

“The kind of technique we’ll be practicing in this class,” Professor O’Connor said, “involves never taking your pencil or charcoal or whatever from the paper. The idea is to sketch out shapes by continuously moving your hand.” He pointed in my general direction.

“You, there.”

I looked at the girls on my left and right.

He stepped closer, wagging his rough pointer finger in my face. “Yes! YOU THERE! Come here and draw a sack.”

“Me?”

“YES!”

I cleared my throat and smiled nervously, “Uhm, what kind of sack?”

Professor O’Connor pursed his lips, then spun around to the board. He made an exaggerated air drawing with his hand around the entirety of the whiteboard.

“Any sack, maybe a sack with a body inside, or presents! Come on then! Draw us a sack! Maybe a woman is trapped inside! Ah, YES! Now, that would be fun!”

*Would it?* Grayson smiled at me, at Professor O’Connor, then back at me with judgmental fascination. Professor O’Connor turned around and handed me the red marker. I took it reluctantly as if he were handing me a fresh turd. I was panting at that point, sucking in tiny gulps of air. I slowly brought my marker to the board and drew a basketball-sized circle, and the marker squuuueaked all the way around. How do I trap a woman inside? I stared at it. Then added a square on top, like a pumpkin, then a little wiggle for the “string,” where it was supposedly tied to stop the kidnapped human from escaping.

Professor O’Connor stepped back to examine my drawing with his hand on his chin.

“What is *that*? That’s not a *sack*!” He pointed to it. “Does this look like a sack, anyone? Anyone?” He snatched the marker out of my hand and went to the board where he drew wildly. “You can draw a sack like this, maybe with a woman’s leg popping out the top or an arm trying to get out of the side. Your sack doesn’t look anything like a sack!”

I’d offended him with my inability to properly contain a body. He exhaled. “All right, fine, everyone, go find an easel.”

I took the easel closest to the doorway, next to Grayson. Our model, a thin, thirty-something man with wavy black hair, shuffled to the center of the circle, kicked off his slippers, dropped his robe and sat on the chair naked. He let his legs fall slightly apart, just enough for us to fully capture every pillowy dimple of his balls. He yawned, and his uncircumcised penis flopped to the side like it was playing dead.

Naked (in Italy)