

Benny began making the pass at the foxy lady. He grabbed the juice first and started talking as he opened it.

“I have to apologize,” he began. “I’ve been totally rude and misbehaved. I’m sorry you had to hear that with my mother. Sometimes...well, you’d have to know my mother.”

There was no response. The foxy lady just continued her business on her laptop.

“No luck with that, huh, Ben?” Eddie was in Benny’s ear. “Now, go for the sandwich. Turn on the flirt as you unwrap it. Maybe offer half to her.”

Benny again reached into his backpack. “It’s crazy, you know what I mean? Here I am, sitting out here on a beautiful sunny Saturday afternoon, with a very pretty woman, offering a subtle bouquet of pleasing fragrance, not three feet away from me, and I don’t even introduce myself. I must be losing touch or something. I understand if you think that I’m a complete jerk and I don’t blame you, but if you only knew my mother, you’d understand. Just crazy...beautiful day, beautiful woman and I just have to ask, could I offer you half of my nice home-made rare roast beef sandwich?”

Benny giggle-talked precociously as he took the lid off the plastic container that Morty had put it in and made a dramatic presentation of the delicious looking sandwich...

... “With fresh crispy Romaine lettuce, thinly sliced, perfectly ripened Roma tomato, on lightly toasted whole wheat bread, delicately massaged with pimento mayonnaise?” Again with a bit of a flirtacious giggle he added, “How’s that for a culinary description? Sounds pretty good, huh? Look at that!” He admired the masterpiece as he delicately placed it on the bench. “No kiddin’, my mouth watered just preparing it. Please, it could be a kind of a peace offering for forgiveness for my bad behavior.” Benny took a swig of the juice and

continued, “I even have some onion and garlic potato chips and a savory dill pickle wedge to go with it if you’d like.”

Eddie and Morty had to restrain their laughter. “Hear that one Ed? Subtle bouquet of pleasing fragrance?”

“Delicately massaged!? What a dink! He made me hungry! Quit it now. Focus. What’s she doin’?”

The foxy lady turned to Benny. Her glowing countenance did not disappoint. Her eye make-up was done perfectly, without overkill, her pink lipstick was pleasing to look at and her cheeks offered a delicate shine. This was a strikingly beautiful woman. Her smile was even more welcoming. Again she crisscrossed her legs, revealing the rear seam up the middle of the back of her legs.

She spoke in a lilting British accent. “Whenever I’ve been around Agatha, I’ve found her to be absolutely delightful and charming.”

Benny was dumbfounded. The foxy lady knew his mother’s name! The juice bottle fell out of his hand, splashing on his shoes.

“And I don’t think Amy would be too happy to know that you’re trying to flirt with a strange woman in the university courtyard. Shame on you. Now, did you bring the money? And like always, Benjamin, don’t you dare say my name. Just give me the money, we’ll get done, and I’ll be on my way.”

Benny could have fainted and fallen off the bench.

“And yes, I’d like that half-sandwich, seeing as though you so delicately massaged the toast with pimento mayonnaise.” Foxy lady paused. “Just hand over the money when you give me the sandwich...Benjamin! Hey! Benjamin Nice!...yoo hoo!”

Benny was almost delirious.

“Ben!...Benny!” Eddie was loudly whispering into Benny’s ear. “Benny! Snap out of it... Benny!”

Foxy lady reached over and nudged Benny’s leg as she shoved the bag of reefer deep into his pack. He came to.

I could’ve done the same thing with two women or two men, or I could have had them start a vicious physical fight to death with each other, but it makes too much of a mess.” With a sinister, horrifying, eerie gleam in his eye, Maestro looked directly at Benny and added, “And Iris’ pets don’t clean up very well after themselves.” Benny shuddered at the thought. “Housekeeping frowns upon that.” Again he howled his diabolical laugh. “That should give you some idea of what I can do. Benny, it’s all about sound. They don’t even hear it, but I’ve figured out a way to control everything through ceramics and sound and my special ink. Like I said, pretty impressive, huh?”

Benny felt queasy. He steadied himself on the edge of a computer table and asked, “Is it OK if I take a seat, Maestro?”

“Maestro! You caught on! You must have heard that from one of my men. Good. You can call me Maestro from now on. Of course, have a seat.” Maestro pointed to a rich looking set of Victorian arm chairs that faced away from the windows.

There was a noise from the back of an adjacent wall that startled Benny as he sat down. His eyes drawn to it, Benny watched as it slid open like their entry wall had. The sight caused Benny’s adrenalin to spike.

“Iris! My sweet Iris!” Maestro said enthusiastically. “Come; meet my old friend Benjamin Nice.”

Iris just stood in the entryway, as if to shock anyone who might witness her presence. It worked on Benny. His first thought was that this sexy, curvaceous, raven haired, black latex-clad vixen was standing between two very large, fierce-looking Siberian Huskies. That would have been almost

acceptable. Looking closer, Benny could see that they weren't dogs at all. They were huge headed, silver-grey, snarling, terrifying wolves! There were no leashes on them! Benny squirmed in his seat as he felt his bladder tinge. Iris made a grunting noise. The wolves stepped forward of her. She grunted again and they stood rigidly at attention. She came forward into the office, went directly to Maestro and they kissed like a husband and wife would after being apart.

“Everything go alright on your little North East expedition, my love?”

Iris only nodded affirmation. Benny thought it odd that she didn't speak.

“You'll have to forgive my Iris. She's a woman of few words around strangers. Iris is more comfortable communicating with canines, in case you hadn't noticed. Iris, honey, why don't you welcome your new friend with a little demonstration of your mastery of your pets.”

Iris snapped her fingers once. Snarling threateningly, the wolves took one step closer toward Benny. He squirmed again. She snapped her fingers twice. The wolves stepped to Benny's feet. Benny trembled. The wolves did not sniff him. They just stood there, their gamey funk permeating Benny's entire self. It seemed like very long minutes before Iris released the tension. She grunted again and the wolves backed up to where they began their stepping toward Benny. They didn't take their eyes off Benny; didn't turn around. They walked backwards away, four eyes locked on Benny's. Benny almost peed himself.

Again with his insane laugh, Troy Grum asked, “Should I get you a diaper, Ben? Maybe a cold, wet face cloth? The perspiration is practically dripping off your forehead.”

“Cold, wet face cloth would be nice,” Benny answered as he wiped his brow with his spastically shaking hand.

