

The Non-Committal Man

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By : Steve Balsky

A supernatural romance tragedy written from the female perspective! Challenging indeed...



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I was so upset when I first heard the message, I listened to it again. This is now the fourth time. By this point I pretty much had it memorized.

Why do women do this to ourselves? What is it about pain that we keep wishing to revisit?

â Hey Gill..Yeah itâ s me. Um.. (cough) listen, Iâ m really, really sorryâ !but I canâ t make it tonight. Iâ ll make it up to you, I promiseâ !itâ s justâ !(sound of papers shuffling) I gotta work.
â Kay? Iâ ll call you.â

Click.

I fought back the tears as I was still at work and didnâ t want to make a scene.

Itâ s not like this was the first time. Matt cancels on me *constantly*. It hasnâ t even been that long either. It seems like every second time we try to get together he has to work. Iâ m sure the guyâ s not *that* busyâ !.

Screw it. I started crying. I reached for a Kleenex in the corner of my cubicle in the publishing house of *All You Magazine* and placed it up to my moistening eyes.

My manager Leslie is one of my best friends in the publishing house. She has this, I dunno, *radar* or something when I get upset and sure enough, she shot right over.

Placing a slender arm around my shoulders she said, â Aw..sweetheart..whatâ s the matter?â I could smell the scent of rosebud from her skin moisturizer.

Trying my best to choke down my tears I said, â Nothing..just..itâ s bullshit really.â

She smiled knowingly. â Itâ s that guy, right? The new one?

â Matt,â I nodded.

â Whatâ d he do?â

â Canceledâ ! againâ !â

Her perfectly threaded eyebrows rose, â Tonight? Werenâ t you two supposed to go that sushi joint you love?

â Arami. Yup.â I dabbed away at my eyes hoping my eyeliner wasnâ t running.

Leslie glanced at her watch. â Girlfriend, itâ s 11:30. Letâ s you and me go for an early lunch and hash this out. The edits can wait.â

I finally looked up at her, embarrassed of the scene I was making and mustered a smile, â I would like that.â

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Her face turned stern. "Alright then, what you waiting for? Grab your purse!"

The two of us went down N. Fairbanks Court in downtown Chicago and made our way to this trendy little café called the West Egg and sat down at the patio.

We both ordered mineral waters and lunch. Mine, a Mediterranean vegetable and brie sandwich on foccacia, she mushroom and cheese quiche and walnut apple salad.

After taking a long swig of water, Leslie said, "So like, how long have you been dating this guy for?"

I rolled my eyes, "Well, if you count all the cancelled times like fifteen but if you count the *real* times..like six."

"How did you meet again?"

"Internet."

"Wow, that on-line dating stuff actually works out, huh?"

"You call this working out?"

Leslie's eyebrows rose again. She leaned forward as if sharing a secret.

"You done it with him yet?"

I giggled and held a hand over my mouth. "Yeah, three times."

"Wow! You're easy! How was it?"

I shrugged nonchalantly, "Good! No scratch that! AWESOME!"

Now it was her time to laugh, but hers was a more deep throaty guffaw.

"Well, I guess if I had me a man that good, I'd be upset too after only six dates."

Leslie *did* have a good man. A great one. One that actually committed to marrying her and blessing her with two beautiful young boys.

"What is it with guys?" I started. "I mean, one guy I dated, Chuck, he cheats on me. Frank? He won't propose after one year and now Matt..guy is so obsessed with work, he can't even pay me a second look."

Leslie shook her head as the waiter placed our lunches down. "Nah girl. He ain't workin'. There's another woman on his plate."

My eyes widened and my pulse quickened. "You really think so?"

She made a fake scowl. "Oh grow up! No wonder the other one cheated on you! You're so easy to fool. Look, men aren't afraid to commit..at least not all of them..but when God gave them a penis, he took away their conscience." She took a forkful of salad into her mouth.

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I nibbled on my sandwich and thought. "But what's wrong with me? I'm pretty hot. And I was. I worked out three days per week. Had C cup breasts. I dressed chic, but not too chic like the dark blue dress pants and light blue silk short sleeve I was wearing today. Why won't he want me so bad he would drop everything? I'm fun. I'm sexy."

When she finished swallowing her quiche, Leslie said, "Gillian, it's not you. Any guy would be out of his mind to turn you down. Some guys are just..funny that way. That's all. So tell me, what's he look like anyways?"

I leaned back in my chair and drew up an image of Matt. "He's like 5'7". Big old mess of curly brown hair on his head I just love to run my hands through. Clean shaven, no piercings. Hot body."

Leslie nearly jumped out of her chair with anticipation. "Like *really* hot?"

I nodded, closing my eyes. "Yeah, and the few times we were intimate he was like..a man obsessed. Like *ferocious*. I guess that's why we humans are considered animals."

Another deep chortle from Leslie. "Really..I'm jealous, girlfriend. I really am."

I took another bite of my sandwich and wiped my red lipstick on the napkin. "Yeah..once he ripped my blouse right off.."

"He didn't!"

"Pinky swear. The DKNY."

"The crÃ"me one?"

"The very same."

Leslie waved a manicured finger in the air. I could see the dazzling design of leaves on the nail. "I have *got* to meet this man and any of his friends. Preferably the firemen."

We both laughed heartily over that one.

Leslie picked up the tab and we made our way back to the office.

"Thanks for being there for me, Les. I really appreciate the girl talk."

She nodded. "Me too..But listen..what are you gonna do about this boy?"

"What do you mean?"

"Well..do you still want to see him?"

"Well..yeah. I guess I shouldn't..but I really do."

She glanced at her watch. "Okay, tell you what. Leave work at 4:30 today. Hustle your butt over to his workplace. He's a banker right?"

"Yeah, the manager."

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“What bank?”

“Citibank.”

“On North Michigan Avenue?”

“Yup.”

“Okay, so you get over there as they are ready to close. Bust in there like you own the place and confront the coward. Take a picture of him with your iPhone. Catch his sorry butt on film and then e-mail it to me!”

I hugged her and told her it was a done deal. I made my way back to my cubicle and filled in time at my desk until 4:30.

I parked on North Michigan across from the Citibank at 4:55 p.m. I had to be quick because the cops loved to ticket on that street between 4 and 6:00. I checked my look in the mirror. I wanted him to know just what he was missing. My eyeliner was re-applied, my lips full and pouty and my shoulder length blonde hair neatly combed and in place.

I waited patiently in the car until I saw the staff and customers trailing out of the bank. Some I recognized when I would meet Matt there in the past, most I didn't. No Matt. At about 5:10, I saw an elderly black uniformed security guard searching for keys to lock the front doors.

I leapt out of my Civic and dashed across the busy street, narrowly missing a collision with a dump truck. As the driver yelled obscenities at me I focused on the security guard who by this point was already staring at the mad hot blonde running at him.

“Sir, sir I need to get into the bank.”

He shook his head. “Sorry ma'am, bank's closed. 8:00 a.m. opening tomorrow.”

I panted, “No, no I need to see Matt, the manager. He's in there, right?”

He looked at me with caution. “Matt? Yeah, he's there. He's working late.”

I nodded. “Yeah I know, he left me a message. I'm his ..girlfriend. I need to speak to him. Please sir, it's urgent.”

He removed his cap and scratched his bald head. “Okay..but don't be too long ya hear? I'm technically off duty.”

He turned to unlock the front doors.

“Thank you sir, thank you, thank you.”

I slipped through the ajar door and the security guard followed me in. The bank was eerily silent. Only the steady drone of computers could be detected. Matt was nowhere in sight.

“Matt? It's Gillian. Matt, where are you?”

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The security guard followed me in. I saw that his nametag read Earle. Ma'am, I never saw him leave. Maybe he's in the vault.

The vault? What the hell was he doing in there?

Earle and I made our way towards the back of the bank, calling out his name to no avail.

We reached the heavy steel door of the vault that was locked shut by the large brass wheel.

Then we both noticed something very odd. Matt's clothes were on the floor. All of them. His Brooks Brothers suit, paisley tie, leather belt, even his socks lie in a crumpled pile outside of the vault door.

What in tarnation is he doing *nekked* in a vault? Earle asked.

My fury was starting to reach a fever pitch. Leslie was right all along. I have a very good idea Earle! I pulled out my iPhone. And I'm going to catch him in the act. Could you please open the door for me?

Earle looked confused and hesitant.

Please Earle? I asked innocently. He could be in deep trouble in there.

Earle swallowed deeply and strained as he rotated the wheel this way and that, hearing the tumblers click in place with each rotation.

With a heave, he was able to crack open the heavy door a peep.

Sorry ma'am, my strength ain't what it used to be..

Then we heard the sounds.

The guttural animal sounds of heavy panting, growling, grumbling..like two making passionate love.

My blood pressure was at a boiling point by now and summoning all the reserve I had, I placed my small frame between the door and the wall and pushed. I felt my face contort with effort as the door groaned open.

Then I screamed.

There was Matt..or what he used to be. In his place was a giant wolf beast covered in body fur, standing erect on two feet, claws two inches long from each paw. Its blazing red eyes stared at Earle and I and its jaws opened, exposing the drip of saliva onto the floor of the vault.

The beast lunged at me and I jumped back, tumbling backward onto the floor as I did. Matt soared through the air and crashed onto Earle's chest. The two fell to the ground and I could see Matt's snout trying to rip through Earle's uniform and get to his flesh. In his right hand, Earle gripped his pistol and slid it over the tiled floor to me.

Pull the trigger! he wailed as Matt ripped away his shirt exposing his bony chest.

I grabbed the gun and aimed for Matt's side and shot him three times.

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The beast yelped like a wounded dog and rolled off Earle. Earle scrambled over to my side, shaking like a leaf.

I dropped the pistol on the ground and held my face in my hands. I began to cry uncontrollably.

“What..what the hell was that all about?” Earle stammered.

I couldn’t answer him. I was too shaken myself.

So my dream man was a werewolf. I can’t believe I am writing this but it’s true. I did some research on the beasts in light of the aftermath at the bank.

The stuff about silver bullets being required to kill them? Myth. The fact that they need a full moon to change? True. But what I didn’t know is that the full moon can be present in the daytime— it just may not necessarily be visible.

All those cancellations..all those missed times to be together— full moon days/nights. Matt was just caring for my own safety by locking himself away and getting as far from me as possible. He did it because he *cared* about me. And I killed him.

Maybe I did him a favor by ridding him of his curse. Maybe I did it to learn the truth and put my mind at ease. Maybe I saved my own life. And the lives of others.

All I know is that out of all of this, I learned that not all men are non-committal.

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