Atom Bomb

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Tom says that the best way to get a girl’s attention is to be cool and while I’m not sure what that means, it seems to be working. She’s smiling at me, coy and suggestive and my friends are nudging me as if I don’t notice. I’ve been waiting for a girl to look at me like that since I first realized what a girl looking at you like that meant; of course I damn well notice. I’m just being cool.

She starts walking towards us and my buddies shift in the kind of awareness

that can only be caused by a girl like Madison. Her shirt is low cut and I thank god for my height.

Tom cuts me off from my drool fest. “Be cool, idiot.”

I pull myself together as Madison stops directly in front of me. The guys

strategically had me in the center of the group; it helps to bolster my confidence.

She smiles and says, “Hey guys,” but doesn’t look away from me. “Jake.”

The guys are grinning and I’m trying to stay cool and Madison knows exactly

what she’s doing.

“Hey, Madison,” I say. My eyes give her the once over I always see my

friends do. “What can I help you with?”

Her eyes flash vixen and I know I said the right thing. “I have a few ideas.

But mostly I was wondering if you’re going to the party this weekend?”

“If you are?” I grin. “Then definitely.”

“So I’ll see you there,” she says.

“Count on it.” I tamp down the urge to apologize for the sleazy way I’m acting. But Tom says this is what works and Madison seems into it. She walks away and my buddies riot. I laugh, ducking my head to hide the heat on my face.

Tom throws his arm around my shoulders as the others disperse for class. “By Saturday night, you will be a virgin no more, my friend.”

God, I hope so. If I do, Tom and I will have more to talk about. Sex was all he’d wanted to talk about since he did it with Linsey Whitehall at summer camp a year back. Obviously, I wanted to talk about it too but my limited knowledge could only take me so far and it had felt like the two of us had been drifting apart the last few months. Tom had always helped me out before and I trusted him to do it again.

“And Madison is the perfect lay.” He pauses. “Or so I’ve heard.”

Nerves crawl up my spine. I stop in my tracks. “How experienced do you think she is?”

I had always tried to tune out the rumors. Madison deserved more respect than the way those guys talked about her and I only hope I can give it to her. She’s beautiful and cool and has always been nice to me.

“If you look up experienced on urban dictionary, her picture would be next to it. Isn’t that great?” He saw my face and got serious. “Don’t worry; it’ll all be fine. And besides, it has to happen sometime, right? It’s all part of becoming a man. Might as well do it with someone who knows what they’re doing and let me tell you; Madison does.”

Music thumped throughout the house and alcohol ran aplenty by the time I got to the party. There were people everywhere, blocking me from searching the room. From what I could tell, kids had already gone crazy. Plastic cups, spilled snacks, and other trash lay all over the place. Muddy water shoe prints track across the plush carpet. I felt bad for whoever had to clean up.

“Looking for Madison?” someone yells by my ear. I look to see a guy sitting by the door, sipping a coke.

“Who’re you? Designated driver?”

“Nah. Designated bouncer. Madison is upstairs, by the way,”

“How did you-”

“Word of the day is you two are gonna do the nasty tonight.”

“C’mon, man, don’t be crude. It’s a lot more than that.”

He stares at me, puzzled. “You mean, you like her?”

“What? Of course I do.”

Deciding it was time to find Madison, I turn away, but then Mr. Designated Bouncer calls out. I glance over my shoulder to see him staring at me in concern now.

“What?”

He shakes his head. “Nothing. None of my business. I just hope it all works out for you, man.”

The conversation has definitely left my realm of understanding so I move upstairs. It’s dark and substantially less crowded but I don’t see Madison. Dread sinks me into the floor and little taunts of rejection begin ringing through my head. That’s when a door opens and a guy I don’t know walks out while pulling his shirt on. I avoid eye contact because it doesn’t take a PhD to figure out what happened in there.

    “You looking for Madison?” I jump when I realize he’s talking to me. He smirks and points in the room he came out of. “She’s in there.”

    Something about that look makes an atom bomb go off in my stomach. I rush into the room, yelling for Madison. It’s so dark, I don’t see her, shit, what did he do-

“Hmm?” A body slinks off the bed. I see a flash of her vixen smile. Oddly enough, I find myself taking a step back. “Oh, Jake.”

“What-” I stop. She didn’t seem hurt. “Are you ok? That guy-”

“Oh, I’m great. Especially now that you’re here.”

She grabs my hands and leads me toward the bed. I let her, but I can feel the fire dying out from the bomb and its radiation is spreading through my body, making me confused. Suddenly, she’s kissing me and I’m on my back and she’s crawling over me. I realize what’s happening and fuck it’s happening fast and despite my friends’ advice I don’t feel prepared and this isn’t how it was supposed to go.

I’m trying to catch up with the situation and it smells bad in here, musky. I try to block it out but the more she moves the more prominent it becomes. The radiation is dispersing fantasies of tenderness and happiness and I can’t take it.

“I love you,” I blurt out, desperation making my voice crack.

She stops and looks at me. Then that *damn* smile is back and that’s her only answer before her hand moves to my zipper. The radiation is mutating me, killing me, and I can’t move from the pain, and Jesus Christ another guy was just in here, and she’s probably only looking for-

“Madison,” I croak. “Stop, I’m not sure-”

“Shh, Tom told me how this is your first time,” she says and the radiation has spread to my lips. “Don’t worry ‘bout a thing.”

She keeps moving and I don’t move at all because the radiation is everywhere now and this is what Tom meant by becoming a man? I keep my hands down at my sides and don’t tell her what it all really feels like.

Afterwards, I stumble back downstairs and see Tom. He’s grinning like a dolt, drunk off his ass. He comes over and wraps an arm around my shoulder. Just a few days ago, the same gesture had made me think we were getting closer but now the bomb has made me numb.

“Jake! I heard you found Madison. Best lay ever, right? I had her a while back and I wanted the best for you,” he shouts.

I think I’m going to puke so I shove him away and run for the bathroom. I pass by Mr. Designated Bouncer. He’s staring at me again, but this time it looks sad. I don’t realize why until after I’ve heaved out some of the toxin. My reflection in the mirror is of a different person; his hair is in disarray and sweat lines his brow. A redness creeps over his face and his eyes are dark. He looks like a man. I heave again when the effects of the radiation sink in, what I realize it’s done to me. I’ve mutated.