

Coffee Date on Wilton Dr.

“So, tell me about your first time.” Mikey said, his smirk growing into a full smile. Mikey was about the same height as me, which was nice. His dark brown eyes had a kindness behind them which contrasted with his heavyset body. Short cropped hair led into a neatly trimmed beard that was etched along his jawline.

“My first time? Why would you want to know about that?”

“Cuz...everyone's first time at a gay bar is different. It's always a good story, mine was in Phoenix, I was a little nervous.”

I looked down at my cold coffee. The air in the shop was a bit singed, as if someone had managed to light it on fire. The humidity outside had matted the jet black hair on my arms, helping to hide my slightly pale, beige skin.

“Well unfortunately mine was in Naples, Florida,” I said. “It was years ago. Actually, now that I think about it, in two months it will be ten years since my first time. I was 24.”

“Were you scared?”

“Terrified, yes. I was working in a christian bookstore at the time,” I breathed. His face winced as if he had been hit with a pebble.

“I decided the night before that I would finally do it. So after I closed down the store, I ran home to get changed.”

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Kent threw his work shirt onto the couch. The nametag saying *My name is KENT how may I bless you today?* crumpled under the sea of purple cotton polyblend. After a quick shower he thought about what people would wear to a gay club. He didn't own many cool brand name clothes, so he settled on a pair of dark blue jeans, black dress shoes, and a tan shirt. After spraying some product onto his head to curl his shoulder length jet black hair, he glanced in the mirror. He looked like a latino Steve Irwin preparing for a segment on the Tonight Show. He grabbed his keys and rushed out the door.

“Steve Irwin! Why would you wear that?” Mikey chuckled, stirring his coffee. He studied my now, short-cropped spiky hair, Diesel brand black boots, and a red Calvin Klein polo.

“Give me a break I didn’t have much of a fashion sense!” I said, accidentally letting my voice get higher. “Let me finish and stop interrupting!”

“Ok, ok, go on...” he said, stifling a giggle.

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Kent was tucking his shirt in while he drove, avoiding the gaze of other drivers. It occurred to him that he should probably stop and get some money, maybe to get a drink while he was there. What if nobody talked to him? He would need something to do while he sat in a corner. Last thing he wanted was to be the center of attention. He pulled his dingy, gray Ford Taurus into the next Seven-Eleven and grabbed a bottle of water, slice of pizza, and twenty dollars cash back.

The bar was in the shitty part of town, of course, and the parking lot was shared with the whole plaza. The bar was at the end of a plaza, its neighbors being a Winn Dixie and a Tax Filing office. The wet parking lot reflected the neon red, white, and green from the store fronts. It was fairly empty. He thought people would be here by now but the dashboard read 10 O'clock. He sat low in his car for a bit and finished his pizza.

Half hour later, more cars arrived in the lot. They were all more expensive than his, Corvettes, BMWs, and a couple of Mustangs. He took a deep breath, checked his hair in the mirror and stepped out of the car.

Kent walked across the parking lot, careful not to slip on the asphalt. When he got to the door, he stepped into line and perused the posters taped to the window. As the line moved forward, he noticed the last poster, the one for tonight, which stated that someone named Nikki Adams was performing. He entered the lobby, and there she was, next to the cashier. She was taller than Kent, about 6’2 not including the high heels. She had slender milky white legs that led up past her mid thigh to the hem of a deep green dress, so shiny it caused the light to dance around her. The sequins, resembling fish scales, led up to spaghetti straps anchored on her broad shoulders just below the largest adams apple Kent had ever seen. She locked onto his eyes, almost sensing his fear, and greeted him with a warmth that enveloped him.

The coffee shop was gradually emptying. The street lamps turned on, casting a dim orange light on the walls inside the shop.

“What did she say to you?” Mikey asked, taking another sip of coffee.

I picked another piece from my croissant, “I can't remember, she was super nice though. I managed to keep it cool when she gave me a little kiss on the cheek.”

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The club's interior looked like a too tall concrete box. Its floors were covered with black and gray carpet that climbed halfway up the two story room. A musty odor was released from the missing patches and tears in the floor. Random pieces of gum plugged the fabric like potholes on a cheap highway overpass. The back of the club was barren. One side of it had a long bar housing hundreds of liquor bottles but only eight or ten people sitting at the stools. The opposite side of the room had a few steps that led up to a mirrored wall behind the stage.

Kent's chest was pounding from the base of the music as he walked up to the bar. He needed something in his hands to keep him busy. The bartender walked over and nodded at him. After Kent asked for a drink, the bartender gave him an awkward look and pointed to the sea of bottles behind the bar. Kent fumbled for his wallet and decided on a beer. The bartender gave him a Corona, and after shoving his wallet back into his jeans, Kent turned to look for a place to sit.

In the center of the room was an old dance floor, now housing long tables with high stools. They were arranged like the iron bars of a prison cell. Kent grabbed a seat in the middle creating a space where he would not have to interact with anybody. Perfect. He took a deep breath, and a sip of the beer.

Just as he thought he was going to go deaf, the music stopped. A spotlight engulfed the stage. Bits of dust speckled the air wafting through the room. Amy Winehouse's “Back to Black” started playing as Nikki Adams sauntered onto the stage. She began to sway in rhythm with the music, her fish scale sequins blazed emerald in the spotlight. Her presence was vibrant, bringing life to the otherwise depressing bar. She made her way around the stage, caressing her body and

gesturing to the audience while Amy sang. She looked majestic. Her eyes swept the audience, many of whom whistled as she locked eyes with different people.

She made her way over to the stairs and the spotlight followed her. She turned, and looked directly at Kent. His breathing stopped as she gracefully stepped from the stage and glided closer to him. Slikning through his little cell, she ran her fingers across the table and gently up his arm. The spotlight blinded Kent, but he managed to smile when she ran her fingers through his hair and blew into his ear, making him the center of attention in the club.

“She did what!” Mikey said pushing his empty cup to the side.

“Yeah I swear, and I was only there for about 20 min!” Kent said with a mouth full of croissant. “I was embarrassed, but the night turned out ok for me after that.”

“Oh yeah? Hows that?” he said, sitting back and resting his arm on a chair, a knowing look growing on his face.

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Kent finished the last sip of his beer. The guy across the bar had been looking at him since Nikki finished her song. Seeing Kent had set down his empty beer, he began to strut over to him. He was tall, olive skinned and broad shouldered. His dark hair matched his jeans, and his shirt was so tight, Kent was surprised he could breathe. With one hand in his pocket, tight shirt leaned on the table and started whispering in Kent's ear. He grazed his forearm as they talked. After a few exchanges back and forth, Kent stood up. His eyes darted around the bar and he nodded, whispering in the guy's ear.

Outside, Kent pointed to his car. Tight shirt nodded, and adjusted his belt before walking off. Kent crossed the lot, and after pulling out of the parking space and checking his mirror, a white T-top corvette came up behind him. Tight shirt nodded to him and Kent pulled into the street, the corvette revving behind him.

The night sky was all consuming. The drive across town was short but with his eyes fixed on the rearview mirror, Kent felt like it took forever. The air was so humid he had to turn the air on to full blast to keep from drenching his shirt. Every time a car whizzed by, his heart raced. When they hit a stop light, he sat low in his seat.

Kent made him park a few buildings away. Pulling up to his apartment, he parked his car, and looked around the complex before he walked over to the corvette. Tight shirt stepped out. He shut the door, silencing the neighborhood behind him. His body screamed sex. Once they reached the apartment door, Kent took a deep breath, fumbled with his keys and opened the door.

“Your first time out? Seriously?” Mikey said, leaning against the plush booth and wiping crumbs off the table. “Well lucky you.”

“Not really,” I said “When we got inside my place, I put my condom on backwards, accidentally head butted the guy, and managed to fall off the bed halfway through. Not my finest moment.”