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Lights Out

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Trigger warning: Rape, sexual assault

Lights Out

“Hey, Alice!” a familiar voice called out as Alice walked her beautiful brown chocolate lab, Kono, down the street to let him stretch his legs after being cooped up in the apartment all day. The golden hour was especially golden that afternoon. As the sun began to set, Alice turned to see who had called her name, and it was her neighbor, Kate. The two were good friends and did things together regularly. Pleasantly surprised, Alice waited for Kate to catch up to her so the two could walk around the block together.

“Hi Kono!” Kate said to the dog. She bent down and gently rubbed her thumbs back and forth on his soft ears, while cradling the back of his head with her remaining fingers. “Did you see Guy’s Instagram post?” Kate asked eagerly, looking up at Alice.

“No, why?”

“Looks like he’s havin’ a party tonight to celebrate getting into NYU. He posted about it; a keg and bong in the background. Wanna go?”

“Do you know who’s gonna be there?”

“Probably just the usual crowd. Guy doesn’t invite randoms. You should come, you haven’t been out in a while. Spread your li’l social butterfly wings.”

“Okay, I guess I’m down,” Alice said as the two finished walking the loop around the block and started up the walkway into their apartment complex. She didn’t usually put herself in dangerous or uncomfortable situations, and she certainly didn’t put herself in situations where heavy drinking was involved. She enjoyed a few casual beers from time to time, but she resisted the ragers that the real partiers went to. A party at Guy’s

could go either way; casual and cool or rough and raughty. So, going to a party at Guy's house was always a bit of a gamble. But she had known Guy since they were little kids, and he would probably feel insulted if she didn't go. Even though he didn't personally invite her. That's just how Guy was; he didn't personally invite *anyone* to his parties. He expected people to just know things about him, and know when he was throwing a party... because usually, people did know things about him, and people did generally know when he was going to throw a party. Guy was so popular and personable that just about everyone he knew, knew what he was up to all the time. *Oh, the joys of social media.* Alice knew she was taking a risk by going to Guy's party, but she was feeling antsy and restless that day, and she wanted to go out. She had fun at Guy's parties most of the time, but there were other times that she wished she would have just stayed home. Finishing their walk, Alice and Kate split towards their units and agreed to meet at Alice's an hour later.

When the two got to the party, they were immediately greeted by the host with a friendly smile. "Hey guys! Thanks for coming! The keg and bongos are out back." Alice and Kate both hugged Guy and thanked him for his hospitality. Then, they started toward the backyard for some beer and weed.

When they got outside, the regular crew was there to send Guy off to his NYU journey, plus a few unfamiliar faces. The unknown faces made Alice nervous. Especially unfamiliar **male** faces. She didn't trust men; they made her feel uncomfortable. They like to stare at women in tight clothes. They don't like loose pants as much. More left for

the imagination. *Good thing I wore my harem pants and a loose sweater.* Alice loved soft fabrics with loose fitting bohemian styles. She loved clothes that flowed in the wind. They made her feel like a gypsy or a fairy or a princess. They also made her feel safe. Alice didn't want to be stared at by anyone, but especially not by men.

"Let's take a shot!" Kate said to Alice. Kate always got excited when vodka was around, especially Ketel One. Kate and Alice didn't drink the cheap shit anymore. The two of them had too many nights praying to the porcelain goddess after partying with too much Popov.

"Okay," Alice replied. She didn't usually like drinking liquor with strangers around, but she felt comfortable and safe around Kate and she figured one shot wouldn't hurt, so she agreed. "I have to pee, I'll be right back."

When Alice came back from the bathroom, the shots were lined up and ready to be slammed down the hatch. There were more than just two shots though, there were four. "Who are these for?" Alice asked Kate.

"They're for our new friends, Aaron and Mitch!" Kate said, as she gestured their direction. "They were sweet enough to go inside and get these shot glasses for us. How nice of them, right Alice?" Kate turned her head away from Alice, and toward the two guys. "Oh yeah! Guys, this is my friend Alice," she said as she gestured in Alice's direction. "Now, let's drink! Cheers to Guy!" Kate then raised her shot glass up for a toast.

"Cheers to Guy!" Alice, Mitch, and Aaron exclaimed as they, too, raised their glasses to toast before throwing back the shot. No sooner did the rest of the party hear

the cheers, and almost in unison, everyone in the backyard yelled, “cheers to Guy!” and then took a sip of whatever they were holding.

Alice reached inside her bag for her cigarettes as she set her shot glass back on the table. She shuffled and shuffled around in her bag, but couldn't find them. “Kate, come with me to the car. I think I left my smokes,” Alice interrupted Kate's flirty conversation with Aaron.

“No, Alice! I'm having fun. I don't want to go to the car! You can handle it, right?”

“I'd rather you come with me... Please?” Alice said as she looked at Kate with puppy-dog eyes.

“Come on, Alice! Don't be a cock-block.” Kate whispered in Alice's ear so that Aaron couldn't hear her.

“Ugh, okay.” Alice said and began to head out toward the front door.

After she shut the door, she heard it re-open again. *I thought you said you were having fun?* She turned around to find it wasn't Kate who followed her out, it was her new *friend*, Mitch. “Oh hey,” she said to him, “I'm just grabbing my cigarettes. I'll be right back.” She looked up to the sky for some sort of relief from the stress she began to feel, and noticed the full moon. For Alice, full moon nights were either really good, or really bad.

“Oh, cool. I'll come with you,” he said as he continued following behind her.

“Okay,” Alice said hesitantly. She didn't really like that he followed her outside. She felt vulnerable. But her stomach wasn't feeling right after the vodka and really

wanted to take a hit. The sensation of breathing the harsh smoke into her mouth, down her throat, and into her lungs, was all she craved.

“How do you know Guy, anyway?” Mitch asked as he walked a step behind Alice.

“We went to high school together. How do you know him?”

“I don’t really know him, my buddy Aaron knows him through mutual friends. How far is your car?”

“It’s just down this way. We got here kinda late I guess, so parking was tough.”

Alice fidgeted nervously with her keys between her fingers as the two continued on towards the car. She used her clicker to unlock her white Chevy Malibu that she proudly purchased last year.

Alice opened the driver door, put her knee on the driver’s seat, and hunched over while she threw open the center console to search for her Marlboro Red 100’s.

Suddenly, she felt a blow to the back of her head, and that was it. *Lights out.*

“No, Alice! I’m having fun. I don’t want to go to the car! You can handle it, right?”

“I’d rather you come with me... Please?” Alice said as she looked at Kate with puppy-dog eyes.

“Come on, Alice! Don’t be a cock-block.” Kate whispered in Alice’s ear so that Aaron couldn’t hear her. Alice gave up on a relationship a while ago, but that didn’t mean Kate had to give up on men, too.

“Ugh, okay.” Alice said and began to head out toward the front door.

“So, Kate, how do you and Alice know each other?” Aaron asked Kate eagerly, as he spilled some of his beer on the brown patio sofa cushion while he adjusted his position on it.

“We’re neighbors, but we met in high school,” Kate told Aaron. She couldn’t help but be captivated by his big blue eyes and his soft brown hair that fell delicately in front of his face, even if he was a little sloppy.

“What’s her deal?”

“What do you mean, what’s her deal?” That question always annoyed Kate. Why does anyone have to have a “deal,” anyway? How was she even supposed to answer that question?

“Does she have a boyfriend?”

“Why do you ask?”

“She’s cute, and my buddy Mitch is interested.”

“Oh,” Kate’s heart almost sunk when she thought that Aaron could be interested in Alice. Alice didn’t want anything to do with guys at this point. She had been too hurt in the recent past, and didn’t want to deal with another heartbreak anytime soon. She cried on Kate’s shoulder too many times, and Kate didn’t want to see her get hurt again. See, Kate could let guys go easily. If she fucked them and then found out that they were only interested in the fuck, she could easily walk away. She wouldn’t get hung up on guys just because she fucked them. Alice, on the other hand, was not that way. She couldn’t go to a party, get a little too drunk, fuck some random guy, and be okay with it later. She would feel ashamed of herself for having sex with a stranger, and instead of dealing

with her shame and moving on, she would hold onto it and try to be in a relationship with the guy, in order to make the one night stand “okay” in her head. She thought that if she at least got into a relationship with the guy, then it wasn’t so much as she fucked a stranger, as she fucked her future boyfriend. It only happened once, and Alice ended up getting serious with the guy and dated him for two years, even though she knew he wasn’t right for her. He was manipulative, but he was also very charming. He would win her back over and over again with his charm, and then he wouldn’t stop manipulating her until he got what he wanted. When it finally ended with him once and for all, Alice swore off men... at least for a while. She needed to mend her broken heart. After her initial panic that Aaron was interested in Alice, she looked around and noticed that Mitch was gone. “Where did Mitch go, anyway?”

“I don’t know, he probably went to grab some more beer or something.”

Kate looked over at the keg, and after the people that were blocking her view shifted away, she could see that there was no sign of Mitch anywhere near the keg. *Maybe they brought their own beer and put it in the fridge.* “Oh, did you guys bring your own beer?”

“No, why?” Aaron was starting to get annoyed with Kate’s questions.

“I just don’t see him by the keg.”

“Oh, he probably just went to the bathroom then,” Aaron said, now getting visibly annoyed with Kate’s remarks.

Aaron started to make Kate feel uncomfortable. She could tell that Aaron was annoyed with her questions about Mitch. *But why would he be annoyed when he*

brought Mitch up to begin with? Maybe Aaron wasn't as cool as I thought. "I'm gonna go check on Alice. I'll be right back." Kate looked away and started to get up from the couch on the patio where she was sitting, when she felt a strong tug on her hand that forced her back onto her seat.

"Alice is a big girl, she can take care of herself. We're having fun!"

"Woah dude, leave me alone. Don't touch me," Kate demanded at Aaron as she ripped her hand out of his grip, no longer captivated by his good looks and charm. She was somewhat stunned by his actions; she did not see their interaction ending that way. She felt seriously violated, and went to go find Alice. She accidentally slammed the front door as she walked out, still flustered from her encounter with Aaron. She continued on down the block toward where they parked the car, and Alice was nowhere in sight. Kate was alone and started to feel worried and vulnerable. She was now regretting wearing her heeled boots that make the *click-clack* sound with every step. Besides the distant thumping from the party and the owls *hooting* in the trees, her shoes were the only sounds she could hear.

As she approached Alice's car, she noticed something wasn't right. The car was moving, as if someone were jumping around inside. But all the doors were closed and the lights were off inside. Kate knew Alice wasn't one for hookups, so she knew she had to intervene. She was no longer walking, at this point she was running down the street toward the car, her shoes now *click-clacking* very loudly down the street, and echoing off Guy's neighbors' homes. Kate couldn't believe what she was seeing, and she immediately felt a horrible sinking feeling in her stomach for making Alice go out to the

car all by herself. *This is all my fault.* Still running for the car, Kate rummaged through her purse for her keychain, which had a can of pepper spray attached to it. Just as she approached the car, the bumping around in the car stopped and she grabbed the door handle. She threw the door open and saw Mitch sitting over Alice's unconscious body, ready to stick his dick inside of her.

“WHAT THE FUCK DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING?!” Kate shouted angrily at Mitch as she ripped him out of the car and he stumbled onto the pavement with his jeans at his ankles. Clutching the pepper spray firm in her hand, she pointed it straight at his eyes and pressed down on the big red button. The toxic mixture sprayed all over his face, and he shouted in pain and agony. Then, Kate slammed the back door of the car. She left Alice where she was, laying in the back seat, still unconscious. She opened the driver door, got in the car and slammed the door shut. She was shaking as she reached down, pressed the lock button, grabbed the keys that were still laying on the passenger's seat, and started the engine. She flipped the shifter into reverse, making her way out of the parking spot that Alice had so beautifully parallel parked in, just an hour or so earlier. When she pulled forward to get out of the parking spot, she saw that the car was very close to hitting Mitch. *Fuck it.* She kept going and immediately heard a shriek cry. It was Mitch, Kate had run over his fingers with the car. *Serves you right, motherfucker.*