

HANGOVER

By J.H. Long

Seagulls calling to one another roused Sasha, and she sat up in the bed, cradling her tender skull. The motel's blankets smelled like old cigarettes, and clothing littered the room. Next to her, soft breaths came in long strokes from under the mound of blankets. She stretched to get a better look, but no part of her mysterious bedmate lay uncovered, so Sasha just grunted and slid off the bed. Her foot landed on an empty bottle of vermouth and she booted it out of the way before picking her panties off the floor and pulling them on.

Sasha's brow furrowed. Her top lay alongside a pair of nylons too small for her and a Turkish-blue dress hung over one of the ladder-backed chairs. Two pairs of heels mingled on the floor.

Sasha slinked onto the bed and eased the blankets off her mystery date, revealing long, dark hair dyed a familiar purple at the ends.

"Jamie?"

The woman in the bed stirred and squinted into the sunlight, mumbling a bit before forming any real words. "What? What is it?"

"Why are you here?" Sasha asked.

Jamie chuckled. "You want me to take the walk of shame?" she asked.

“What? Walk of shame? Did we have sex together?”

A contented grin spread across Jamie’s face like warm butter over bread. “Mmm.”

Sasha covered her mouth to stifle a noise somewhere between a laugh and a gasp. “Oh my god. This is a new low, even for us,” she said.

“Low?” Jamie asked.

“Yeah, double teaming... whoever,” Sasha said, glancing around the room, “and he’s already gone.”

“What? Who?”

“There was a man, wasn’t there?” Sasha asked.

Jamie’s face darkened. “No,” she said.

A beat passed, and Sasha asked. “It was just you and me?”

Jamie sat on her ankles, clutching the sheets to her body. “Well, don’t sound so disappointed,” she said.

Jamie stood. “What the fuck?”

“What?” Jamie asked.

“How?”

Jamie scoffed. “Do you need me to draw you a picture?”

“This isn’t funny,” Sasha said.

“No, it isn’t,” Jamie said. “You’re acting like it didn’t happen.”

“Well, how did it happen?”

Jamie took a deep breath. “Well, you were really smashed after the club,” she said, “so I decided it would be best if you stayed with me. I got the room, and when we got up here... you kissed me. It was a good kiss. One thing led to another...”

“Jamie, gross,” Sasha said.

“Gross? You were totally into it. You don’t remember anything from last night?” Jamie asked.

“No, and I don’t want to,” Sasha said. “You think I’m into that?”

Jamie’s mouth made shapes, but produced no sound, and she resigned herself to contemplating her restless fingers.

“Are you?” Sasha asked.

“What?”

“Are you into that?”

Jamie cringed. “Well, I don’t know.”

“You don’t know?” Sasha asked.

“Well, sometimes I think maybe I am, and sometimes I think, maybe...it’s just...you.”

Sasha’s breath caught in her throat. “Me?” she asked. “Did... you... get me drunk?”

Jamie rolled her eyes. “Oh, come on. Don’t start that. It wasn’t like that,” she said.

Jamie tried to touch Sasha’s hand. Sasha recoiled like she’d touched a hot stove. Her eyes darted about until she spotted her skirt, and she picked it off the floor.

“What are you doing?” Jamie asked.

Sasha zipped her skirt and collected her clothes.

“You’re leaving?” Jamie asked. She rose to her knees atop the bed and the blankets fell away, revealing breasts with little red bite marks.

Sasha’s breathing shook as she strapped on her heels and she looked anywhere but at Jamie.

“Does the thought of me disgust you so much?” Jamie asked.

Sasha grabbed her clutch and marched for the door, wearing only one earring. “I’m not a lesbian.”

Jamie jumped from the bed. “You enjoyed yourself,” she said.

Sasha jerked the door open.

Jamie said, “You told me you loved me.”

Sasha hesitated. “Well, I was drunk. I didn’t know what I was saying.”

“That’s bullshit. You looked into my eyes and you said it while I touched you.”

“I don’t remember that,” Sasha said.

“You have to remember!”

“How long have you thought about me that way?” Sasha asked, still facing the open doorway.

“I... I don’t know,” Jamie said.

“Stay away from me.”

Sasha tried to leave, but Jamie pulled her back into the room. The two women struggled against each other, panting and grunting, before Jamie managed to pin Sasha to the wall.

“Get off me.” Sasha turned her head to escape the peach scent radiating from Jamie’s hair and skin.

“Don’t leave. I love you,” Jamie said.

“Well, I don’t love you, not like that.”

“How can you say that after how you were last night?” Jamie asked. “How you were with me?”

Sasha met Jamie’s eyes with an implacable glare. “Let me go. I can’t even remember any of that.”

“You can. You can remember. You have to,” Jamie said.

Jamie took Sasha by her nape and pulled her into a kiss. Sasha resisted, and their lips only brushed against one another before she pulled away.

“No. Leave me alone, Jamie. I’m leaving,” Sasha said. She shoved Jamie away and marched out of the hotel room, yanking the door shut behind her.

The two stood in silence on opposite sides of the door for a moment. Jamie tried to open it, but Sasha held it closed.

“It doesn’t have to be like this,” Jamie said.

Sasha released the door handle, but only to turn and tread down the hall. Her heels thudded away on the carpet. The quivering in her legs caused her to stumble into the hallway wall halfway to the stairs. There, she stood, one hand bracing her, the other pressed flat against her chest. She took deep, shaking breaths, and tried to quiet her traitorous heart.

“No,” she said through clenched teeth, and she continued her march, not daring a single glance back at the room.

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