

This story contains mature themes and situations. I guess this is where I say no one under 18 admitted without parent or guardian.

The Worst Xian: Installment VIII

The Post War Years

"Saturday"

I woke up alone, in the dark, my sheets bunched around me, twisted between my legs, an overstuffed pillow clutched to my chest; sweat on the back of my neck. I looked up at the ceiling to read the pale blue script of the clock - Saturday, 5:42 anno meridian. I had been asleep for almost exactly one half hour. Waking up this way was part of my nightly ritual. Half an hour after dozing off I would wake up and stare at the clock's display, usually incredibly aroused, my penis sticking upright against my body, feeling painfully swollen, begging for attention.

This was normal. I often find myself semi-lucid, fitfully waking and drifting, not able to stay awake, not able to sleep. I had been dreaming/fantasizing about things to do with an underage girl, things that had to be illegal in all fifty states and Puerto Rico. Neither really awake nor asleep, I had only limited control over the images and thoughts that welled up from my subconscious. Inconsistent and often violent images surfaced and dove from the chaos waters.

One moment my dream would be of being in total control, pushing, shoving, tearing; the next of utter submission, and violation. Through the struggles I could feel my sheets damp with sweat against me, my own hands masturbating me, twisting in the sheets, my teeth in my bare lip. Underneath it all, under the crashing waves of reptile brain driven violence and desires, my conscious mind struggled and gasped for air, railing against it all. Twenty five years of hypocritical societal programming about what is right and what is wrong, dragging me down; a stone around my neck.

I forced my teeth together and woke painfully into the world, "Saturday, 6:02 anno meridian" on the ceiling in pale blue.

There is the taste of blood, salty, rusty, sexual, on my lips. It brings back a fleeting flood of images from the already nearly forgotten dream. I cringe at some of them, barely believing that I had thought of them. The thought that these images and desires could exist anywhere in my mind revolts me in a way. I run my fingers through the nearly shaved, sweat damp hair on my neck; it bristles and snaps back into its unruly place. My cock throbs beneath the sheets and I again think about the dream, this time less ashamed and more desperately aroused.

The air of the apartment is cool; as I twist free of the sheets it sends a chill over my naked body. I slowly slide my hands down my ribs to my hips, one hand grabbing the shaft of my penis, the other wrapping tightly around the testicles. I arch my back in an exaggerated wave, alternately lifting and thrusting back against the bed with my hips and shoulders. Flashes of the dream come back to me - the girl on her back, on her stomach, face into the

ground, alternating places with me. In dream fast jump cuts things progress, regress and fold. No need to bother with continuity, possibility, or reality.

In my mind the girl rears up, straddling me. Her fingernails, becoming claws, dig under my collar bones. I bite at my cut lip and taste fresh blood, thrust my pelvis against my hands, imagine her wrapped around me as tight as my fist. She lowers her head, long horns curving and curling sleekly back over her head, coming out to the side in sharp points. I slip my left hand underneath me, pressing a finger against my anus.

I let my body be exaggerated, let it roll against the bed, sweating despite the cold air. Allow my breath to come to me raggedly, loudly. I groan for my own benefit.

What was once a young woman now looks down at me through long lashed, narrow slits of eyes. Razor tongued and sharp toothed she cuts and bites into me, my blood flowing freely from her lips down over her naked body to where we meet and piston into one another. She lifts herself up on cloven hooves, pressing her horns against my forehead as she enfolds us in the warm black of her leather wings.

I shake awake again; "Saturday, 6:29 anno meridian".

The shades, as always, are drawn, keeping what is probably a brightening sky out of my apartment. I touch my finger to the screen of my pad, which sits on the nightstand next to the bed. It casts a pale light as it powers on. I touch one of the screen icons and the 35" flat on the far wall lights up, showing the start screen of my pad: Time, date, a jumbled mess of work projects, to do lists, music files, and semi concealed folders of pornography. My mail icon pulses and spins erratically, I had forgotten to check my messages when I had gotten home, almost two hours ago.

"Nenagh, messages." I croak as I slide out of bed and make my way to the kitchen. Cold air tumbles out of the freezer as I retrieve the translucent blue bottle from beneath the ice maker. The contents are clear and semi-viscous, I pour two fingers worth into a glass, before returning the bottle to the freezer. I grab a pair of boxer shorts, of debatable cleanliness, from a pile near my desk.

"5 messages." Nenagh's soft, benign, synthetic voice announces as I slip into the shorts and grab my pad. "Margaret Garbarino called. KellE Karma and PHO'88 posted to Hip Shit. Zoe called. RocKetGrl sent you a letter."

"Shit." The gin in my glass, it is literally colder than ice and burns my bloody and raw lip. "Shit."

I lean back into the reclining chair that sits near the foot of my bed. From here I can see almost all the dimly lit apartment - the queen size bed next to me, the bookshelf lined walls leading to the desk over which is mounted my 35" flat; a present from my parents during my months of recuperation. The desk is littered with debris, currently backlit by the flat. I can make out my

deck, a dozen or so styluses, pens, and pencils in a mason jar, reams of random paper, which I know to be mostly club flyers even though I can't see them, my printer, and a number of anonymous shapes that, while I cannot make them out individually, I know are beloved toy robots.

To the right of the desk and flat is the bathroom door; in the wall next to that, the entrance to the other room, which is the kitchen and the front door. Not much of an apartment, to be sure, but more than enough at the same time.

I look at the pad and tap the top message.

"Jack, Marge Garb, but you already know that don't you." As my editor's voice fills the room Nenagh transcribes her words onto the flat and onto my pad in scrolling text.

"I'll keep it short." My stomach rolls under the impact of her clipped professional voice. "It's getting to be head count time 'round here. I want you to stay on with us, but to be honest we can have an off the shelf deck do the job that you're doing right now. We need to talk about what we can do to move you up the ladder a rung or two. We'll talk about it Monday, say ten thirty anno? Call me if there's a problem. The number's embedded"

I passively sip some more of the expensive gin, file the message, and tap the next one up.

Re: Dam5ons post.

Ahh... poor twisted Dam5on. If only you could understand the finer subtleties of brewing coffee in a percolator. I guess asking someone as solid state as you to understand something as pre-digital as finely brewed coffee would be asking too much.

KellE Karma - Analog coffee maker.

Delete.

Unsubbing.

You are all bastards. You all think you are sooooo fucking cool sitting around being intellectual and talking shit about how cool things used to be. Well wake up! There is just as much cool shit going on today as there was ten years ago.

Fuck you all, I am out of here!

PHO' 88

Delete.

I stare at the flat at the last two remaining messages, debating which to open first. I sip my gin and select a music file at random to play. Carla begins to belt a country flavored Hype tune, not the best choice ever as the lyrics begin to spill out about love lost and lovers murdered.

I pull up Zoe's call.

A picture of her smiling and giving me the finger unfolds next to the transcription window.

"Hey Shade, you shit head", the pic refreshes to her doubled over laughing. "It's me, I just got home from work and I have news." The pic refreshes to her sitting down. She is wearing a white button down dress shirt, unbuttoned to the waist revealing her smooth pale chest and black bra. She tilts her head at 1 frame every 12 seconds. She takes a long drink out of a green glass bottle, marring her lipstick.

"Well, I was at work tonight, and Jana - you remember her, the one with the two kids that I lived with for a while over in Northside. Frizzy hair. Uhhmm... big tits; you were always staring at her when you'd come to pick me up." Her voice iced for a moment, "Fucker." The camera managed to capture the moment. Her eyes dropped to the carpet, and her face twisting meanly.

Zoe always assumed I was out to hit on her friends, to fuck them behind her back. At the end of every night that we would had hung out with other people, she would always lay there in bed and accuse me of wanting some other girl that she knew more than her, or that I wanted to have sex with her co-workers and her. No matter how much I denied it, truthfully and honestly, she never truly believed me. She would roll over on top of me, letting her chin length black hair cascade around that almost boyishly cute face, tickling my nose with the ends of the strands. Playfully holding me down, she would say she believed me, and that she was just kidding. But her eyes would remain cold for hours afterwards, even if we had sex. Her eyes would be violent and she would act as if she were proving she was better than them.

The next frame caught her tossing her head back up resiliently, taking another long drink of her beer. Her hair would smell of the bar. It would smell of cigarettes, perfume and sweat; thinking of it now I began to get my erection back.

"Anyway, she's got family in DC and is going to visit for a bit; she knows that you're out there and offered to let me come along. I need to know if you want me to stay with you, or if I should tell her I need to stay with her."

The image refreshed, showing Zoe fidgeting in her chair. The button down had shifted to reveal the form of her breasts beneath. My mind shifted from its earlier concerns to much more carnal matters. I took a hefty drink out of my glass, while rubbing myself through my boxer shorts.

"Let me know, fucker." With that she leaned forward, towards her screen, giving a full view of her body from chin, past her cleavage, down her long pale, languid torso, to the tops of her black jeans, out of which the top Brazilian cut bikini bottoms she wore when dancing showed.

The next refresh was of her tongue against the camera lens. The next was simply of her smiling ear to ear, the message ended.

The thought of irreverent sex with Zoe was almost enough to make

me forget the final message. I marked Zoe's message for re-reading and looked at the final message header. It floated there waiting to be called up: "Sender - RocKetGrl, Subject - Hello?"

I got out of my chair and went back to the freezer, stumbling over a pile of dirty jeans in the process. I pulled the sapphire blue bottle out of the freezer; it quickly covered itself in frost, then, more slowly, condensation. I poured a fresh glass, about four fingers worth, then recapped the bottle. I made to put the bottle away when I heard Carla singing the next track off the album. It was a ballad, of sorts. Wild noise and distortion played out viciously, even at the low volume I had the player set. The lead singer, an ex-prostitute, began screaming about love lost, and being alone. About being fucked and deserted. I closed the freezer door and brought the bottle back to the chair with me. When I sat down I refilled my glass.

"Nenagh, radio, HFS."

The music stopped instantaneously, a DJ came on talking about the morning traffic on the inner beltway; it would be a few minutes of banter before something appropriately trendy and numbing was played.

I stabbed at the final message, touching it as if it were a hot coal or ember. The text screen unfolded:

Shade?

I was sent an anonymous letter telling
me that you wanted to talk.
I tried tracing it, but couldn't.
I don't know if this is actually you
or not.
I am in the process of moving.
If this is you, either mail me your embed
or mail me back and I will send you
mine with all my new info when I get
them.

Yours;

Karen

P.S. I am not mad at you, I never was.

"Well looks like we have an early backup at the New Woodrow Wilson. Seems there's an accident in the left..."

"Nenagh, radio off."

"Nenagh, save message to Folder Karen, mark it as important." My voice seemed hollow in the empty, silent room. In my chest my heart pounded. It had been months since I last spoke with Karen, and that had been ugly. I had been ugly. I drank some more of my gin; things began to go soft at the edges.

In my mind I could remember lying on the couch at my parents house, in a situation not too different than this. I was drunk and

alone. I had just gotten home, my leg was wrapped and bandaged from hip to toe. It had been a bit hard to get drunk that night because I had to ask my mother to get me anything I wanted; still I had managed.

I had been trying to call her for days, but she had not been in. She had been in the process of moving then also, from Central New York to the Raleigh/Durham area of North Carolina, apparently following her father who had been supporting her, somewhat.

I had finally reached her at her new apartment. She had apologized for being difficult to get hold of. I had not told her that I was home yet. Instead I was leading up to telling her that I loved her, and that I needed to see her. The conversation was muddled to begin with.

"How are you?" she said.

"Good, you?"

"Fine, fine. Sorry I have been so hard to get hold of, it must be worse with all the international long distance and military things."

"Yeah, I would have liked to have called you sooner. You know, cuz there's things I can't really say in a letter."

"Yeah? Like what?"

"Oh, things. So how's the south?"

"Well, we've only been here a few days. Seems pretty boring though."

"I've really missed you. You can't believe how much I have missed you."

"Hold on, let me grab the handset. I've missed you too."

"You don't sound like it." I joked.

"What... I have. Really."

"Is there someone there? Should I call back later? I mean, it's kind of important that I talk to you, but it's kind of personal."

"No, no, it's all right, just let me get my cigarettes"

"Are you all right?"

The sound of her inhaling. "Yeah, great. What did you want to say?"

"You're seeing someone, aren't you. Dating them, I mean."

The sound of her exhaling. "Yeah."

Silence. Her waiting for me, me waiting for her.

"How fucking long?"

"Shade... Jack."

"No, how fucking long?"

"About two months..."

"TWO FUCKING MONTHS!"

"I wanted to tell you. But like you said, there are things you can't say in a letter."

"You should have told me."

"I couldn't reach you, there was no way to tell you."

"You should have told me. Do you know why I called you?"

"No."

"I called to tell you I loved you... and..."

"What?"

"I called to tell you I love you. To, to.. ahh, fuck it, fuck you."

"Shade, what the fuck. What was I supposed to do, how was I supposed to know?"

"How should you know that you shouldn't date someone without telling me? Gee, beats the fuck out of me."

"Stop it, stop it now. Seriously Shade, you never told me you wanted me to stay loyal to you. Now, after a year away, you finally call me from the other side of the planet and say you're in love with me. You always said you didn't know how to love. What the hell changed overnight that I should believe you?"

"Read my letters, the E-s I sent to you. I have been trying to tell you for months, ever since I left; I just didn't have the courage or chance to say it 'till now. So what's his name?"

"Dave."

"So does Dave love you?"

"Don't do this."

"No I think I have a fucking right to know. Does this guy love you?"

"No, Shade, no, he doesn't, but he might, he could, which is more than you left me with."

"Fuck, I gave up everything for you."

"What do you mean by that? What's that supposed to mean?"

Silence.

"Nothing, it means nothing. I guess I should have known by your letters."

"Maybe, but you're right, I have should have told you outright earlier."

"Don't do that, don't condescend to me."

"I'm not condescending to you. I am being honest."

"Well, fuck it. I should go."

"Don't go yet Shade."

"I have to."

"Jack, don't." Her voice had gone soft and buttery.

"I'll be home soon. If you want to talk to me again, call my parents' place, they'll know

where I am."

"Jack."

Silence.

"I meant what I said, Karen, I really mean it. If you ever dump this Dave call me."

That was it. The last time we talked. How long had it been - more than a few months, almost a year?

I sat in the dark, drinking my third glass of straight gin. The bottle itself in my lap freezing cold and going wet against my stomach and hip; the flat was black, gone to sleep to save energy while I was lost in my reverie.

The room was dark and quiet again. My stomach hurt. I felt like getting up and breaking something. But I couldn't summon up the strength or true desire or even reason enough to do anything more than lift the glass.