The End. by Erin Zulkoski

Liz lies in bed next to a stranger.

He is snoring softly, and she turns her head toward him, looking at his eyelids flutter as he enters REM sleep. He stirs and rolls over on his side away from her. As he does so, he pulls part of the comforter with him, exposing her to the cool breeze blowing from the fan that's by the front door of his bedroom. She's acutely aware she's naked now and her skin tingles, causing goose flesh to prickle her arms, legs, and torso. In a futile attempt to warm herself up, she rubs her hands over her skin, but to no avail. With a heavy sigh, she gets out of bed, careful not to disturb the man who is now mumbling in his sleep.

It's not fair to call him a total stranger; they had been out on two dates prior. He was a nice guy for the most part, but Liz has a habit of picking out the physical flaws of men she's not entirely interested in. Micha, for example, had too big of lips. During dinner last night, Liz found herself transfixed on them, and not in a good way, but in a "he's a circus freak" kind of way. She watched him put his fork in his mouth and linger a bit too long as he pulled it away. It was grossly pornographic.

In order for Liz to enjoy the evening out with him, she ordered too many strong drinks. After three double whiskey and colas, he started becoming less annoying and she started to loosen up, which in retrospect, was probably a bad idea as he started taking her more easy going demeanor as flirtation. After dinner, they walked to a cigar bar where Liz put away more strong drinks and Liz got a stogey. She made a great deal of putting it between her lips and wrapping them seductively around the cigar. She was toying with him and she didn't care. It had been over six months since her last sexual encounter and she was horny. No sense in trying to deny it.

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The bar closed and the two of them stumbled back to Liz's car. She had driven because Micha's was in the shop.

"You okay to drive?" he chuckled as she fumbled for her keys, found them, then promptly dropped them to the ground, hitting her head on the driver's side door as she bend down to pick them up.

"Yeah, I'm okay." A hiccup escaped, betraying her statement.

"Hey, listen, if you want to go to a coffee shop or something to help sober up, that's cool..." he trailed off. He looked nervous and was shifting his weight from foot to foot.

Liz looked at him with a hard stare.

"Get in the car," she demanded.

"Ha," he laughed nervously. "Okay, okay, I'll get in. But you're staying at my place tonight."

"That's exactly what I had in mind anyway."

Liz unlocked the car doors and both slid in. She started the car and put it in reverse and backed out of the parking space, slamming the gear shift into "drive" and took off a little to fast.

"Easy there, Andretti," Micha laughed, but Liz could make out the scared tone in his voice. She smiled to herself in the darkness of the car interior.

They made it back to Micha's place without incident and went inside. Liz sat down on the fake leather couch and surveyed the living room while he went into the kitchen to pour them more drinks. Typical bachelor pad, Liz thought to herself. A flat screen tv mounted on the wall, various video game consoles and games filled the shelves of the entertainment center, and was that a glass pipe sitting on top of his copy of "Stepbrothers"? She leaned forward to get a better look, and sure enough, it was. Liz rolled her eyes at how much of a cliche this guy was. A big-lipped cliche. Liz wished Micha would hurry up with those drinks. She was losing her buzz and if she was going to have sex with him, she needed to be drunk.

Micha came into the living room and set two glasses down on the coffee table with a loud "chunk!" and he flopped himself down on the couch next to Liz. He leaned closer to her and she could smell stale cigar smoke and the sickening sweet smell of bourbon on his breath. His eyes were bloodshot and eyelids were droopy. He leaned closer still and put his hand on her thigh, rubbing it too fast. The heat of his hand was penetrating her jeans and making her entire leg hot.

Liz smiled a coy grin and brushed up against him as she reached for her drink. She picked it up and brought it her lips and took three large gulps before setting it down. She sat back in the couch and turned to face Big Lips, repeating over and over to herself in her head "it's only sex, it's just the one time, you deserve to get fucked tonight, it's been too long..." Liz gave Micha her patented "look."

"Goddamn it, you're sexy," Micha sighed as he lifted his hand to her face. Liz smiled again, and he brushed his thumb against her lips. Liz licked it slightly as it moved across.

"Oh, God..." Micha moaned. He put his hand behind her head and pulled Liz to mouth, his overly eager tongue jutting in and out. Liz tried not to think of his lips.

They started making out, Micha clumsy with his moves. Liz hadn't had a make-out session this bad since junior high, the only exception

was Micha didn't have braces, otherwise, it was exactly the same, awkward groping and too much saliva being smeared around Liz's face.

"Why don't we go somewhere more comfortable," Micha slurred his words.

"Okay," Liz said as she stood up and grabbed Micha by the hand to help him up. He stumbled slightly and almost fell over the coffee table. If he was this ungraceful now, Liz thought, imagine how much of a train wreck having sex with him is going to be.

They made it to the bedroom and Micha shoved Liz backwards onto the bed, and he crawled on top of her. She could feel his erection pressing into her thigh. He started rocking back and forth, rubbing himself against her. Liz had to admit, the sudden dominance of being forced on the bed was kind of hot, and her buzz was coming back, so she had to problems reaching down for his crotch, feeling him. Micha moaned again and leaned down to kiss Liz's neck. He grabbed her neck with his teeth and bit her. Maybe Liz was wrong about this guy...or maybe that was the cheap rum talking. Regardless, Liz was getting turned on and she reciprocated Micha's advances. Within a few minutes, they were naked and writhing round on the bed, getting tangled in the bed sheets.

"Do you have a condom?" Micha breathed into her ear, tugging at her ear lobe with his lips.

Liz froze underneath him. "What? No! Don't you?"

"No, I forgot to pick some up." He was still nibbling on her ear lobe. Liz tried to shove him off of her, but he out-weighed her by fifty pounds and he wouldn't budge. "It'll be okay, I promise," he purred into her ear. "No, it won't be okay! Get off me, Micha. I'm not having sex with you without a condom!"

Micha would not move off her, and somehow he became heavier on top of her. Liz's head was watery and her vision was getting blurry. Micha continued kissing her body, moving down toward her chest and he took one of her nipples in his mouth and sucked on it. Liz was rendered immobile, and again tried to shove him off of her, but her arms were weak and felt as heavy as steel girders. The last thing she remembered as she slipped out of consciousness was Micha on top of her again, his face directly above hers and him whispering, "this won't hurt a bit, doll..." and he put himself inside her.

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