

Rosanna

The brown truck backed out of the driveway. Another stupid package addressed to Mr. J. and Mrs. R. Smith. My dad's name is Clyde. My mom is Marion. There is no Mrs. R. Smith. There is a Mr. J Smith, me Jason.

It was the third one today. Like the others with a card. This one read. We are so sorry we can't attend your nuptials. Travel and time and given such a short notice. Accept our gift and our apologies. Love and Kisses your Aunt Virginia and Uncle Bert. Who are these people?

Mom and Dad had to work today, on a Saturday. They don't usually work Saturdays. I did not. Actually it was the first day of my vacation, nine whole days. Nine whole days to do what ever I wanted and now this. I set the package down. No return addresses. Mom would know what to do when she got home.

I better get back to packing for my trip. Mom said to go to Vegas. Dad said rent a nice cabin on the lake. I like to fish. It was the cabin on the lake.

R Smith? R R How many girls do I know with an "R" starting her name? How many girls had I dated. That was easy one. "R" What?

"ROSANNA, ROSANNA. That's it."

I haven't seen her in almost a year. Yes I dated her once, only once. And I didn't even ask her out. I was doing a favor for a friend. His girl friend's cousin was in town and could I? Auh You know the rest. I put hands around a post that held the porch roof up. I

pulled sharply until my head struck the post with a thud. “What did I do? How could I have been so stupid?” I grumbled through clinched teeth. I rapped my head again. “Why Rosanna? Why are you doing this to me?”

I’ve heard of cutters. They take sharp knives and cut their arms or legs to punish themselves. I guess I am a head banger “Why me? Why? Why? It was only one date.” As if anybody could hear me. As if anybody cared. As if anybody was going to do anything to help me. I rapped my head on the post again. OUCH I touched my forehead with my hand, brought it down to my eyes, checking for blood.

“Rosanna, She had a thing right there.” I pressed my finger to my cheek. “Right there.” A mole or maybe the start of cancer or something. I pulled my shoulders up and shook. It was a good thing I wasn’t near that front porch post anymore. I let out a deep sigh. I carried the gift into the house and put it with the others.

I’ll have to send them back but how? The postage will cost a small fortune. Who were these distant relatives and how in the world did Rosanna get their names and addresses?

It was just one date and one thing lead to an other. In mean one minute we were laughing and having a good time and the next. “My GOD. She had a thing right there.” I touched my cheek again. My left cheek. How could I remember that thing so well. I never even heard of Aunt Virginia and Uncle Bert.

I liked her and everything, but but. I shook my head.

“I could killer her. Yea, That’s what I’ll do” I had grit my teeth again so no one could hear me. “I’ll kill her. I know sometimes people say that they are going to kill

someone, but don't really mean to do it, This is different. I'll do it." I found myself nodding and grinning. "No I won't. The cops always look to the spouse first, OUCH. I didn't mean to say spouse I mean." I was talking to myself. I seemed to be talking faster. "I meant. I meant." It's bad enough when you stutter but it's worse when you are only talking to yourself. "Significant other. That would be me. No It isn't. Maybe the offended party?"

She was nice. And a great kisser and I didn't even start to itch. I really wanted to see her again, but I couldn't. I might told some of my friends that I liked her. I might have even told my mom.

It's not like she was shaped like the Pillsbury Dough Boy or anything but, I touched my cheek again. I pined. Maybe a thing like that could be surgically removed. I slapped my face with both of my hands. I dragged them down pulling on my skin.

"I don't even know how to reach her to call this thing off. Wait a minute," I screamed. "There is nothing to call off. Let me see." I counted on my fingers as I tried to figure things out. "She was Holli's cousin. Carl was dating Holli. I'll call Carl." I picked the phone.

"Hello"

"Hello. Could I talk to Carl."

“Who’s calling?”

“It’s me, Mrs. Dunn. Jason, Jason Smith. You remember me?”ta

“Hum” There was a brief pause. The back ground noise even stopped. I thought the line might have gone dead. My heart pounded. I wanted to hang up, then her cheerful voice came back on. “Jason Smith? Oh yea and how are you?”

“I’m fine, thanks.” I had always liked Carl’s mom. I found her easy to talk to. “And how are you?”

“Fine Fine Fine.” Mrs. Dunn said.

“Could I talk to Carl?” I asked. Mrs. Dunn was silent a moment.

“I’m sorry, He’s not home right now. Would you like to leave a message?”

“No.” I sighed. This is going nowhere I thought. I slowly bumped my head on the cabinet over the phone.

“Jay. Are you OK? I thought I heard a thump.”

“You did. I don’t want to bother you.” I said slowly like that character, the donkey , in Christafur Robin cartoons. “When will he be home?”

“Ah, ... Not right away.” She said. It took her a minute to go on. “He’s in the Marines.” He’s in the Marines, bounced from the phone.

“I’m sorry I called. I didn’t know.” Came out of me. I must have sounded defeated.

“Maybe I can help. It’s worth a try.” She sounded cheerful again. “I’ve been told I’m a good listener.” I sighed loud enough to be heard over the phone..

Rosanna

“OK,” I took a breath. “Here it is. Carl was dating a girl named Holli.” I spilled out.
“but I don’t remember her last name”

“Stone, Her name was Holli Stone. Nice girl too.” Mrs. Dun said.

“Yea Yea Holli. Anyway she had this cousin.”

“OH?” Came out of the phone as if Mrs. Dunn was surprised. “I don’t remember her
much. What was her name.”

“It was Rosanna.”

I heard Mrs. Dunn pull in a deep breath

“Yes Yes Now I remember. Didn’t she have? “ I could almost see her pressing her
finger to left her cheek.

“Thing” I said sharply.

“ Beauty mark of some kind.” She said in a defensible way

“No It was a thing.” I said quickly. “What was her last name. I’ve got to talk to her.”
Mrs. Dunn pulled in her breath.

“Oh This is so romantic.” I could almost hear her giggle.

“No This is not.” I tried to sound firm. “I just have to talk to her, OK. Talk.”

“If you say so. She was Holli’s cousin? OH NO.” The “OH” came out in a high pitch,
but the “NO” came out slowly with a lot of air. “Carl is on the outs with Holli. I don’t
know if I can help you.”

“Thanks anyway.” The thanks came out. I’m sure it sound sarcastic. I bumped my

head again.

“It was nice talking to you again, Jay. I only wish I could have been more help.”

“That’s OK. Bye.” I said. I was ready to hang up.

“Jay Jay Jay Are you there?”

“Yea”

“I am glad you called. I’m in a bit of a pickle.”

“OH”

“You see my car is in the shop, and the guy called and said it was all fixed and could I come and get it. George is out of town and. Could you? I mean, I know maybe you already have plans for today, but do you think? I miss my car.”

“I could drive you.”

“OH, Would you?”

“I don’t mind. I’ll be right over. See you soon Mrs. Dunn.”

“Pick me around noon.”

I drove to Carl’s house. His mom was waiting on the front porch. She jumped up. Her purse was hung on her arm. Her hair was put up and she wore a bright yellow flower print dress and a pink scarf around her neck.

“We need to go to Bristol Street in Fort Howard. That isn’t too far is it?” Mrs. Dunn

said as she entered the car.

“No, That’s OK.” I said. All the way to Fort Howard. Well, It’s a nice day for a drive. And there is nothing to bang my head on. I wonder what ever happen to Rosanna and that thing. She wasn’t really bad sort. I guess I was a little disappointed when I didn’t date her or even see her again. I guess I was looking forward to seeing her this time, at least talking to her.

I would have thought she would know the way to the garage but she spent most of the drive checking on the phone. She said she was looking directions to the Prep Boys Garage on Bristol Street. It struck me strange if she took her car there why would she need directions there now? We drove past the Bristol street sign.

“We just past Bristol street.” I said. Mrs. Dunn looked up from her phone.

“What?”

“We just past Bristol.” I said again.

“We did? Look for the next corner then a right, OK.” She said. I did.

“Go down three streets then turn right and we will be back on course.” I drove three blocks and turned right. When we came to Bristol she told me to turn right again.

“Right here.” She said. So I stopped the car in front of the Prep Boys Garage. We got out of the car. We were walking up a sidewalk toward the door of a building.

A man came running down the street toward us.

“Mister Mister. Can I talk to you a minute?” He was short of breath. He had a close cropped red haired head. He wore a black and white tuxedo. Gasp Gasp Gasp “We’ve got

a problem.” Gasp “Would you talk to my boss?” Gasp Gasp “ I’ve got him on the phone.”
Gasp “Will You Talk to him?” The man handed me the phone. I said hello.

“WHO IS THIS.” Came bounding from the phone. I had to hold the phone at arms length away from my ear.

“My name is Jason.” I said after I brought the phone closer to my lips

“How Dee, I’m Kendall.” It was expressed heavy on the Ken and lighter on the Dell.
KEN-dall MORNING STAR. HOW BIG ARE YOU ANYWAY?” I held the phone at arms length when I wasn’t talking and close to my mouth when I was.

“Aum I’m six foot tall. I weight about one seventy two.”

“GREAT GREAT GREAT DO YOU KNOW WHAT A PROXIE IS BOYY?”

“I think so. Isn’t he someone who votes for you when you can’t get there on time.”

“THAT’S RIGHT BOYY. I’M STUCK DOWN HERE IN DALLAS. DANG PLANES, I TELL YOU. ANYWAY WHAT I NEED IS A PROXIE. SOME ONE TO STAND IN FOR ME. TEN MINUTES WORK I’LL GIVE YOU A HUNDRED DOLLARS. WHAT DO YOU SAY SON?’

“I don’t know.”

“COME ON BOYY. I MET THE SWEETEST LITTLE GAL DOWN HERE IN TEXAS BUT SHE INSISTED ON GETTIN’ MARRIED IN HER HOME TOWN. YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT WOMEN. BOYY LET ME TELL YA. IF THEYWANT TO GET MARRIED IN THEIR HOME TOWN THAT’S WHAT YOU GIVE ’EM. I’LL HAVE YA. GIVE ’EM WHAT THEY WANT. COME ON PARTNER, HELP ME OUT

HERE. YOU'RE MY SIZE. YOU CAN WEAR MY SUIT AND EVERYTHING. WHAT DO YOU SAY? BE A PAL."

"I don't know. Mrs. Dunn What do you think?" I said almost whining.

"It's up to you, Jayson. I'll wait for you if that will make it any easier. It's OK. I haven't been to a wedding in a long time. I ruined your afternoon. What ever you want to do."

"COME ON, COME ON, BOYY. ALL YOU GOTTA DO IS SAY YES A COUPLE TIMES. I CAN'T LET THAT LITTLE GAL DOWN."

"Well OK I guess."

"THANKS THANKS A MILLION. NOW REMEMBER DON'T KISS HER AND WHAT EVER YOU DON'T SIGN NO PAPERS. I'LL BE THERE I AS SOON AS I CAN."

"PUT THAT LEE ROY BACK ON."

"This way." The man with the short cut red hair said. My name is Lee Roy. A lot of people call me Red."

"I assumed. I'm Jason." We shook hands and hurried back up the street. Lee Roy reached the corner first. He looked to the left, stopped and pushed me back.

"The bride."

"What."

“The groom mustn’t see the bride before the wedding on the day of the wedding. Bad luck.” Mrs. Dunn said, shaking her head. “Everybody knows that.”

“Bad luck.” The red headed man said. He pressed his lips together as he shook his head.

“But I’m not the real groom. The real groom isn’t going to see her.” I said. I searched their faces.

“It could be bad luck just the same. You don’t want to spoil it for the bride and groom.” Mrs. Dunn blurted as fast as she could. She removed the pink scarf from around her neck. “Turn around.”

She tied her scarf around my head. I was blindfolded. “Hey I can’t see a thing. I think you got it to tight.” I felt Mrs. Dunn pat my shoulder.

“You’ll be alright.” She placed my hand on her elbow.

“Here hold my elbow.” We walked, I holding the elbow of Mrs. Dunn. I heard voices. Some seemed so familiar. That I turned my head that way although I couldn’t see anything.

I was dressed in a tuxedo. I stood at the front of a church. There were girls in matching pink dresses, to my left. Young men in Tuxes to my right. I heard every one behind me stand up as the march began. The guy beside me (Red) said. “You want to turn around now. Watch the bride as she enters. That is what everybody does.”

Every one had turned around. I recognized Carl's mom from the back in her flowered print dress. The bride looked tiny next to the broad man holding her arm. She was so beautiful. She wore a veil. All she needed was a mediocre face and she could be the most beautiful girl in the world.

I felt my left arm begin to itch. I scratched it with my right hand. I tried to scratch under the sleeve. The bride stood beside me. She held my arm. The preacher stood before us. My feet. I rubbed my heels together. Then I got this unbelievable desire to scratch myself. I couldn't do it now. Not there. Not here.

Red was standing beside me. He whispered. "Say I do." I looked at him. He nodded forward. I had forgotten where I was. I turned.

"I do." The itch got worse. I squeezed my legs together. I barely heard an (I will). I looked over at Red than forward. "I will." I raced my knees back and forth rubbing them together.

"You may kiss the bride." I turned toward her then froze. I thought about what the man on the phone, Kendall had said. I caught the minister move in the corner of my eye. He motioned. He pinched his fingers together and made a circular motion with his hands. I could tell he was illustrating to lift the veil. I turned to the bride. With shaking hands I looked back and forth between the bride and the minister and lifted her veil. I swallowed hard.

She stared up at me with two of the most admiring eyes I'd ever seen. They could have melted me on the spot. I forgot all about the itches. I didn't know what to do.

"Rosanna?" I choked out a shocked whisper. She smiled.

Rosanna

“Turn around.” She whispered.

“What?” She took my arm and turned me toward the audience. My mom and dad sat in the front row with the broad man that had walked her down the aisle. Mr. and Mrs. Dunn, Carl and Holli. Holli smiled and waved a palm toward me circular wave. Silence complete silence. A man toward the back stood up. I found out later that man was my Uncle Bert, from Washington state. He placed his hands around his mouth. He pleaded out in a loud Texas like drawl.

“GO AHEAD BOYY. KISS HER.” I did. I picked her up and twirled her around.

“My dad broke out in the hives. They had to postpone their wedding three times.” I whispered into Rosanna’s ear.

She whispered back. “I know. Your mother told me.” She squeezed my hand to remind me she would never let me go.