

Jane

Jack Everett

Caroline had introduced me to *Second Street Poetry Club*. We'd been there on a few dates. The club was pretty much how you'd imagine a poetry club to be. The main feature was a stage with a brick wall behind it. Curtains could cover up the wall if necessary. It was a bar, really, but it had to be licensed as a club, as there already too many bars in town. I was a student in a college town, and it was the place for students to gather. Well, the intellectual students, that is. The partiers usually stuck to the traditional bars. I wasn't really an intellectual, but no one seemed to notice or care. Bands would play at the club. Most of them were pretty lousy. Music students would perform with whatever instrument they were obsessing over at the time. Accordions were the worst. I don't care how talented an accordion player is, the instrument just doesn't sound good. Most of the accordion players weren't very talented. I guess it's a difficult instrument. The pianists had talent. They were perhaps the most entertaining. Of course, it was called a poetry club, and the majority of performances were English students reciting poetry, or other readings. Some of their poetry was pretty good, but like most poetry it was very specific to the individual, and didn't have mass appeal. I was never really into the poetry, but when you just wanted to go out for a drink, the poetry recital in the background was not that bad. Pretty much any kind of performance art was accepted at the club. I'd seen it all, juggling, magic acts, whatever you could think of. Except for the poetry and music, everything else was pretty rare.

Tuesdays and Thursdays were technically "open mic" nights. On the other days performances had to be booked. Though, in all honesty, only a day's advance was needed to get a booking, except for Saturday. Well I had been a regular for some time, even after Caroline and I had broken up. I'd still see her there. We were still friends. We both just realized that we weren't a great couple, but we'd still have a drink together from time to time. On occasion she'd encourage me to get up for a performance on open mic night. I'd argue that I didn't play an instrument or write poetry, so I didn't really have much of a show to put on. She'd say, "You know, Riley, you're really funny. You should try some standup comedy." *Yeah right*, I had thought at first, *I'm not really that funny*. At least not what most people would consider funny. I

Jack Everett

was sarcastic, and seemingly too serious. I have to admit, now, that Caroline was right. She, perhaps, knew me better than anyone else.

Well, one Thursday I decided to give it a shot. I had spent the week before writing up some material. I wanted at least five minutes worth. I didn't just want to get up there and tell one or two jokes and sit down. I wanted at least some type of routine.

Getting up for the first time was the worst. By that time all the regulars recognized me, and though I didn't feel uncomfortable in front of them, I could tell that they were all pretty curious as to what I was going to do. I'm not sure if this is the case or not, but it felt like every put down there drinks and stopped eating to watch me. They had to know I wasn't about to perform a musical number. I didn't have an instrument, and most of the poets had their poems written down. I didn't have any props either. To them I was a business student. At my school business students had a reputation of being the guys that didn't really know what they wanted to do, so they majored in business. That was a pretty accurate description for me, and those that knew me, knew that.

Well, I thought I was just about to faint. I had memorized my routine, if it could be called a routine, and I thought I was going to forget it all, as soon as I stood in front of the mic. I found myself spitting it out, however, and when I realized I was getting some laughs, I started enjoying myself. I had jokes about school, politics, grocery shopping, and anything else that a student might be interested in, or find funny. Then it was over. I looked over the crowd, and they weren't looking at me like I was a complete idiot. Caroline looked especially pleased. That was fine by me, because it was her idea that got me up there.

After time I developed my act into a full fifteen minutes. At first my jokes had mostly been about college life, but I soon realized that I wanted to broaden my range of material, and potentially have a bigger audience some day. I was getting big aspirations, it felt good. Sure, the chances of me ending up as a comedian in New York City were pretty slim, but I liked to dream about it. I'd get up every week, and work on refining my comedy. It was quite enjoyable for me, and for the audience. Regulars would invite their friends that had never been to the club. They invited the people that weren't interested in poetry or lousy bands.

My standup had gotten quite good. After a few months I had developed two good routines, though every performance was a little different. I found myself able to respond more thoughtfully to the crowd and play off the audience.

In class, and in public I'd wonder if the various people I passed by knew I was the comedian at *Second Street Poetry Club*. I'd had been interviewed about my standup for the school paper, so I knew that more than just those who had come to the club had heard about me. I never tried to be funny in public. I tried to be my serious old self.

Well a month or so into my comedy gigs, I happened to notice a new girl that was showing up. One of the regular's friends I figured. She had drawn my attention quite a few times, every time throwing a smile in my direction. She was an attractive brunette with long curly hair, a fit body, and a pretty face. One day, after my standup routine I had sat down for a drink and she approached me. As soon as I saw her approaching I got a little nervous. "I'm Jane," she said.

"Riley," I announced.

"I know," she replied. Obviously she knew. I had been the main event for some time by then. "I think you're a pretty funny guy." She handed me a slip of paper with a phone number on it. "Why don't you give me a call some time?"

I didn't say anything in reply as she walked away. I pocketed the phone number. I sat there trying to be cool, but as soon as she walked out of the club I excitedly got up. A girl had never approached me like that before. Everyone I had dated before had been a friend of one of my friends, or I had known them for years, like Caroline. This girl I had only seen around the club a few times, and until then I hadn't known her name.

I quickly found Caroline, and asked her if she knew who this girl was.

"I don't know much about her," she said. "I don't think she's majoring in the arts, but I have seen her around school. Why don't you ask Sara about her? I think they are friends."

"Sara?"

"Sitting over there," she motioned.

I didn't know Sara. I'd seen her around the club as well. I wasn't about to talk to someone I didn't know, though. Caroline realized this, "Maybe you should call her, you might like her."

"I guess," I said. Well I left the club earlier than usual that night debating if I should call this girl or not.

I had spent days deliberating if I should call her, not sure what I would say. She had given me the number because she thought I was a funny guy. Little did she know that my standup comedy was pretty much my funniest stuff, the rest of the time I was serious, and

concerned about things. It finally got to the point that I realized if I didn't call, she might be at the club the next time I went on stage, and I wouldn't know how to face her. So I called, and we went out a couple of times, and soon we were officially boyfriend and girlfriend.

We had been going out for about a month, and I thought she would have figured out right away that I wasn't as funny in person as on stage. I thought my seriousness, and the things I worried about, would make her lose interest in me. She never said anything about my personality. Instead she just kept on hanging around me.

Spring break was coming, and that had me especially worried. Jane had found out about my grandpa's cabin. A rather luxurious cabin, with three bedrooms, an electric generator, a big screen TV, and all the other luxuries of a home, except that it was in the wilderness surrounded by trees, and away from society. She had suggested that we and some of our friends go camping there for the week. She had spent a few days planning it out, and proposed the plan to me. She wanted us to spend two days there, alone, and then our friends would come up. I was scared right away. I knew she would want to have sex, and while it's true that I really wanted to have sex with her, I was afraid. I was a virgin. My friends had told me about their first times, and so I thought it would be disappointing for her. Though we had never talked about it, I was sure that she was experienced. While she might know what to expect since it was my first time, I was still uncomfortable with the idea. "You know I'm a virgin right?" I had to ask, I needed her to know.

She gave me a look that said, of course I know. I'm not an idiot. I don't care. "We like each other, don't we?" she said.

I sort of gulped. Half nodded, and then agreed to the camping trip. I wasn't really sure what was going to happen at that point, but I figured my fate was set. Whatever was going to happen was going to happen. Maybe I could get out it, if I absolutely had to. The truth is I really wanted to have sex with her. I wanted to have sex, period. It had never really come up with any of the other girls I had dated. I hadn't dated any of them long enough, except for Caroline, but I thought Caroline was a virgin too. I thought maybe it would be easier to do it with another virgin. That way we both wouldn't know what to expect. In a way I was wishing it was Caroline that was going to go on this trip with me. Or that I wasn't going at all. I was twenty years old, though. It was about time I lost my virginity. At least that's what I figured.

A few days before leaving, I decided I should get some condoms. To me it seemed weird to buy them. I didn't want to look suspicious so I bought them with some other groceries. While

I was avoiding looking at them the whole time, the cashier didn't even give them a second glance. I was already thinking too much about it.

When we arrived at the cabin, I half jokingly said, "We can each have our own room." I didn't know how to read her response.

After getting our bags into the cabin, I suggested that we go hiking. We set out into the woods. I was serious the whole time. I didn't laugh at anything, and I certainly didn't crack any jokes. I barely spoke. I didn't even hold her hand. I was acting awkward, and it was obvious that she realized this.

I couldn't figure why this attractive girl would want to have sex with a weirdo like me. I wasn't really a weirdo, but I kept trying to think of things that were wrong with me, or reasons why Jane shouldn't want to have sex with me. I couldn't come up with any good reasons.

We got back just at sunset. I suggested that maybe we watch a movie before going to sleep. "You don't want to have sex with me, do you," she attacked. I was startled. I hadn't expected her to say anything.

I was taken aback. I paused for a second, staring back at the stern look on her face. "I do. I really do, but I just don't think I'm ready." I felt like I sounded whiny, like a child. The look on her face eased a bit, but not much, no sympathy anyway.

"What did you think we came up here for?" I'd never seen her so angry.

I stood there, not responding, not even moving. She went took her stuff into one of the rooms and closed the door behind her. I took my stuff into another room, and closed the door as well.

We stayed in separate rooms for that first night. I didn't sleep. In a way my fears were relieved, but I had a whole new set of fears. I figured it was over between me and. I was disappointed. I liked Jane. I was mad at myself for being afraid. I wanted to leave the woods and go back to town.

The next morning I was afraid to get up. I didn't want to face Jane, but I knew I couldn't stay in the room all day. I got up. Jane was sitting on the couch in the den. "I called Sara," she said, "our friends our coming up today instead of tomorrow."

I nodded at her, and thought about how much I had royally screwed up. I was certain I wasn't going to have a girlfriend anymore.

A few hours later some of her guy friends showed up. I was wondering if she had invited my friends to come up at all. I was also wondering where her girlfriends were. I soon found myself the fifth wheel, utterly useless, a tag-a-long. I kept thinking to myself that I should call it quits with Jane, and tell her that I wanted to break up, right in front of her guy friends. She seemed happier with these other guys anyway. I felt like a real loser. I was a loser.

I justified that I should break up with her because we didn't have anything in common, but really I wanted to break up with her before she had the chance to break up with me. That way I wouldn't be as humiliated in front of these other guys. That's how I saw it anyway. Really I'd look like the loser no matter what.

After playing a few board games she disappeared with the other guys. They went boating, and I found myself alone in the cabin. I thought I would tell her it was over when they got back. I didn't want to say it like a loser, and wanted it sound casual, like I just didn't like her, like I was too cool to be her boyfriend. I knew I was lying to myself. That would never happen. I'd look like a loser no matter how I said it, especially if I broke up with her in front of her friends. Frankly, it pretty much seemed like we were already broken up anyway, just the words needed to be said in order to seal it. Then I thought how good it felt to have a girlfriend, and I thought maybe I shouldn't say anything, because maybe she wouldn't say anything anyway. Realistically I didn't think we could stay a couple anymore. I didn't think I could even talk to her anymore.

I was bored out of my mind, and I was pacing around, when I decided to go into her bedroom and rummage around her stuff. I don't know why I decided to do that. I had always felt it was wrong to go through other people's private things. Don't get me wrong, though, I wasn't doing this as a pervert, I wasn't looking for her panties or anything like that, I was just looking at what she had brought for the camping trip. I was surprised to find that she had brought a season of the show "The Office". "The Office" had been one of my favorite shows, but I did not think that I had mentioned that to Jane. Maybe she did know, and maybe she was planning for the lot of us to have an "Office" marathon. My apprehension, however, had killed off the potential for any kind of marathon. Seeing the DVDs made me think that maybe we had a lot more in common than I had suspected, and that maybe if I had been more open with her we might have had a much better relationship. I felt like an idiot. I didn't know why I had been so afraid to have sex with her. It was probably too late now though. I left her room and decided I wouldn't say anything when she got back. If she wanted to break up, it was in her hands.

Well an hour or so passed by and another car arrived at the cabin, I went outside to see who it was. It was Sara. She arrived alone. Sara and Jane had been best friends for years. I had sort of gotten to know her while hanging out with Jane, but I didn't know that much about her. She said, "Hi Riley," to me with a little wave.

"Jane's out boating," I mumbled. I figured that Jane had already told Sara what had happened the night before.

Sara was about as attractive as Jane. She was shorter, with straight blonde hair, and more curves on her body. I felt embarrassed checking her out. Hell, I felt embarrassed checking Jane out while we were on dates. I'm pretty sure that Sara noticed that I had swept my eyes over her.

"Why don't we wait inside?" she asked.

"Alright," I said.

We went inside. I sat down on the couch across from the big screen. She sat next to me, right next to me, her hip and arm touching mine. I was nervous. She was a little close, considering that Jane and I weren't officially broken up, I wasn't sure that it was right for her to be that close. I was tempted to shift to the side a bit, but I didn't move.

"Anything to watch?" Sara asked.

I barely managed to say, "There isn't any cable or broadcast out here, but we could put in a DVD." My response was almost inaudible. She didn't seem interested in that idea.

"The others will be out for a while?"

"I guess," I didn't really know, they had already been out for a while, and I didn't really know when they planned to get back. I didn't think Jane was too eager to see me again, though.

"Anything much to do?" She picked up a magazine that was sitting on the coffee table in front of us, and put it down again.

"I dunno."

"You wanna fuck?"

I found my heart beating fast. Had I heard right? I didn't know how to respond. I wasn't even sure if she was serious. I didn't know her at all. I was afraid to have sex Jane, and I'd been around her for over a month. Sara, I'd only been around maybe a dozen times. This was a huge deal. Jane had never mentioned that Sara was a particularly loose girl, so her question seemed a little out of place. I was taking too long to respond, I'd have to decide fast. "If you want to," I managed.

Jack Everett

“You seem kind of nervous. Jane told me you’re a virgin.” I think I blushed. “I don’t mind. I’ll show you what to do.”

She didn’t mind? I guess I was going to do this. No backing out now. My fate was really sealed now.

“It’ll feel more comfortable if we do it on a bed, are there beds here?”

“Yeah,” I motioned towards the bedroom doors. She stood up, grabbed my hand and led me into one of the bedrooms. Jane’s bedroom as it happened. I felt really weird about that, but I was too nervous to say anything.

“We can do it in the dark, if it’ll make you feel less nervous.”

I knew I wouldn’t feel less nervous no matter what. I did, however, think that maybe that was a good idea. A woman had never seen me naked before, and while I doubted that Sara or any other woman would have a reason to laugh at my body, I liked the idea of doing it in the dark.

“Okay,” I said.

She pulled the curtains over the room’s window. It was dark alright. There was only the light from open door where I was standing. She crossed the room, grabbed my hand, and closed the door behind us. In the dark now, she led me to the bed. She stumbled over a pair of Jane’s shoes and laughed. Soon we were on the bed, and under the sheets. “Take your clothes off,” she said.

She was shuffling around in the bed next to me so I knew that she was already undressing. I found myself slipping my t-shirt over my head. Taking my pants off was a little nerve-racking, and when I got to my boxer shorts I was trembling. I was happy we were doing this with the lights off. It helped me feel more anonymous. Like I was doing this without anyone know about it, not Jane, not even Sara. Sara had been undressed for some time by the time I finally slipped my boxers over my feet.

My eyes had adjusted somewhat to the darkness, a little light shown around the edge of the door and window. I could see the outline of Sara’s body under the sheets. She was on her side facing toward me with her arm supporting her head. “Ready?” She asked gently, though somewhat impatiently.

I couldn’t speak. So I slowly nodded, figuring that she could see well enough to see my response.

“I’m on the pill, so you don’t need to worry about a condom.”

That thought hadn't even occurred to me, but now that she brought it up I wondered about STDs as well. I guess if she had one I was screwed because I was going to go through with this.

Without warning I felt her hand grab my dick. I hadn't realized she had moved. "I guess you are ready." I had been hard since she had suggested that we do this. She rolled onto her back. "Let's do the missionary position since it's your first time, just climb on top of me."

I did as instructed. I sort of squirmed around under the covers until I was straddled over her. Except when she had grabbed me I hadn't touched her, as I was hovering over her. I could sort of see her facial expression. She was smiling, almost ominous like, at least that's how I perceived it. I couldn't really tell in the dark. She lifted her head up and licked my face, and then she lifted her whole body up and pressed her body against my chest. I was shocked by the sudden touch and found myself collapsing onto her. Her back fell back onto the bed and I caught myself just before my full weight would have pressed down on her. She was quite a bit smaller than me and I didn't want to crush her.

"Alright, just stick it in, and it'll be over before you know it," she demanded. I could just barely see her face, she looked excited, and it that seemed strange to me. "Use your hand to guide it in if you need to," she explained.

I did as instructed. Every muscle in my body tightened, and I'm sure I had a weird expression on my face. Thank goodness the lights were out. I let out a moan and came immediately. The full weight of my body collapsed on top of her. I lifted myself off of her and rolled to the side. As soon as she got her breath back she giggled and said, "Not bad for the first time."

Definitely better for me than for you, I thought. Then I figured I just say it out loud, "Definitely better for me than for you." She laughed, it wasn't really that funny.

She leaned over and licked my face again. "You're a real sexy guy you know."

I blushed, but of course she couldn't see that in the dark. "Just not a real sexually experienced guy," I said. Again, not funny, but she laughed anyway.

She leaned towards me again, put an arm around me and held on. I guessed that that was post sex cuddling. Unsure of myself, I put an arm around her as well and lay there with her. It felt nice to have a warm body next to me. She may not have known it, but I was smiling.

Jack Everett

I don't know how long we were laying there. I may have fallen asleep, but some time later there was laughing coming from the den. The others were back. Before Sara or I had a chance to move, the full light from the den shown through the room's open door. Jane was standing there, shocked for a moment, then angry. "What the fuck?" she said.