

In an Irish pub with a lot of oiled wood

by E. Victoria Flynn

"I love women. They're like goddesses." Max took a long swig of Guinness, kicked his boots up on an empty chair.

"Man, don't let Naomi hear you say that shit. She's always pissed at me."

"You and Naomi, your good shit. What you got is deep—you hook up, you fight, you have kids, they fight. Then you get old, and you're still together. That's what it's about."

Rick noticed the waitress standing behind him, "I'll have another Jameson."

Max leaned in, "You got to meet this chick I've been seeing. She's a trip, man. She's like, I don't know, really weird, but I like it. She's got this thing about eating in front of people. I mean, she wouldn't do it. I'd call her up and we'd go downtown and check out a band and she'd be really into it, you know? Then I'd want to take her out and get some bar food and she wouldn't go."

"Maybe she's anorexic."

"No, no, that ain't it. One day I figured I was going to find out what her deal was so I took her out on my bike and we rode out to Devil's Lake. We hiked around and made fun of people's kids. You wouldn't believe this chick, she's more crass than me. I don't even think she likes kids. Anyway, I made a whole day of it. Then I took her out for ice cream. I was starving, she had to be hungry.

At first she was like, 'I don't like ice cream.' But you could tell she was lying. She just kept looking at it. So I told her if she didn't order any I'd do it for her."

"So you forced her to eat."

"Nah, man, she had to do it sometime. So she gets some ice cream and we go outside and she wants to go be alone. That's cool, I did too. So we go down by the river and there's ducks and stuff and

we sit down. Then she starts to eat. Oh, man! She starts grabbing the ice cream with her hands and, like, smashing it around on her face. It's so weird. It was like at Nicky's birthday party, remember that, when you stripped the kid down and gave her a piece of cake? Damn!"

"Man, that's messed up."

"I know, but it was kind of hot too."

"You're still seeing this chick?"

"Hell yeah. Tonight I'm making dinner."

