

“Untitled” *by Mav*

Chapter 1

“Oh God. Oh Jesus Fucking Christ. Oh God, I swear if you get me out of this I'll never drink again as long as I fucking live.”

Ok, it may not have been the most original prayer nor was it the first time I'd ever made that very same promise, but at that moment, I swear that I meant it as much as I have ever meant anything in my entire fucking life. I'd already thrown up twice but the churning in my intestines let me know that it wasn't over yet. I could feel my insides twisting as my stomach continued to tighten; attempting to expel whatever traces of alcohol from earlier in the night were left. The smell of my own vomit filled the air in the bathroom as my head throbbed in rhythm with the bass line from whatever trip hop song it was that the DJ, probably Dominic, was blasting from beyond the bathroom door. I felt a heave in my gut and I got up on my knees and bent over the bowl. I felt my body tighten from my throat all the way down to my balls and I tried to throw up again. But there was nothing left. I was empty. I began coughing and managed to spit out what the burning feeling in my throat and on my tongue told me must be the smallest bit of stomach acid. I felt like I was bleeding inside. I fell back on my ass and laid my head against the cold hard side of the toilet. “Jesus God, please don't let me die.”

I don't know how long I stayed there like that. It was one of those moments where it could have been ten seconds or ten hours. I was already drinking from the glass of water that she had brought me when I finally realized that Jamie was in the bathroom with me. Her normally perfect blonde hair was tangled from several hours of continuous dancing. I could smell the cinnamon schnapps she on her breath. She had been drinking,

but she couldn't have possibly been anywhere near as far-gone as I was. Her tight pink tank top was drenched in sweat and I sat and stared as her nipples worked to push through the spandex. Goddamn she is so fucking gorgeous. "Go on, K, finish it all. It will help," she told me. I had been staring so hard at her tits that I had stopped drinking. I lifted the glass of ice water back to my lips and sipped some more. She was right. It did help. The music outside had slowed to some weird electronica that was far easier on my throbbing head. The smells of cinnamon, sweat and perfume mixing together in the air had replaced the stench of stomach bile and tequila that I had been aware of before. She caught me staring at her again and giggled. "Come on, lets get you out of here" she said as she grabbed me by the hand and pulled me to my feet.

I woke up the next morning with a shooting pain like a hot knife stabbing at my eyes. I screamed and my own voice echoed around inside my head like it was the Grand Canyon. Jose Cuervo, I hate you, you son of a bitch. I slowly opened my eyes again and saw that the blazing inferno that was burning my eye sockets out was nothing but the sun coming in through the window. I closed my eyes tight again and rubbed at my temples. "Oh Jesus, what the fuck did I do last night?"

"You got drunk off you ass. Like usual." I heard a sleepy little voice giggle. I rolled over and saw Jamie's head sticking out from under the covers next to me. Her hair was tussled and her lipstick and mascara smeared ever so slightly across her face. So that's what she looks like in the mornings. Not the perfect Cosmo girl that I see at work every day. Just a normal... you know what, she's still fucking gorgeous.

"What am I doing here?" I asked her.

“Hey, I practically had to drag you out of the bathroom and up the stairs. You sure as hell weren’t going to be able to drive home.” She sat up in bed, leaning against the headboard and pulling the covers up around her and under her arms as she did. There were no pink spaghetti straps over her shoulders anymore and I finally realized that she had to be naked under the blanket. I was in bed with a naked Jamie Polanski. Only a hand-knitted wool blanket and a cheap one hundred and fifty thread count sheet was blocking my view of the body of the hottest girl I knew. I couldn’t stop staring and she kind of giggled again, the way she does when she knows I am lusting after her. But then, things started to become a little clearer to me and I lifted my own sheet up and confirmed what I was guessing. I was naked too.

There was a long awkward silence between the two of us. I pushed the sheet back down to cover myself and tried to go back to staring at her, hoping that she might giggle and offer some explanation, but she wasn’t laughing this time. She wouldn’t even look at me. She turned her eyes down and twisted her head to the side and her tangled blonde hair fell in front of her face blocking her eyes and the smeared mascara from my view. For the very first time since I’d known her, I noticed that there were tiny streaks of brown mixed in with her perfect golden locks. Finally I tried to speak up. “What happened last—“ I began to say under my breath.

“Hey, you want some breakfast or something?” she quickly cut me off, still without really looking at me. She started to get out of bed but then remembered herself and stopped, pulling the covers a little tighter, this time up to her neck. “Uh, K? Can you like, turn around or close your eyes again or something?” I turned my head back towards the bright evil sunlight and felt the mattress bounce as she slipped out of bed. “I’ll make

some, uh, waffles and coffee or something. Come on down whenever you're ready." She said as she was rambling around the room looking for something to wear. I didn't turn back around until after I'd heard the door to her bedroom shut behind her.

It took me a few minutes to find my clothes (my boxers had made their way under Jamie's bed) and get myself together to come down the stairs. The house was a mess, as one might expect the day after a party. Beer bottles and plastic cups were scattered all over the place. A half eaten plate of nachos was sitting in the middle of the steps. There were a couple empty pizza boxes (which someone must have ordered after I passed out) laying on the floor in the living room. But, there didn't seem to be any permanent damage, which I'm sure the girls must have been happy about. Katie's boyfriend, Dominic was passed out on the couch, where by the looks of him, he had been all night. He was still wearing his clothes and smelled of booze from the night before. His shirt was stained with beer and he still had the empty bottle grasped in his hand. He might have been a mess, but I expected he was in better shape than I had been the night before. As I walked into the room, he absentmindedly reached up and wiped some drool from the corner of his mouth.

I could smell a pot of French blend coffee brewing from the kitchen, but I was hesitant at first to go in there because I could hear voices talking. I tried to listen but couldn't really make out what they were saying. I was pretty sure I heard my name twice and I'm positive I heard Katie say, "Rick is going to kill him." For a moment, I felt like I was going to throw up again. I took a deep breath and stepped over a pizza box to head towards the kitchen.

The conversation quickly stopped as soon as I walked through the door. Katie looked me over as she sipped her coffee, I tried to smile at her, but she just gave me the slightest nod of acknowledgement. Jamie turned away from me as soon as my eyes met hers and quickly started stirring her bowl of waffle batter. I decided that was a good enough hint that I should keep my mouth shut and I wasn't really in the right mindset to discuss whatever had happened the night before anyway, so I went to the cupboard next to her to get a mug, taking extra care not to look down her bathrobe as I stood next to her, because I figured that would make things worse. She didn't say anything but I could tell she picked up on it. As I was searching I could see her look at me – I don't know, not really expectantly – out of the corner of my eye. Anyone could tell something was wrong between us. It was the first time in years that I wasn't staring at her chest. Once I found a mug, I poured myself some coffee and sat down across the table from Katie.

For a long time, none of us spoke, but I was quite certain that there were quite a few choice words that Katie at least wanted to say to me. Still, we all kept quiet, and I was finishing up my second cup of coffee when Dominic wandered into the room.

“That was sure some crazy shit last night!” he yelled as he walked in. He kissed Katie on the forehead as he walked by her. Her wince implied that she didn't quite enjoy it. No wonder, he smelled worse than I did. It was only then that I noticed I didn't really smell that bad. Sure, my clothes smelled like tequila, but I was actually in pretty good shape. “You girls throw a hell of a party, Sweetie.” He said to Katie as he pulled the milk out the refrigerator and started drinking directly from the carton. Jamie started to turn to admonish him but then stopped herself and just turned back to prying the first batch of waffles off the iron. “That was some crazy ass shit, last night.” He sat down at the table

next to Katie. “K, what happened to you last night? I didn’t see you after about 1 and we figured you’d bolted. Did you hook up with some chick or some—Oww! Shit! Katie what the fuck was that?”

Katie had elbowed him in the gut. “Dom, just shut up and let everyone have some peace for once”

Dominic had no idea what was going on, and a regular person might have realized that now would be a good time to shut up. Dominic is no regular person. However, he was distracted enough to not pursue the line of questioning further. Instead he turned to his favorite pastime, arguing with Katie. “Shit, you really don’t have to hit me like that. You could just try to say something like. ‘Dom, our heads hurt, could you please be quiet?’ Or even ‘Dom, shut the fuck up!’” Katie set down her mug and pushed her hands over her ears. “There’s no reason to just haul off and hit me like that. I mean I don’t hit you when you won’t keep your big mouth shut. You don’t see K going around hitting people. You never see Jamie haul off and hit Rick for no good reason do you.”

Jamie tossed the plate full of waffles down in front of us with a large clang and sprinted out of the room, a flurry of yellow hair and white terrycloth billowing behind her. I gulped down what was left of my coffee and ran out to follow her, leaving a confused Dominic to wonder what was going on and a frustrated Katie to try and explain to him how it was none of his business and he probably wouldn’t understand it anyway.

“Jamie, come on, wait! We should talk about this.” I caught up with her in the living room. I grabbed her hand, half expecting her to turn around and slap me with the other one. Instead she just stopped short, stood there for a moment, then turned around, buried her head in my shoulder and began to cry.

Chapter 2

It took Jamie about fifteen minutes before she had calmed down enough to where I could even try to talk to her. I had led her over to the couch that Dominic had been sleeping on and we pushed the crumpled jacket he had been using as a pillow to the floor. Her head remained buried in my shoulder the entire time. If she was trying to communicate anything about our night together or the situation that we had found ourselves in that morning, I was unable to decipher it.

For their parts, Katie and Dominic had found some way to confine themselves to the kitchen. Several choice screams and swear words told me that this was mostly Katie's doing. Her argument with Dom was both louder and clearer than her earlier conversation that I had overheard with Jamie, and this time I was quite sure that I was able to pick out my name on at least three occasions paired with terms like *asshole*, *motherfucker* and *shithead*.

"I'm sorry," a tiny voice rose up from my shoulder. Jamie had finally stopped crying. Well, more or less.

"Sorry for what?"

"Katie and Dom. They kind of get like this sometimes. And well, us... you know, this morning... and I'm just so sorry for everything."

"You really have no reason to apologize, Jamie." I was trying to be consoling. I'd been kind of awkwardly holding her around the waist the entire time with my right arm, unsure of where it was appropriate to touch her with my hand. It's kind of funny, really, maybe half an hour before, I was sleeping naked, in bed with this girl, and now I was afraid to touch her waist with my hand. Trying to determine a way to determine a way to

be comforting, I brushed through the tussled hair that hung across her forehead and cheek with my right hand. She flinched, but didn't complain. I wondered if maybe it wasn't the best move after all. "I mean, I guess, its natural to feel... well, that is, I guess you can..." I tried to find the words, but really, what words were there.

"You know, it's just. Well. You know, if Rick," she interrupted me. As worried as I still was about what Rick might do to me, I was at least very thankful that she had cut me off and hoped that maybe I'd be off the hook to come up with something to say. I was not. "Oh my god," she whimpered. "Why the hell is this happening? How could I let this happen?" Her eyes began to well up with tears again.

She lifted her head and sat up, looking at me expectantly. Waiting for me to say something. I'm not sure what. Was I supposed to tell her I loved her? Was I supposed to ask her to leave her boyfriend? Was I supposed to tell her that I knew that last night was a mistake, a moment we both got carried away in and it would never happen again. Or maybe I was supposed to admit that I had blacked out and that I didn't remember a damn thing. Whatever she was waiting for, the words never came. My stumbling and stuttering was all I ever managed to get out. "Jamie, I just. I don't know. Whatever. I mean..."

She closed her eyes for a moment then opened them again "K," She paused and took a deep breath. She lowered her head. "Can we just keep this between us for now?"

"Jamie, I..." I what? What did I want to say? What could I say? What I really wanted was answers. I wanted her to fill in the holes of that night. To let me know how what happened could happen. I wanted her to tell me what it meant and where we were supposed to go from here. I wanted her to tell me anything. But, I sat there and I looked at her, this beautiful girl. A girl that I had wanted for the better part of five years. The

most beautiful girl I had ever met in my life. Broken. Not just fragile and vulnerable, but broken. Completely destroyed. I looked at her and I realized that there were no answers that she was going to be able to give me. Not to any of the questions that I had. She couldn't even answer her own. "Ok," I told her.

We sat there for a while just like that. Me holding her as she once again had lowered her head against me. We sat there, not speaking. Not even interacting save for her muffled sniffles and tears that rolled from her eyes and to my neck and my occasional awkward caress of her waist or her cheek. A million thoughts raced through my head as I tried in vain to reconstruct the previous night. Had I made a move on her? Did she just feel sorry for me? Was it any good? I had wanted this for so long. Would it ever happen again? Could we really keep this from Rick? Did I really even want to, or was I just waiting to run up to his pretty boy face and scream, "I did your girlfriend last night!" Would he really kill me when he found out? Jesus Christ I need a smoke. Fucking A! I slept with Jamie Polanski. And she's crying. What have I done? Christ, I hope she's going to be okay. Dear God, please let her be okay.

I looked down to see that she had stopped crying. She felt me shift under her and she looked up to face me. Her eyes are gray; I had never noticed that before. Gray, and wrinkled at the corners, a little beyond what they should be at her age, but gorgeous nonetheless. Our faces were maybe an inch apart and in the movies this would be the part where we kiss. And yes, I did entertain the notion for the briefest moment. But this was no movie. She looked away from me and sat up, and tried to wipe the drying tears from her face. "K, I think you should leave now."

As I grabbed my jacket, which I found pitched in the corner behind the couch that Jamie was still drying her eyes on, and turned to leave, I saw Katie and Dominic finally reenter the room. Dominic still looked confused, and I was certain that he had no idea whatsoever what was going on, but the fire in Katie's eyes told me that she at least believed that the sooner I left the better things would be for everyone involved. I tried to look at Jamie one last time, wondering once more if she'd tell me what was going on with us, or even just ask me to stay. She didn't look up. I thought to myself that at the very least – with Katie there – at least she wouldn't be alone.

“Goodbye, Jamie,” I offered softly over my shoulder as I walked out the door. Katie quickly closed the door behind me, and as I reached the first step leading off of their porch, I heard the deadbolt lock into place.

I drove home replaying the few details I could remember of the preceding eight hours over and over in my head. Drinking. Vomiting. Talking. Waking up naked. Crazy Twilight Zone behavior and Crying. Hugging. Getting thrown out. That was pretty much it. Don't think I missed anything.

Except that somehow I was missing everything, or at least all of the important things. Somewhere in there, there must have been some seduction. Maybe I said something clever. Maybe I moved in some very graceful way and the lighting was just right and for a moment I was irresistible. Maybe, and one could only hope, maybe in a fit of drunken rage I had simply decided to punch Rick in the jaw and I knocked him out cold. He fell to the ground and by the time he was awake enough to cry like a little girl, Jamie had already become so overcome by my display of primal alpha masculinity that

she had already dragged me to her room and was halfway through the lap dance she was giving me for foreplay. Or maybe – let’s face it – more likely, she had gotten so drunk that she didn’t even know what, or who she was doing and she just wanted to forget the whole damn thing. But she couldn’t forget. I couldn’t forget. And yet I couldn’t remember either. I had sex with Jamie. It should have been the greatest moment of my life. But now, I was starting to wonder if I had even been there.

It wasn’t until I was walking through the front door of my own apartment that it really started to sink in how hung over I still was. I threw my keys down in the middle of the floor and pulled my jacket off inside out just before letting myself fall back onto the frameless futon mattress in my bedroom. I managed to get one shoe off before I fell asleep.

The shrill piercing of the three-dollar phone I had stolen from my dorm room after my freshman year woke me up. I want to say it startled me awake, but that’s not quite right. Actually, I tried to ignore it for the first four or five rings and remain happily face down in my pillow and drool but the wretched, biting, chirping sound just kept echoing inside my hungover head. I was going to have a migraine for sure. Who would have the audacity to call me on a Saturday morning at the ungodly hour of – I rolled over to find the alarm clock that sits on the floor next to my futon – at the ungodly hour of 1:17 in the afternoon. The ringing wouldn’t stop and I promised myself that one of these days I’d have to get an answering machine, or at least a phone that would let me turn off the ringer.

“Hello,” I moaned sleepily into the phone.

“Don’t call her. Don’t try to talk to her. Don’t bring it up at work. Just leave her alone!” and with that there was a click, and the line was dead on the other side. And hello, its so nice to talk to you again, too, Katie. I’m fine, thank you for asking.

I laid the phone back down on the floor. For a moment I contemplated calling Jamie back right that very second just to be contradictory. But pain outranks spite, at least in my book. I stumbled towards the bathroom in hopes that I could find some aspirin or Tylenol or god willing some morphine – anything to make the pounding stop and let me get back to sleep.