be in a world of trouble.

Three hours later, Jim took her hand in his and said it was time for them to go. I watched Rachel carefully for a reaction – surely, she’d never leave with this loser when she was totally infatuated with me. Only then, she did just that.

Rachel did pause to say goodbye to me, I guess, which was certainly out of character. I guess. “Thanks so much for the drinks, Knox. We’ll definitely have to do this again sometime!”

“Already counting the days, and readying the hole in my savings account,” I said, forcing a smile at my lame joke. Then she gave me a little hug, breaking it off before I could even reciprocate. She took Jim’s hand and didn’t look back.

What. The. Fuck.

The next couple days were a low point for me. I’d really put all my eggs in the love-slave basket, and to have everything come so close to perfection and yet still go totally bust... it was a lot for a warlock’s ego to handle. When I finally extricated myself from Stan and the rest of the lingerers around midnight, I’d come home tipsy and was drunk in short order. I smashed a fair amount of my chemistry gear in an inebriated rage, and the next day sat around alternately moping around the basement, storming around the main floor, or flitting around the upstairs watching for Rachel to come throw herself at my feet.

I slept on my couch that night. Alone.

The next day wasn’t much better in terms of my temperament, but at least I started getting productive about it. Ordering replacement glassware, doing laundry, catching up on back issues of Home Alchemy Quarterly I’d neglected during my scheming months. I called up the customer service line of the company who’d bungled my order and gave a thorough tongue-lashing to an Indian man pretending his name was Dennis. It didn’t help, though. I was too dejected to be cheered by some vicarious cruelty. To think, I’d squandered all that time, money, resources, favors... and what did I have to show for it? A hug from a pretty girl. A *hug*. What a waste. What a damn waste!

On the morning of the third day – no, wait, it was going on 2:00 in the afternoon – by the sound of the doorbell. I ignored it at first, reckoning it was just some solicitor. The second time, I

figured it was some package delivery I'd forgotten, one that required a signature. The third time, I didn't care who it was. I was in a foul mood, and I didn't want its foulness disrupted by the outside world.

"Now listen here you son of... uh, Rachel?"

There she was, clad in an adorable little pink romper, smiling congenially into my doorway. In an instant, I found myself trying to smooth wrinkles from clothes and kinks from my hair, all the while thinking that if life were fair – to me, not to her – that *she'd* be the one eager to make a good impression on *me!*

"Oh, I'm sorry, did I wake you?"

"No, no, no. Well, yes. But no matter, I should've been up some time ago."

"Good then. I was going to come by earlier but I didn't want to freak you out or anything." Were her cheeks coloring, or was I just imagining it?

"You seem harmless enough. Why would you freak me out?" I managed a smile, despite the hatred of the universe sitting in my stomach like a pile of lead.

She giggled. "That's how I get ya. But no, I just wanted to swing by, see if... I dunno. If you wanted to... do something. Or whatever."

Rachel was definitely blushing. Perhaps I was too, as my imagination flooded with all the something I wanted to do with her. Still, I was cautious by nature. If the potion had been working, surely she would have acted on it before now. Maybe I'd just made a good impression during small talk. "I have to say, this is kind of a surprising offer. What brought this on?"

If I thought she was blushing before, she was positively crimson now. "I... Well, I... Geez, this sounds weird. I..."

"You...?"

She took a deep breath, hands fidgeting self-consciously. "Ever since the block party the other day, I've just really been thinking that you and I don't spend enough time together. Like, we've *never* spent time together. And that just seems so... wrong. You know?"

"I'm afraid I don't know," I replied. Come on, Rachel, tell me you want to blow me. Say it. Get the words out.

"You don't think you'd want to... you know, spend more time, and stuff, with someone like me?" She sounded so hopeful. C'mon. Bend the knee, girl. Tell me I own you.

"I guess I hadn't given it much thought."

Rachel took a step toward me and placed a delicate hand on my arm, gripping it like she didn't mean to let go.. "It's just... look, I think you're an awesome guy. I knew all the rumors had to be bullshit, and I just really want to hang out with you, get to be friends. Like, best friends. Like, I just... I just, like, *need* to be your friend. If that makes sense."

There! If that didn't mean it had worked, what would? I couldn't wait to learn more about how this delectable morsel defined friendship. "I'm not sure it does. What kind of 'friends' did you have in mind? Like you and that Jim guy?"

And then, she laughed outright, withdrawing her hand from my arm to cover her mouth. “Oh gosh no! No, Jim is my *boyfriend*. Whereas I see you more like...” She tapped her lip, probing for the right word. “A brother? Yeah, like a really close big brother.”

What?!

I blinked. This couldn't be happening. Months of planning and a small fortune dumped into this scheme – and she was literally labeling me as something worse off than what I was before! At least pre-potion I'd been a friendly neighbor of more-or-less dateable age! Brother?! A mysterious stranger had a shot; a “brother” was the lowest rung on the dating ladder outside of registered sex offenders.

“I'm sorry, I just don't see you that way. If you wanted something more, then maybe we could give it a shot, but.. Bffs? We're neither of us 9 years old any more.” I grit my teeth. This was the diarrhea icing on the shit cake.

She put her hand back on my arm, though I could sense now that there was nothing intimate in the contact. Like I really was her brother. “Oh come on, how can you say that until you get to know me?”

“I–”

“Hush. What are you up to tonight?”

Brewing an elixir of life to resurrect the rat bastard who invented love potions so I can kill him again myself. “Nothing, I guess.”

“So come on, let's hang out! Come on over to my place. I'll make dinner, and we can catch a movie, or hit the mall or something.”

“Catch... hit...” I was stunned by how uninteresting the suggestion was. “Sorry no.”

“No isn't an option,” she said with a grin, confidence returning. I bet she didn't have a lot of guys tell her they weren't interested in spending time with her. “So quit being a Negative Nelly and tell me you're coming over at 5.”

To be so close to my dream, and yet so far away... it was shattering my normally ironclad self-defenses. In my desperation, I finally just said what I'd wanted to say to her for three days now. No, for over a year. Since the moment I'd laid eyes on her. “I want you to suck my dick, Rachel.”

There. Either the potion would push her over the edge, or it wouldn't. I'd rather she think I was a total creep than her goddamn brother.

Instead, she just giggled. “I'll bet you do, Knox. So c'mon, my place at 5?”

I sighed. “No. Thank you.”

“Puh-leeeeease?” she whined, clasping her hands in front of her. Precisely the thing I wanted her to say and the manner in which I wanted her to say it – just for the wrong damn favor.

“I already have a sister,” I said, easing the door closed.

“Wow, really? You seem like such a dude's dude and all that I figured you for an only chi–” and the door shut. “Don't think you won, buddy! I'm not giving up on you!” she called.

Like I was just playing a game. A moment later, Rachel was skipping back down the block; when she caught me peering at her between the blinds, her perfect little butt rocking that romper, she turned and waved before continuing on her way.

This couldn't be happening. Not only had the potion failed to make her fall in love with me, but it had succeeded in making her fall... in *like* with me?! I thought it over, then poured over some of my books and notes on the subject. The lunar caustis was a major catalyst in the lust-inducement power of the potion, given the moon's rightful association with wildness and sexuality. And genius that I was, I'd underdone it by half.

Everything else had gone exactly right. I'd made an ultra-powered, durably permanent, irrevocably binding potion of platonic love. Rachel Levine would live out her days utterly convinced that I was the best buddy she could ever have. Someone to confide secrets in, explore hobbies with, come to with hardships... and never, ever fuck.

I wish I could say I handled it with a little more class, but when she came back at 5:15 to tell me dinner was ready and waiting, I said I wasn't hungry and shut the door in her face. When she returned the next afternoon to see if I wanted to hit the gym with her, I rolled my eyes and shut her out without even a word. Even if I didn't have a recipe for a tincture that dissolved fat, I sure as hell didn't want to work up a sweat with Rachel unless both of us were naked and my cock was somewhere wet and warm.

Before the day was out she'd added me and/or followed me on every conceivable social media platform and began texting me at intervals, each one an update on her dreadfully mundane activities and an invitation to partake. When she told me she'd have to cancel our plans the following evening – plans which I had vociferously not agreed to – to have a date night with Jim, I told her that if she really wanted to be my friend, she'd dump him to hang out with me. See if I could at least afford my misery a little company.

jim said your welcome to come to dinner with us.. "a friend of yours is a friend of mine lol though I think he's jealous... not like he has reason 2 be i keep telling him!

Not only could I not get her to fuck me, I couldn't even get her to *stop* fucking Jim.

Tell Jim he can shove his dinner up his ass, I replied.

lol don't be grumpy! jimz out of town this weekend so you and i can hang nonstop!!! i was thinking we could go apple picking at the orchad? sound fun?? :D

It did not.

So it went for the next several weeks. Rachel made constant overtures at friendship, and I made constant refutations. Every time my resolve faded and I began to think maybe I could try to befriend her, then see if I could bridge it into something more, I had to slap myself back to sensibility. This was a love potion. More or less. It hard-wired the way she felt about me; I couldn't make her feel other than intense amicability any more than I could make someone under a traditional love potion change their feelings.

I'd read a lurid description once of a particularly unscrupulous alchemist who had given a woman a love potion like the one I had meant to. His had worked fantastically, and he'd

sadistically reveled in having her betray her every other relative, friend and acquaintance until he was the only one in her life. She slept in a basket at the foot of his bed, like a dog, and developed an entirely servile personality as she realized that was what pleased him best.

In time, the man grew bored of his plaything – yet try as he might, nothing he did could dissuade her. She threw herself at him, begged and pleaded, starved herself on his doorstep, and quite nearly took her life before he relented. For years, he devised means of ridding himself of her, and for years, she persisted in blind adoration.

Lucky me. I'd have the same problem, except instead of Rachel unshakeable in the belief that the sun rises and sets in my pants, she'd always think I gave the best relationship advice.

Worse, I was increasingly haunted by the fact that even outside our circumstances, I wouldn't want to be her friend. Rachel was gorgeous, yes, and friendly in a what-a-nice-girl-my-granddaughter-is kind of way. We simply had nothing in common. She exercised like a fiend, was a die-hard fan of reality dating shows, spent an hour or more a day browsing sites featuring of animals of different species who are best friends, and her opinions on politics ranged from “oh, that sounds bad” to “we just have to hope for the best.”

Day by day I grew more and more blunt in my rejections.

She asked if I wanted to see the new Johnny Depp movie (“He wears the funniest costume!”); I told her not unless she'd be wearing her birthday suit.

She texted me at 1am to ask if I'd come kill a big spider in her bedroom (Jim was all the way across town at his place); I wrote back that if I came over to her bedroom at that hour, I'd be staying the night.

One morning she showed up with a pitcher of fresh-squeezed OJ; I marched right out to the street and poured it down the gutter.

(“You could've just dumped it on the porch,” she said with a laugh, undeterred.

I sneered “Do you want ants? Because that's how you get ants.”)

And so on. She was relentless in seeking me out, and the way she talked to me, it was like we really were old and dear friends. No matter that I never gave her the time of day. She'd ask if I wanted to go shopping with her, then when I refused, she'd swing by wearing her latest purchase to ask if it made her ass look big, or if I thought Jim would find it sexy.

Speaking of Jim, it was one month to the day after I'd fed Rachel the potion when she came into my house, unbidden as always, tears streaming down her sun-kissed cheeks. Before I knew what was happening, she wrapped her arms around my neck and started weeping into my shoulder. It was all fairly incomprehensible for a while there, but I soon pieced together from the monosyllables she managed between sobs that she and Jim were no more.

Lucky bastard. He had the option to be done with her – without even having to change his phone number and address. I'd already been looking at real estate on the west coast.

She told me all about it as I held her, smoothing out her hair and for once getting to enjoy the feeling of her apple breasts pressed against my chest. Evidently, ol' Jimbo had gotten sick and tired of all the attention his girlfriend was paying to her oddball neighbor, and told her it was

going to be him or me. And obviously she wasn't going to part ways with her best friend for some guy she'd only been dating a couple months.

It would have been flattering if it wasn't so inconvenient.

"Oh, Rachel," I said, patting her back softly. "I don't suppose this means you're ready to start fucking other men now." I was well beyond pretending sympathy. I'd victimized myself more so than I had her. She at least enjoyed my company, even when I made no effort towards being warm.

"Only in your dreams, buddy," she said, laughing in spite of herself. She always found my "jokes" hysterical.

With a sigh of irritation, I decided I wasn't really in the mood to help her through this. Let one of her real friends take on that burden. So without really thinking, on impulse, I did something sure to drive any grieving woman out of my presence.

I squeezed her ass.

It was even more incredible than I'd dreamed. Pert, and incredibly firm, and fit perfectly in the palm of my hand. I could make out her panty line laterally across the butt cheek, and envied that garment its ease of access.

Rachel didn't even react. Good grief, the girl couldn't take a hint. I let go and said, "C'mon Rachel, I have work to do. You're going to be fine. Call your mom or your sister or your former BFF and have them deal with this."

"Yeah, you're right, I'd put enough of this on you. Time to tough up, right? I'll get out of your hair. Thanks for listening, Knox," she said, sniffing, giving me another firm hug, another feel of chest to chest so I could be jealous of the bra as well.

"I didn't," I said, ushering her out the door and shutting it tightly behind her.

It was 3:11am when I sat bolt upright in bed realizing what had happened.

I was so excited that I didn't even dress, just slipped on my bathrobe (the one with all the stars and moons I'd gotten as a graduation present) over my boxers, put on my sandals and was out the door. The neighborhood was quiet as could be; even old Rick Blanchard's terminally barksome dog Bowser was quiet in his back yard kennel. Rachel lived only three streets away, but it felt like a journey of a thousand miles – especially having to keep my cock from stabbing out through the front slit of my boxers.

Her house was dark, as I expected. I let myself in using the key she'd left for me ("ya know, in case I ever need a trusted friend to house sit or whatever!") and shut the door quietly behind me.

I'd never actually been in her house before. I'd been on the front steps a few times in my efforts at ingratiating myself to the community, but other than a scant glimpse as she opened the front door, I didn't know what to expect. It wasn't much, honestly. It was the quintessential

20-something girl house, decorated with inspirational words stenciled on blocks of wood, stuffed animals from childhood, and anything pink she could find.

I hadn't even known Rachel owned a cat until I almost tripped over the thing on my way up the stairs. I nudged it away with a foot and it scampered off with a sullen yowl.

I found the bathroom and the guest bedroom before the master bedroom, but at last there was my quarry sleeping in the wan glow of the hall night light. Rachel Levine, bundled up in layers and layers of blankets, dozens of tissues air-drying her post-breakup tears scattered around the floor. Breathless with anticipation, I wasted no time in peeling back the layers of coverage. There was only one left when she finally sensed my presence in the room, sitting up with a shriek.

"It's OK, Rachel. It's me, Knox," I said in what I hoped was a soothing tone. Not that I much cared.

It took her a moment to recover from her confusion and process this, but soon her breathing slowed and she flipped on the lamp on the night stand. She was sleeping in a tank top and boxers – not the sexiest, but no matter. It didn't have to be.

"Um? Like, what's wrong? What're you doing here?" she asked at last, rubbing the sleep from her eyes and switching the nightstand lamp onto its lowest setting.

"Nothing's wrong. I just... wanted to hang out," I said. It was around then that she saw my boxer problem, and her eyes widened.

"Knox! Looks like you're 'hanging out' already!" Still, she made no move to cover herself, no sign of self-consciousness or anxiety about having me in her bedroom, unannounced, in the middle of the night. In fact, she gave a little giggle at her pun.

"I've been thinking about our friendship," I said.

That brought a smile to her face. "Are you finally over your butthead phase? I've really missed hanging out with you. You never come over, never have time for me when I stop by... it's been really hard without my best bud."

I sat down on the bed beside her. "I know it has. And I think I've just been stubborn because of the kinds of things you've been wanting to do together. Can I give you a little tough love, Rach?"

She nodded. "Hit me with it."

"We have very different interests, you and I," I said, catching a copy of a fashion magazine on her nightstand and shuddering. "And I think we just need to incorporate more of the things that I like to do into our time together."

"Oh. Yeah, I get that. You just never tell me what you want to do, so like, I keep coming up with suggestions, and..."

"Right, right. So maybe tonight, we can do one of the things I like doing. Sound fair?"

"Tonight? Um, it's the middle of the night, and I have work in the morning..."

"You can call in sick. Don't be a spoilsport."

After a moment, she relented. “Well... all right, I guess. We’ll see how tired I am come morning. So what’d you have in mind?”

Moment of truth. “This.”

In one deft maneuver I grabbed the bottom of her tanktop and lifted it right up to her armpits. There they were in front of me, Rachel Levine’s perfect little tits, bare and beautiful. They were a little bigger than I’d anticipated, but small enough that gravity did nothing to them. Free from their minimal constraints, they bounced slightly, nipples hardening in the cool night air of the bedroom.

With an effort, I looked up to Rachel’s face. Would she be horrified? Furious? Humiliated?

She was arching an eyebrow. “Um, Knox, my boobs are out.” Still, she didn’t pull her shirt back down.

“I know. They’re fucking amazing.”

“Thanks,” she said, leaning back to rest on her palms. “Jim freaking *loved* them. Some guys complain they’re too small though.”

“They’re perfect, Rach, just fucking perfect. Do you mind if I...?” I asked, already reaching out to cop a feel.

“Um, ya I mind,” she said. I didn’t hear it, though. My hands were already grasping those magnificent little orbs. They felt amazing. Why had I ever thought little tits wouldn’t be as good? Madness. I could squeeze these things all night. All year. In fact, I told her so.

“Maybe we just settle on the night,” she said with a little laugh. “I can play hooky today, but I don’t think I can come up with enough excuses to last a year.”

She just sat there, letting me amuse myself, and every passing minute I grew bolder. I gave them a light slap from the side to see how long they’d jiggle. (Not long. I confirmed this several times.) I tried to see how much of them I could suck into my mouth at once. I asked her how much experience she had at giving titty fucks, at which she blushed and mumbled “um, like, none...” I grabbed at her cute little bee sting nipples and gave them each a good twist, each bud popping out like a pencil eraser from my stimulus.

“Are you turned on right now, Rachel? You can tell me.”

For a moment her jaw dropped at my forwardness, as if it was somehow more invasive than my tit-handling. “Knox! Not that it’s any of your business,” she said with an exasperated giggle, “but having a guy go to town on her boobs will generally turn a girl on. So yes.”

I slipped a hand down to her slender, golden thigh. “Show me.”

Another giggle. (She really did it a lot when she was self-conscious, I was learning.)

“Um, ya, I think you’ve seen plenty already, bucko.”

I slid my hand higher until my index finger was right up against her slit. There was some heat there, but I couldn’t detect any dampness as yet. “You don’t feel turned on to me.”

“Well you’ll just have to take my word for it,” she said, leaving her legs just as open to my hand.

“Sorry, I need proof,” I said, taking to my feet. “C’mon. Stand up.”

“Seriously?”

I made a stern face. With another roll of her eyes and another giggle, Rachel squirmed out of her plush bed and to her feet. She still didn’t pull her shirt down over her tits. “All right, I’m standing, ya goof.”

“Now hold still.” With that, I pulled Rachel’s tank top over her head and threw it over my shoulder. We both laughed at the sound of a surprised meow and retreating footsteps darting away down the hall. Then I knelt before her and tugged down her boxer shorts over slender hips.

“You wear two pairs of underwear to bed?” I asked, confounded by the presence of a pair of little pink panties under her boxers.

“Boxers aren’t underwear. Besides, I just feel better with a little support. Sue me.”

“No wonder I couldn’t tell if you were turned on or not – you’re keeping secrets from me, Rachel.”

“You’re the only friend I’ve ever had who could have me standing in front of him in nothing but my panties and say I was hiding too much.”

“Sorry – I’ve had my heart set on this sweet little cunt of yours for too long to appreciate even one extra obstacle,” I said, peeling down the panties, reveling in my first feel of my hands on her bare ass. She had a neatly groomed little landing strip in front; Jim’s influence, probably.

Rachel made a face. “Why do guys always use that word. I hate that word.”

I took in her scent, sighing in delight. She was definitely still aroused. “Cunt? Because it’s a dirty word. And you look like a dirty girl.” I gripped her ass in both hands, pulling her pussy right up against my face, pressing my lips to it.

“Nuh uh. I’ll have you know I’m a good girl.”

I extended my tongue and took a little taste of her; god damn but she was a sweet one. “Really, Rach? Because standing there letting your BFF lick your sloppy wet cunt doesn’t sound like a good girl to me.”

“It is not sloppy!” she said, stamping her foot petulantly.

I took her wrist and guided her hand between her legs, pressing two of her fingers into her pussy with two of mine. “You sure? Feels kind of sloppy to me.”

“Pussies are *supposed* to feel that way, Knox. It doesn’t make them ‘sloppy.’”

I stood up then, shedding my robe, my sandals, and soon after my boxers. “Maybe you’re right. You’ll have to forgive–.”

“WHOA!” she said, taking in the sight of my throbbing erection for the briefest of moments before craning her neck to look anywhere else at all.

“What’s wrong?” It was so hilariously childish I couldn’t help but laugh at her discomfort.

“Um, you’re naked!” she exclaimed, pointing blindly in the general direction of my cock with the hand I hadn’t shoved into her pussy.

“So are you – you don’t see me making a big deal out of it.”

“Oh. Well... yeah, I guess,” she conceded after a moment, turning her head to look back at me, though tilting her chin up to make it near impossible to see my cock.

“You know, you’re not being very friendly right now,” I prodded, hands on hips.

She frowned. “I’m... I’m not? I feel like I’m being pretty chill about hanging out the way you said you wanted.”

“Well it’s like you only want to be friends with part of me. It definitely doesn’t feel like you want to befriend my cock.”

“I don’t,” she said.

I smiled. “Well too bad. You guys are going to get to know one another real well.”

I lifted her slender body by the hips and tossed her back on her bed. (Unsurprisingly, it made her giggle.) “In bed, out of bed; standing, lying down; sloppy, not sloppy. You just can’t make up your mind, Knox.”

I crawled onto the bed, positioning myself on top of her. “Oh trust me, I know what I want.”

“You’re lucky me and Jimmy broke up,” she said as I lined up my cock at the entrance to her pussy, “or else I think this would definitely count as cheating.”

“On come on, Rachel. I’m just being... friendly.”

With that, I slid inside her. Sopping wet as she was, it was still the tightest fucking pussy I’d ever felt. It gripped me like a loving hand clad in a wet velvet glove. Like it didn’t want me to leave. I didn’t mean to.

Rachel mostly just lay there smiling while I fucked her. She’d make a sound occasionally when I bottomed out, or if something felt especially good. Maybe one of these days I’d sex her up properly, amuse myself by watching her howl out a few orgasms, but today was for me. Today, I needed my best friend.

To think, I’d sat there an entire month neglecting this opportunity. All the times I’d cursed her seeing me as a friend no matter what I did, yet somehow never realizing that meant I could do anything I wanted. It wasn’t “please allow your fuck toy to give you pleasure, Master,” but as I helped myself to Rachel’s cunt buffet, I was fast realizing that this was nearly as good.

“I’m really glad we found something you enjoy doing together,” she said with a happy moan. “I’m on the pill, so go ahead and come wherever you want.”

All right – just as good.

I watched those perfect little tits of hers micro-jiggle up and down while I slowly readied her pussy to be well and truly savaged. It was so tight it was almost like I was fucking her ass – which, I realized with a broad smile, I’d soon have a more precise frame of comparison with. After months of pent-up sexual frustration, I’d be lying if I said I made a braggable showing on this, my first time fucking my friendly neighbor. It wasn’t long before I flooded her pussy with what felt like a bucket of cum, collapsing on top of her panting as I tried to regain my breath.

“Can I tell you something?” she murmured into my ear.

“Sure, sweet cunt. You don’t mind if I call you sweet cunt, do you?”

“Not as long as you mean it in a good way.”

“I do. Now go on and tell me.”

She laughed. “You make the most hilarious face when you’re fucking me. Omg, I had to fight so hard not to giggle in the middle of things. You were all…” She made a face that, on her, looked like a cross-eyed raging gorilla, then broke into gales of laughter. “Sorry. I’m not making fun. It was just funny.”

“Yeah, yeah,” I said, pulling out and rolling to my feet on unsteady legs. My cum was dribbling out of her slit. “Now come over here and clean me off. I don’t want to make a mess of your nice clean bedroom.”

She looked around a moment. “I’m not sure what happened to my tissues. I might’ve used them all up.”

I extended a hand; when she took it, I pulled her closer so that she was right on the edge of the bed. “Well lucky for us, I don’t plan on using tissues. Now open wide.”

She half-opened her mouth, then snapped it back shut. “Wait, you don’t want me to…!”

“I sure do. C’mon, be a pal. I’m gonna drip on the floor soon.”

Rachel’s pretty mouth pursed in a frown. “You know, you can be such a baby when you don’t get your way.” With that, she leaned out with an open mouth and sucked my deflating cock right in.

Formerly deflating, I should say. Because the instant her tongue started licking my shaft clean, it raced in the opposite direction. I’d never had such a short refractory period in my life, but the warm, loving mouth of my new best friend was all the motivation my dick needed.

“There,” she said after a moment, pulling back. “You’re definitely clean.”

“Don’t you dare stop,” I said, thrusting it back towards her.

“Hey, it’s not my fault you can’t get your cock sucked clean without getting excited, Knox,” she said with a little smirk.

I wiggled my hips in a circle, rubbing my moist cock back and forth across her lips. “C’mon, Rach, pleeeeeease?” Not that I needed to beg – if she didn’t agree, I could just shove it in anyway – but I was enjoying our little charade of friendship.

More and more the act was making her laugh, until she was overwhelmed by a fit of giggled. “OK, OK! Geez, you are SUCH a boy sometimes, I swear! You’re lucky I like you,” she said, like she was spotting me \$10 for lunch rather than giving me a blowjob.

With that, she took me back into her mouth and got to work.

Rachel was already one hell of a cock-sucker. Later I would learn that she’d been raised in a strict Christian household, and so to get around the whole prohibition against premarital sex, she’d perfected certain other ways of keeping her boyfriends satisfied. (On behalf of men everywhere, thanks for that one, Jesus.) Presently, I just stood there trying to keep my knees straight as she did her darnedest to suck my soul out through my dick.

I'd worried, at first, that she'd just tolerate it, and it would be more like me fucking her mouth than an honest-to-god blowjob, but boy had I been wrong. She threw herself into it, every now and then looking into my eyes with an expression that seemed to say, "you're welcome." To know that I'd warped her fragile mind into thinking that fucking her mouth was a casual favor on par with borrowing a DVD... the violation of her pristine essential self was almost as gratifying as the willing violation of her myriad holes.

It took more work than it had in her pussy to get me off this time, but only on account of it being my second go in so short a time. It certainly wasn't for lack of effort on her part. She didn't even skip a beat as I bent down to take one of her tits in hand, squeezing it like a toy while she blew me. It would be a long time before her body stopped amusing me.

At last, I came again. Rachel squealed in surprise at the suddenness of it, especially as my balls had held plenty in reserve even after the first time. As I slipped out of her mouth, I could see she was once more looking around for a tissue, this time to spit it in.

"Hang on – leave it in your mouth for a sec," I said, plopping down beside her and snatching her phone from the nightstand.

"Nuuuh!" she whined. (I think that was supposed to be my name.) "Muh mouh eh full of yuh cum!"

I switched on the camera and pointed it down at us. I took three pictures in rapid succession. In all three I was grinning broadly. As for Rachel, in the first she was still looking concerned about the spunk in her mouth; in the second, she looked mortified to realize the camera was immortalizing this moment; in the third, she was smiling at the camera, a line of jizz leaking down her chin.

"First BFF selfie," I said, putting the phone down. "Now swallow, you big baby."

She did, with a disgusted expression. "I swear, the things I put up with from you."

"Don't like the taste?"

"It's not something good girls do!" she insisted. "What, stop laughing at me! It's dirty!" But she was laughing too.

"Well then let's get you clean, dirty girl," I said, pulling her to her feet and smiling as she stumbled along behind my hasty pace toward the bathroom.

She didn't make a fuss whatsoever as I joined her in the shower, using it as an excuse to caress and fondle every single inch of her. I meant to know the feel of her body better than I did my own, and she made no effort to impede her friend's idle amusement. "I'm starting to think you're not just getting me clean," she giggled.

"What kind of a friend would I be if I let you go out into the world with an ass crack that didn't squeak when you swipe it?" I asked, grinning as she squealed at the surprise of my fingers suddenly digging into her ass.

"I guess we'll never know," she said, smiling as I lifted her light frame by the ass and guided her over my cock. I knew it was dangerous, fucking her in this position on the slippery shower floor. But frankly, if this was how I died, I'd call it a win.

I didn't need to. Rachel was clever enough to grab the top of the shower door for balance and support, and she held on for dear life while I fucked her snug little cunt all over again. Beads of water flew from her tits as they bounced up and down with each hard thrust; this time, she was coming herself midway through and never really stopped. I imagined the letter she'd get from the neighborhood watch for shrieking orgasms after 4 in the morning.

The water was getting cold by the time I joined her in orgasm, and when my eyes opened after, I saw her baby blues locked on mine. "Next time we hang out, can I pick what we do?" she asked.

"We'll see," I said with a shrug.

"You can be so bossy," she groused as I lowered her back to a standing position, though she didn't really sound like she minded.

"Admit it, you love me," I said, giving her ass a soft smack, the sound echoing around her cramped shower.

Rachel's voice was all sincerity. "You know I do. How could you have ever doubted?"

