

Nobody's Trash

By

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Megan missed being in love. In an attempt to find someone she went to Danny's Tavern off Milwaukee Avenue, because she thought out of all the bars in Chicago, this was the bar she looked best in. The dimmed lights bounced off her black framed glasses and arched eyebrows and made her look as though she was worth writing songs over. The stools came up to her white belt she always wore, and when she sat down, shadows fell onto her in a way that made her look like she had a bigger chest than she actually did.

She met a boy who took her home, and in the dark she counted each of his birthmarks with her tongue. In the morning, when she crawled out of bed and looked over the boy, his scruffy beard melting

into the pillow, his hair sticking out from his head like twigs, she knew she had to look just as awful as him. She went to the bathroom and looked through his dusty toothpaste stained mirror. Her hair was a mess of black electrified cotton balls. Somehow, between spending a portion of the night on her back, her knees, on top of him (and then reversed on top of him) her eye liner had formed deep black circles around her eyes, giving her the kind of black eyes women get at truck stops.

Then there was John, who seemed like a good idea in the buzz of P.B.R. but when she woke up, all that composed John was on his night stand: an ashtray filled with half-smoked hand rolled cigarettes, a copy of *Vice* magazine, and a tab of acid. There were the four random guys not even worth remembering, except she couldn't let them go. The short guy who bought her two beers at the Gold Star that told her punk was just a hiccup in rock 'n roll history. The vegan boy she met at the

park that didn't like electricity or drinking or Wonder bread or laundry detergent.

There was Chris with blue eyes and two moles on his face that looked like buttons. He had crusty lips, the kind that should only exist during winter, who went to school for photography, but didn't take photo's anymore. She met him at a white-trash house party. He was the one in a wife beater and cut off jean shorts, with a forty ounce King Cobra wrapped in a brown paper bag.

"I am the most white trash mother fucker here!" He screamed as he leaned against the refrigerator.

They fucked two weeks later, after he made her a home made dinner in his Humboldt Park two bedroom apartment, after finishing a bottle of rum he had saved from his birthday eight months ago.

That night wasn't good. It was the kind of awkward sex that could never become anything more than what it was: Klutzy fingers and slippery

hip bones. The kind of sex that with time would never grow into anything meaningful.

What made this guy even worse, was the fact that every time they fucked, he had to eat a taco afterwards. He crawled out of bed threw his shoes on, and biked off, searching for a taco stand that was still open. When he'd come back, as Megan would try to fall asleep, he'd sit against the bed, dripping grease, beans, and salsa onto the bed sheets

Megan figured Chris could have eaten anything; maybe potato chips or even a sandwich. She never kept anything in her pantry except for generic coffee, and watermelon and sometimes cherries but most of the time it was watermelon. She had a theory that eating was only necessary when her stomach was clenching, her head dizzy, and she assumed almost everyone thought this way.

"I find it really attractive that all you keep in your kitchen is watermelon and coffee." He said, as he

pushed the brown hair out of her face, his knuckles hitting the headboard.

“I keep salt too. And cinnamon because in the winter I eat a lot of oatmeal.”

“Why do you have salt? You don’t eat anything you could put salt on.”

“That’s why I have a lot of it.”

This bothered Megan. Because it went beyond the fact that Megan almost never ate and Chris ate too much. It was because when she’d fuck this guy, it was as if she wasn’t there. She tried to give him a little more credit, that it wasn’t his intention to make her feel this way. After all, he was sensitive and he was a vegan, which meant he was supposed to appear like he had substance and that he actually liked her.

In fact, every time they fucked, he did not make her cum once. This pissed her off because it was just bad manners. She wasn’t fucking this guy so he could tell her she was pretty or hold her hand or

pretend that one day they could get married; she fucked Chris because, flesh is flesh. If she closed her eyes tight enough, this guy could be someone she would actually want to be with who would be able to get her off.

They were drinking crappy beer at a bar neither one of them should have been at. The type of bar filled with construction works. They laughed and kicked the sides of the pool tables with their paint-splattered boots, and heckled Chris in his brown corduroy pants while pointing at Megan's flannel patterned dress. They went back to her place to her bed room that consisted of only a bed and a desk, they started going at it. Chris unsnapped her bra and pulled her legs around him, Megan actually felt she might get off this time. Right as she was about to climax she pressed her nails into his shoulder blades and bit his ear. This made the little bitch he was finish quickly. No warning, no "I'm about to come." Nothing.

“Fuck you asshole!” Megan crawled from under him, held the blanket to her body, her hair swimming over her collarbone. She turned to him, and then jumped on top of him, wailing her fists into his chest.

She couldn't believe she said it. All Chris did was grab his pants that were hanging from the corner of the bed, the blanket slipping off of him and onto her.

“What are you doing?” She asked.

He pulled his pants up, jumped as he buttoned them, his coins and house keys shaking in his pockets.

“I don't think this is going to work,” he picked up his shirt and stretched it over his head, “You're just too mean.”

It was only four days after she ended it with Chris when she met Jacob through this guy Frank, who she knew through a mutual friend, Jess, who had slept with her best friend Annie.

Jacob had wrinkles around his eyes. Megan wanted to pretend they meant he was something more than most 25 year old boys in Chicago. That the wrinkles were proof he had seen oceans and rivers, highways and rural roads, subways and airplanes. He was wearing a shirt that was too short for him, and every time he bent over, the elastic band in his underwear smiled at Megan. She thought this was the sexiest thing in the world. There was something about his sun burned skin and thinning blond hair that made him look classic, like someone who plays guitars and drinks Canadian Whiskey.

The thing about Jacob was the fact he wasn't like any of the guys she had been with. He was from Wisconsin and she thought that anyone from Wisconsin had to have innocent lips. They went from talking about chocolate milk at Frank's apartment, to this bar by her house, and then a walk to her place where he did not ask to come up stairs, but instead asked her out on a date.

That date was a salad in his kitchen that smelled like lemons. After, they took a walk around Logan Square. They held hands and he told her about growing up in Wisconsin and she told him she could remember when Logan Square wasn't cool, when Humboldt Park was actually ghetto, and when this city wasn't filled with millions of 25 year olds with tight pants trying to be the next best thing.

The first time he spent the night at her apartment, it was only because of rain, and he did not try to fuck her. In fact, they did not fuck the next time they hung out, or the time they went for Chinese food, or even into a month of dating.

"It's gonna be cold." Jacob said to Megan over the phone, as she sat on her couch, holding her toe nails out in front of her, painting them red.

"It's August." She cradled the phone between her ear and shoulder and looked at the living room light bounce off her freshly painted candy apple red toe nails.

“I’m just saying. My friend’s show is kind of a far bike ride. You should bring a sweater.”

When Megan got to Jacob’s house prepared to see Jacob’s pseudo-famous friend’s show, they decided to listen to The Pixies, and then go. After that album was finished, they figured his pseudo-famous friend wasn’t going to play until later, and ordered pizza from Clown Pizza. Over pepperoni and cheese they both managed to say “I like you” and instead of it making it to the show, ended up fucking.

When they woke up, after he made coffee and oatmeal, after she took a shower and borrowed his toothbrush, Jacob walked her out of his apartment. When she hugged him, she could smell his history on his t-shirt.

A week later, she was sitting on top of him and Frank Black was blaring out of her stereo. The

August heat hadn't bitten Chicago yet, when he said
"I can't be your boyfriend."

"What?"

"Just- I'm looking for something serious. I can't
see that with you."

"How can you not see that?" She got off him and
sat on the edge of the bed.

"Well," He got up, and a pillow fell off the bed,
and he tried to pick it up, but decided not to, "you
don't even have a desk lamp."

"You can't be my boyfriend because I don't have
a fucking desk lamp?!"

Jacob wasn't supposed to be more than two
months of her life. He was supposed to just
disappear into the hipster world of Chicago. They
had become weaved into each others lives. He had
started to keep his coffee grounds in the freezer,
because that is what she did, and she started to
sleep without music at night, because that's what he
did.

He came over on a Wednesday night and because they both worked the next day, they decided not to drink. Except she had some beer left, and it seemed like a good idea to have one.

One drink became a 12 pack. Which turned into him on top of her on the kitchen table, crushing her new pack of cigarettes. Then it was them in the bedroom having the kind of sex you have when you've slept with someone for three months, when all your rhythms and hip bones match up. Megan screamed and curled her fist into a ball, pulling her yellow bed sheets into her fingers. Jacob thought that fist was so sexy, that fist that was curled up like his ex Cheryl's fist would curl, who had moved to New York. He thought, as he pushed into Megan, he should have chased after Cheryl, but he didn't want to give up the iron smell of Chicago. That fist did not belong to Megan.

He pushed up and while still riding her, wishing she was Cheryl who would smile and hide in her

coffee cup in the morning, said “ I can’t marry you.” He pushed into her harder and the mattress slid, the springs bounced, and a pillow that was the one thing separating Megan’s head from the wall, slipped off the bed.

As he pounded her head into the wall, she tried to kiss that sentence away. “Who’s talking about Marriage?” She panted. Megan realized, she wasn’t looking for marriage, or even love anymore. She was just looking for someone to fill her up.

Neither of them finished that night. The next day, when they woke up too late to make it to work on time, too late to say anything about the night before, Jacob gathered his things.

“I just- I have to be with a nine to five kind of girl- mean look we are both late for work.”

“That’s not my fault.”

“I know, but you don’t even wear a bike helmet.”

“Neither do you.”

“But I am trying.” He scooped up his bag onto his left shoulder, “This doesn’t fit me.”

That one hurt. It took two months, three cases of beer, three broken windows, and two weeks of Hank Williams on repeat. Megan lay in bed and felt her eye balls sink out of her face and right into her pillow that still smelled like their sex.

By Halloween, Megan had managed to get out of her head, forgot about the way Jacob snored if he slept on his back, and how she’d sometimes catch him watching her sleep.

November came. There was ice coffee and 70 degree weather in November, and the fact that even though Chicago is a big city, all the people she never wanted to see again were the ones she saw too many times. Megan was sitting at the bakery she always goes to when she doesn’t want to go home but wants to be in a place that smells like home.

“Can I sit here?”

She looked up, and there standing over her was Jacob “I was just leaving.”

“You don’t have to.”

“No, I do.”

She got up and walked out, but he followed her, and they ended up walking to Logan Square together.

“You should come over to my place.” He said.

She made herself go to his place to prove to herself that she could and not care about him. But she knew it wasn’t a good idea when she was standing at his front door, and he was looking at her in a way that she could see him remembering the way she would sit on top of him, twisting so that all of her ribs stuck through her skin.

“Hey,” she said, putting her hand on her bike seat.

“Hey,” he looked at her bike, “ you should fix the tension in your chain.” He pointed.

“Oh yeah, I’ve been meaning to.”

“I can do it for you.”

“No it’s fine.”

“Oh come on.” He picked up her bike, turned around, and began walking up his stairs.

“Why are you bringing it up there? We can just fix it on your porch.”

“All of my tools are upstairs.”

Megan didn’t like the fact her bicycle was upside down in the middle of his living room. It ruined her escape plan, made it nearly impossible for her to leave whenever she wanted to. As he fumbled with wrenches and chain grease he told her how he noticed how much she’s changed since they had broken up. How she didn’t seem so tough anymore, “I can see you’re letting yourself be vulnerable. I like that.” He said, stepping back from the chain.

She wanted to hit him and scream “screw you!” Cut him or whatever she needed to do to prove she hadn’t changed one bit. But she couldn’t.

The alarm clock buzzed Saturday morning traffic reports and Megan tried to ignore it until she felt Jacob shaking her.

“I need to get on the first train to Wisconsin for my mom’s birthday.”

“What?” She lifted her head and looked at the clock that said 6 A.M.

He crawled out of bed and picked up her clothes, “Yeah you know for breakfast and all, but we should make plans.”

“You’ve got to be joking.”

“No. How’s Tuesday? I remember you have Tuesday’s off.”

“It’s not your mom’s birthday.”

“Sure it is.”

She sat up and rubbed her eyes, “That is such a bull shit lie.”

A couple of days later, when Jacob had called to tell her “that night was a bad idea”, Megan knew

she had been played. Jacob just wanted to get laid, and when he ran into her he remembered all the things he would need to say to get her shirt off. Not only had he gotten her shirt off, but he managed to get her out of his apartment before noon.

“I’m just saying there was a reason we didn’t work out in the first place.” He said over the phone, “maybe we just got caught up and weren’t looking at the situation logically that night.”

“You’re a piece of shit.” She hung up. She wanted to do a lot more than that, tell him that he broke her, that he should disappear, and never show his face in her side of town again. But she knew, by saying that, she would be exactly what he wanted. She would be some vulnerable girl who picks flowers and holds hands, “fuck that.” She threw her phone across the kitchen, ready to break something, punch someone, anything to prove she hadn’t become what he wanted her to be.