

Don't Trip On My Exit Switch

by Jennifer Donnell

“Be careful.” my boyfriend motions, moving his gaze from my blue eyes to the outdoor wooden credenza and growing distant, “Don't trip on my exit switch.”

I shiver a little, which makes my blonde mane shake. It's like he told me there's a spider on my shoulder and, who knows, there might be. Perhaps my ex is a black widow and it's only a matter of time until I'm fatally bitten with nostalgia or the nuance of 'ever after'. Boyfriend shivers too, at the thought. His surfer shirt jiggles over his skinny, veiny untanned skin. I tell him that we could never have a child as I'm veiny too and our child would be an aortic freak. He laughs, which I take as agreement.

I step to the right and duck down, not sure where my boyfriend even keeps his lever. I should have noticed. I've sorted his baggage; even helped him unpack and memorized the location of (most of) his land-mines. There's still so much I don't know.

I kiss his lips. They're smaller than mine, yet it's so much better than expected, every time. I want to kiss him until the cows come home or I find out what that expression means.

Later, lying in bed, I can sense his exit switch is coiled and folded away. He pulls me tight and tells me I'm 'amazing'. I tell him he's 'sooooo cute'.

It's nice, but, it's weird not being in love, or maybe in love, sometimes in love.

(Or, not in love. Frankly, we might be not in love.)

Or, both of us might be. Or, only one of us might be.

(Good lord, I hope it's never me.)

Take this as evidence, when I drew a heart on his birthday card, he told me that a heart meant love.

"No it doesn't!" I'd insisted, truthfully, "I draw hearts on everything, it means only that... *heart.*"

I went on to explain, "A 'heart' merely indicates caring, like it matters that the person exists in the world, but it doesn't mean *love.*"

"Whatever!" he dismissed cockily, "You already told me you love me, the other night."

"I certainly did not!" I exclaimed, my mouth dropping open at the injustice, "I tried to say that I loved you.... *doing that one thing...* the way you were making out with me, but, then, I had a last minute change of terms and it stymied my entire sentence! I swear upon ten bibles, it I didn't mean that I love you!"

He looked hurt. I reminded him that, the second time we made out, he actually told me he loved me.

He argued this new revelation tooth and nail, but I know what he said in the heat of the moment.

BBC news says it takes the average male eighty-eight days to fall in love.

My calculator says it's been a depressing ninety two.

And what is being in love? A transitory obsessive state pumping chemicals into the brain?

For myself, I know that the only thing stronger than love is stubbornness. Boyfriend once told me he's had several girlfriends say they loved him, whom he didn't love back, and it grew awkward. He said they'd say it at family functions to pressure him.

"Wow, you don't love anyone!" was my only remark.

"That's not altogether true. Some, I do." he reassured with a twinkle in his eye and a look of fortitude.

Yesterday, he and I drove to a Denny's, drank diner coffee and let the other listen to our favorite songs of all time, through shared headphones, one ear bud each. It was one of the nicest times I'd had with anyone, at least in awhile.

Still, we might not be in love. Until we are, I'm keeping quiet during passions of the flesh. You never know what crap might come out during an orgasm.

