

DareMe: Love In Chains

I have despised love ever since my engagement was called off over four years ago. Any date, except in the name of DareMe, I declined. I didn't even RSVP to wedding invitations - they ended up as kindle. Men were no more than hairier friends and the first and only woman I dated left me for a beautiful blonde bombshell with a killer nine to five. I was manifesting Steve Martin from *Father of the Bride*, pushing every single eligible bachelor from my life because no one was good enough. I was a perpetual child having a temper tantrum. Everyone was stupid, and love was even stupider. I accepted my fate of being alone forever.

I eventually had to end my anti-wedding streak and attend my first cousin's wedding in South Boston. He and I were never close and I only saw him once a year at Chanukah, but he insisted I go and asked if I would be the wedding photographer at the after party because it was going to be "too wild" to hire a professional. I agreed, but only if he paid the \$300 to fix my camera and under strict agreement that if there were too many "wasted bros slobbering on my lens" I was allowed to leave guilt free.

"Not every guy is a schmuck or a douchebag, and just cause my boys are from a fraternity, wear baseball caps, and pop their collahs doesn't mean their bros, aight?"

I rolled my eyes. "Are you gonna have red plastic cups at your wedding too?"

He sighed, "Well, we wanted tah have 'em, ya know? But Target was out of red, so we got blue."

So, *anyway*, he agreed to get my camera fixed, but only if I went to his friend's of a friend's camera shop in North Attleboro based out of his home. I wanted to kill him, not because he was sending me to some strange man's house, but to a strange man's house in North Attleboro. My cousin gave me the number to his camera fixing friend of a friend, Jacob, and I called him to set up an appointment.

I arrived just on time to his small white house with the sickest porch set-up I had ever seen. It was like a 90s music festival was perpetually happening on his front deck. Comfy tables, awesome lighting set up, and 90s grunge posters of Alice and Chains, Candlebox, Soundgarden, and Temple of the Dog to name a few. Not my scene, but Jacob ended up being a really cool guy and his long brown hair and faded tattoos made me feel at ease. I ended up chilling at his house while he fixed my camera and eventually told him about the wedding that I didn't want to go to, my love strike, and the DareMe I had to write. It had to stick to the theme of weddings, but I didn't want to put my face into the cake or get onstage and flash my breasts to my extended Jewish and Evangelical Christian family to be. Jacob's eyes lit up. "I dare you to go have a good time, and fortunately for me your camera is too broken to fix in time. You can borrow mine. You just have to bring it back. I dare you."

Now, Jacob was totally not my type, but his eyes were kind and I found the way his wrinkles shaped his face endearing. "Thanks. I appreciate it and I promise I'll try to have fun."

He laughed, handed back my camera and said, "To quote Bob Marley, 'Don't analyze. Love hard when there is love to be had.' Go have fun at the wedding. Maybe you will meet a nice Goyim," he winked.

So, the wedding ended up being horrible. I'll spare you the details, but I survived thanks to extra dirty martinis and my pack of pre-moistened cleaning wipes for when one of the bros vomited down my leg

and into my shoes. I ended up leaving mid after party and on the way home I got a call from Jacob. "I had a feeling you wouldn't make it through the wedding. I just started cooking dinner and would love for you to join me. Maybe afterward we could play beer pong?"

I dropped the cup of olives I stole from the bar while almost choking on the three that were in my mouth "Beer pong?!"

"I'm just joking, silly!" Thank God. So far, I have had six dinners with Jacob and zero beer pong sessions. Maybe I am being too ambitious or maybe my brain has been reset from all of that heavy metal that I have been listening to, but I think my spell has been broken.

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