

Jason Miller  
English 218  
Short Story Final Draft  
“Oh yeah”

The sheets are softer than any sheets that I own, and there are way too many pillows on the bed. I sit up and I try to open my eyes but my eyelids are stuck closed. As I desperately try to rub the sleep from my eyes I can hear someone in the bathroom getting out of the shower. The slide of the shower curtain rings is followed by the sound of water trickling from the showerhead.

As I finally get my eyelids open, I look around and all I am able to see is various blurs and shades of color. For a second I'm panicked that I have gone blind or that I'm going blind. Then as I come out of the fog of trying to wake up I finally figure out that I must have fallen asleep with my contacts in. As I yawn my eyes begin to water and I'm able to peel the contact from my right eye and I start to regain my sight. I scan the room looking for my jacket and realize that I am not anywhere familiar, or at least that I don't recognize *exactly* where I am.

I know that I'm in a hotel room and not someone's spare bedroom. I see all of the cookie cutter things of a hotel room, the halfway decently upholstered arm chair stuffed in the corner under a reading light, a writing table that is almost too big for the space it's in with various books of hotel amenities and local attractions, the armoire with the built in television and the mini bar. Then,

there on the dresser, BINGO! My jacket. I kick the covers off of me and swing my legs over the side of the bed and slowly make my way around the bed and over to the dresser. I pick my jacket up and start patting and going through the pockets looking for my contact case or some eye drops.

Once my sight is restored and my contact lens back in my eye the task of collecting my things begins. This is basically going through a mental inventory of all the things I started the night with and what I might have lost the night before. To my surprise, my phone is in my inside jacket pocket and my shirt and pants are folded and sitting on the chair at the writing table. Then there is a somewhat familiar female voice coming from the bathroom, "You up yet?" I hesitantly answer back, desperately trying to remember the names of all the people I was with last night and drawing a blank. All the while trying to sound sincere in my response, "Yeah. Good morning."

As I desperately try to figure out who's in the bathroom my mind begins filing through a Rolodex of names that will hopefully cross-reference with the voice in the other room. Sandy? Randi? Mandy? Madeline??? No. Not even close, Tara? Sara? Cara?

Then, I'm suddenly overcome by a wave of panic like a splash of water that says to just get out of there. Get your clothes together, grab your shoes

and just get out. No kiss goodbye, no I'll call you later, no nothing. Just-just, just go.

Wearing only my undershirt and boxer shorts, I grab my clothes and realize that I'm missing a shoe. As I hunt for my left shoe I notice a name badge hanging on the lamp sitting next to the bed, I sit down and read the bold type, "Bobbi Cruz".

Just as I finish reading this, my host comes from around the corner smiling and wearing a robe and a towel on her head. "Good morning, Sunshine!" she says, leaning over me and picking up the remote control from off the bedside table. She turns on the television and starts hunting for something to watch.

*Damn it!* I think to myself, if I had hadn't had to look for my damn shoe I'd be in the hallway getting dressed and halfway home free. But now that I've seen this girl and she seemed somewhat pleased at my presence, I should probably hang out for a minute and at least grab a coffee with her. Maybe I can fish some details out of her about last night.

I clear my throat, and do my best to sound breezy. "Hey, do you mind if I grab a quick shower?" and I head to the bathroom before I hear the answer and close the door behind me. I throw my clothes on the counter and realize that not only am I wearing a shoe with no sock, but also that the shoe I was

previously hunting for is in my hand. I laugh and toss it on top of my pile of clothes.

As I turn on the water I try to figure out the shower controls and I'm briefly scalded and then sent into a semi hypothermic state until I can adjust the water temperature. As the water runs down from my head I fumble and fight with the little individually wrapped hotel soap and wonder why there isn't a little bottle of shower gel. I mean this is a relatively nice place, and yet here I am wrestling with a Motel 6 bar of soap. I finally get the waxy paper wrapper off of the soap and try to piece together the events of last night that has led to me standing in this shower.

Okay, I remember Steve leaving and his friends introducing me to so many people that I wasn't sure if it was the drinks or the overwhelming number of people that got my head spinning. That must be when the evening took a turn. Why or why did I break my rule? No shots, no shots, no shots. Now how do I play this Bobbi situation? How did I meet her and how in the hell did I end up in her hotel room? My thoughts are interrupted by a knock at the door.

"Hey Dan, I have to get going soon. Do you think you can wrap it up so we will have time to grab some breakfast?"

"Oh yeah, no problem." I say as I turn the water off. I hear the door close and as I throw back the shower curtain and reach for a towel another dilemma

occurs to me. Where am I? I wonder what hotel this is. As I look around for a clue I remember the soap. I fish the soap wrapper from the corner of the shower and see that I'm in a Marriott. Well that helps little; it narrows the choices down anyway. At least it's in English and I'm not in Montreal or anything. I wish I had thought about this earlier, now I have to figure out how to look for a clue out in the room without actually looking like I'm looking for a clue.

As we are seated in the hotel restaurant I'm greeted by various smiling faces of strangers who seem to know me, obviously new friends from the night before. I do my best to return the greetings and act like I know who they are and what they are talking about.

Our waitress brings some coffee and Bobbi and I start talking about the conference she is attending. She stops abruptly and says "Oh hey, don't forget that you promised to go to dinner tonight."

"Dinner?" I ask as I take a sip of coffee. "Yeah, sure, dinner. Who's all going?"

Bobbi smiles and says reassuringly "Just some people from work. Oh, and don't forget to bring your friend; Stephen was it?"

"Yeah, Steve." As I smile and think that the only person that must call Steve, Stephen is his Grandmother. I mean even Steve's mother and father call

him Steve. The waitress comes back, takes our order, tops off our coffee and we continue to talk about the conference.

After breakfast we say our farewells and confirm our plans for later that evening. I start to make my way through the lobby to the front door and as I step out into the sunlight I realize that I am all the way lost. Nothing looks familiar so I'm forced to go back into the hotel to ask where the closest subway station is.

After a brief conversation with the concierge I prepare to make the two-mile trek to the subway station and I get my phone out to call the office and I see that there are four missed calls from the office and three emails from Steve. All the emails say the same thing; "call the office". Up until now I hadn't realized that it was starting to get late. I look at my watch and see that its almost ten o'clock and my phone rings. I look at the screen and see that it's Steve. I hit accept, "Stevie, buddy, o pal o mine!"

Steve laughs and says "Hey do you think you will be gracing the office with your presence today?"

I give a long pause and then respond "Yeah, about that. Let me tell you a story. Up until about ten minutes ago I didn't know where I was except that I was at a Marriott."

“Oh Danny Boy. I figured as much. So where are you exactly? Wait, hold on a sec. Let me go into the conference room.”

I hold the phone to my ear and look around the front of the hotel. Over the sounds of the street I hear various voices and phones ringing and then the heaviness of the conference room door closing, silence and then the squeak of one of the conference room chairs, probably Ted’s chair at the head of the table.

Steve sighing, clearing his throat and getting comfortable “Okay, now where are you?”

“I’m just across the river on the blue line, I should be in the office in a few. Let’s say, eleven? Twelve at the latest”

“Tell you what. Since King Theodore isn’t in today. How about I swing by and pick you up? I have to drop something by the printer and I could take the scenic route and pick you up first. So you’re at a Marriott?”

I take a deep breath, exhale and stretch “Yeah? How about you pick me up out front of Four Corners at the Courthouse stop? I’ll be the guy drinking an energy drink, sitting in yesterday’s shirt and tie, well yesterday’s shirt anyway.”

“Alright then.” Steve says laughing. “See you in about twenty, and don’t make me circle the block looking for you.”

I hit the end call button and put my phone in my jacket pocket and head out to the Four Corners. Walking down the sidewalk there are stores and buildings that I must have driven past scores of times before but have never really noticed. This sudden realization makes the walk shorter and before I know it I can see the Four Corners at the end of the block.

Before crossing the street I step into a bodega for something to drink. The cooler is freshly stocked and all the cans and bottles aren't that cold. I look over all the colas and fruit infused teas and decide on a couple cans of energy drink.

As I walk up to the restaurant I crack one of the magical elixirs and eagerly drink about half the can. The sun is starting to peak out from behind the buildings across the street. I look down the street for Steve and see people getting off the subway, people going in and out of buildings and people running from buses to catch the train. I find a spot in the corner of the patio just in the shade of the building's awning.

Not long after I throw my jacket on an empty seat and get comfortable a waiter comes out and asks me what he can get for me. I reply "How about a Bloody Mary and a steak sandwich?" then a chuckle and I tell the waiter "just a menu for now and a glass of water, thanks." The waiter goes inside and before

he returns with my glass of water Steve pulls up, honks the horn and motions for me to get in the car.

I get up grabbing my jacket and the paper bag from the bodega, pausing for a second to finish off my energy drink. I crush the can and leave it on the table. With my bag in hand I head over to the car and get in. Steve pulls away from the curb and asks me my advice on the best way to get to the printer. "Alright there Magellan, do you know how to get over to the printer from here? The only way I really know is from the other side of the river."

"No problem. I actually passed it on the walk over here. Its right around the corner, you're going to have to turn around and head back south." I say as I wink and point behind us.

We reach the printer's office and Steve parks the car in the corner of the parking garage, before running in he pokes his head back in front of the window and say in and says, "I'll just be a second. While I'm taking care of this, take look in the trunk."

Even before Steve is out of sight I pull the keys from the ignition and hop out to take a look at what Steve is talking about. In the trunk there is a garment bag with a crisp, clean shirt and sports coat that didn't look like it had been slept in. "Right on!" I exclaim and grinning from ear to ear and start unbuttoning

my shirt. After changing my shirt I, get back in the car and hang the coat on the back of my seat, recline the seat, close my eyes and wait for Steve to get back.

I hear Steve as he opens the driver's door and flops down. "Hey, looks like Christmas came early this year. Well almost, they *are* your own clothes. I remembered that you had those duds hanging up in your office."

"Thanks, I had almost forgotten about them. Either way *Mr. Black*, you're my hero. A shining beckon in the oil spill of last night."

A click of the ignition and we pull out of the garage and head back into the city and to the office. En route, Steve queries as to what happened the night before. "So what was it this time? Death by mini bar???" Then I begin to tell him what I can remember. "Well after you took off I was hanging out with your buddies from Nebraska, then they started introducing me to a bunch of people from the conference and then I was in a cab headed over to 23<sup>rd</sup> Street Billiards with a whole different crew; and that's when things kind of get hazy. Anyway, long story short, we have to go to dinner with this girl I met."

"Ahh yes, the beloved day after interaction, dinner in this particular case. And you would never flake on something like this because you, Dan, are the doer of good things where women are concerned. Right?"

"You know me don't cha?" I say as I straighten my shirt cuffs.

"And you drag me along why?" Steve asks.

I look over to Steve, smile and say “Well, dinner’s supposed to be with her co-workers and I must have mentioned you last night and I think that maybe she’s going to introduce you to someone, maybe.”

“Oh, I see. Well that’s all right by me because you’re buying tonight. *And* I’m getting the most expensive thing on the menu. So, what is this lovely lady’s name?”

“Bobbi Cruz.” I reply.

Steve licks his lips and says “Bobbi Cruz? Bobbi Cruz? Why does that name sound familiar? Where is she from? Is she local?”

“Uh, I don’t think so. I mean she had a hotel room. If she was local I don’t think she would have a room.”

“Hmmm. Well if you figure it out, or if she calls you, let me know if she has a local number. I know that name for some reason.”

“You mean you *know* her, know her?”

“Hell, I don’t know. I might have been out drinking and met someone with a similar name. Don’t worry about it.”

As we get back to the office the discussion has shifted to various projects that are in the works, and for the rest of the day we carry on like any other workday. The next thing we know its seven o’clock and the steam whistle

is blowing. With my *new* set clothes we're able to head straight to the restaurant and meet up with Bobbi and her co-workers.

As we walk into the restaurant I tell Steve where we are supposed to meet everyone. "She said that they'd wait in the bar until we showed up, I said that we'd probably be here about seven thirty."

"So what am I looking for? What's this girl look like?"

"She about five foot six and she has long dark brown hair, there she is. They're sitting at the bar."

Steve stops suddenly, turns around, grabs me by the arm and leads me back out into the entryway of the lounge. "I do know that girl, except her name isn't Bobbi. It's Roberta. Oh... Bobbi. Danny, that girl is bad news. She's cracked, she's that girl that showed up on Ben's doorstep with *luggage* after what, two weeks and something like five dates. I thought he said that she moved out of state, Delaware or something. I'm telling you, from the way Ben tells it, she'll go Sybil on you."

"Ben who? Gentle Ben, Uncle Ben?" Dan asks, trying to make light of the situation and smiles.

"Yeah, Uncle Ben." Steve responds sarcastically. "No, you moron! Ben from Accounting, you know; Ben. Come on now, he plays shortstop on the softball team..."

”Oh, Ben Andrews. Well that info doesn’t really help out so much right now does it? What do you suggest that we do now? I’m pretty sure they already saw us when we came in.”

“I suggest that we high tail it out of here. We should take off and you can call her from the car. Tell her that we came in and took a look around but that we didn’t see her or that something came up and that you’ll be in touch.”

Just then, there is a hand on my shoulder, “Hello boys, how are you guys doing tonight. We were starting to wonder when you two were going to show up.”

“Oh hi Bobbi, we were just talking about something *work* related” I say as we are lead back into the lounge.

As Dan and Steve are lead back into the lounge, Bobbi takes Dan by the hand and very enthusiastically leads him to the end of the longbar where her co-workers are sitting and begins to introduce him.

“Here he is, this is him. This is Danny. And his friend Steve.” Bobbi says with a twinkle in her eye and a lilt in her voice.

“Danny?” Steve says under his breath, smiling as he nudges Dan in the ribs.

“Danny, Steve, this is Mr. Martin Lucas and Ms. Cathy Burke. Marty and Cathy both work here in the main office.”

Dan extends his hand and greets Martin and Cathy, “Hello to you both, Cathy, Martin. So what’s on the agenda for tonight? I apologize for our tardiness and for missing drinks tonight but we had a little difficulty getting away from the office tonight. But, I’m sure I don’t have to explain to you how the day can slip away from you.

Martin smiles and reaches over to shake Steve’s hand and says “Oh I know. My wife is always getting on me about that very thing. And speaking of which, I’d better get going. Good to meet the both of you. I’m sure you four can get along without me. Goodnight all”

The four say their goodbyes to Martin as he calls the bartender over and orders one last round and pays the check.

“So, what are you two in the mood for, for dinner?” Steve asks as the bartender comes over with two glasses of red wine and asks what Dan and Steve are drinking. “Where did these come from?”

“Martin ordered these when he got the check and he got you guys a round too. So, what’ll it be?”

Dan answers, “I’ll have a Bloody Mary, and I think my buddy will take a Vodka Martini?”

“That’s fine.” Steve says and nods to the bartender. “So, what did you ladies say you wanted for dinner?”

Cathy looks up from her glass of wine and places it back on the bar. “Well, we were thinking of maybe going down the street to this little place called The Elephant Bar.”

“The Elephant Bar? What do you want to get at The Elephant Bar? A couple leopard spot shooters and a some deep fried crocodile tails?” Steve asks as he sips on his drink.

“Lets not forget the tiger striped cake for dessert.” Cathy adds as she looks over to Bobbi and Dan.

“Okay, that sounds like a good plan to me.” Bobbi says as Dan nods his head and shrugs his approval.

As the foursome is seated at the restaurant they all begin to comment on the décor and how dimly lit the place is. “Okay, just who’s grand plan was this?” Dan asks as he looks to the rest of the group. “Its so dark in here I cant even see who I’m talking to. I just hope I’m sitting with the people I came in with. Just kidding, Cathy. I think this place is pretty cool.”

“Oh yeah, me too. I *especially* dig the painting of the elephants drinking at the bar, hanging over the bar. How clever.” Steve adds jokingly.

“Okay, okay. It’s a dive, but I heard that the food here is pretty good. And you have to admit that this place is anything but dull.”

Bobbi interrupts, “Well, I like it. I think we should give the place a chance. I mean the place is pretty packed and that’s *always* a good sign.”

Just then a waiter walks up to their table, “Good evening, what can get for you to drink tonight?”

Cathy answers, “We’ll have four leopard spot shooters!”

“Very good, I’ll be right back with your drinks.”

As the waiter leaves the table, Cathy looks at Steve and Bobbi with confusion and then the table erupts with laughter. “What in the hell is a leopard spot shooter?” Dan asks Cathy.

“I have no idea. Steve and I were joking about what kind of drinks a place like The Elephant Bar might have. And he said *leopard spot shooters*. Now I’m kind of scared to see what they bring us!”

As dinner progresses the two couples seem to be hitting it off until it comes time to order dessert. “So what do you think we should get for dessert? How about Bananas Foster?” Everyone nods and shrugs their shoulders in agreement. And as soon as the waiter comes by they order.

“So, Bobbi.” Dan says smiling. “It’s starting to get warm again, does your company have a softball team?”

“No. I don’t think so. Cathy, do we have a softball team at work?” Bobbi asks Cathy. But before she can respond Bobbi excuses herself from the table and walks away.

“Cathy, is she okay?” Dan asks.

“Yeah, I think so.”

“Maybe we should get another round of leopard spot shooters?” Steve says smiling.

Cathy rolls her eyes and then agrees with a smile back “What do you think was in those shots?”

“Not to worry, I think they were just lemon drops” Dan says while trying to get the attention of a waiter.

“Yes, sir?” the waiter asks.

“Can we get another round of leopard spot shooters? Those are just lemon drops, right?”

“Yes sir. Something similar.

“Thank you.” Cathy says with a little bit of relief in her voice.

Cathy and Steve look over to see a look of horror on Dan’s face and are surprised to hear yelling coming from over their heads directed at Dan. “Just who in the hell do you think you are!? What kind of person would meet someone

and spend the night with them just to string them along to humiliate them in front of their co-worker?!!!”

Cathy looks over to Steve who looks like he’s watching a scene from a bad high school drama club skit. “Bobbi! Calm down! What’s going on, what’s wrong?”

Just then the waiter comes back to the table carrying the Bananas Foster. Bobbi pushes the waiter out of her way just as he puts the desserts on the table and knocks him down. As she storms out of the restaurant, Cathy is close behind her calling out to her. “Bobbi!”

Dan gets up out of his chair to help the waiter back on his feet and to wave the other waiter carrying the round of drinks over. “I’m so sorry, I don’t really know what she’s so upset about.”

As the drinks are being put on the table Steve grabs two of the four shots, raises his glass and throws one back. “I told you, Sybil.”