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Best Worst Date

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Harper checked her reflection in the mirror one last time before heading out of her bedroom. "How did I let myself get talked into a blind date?" she mumbled, double checking she had cash, a credit card and ID. As she made her way down toward the waiting cab she seriously questioned her sanity going on a blind date.

The ride was short, but in the three-inch heels, and her short backless dress, she wasn't going to walk the five blocks. After paying the fare, she smoothed the hem of her skirt and walked with a purpose.

"Just breathe," she told herself as she entered the crowded bar, scanning for what Paul had told her he'd be _____. "Why didn't I ask him to meet me at the door?" Her gaze jumped from table to table, until she spied him in the back.

By the time she reached the table, she felt as if she'd swam across a raging river. The man at the table finally saw her and stood, his towering height and easy smile melting the ice on her tongue. "You must be Harper. I'm Paul. Here, have a seat."

"Thank you." She said as he held her chair out then sat back down. He scored a point for the action.

Gesturing toward the drinks in front of him. "Would you like a _____?" The twin glasses sat on the table with dark liquor in them. One was half empty.

"Oh, I'll take a glass of wine."

The

waitress came over and Paul looked the young girl over. Now, Harper wasn't really the jealous type, especially as they weren't dating per say...however, she didn't think it was good dating etiquette to eyefuck the waitress in front of your date. Call her crazy. Paul was on his way to being the worst date as she mentally checked off another _____.

"So, tell me about your profession, Carrie told me some." He leaned forward, interest in his dark brown eyes. Harper crossed her legs and smiled as his _____ followed the movement then went back to her face. "I'm an orthopedic surgeon."

True interest shown in his eyes. Harper pulled out her credit card when Paul didn't offer to pay as the waitress sat the drink down. The one point he got for interest erased. Lord, was she being too bitchy or too presumptuous? Since he didn't track the young waitress with hungry eyes, she decided to stop being so judgy. "She told me you owned your own business, but not what that was. Care to enlighten me?" she asked with what she hoped was a flirtatious smile.

Paul finished his first drink, then cupped his hand around the second glass. "I own a carpet cleaning business. We have three branches. If you got a stain, we can get it out, no matter how _____ you are." He winked.

At his words, his last name finally clicked. She was sitting across from one of the carpet _____. Shocked, she took a gulp of the wine she ordered. Having only lived in the city for a little over six months, she wasn't familiar with who was who, but she had heard of them. The three brothers were notorious womanizers.

"Tell me more about you, Harper. I can see by your face you've heard of my family, but don't make assumptions. You have questions, ask. I'm an open _____." He spread his arms wide.

Harper couldn't deny Paul was gorgeous, and clearly, beneath the button down top he was built. Again, she told herself not to be judgy. She opened her mouth to ask more, but was pulled up short by a gorgeous blonde yelling. At first, she only glanced at the woman, sorrow for her clear distress washing over her. However, Paul's face became rigid. "Do you know her?" she asked.

"Wait here," he instructed, getting up and leaving Harper staring after him.

"Honey, if I was you I'd cut _____. You know, better to do that than sink with the ship ."

Harper laughed. "I knew what you meant."

The blonde looked toward the door and back. "She was here with him earlier. He must be a serial dater."

Harper stood so fast the chair fell backward. "Are you serious? Never mind, don't answer that. Thank you for the info." She fished a five out of her clutch and gave it to the girl, looking for another exit.

"This way." Harper followed in the younger girl's trail, looking over her shoulder for a glimpse of Paul.

"That would be a first and last, worst date, ever," she muttered. Once on the sidewalk she thanked the other woman, then sent a text to Tricia and Molly, updating them on her evening. She smiled at their immediate response and demand that she meet them for drinks around the block. _____ wheel or not, she was dressed up, and it was a chance to see her friends.

The sign for Tipsy's came into view. "Thank you, Jesus," she swore, pulling the door open. Her three-inch heels looked

great, but were not made for walking on uneven sidewalks.

Tricia stood up, waving her arms back and forth. How she thought Harper would miss her was comical seeing as she was the only one in the place sporting turquoise hair. She waved, letting them know she saw them, making a bee-line for the bar. A drink was exactly what she needed.

She wiggled into an open spot and waited for the bartender to come her way. The guy to her left grabbed his drinks and moved off, leaving the stool for her to sit.

"What can I get for you?"

"Can you make a Purple _____ Martini?" she asked, a plea tinging her voice.

The young man put his elbows on the edge of the bar. "What's in it? If I got it, I can make it?"

Harper crossed the fingers in her right hand and rattled off the ingredients, pausing on one. "Alright, now this one is a hard one to pronounce, even for me, and I'm a doctor," she paused. "Blue _____, but it's spelled CARACAO."

He laughed. "I've got it all and even sugar for the rim. Coming right up." He turned and began making her drink.

"Now, that's a sexy drink, for a sexy doctor."

Harper gasped as Paul's voice whispered in her ear. "What the hell? Did you follow me?"

She looked around the bar, happy her friends were around.

Paul sat on the now empty seat next to her. "Of course. You're my date. A gentleman wouldn't allow a woman to run off without making sure she was safe."

Her heart was pounding. Was he some stalker?

"Before you go thinking _____ thoughts, let me explain. That woman was my sister. She's upset with all of us, but that's," he shook his head. "If you let me explain I'd like to start over. I'm sorry I was an asshole earlier. Can we start again?"

Her drink was sat down, but when she went to pay, Paul placed his hand over her's. "I got it."

"So, this is what?" she asked taking a sip.

Paul leaned forward. "Second date. Firsts tend to _____."

"What do we do on the second date we didn't on the first?" The feel of his warm palm on her bare back sent a sizzle through her blood. She took another drink, licking the _____ off her lips.

Paul's eyes followed her tongue. "We get to know each other better. I admit I've been intrigued by Carrie's friend since you moved here six months ago, and have wanted to meet you since her wedding."

Harper tilted her head to the side. "What?"

He nodded. "If you hadn't got called away on an emergency, we would've met that night. This would've been our like fifty or sixtieth date."

His words stunned her. "What are you saying?"

Paul lifted her martini and took a drink, raising a brow. "I'm saying I believe in fate. Sometimes you just know when you meet someone. My sister almost screwed it up, and my own actions did too. Give me a chance, and let's see if we can't fix this worst date. In fifty years we can look back and joke about that one time."

Harper shook her head. "You know that usually ends with...one time at _____ camp, right?"

Paul

snaked his hand behind her neck and leaned forward. "One time, at a bar," he murmured and then he kissed her.

Harper had been kissed, many times. But never had she been kissed by a man like Paul Crestland. His lips were soft and moved with a masterful purpose. When his tongue licked the seam of her lips, she opened willingly. The thrust and glide against her own made her think of other things that mimicked the same act.

Pulling back, she gasped. "Wow."

"I can't wait for our third date," Paul said.

Neither could she.

The End

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