

## THE GUY WE DIDN'T INVITE TO THE ORGY

There was one guy we didn't invite to the orgy. We invited everyone else: Solaire because she's crazy, and John and Walt because they're both so good-looking and they're partners anyway, and we invited Amy because everybody just loves Amy, and Raya because she brings the drugs and the good stories, and Smucks and Goldman and Belle because you can just look at them and see they've got the moves. We invited Pete, Shayna, Cooper, and Mac—all great folks. As a last-minute thing we invited that guy we met at the liquor store that night because he had a strange kind of authority, though we didn't really know anything about him. We invited our philosophy prof—we just knew he would be into it, and plus Solaire was already sleeping with him. We even invited Miranda just because she's the jealous type, and since her sister was in town we threw open the door to her sister, too. But there was this one guy we didn't invite.

You know, right afterward we told him all kinds of things. We told him, *I don't know what happened—maybe you were in the bathroom when we were telling everybody*, and we said *Didn't you get your invite in campus mail?* and we said *It's amazing how hard it is to organize an orgy. You'd think it'd be so easy, but really it's complicated.* But none of it was true. We had a lot of people we wanted there, but this guy wasn't one of them, and even if none of us could come out and say that after the fact, it's the plain truth.

It wasn't that we were worried about him disapproving. He isn't the type to get all sanctimonious about anything. He's been in his share of trouble himself, and he's heard all of Raya's stories, and Zook has the foulest mouth in North America, and this guy is as comfortable as anyone else with all of it. Besides, hell—we invited Cathy, and we just knew she'd bring her Jesus pamphlets with her, just knew she'd hand them out as soon as things were getting interesting, and that's exactly what she did, plus Smucks has this irritating thing where he has to rate everybody on everything—he was scoring people on sexual technique all night—and we weren't concerned about either of them, or about Liza and her squeamishness, or even Hank and his fucking homophobia.

Meanwhile, the guy we didn't invite, as it happens, is pretty good in the sack—not so good that it makes you feel like crap about yourself, but good

enough that you're glad to have had sex with him. That's what Solaire says, and Latia too, and a couple of others. He's certainly less awkward than Walt—God, Walt! This guy, the guy we didn't invite, takes his time, gets creative, is basically game. And he's not overboard about it, either, not that we were turning away nymphomaniacs—Colin, for example—by any stretch of the imagination. The point is that he gets good marks between the sheets and nobody thinks he's creepy at all.

The other funny thing is that he's actually a pretty attractive guy, this guy we didn't invite, though in any case the orgy wasn't about beauty in the conventional sense. Priya, for one, is about fifty pounds heavier than she wants to be, and Serge always gets the same terrible haircut—and he pays so much for it!—and the guy in the liquor store was missing his left arm and a couple of toes. We weren't worried about any of that.

150 And we weren't strict about inner beauty, either. Most of the people who were at the orgy are stand-up citizens, but Miranda is nothing but hostility inside, and Taylor's a serious drug addict, and Kumi literally spits on homeless people and doesn't have any regrets about it. Our philosophy prof, when you think about it, is so ugly inside that he has to sleep with his students just to quiet the self-loathing. We were happy to have all these people, even if their souls were nothing but shit and cancer—and meanwhile the guy we didn't invite is a nice type by just about anybody's estimate. Not too nice, not the kind of nice where it makes you feel like crap about yourself, but the kind where he spots you twenty bucks if you need it, gives you some of his beer when you run out, listens to you nonjudgmentally when you have a problem. When Astrid's brother died this guy was an ace with her. And a week later, because she really wanted to, they had sex—this very gentle sex—and she says it was the most beautiful night of her entire life. And Astrid never talks like that. The most beautiful night of her entire life, she says.

So. *Why didn't you invite me?* he wants to know. *What is it about me?* He's desperate to know.

We keep up with our excuses—*We thought you had the flu* and *Tomas was supposed to tell you* and *We thought you were there, actually!*—but none of it's true and none of it convinces him. Even if one of us was willing to be honest, in the end, there's nothing about him that you can really point to as a good reason why. That's got to be what bothers him the most, not even getting a real answer about why he wasn't invited when everybody else was, and when after all you consider that he's one of our better friends.

It's just that, when you're putting an orgy together, you have this sense that you'd better not invite every single last person on earth—that, if you do, it's going to change things somehow. We really didn't want that. So someone's got to be left out; someone's got to be the person who doesn't get invited—and this guy, this guy that we all love and respect and who many of us are even hot for, this guy just wasn't going to be there, no matter what.