

The Dummy Drop

by Mark Stratton

I looked at my now silent cell phone feeling like an idiot. Thad was standing next to me, that shit eating grin plastered on his face like gravy stains on an old shirt.

"So Genius Jones, what the fuck did he say to you?" asked Thad, sarcasm dripping onto the floor. "She blew you off again, didn't she?"

I cringed. The mother fucker could read me like a damned book. Pissed me off, but what could I do? Sonuvabitch was right, wasn't he? Darlene had blown me off again.

"Yeah..." and my voice trailed off and got lost. Who knows where.

"I told ya, man. I told ya, and toldja..." and Thad's words started to run together such that all I heard was loud teenaged white noise. Sort of like a cross between a buzzsaw, hyenas barking and an acne commercial. At one point, I picked out the following words; "What bullshit excuse did she give you this time, man?"

I wanted to coldcock Thad. Punch him right in his shit eating grin, wipe that gravy stain off his face, stomp his ass into the ground right then and there. But, as much as I hated to admit it, I wasn't really mad at him. Well, except for being a fucking douche bag, but that's hardly enough to want to kick the shit out of somebody, right? No, I was pissed off at Darlene, that lying bitch.

"....did she tell you this time, man? How many times I gotta ask you?" Thad asked, for what was probably the fourth time.

I glared at him, wanted to spit in his eye, shit my pants or cry. I wasn't sure which, but I knew that nothing would make me feel any better. Drawing in a lung full of air and busted pride, I said, "She told me, *'I have to go- we're throwing the dummy from the balcony again.'*"

Thad peed himself laughing at that. A great big stain in his jeans. I took a small measure of solace from that, turned and went home.

