

Dead Sexy

For Minke Amelia.

I remember the way Alex's baby pink underwear clung to her skin and pushed her breasts up to meet. Her chest reminded me of a rolling meadow squeezed between two plump hillsides.

She was so delicate.

Like a child.

Frightened by her own shadow.

Her white skin and pale blue eyes.

Blue in the way I'd imagine a polar bear's longing eyes as it searched the sea. Peering over the edge of a drifting iceberg.

I was a fish caught under her paw and everything went black.



I guess you ought to know, I've always liked the idea of taking life easy.

Alex: the moment I met her, the grin on her face seemed to ask, "how easy do you want to take it?"

And I'd have my feet up on a cushion, with a fresh cigar from her larder slid into my mouth.

But my life so far, as easy as I tried to take it, well it had its share of speed bumps: The bruise around my left eye already turned purple by the time I saw it in a mirror. Red flecks around my eyelids were from the tiny veins damp with bloody cuts.

A throbbing reminder of Minnie.

Minnie who started speed-dialing my number as soon as I retreated from her. Minnie to whom I'd promised to be faithful. When I checked my phone all I saw was the time 9 o'clock PM, and 7 missed calls from Minnie.

Then it died.

In case you're wondering, I had no plans for recharging it anytime soon. I marched across 61st street, bitter wind and rain under jeans and a t-shirt. Music was coming from the open front door of a youth hostel. It was only in the mens room mirror of that hostel I noticed how it gave my eye a nice gloss. How could I anticipate that Alex would be clinging to me two hours later as I felt our way through the forest in the park to her building?

“Sa-hum, Sa-hum! Look et me!” She shook me against a stone archway in the thickest part of the bush. “You can fuck meh. You can fuck meh friends.” She looked so serious about this. “I only want to know about et, no?”

For midnight on a school night, it wasn't what I'd call a dull evening.



Earlier I'd stumbled in from the rain pretty much straight onto her table (in what was seemed to me to be a sort of hostel mixer).

"I work for *American Express*," she said turning to me. "You know et?"

Did I know it?

I may have been failing college by day and dodging Minnie's kitchenware by night, but what did this chick take me for?

I pretended to think hard.

"Uh, yeah."

She giggled like she hadn't seen it coming. Steam from the hostel boiler heaters fogged the windows. Streetlight reflections from the wet road cut bright through the haze. I couldn't help thinking she wasn't just staring at me, but rather at that purple shiner around my eye.

Speaking of earlier tonight and Minnie's attack, the last time I saw her was about three and a half hours ago. She was standing on the

verandah of our house screaming at me not to leave. An egg beater hung from her hand like one of her designer handbags. That utensil she used against me dangled level with raised goosebumps over her bare legs. Under layers of generously applied bronzer, I could see she was more excited than angry. Even so, she'd been fighting me over pretty much anything lately. Her lips seemed plumper and cheeks rosier as she shouted orders at me. Was this a tactic to force us to make up afterwards in the bedroom?

That kind of thing was becoming the only sex we were having. Actually, I didn't realise my face was bleeding until I noticed red drops of my own blood dripping off the eggbeater onto the wooden deck.

That wasn't going to wash out easily.

Now Minnie wanted to make it all better.

The me who wanted to be those ripped denim shorts clinging like they were sculpted around her step-Reebok-ed thighs. It seemed a long way away from the feelings I was feeling about her now.

I needed a drink and clear my head.

I have to confess about an hour and a bit later I was sipping on an ice cold beer like my girlfriend didn't matter anymore. At the same time I was wondering if Alex's laughter was the authentic mating call of the truly unexpected French giggle.



Kicking back at Alex's was a relief after what she called 'ze Rumble en ze park'.

Not only because of the sofa.

Namely *her* sofa.

And it wasn't her cigar I was enjoying either.

It was the view of the sprawling trees and bushes in that park.

(35 floors below us outside.)

This 'armless rumble' was the forest. I wouldn't be surprised if a few less lucky people hadn't nearly died testing it after dark.

Now it kind of looked a lot tamer.

Like her matchsticks smouldering in the ashtray.

An ultimatum seemed due to college, and the more I thought about it, to Minnie as well. That house we lived and fought in, and then there was Minnie's dad. Since our house was actually his, and that I was also employed by him, it all started fading.

Shrinking.

Disappearing under Alexandra's fly swat.

I've got to tell you, it only occurred to me right then and there that for someone who had Cuban cigars at the ready for houseguests I'd never seen Alex smoke.

You should know I didn't realise we weren't alone until her roommate walked out into the lounge room like she'd just woken up. Nobody I knew had friends that looked like her friends.

They were both impossible to ignore.

Alex's body perfectly framed outside the kitchen entrance popping the cork off of a dusty looking bottle of champagne. It was like I could hear the forest below us, but then my head was light. Her body, her arse had a state of the art curve that reminded me of Minnie's sports car. I could catch little glances back at me while Alex and her roommate whispered to each other in the kitchen. I was wondering if that roommate of hers

was German, French, or I don't know what. The one thing I was sure of were those little looks. A big part of that conversation had to be about me. Strings over the stereo hit a climax. Her roommate stood before me. Close enough to feel her cold breath against my face.

Her tongue locked me into her grey eyes like grey moons under thin black eyebrows. A second ago she was talking to Alex way over in the kitchen. Now, these eyes seemed green. How deep and green they were now was anyone's guess. These bottomless pools of eyes were calling. Her tongue caressed her top lip from one end to the other. Why I didn't know, but her eyes still called for me.

“Kess me, Sam.” She knew my name. “Kess me.”

It didn't feel right. I pulled away, but the pools in her eyes were swirling larger. Alex's words under the stone archway told me everything I needed to know. This 'kessing' wasn't off limits. She only wanted 'to know about it'.

Should I tell her before or after?

‘Uhm ‘ungry.’ Roommate’s breathing deepened reaching closer to my mouth. ‘Kess me.’

‘Suki!’ Alex called stepping out of the kitchen into the lounge. ‘ze wine!’

She brushed my arm with her firm breasts handing me a frosty bottle of imported beer. Her roommate, now revealed to be a Suki, withdrew.

All ten of her bright red nail polished fingers crowded around the glass like she was dying of thirst. Her eyes stuck on me from behind the glass. What I thought was French champagne was actually red.

Alex smiled at me. I smiled back and held her hand. Suki’s lips were stained with a wine red moustache. The green whirlpools in her eyes disappeared into still grey.



From the moment I came to I needed to spit.

The air tasted like dust.

I haven't passed out since age 17 and I've never done it naked.

"Kess me, Sam."

"Noh, kess me!"

Alex and Suki: I couldn't see them. In the darkness I couldn't see anything but their voices echoed.

I turned over against the wood floor wondering what the hell happened.

I know what bruises feel like.

I felt them all over.

The last thing I remembered was that drink. Something told me they knew all about Minnie.

My Minnie who only wanted to hit me where it hurt for the thrill of coming together again. Wounded love making in the master bedroom of

her dad's holiday house.

And I thought *that* was sick.

I turned on the cold wood floor. The back of my head hit a door with a thud. When I felt for the door handle I realised it must have been the bathroom. Alex and Suki's voices were only in my aching head.

"Kess us!" They called.

"Shut up!" I cried.

Crying at myself.

Who locks a bathroom door when they're not in it? Every door I tried was locked. My clothes, my dead phone, my wallet for God's sake. All gone!

I started picking at the lock on one of the windows. The more I concentrated on the brass window lock in the blindness of the dark.

The more I felt a wave come over me:

Alex and Suki were sleeping in a bed with deep red satin sheets big enough to fit five people. I thought I was only thinking it, but I was standing there naked like I was still picking the window lock in their living room. You see I could see it all like I was totally there: It was warm and I saw the walls flickering with orange light from candles on brass candle sticks bolted to stone walls.

The air was cold. I thought the cold was from the stone walls that somehow covered the walls. Great grey stones with a little painting hanging of a woman dressed in an old fashioned pink dress. That painting (she who in the painting looked suspiciously like Alex) it starred right though me in a way I'd never felt like I was so frozen from my head down to my toes wriggling in the fur of a bear skin rug under my feet. I was looking at the cuts and bruises all over myself under that candle light.

Enough light to see they had all of my stuff.

It was like a bear cave.

There was even a polar bear's head on the end of the rug looking up to me teeth out. Except that's when I realised the dripping wax off the candles down the stone was actually dripping up to the floating wood floor below us. The bedroom door was upside down and we were all up on the ceiling.

“Sa-um?” Shot Alex, propping herself out of bed with eyes straight at me. “I only wanted to know, Sam!”

I fell to the living room floor with a stinging shooting up my arm and my butt. Hell if I knew what was going on. I'd cut myself on that window lock.

But I sure knew this much: I was in deep trouble.



The smell: the room started becoming clear.

Like the chemicals in an instant photo.

Details popped. This was Alex's living room all right. Four windows just as I remembered. Where there were long dark satin curtains last night, now there was nothing. Only the hooks for the curtain rods remained.

The windows were painted black (that explained the thick dark) but the last one was half open.

There wasn't even a chair in the place: all completely gutted.

That half open window would not budge, either way I started to wonder if I could still squeeze through it.

Then there was the smell.

That smell: sweeter than anything I'd ever got a lick of before. It's hard to describe, but I was smelling my way around the room.

Then I saw it.

Blood dripped from that window lock I was working on maybe ten minutes ago. What confused me was I didn't even have a nick on my finger. I've got to say, I felt amazing. I can't explain it, but I felt ten feet tall. And with that, the room felt bigger and bigger. Like a warehouse big enough to make your voice echo, but it wasn't the room that was changing.

It was *me*.

Getting smaller and smaller.

Behind the bloody drips falling under the window something stopped me cold. A paper thin sliver crept over the sky from the open window.

Dawn light: Tiny flecks of orange peek behind a building.

Like the blast radius of a nuclear explosion.

Alex and Suki.

Black webbed wings flapped wildly where my arms had been. I was hovering in a dark corner of the room.

Oh they planned it alright.

That daylight was deadly - to vampires!

Uh, come on?

I didn't ask for this!



Put Alex and Minnie in the ring: I give it no more than a round before there's blood on the floor and Minnie's on the ropes. Alex dances backward into a baby pink boxing robe as Minnie falls to the ground.

The referee counts to six or seven and keeps on going. I'm standing there ten rows back in the cheap seats. Air conditioners blow cold from the ceiling, but I'm still sweltering in the squeeze. Her skin glistens wet with sweat and blood under fight night lights. Even over the crowd's roaring I can only just hear myself thinking it serves her right. Except for her perfect angel face.

And I kind of wish she could see me too. She looks so peaceful when she's unconscious. Red stilettos step over her quivering body dripping life all over the white canvas.

But man *that* body!

That girl in the fringe with the pumps stepping over Minnie.

Wet blow-dried hair down her shoulders in a fire-engine red bikini.

It's Suki raising the K.O. placard to the crowd.

And that crowd's stamping, panting and booing with every struggle
Minnie puts in from the floor. It almost seems safer in the ring than
this audience. Teeth out everywhere spinning around me like a
kaleidoscope, 20,000 mouths dropped open all hungry for blood.

Alex's longing eyes searched the sea. Peering over the edge of a drifting
iceberg. I was a fish caught under her bear paw and everything went
black.

