

Chip's Bar

by S.H. Gall

Bill texted me at 3:44, invited me to join him at Chip's, where he was having a drink. Chip's Bar is a great dive, and I accepted without hesitation.

Ten minutes later I was on a crowded bus filled mostly with fat people, and twenty minutes after that I was walking into the bar. Bill's response was delightful but embarrassing. "RAMONA! BAAAAABY!" I blushed, but the room was dim, and the faces that turned to the source of commotion were pale and indistinct and returned to studying their shot and a beer almost at once. I wasn't much to look at. Mousy is my least favorite word.

Under the glassy gaze of a deer head mounted over the selection of cheap liquor, Bill and I chatted about irrelevancies, me over a Budweiser draft and Bill over a Bloody Mary. \$1.50 and \$3 respectively. What is not to love about a good dive bar? Then the door chimes tinkled and Bill lost his train of thought.

He yelled something, I couldn't tell what, sounded like "Skeet." In an instant he was off his stool and greeting the newcomer, who was parking the bicycle he'd arrived on by the jukebox. They had a hushed exchange, complete with furtive glances, and then Bill led the man over to me. "Ramona, this is John. John, my best girlfriend, Ramona."

John was swarthy, grey-templed, paunchy, and adorable in the way only full-blooded Greek men can be. But I was still surprised when Bill confided to me, after John had taken a seat down the bar, that this was the guy he had been dying to bed for the last ten days. The guy he had dated for awhile years ago.

"How old is he?"

"Forty-three, maybe?" Not *too* much older.

"So... why did you break up with him back then?"

"He stood me up. Twice. He's schizophrenic."

"Oh. Not good relationship material."

"Right, but I'm really horny. I'm gonna get laid tonight." With that, Bill got up and approached John, and they had another discreet confab, eyes darting and returning and settling. Finally, after a five minute whispered exchange, they kissed briefly on the lips. John's hand cupped Bill's ass for a long second.

"Looks like you're getting laid tonight." I was happy for Bill. I had a man waiting for me at home, a man who could see my hotness through the mousy. Bill couldn't seem to settle down, but he was OK with that, as long as he got laid every week. "Yeah," Bill said. "We're going to do it in every position." His eyes were dreamy, or maybe just a little drunk; he was on his seventh Bloody Mary. Bill is a champion drinker. Seven Bloody Marys are a light breakfast for him.

John and Bill then proceeded to very indiscreetly exchange cocksucking faces across the long stretch of bar. Mouths wide O's. No one else seemed to notice, they were watching a heated game of pool, and then some guy named Mike won the game and bought a round for the whole bar, and everyone thanked him profusely. Bill and John were lost in their feigned fellatio.

Moments later, Bill and I left. He was set to meet John at his apartment in an hour. They live just two blocks apart, close to Chip's. I fanned myself at the bus stop, feeling the effect of three Budweisers, looking forward to returning home to my man.

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