

## YOU

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You're in bed with an obese young adult who's wearing his shoes on his bed. He's on top of you grunting as he unzips your jeans. He tears off your jeans and pulls your underwear to your ankles. With all your force you throw your body to the right and roll away from him but he realigns you underneath him. You can hardly command your body to move; you're drunk. He's fondling your clit. You try to raise an arm to push him away but it flops onto the mattress. He forces his sausage finger into your vagina. His untrimmed nail scrapes the wall of your vagina. He rotates his finger around continuing to scrape the entire circumference. He then retreats his finger only to push it in harder but it doesn't get any farther because your vagina is tight. He repeats the motions, fast and hard. It hurts, but you are hardly coherent enough to feel. You are hardly coherent enough to remember what chain of events led you here.

He was a friend of your roommate. He wasn't big like a teddy bear but big like a bodyguard; he always wore his sunglasses over his eyes. You could tell he was part Irish, a mutt of mixed breeds. You met him two weeks ago, your first weekend away from home. That Sunday you went to mass with him and your roommate; he's a devout Catholic. After classes the next afternoon you ran into him as you were walking to your dorm, so you invited him in. You talked of weather, of school, of books. Then as a disturbing non sequitur he confided in you his past: he and his mother were beaten by his father. Now his parents have divorced, and he lives with his mother. His father isn't part of his life anymore. You cried for him. Your friendship was expedited; you were his confidant and he became yours as you revealed all your family's problems to balance

your vulnerability with his. You were glad to have made a friend because you hadn't made any others at the university yet. In the next two weeks he would take you to Subway when you missed lunch because of your 12:00 class twice a week on Tuesdays and Thursdays. At the restaurant you'd compare movie and music taste; you didn't agree on American Pie, but the band America was good. You'd rally embarrassing experiences --walking into glass doors, tripping on cracks-- and childhood memories-- not stepping on cracks so you wouldn't break your mother's back, dreaming of being a fireman or a ballerina. And you'd share aspirations-- he felt a calling from God to be a priest.

Friday started by sleeping through the alarm and being late to your 8:00 a.m. class. The professor reprimanded you exhaustively, stressing you were rude and a disruption to the class. After class, you were envisioning a restful afternoon in your dorm room; but you find people sitting on your bed with their shoes on, watching a movie with your roommate. You left. As you were walking in no particular direction, the man of your amorous attentions passed. He didn't notice you, as he was with another girl, flirting with her. She was not very pretty. You couldn't understand why he'd be associating with her, but a depressing thought surfaced; maybe she had something you didn't. You sulked back to your room and sat on the floor to watch whatever movie it was that night.

Now it's Saturday. Still brooding on Mr. Right's stupidity of choosing girls, your stupidity of thinking he'd actually choose you, and your further stupidity of sleeping through an alarm leave you in a gloomy mood. You weren't in the mood to do anything, so you did nothing; you moved like a sloth throughout the morning and afternoon in your dorm. There was a knock on your door about 5:00. It was the bodyguard. You told him you weren't in an entertaining mood, so he said he'd entertain you. He offered to take

you somewhere to eat, and over dinner you related your frustration. He suggested that you drink with him to blow off steam. You had never had a drink before, but college is a time for new experiences. You agreed. He had vodka and rum stashed in his dorm, but he didn't have anything to drink them in. You drove with him to the drug store, and watched him buy a shot glass and the classic, red, plastic cups for the alcohol. You discussed with him where to drink. He volunteered his dorm room, but you didn't want to get caught on campus. Maybe you could drink off campus and then return afterwards, but who would drive back to campus? You suggested that you have only one drink and drive back when sober. No. He insisted you drink. With no one to drive he proposed his house; you could sleep over. He'd let you sleep on his bed and he'd sleep on the couch. He called his mom and said he was coming home, and you could hear her joyful exclamation. He told her he was bringing a friend home to drink. You assumed she agreed to it because he escorted you to his car and started to drive toward his house.

So, your mom lets you drink?

Yeah, well she doesn't care. She's just glad I'm coming home. I've never brought a girl home before; she's excited to meet you.

As a friend, right?

Right.

After an hour of driving, he pulled off the highway and in a few minutes you reached his house. When he entered the house his mom was waiting at the other side of the door and welcomed him with a great hug. Oh, she missed her baby boy. You joked that her baby was corrupting your mama's baby because you had never had a drink before, so she warned him to not let you get drunk. He promised; it was going to be a safe

evening with the bodyguard. You went out the backdoor of the house to the patio where an iron table and chairs sat. He set the alcohol and cups on the table. Wait; let him get cranberry juice and Coke to mix with the drinks. He left you for a while. The thought of drinking for the first time was exciting to you, so when he returned with the cranberry juice, Coke, and a beer for himself, you started straight up with a shot of rum; it burned. You had two more shots, and then you had to shake it out and exhale. He laughed at your reaction. Then he offered to mix it with Coke, maybe you would like it better. He handed you a full, plastic, red cup. As you took your first sip he challenged you to drink it as fast as possible. You chugged it and slapped the table, feeling victorious, as you finished it. You asked for the vodka next and he mixed it with cranberry juice. It also burned your throat; you could feel it all the way down your esophagus. It was sweet but tart.

Your stomach felt warm, and with each shot the warmth diffused to the rest of your body. Your nose numbed; and you amused yourself, touching your nose with your numb fingertips. You didn't feel anything. You were fascinated with the baroque pattern on the iron table. The design swam in and out of focus. You were dizzy, looking at it.

You'd had about eleven shots so far-- five in the shot glass and two in every plastic cup accompanied by Coke or cranberry juice-- and he had been quietly sipping only one beer as he watched you deteriorate. You could not grab the third cup or lift it to your lips anymore. It was odd but your neck no longer could support your head, so it rolled back. You tried to roll it forward but your torso folded in half, and you hit your head on the table. It didn't hurt. You laughed. He smiled. He pushed you back up but you collapsed again. You laughed. He left your head on the table, letting it rest on his arm. You were like clay or wax; he could mold you into any position. He got up from the table

and asked if you could walk. You got up but your legs could no longer support you either, so you hit the cement, crashing into the iron table. You saw feet dressed in slippers approach your face sideways and heard his mother's voice.

How much did you let her drink? I warned you not to let her get drunk. Look at her; she can't walk. Put an icepack on her head so she won't get a hangover.

He dragged you to his bedroom. His mother had followed him in with an icepack. She gave it to her son, admonishing him for disobeying her. As he was sitting at the bedside holding the icepack to your head, she left. Once his mother was surely in another room and out of earshot he swore his love for you. He had wanted you since he met you. You bluntly mumbled you liked someone else and would never like him. He swore he'd have you anyway. He kissed you. You moved your head but then he held it firm in his hands as he forced his tongue into your mouth. His tongue moved like a hyperactive snake. His teeth tapped yours as he forced his tongue to the back of your throat. You made a sound in objection, but he took it as an invitation to mount the bed and fondle your breasts. His hands slipped from your breasts to your hips. He unzipped your pants. You had never had a drink before, and now you are here.

You wake up and he is spooning you with his arm around your waist. You lift your arm; it feels heavy and it falls onto his body. You roll your cumbersome body away from his grasp but continue to roll off the bed with a thud. You still hardly have control of your crumpled body. You heave yourself to the edge of the bed, leaning on it to support you as you sit upright. You know what happened, but you croak as you ask what happened to hear his account. He assures you that nothing happened. He put you to bed and he was going to sleep on the couch but you begged him to sleep next to you in bed,

so he agreed. You let his words process in your mind. He lied. He lumbers to your edge of the bed and hauls you to your feet by your elbow. He begins to lead you but you trip on the underwear that ties your ankles together. He leaves you on the floor, and he tells you to get dressed. He leaves the bedroom. You dress and pick yourself up. Leaning on the wall for support, you walk to the door and take hold of the molding around it. You look out of the room and see a short hallway. Across is a bathroom and to your left is an opening with light. You carry your hollow, heavy body toward the light and find the kitchen where he is eating a Pop-tart and drinking. He takes a swig of beer. You look at the clock above the refrigerator; it's 9:00 a.m.. He wipes his mouth with the back of his hand, the crumbs falling down onto his shirt. He looks down, the fat of his double chin rolling and keeping his head from touching his chest. He looks up and sees you. We should leave.

On the car ride back you stare at the rosary he has hanging on his rear-view mirror, watching it sway. Its backdrop is a grey, cement highway underneath a grey sky. You say nothing the entire car ride: neither does he. Within the hour it takes to reach the university you regain total control of your body. You arrive at the parking lot in front of your dorm. You duck your head and exit the car. He unrolls the window and tells you that you don't remember anything. You take a few backward steps away from the car and watch him drive away, probably across campus to his own dorm. You wouldn't walk before he left because you did not want his beady eyes underneath the sunglasses boring into your ass as you walked away. You walk into your dorm building; the fluorescent lights buzzing are your static invitation home. You open your room; your roommate is gone. You lay on your back on the floor and don't move. You stay there until dark.

The lock clicks and your roommate enters, curious to find you on the floor. She asks if you are ok. You answer. She asks what happened. You don't answer; telling anyone would make you more vulnerable. She tries to soothe you off the floor, but you remain there as she prepares for bed. You don't want to associate with a bed, but you're tired and your roommate won't allow you to sleep on the floor. You crawl under the crisp sheets. Whenever you close your eyes you feel his hands violating your body. You lie awake fighting off his hands.

It's Monday and you go through the motions of a student, but you are a hollow corpse; you don't eat because there are no organs to digest food. You exist for a week, keeping up with the motions. Although you don't raise your hand in class anymore, you do your homework. You stay hygienic, taking showers often, trying to cleanse yourself, but you never feel clean.

It's Saturday again, the week anniversary. You leave the bathroom in a towel after your second shower that day. As you sift through your drawer for pajamas your roommate expresses her concern for you. You're fine. She shrugs. She tells you she's going out tonight with a friend. He lives in the apartments near campus, so she'll be taking the car. She apologizes if you wanted to use it. As she leaves, you wish her a fun night. She laughs.

Yeah, Saturday nights are always fun when there's alcohol involved. She shuts the door behind her.

You return to the bathroom to take another shower.

A few hours later as you're reading your psychology book-- the assigned reading on violence-- your cell phone rings. It's your roommate.

Her speech is slurred and hyperbolically enthusiastic as she greets you. Hi! You're acting weird. She pops the 'd.' She repeats herself and laughs. She continues to ramble and laugh, exclaiming she's weird too; she's drunk! She thinks aloud, intimating that she should take a shower too because you take so many.

You cut her off, and slightly confused, you ask her name.

She yells a warning in the background. Stop touching my ass! She's laughing. The phone beeps as if she dialed a number accidentally.

She continues yelling in the background. Stop! No, no, I don't want to take a shower with you! Gross! Stop.

You demand to know what apartment number she is in. She hums as she thinks. She's in 302. She delivers the last number as if calling to a whale.

You hear a male's voice yell, asking her who she is talking to. Then the connection is lost.

A scene flashes vividly in your mind. You call a cab. Minutes seem like hours; the cab takes too long, and you're afraid it's too late. It seems the cab can't reach the apartments fast enough. You finally arrive, so you stuff a few bucks in the cab driver's hand, not even bothering to thank him, and run across the parking lot. You see your roommate's car. You scramble up the three flights and find room 302. Out of breath, you knock on the door. The male answers.

Catching your breath, you demand to know where your roommate is.

Who are you?

You wonder if he's intoxicated at all.

You yell your roommate's name past him. You hear a thud and maybe some glass fall off a table.

She stumbles to the door. What'r' you doin' here?

You tell her to come with you. She doesn't move.

I don'wan' to come with you. I'ma stay here.

You take her arm to lead her out the door, but she pulls back.

No! What'r' you doin'?

You tell her she'll understand later. Please, let's go.

She takes a step out the door, but he grabs her arm. You demand him to let go.

He furrows his brows, and tightens his grip. She takes a step back inside.

You beg her. Please, come with me. You need to come with me.

She slightly sways as she stands. She looks at you, furrows her brows, and pulls her head back. She turns her head toward him. She stares at him and his hand on her arm. He lets go. As a delayed reaction, she jerks her arm away from him. She turns back to you and slurs her words.

Le'ss go.