

excerpt from **My Life as a Local Band Groupie**

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"Blillaaaagghh" I roar from deep within my belly as yet another reincarnation of tonight's dinner comes hurling down the pike. The headlights from the passing cars allow me to inspect my vomit for two second intervals. I can see three things pretty clearly, some form of tomatoes (maybe sun-dried? I can't remember what I had for dinner, it's all a blur now), the brownies, yes, definitely pieces of the laced brownies, and the hideousness of the situation I am in right at this moment. On the side of Interstate 81, drunk, stoned, and now, covered in my own vomit.

"Get in the car!" Smithy yells from the parked car about fifteen feet behind me. He's mad now. This was a pit stop he wasn't counting on making. I wipe my mouth on my sleeve and get off my knees. The gravel stuck into the bare skin on my legs, my skirt sitting somewhere around my hips, my hair bearing the perfume of the moment. I walk back to the car and slip into the passenger seat. I sit silently as Smithy gets in and starts the long drive home. I watch the street lights blur by and try to recall the night. Someone's party...but whose? Oh Amanda, that's right. Leaving the party, hearing my cousin John play...I hope I didn't throw myself at him again, damn him and that guitar, wait a minute... Someone bringing out a cake, with hash? Oh, that was it. My stomach flutters to corroborate my story, yes, it was the cake.

"Blilllaghgh!" Another sour reminder of the cake flies from between my lips onto Smithy's floor mat.

"What the...? Fucking Christ!" He slams on the brakes. "Get out!"

"What?"

"Get OUT!" He reaches over me and opens my door.

I gather my purse and step out of the car. I stand in shock as he drives off, his taillights the only color in the black of the night. I am only two blocks from home. This is the end of my life as a groupie, standing here on a street corner in Wilkes Barre, covered in vomit, dressed like a prostitute.

Six Months Earlier

When my first husband left me for his boss, it spelled the end of the world for me. I was twenty-seven and divorced. I detested that word, I hated the fact that I had to carry around that badge so early in life, and I hated that I had wasted ten years of my life on this man. I had no idea how to date, since I never had, I had no idea how not to be married, or how not to be one of two. I had also lost almost a hundred pounds, and for the first time in my life was feeling "sexy", a word I didn't even know the meaning of before. So, here I was, lonely, desperate, and not too bad looking, all of these elements combined to create what would become a perfect storm.

Meet Tom. Tom is a simple guy, he's in his early-thirties, he's short, he's bald, and carrying an extra thirty pounds around the middle. After barely squeaking through five years of college, he has found a job at the same TV station I work at, that pays barely over minimum wage, and requires almost nothing of him.

Now meet the other side of Tom, the side I met. After being introduced to him at work, he asks me and my girlfriend, Jen, to meet him and his friends at a local show. Afroman is playing, do I remember him? I laugh, bat my eyelashes, and throw my hair over one shoulder, of course I do, I thought he was dead. Looking for any type of entertainment in the midst of my otherwise lonely life, I agree to go.

When we arrive, I discover Tom's band is headlining the show, yes I said band. He's on stage now, known to his fans as "Smithy" and he's really good. He's causing quite a stir among the twenty-something's waiting to see Afroman, and they are beginning to gather at the front of the stage.

My opinion of him starts to change now. Under the hot lights of the stage, his bald head and huge eyes don't look too bad, he actually looks...kind of hot up there. Then I hear it. Smithy on bass, begins the baseline for Tool's "Sober", and he stares right through the small crowd at me. I hold up my beer to show my appreciation and he winks at me. Jen looks over at me and sighs "Oh, no."