

Advantageous

Purple crop top. Pink sandals. Michael Kors Purse. Oak less Shades. It looked like she was in that buy it and refund phase. I sought her out visually. We were at the King of Prussia Mall. However, I was not about to approach her in that large crowd. I went home that day thinking about her, but the next day I forgot. Like a lit candle blown away with a gush of wind on an autumn evening. Life happened. Jobs happened. Family and friends held functions, and I attended. I never thought I would see her again until I saw her at Heckler park on a Sunday afternoon while driving home. She was alone. It seemed like a setup, but I fell for it.

Parking my Honda in front of the dusty park pavilion, I hopped out and greeted her.

Wearing this time an orange sundress and a golden necklace, she casually sat there staring off into space. Approaching her was not as tough as I thought. She greeted me without hesitation, like we already knew each other. With a slightly shocked expression on my face, she said she remembered me at the mall, telling me her name was Bella, and I told her my name was Tyler. My first impression of her was great. She was delightful and charming with a voice as soothing as a strum from harp strings. She said Harlem raised her, and New York was her motherland. Her Aunty resided in King of Prussia, which is why she was in Pennsylvania for the weekend.

Since we were right by my house, I asked if she wanted to come over, and she said yes.

Driving to my two-story shack, she seemed intrigued yet calm. Cracking the passenger window open, her blonde hair blew in the wind in a way that made time slow down. We entered the house, and she did not seem bothered by my messy space. In fact, she said she liked the ambience. Since it was close to dinner, I offered her some food. We ate the rest of my left-over potato salad and barbecue chicken. After that we went to the living room, conversing for three hours while drinking wine. She had such a way with words, and I liked the way she looked at me. As slow sips of wine accumulated, we were inebriated before we knew it. Not only off the wine but off each other. She was about to bid me farewell, but as she was wobbly and discombobulated, I offered her my bed for the night. We both stumbled from the couch to the bedroom. I was going to sleep on the floor, but once I laid her in the bed, she pulled me onto the bed with her. One thing led to another, and we ended up making love right there on the covers.

Time moved slowly as our bodies moved quickly. Eventually we both came, but I refused to let her go. We spent the rest of the night cradled under the moonlight.

By sunrise she left, and we parted ways. Bella went back to New York, and I went to work. As a full-time package handler at the Coca cola factory in Harleystown for 10 years, my boss was still adamant about me being on time. Thankfully I made it to my shift in the nick of time, getting back to the old grind. Yet, I could not get Bella off my mind.

Throughout the course of the week, I was doing a lousy job. My boss had to pull me to the side at one point, seeing that I was distracted. Yet, I told him it was nothing, and tried to stay as focused as I could. Usually when stuff like this happens, I would be able to

move on quickly, but in this case, I was barely satisfied for a work week without thinking about her.

By Friday, after a grueling 40-hour work week, I was beyond exhausted. Once I got home, I put down my briefcase, and sat on the couch. I then began thinking about Bella. Her hair. Her personality. Her body. As hours went by, it began to wreak havoc on me. That evening I tried to sleep, but my own thoughts kept me awake. At 3am, drenched in sweat and tears of withdrawal, I could not take it anymore. I reached for my phone and dialed her number, longing to hear her voice.

—Hello? —

Her raspy yet delicate voice instantly alleviates my stress and agony. My face then flooded with tears of relief.

—I want to see you again—

—I do too, but I am back in New York, and I will not be back in Pennsylvania until November. Maybe then we can see each other... —

—No, I am coming over tomorrow and that is that! —

Hanging up the phone before she could respond, I got out of bed and began packing. In

less than thirty minutes I had all the essentials I needed. I was determined and ready.

Around 5am I sprinted to my car, threw all my weekend worth belongings into the trunk of my Honda, and pushed the gas. I was tired, but due to my lead foot, what would have been a three-hour drive was cut into an hour and a half. Thanks to her sending me her address the night before, once arriving at the destination I pulled right into her driveway. At that moment, I had half a tank of gas, 25 dollars in my pocket, a bladder full of urine, and a dying urge to see this woman. With all that in mind, I knocked on her door.

Once she opened the door, I had to resist barging through the entrance. However, it was her running into my arms instead. At that moment, my life felt complete, chest to chest with her.

She let me into her house. It was a very nice Brooklyn style house with three stories, beautiful brown wooden floors, and upholstered paneled walls. I had no time to admire it as I had to use the bathroom hurriedly. Once done, I got to see more of the house. The kitchen was huge with a beige marble island, and there were three televisions just in the living room. I was curious to ask what she did for a living, but I only desired to spend time with her, so I kept my curiosity compacted.

As I exited the door, I saw her waiting for me by her Toyota. She told me that since I was the guest, and I was only there for the weekend, she would treat me. I was hesitant at first, but she would not take no for an answer, so I went along with it. However, I requested to

drive her in my car to show her my appreciation.

As we drove through New York, using WAZE of course, I told her about my rough journey just getting there. How I drove away from a homeless man trying to rob me at gunpoint at a stoplight in the Bronx. How a maniac cut me off in traffic, flipping me the bird. How I took the wrong turn and found myself around a monsoon of hookers luring in suckers to satisfy temporarily monetarily. I failed to mention how tempting it was but finding my way to see her was more important. Her response was simply...

—Welcome to New York, it gets crazy out here—

I also failed to mention that one out of the three things that happened were in Philly, but that was beside the point.

As I drove around, Bella told me different places to stop at, and she paid for everything. First, we went to the deli, ordering falafel sandwiches. Following that, we went to Luna Park on Coney Island. After half an hour, letting our food digest, we went on Adventurous rides like the Cyclone Roller Coaster, a wooden adrenaline charging ride that put us through the wringer. Later we went on the Brooklyn Flyer, which left us feeling like we were floating beyond the clouds. The last ride we partook in was the Luna 360, and that took us through a tremendous loop. Finishing the day off, we went to see Spider-Man: No Way Home In 3D. Smuggling candy inside the theater, we felt like glucose-deprived hooligans. I was also taken aback by her knowledge of Marvel. She

knew even more characters than me.

Once done with our conquest, we headed back to her house, and that was where more magic happened. Pregaming by sharing a bottle of whisky followed by taking off each other's clothes, we slowly but surely got down to business. This was the main ingredient of this 5-course weekend. Re-enacting what took place a week ago, only in a different setting. Excitement exploded from both of us on a rambunctious evening within one of New York's five boroughs.

The next day I woke up at 4pm on Bella's bed, yet she was not there. I thought nothing of it, as the day had been underway. Plus, the weekend was subsiding. I decided to take a shower in her bathroom, pack my bags, and prepare to depart. If it were up to me, I would have prolonged that weekend, but my temporary urge to see her had quenched, and if I had to, I would have been able to wait until November to see her again, for our next occasion.

Around 6pm, I took a stroll around the house, wondering where Bella ran off to. I was about to call her, as I was about to head back home. Yet, before I dialed her number, I heard giggles from the room around the corner. It sounded like Bella's voice. I assumed she was talking to a friend on the phone or something. I wanted to think nothing of it, but suddenly those giggles turned into moans. That curiosity I initially kept compacted started to break free, but I tried to contain it. My face began to turn blue like I was holding my breath. Once those moans turned into screams, I could not contain it anymore. I tiptoed to

the room that stimulated my suspicions. The closer I got, the more the screaming would crescendo, along with creaks of what sounded like a bed. Once I got to the room, it was evident. My ears and eyes did not deceive me. Undressed and under the covers were Bella and another man. I lost it.

—What the fuck! What the hell is going on! What is this!

I was blistering with fury. Seething with rage. As an appropriate reaction to me setting the room ablaze, the two lascivious beings nearly defecated in the bed of what looked like the guest bedroom.

—It is not what it looks like! He is just a friend! His name is John...John Rodriguez —

The friend was speechless.

—Bella...—I stammered as my fury steadily faded into melancholy.

Bella, with the orange and black tiger themed bed sheets covering her areolas, was on the verge of passing out, and so was I.

Queasy and uneasy, I fell to the carpeted ground, catching myself with my right knee, saving my head from a scary collision. Avoiding injury, I slowly got back up, looked at Bella in her eyes, and then the other guy. A somewhat good looking fellow with dreaded

hair and blue eyes. Muscular, brown-skinned, and possibly Afro-Latino, as his last name was Rodriguez. He looked like a force to be reckoned with, and slightly resembles Terry Cruise. Still, as my expression transformed from discombobulated to disturbed, I wanted to beat him to a pulp. A melee to make it to the promised land, residing in Bella's heart, and body.

—What are you trying to do? —Asked the robust Terry Cruise looking mother fucker.

—Nothing—I said after hesitating and thinking how messy things could have gotten.

I then decided to sit down, right there on the carpet. Taking in the betrayal, beside myself I was. On another level of sadness is where I resided. There, all three of us silently sat, in deep thought.

An hour passes. Our stomachs began to rumble.

Bella, breaking the awkward silence, asked both pensive men if we wanted pizza. We nodded our heads.

Leaving the room, not only was she hungry, but in dire need of a temporary escape.

Ordering the pepperoni pizza, Bella stood at the front door, thinking about the consequences of her affairs. Her phone then rings. Contemplating whether to pick it up,



she decides to answer.

—Hey, now is not a good time—

A very deep voice then responds.

—Ok, well, I will be home tonight—

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Meanwhile, scarfing down pizza, filling our guts with cheesed up baked goods, me and the Terry Cruise look alike were somehow building a rapport. John was born to a Dominican mother and a Black father. He was born and raised in Brooklyn, and apparently his brother was a pitcher for the New York Mets, Joely Rodriguez. He however played baseball as a kid and made the baseball team for NYU. He graduated but was not good enough to play for the pros, so he is an electrical engineer as his major was Physics. Growing up his mom was a chef, and his dad was a garbage man, and a genius. He taught John math and instilled formulas in his brain at a young age. He also likes Bachata, HipHop, and is a major Miles Morales fan, thinking of himself as Miles Morales in his own way. Barring our lascivious excursions, we found a way to squash the tension. Alas, we shook hands and formed a truce.

Two hours later, I went to grab my bags heading toward the door. John was about to leave

too but he had to use the bathroom first. Seeing Bella at the front door, I wanted to say goodbye at least. However, approaching the door, she turned around to face me expressing grief on her face, oddly apologizing twice for what was about to take place. I was confused, but I accepted her apologies.

Thinking that she was opening the door for me, I proceeded to exit it until I met with another fellow. Before I knew it, I found myself backing up as a man of great stature came in. At this point, John, done with the restroom, approaches the door to see who it is. Standing next to me, we both saw a man that fit the description of tall, dark, and handsome, literally. Intimidated the both of us were. On his head was a New York Giants cap. He had on an all-blue sweat suit with Gucci slides. He was about 6 foot 6, black, and robust. Nonetheless, he lacked a filter...

—Who the hell are they, Bella, your gay friends? —

—Yeah...—Said Bella, signaling to John and me to play along.

We were shocked and beyond uncomfortable, but seeing how intimidating this guy was, we did not know what else to do. Nodding in unison, we introduced ourselves, but not as far as getting into character.

—Hmm... y'all don't seem gay, but what do I know? Hahaha. Anyways, I see you bought pizza... —

Opening the box, he takes two slices and chomps them down instantly.

—Well—the man says while scarfing down pizza.

—It is getting late, so I think it is time for you guys to go!

John and I, dumbfounded, stood there as stiff as a board. All we could do was think to ourselves...

—Who the hell is this guy? Why is he kicking us out? Isn't this Bella's house?

Bella then opens the door, signaling to us yet again, but this time to leave.

Just like that...we exited the house both looking back one last time...waving goodbye, she thanked us for coming, and closed the door.

John and I, standing on her driveway, were left befuddled.

Not only did she play me. She played John too.

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Weeks went by...Slowly I was getting back into the swing of things, even though I still

shook from what happened. Working in a factory, I usually kept to myself, but since that day, the solitude saddened me even more. One day, one a Sunday evening, as I get home, I get a surprise caller. Oddly enough, it was Bella. Why is it always a Sunday?

—Hey. How are you? —

—Miserable, actually—

—I am good, thanks for asking—

—I didn't—

—Ok, look. Don't take it personally, I just get lonely when my Jarret leaves for work, as he is gone often.

Hearing her say “My Jarrett” made me throw up in my mouth a little.

—Ok, look. I am sorry you had to find out this way, but at least you and John made up. I hope we can still be friends...—

—I am sorry too, Bella. Goodbye—

We both hang up the phone. It turned out, after doing research, that her boyfriend plays for the New York Giants as a tight end. She was promiscuous on the weekends when

Jarrett was away. I guess we had something in common, as my heart was in a tight end as well.

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5 months went by. One day I was driving by the park near my house, and I saw a lady sitting at the pavilion, staring off into space, wearing an orange sundress, but this time with Gucci shades. It was Bella. I parked my car in front of the same old dusty pavilion. She waves at me, and I wave back. I get out of the car. Approaching her, she offered me a hug and a kiss. I returned the favor. She started conversing again, and I pretended to listen, nodding my head, matching her expressions. She then asked me if I wanted to come back to New York some time since her boyfriend was out of town playing against the Jaguars in Jacksonville the following weekend. I told her I would think about it. We then hugged and kissed. During the embrace, I slid something into her pocketbook. It was the bust down watch she sent me in the mail as a parting gift, along with money that amounted to how much she spent on me during our Brooklyn excursions.

Noticing the unlikely deposit, she turned around, giving me a look enmeshed with disappointment, sadness, and understanding. She then blew me a. It seemed like it resembled closure. A final goodbye. I grabbed it, stowing it in my pocket. I then bowed to her out of respect before entering the driver's side door of my Honda accord, started the car, and drove away.

It may have been cheesy on my part, but if there is a better way to end an infidelity than like that, you better let me know.

