

## -SYLVIA-

Just holding him makes me feel alright. Just his warmth and the tight grip of his hand. I want to say here with my head on his chest. I know he's having that reaction or whatever, but he seems so at peace right now. With him holding me I can bear the dry tear-stains on my cheeks.

I look up and the smile never leaves his face. We cruise in his car going back to his place from the diner at the outskirts of town, with Loopy driving and us both in the back. It's a beautiful countryside drive, just as the sun is setting. He lays back, breathing deeply and eyes closed, and the wide smile will not leave his face I can listen to his breath and his heart, in perfect rhythm with one another.

"What this job needs is a burglar, a thief and a swindler; and so here we are. The entire universe is in total harmony." He says, "Sylvia, your job is to steal a key."

I look up at him.

"You see, for my plan to work it can't look like a robbery, so we need the key to get in."

"What plan is this?" Loopy asks.

"She steals the key for a warehouse, she gives the key to you. You go to the warehouse and take most of what you find. I'll give you a list."

"What do you do?" Dave asks him again

"Well, Ken, that's for me to know, it's all very boring insurance paperwork. It's nothing like this." He strokes my hair, as he did before. "Oh, my God. Oh, my God. Dave, stop the car!"

Loopy does just that and pulls to the side on a frosty cold field of wheat. To be honest, I don't know where we are going. I feel myself drop as he shifts towards the door and opens it. He jumps outside and I feel the sudden rush of cold late-autumn air. He takes off his shirt. It's flapping grayer than the dusk sky in his hand as he spreads his arms wide in the light, frigid breeze.

Where the hell is my camera? Oh, fuck.

I reach into my bag quickly and sighing so joyously that even Dave can tell pull it out and flick it on without delay.

The ice cold spears of brown grass crackle underfoot as I run after him.

"I love it! I love this place! I love it all. I'm going to finally complete my goal! I haven't felt this

good in a week!”

“Wait, Arthur! Wait for me!” I shout.

“You want to freeze to death you stupid cock?” Dave screams, also pursuing.

I yell at him to stop and turn around. He does just that. I tell him to put his hand behind his head in a vogue pose. He does. I ask him to put his other arm across his chest. I get the shot. I think this is the culmination of my photographic career. Arthur topless against the fading twilight. His smile overjoyed, ecstatic, but lost and distant at the same time.

“It's a blast of a sensation to feel the sweat that covers your whole body cool in one instant. I can only hope dying will feel this good.”

He throws his shirt over his shoulders.

“Dave, I've told you the plan. Sylvia, are you in?”

Right now I want him so bad. I want him all over me. Back in that car and in my pants so bad. Everything I've been waiting for is right here. His smile alone pulled me right out of the pit of my sorrow. I can only hope that he will love me. Please, God, say he will one day love me back with even half as much of this feeling.

I want him so bad it hurts. The light is fading, and all we have is a half-moon. I flick my camera into time-lapse exposure.

“Arthur, I will do anything you ask. First sit down in the grass, throw one hand behind you and lean back. This is going to be time lapse so you have to freeze for ten seconds.”

## -DAVE-

The shit head is going to die of hypothermia. It may snow tomorrow, and I'm holding myself in a deep shiver. The Ecstasy that he took probably had some speed in it he looked wired at dinner. X is supposed to overheat you anyway. His body's probably turned up thermal higher than a coal boiler. This might be a good chance for him to not cook himself alive.

He lays his shirt out like a mat on the grass. Then he leans forward on it, holding his hands on his chin smiling like the stoned idiot. Sylvia finishes another shot.

"Some days" he says "I feel like I'm just ticking down seconds for world war 3 to start, and blow me off the face of the world. Just a mile-high white-hot fireball that vaporizes the fuck out of me and leaves a stark shadow behind in a fiery crater."

The silence after he says this is awkward, even here in the middle of nowhere. I brush my cold fingers across my gristly chin.

"Arthur," I say "Why would you even think that?"

"Well I'm not thinking it now. I just, once in a while, wonder how the world's going to end."

"You don't want the world to come to an end do you?" Sylvia asks

"No! Well, not while I'm standing on it, anyway."

"What's your damn plan, man? Why are we out here miles from town? What could be so important?"

"I know!" He says and takes off his pants. I only regret that I was surprised by his endowment. Pretty impressive, actually.

"Oh, my God." Sylvia says; impressed.

"Fuck this! I'm going back to the car."

"Where are you going, Ken? He hollers.

I don't even look at him. "You're turning blue you stupid son of a bitch!"

"Hold that pose. That is beautiful." Cries Sylvia

I can't turn on the radio fast enough when I get inside the cab. I couldn't be more happy that Guns n' Roses is playing. I don't turn my head. I don't want to know. This is my happy ending. I sit inside his warm little coupe while he freezes to death in front of the fawning little wet-fest fangirl. I close my eyes, and listen to the harmonies and don't even notice when I've drifted off into a peaceful nap.

I wake up to White Snake, here I go again. The back door has been thrown open.

"Get the heaters going." Says Sylvia

Arthur piles into the back seat, and the doors shut. He's pale to purple. His blond hair is more a brown now, against his whitened face. Oh, yes, and he's still naked. Leaning forward he takes my hand and presses it to his chest. It feels like cooled chicken meat.

"Hot or cold?"

I punch him on the cheek, he reels back in the seat.

"Don't fuck with me, Arthur."

Sylvia hits me on the shoulder. "What was that for, Dave?"

"Shut up, Sylvia. He's high on ecstasy. He didn't feel a thing."

It wasn't a hard punch, anyway, just enough to get him off my case. I don't need him dying of hypothermia on me, either.

"Get his clothes on him."

I'm fed up. I need to get back to the city. I can only take so much of the rustic outskirts.

"It's so nice out here." He mumbles.

"Get some pants on this asshole, so I can get driving, Sylvia." Bad time to look back; I catch him warming his balls by hand. That which is seen cannot be unseen.

"Turn off the radio, will you? Get some lights on in here" Arthur asks

I kill the radio and flick on the dome and my hazard lights. With my eyes closed I just try to start breathing calmly again.

Our God is an awesome God,  
He reigns from heaven above.  
With wisdom, power and love.  
Our God is an awesome God.

“OK, people. That was fun. Now lets get it together. We're going back.”

Arthur reaches for his pants and pulls out his pillbox before tossing the clothes down. He opens one of the randomly sealed slots and removes a red and yellow capsule.

“This is Vyvance. My doctor says it will make me feel better.”

He takes out a blue chalk pill.

“This is MDMA. I say it will make me feel better.”

Yet another pill.

“This is prozak it's supposed to pick me up.”

“Look, let's get going.”

“There's a point here, Dave, bear with me.”

He goes through fifteen pills at least. Lithium, Speed, Mescaline, Oxycontin, Diazepam, psilocybin, Rohypnol, Zyprexa, Wellbutrin, demerol, Reds, Tylenol; it just kept coming. He emptied what he had left in the whole pillbox, and its a hand full of prescription and street pills.

“Either I get them, or a shrink gets them for me. Ever since I was 16 feeling better was just supposed to be another pill away. I can take a peel to feel up, or another pill to feel down. How many pills can I take before I feel happy?”

He holds them up to Sylvia.

“That's awful.” She says

“I know.” He says, and I am much calmer now.

“Arthur, I've been bugging you for over an hour now. You have a plan. The three of us, a key, the doomsday fund, and a warehouse. How does it all add up? What's on you mind?”

The Three Weasels 4-2

<http://www.14rivers.com/threeweasels.htm>

He looks back with his eye suddenly serious and a weak smile on his face.

“What's on my mind? What would it be like to feel everything all at once?”

He opens his mouth and shoves in the fist full of pills.

## -ARTHUR-

I'm not trying to kill myself. I'm trying to live. Trying to escape into some real life. Feel it all. No more living moment to moment, feeling to feeling. Just feel it all and then feel nothing. That's life anyway, isn't it?

Before I know what is happening I'm out of the car and he's bent me over, on the side of the road. My naked body soaks in the cold air. Both his hands are around my throat. He's behind me and pushing my head down, down down. I'm staring at the axle of my Audi in the dark and I hear the both of them screaming over me.

Spit them out.  
Spit them out.  
Spit them out.

I might as well. It was too many at once, and I couldn't swallow a one. Plus he's choking me. Nothing will go down.

For a second I try to get up. Now even Sylvia is forcing my head down, while Dave's fingers clench around my windpipe.

It's his fault. He hit me. I was feeling so great up until then. The sadness I felt tried to sink into the X and I couldn't know how to feel. So I did it. I failed to commit again.

With my tongue pushed out of my mouth a big glob of five pills comes out and falls in a clump. My mouth is still open, and Sylvia gets on her knees, routing out pills with her fingers. They seem to come out of me in a spray.

"Are they out?" He asks.

"Yeah. They're out. Let go."

Dave lets go of my neck. I breath in, coughing and roll to my side on the icy blacktop. Dave hands me the water bottle with just a gulp left in it.

"Don't drink it. Just rinse." He says.

Too many pills. I wash out my mouth of what's left. I spit wondering what kind of buzz I'll be getting if any of the traces of the stuff kicks in. I crawl into the car and Sylvia is back in the seat next to me. We drive away, with me still coughing, and feeling embarrassed. I compose myself well enough for her to give me the 'you better kiss me right now' look in her eyes. That's the look. You just look it. You don't say it.

So I do, I take her in close and I kiss her. What the hell? I might have been dead right now. Feel alive, but I don't feel right. It's not what it should be.

It's after dusk now. The trees passing in the night around us are dark, barren stickmen, and the stars emanate above the violet black hem of night.

"Thank you, Dave." I say

"Don't thank me. Ever."

I think I want sadness. I should, but I can't, so I don't. I sit back listening to the hum of the engine. I ignore Sylvia's glare, and after a while, I pick up my pants from the floor, but I don't put them on.

"Here's the plan, Sylvia. You need to steal a key from Marvin Curosa. You need to break into his house, find the key, copy it and get out in one night. It's a key to a warehouse and it has teeth on both sides and a bright orange rubber end on it."

"You're going to break in somewhere?" She asks

"No. If we have a key, it's legit, so we will, by copying it."

Dave chimes in;

"She a pro lock-pick. Why would you need to have her steal a key when we can just pick the lock at the warehouse?"

"looks too-" Sylvia cuts me off

"If it's double sided I'd have to rake the cylinder. That's noisy, and it takes a while, plus I've never really done it."

"Yeah. What she said." I go. "Besides, no one persons part in this plan can be directly linked to anyone else's. We have to do it all separately so it doesn't look like a group job."

I won't divulge too much. I'm going to keep control.

"One job per person. We all know each other's secrets, so now we all have to share one secret together."

"What's in it for me and Sylvia?" Ken asks

"I'll be giving you a list. Everything you take is ours. It's a score that's more than worth your time."

"What I don't get, Arthur is why you should care. You're the wealthiest fuck I know. Your whole life has been a cherry ride, and you live in a mansion."

"Don't psychoanalyze me, Dave. You haven't got the degree for it. Now shut up, I have to make a call."

I crack the window, and take out a cigarette from my pants. I light up and look at Sylvia who I can see in the light of the dash. She hasn't said very much, just looks with her palm pressed flat on the leather seat next to me. When I move my hand closer to hers she takes it and holds tight.

What the fuck am I doing?

I call Chad on his cell. What does Chad do when he's not getting high at my place? He works for a hardware store. He can get the key made. No questions asked.

"Yo, Art. What's going on? Want to get fucked up?"

"No Chad, I need a favor. You can make a key out of a clay imprint?"

"Sure, dude. That shit's easy."

"Could you manage it for me, off the record?"

"No sweat, bro."

"Thanks. I'll make it up to you later."

I hang up. Once I get the imprint it's all over. He won't know where it's coming from. He won't know where it's going to. Every piece is separate. Nothing is connected.

If Dave or me or Sylvia get busted that person fries alone.

I try to hand Sylvia a drag on the cigarette. She shakes her head.

"My mom smokes. I can't stand the smell of it. I can't get the stink out of anything."

I throw the cigarette out the window.

"Ken" I say "You're nothing but a shitty two-bit weasel, you know that?"

"And you, cocksucker, are not one to talk."

"Shut up, Dave. You've done enough damage."

"Same goes for you Sylvia. And I mean that in the best possible way." I say "Right here in this car are the three sleaziest people I know. It is for that reason I know we can do this."

I scratch my head and try to get my thoughts together because I'm still kind of high.

"Sylvia your job is easily the hardest. With a clay stamp you will copy the key on both sides, and get out. My job is to clone the key, work the insurance end of the score, and get a moving van. Ken, your job is to get the goods, and sell them off."

"You want me to find buyers online?"

"And no slacking either. We weasels all three will be rich, powerful and successful."

Sylvia comes close, and whispers in my ear, as she caresses my abdominal muscles.

"If I do this for you, I want you."

She reaches down without fear, and wraps her hand around the shaft of my manhood.

I reach around her, and pull her close.

"I am not a man of compromise." I whisper to her, and I make a move with my hand.

Her breath is deep, as her inner thigh is warm. Inviting.

Ken stops the car so fast that we both almost fall out of the seat. He turns.

"You've got a deal, Asshole, but I've been chauffeuring you around long enough today. You drive." He opens his door and the overhead light comes on. I see the anger in his eye, the protectiveness, the jealousy. Aha; the game's afoot.

After I get dressed, and take over the driving no one speaks. The car ride is totally silent.

Send questions, comments, corrections, criticisms and thoughts to  
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More Chapters will be made available. <http://14rivers.com/threeweasels.htm>

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