
Beer Run

Sara sat as straight up as she could, trying to give the illusion that her stomach was flat. About a foot of couch space separated her from Brian. It didn't matter to her that he was her roommate's boyfriend. He was a boy and that was enough to make her uncomfortable and paranoid about her looks. Uncrossing and crossing her legs, she smoothed her shoulder-length black hair behind her ears and pushed her glasses back up her nose. Sara was thinking about how not-cute Brian was when Lori came in from the kitchen.

"Brian, we don't have any beer, do you want something else?" Lori asked.

"I thought you said you were gonna get some. It's cool, I guess." Brian rubbed his eyes as if he were slightly annoyed. Sara wondered if he really loved Lori.

"Sara, will you make a beer run for us?"

"Yeah, but someone has to come with me."

"I'll go with you. What kind do you want Lori?" Brian reached for his boots, pulling on first the left and then the right. Sara grabbed her coat and searched the pockets for her keys. Plopping herself down on the now vacant couch, Lori looked lazily at her boyfriend.

"I don't care. Coronas, I guess, but don't forget the lime."

Sara moved past Brian and headed for the door. She caught a glimpse of herself in the mirror over the fireplace and frowned. Her lips were pale, her skin tone uneven, and her eyes sad. Quickly she looked away and glanced back at Brian. He was kind of a mess too. His jeans sagged everywhere, drawing attention to his gangly frame. The blond hair that hung in his eyes looked greasy and in need of washing. Sara was pretty sure that the polo he was wearing was the same one he had worn yesterday and the day before. Brian leaned down to kiss Lori goodbye and Sara let out a breathy "oh god."

"We will be back in ten minutes. I don't think you need a farewell kiss." Annoyed, Sara pushed the screen door open and walked into the night air, leaving Brian in the living room. As she unlocked her car door, Brian came running out of the house. They both slid into the car and latched their seat belts. Brian was grinning at her, obviously unaware of how irritated Sara was with him. He reached for her black case that held her CDs.

"Can I put in a CD?"

"Depends. Are you going to put in a good one?"

"Well, they're all yours, so if it isn't good isn't that your fault?" Sara pulled her eyes from the road just long enough to see if he was seriously being an ass or just kidding. Brian was looking right back at her with playful eyes.

"Fuck off," she said smiling to let him know she didn't mean it. Even though he occasionally pissed her off, Sara liked Brian. Actually, the more she thought about it; it was really Lori who pissed her off. She and Lori had never been extremely close. They were roommates because it was convenient. As Sara thought about the past couple of weeks, it occurred to her that she had been spending a lot of time with Lori, mostly only when Brian was around. Sara watched Brian as he put a disc in the player. She was pretty sure that she did not have a crush on him. He was just the most interesting person she had met in a long time. He liked to rant about corporate America and materialism. Sara loved materialism; she lived for Coach purses, Sephora catalogs, and the spring fashion line. But that's what made Brian so great- he was her opposite, they both knew it, and yet, they were still friends.

Sara wished that she could call him at anytime and ask him to hang out without having to consult Lori. But Sara knew she had to recognize her role. Lori was the girlfriend; Sara was only the girlfriend's friend. She wondered if that's what Brian thought. Smiling in appreciation of his good mood, Sara watched him shake his butt in his seat and then sing a few random lines of the song. As if noticing that he finally had her attention, Brian pounded his fists on the dashboard and then said excitedly,

"Oh listen, it's your song." He pushed the track button until he reached number seven. At first, Sara did not recognize the tune, but it sounded faintly familiar. Brian grabbed her windshield scrapper and used it as a microphone, screaming as loud as he could,

"Sarrrraaaa, Sara, no time is a good time for good-bye!"

As sarcastically as she could without laughing, Sara yelled,

"Wow- you're really good. You should go on Star Search."

"I would, but Ed McMahon doesn't do that show anymore."

"Oh, too bad." Brian punched her in the arm and muttered, "Shut up." Sara pulled into the liquor store parking lot and shut off the car. Unbuckling her seatbelt, she asked,

"Okay, what do you want?"

"Get Coronas, I guess. And a lime."

Sara went in grabbed the beer, a lime, and a bottle of vodka for herself. After paying, she hurried out to the car and loaded the goods into the backseat. Brian was sifting through the junk in her glove compartment.

"Hello? Ever heard of invasion of privacy?"

"A glove box is not private. First of all, if it's contents were so important you would lock the box. Secondly, the box is on my side of the car, therefore I maintain the right to know what's in it."

"Fine, but don't think for a second that any of that crap is yours. Your side of the car or not, I will never let you have my Purple Rain cassette."

The rest of the car ride back to the house Sara and Brian argued over the Prince tape. Sara drove just under the speed limit, trying to stretch out her alone time with Brian. When they finally stopped in front of the house, Brian walked quickly to the front door, yelling at Sara to hurry up. Lori was still on the couch watching TV. Brian lifted up her legs, sat down and then placed them over his lap. Instantly he began to rub Lori's calves, giving her an excuse to tell a ten-minute, very detailed story about the run she took that morning. Bored by the inane babble of her roommate, and a little jealous of the leg rub, Sara pushed herself off of the loveseat and headed for her room.

"Great story Lori. You should tell more of those." As soon as she had said the words, she regretted it. Sara thought Lori would be angered by the comment; she was too caught up in her tale to realize that Sara was making fun of her. Brian, however, seemed amused and gave Sara a wink as she walked out of the room.

That night Sara fell asleep thinking about Brian, trying to decide if he was worth having a crush on. Resolving that she couldn't allow herself anymore hopeless heartache, she let herself drift into her dreams. She dreamt of a world in which size fourteen was sexy. A world in which a crush instantly became a reality. A world in which there were no Brians and, more importantly, no Loris.

The next morning Sara awoke smiling and feeling reassured that she would not be lonely forever. Getting up from her bed, she tied her hair in a sloppy ponytail and went into the kitchen to get some juice. Lori was once again sitting on the couch. There were a few empty Corona bottles on the floor by her feet. She kicked one over as she pulled

her legs up to her chin and wrapped her arms around them tightly. Lori was one of those girls who thought it necessary to share every intimate detail of her relationship with her friends. And Sara could tell by the look on Lori's face that she wanted to share whatever had happened last night. After pouring herself some juice, Sara took her obligatory seat next to Lori on the couch and waited. Almost immediately Lori started in,

"So I feel really bad because, well, promise not to tell- Brian has a hard time controlling himself. And I mean, he doesn't even get the condom on before, well, it's over."

Sara did not know what to say. She knew that she was supposed to say something supportive, but what- "Oh, sorry, better luck next time?" Besides, all Sara really cared about was that they were having sex. The last time she and Lori had had one of these talks it was about boobs. And now, already Brian and Lori were seriously below the waist.

Realizing that her roommate had little to offer in condolences, Lori moved on to other aspects of her previous night's activities. She was rambling on and on and Sara wasn't paying much attention until she said,

"Do you want to know what he said about you?"

Sara tried to act casual. She did not want to let on that she cared about what Brian had to say. Besides, Lori could not have anything too steamy to tell her. She was his girlfriend. He wasn't going to pour his heart out to Lori about his true romantic feelings for Sara.

"I guess, as long as it's not mean."

"He said that your personality blew every other girl's out of the water. Except mine of course."

"Oh, that was nice of him," Sara said. Lori continued talking until she tired herself out and then decided she needed a shower. Lori had just started the water when Brian emerged from her bedroom wearing a Star Wars t-shirt, heart boxer shorts and a black sock on his left foot. His right foot was naked. He threw himself onto the couch next to Sara and smiled,

"Good morning."

"Yeah, you too." She didn't know what else to say so she blurted out, "I heard what you said about my personality."

"Oh yeah, what about it?"

"Why would you say that? Personality compliments are the biggest insult. I would rather have you call me fat."

"I didn't mean it like that. Besides what would you have me do, tell Lori that I think you're beautiful?"

"Do you?" Sara tugged on the hem of her t-shirt, thumbing at a white splotch on the green cloth.

"I don't know. But even if I did I couldn't say that to Lori." Brian looked as if he felt caught in a rodent trap. Sara could tell just by looking at him that "beautiful" was not on his list of "adjectives that describe Sara." Angered that she had let herself be hurt by someone that she had already decided not to like, Sara glared silently out the window. Brian tried to punch her playfully in the arm, but she did not respond. Then he pulled on the leg of her pajama pants, but she would not look at him. Fed up with Sara's silent treatment, Brian started tickling her as fiercely as one could tickle. Sara squirmed, then thrashed, and finally began to laugh. Satisfied, Brian stopped his assault and helped Sara to sit up. She was tightening her ponytail when Brian unexpectedly leaned in and kissed her on the mouth. At first she did not respond, so he tried to separate her lips with his tongue. Sara placed her hands on his shoulders and forced him off of her. She jumped up from the couch and angrily spat at him,

"Get over yourself."

Sara walked out of the room. As she rounded the corner heading for her bedroom, Lori came out of the bathroom. Sara tried to brush past her, but Lori caught her arm,

"So what do I owe you for the beer?"