

# Assault on the Senses

A Novel

Michael P. Ferrari

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# Prologue

## Booze, Broads and Balls

“Give me a fucking cigarette!” I yell across the three people crowded between Barry and I.

“I thought you were quitting...” he mentions, standing still as I wiggle through the three people—three short, chubby blonde girls—trying to make my way in Barry’s direction.

“Fuck quitting,” I tell him. “One isn’t going to kill me.”

“I don’t got a lot left,” he tells me. His voice shrinks into the blaring music as he yells to me.

“I’ll buy you a pack tomorrow,” I reassure him.

“Fuckin’ A-right you will,” he says, dragging a crushed pack of smokes out of the front pocket of his jeans. Barry is like a cigarette loan shark: if he gives you one when you really need it, he expects a pack back in return.

“Feeling old yet?” I yell to him, slurring on my last word and lighting my first smoke in two days.

“No...why?”

“This is your first party of your last year in college,” I scream to him, glazing my eyes across our crowded living room. The room is filled with freshman girls covered more by their drunken smiles than their clothes. I love freshman girls in all their slutty, underdressed goodness.

“Thanks for reminding me, douche!” Barry yells back with a smile. “I’ll be sure to come up for your last year just to rub it in your chubby, degenerate face when it’s your turn!”

Turning away from Barry, the first thing I notice is a squad of freshman girls huddled together in a corner, pro-

tecting themselves from every sexual predator in the room with just an awkward smile. They hide from would-be drunken conversations with their half-full, plastic Silo cups propped up in front of them as if they were crucifixes warding off vampires. It's a shame these girls don't know the truth: they aren't in high school anymore. The minute they get drunk, they're going to be dancing all over anything with a cock, prepping to go home arm-in-arm with the first guy smooth enough to convince them that the Liquor Control Board is in town, and the safest place to hide from them is in his dorm room. God bless freshmen.

"There he is!" I hear in a cheerful voice. I do a swaying, drunken spin to face the voice.

"Molly, Lana," I say, tipping my head and greeting the two girls I've known since I came to this school several years ago.

"Kalvin," Lana says, drunk and pretending to be a lady, "how are you?"

"Pretty damn good."

"Okay," Molly says, "I'll admit it: I'm kind of impressed."

"With what?"

"This is actually a good party you guys have going here."

"First weekend of the year, darling," I respond. "Had to start the year right."

"Yeah, but this actually looks like a real frat party," Molly says.

"Well, we are a real fraternity."

"But you never had parties before."

"That's just cuz we were lazy in the past," I say. "This year? It's a whole different fuckin' can of worms!"

"Kal?" Lana asks in a half-concerned, half-playful voice. "Are you fucked-up already?"

"Lil' bit, Lana," I say, pinching my index finger and thumb together to show them the teeny, tiny degree of how drunk I am. "Only a lil' bit."

"You got an extra one of those?" Molly asks, looking down at my cigarette.

“Don’t you got your own?” I ask.  
“I forgot to stop on the way here.”  
“Well, that’s too bad, because I can’t help you,” I tell her.  
“I don’t smoke anymore!” I smile like a dick when I take the next delicious, almost delirious drag. “I’m quitting.”  
“You?” Molly asks.  
“Yup!”  
“Why?”  
“For a girl,” Lana responds with a casual smile.  
“What?!” Molly exclaims, yelling more than asking.  
“Fuck you!” I yell to Lana over the music. “You weren’t supposed to tell anyone!”  
“What girl?” Molly asks.  
“Yo, dickface,” I hear as I turn around to see Doug, drunk and squinty-eyed, stumbling around like the poster child for Down’s syndrome.  
“Yes sir?” I ask, wrapping my arm around him in the typical drunk fashion.  
“Some broad was looking for you in the kitchen,” he slurs out.  
“She hot?”  
“I don’t know about ‘hot,’” he mumbles, “but she’s definitely too good-looking to be asking about you.”  
“Sweet...” I say, letting Doug out of my grasp.  
“Is that her?” Lana asks.  
“I don’t know,” I say, crushing my dropped cigarette butt between my foot and the carpet. “How’s my breath?” I ask, opening up and urging my breath out in the direction of Molly’s nose.  
“Atrocious.”  
“Dammit! Gimme some gum!” I stumble my hands in front of her.  
“Give me a cigarette.”  
“Fuck you! I told you I quit!”  
“Here...” Lana says, handing me a peppermint Life Saver. “It’s the closest thing I’ve got.”  
“Awww, Lana!” I yell, being as over-the-top as I can.

“You’re *my* life saver!”

“I know,” she says sweetly as I fumble my fingers, forcing the mint out of its tight, plastic wrapping.

“Now,” I say, popping the mint into my mouth, “if only we can get you to keep that large, whorish mouth of yours shut!” She cringes as I pinch both of her warm cheeks with my index fingers and thumbs.

“Kalvin!” Molly yells. “Don’t be a dick!”

“What? She knows I’m kidding!” I turn to Lana, who’s still smiling. “You know I’m kidding, right?”

“Go...” Lana says, sweet smile still intact, “knock her dead.” I smile and pat her back as I walk away.

I leave Molly, Lana and Doug to the fate of the party as I merge into the tightly packed crowd occupying our living room. Thick smog covers the low-hanging ceiling of our place, which we’ve inhabited for only a little more than a week now. It reeks of smoke, sweat and spilled beer. The hot September humidity hangs off of the people I push by, spreading across their drunken faces in the form of glimmering sweat smears. I wedge behind a girl in tight black pants—a trademark fashion statement of slutty freshman girls. My hand subconsciously glides across the small of her back as I pass by.

I push through a few more people before I almost forget why I’m doing it in the first place. Then I see her, waltzing out of the kitchen and slowly pacing into the crowd. Her deep black hair hangs straight off of her head, blowing gently every few seconds as small gusts of wind from the only fan in the room blow by her soft face. She has her arms folded insecurely over her chest. A flimsy, tan blouse barely hangs off of her shoulders revealing a white tank-top underneath. The room goes silent in my head as I see her inching slowly into the living room. I can almost hear the clapping of her sandals as she approaches; her short, denim skirt clings to her thin legs with each step.

“Jill!” I yell, standing maybe 10 feet away from her at the most. She snaps out of a neutral stare and jerks her head in

my direction as she hears her name carried over the noisy drunks and obnoxious dance music.

“Hey!” she says, stepping towards me. “There you are!”

“Here I am!” I say. “Find the place all right?”

“Yeah...it wasn’t very hard to find,” she says with a curved, flirty smile, “you are only a few houses down from me.”

“Yeah, that and I give kick-ass directions!” she softly chuckles and looks at me before coming in for a hug.

“Looks like a heck of a party,” she comments.

“Yeah, it’s all right,” I say casually. “Want something to drink?”

“Sure!” A smile beams across her face as she steps towards me, expecting me to take the lead. I grab her by the hand and lure her towards the less crowded kitchen she just emerged from. We find a crevice in the corner by the fridge, the one spot in the house right now where nobody seems to be lingering.

“I know you told me before that you don’t drink beer,” I say to her as I open the freezer door. “So I got you this.” Her eyebrow rises as she accepts the clear, chilled bottle I hand her.

“Banker’s Club, huh?” she scoffs. “You know what a girl likes.” Her voice is layered with a fake, snide tone. “I can’t imagine how you stayed single for so long before you met me.”

“Before I met you?” I ask. “Are you implying I’m not single anymore?”

“Well, we have been kind of ‘seeing each other’ for a while now,” she says, putting the bottle aside and drawing herself closer to me. “And, to be honest, I don’t know if I can easily resist a guy so willing to buy me a \$10 handle of vodka.” Her head bobs in slowly as she drops a soft kiss on my mouth just before she pulls away as slowly as she approached.

“If it sweetens the deal, I’ve got some cheap cranberry juice in the fridge.” She smiles at me again before giving me

another short, sweet kiss.

“So,” she says, pulling away again. I guess she doesn’t want to be that couple that sits around making out at a party. “Aren’t you going to introduce me to your friends?”

“Now?”

“That’s why I came here, wasn’t it?”

“It wasn’t for cheap booze and rough, awkward sex?”

“Ha, ha,” she says. “Funny.”

With that, I feel a slow, slithering hand on my shoulder. It’s soft at first, and then it digs its fingers deep into my shoulder. Jill makes a weird, almost disturbed face when she looks behind me.

“Yo...” I hear slurred silently into my ear. “Gimme a smoke...” I turn my head to be greeted by Dutch’s sloppy drunk face and giant red ears resting on my shoulder.

“Okay,” I say with a deep breath. “Jill, this is my friend, Dutch. Dutch, this is Jill.”

“Hi!” Jill says, her smile beaming bright and sincere.

“Tonight,” Dutch slurs at me, his eyes dead set on mine while he totally ignores Jill. “Tonight...I will drop my balls on your forehead while you sleep.”

“What?!” Jill exclaims.

“My balls and your forehead, Kal...” Dutch says cryptically as he slowly pulls his drunken mess of a face away from me. He stumbles a few feet from us. “Sleep with one eye open, fucker!” he yells as he walks away, pointing at his balls just before he points at my head.

“Ooooo-kay...” Jill says with a shocked smile.

“Yeeeeeah...” I say, having no other words to explain the moment. “That’s Dutch. He likes to put his balls on things when he’s drunk...”

“Like your forehead?”

“Ummm...” Fuck! This was a stupid fucking idea. I just started dating the girl and she’s already repulsed. “Well, he puts his balls on all kinds of things. He hasn’t put them on my head yet though. I think that’s why he wants to. It’s like a challenge to him. That’s why I lock the door and sleep with a

shotgun and..."

"Kal?" Jill says, interrupting me. "You're rambling."

"Sorry about that..."

"Well, since he's so hell-bent on dipping his balls on your head tonight," she starts, "why don't you just stay at my place?"

"Tonight?" Jackpot. Something tells me I'll actually enjoy waking up tomorrow morning.

# I

## A Day in the Life

Six Months Later...

Nobody enjoys waking up. It's the worst part of the day.

I'm still asleep, but I lift my head up anyway. I crack my eyelids and let the light burn in. It always takes about 45 seconds for me to get re-oriented. The day feels half-over when I come around, but then I get really depressed because I know it's only started. Out of habit, I look to the right side of my bed—the part pushed against the wall—and look to see if anyone is there. Nobody ever is. Ever. All I see is fake wood paneling against the stained end of my mattress with no sheets.

Morning breath is sitting thick and hot in my mouth, waiting for me to blindly sway my arms around, looking for something to drink. I only find near-empty water bottles, the bottom halves stained a tarnished yellow from cigarette filters and whatever shit they put in them to keep us coming back for more. My chest pounds; the wear and tear caused by smoking a pack and a half the day before makes me feel like a tank was just dumped onto my rib cage. This is how I wake up. This is how I feel every morning.

This semester, every day starts at 9:30 a.m. I'm used to sleeping until noon before I have to go anywhere. Wally, the housemate I share a bedroom with, always wakes up before me—sometime around 8. This always throws me off. When-

ever his alarm goes off, I spend 15 minutes whacking at my alarm, trying to get the noise to stop. I hate that alarm clock noise. Each loud, piercing beep feels like napalm spreading through the back of my skull.

When this little ritual is done, I awake to an empty room. Well, almost—the only other creatures in my room are flies. Flies don't normally fester a place in early February, at least not in Pennsylvania. We have the only house in this frozen state that has fly problems in the winter—a constant testament to how disgusting our hole of a house is. To make things weirder, I swear the flies have sex on my alarm clock. I watch them every morning while I sit on my bed and spin my head in circles to get the kinks out. It only takes a couple of minutes for a pair of flies to land, one pouncing on the other from behind. I watch as one fly forces a strangely sensual display of power onto the other. It doesn't look any different than two people going at it doggy-style. I've been seeing them do this for months. Dried specks of brown, sticky stuff—fly run-off, maybe?—get all over my hand every time I slap onto the snooze bar.

Almost every morning, I trip on all the shit we have spewed upon the stairs, and every morning I barely save myself by clinging to a piece of fake wood paneling that is hanging on the wall. The entire downstairs of the place looks like it's in a state of constant hangover from the long night before. Crumpled, ripped papers are common, so are half-empty cans of beer and soda loaded with cigarette butts. Usually, at least one ceramic plate is broken in the corner of the room, with leftover grease and ketchup stains on the shattered pieces. Old newspapers, junk mail and used wrappers make up the rest of the mess.

I swear to myself every morning that I'm going to make a good breakfast for myself—toast, eggs, maybe some juice—I never do. I'm a lazy shit. Even if I do find some motivation, most of the stuff in our fridge is half past dead. There are stains painting the walls and floor on the inside of the fridge as if it were a crime scene. The only things that stay alive in

that fridge are soda, beer and bottled water.

This is the part of the morning where I get enraged. I realize, for the first of many times though out the day, that I am a fucking cliché. The binging, the messy house, the rotting fridge—I've become nothing but a novelty poster a freshman would hang in his new dorm, right next to a mixology chart, a random naked chick and a list of multiple empty shot glasses cleverly titled "What I Really Did in College." And there I would be. A poster. Standing in my wasteland of a house, wearing my fraternity letters, buried in broken bottles and empty beer cans with some stupid look on my face and something retarded like "What's class?" printed in bold white across the bottom. This is my life. This is what I've become. I hear the snooty 16-year-old I used to be crying out from inside of me. He sits there in a constant protest, resenting what he'll ultimately become. The only rebellious, unique part of my being, and I repress and ignore it. I have to. If I don't, I'll fall into depression, and with depression comes "The Stare." The Stare is an occurrence that manifests at times when my brain just isn't there. The most common time is in the early morning hours while I sit in my heap of a vehicle, waiting for the inch-deep coating of frost to melt away from the hood and windshield. Lately, The Stare comes a lot more often. I caught myself doing it yesterday when I was eating dinner. It happened again when I was driving. It happened at the bar last night for probably a good 20 minutes before I even realized what was going on. The problem with The Stare isn't the fact that I look like I fell off the short bus. No, the real problem is that I have no idea what's going on while I'm staring. I usually don't know what I'm staring at, and I'm usually so zoned out that I have no idea what's going on around me. When The Stare is over, I usually act and sound more depressed than a Radiohead CD.

This is my regular morning. These are just some of the broken pieces of my crappy life.

I don't exactly feel like scraping the ice off my car this

morning. Laziness is becoming a regular part of my life. Luckily, I have a back up plan: Jay—another component of the quartet that dwells in our place on Cohen Street. We have class at the same time everyday, and on cue, he comes outside just in time.

“I need a ride again,” I say.

“Your car still broken?”

“It’s not broken.”

“Oh, God!” he exclaims. “I mean, why the hell would I think that? I just assumed that was the reason for you acting like a lazy shit, sitting in my car smoking cigarettes while I scrape the hell out of my windshield.”

Jay is a tiny, bitter man. Measuring a diminutive 5’7, he often feels like he’s getting the short end of the stick, pun intended.

“I just don’t feel like driving.”

“I know, because you’re a lazy shit,” he says, once again, as he unlocks the driver’s door of his ’91 Beretta. He’s looking at me with beady, little eyes peaking out from the bottom of a knit hat.

“I had a long night, and I really don’t feel like driving this morning.” I hope he doesn’t remember that I used that excuse yesterday.

“You said that yesterday. Besides, you didn’t have a long night. You went to bed at 8. I know this because you decided to sleep with every fucking light in the house turned on.”

“I know. It was...really dark.” He’s staring through me like I’m invisible. He opens up the door and throws his backpack onto the back seat. “Okay, you’re right. I had no real reason. I just forgot to turn them off.”

“You have to say more than that, or I won’t give you a ride.”

“Like what?”

“You know what I want to hear.”

“I am a lazy, worthless piece of shit.”

“Yeah, I know,” Jay stands there looking at me, waiting for more.

“Do you want me scrape the windshield?”

I finally get Jay to crack a smirk underneath those beady, little eyes. “Scraper is in the glove box.”

My bare hands blister and chap as flakes of shaved ice fly against them with each scrape. If I knew I’d be doing this, I would have just fucking done this for my car. The back door of our house slams again as Barry, the fourth member of our group, exits the house.

“Sup?” he asks with a casual nod, approaching his car right next to us. His burly shoulders hold steady as he waltzes towards us with a lazy swagger.

“Yo,” I respond while continuously slashing at the ice. Jay responds with a nod in Barry’s direction.

“Why are you scraping his car?” Barry asks, confused as hell.

“Because he’s my boyish man-bitch,” Jay responds.

“Oh,” Barry says, surprisingly understanding of Jay’s answer. “Only a little more than seven hours left,” he says, reminding us that Happy Hour is fast approaching.

“Nice...” Jay says, keeping his eyes on me, assuring that he can continue to enjoy the spectacle I provide while doing his grunt work.

The slamming of another door rings from a short distance. The big, fat kid who lives next door wobbles out silently, glaring at us as he slowly approaches his massive pick-up truck.

“Morning!” Barry yells, throwing an arm to greet the go-liath as he moves forward like a sloth. Fats gives him no response.

“The fuck’s up with that guy?” Jay asks. “He’s got some kinda hate on for us or something.”

“Yeah, that’s probably my fault,” Barry says, unlocking his car door.

“Why?” I ask.

“I think he’s still mad about me passing out and puking in the back of his pick-up,” he says, sliding his large, massive, ex-high school linebacker body into his car. The car bounces

slowly on the shocks as he fits himself in. “Some people, huh?”

“When we gonna start drinkin’?” Jay asks just as Barry’s about to close the door.

“Patience, darlin’” Barry says as he closes the car door. “Patience.”

“Your steed is ready, sire,” I say, throwing his scraper across the hood of the car. Barry’s muffler coughs and puffs like a cancer patient as he drives away.

“Hey!” Jay yells. “Watch my fucking paint job!”

“What paint job?” I ask. “The thing’s got more scratches than a fucking cat toy.”

“And you missed some of the ice...” he says, evaluating the windshield.

“Will you just get in the fuckin’ car already and take me to my fuckin’ class?”

\* \* \*

It’s not a long trip to Stanley Hall, the building where we have our first classes of the day. We don’t have time to get into any real conversations. Even if we did have that kind of time, it’s too early and neither of us are “morning people” enough to start yapping. I just sit there with a cigarette, blowing smoke out the side of my mouth.

The longest part of the trip begins only a few houses down from ours. This is where Jill lives. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday at this time, we drive by her house on the way to class. I see her walk outside with Fernando, her Latin lover. I see her kiss him deeply, the butterflies in her stomach visible while she does it. This is one of the hardest parts of my day. My jeans have marks around my knees from squeezing so hard while I watch. I know he slept over again. I know he fucked her again. Jill and I may not have a future, but our history is enough to keep me occupied. I’m really pathetic like that.

“I feel like drinking tonight.” Jay says. He doesn’t realize

I'm only half listening to his attempt at small talk. "I think I might get a case after class. Get an early start."

"Well, it is Friday," I reply. I'm on autopilot when I talk. I'm too busy concentrating on Jill and the Spanish Fly over there. Standing on the front door step, rubbing noses and baby talking. I watch them do this, watch as they ignore the musk that's probably hanging off his body from a night of throwing his dick in her. Every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, I swallow hard and try to hold back the vomit caused by the nerves bouncing around in my stomach—the kind of nerves you only get when you see lost opportunity cuddle and woo with someone else right before your eyes.



## Learning Curve

We climb up the stairwell of Stanley Hall, reluctant as always. It's so early in the morning that I'm convinced the cold has frozen the water in my muscles. Each thigh feels like it weighs three times what it should and moves as slowly as sap dripping down a pine tree. Each step up the stairs is a challenge while trying to heat up in the lukewarm building. Berkshire University is one of those places in the world where lukewarm is the best you can hope for. Jay was kind enough to park about a mile away from the building—dickhead. I've never seen anyone get such a hard-on for pissing people off. We split up at the top of the steps, going into different directions, barely a word exchanged when we do.

Advanced Communications is my first class of the day. I've had better classes. Chip is our professor. Everyone has met Chip before, they just may not realize it. Chip was cut from a mold, which was made in a factory out in Ohio before he was shipped out to universities across the country. Chip has a head of lush hair that's barely tainted by the gray that comes with age. He has one of those scalps that have only given up in certain spots. In this case, it's in the front—just atop his forehead—leaving only a peninsula of hair on what used to be a widow's peak. The other Chips of the world are known for having similar hair, give or take an extra inch of length. Like this Chip, they have the mentality of a quickly aging 26-year-old in the body of a pot-bellied, 55-

year-old. Yeah, the Chips of the world are everywhere. Ours is fortunate enough to fit into his old clothes from the 70's, giving him the look of a washed-up, cowboy porn star. The Chips never use chairs—they always sit on the desk instead. And, of course, it's hard to forget one of the most endearing qualities of the Chips: they always insist against formalities. After all, "Mr. <insert your Chip's last name here>" is his father's name. The world never gets sick of that little gem.

Chip, as usual, is late. He feels that wearing a watch makes you uptight. Probably. I don't know. I'm just assuming that he feels that way. I take my regular seat behind the fat chick that always leaves class early to get to the cafeteria before they stop serving those Egg McMuffin knock-offs that they sell. She says she leaves early so she can make it to her next class in time, but we all know the truth.

I can't help sitting with my head rested in my arms staring at the seat catty-corner from me. This is where the Hot Liberal Arts Chick that doesn't date frat guys sits. I always dig girls like that. Maybe it's that whole "I hated you before I met you" style she walks around with that turns me on. Either that or because she gives off that mystery vibe that sucks you in and leaves you baffled over little details like what her underwear looks like or if she sleeps naked. Maybe I want her because I can't have her. She seems like one of those girls who probably weren't given much attention in high school. I'm betting she didn't start looking really hot until the summer after she graduated. She probably dates some guy who's studying civil engineering at MIT. She probably sits around with her roommates in tight little cut-off sweat shorts and talks about how it's hard being in a long-distance relationship, but it's "so totally worth it" because he wants to change the world and that's so romantic and blah, blah, blah. I'm betting she's either like that, or she digs bad boys. I'm neither.

When I see her walk in, hair in a ponytail, thong sticking out of her sweat pants when she sits down, I get shifted into thinking about time travel. I think about going back in time a

lot. I think all people do secretly. It'd be so nice to know what I know now back when I started college. I'd go back and tell little, wide-eyed Calvin L. Gray all the right things to do and say. I would have definitely been able to lie and work the whole "noble diligence" or "misogynistic bad ass" angle perfectly, and I could've spent the better part of my college years banging girls like her. That'd be so friggin' hot.

While leering at the Hot Liberal Arts Chick, I notice she's giving me a bit of a stare back, which is hot. The bad part is that it's not so much of a "yeah, daddy, come and tease me" kind of stare. It's more of a baffled, "what the hell?" kind of stare. I'm not really surprised by it. I just woke up—I probably look and smell like an elephant's ball sack. Whatever.

A funny feeling comes over me. I look around the room and realize that aside from the fat chick and Hot Liberal Arts Chick, nobody is sitting near me. There's a circle of empty desks around me, like a buffer zone. I look over to my left and see shy, blonde girl. She turns her head quickly. Behind her is retarded stoner guy, who's just looking at me with glazed eyes and a sneered lip. Whatever. They can probably smell the gas I just squeezed out of my ass. I hope it burns their nose hairs.

Five minutes later, and Chip still isn't here. I'll be pissed if he doesn't show up. I hate waking up for nothing. I notice that the stares are starting to get more constant. In the corner of my right eye, I keep catching emotionally misdirected jock aiming his big, heavy brow at me. I get the feeling that he's planning on taking me out to the bar and date-raping me in the mouth like he probably has to so many guys in the past. This class is annoying enough without having to worry about being subjected to the wonton desires of Berkshire University's third-string cornerback. Three seats right of him is some really short girl that I've never seen before in my life, who is also staring at me. Only her stare kind of freaks me out, probably because she's cross-eyed.

Finally, Chip walks into class a total of 10 minutes late. That goddamn "seven-minute rule" joke has been said seven

times—I counted. It’s Friday, which means it’s donut day. Under his right arm are two boxes of donuts. In a constant effort to prove he’s not a typical college professor, Chip always brings donuts for his class on Friday. My fat ass has yet to find a problem with this.

“Wha’sup guys?” Chip’s typical greeting. Ugh. “As you know, it’s donut day, so help yourself.” Chip drops the boxes on his desk and opens one of them. He opens his backpack—yeah, he wears a backpack since he rides his bike to work—and pulls out his grade book. He starts gliding his eyes back and forth, from his book to the audience in front of him. “Perfect attendance,” he mutters, putting down his book. “That’s just awesome. Y’know, I got no problem buying donuts for you guys if you come to class. Believe me, I remember how hard it was coming to class this early on a Friday. Anyone have any idea how many times I used to say ‘Fuck it’ and turn off my alarm on days like this?” Chip admits with a chuckle. That’s right—like all the Chips of the world, he’s the cool teacher who curses.

“Probably about six times less than I did this morning!” says the douche bag suck-up who lives to clean Chip’s dick with his tongue. He chuckles some more before saying “I fuckin’ hate your class, Chip!”

“Ha! And this is coming from one of my advisees!” Chip chuckles a little more before he hands a box of donuts to the suck-up. “Take some and pass them around, you lil’ sonnuva bitch.”

Chip reaches into his backpack and pulls out an empty plastic jar. The label has been peeled off, and the cap has a slit in it, obviously carved with a knife. I don’t know what the fuck he’s collecting for, but my poor, broke ass will have nothing to do with it.

“As some of you may have already heard,” Chip begins, his voice suddenly grim and low, “Connie Ward, one of my advisees, was assaulted and nearly raped last week behind Dill’s Bar. Connie should be getting out of the hospital later this week. Since the incident, she’s missed about a week of

work. For those of you who don't know Connie, she works full-time in the cafeteria in order to pay for her time here at Berkshire. The other professors in the department and I all agreed that it'd be a nice thought to start up a collection to help cover the money Connie won't be able to make while she's recovering. I'm just going to pass this around the class right now. If you want to leave a donation later, you can find donation bins in the teachers' lounge and my office."

Chip passes the jar to the suck-up, who puts in about 10 different bills. Even in charity he kisses ass. While the jar goes around, I focus my attention on something much hotter: Hot Liberal Arts Chick holding onto the box of donuts that have been passed around for the last five minutes. She takes out a plain glazed and puts it down on the top half of her notebook. She whips her ponytail around as she turns to me and hands the box my way. She puts her index finger in her mouth and starts to suck on it, lowering her lips halfway down, and then dragging her smooth, puffy lips back up. She drops her jaw slightly, circling her finger around the inside rim of her lips just before she dips the finger further in her mouth. Keeping her mouth open just enough to show her tongue grinding against her moist finger, she mutters out one of the hottest things I've ever heard:

"Here you go, Calvin."

The rest of the class is fixated on Chip's little "Ode to Connie." I only feel kind of guilty about not paying attention while I mentally masturbate to the little show Hot Liberal Arts Chick just put on for me. I have to admit, I don't even care that much about watching her finger her mouth; I popped half a chub just hearing her say my name. Hell, I didn't even think she knew my name. Wow. That was incredible. That's just another thing I love about girls like her: they all have these hot, devilish, just plain slutty sides to them that they are itching to show. Part of me wonders if it's normal to be damn near creaming my pants just because I heard a hot girl saying my name. Another part of me tells me I'm a completely love-starved pussy for acting this way. A third

part of me tells me not to get worked up over her. The fourth tells me that I shouldn't care about this because someday Jill is going to come back to me. The fifth and final part is my favorite: it doesn't tell me anything at all—it just focuses on ripping at her clothes with my claws and teeth before I throw her against something and have vulgar, demeaning sex with her.

Of course, she's already turned around towards the front of the class again by the time I finish digesting all this. I notice the fat chick in front of me is turned around. She's sweating—who the hell sweats in the middle of the winter? She's eyeing the donuts.

"You planning on sharing them with anyone else today, sweetie?"

"Are you?" I reply. I don't think she likes me much as I hand her the box.

"Listen, I don't want to be here. I have to leave soon to make it to my next class, and I just want my damn donut before I go."

"Sure. Wouldn't want to starve you before you have a chance to dig into a breakfast burrito." Hot Liberal Arts Chick snickers as I say it. I think I just felt my dick jitter a little.

"Jesus Christ!" yells the fat chick. "I am so fucking sick of you elitist frat guys going around acting like you're fucking better than everyone!" Whoa. "Just because you think you're so damn perfect doesn't mean you have to hold everyone else up to your standards!"

"The hell you talking about? I'm 15 pounds overweight, and I'm wearing a stained undershirt! How the hell could I be an elitist?" By this point, Chip and the rest of the class have stopped what they're doing to listen to us. "I mean, Jesus, look at me here! Do I look 'elite' to you? For fuck's sake, my shoes have holes in them!"

"Oh, so now you want everyone to feel sorry for you?"

"No..."

"Awwww! Poor little guy can't afford shoes! But you can

still afford a pedestal to stand on while you spit insults on people!”

“What the fuck?!” I exclaim. “I’ve never even talked to you before!”

“Of course you haven’t!” she says, flailing her arms towards me. “People like you can’t be bothered talking to little ‘peons’ like me! All you have time for is making remarks about how we’re ugly or fat or not as well dressed!”

“Whoa, whoa...wait a sec,” my face is chilly with sweat and red hot with embarrassment. “Aren’t you being a little melodramatic here?”

“Who are you to sit there and bark out derogatory remarks about people like me?” Clearly, she can only hear herself at this point. “I’m friggin’ tired of people like you! You, and everyone like you, can go and fuck yourselves in the ass with a hot iron rod!”

With that, everyone in the class, including Chip starts clapping for her while she walks out of the room with a tear in her eye.

“What the hell just happened?” I ask.

Everyone looks at me, expecting me to make some kind of rebuttal in my defense, and I wish I could. But honestly, what the hell can I say to that? Each person’s look of expectation begins to sour into a look of anger and resentment. With a speech she probably knocked off from *The Breakfast Club*, Fat Chick has just completely demonized me to a class of my peers—during a speech about an attempted rape victim, no less.

“Here ya go, sweetie.” I look over to see Hot Liberal Arts Chick handing me the plastic donation jar. Everyone is still staring at me. Either they still haven’t cooled off from seeing me destroy an overweight girl’s self-esteem with just a few words and no actions, or they’re giving me a small chance to redeem myself. They’re sitting there in wait, looking to see the extent of my guilt. They want to see if I’ll make it up to all the downtrodden masses of the world with a small donation. They want to measure my worth in pocket change.

“Um...here,” I mutter to the person closest to me as I pass the jar. “I don’t have any money on me...” The room immediately fills with angry moans and venom-soaked hisses. The girl I’m trying to pass the jar to stares at me with a look so mortified that it could peel paint from the wall. “Seriously! I really don’t have any money on me!” The hisses get louder. Any chance I convinced myself of having with Hot Liberal Arts Chick evaporates. Chip just leans against his desk and shakes his head. On this day, the devil invaded Berkshire University, and his name is Calvin Gray.

The rest of the class drips by slower than hunks of wet sand out of a beach pail. Chip, as usual, didn’t lecture, teach or even bring up the topic of Advanced Communications. He mostly sat on his desk and talked about a time he got drunk at a wedding and got two separate blowjobs from two of the bridesmaids in the same bathroom stall. Two girls from the Women’s Empowerment Club left after hearing about the first bridesmaid.

The class ends, and immediately a small crowd bottlenecks towards the door. Even this early in the morning, people are able to summon up an amazing amount of energy to get on with the rest of their day. People crowd along the inside of the room, lining the walls along the door. Constant glares and stares keep coming my way. Everyone looks at me like I’m the “Dickhead of the Year.” Guess I can’t blame them. I had a chance to prove my worth by donating to the Connie fund, and gave shit. My opportunity for looking good in their eyes has sunk like a fat guy in a kayak.

Chip is leaning casually against his desk, arms folded, a cocky glare painted across his face. His eyes set on me and stick like flies on a donut. Everyone else thinks I’m a douche right now, why shouldn’t he?

“Kal?” Chip calls, as I approach the crowded doorway. “Have a nice day.” His voice is creepy and leering, like a child molester. Why did he say “nice” so weird?

“What?” I ask. He doesn’t respond. He stares at me, smirking as if he just pulled off the crime of the century. I

shrug at him, and still no response. Creep.

In the hallway, I feel like a million stares are glued to my body and eating away at my skin. It's getting stuffy in here. I feel like taking off my coat, but I only have a white undershirt on, and the armpits are caked a shade of piss-yellow from profuse sweating. The back of my head burns. It feels itchy underneath my fingernails. Little beads perspire from my forehead. What the hell is going on?

"Hey, Calvin." I turn around and see Hot Liberal Arts Chick, in all her slender glory. "How's it going?"

"Hey...you. What's up?" Weird just got weirder.

"Not much. You look like you're having a rough day."

"Yeah, kinda," I reply. "And it's only 10 am." What am I doing? I don't even know her name.

"I'm really glad you told that girl off. I hate that girl. She lived down the hall from me my first semester. She's always been really self-righteous like that. I thought it was cool how you stood up to her though."

"Yeah, I guess...if you consider that standing up to her."

Crap. I've got nothing here. What the hell am I going to say to her? This is my chance to "wow" her, and I don't have shit to say. I hate these weird moments. She's going to think I'm autistic unless I say something soon. Either that or she'll leave. Yeah, that's what'll happen. And then I'll blow any chance with her. That sounds about right.

"Hey, you and your friends usually go to the bar for happy hour, don't you?" she asks, with one of the sexiest smiles ever recorded by human eyes. "I'll probably be there tonight, if you want to talk about all this...get it off your chest..." she says this while putting her hand on my chest. Holy shit...Hot Liberal Arts Chick is flirting with me! As long as I don't sweat or pop a wood, I should be okay.

"Sure. Sounds cool." That's right, playa. I want to ask how she knows what my friends and I do on Fridays, but I should keep it simple. Chicks dig the whole "man of a few words" routine.

"Allrighty! See you then." She starts to walk, but then stops

after a few steps, whips her ponytail around, and faces me again. “By the way, my name is Katie, in case you forgot to ask.” She smiles, “See ya!”

“Okay. See you later, Katie,” I say while I wave goodbye. My hand feels heavy and numb as I sway it back and forth. Is it bad that she knew that I didn’t know her name?

People whisper and stare some more as I pace down the hall. I walk through a gauntlet of whispers and appalled faces armed with pointing fingers. My ears pick up waves of incomplete, whispered sentences.

“...looks really creepy,” I hear in a hushed girl’s voice.

“No, the one from the poster...” I hear from another direction.

I’m starting to feel sick, and I don’t know why. I feel acid in my stomach climbing up and sliding back down again as if it were a water slide. I feel the heat from each of the florescent lights I walk under as they burn the top of my head while I rush further down the hall and around the corner. Room 214. That’s where Jay had class. I think. I could just walk the mile home, but I want to get far away from this place as quickly as I can. Not only do I want to get out of here fast, but it’s fucking cold out—I don’t want to walk in that.

Before I turn the next corner, I hear the muzzled roar of a small crowd. It doesn’t sound like it could be more than 10 people. On top of the low whispering, I hear a familiar cackling. It layers itself above the noise of the crowd. It sounds like a high-pitched squeak coming from the rusty springs of an old bed, and it follows a specific pattern:

“Ha, ha, ha-haha. Hahaha-haha. Ha, ha, ha-haha.”

I turn the corner and there he is: Wally, my roommate. He’s slightly bent over, with his left hand on his left knee for support while he’s laughing. He’s decked out in his typical wardrobe: backwards black baseball cap, long-sleeved t-shirt and a pair of size 36 jeans hanging from his size 32 waist. His tiny eyes are squinting as he laughs his ass off over something hanging on the wall. Apparently he’s the only one laughing

at this. Everyone else looks pissed enough to be watching a Gallagher stand-up routine.

I take a few steps towards Wally before he turns to his side and sees me approaching. His machine gun-like cackling transforms into all-out howling once he catches me in his sites. Everyone else moves his or her glare from the wall to our general direction.

“What is it?”

“Did you see this yet?” Wally asks, gasping for air, taking only a second to squeeze out the question before he starts bursting out into more laughter.

“See what?”

“You serious? You haven’t seen it yet?”

I push Wally aside and move closer towards the wall. I can’t see what’s on the wall too well; all I can see is a cork bulletin board with a bunch of scattered papers hastily stapled and push-pinned onto it. Usually this thing is masked with “help-wanted” flyers, or “roommate needed” ads, or those things that have all the little slips of paper cut into the bottom of it with a name and phone number you could take home with you. I try to ease my way through about four people who are reading something towards the bottom half of the board. Wally, who’s full-on laughing has now subsided into minor chuckling while he catches his breath, is pushing on my back, forcing me closer to the board.

“This is fucking great! You gotta read this!” he snorts out through his giggling. I force myself between the four people who are making perturbed faces at me while I make my way to the center of attention. I finally catch the top half of what everyone is looking at. It reads in big, black, copier machine-print, “Have you seen this man?” I start to inch closer to the flyer, and under the top line there’s a guy with bushy hair, big eyes, thick eyebrows and a narrow nose. Underneath him is a description:

*Suspect is said to have dark-blonde hair, which is short and feels “bushy.”*

*Suspect weighs between 190 to 200lbs., measures approx. 5’8 to 5’11.*

*He was last seen assaulting the victim behind Dill's Bar on Street Rd.  
Suspect was reported wearing fraternity letters, blue jeans, light-colored  
sneakers and a black coat.  
Suspect was later seen driving a dark-colored Chevy Cavalier.  
Wanted for questioning on the assault of Connie Ward.*

“Dude! That’s you!” Wally says before he starts giggling again.

“What’re you talking about?”

“You kidding? The sketch even looks like you!” The crowd is hearing us. I’m starting to get more of the same looks I’ve been getting all morning.

“Okay, maybe it does a little. But except for that it’s nothing like me. Well, he has the same kind of car and a black coat. And he’s in a fraternity.”

“...and the same hair cut and hair color. And he’s, like, the same height and weight and everything! Hahaha! You’re wanted for attempted rape! I gotta call Barry!”

Wally goes on about how funny this is. He’s fucking sick in the head. I take another look at the giant flyer, easily a foot long and getting bigger. I guess I could see how it looks kind of like me. Maybe. I wonder if it’d be an admittance of guilt if I pulled the flyer down. The crowd is glaring at me more and more. Each face twists and turns as it gets an eyeful of the guy they think attacked poor Connie Ward.

The crowd starts to shift and churn. Some people leave. Others turn to the person next to them and whisper with their eyes fixed on me. I can physically feel how uneasy this small group of people is starting to act. I’m sweating and squirming where I stand. I can feel a cool breeze inside the back of my pants as my ass sweats and drips down the back of my thighs. I spin my head and look at the people around me. My arms and hands shake with paranoia. The only things this crowd is missing are torches and pitchforks. My stomach feels like it’s boiling a little more each time I look at these people. I start to slowly walk backwards, wiping sweat

from off my wet forehead. Everything goes silent and slow. I can still see Wally laughing, but I can't hear him. Every step I take away from the mob makes me feel like they're taking two more towards me. Everything slurs to a stop as two words flat on hit the front of my brain and immediately drip out of my mouth in a mutter:

“Oh, fuck...”