

Rachel's Love Potion 2: Rachel's Love Potion's Love Potion
Part Two

"Wh... where am I?"

I was awake in a flash, darting to kneel beside the sofa. Joanna was looking around in confusion, eyes squinting despite the single candle lighting in the room. She must have hit her head harder than I'd feared.

"I'm here, Jo. It's me. You're OK," I assured her. I took her hand and squeezed it firmly.

"What happened? One minute I was in the pool, and the next, I... I don't remember." She frowned.

Oh thank goodness. Sitting here all evening with nothing to do but fret, I'd had all sorts of scary scenarios cooked up. Her not remembering was decidedly for the best.

"You took a drink, and then fainted on the spot. Knox and I caught you, but you're only now waking up. It's..." I glanced at my phone. "It's going on two in the morning."

"I fainted, and you brought me inside to lay on the couch? For what, like, six hours?"

"That's right, hon. I'd have stayed by your side all night if I had to."

She fought to sit up, but gave up halfway, groaning. "Why the fuck didn't you two take me to a hospital? Christ almighty, Rach, I could have been brain dead for all you knew."

I laughed. That was my Joanna, surly as ever. "Yeah, I guess I should've, huh. But hey, your health insurance will thank me for it later on down the line."

"Assuming I still have two brain cells to rub together. Damn, my head is pounding. You got any tylenol? I'd ask for something to wash it down with, but since the last drink you made me nearly killed me, I think I'll just chew and swallow."

I hurried to comply, bringing her a glass of water anyway. She downed it greedily, and I quickly brought a refill. She was sitting upright by then, which I took as a good sign, and I took a spot next to her. I know it was paranoid on my part, but I was tensed and ready to leap into action in case she fainted on me again.

Joanna eyed me with open judgment. "Are you really still wearing your bikini? You laid me up all evening and didn't even bother to get dressed?"

"You're still wearing yours," I pointed out, gesturing to the huge half-revealed boobs, pale skin practically glowing in the dark where it spilled out of her suit. She didn't laugh. "Kidding, Jo. Relax. I dunno, I guess I've gotten used to keeping it casual. If it bothers you, I can—"

"No, whatever. You keep it warm as hell in here. But hey, yeah, speaking of. I guess I fainted before we had a chance for me to ask you what the fuck gives with that creep Knox."

Creep? What on earth could she be talking about?

“Oh yeah! I didn’t even know how much of a chance to talk you guys had gotten. Did it not go well?”

“Of course it didn’t go well. Come on, Rach. I’d been holding out hope he was at least really good-looking but maybe too old, or rich and classy but not cute enough to date. Maybe even just really, *really* funny. But that guy? He’s a million miles below our league. Why the hell are you treating this bum like he’s the best thing since... well, me?”

“Well, so much for playing matchmaker,” I sighed.

She spat out a mouthful of water all over the living room floor. “Match...?! Rachel, I said I’d *meet* him. You seriously thought there was a slab of bacon’s chance in fat camp I’d give *that* guy the time of day? Fuck, I know Ian isn’t the best I’ve ever landed, but you really thought my standards had just up and died?”

“No, but...”

“But what? God damn, baby girl, what is going on with you? I mean seriously, does this guy have you under some kind of spell or something?”

For a moment, I actually stopped and wondered. I know she was only using an expression, but... Knox was an actual warlock, and he did have an actual love potion recipe thoroughly marked up in his library. Could he have...?

But then reality caught up with me, and I almost laughed at the absurdity of it. If he’d used a love potion on me, then I’d *love* him. Who would go to all the trouble of brewing a potion to turn their neighbor into their bestest friend? If all he was after was making me his love slave, what the heck good would that do him? I made a mental note to tell him about it tomorrow – he’d get a kick out of that. Once he was done fucking my butt, that is; he’d texted me earlier to tell me to make sure I was lubed and ready when he got here in the morning.

“Joanna, it’s really nothing weird. We met at this neighborhood picnic thing I went to with Jim earlier this year, and we just hit it off. His looks, his money, none of that has anything to do with anything – and it’s honestly a little hurtful of you to suggest it might.”

She didn’t look chastened by my rebuke. “OK, so what is it then? What is it about this guy that makes you so fucking eager to let him dress you up like some teenie bopper whore? Why do you let this totally unremarkable pig come into your house and use you—”

Joanna was ready to go on; I knew how she got when she was in a judging mood. But she had crossed a line, and I was not having it. “You know what? I don’t have to justify myself and my choices to you, or anyone. I *like* Knox. As a *friend*. Nothing more. And if we’re not the boring cookie cutter buds you want us to be, that’s not my fault or my problem! But I’ll be darned if I’m going to sit here and listen to you call him names and run him down when you don’t even know him!”

She gaped. “Rachel, what the fuck are you—”

I stood up, folding my arms – then pausing to tuck my left nipple back into my bikini top. Darn skimpy thing. Knox always picked out the teensiest little outfits for me, as if regular bikinis weren’t scant enough. “I’m going to bed. You can sleep on the couch, or if you want I can call you an uber. But I am done with this conversation.”

With that, I stormed upstairs and slammed my bedroom door behind me. I honestly don’t know if she stayed the rest of the night or not, but when I woke up to start prepping some scramby eggs and my butthole for Knox, Joanna was gone. And to think I’d been worried I’d hurt her, when all she’d wanted to do since the moment she came over was hurt me.

Knox didn’t laugh at the love potion joke at first, by the way, but after a minute, he broke down so hard his cock slipped right out of my butt. I knew he’d think it was funny. A real friend is someone who gets even your most ridiculous jokes.

I could hardly believe it when Joanna texted me that night to ask if I wanted to hang out, have a proper pool party. Just *hey lets do ur pool proper 2nite*, like she was under no obligation whatsoever to make things right. I opened the text, but boy howdy did I leave her judgmental booty on read. If she couldn't even acknowledge my feelings, I sure as heck wasn't going to let it slide knowing she was harboring such thoughts.

"Use me," she'd said, like she wasn't right that moment trying to use me. What was the difference between her using me for my pool, and Knox using me for my pussy? To me, it was the same thing. They were friends, and I was only too happy to accommodate them. I already had both of them ready and available; why would I begrudge my friends taking enjoyment in them? Why was that so hard for her to accept?

She tried again the next day, though this time it was raining and chilly out, so she went for a dinner date invite with her and her boyfriend Ian and his buddy. Because of course, she wanted to set me up with someone. I knew how her mind worked. She couldn't believe me and Knox were nothing but friends, and she was figuring if I met a guy, someone closer to my age, someone attractive, I'd forget about him and things could go back to the way they were. Knowing I couldn't ghost her forever, I settled for a simple *I'm busy* and went back to my book.

The next day it was a more direct notification that she was in the area and "was going to stop by;" I'd already booked the whole afternoon for a marathon BJ with Knox, and I informed her as much. (More or less. She didn't need to know the gritty details of what he and I were up to.) So she said she could hang out that evening, but by that point Knox had impaled himself on my face again. By the time he was relaxed enough that I could consider splitting my attention between those long, lazy slurps and trying to text her back, I'd talked myself out of it. Here was Knox, willing to give me his whole day, not judging me even though my fellatio-smudged lipstick probably made me look like some kind of killer circus clown, while all she wanted was for me to push him out the door.

The next day was Saturday, and I'd already notified her that I was out on a friend date with Knox and not to bother. It was a nice relief from that cloying guilt – I *hated* being in fights with my friends, no matter how justified I might feel. Still, I was incredibly grateful for Knox. He took me to this gorgeous local orchard. I spent all day picking fresh apples and browsing the adjoined farmer's market while he restocked on some herbs and fungi he could use for his experiments. I was doubly grateful for Knox's presence, because he convinced me to go in nothing but a pair of cutoff overalls, so I was all cleavage and sideboob (such as I had) and booty, and it was up to Knox to keep all the guys who were leering at me from getting too handsy. As it was, by the time we left I had a fan club following along behind me like a flock of baby ducklings. Knox joked that I looked like such a redneck trailer trash hooker that I was probably going to wind up in the promo materials for the farmers only dating website. Isn't he a kidder?

Sunday, Joanna didn't text me until pretty late, asking only to talk things out. I, however, was in the middle of one of my frequent and lengthy masturbation sessions. It's sort of embarrassing to acknowledge, but because Knox spends so much time treating me like his personal sex slave, I have actually been kind of generally horny a lot of the time these days. See, friendly as he is, Knox was pretty bad about remembering to get me off, too. Plus dressing sexy like this all the time, knowing that somewhere out there people were watching me on those cameras, some of them probably... you know...

I dunno. Don't judge! A girl has needs is all.

So by the time I finished a very dreamy fantasy about this super cute hunk on *The Bachelor* and collapsed with a delighted sigh onto my pillow, Joanna was already in bed for the night.

Still, she'd at least reached out to me and acknowledged things weren't right between us, so I threw her a bone and at least put a point on what I expected from her. *I don't have room in my life for people who are going to try to tell me who I can be friends with, and what that friendship looks like*, I wrote. *So unless you're ready to apologize and promise you're going to be cool with him from now on, there's nothing left to say.* More words almost followed, but I recognized that was just the hurt trying to come out. I left it at that.

Besides, Knox wanted to come over and see if his ointment that was supposed to grow my boobs had done enough work to make them properly fuckable. He wound up super bummed that they were still a bit too small to feel the way he wanted, but to my mind, they were already getting pretty big. I didn't wear bras any more, but last time I went to the mall, I'd tried a few on to see where I was at. I was almost a C cup, which was pretty crazy considering I'd been a biggish A before Knox came along! He was helping me move forward with my life in so many ways, even ones like this I hadn't even wanted!

Joanna wrote me back bright and early Monday morning while I was making Knox's breakfast, and I almost dropped the carton of eggs when I read it. *sorry if it hurts you to hear it babe but your 'friend' is a fucking creep and i dont know what you see in him but I'm not letting you settle for being treated like his sugar baby*

I was re-reading that when she wrote again. *so help me god i will make you see your better than this! just talk to me pleeez*

My jaw was still working in numb little circles when the first tears leaked out. How *dare* she!

I blocked her on the spot without so much as a reply.

"What's wrong with you, tiny tits?" Knox asked as he slumped into his place in my breakfast nook.

“It’s nothing,” I said, passing him his plate. For once, he didn’t even help himself to the portion I’d cooked for myself. He was so good at recognizing when that extra little bit of tenderness would go a long way. It only made me cry harder.

“Well knock it the fuck off. You’re putting me off my appetite.”

There was a gross combination of crying, sniffing and laughing at his attempt at levity, and I apologized as I sat down beside him. “I don’t mean to be a pain. It’s this whole thing with Joanna.”

“Oh, the hottie with the big tits that you tried to drug?” I nodded. “What ever happened with that?”

“Yeah, that’s Joanna. She was fine – woke up and didn’t even remember what happened. Thanks again for that.”

“My pleasure,” he said, squirting a burst of syrup on my exposed boob and dabbing a forkload of pancake in it before shoveling it into his mouth.

With the syrup already there and threatening to trickle onto my lap, I did the same. “But yeah, we talked the next morning, and... she’s been shitty ever since.”

“Oh yeah?” he said, taking another bite. I was running out of syrup runoff, so I squirted another blob for him, this time aiming higher up so we’d have more time before it dribbled off.

“Yeah. And this morning, she...” I glared at my phone. “She crossed the line. I don’t think we can be friends any more.”

“That’s too bad.” I thrust my boob out to his questing fork. “Thanks. So what’s the drama? You get jealous of how much more fuckable her rack is? You’ll get there someday, Rach, don’t you worry.”

I rolled my eyes with a little laugh. “It’s definitely not her ‘rack,’ ya horndog. No, it’s... well, it’s actually... forget about it.”

“You got it.” Knox leaned over and helpfully licked some of the sticky residue off of me.

“It’s about you!” I blurted. It was nice of him to give me the room to try to forget about it, but I was in more of a venting mood.

He grinned. “Oh yeah? How so? She not like me dressing you up like a little fuck puppet?”

“No, she decidedly does not.” I took a bite of my eggs and decided they were a little bland. I made sure to miss Knox’s hair while I salted them as he sucked away on my nipple. “I told her I don’t want to be friends with people who try to tell me who I can and can’t be friends with, and she blew up at me. So I blocked her.”

I ate in silence for a while as he suckled away, but when he pulled back, it was with that impish grin I loved so well. “So you’re saying, if I tried to tell you not to be friends with her, you’d block me too?”

“It’s different with you. You’re my best friend, Knox. I know if you told me I should get rid of somebody in my life, it’s because I wasn’t seeing how I would be better off without them.”

He shook his head. “I swear, you never cease to amaze me, Rachel. Come on, jack me off onto your eggs – I wanna see you eat that shit up.”

I gave him a quick hug for being such a good listener and proceeded with the handjob. Once upon a time, I’d gotten kind of grossed out when he came in my food and drink, but the gag impulse went away when I convinced my brain that it was no different than when I sucked it out of his cock and ate a meal later.

Good ol’ Knox, always helping me past my hangups and taking my mind off of my troubles. I was a lucky, lucky lady.

It was another week before I heard from Joanna again.

Well, no. Technically, she'd slipped two letters in my mailbox and even sent me – and Knox! – an edible arrangement. The attached note, as well as the letters, were full of requests to see me, practically begging me to give her a chance to explain. However, I wasn't interested in explanations. "Explanation" was Jo code for telling me why she was right and I was dumb for ever questioning her.

No. I was going to get an apology, or I was going to move on.

She ambushed me while I was out doing some yard work, pruning some of the hedges and trying not to notice how many of my neighbors were peeping at me while I did so. It would be nice if Knox would have left me something comfortable and slightly more modest to garden in, but I was making do with the same overalls I'd worn to the orchard, and tried not to bend over much. Or turn too fast.

"Jo? Oh my god, you look..." I couldn't finish the sentence, though a bunch of options were on the tip of my tongue. Miserable. Haggard. Distraught. Wretched. Her hair was disheveled, and she looked like she hadn't slept in days. Dark circles under her eyes, no makeup, her nail polish cracked and peeling.

"Yeah, I know how I look. And it's only half as bad as I feel, OK? So shut up and let me say this."

But my defenses were by now firmly in place. "Look, I haven't changed my mind. If you're here to–"

"I'm sorry, and I'm OK with you and Knox!" she shouted over me. Her eyes squeezed shut, like the words had pained her to say.

I hadn't expected that. "You're... you are?"

"I am. So can we hang out again now?"

I put my hands on my hips. "Why should I believe you?"

She frowned, taking a moment to frame her words. It was very un-Joanna. Usually she simply said whatever was on her mind and didn't give a hoot about the consequences. I was mystified.

"OK, so maybe I don't necessarily love your dynamic with Knox." She could see my hackles were already rising up, and hurried on. "But! But, I know you're a big girl, and you're free to live your life however you want. And I've missed you like crazy, so I figured I'd rather accept some stuff I don't like than lose out on my best friend."

I studied her for a moment. I definitely didn't like that she still had a chip on her shoulder, but her words were heartfelt, and I didn't doubt her sincerity. She looked like this was a realization that had been taken quite a lot of swallowing her copious pride to reach.

"I'm still going to be friends with Knox."

"I know. And that's... fine." She barely hesitated, but she did hesitate.

"And I'm probably going to keep dressing like this."

She looked me over. "I'm pretty sure the kid next door could fill his spank bank for the rest of his adolescence with that alone."

"Let him. I don't care." I did care, actually; it was pretty humiliating to be the neighborhood eye candy, especially for some skeezy teenager, but it was important to Knox that I display myself like this, and I supported my friend's ambitions unflinchingly.

Besides, the one time I'd tried to buy myself normal clothes, he'd cut them to ribbons right in front of me and threatened to make me go naked for a month if I tried it again. I may not have liked his decision, but I had to admit that when the guy thought he knew what was best for me, he didn't let anything get in his way.

Joanna took another deep breath, then nodded. "OK. Fine. So you're changing up your style. Cool. I can get on board with that."

"And how do I know you're not going to lose your cool if you see Knox doing something you don't like?"

"I'm not allowed to lose my cool just a little?" she said in a small voice, chasing it with a nervous laugh.

Give the girl an inch and she'd try to take a mile. "No. I'm serious, Jo. You already have two strikes on this. If you can't deal, say so, and... that's that." I did not have any tolerance for people being crappy to my best friend. Joanna of all people should know that, since she'd been my best friend for almost my entire life.

She seemed to wrestle with this pronouncement for a long while. I wasn't going to rush her. If she agreed to my terms, I knew it couldn't be forced.

"OK," she said. I was about to smile and draw her in for a hug when she went on. "But I have one small request. Just one."

"Jo..."

"That you and I hang out more," she said quickly. "That's all. I've barely seen you this year, and I hate it. I just want to spend more time with my best friend. I *need* to. And if that means sharing you with this Knox guy, then sure. But don't push me away any more, OK?"

I broke out in a broad grin. "OK. I can definitely get behind that."

"Yeah?"

"Heck yeah. Now I gotta finish up my pruning here, but tomorrow, you and me, spa day. OK? We gotta get you looking like you again."

"I got work. Besides, I'm sure you and Knox are going to be hanging out, or whatever."

"I said, spa day." Knox was out of town at some kind of warlock convention for the rest of the week, otherwise I'd have had to check with him first.

"Cool. I'll call in sick."

"Awesome. Now c'mere, you."

And I pulled her in for the biggest bestest hug I'd had since Knox squeezed the crap out of me while he was fucking me from behind in the shower that morning.

Like that, things were back to normal. Joanna and I hung out the entire following day, and she came over again after work each of the next three nights. When we weren't hanging out, she was constantly texting me from work, so much so that I had to remind her not to get herself fired. Ian joined us one night, but I think he saw we were enjoying our girl time so much that he quickly lost his appetite for it. Besides, his girlfriend had to keep nudging him when his eyes strayed too far. It was really thoughtful of her. I felt really weird dressing like that around my friend's boyfriend, but luckily Joanna didn't issue a single word of complaint. Not even when Ian's eyes nearly popped out of his head when, I'm pretty sure, he saw right up my mini skirt and realized I wasn't wearing panties. That was nice of her. Even I felt a little bad about that one, and I'd gotten pretty used to having people see my privates that I didn't want seeing my privates.

"So, you're cool dressing like that around Knox?" she asked the following evening, glancing down to my choice of attire. I'd worn one of my most modest outfits, a blouse that ended halfway down my stomach and was big enough to let me barely do up the bottom two buttons. It coupled well with a skirt that was like the bottom of a summer dress, except short enough that it threatened to flash my bare butt and pussy if I pivoted too quickly.

"I am," I said evenly. She'd avoided even mentioning his name the past few days. I was willing to see where she was going with this before I got too defensive.

"He must... enjoy the view." She took an oh-so-casual bite of her salad.

"Well duh." I giggled. "I mean, he's a guy, isn't he?"

"And is that as far as it's gone? Him... enjoying the view?"

I arched an eyebrow. "Do you really want to know?"

"So you're saying there's something to know," she said knowingly.

I laughed, and like that, the dam was broken, and I felt free to talk about things. There were some subjects I knew Knox wouldn't appreciate me telling anyone – the whole warlock thing, for example – and I might have soft-pedaled some of our physicality so Joanna didn't freak out. It was too funny – I'd always been the shy and demure one, and now here I was hiding details of my sex life to keep from offending her! I simply acknowledged that yes, Knox was attracted to me, but that was only a physical thing. Ian was no doubt attracted to me, too, I pointed out. But neither of them had any interest in anything romantic.

"So when do you think the three of us will hang out again? Kinda curious what our dynamic is gonna be," she speculated after a while. I didn't miss it in her voice that she wasn't looking forward to it, but she at least tried to hide it.

"He gets back from his business trip tomorrow. I know he'll want to see me—" (I couldn't wait!) "—but I'm not sure how he'll feel about making it the three of us. I know he always misses me a lot when we're apart for a while."

Was that ever an understatement! He'd had to go home for his grandma's funeral a couple months ago, and when he'd come back, we basically didn't leave the bedroom for almost a week. My sheets had had so many cum stains I'd had to throw them out. Knox had actually had to make an alchemical suppository to heal my ho-hum because he'd fucked my butt so much that I couldn't...

Well, believe me when I say the guy misses me when we're apart, same as I miss him. It had been awful, these past few days without him, and even Joanna's constant companionship couldn't help me miss my bestie any less.

"Sure, sure. I get that. I, um... I dunno. I guess just, whenever you guys are done, or if he thinks he can handle the two of us, call me. OK?"

I gave her hand a squeeze to show her I appreciated her making an effort. It was all I could ask.

Sure enough, Knox came straight over to my house the minute he got back. He'd texted ahead to ask me to be naked and ready, and so of course I was. He had his belt off before opening the door, and his pants off before he'd left the entry rug. I was actually a little horny myself, having gone more days without being penetrated than I had in months, so having him wordlessly shove his cock inside me was actually pretty welcome for once. I laughed to myself at the thought that maybe one day, I'd be the one jumping him! It seemed absurd, but never say never.

"So hey, I patched things up with my friend Joanna. And, um, I was wondering if it was cool if she came over today," I said, hoping I wasn't distracting too much from his thrusting.

For a while there, Knox seemed not to hear me, but eventually he saw the question lingering in my eyes and acknowledged I'd spoken. "That cunt friend of yours again? I swear, you're obsessed with her lately. And no, I'm gonna be here allllll day, until your sweet little puss has milked me dry. And with the potion I drank on the way over, that is going to be quite a little while. Viagra doesn't have shit on actual sorcery."

"Yeah, that's kind of what I told her you'd say, but I thought I'd ask. She's been kind of clingy this past week, honestly, so maybe that's for the best."

And that was all the more I'd intended to say on the subject. Only, as the morning went on...

Bzz bzz.

Bzz bzz.

Bzz bzz.

My phone was on the end table, right where I'd left it when I'd stripped and juiced up my pussy in preparation for Knox's arrival. Joanna was as relentless with her barrage of texts as Knox was at drilling my pussy with his alchemically augmented penis. After the third or fourth time he'd come, another text arrived during his post-orgasmic breather. Knox finally lost his temper.

“OK, that is just about e-goddamn-nough of that,” he grumbled, snatching my phone. “Fucking hell! That bitch has texted you seven times already this morning! This is ridiculous.”

“Really? Nothing’s actually wrong, is there?”

He rolled his eyes, swiping my phone on and scanning the texts. “No. No, it’s pretty fucking far from an emergency. She asked if she could come over, and is now pinging you at intervals to get a response. Fucking hell.”

“Oh gosh. Here, I’ll tell her to chill.” I reached for my phone.

“I got it,” he said. I frowned; I definitely was not a fan of other people impersonating me on my phone. I’d had a huge fight with Jim about that when he did that once as a joke. Still, Knox had already made my day by how eager he’d been to see me, so maybe I needed to let the little things go.

“What’d you tell her?” I asked when he was done.

He grinned held the screen up so I could see it. Sure enough, there was Joanna, *PING, PING, PING*. Underneath it was “my” response.

Come on over – we’re sitting around fucking like jackrabbits, he’d sent.

“Knox! You are such a rascal!” I reached for the phone. But he held it back, pinning me beneath him with his cock in my pussy.

“Oh, whatever. That’s some thick-ass sarcasm. Why, you want me to send her a pic and prove it?”

“No!” Oh my gosh, that would be so embarrassing!

“You’re sure?”

I rolled my eyes at his antics and grabbed his buttocks, pulling him all the way inside me. Aside from not wanting to explain to Joanna the truth behind his prank, I was actually still kind of horny, and Knox been inside me so much that morning I had almost gotten off. “Oh, just shut up and get back to fucking me already! If she decides to come over, I wanna be done and have the sex smell cleaned up before she gets here.”

“It smells like sex in here,” said Joanna, wrinkling her nose.

“Does it? I don’t smell anything,” replied Knox, grinning at me when her back was turned. Such a practical joker! I’d only just finished wiping down the sofa and lighting a scented candle when he surprised me by slamming my face down on his cock again and having me suck him until he came – this time, all over my boobs. By then, Joanna was already coming in the front door, so all I could do was snatch my top off the floor and throw it on while she made her way to the living room. I wiped the stuff still visible on my cleavage off with a finger and sucked it clean; the rest was still drying on my chest.

“Leave it to you to always have sex on your brain, Jo,” I said hoping I didn’t sound as awkward as I felt. I was totally used to Knox and his proclivities, but it was a whole other thing to have it seen by the world. It was like biting my fingernails – no big deal in the privacy of my home, but not something you wanted the world to see.

“Well with you dressed like *that*, it’s a short mental path,” she said dryly.

“I know, right?” Knox *tsk-tsked* at me as he emerged from where he’d quickly dressed himself in the bathroom. “I don’t know where she gets off, dressing like such a total skank all the time.”

Joanna’s eyes narrowed; I could see the conflict in her at hearing her opinion put in his terms. Still, I was the one he was calling a skank! “Knox! *You’re* the one who picked this out for me, remember?”

“Who, me? I mean, I’m happy to look over your shoulder while you’re browsing, make a recommendation about what’d look good, but let’s not go blaming your flare for the skankalicious on me.”

My jaw dropped, but I was smiling beneath it. Leave it to Knox to dress me in this top with its hole cut out to show cleavage (what little I had) and this teensy denim skirt and then blame *me* for picking it out. I was sure that to Joanna it’d sound more believable that I’d started dressing like this to attract a guy than that I’d suddenly let a guy make these kinds of decisions for me. Such a scamp!

Jo smirked at my discomfort. “It’s not her first skank phase. Remember in high school, when you had that huge crush on Harris Richters? Oh my gosh, she tried every cliché in the book.”

“I did not!”

“Rachel, the woman at the makeup counter at the mall had to cut you off, you started wearing so much. I was starting to worry you were going to join a death metal band.”

“I might have if I’d had a crush on *you*, ya goth queen.”

“At least my wardrobe was an aesthetic, and not bought from the wish list of horny teenage boys everywhere.”

Knox laughed. Joanna laughed. After a brief glare, I let myself laugh too. Mostly, I was glad to see everybody getting along. I don't know why, because Knox is so clearly awesome and I love Joanna to death, but I'd actually been pretty paranoid that they wouldn't get along. But I could read them both really well. Joanna still didn't love that he was here, but she'd committed to making an effort. As for Knox, I could tell he'd much rather still be in a sweaty tangle on the couch, but he was content to have my hot busty friend here to leer at.

Good enough, for now.

We plopped ourselves down in the living room and tried to act like friends, or at least act friendly. I mostly kept quiet, letting the two of them talk. Knox told her he was a researcher specializing in the paranormal, which was sort of true, and Joanna tried not to get too incredulous about it. She'd been an outspoken atheist since I'd known her and was a skeptic of anything remotely supernatural; I could only imagine what she'd say if I ever told her I'd try to dose her with a love potion. Then Knox tried not to look too bored while Joanna talked about her job, about Ian, and basic get-to-know-you stuff.

After an hour, I decided it was time. "Say, who's hungry? I'm gonna make us some lunch."

Both of them agreed; Joanna even offered to give me a hand, though I was pretty sure it was to avoid being left alone with Knox. I refused, of course; the whole point of my making lunch was to see if they could play nice together without me. She still poked a hole in my plan by excusing herself to the bathroom, and so Knox followed me into the kitchen anyway.

"I really can handle this, you know," I assured him as I started grabbing ingredients.

"I know. And I really can handle *this*." He flipped up my skirt and squeezed one butt cheek with each hand.

"Knox!" I squealed, giggling.

"Oh, whatever. We still got a few minutes before she gets back. Just be glad I haven't bent you over right in front of her yet. That boner juice I drank this morning isn't making it easy. Your friend's amazing titties aren't either."

I nodded, being very careful with my knife as his groping grew more intense. "Yeah, she's a cutie, for sure. Too bad my love potion didn't work out, huh? Clingy as she's been the past couple weeks, I wouldn't have minded her having you to take her off my hands."

"Clingy, eh?" he said, slipping a finger up inside me. I'd gotten pretty good at cooking amidst such distractions. "She doesn't strike me as a needy sort."

"She's usually not, but ever since we had that little fight, she's been... ugh. Guilty conscience, I guess."

"Oh yeah, you mentioned that, didn't you. Huh. What was the fight about, again?"

“She got upset, about you and me and how close we were, and I told her not to tell me who I can and can’t be friends with. Then she just... man. She was unrelenting trying to get me to forgive her.”

“Really...” He withdrew his finger, stroking his chin pensively. Then he realized he was smearing my pussy juice on his face and winced, wiping it off on my hair. Ew! Boys could be so gross.

“Yep. I really thought she’d be too proud to back down – one time she didn’t talk to me for like two weeks because I made fun of this song she liked, no joke – but nope. She folded like a house of cards.”

“Is that right.”

“Yep. Promised she’d never complain about the two of us again as long as I took her back in.”

“And that’s unlike her?”

“Oh my gosh, so unlike her. You have no idea. Thank goodness, right?”

“Yeah, yeah,” he said, though he was clearly lost in thought. It was pretty unlike him to wax pensive while my bare bottom was exposed. Before I could ask, though, he popped me a question that caught me totally by surprise. “Rachel, when you tried your simple best to make that potion... did you do anything unusual? Swap out an ingredient, blend instead of press, forget to take an herb out of the moonlight in the specified timeframe... anything like that?”

“What? No! No, I followed the directions to the letter!” I insisted. I know he’d had a dim view of my dabbling in his area of expertise, and while I’d been rather intimidated by some of it, it hadn’t been *that* hard. A few parts had been confusing, like what the difference was between combining and stirring, or why a lot of the original text referred separately to “the imbiber,” “the brewer,” and “the object of adoration” when all of Knox’s notes suggested the second two could be used interchangeably.

“Huh. For a minute there, I almost—”

“Well,” I interjected after a moment’s consideration, “I did up the dose a bit. You know. To make sure.”

He froze. “Up the dose?”

I nodded. “Yeah. Man, if it had actually worked right... I did triple the amount it said to. Could you imagine? She would’ve probably been, like, *obsessed* with you!” I laughed.

“Triple.” He took a slow breath. “You’re telling me you *tripled* the ingredients.”

I shook my head at my own hubris, grabbing my apple corer from the utility drawer. “I know, right? Thank goodness you dispelled it, or who knows what could have gone wrong.”

“But...” Suddenly, Knox broke out in grins. “Yeah. Thank goodness I had my simple, regular, baseline dispel charm on hand.” He chuckled, evidently pleased with his foresight. Heck knows I was!

“Hey, I think I heard a flush. I’m gonna head back in there and entertain your guest, get to know her a little better. You take your time in here, OK? We’ll play nice. I... I think she’s going to make a great addition to our duo.”

I beamed. “Thank you, Knox.” He knew what a load off that offer was for me. The perfect best friend. As he rejoined Joanna in the living room, I allowed myself a moment for a brief happy cry. My new best friend, committing to take in my old best friend. It was the happiest I’d felt since that whole awful fight started. I gave them a good twenty minutes, even taking time to check my email and touch up my makeup post-cry.

By the time we finished a delightfully stress-free lunch, everyone’s patience for idle chit-chat was expended, and it was time to actually make plans.

“So, I was thinking of heading back to my place and getting caught up on the last couple episodes of *Walking Dead*. Who’s in?” suggested Knox.

For some reason that made Joanna smile. Almost smirk? “I dunno, I was thinking of binging *The Bachelorette*. Wanna come?”

This was not a difficult choice. As Joanna well knew, I absolutely adored all things Bachelor and Bachelorette; likewise, as Knox well knew, that zombie show absolutely grossed me the fudge out. It was one of the few times where I was actually kind of glad when he’d have me spend our TV time sucking his cock, just so I didn’t have to see all the ick.

“Yeah, I think I gotta go with Jo on this one, buddy.” I gave Knox a playful punch on the arm.

“You’re sure? You’d really rather watch that mindless dreck than see animated corpses annihilate the last vestiges of civilization?”

I laughed. “I’m sure. I mean, no offense, right?” I turned to Joanna, quick to make sure I wasn’t bruising his ego. “Knox knows everything there is to know about zombies, though. It’s crazy how much information is out there about them that’s not in the pop culture depictions.”

“Oh, I wouldn’t say I know ‘everything,’” he said, waving off my compliment. “I was a B+ student at best at the necromantic arts. Not my primary field of study.”

Joanna rolled her eyes. “Sure. So yeah, wanna get going? If we hurry, we can get there before Ian gets home from work and tries to stake out the big TV.”

“You got it babe. Have fun with your corpses, hon.” I gave Knox a quick hug and followed Joanna to the door, looking for a suitable pair of shoes. Joanna, weirdly was still wearing that smirk, and it was definitely pointed at him. Had I missed something?

But Knox was still perched on the couch, not seeming to notice her. “Please, Rachel?”

I paused. Had Knox just said “please”? He *never* said please. Well, not unless he was telling me what he wanted me to do; pleasing him was kind of our most frequent funtivity.

Joanna saw me hesitating, and grabbed my shoulder. The smirk had vanished. “Come on, you don’t wanna watch the macho crap. I got five seasons DVRed, ripe for over-consumption.”

“Well...”

“It’d mean a lot to me, Rach. I’ve missed you.” Knox regarded me earnestly.

My heart was melting. Did I mention he was the sweetest guy in the whole world? Practically the brother I never had! (Aside from all the sex stuff.) “I... I mean, I can...”

“Rachel, he lives down the street. You guys can literally hang out any time on two minutes’ notice. You blew me off all summer for him.”

I withdrew my arm from her grip, frowning a bit. When I spoke, it was in a low voice. “Hey now, you’re getting awfully close to that line again.”

Her already pale skin blanched. “I’m sorry. I didn’t mean... I just... I’m sorry.”

I was satisfied, but before I could say as much, Knox cut in. “And hey, why don’t you bring over that big blue power vibrator I got you for your birthday? I love the way you squirm when I turn it up all the way.”

“Knox!” He could be so exasperating. bringing up something like that right in front of her!

“What? I’m only trying to save you having to walk back over here to get it later. Just thinking of you, sluttykins.”

“Oh yeah, super thoughtful,” I replied with a dry smile, then turned back to Joanna, who looked about as floored as I felt. I didn’t mind Knox practicing his vibrator technique on me for when he found himself a girlfriend, but it was quite another thing to casually bring it up in front of people! “Sorry, Jo. You go and watch it for both of us. You can text me. I mean, if I’m not... you know.” Here, “you know” was code for “coming my brains out,” but it felt crude to talk that way in front of her. (Knox, on the other hand, seemed to actually prefer the cruder ways of expressing things. He was so super chill.)

“You know,” said Knox, coming up behind me, confirming that his potion was still working quite well by the way his cock nestled between my butt cheeks, “I was actually thinking we could just do the whole series, starting with the pilot. Say, a season or so a day? You could just pack a bag, stay over at my place for the week. Like an epic sleepover! Whaddaya say, Rach?”

The idea of being stuck watching that show for a whole week was nauseating, frankly. But still, that Knox was *this* excited to see me, that he wanted to spend so much time with me, that he wanted to share the things he loved with me... I was overwhelmed by the thoughtfulness of it. “That would be awesome! Holy cow – this is gonna rock. We

can put sleeping bags on the living room floor, and I'll pop us some poppinfun, and we'll have non-stop you and me! Knox, you always come up with the best ideas!"

"I do, don't I," he replied, though he was looking at Joanna. "Sorry, I guess your friend's gonna be AWOL for a while, Jo. But don't worry, I might loan her to you, in a week or two, for a couple hours."

I laughed, excusing myself to run upstairs and start packing. I was too excited to wait. It was like I was a teenager all over again! Joanna and I used to have the best sleepovers growing up! Too bad the kinds of things Knox was probably going to enjoy doing during our sleepover wouldn't exactly go over well with her. Or Ian, for that matter, I thought to myself with a giggle.

So imagine my surprise when I came back downstairs and found Joanna waiting for me, chin in her chest. "I, um, wouldn't mind hanging out. At Knox's. If... that's OK with you," she mumbled.

I patted her shoulder. "Jo, you'd totally hate it. It's only gonna be me and Knox—" "And Papa Smurf."

I ignored him. "—watching shows you'd totally hate and doing stuff you'd totally not be into. When we're done, I'll give you a jingle and we'll find some time for you and me."

Knox cut in, grinning, "Unless I feel like tagging along."

"Sure, unless Knox wants to come. So yeah, don't sweat it."

She closed her eyes, took a deep breath. "No. I... I want to come with you. I, um, kinda miss hanging out with you, too."

"Really?" How did I get the two sweetest friends on the planet earth?

"Yeah."

"You forgot to ask me if I minded," said Knox, folding his arms across his chest.

Joanna's eyes slowly rose to meet his. "Oh. Um, is that OK? Can I come too?"

"Sure you can, chum of my chum. But mind you, it's my house, my rules. You break 'em, you're out, and you're not getting back in." I'd always known Knox was particular about who he let in, but wow, was he ever giving Joanna the third degree! It was only fair, though. It *was* his house.

"Like what kind of rules?" she asked through clenched teeth. She'd never been one to like being told what to do, either.

"For instance, women aren't allowed in without checking their shirts at the door."

Oh gosh! Joanna didn't know him well enough to know he wasn't being a pig! I interrupted quickly to make sure she caught on. "You let me in with a top on all the time, Knox."

"I said women, not flat-chested little girls like you." He honked my boob playfully. It was kind of awkward, with Joanna there, but since he was committing to the joke, I didn't want to ruin it by calling him on his nonsense. "What say you, Jo? You're

under no obligation. You can just hang out with Ian, without Rachel, for the next few weeks. Or months. Or whatever.”

Man, my girl had one hell of a glare on her. Still, I was surprised as heck when instead of calling him on it, she... gave in?! “Fine. Any other rules?”

“Oh, there’s so many I forget them sometimes. I’ll let you know as they occur to me.” He opened the front door, escorting me in front of him with a hand on my bottom under my skirt. “Coming, Joanna?”

Man, I hoped she didn’t start in again. Knox was just being Knox, and he and I were too close for him to have any boundaries.

My friend let out a deep sigh of resignation. She really must miss me a lot! I knew the feeling, because it’s exactly how I felt when Knox had been away all last week. I must have texted him a hundred times, right up until he told me to shut up until he got back. Then he’d blocked me until this morning’s *get your cunt ready. be there in 20*, which had been sweet sweet music to my ears. Or eyes, I guess.

“Coming,” said a sullen Joanna.

Knox had walked over, but Joanna was going to drive, just so her car would be on hand when she left. Since he didn’t offer to help me with my bag, I tossed it in the back of her car and then joined him for a leisurely stroll down the street. If it was weird for a man to be walking with a woman with his hand up her skirt, our neighbors were used to it by now.

“So you want to tell me what all that was about?” I asked him.

“Hmm?”

I bumped him with my shoulder. “You guys seemed to be getting along so well all day, and then suddenly... I don’t know. It was like you were fighting over me. Not that it wasn’t really sweet of you, but... I guess it looked like Joanna didn’t like it. I hope she doesn’t think she really has to take her shirt off.”

“Oh, she does.”

“What? Knox...” I grimaced. How weird would that be, sitting around with my topless second-best friend?

“Look, I’m doing this for you, because of how much you mean to me. If you don’t feel the same way, then...”

“I do! Oh, I so do. You know I do, right?” He nodded. “But how is Joanna busting out her huge boobs for *me*, exactly?”

Her car drove past us, and I waved after her.

“Look, I didn’t want to make you feel weird but... we talked before lunch, and she started in on that whole ‘I bet Rachel likes me more than you’ thing again. You and I, we both know we’re in this together until the end.”

“Darn right.” I flexed my butt in his grip, my funny little way of squeezing his hand when he wouldn’t hold hands with me. (Not that I minded. Holding hands would be weirdly romantic for two buddies like us.)

“So I didn’t want you two to have to get into another fight, and I knew you’d pick me over her if she made you choose...”

“You sort of *both* made me choose.”

“Whatever. And so I told myself, why don’t I give her a real test, to make sure she’s one hundred percent done with judging me – judging *us*. So I figured I’d put her through her paces. If she decides she’d rather bitch out on us again because she has some weird inexplicable chip on her shoulder where I’m concerned... then I can be the one to tell her to get lost so you don’t have to. And if she decides she’d rather be cool about things, then by the time we’re done with her, we’ll be good and sure she’s accepted me.”

“Accepted us.” I smiled up at him as a few houses ahead, Joanna pulled into his driveway and exited her car. She grabbed my bag and waited for us with an anxious expression. “Knox, you know... I don’t really deserve a friend like you.”

“You know, you really don’t.”