

Watermelon

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"We're here, ma'am," the Uber driver, otherwise known as Ernest, says as he pulls up in front of Penny's Bar.

Finals week has been hell and I partially blame the stress of studying on the fact that I am meeting up with a guy tonight that I connected with on a dating app. All of my friends have been using the app on and off while we've been in school, but for me, my classes are always first priority. With my last final under my belt, I chose tonight to let my hair down and finally have a little fun.

"Thank you," I say to the driver, exiting the car while confirming payment on my cellphone.

My apartment is close enough to the downtown bar that I could have walked, but in the heels I decided to wear tonight, I would have been crawling halfway.

Eric and I had been chatting for the last week and as far as conversations through messenger go, everything has been great. We have talked about a lot and seem to have quite a bit in common, so while I am extremely nervous to meet him, I am also excited. I haven't been out with a guy in over six months and I haven't so much as kissed someone in almost a year.

I show my ID and enter the bar, surveying the room for Eric, hoping he is already here. We agreed to meet at eight, but I have a tendency of showing early for everything. Luckily, I spot him right away, leaning against the bar and looking every bit as handsome as his pictures. There is one worry eliminated.

At least he didn't catfish me.

His eyes meet mine and a smile spreads against his full lips. He is tall and fit, the dark gray shirt he's wearing stretches

against his muscular biceps. A guy who looks like this has heartbreaker written all over him.

Good thing I'm not looking for love.

"Wow, Jess. You are even more gorgeous than I expected," he says, his gaze moving up and down my body as he licks his lips.

"Uh, thanks," I respond, not quite sure what to say and feeling a bit on display.

His dark eyes come back to mine, "I didn't mean any disrespect by that. Your photos were all beautiful, but in person, all I can say is wow!"

My cheeks heat up at the compliment. Not that I'm insecure or not used to hearing them, but that mixed with the way he is looking at me, just leaves me uneasy.

"Let's get you a drink." Eric's hand presses against the small of my back and he moves me towards the bar.

A handsome bartender approaches us and takes Eric's order, waiting on mine. "And for the lady?" he asks.

I glance behind him at the variety of liquor bottles lined up but have a hard time deciding what I want to drink. I am one of the worst people when it comes to making decisions.

"Didn't you mention liking wine? I'm sure they have a decent red in this place," Eric says, causing the bartender to roll his eyes.

My eyes swing back to Eric. "Actually, no. I can't stand the taste of wine." It's apparent that I am not the only girl he's been talking to. Returning my attention to the waiting bartender I ask, "What do you recommend?"

With a sexy smirk, he backs away and winks. "I know just the thing." Turning, he pulls a few bottles and begins mixing drinks.

"So, Jess, what did you say you were majoring in? Marketing?"

"Nope," I answer, wondering if this guy even remembers anything we have talked about. "Education. I'm going to be a teacher."

"Oh yeah, that's right." He nods his head as though he knew that the whole time.

"Should we go grab a table?" I point towards the few vacant tables off to the side, but notice Eric eyes are on his phone and not paying any attention.

Before I ask again, my drink is delivered and I inspect the pink liquid, wondering what it is.

"It's a watermelon Jolly Rancher martini." He leans over the bar, closing the space between us. "I figured you would need something strong to deal with your date."

I take a sip and smile. "It's really good. Thank you..."

"Chad," he answers the unspoken question. Pushing away from the bar, he stands tall and crosses his arms.

Where Eric is all dark eyes and dark hair Chad is the opposite. His hair is a golden blonde and his eyes a piercing blue that I would have no trouble getting lost in. Had I not already been on this date, Chad would be the kind of guy I went for. Even if it was just for one night.

"Hey, do you want to grab a table?" Eric asks once he finally pockets his phone.

I nod my head in response and grab my martini. His hand goes to my back possessively as he glares towards Chad, who stands in the same spot smiling.

We begin talking about finals and how happy we both are that they are over and things finally start to move smoother, but I still can't help but feel like something is off. Whenever conversation transfers back to him, he has

no issue talking about himself. He is going pre-law and plans to attend a big ivy league school next, where every other guy in his family has graduated from. His family is some supposedly well-known name around here, but I've never heard of them.

During the last few minutes, his attention constantly goes to his lap, which I can only assume is where his phone is sitting. He literally stopped mid-sentence and glanced down to his crotch.

"Am I keeping you from something?" I ask, having enough.

It takes a moment before he even registers that I asked a question.

"What?"

"You seem to be more interested in your crotch than the conversation, so am I keeping you from something?"

Like an alcohol miracle, a new martini is placed on the table in front of me and the empty glass removed.

The girl doesn't say a word and is gone as quickly as she came. I take a quick glance back towards the bar where

Chad stands with a devious smirk.

"Are you fucking the bartender?"

In shock, my head whips back around to Eric. "Excuse me?"

"Note for future dates, don't pick the bar where you're already fucking the help. I have never been so disrespected in my life. Who do you think you are?"

"Hold up! You have never been so disrespected? Right. How about the fact that you don't seem to remember a single thing we have talked about? Or how you have been on your phone nonstop this entire time? And to top it off, you just insinuated that I am a slut. All because what? The bartender made me a drink?"

"You know what? I don't have time for this." Standing abruptly, his chair flies back. "I hope you realize the opportunity you just passed up. You could have gone home with an attorney, but instead, you chose a bartender."

I can't help the laugh that escapes me. "First off, who refers to their self as an opportunity? And second, you're not an attorney. You aren't even in law school."

"Either way, I'll still amount to more than him. Good luck with that."

Eric leaves and heads straight for the exit as I try to decipher what in the ever loving fuck just happened. It definitely goes to show that people are completely different behind a phone or computer than in person.

I am slightly disappointed that this is how my first date in forever is ending. I was hoping for something a little more memorable, although, I doubt I will ever forget this.

Lifting my martini, I grin when I notice a big figure slide into the empty seat.

"Well, he ran out of here rather quickly. Emergency?" Chad asks.

"Something like that."

"What were you doing with a tool like that anyways? A girl like you can do much better."

I shift in my seat under his penetrating stare. "You don't even know what kind of girl I am."

Crossing his arms on the table, he leans in closer. "I can tell enough to know you deserve better than that guy."

How did you meet him anyway?"

"Online dating at its finest," I answer and down the rest of my watermelon martini.

He shakes his head and chuckles. "I think the old-fashioned way is much better."

"And what's that?"

"Pick them up at the bar," he laughs and clears his throat. "Hi, I'm Chad." He reaches his hand across the table.

Slipping mine inside, I respond, "Hi, I'm Jess."