

Isobel's Surprise

By

Maggie Carpenter

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CHAPTER ONE

Isobel couldn't take her large green eyes off him. She knew she should be listening but it was impossible to focus on his words when his washboard stomach and incredible arms were so damn visible. It was spring, but the evening was unseasonably warm, and he was wearing a crisp white shirt with the top three buttons undone and the sleeves rolled up. She could see a smattering of chest hair attempting to escape, and could easily imagine glistening water droplets trapped there as he stepped from a shower.

I would lick them, one by one, and I know you would grab my hair and-

“Would you agree, Miss Parker?”

Her gaze darted up; his dreamy blue eyes were staring at her, a slight frown creasing his brow.

“Y-yes, I would,” she stammered, having no idea what he'd been talking about and praying she'd offered the right answer.

“Which one of my observations do you think would be the most important?”

Shit, really?

Feeling the flush of embarrassment she glanced past him to the blackboard where he'd written three bullet points.

Have knowledge of your subject matter.

Draw on personal experience.

Listen to your characters.

“Um, they're all important,” she managed, “but if I had to choose I'd say the personal experience thing.”

There was a tittering through the class, and she could see his frown deepening.

“Anyone care to enlighten Miss Parker?”

A middle-aged woman sitting a few desks across from her threw up her arm, waving enthusiastically.

“Mrs. Adams,” he smiled.

Isobel grimaced.

Mrs. Adams, Mrs. Adams! You always have the answers, don't you Mrs. Adams?

“I’d say your comment about people-watching,” the woman declared. “If I sit in a coffee shop long enough I’ll see a quirky habit, or an outfit, something. There’s always something if I wait long enough.”

“Exactly. You can draw from the outside world to color your work, to add dimension to your characters. You’re all creative geniuses, but there’s no law that says you can’t step away from your computer screen and note the behaviors of strangers, then incorporate those behaviors if they ring true.”

Isobel sighed and stared at her hands.

Shit. I’m so busted. I should just listen and not look at him. Those eyes of his, and that mouth. This is so hard.

“Your assignment for Monday is to write a short story based on a title I’m about to give you. The story is to be written in the third person, and no more than twenty-five hundred words.”

As he turned his back to the class and erased the board, Isobel stared at his wide shoulders and narrow waist.

I’ll bet you’re a surfer. You don’t get a physique like that jogging or going to the gym. That’s a surfer’s body if I ever saw one.

Bent at the elbow, his arm moved backwards and forwards, and she felt herself getting lost in its rhythm.

Oh, man, I can see myself against that board, your hands holding my arms above my head while you kiss my neck.

“Miss Parker,” he called as he continued writing, “please tell me which of the bullet points you think best pertains to this title.”

Snapping herself from her fantasy she watched him turn to face her, and when he crossed his arms and fixed her with a steady, firm eye, she felt herself flush an even deeper red.

Why is it so damn sexy when a man does that? Especially him. Please uncross your arms, you’re not being fair. How can I think when you’re striking that pose?

“Miss Parker, the board?”

Gulping, she shifted her gaze to the title he’d written in large block letters; it read, THREE DARK HOURS.

“Which of the bullet points, Miss Parker?”

Taking a deep breath and doing her best to focus she nervously began.

“It would depend on what the story’s about. I mean, if it’s a tale of horror I’d say listen to your characters, unless you’ve seen a ghost yourself, then you’d draw upon personal experience.”

She risked a look, and his nod of approval gave her a shot of much needed confidence.

“If you’re writing about a scuba vacation, then it would be having knowledge of your subject matter, because that would involve technical stuff you should know,” she continued, “oxygen tanks, things like that. You’d have to know what you’re talking about to make the whole thing believable, but I think each of those bullet points is equally important. Lose any one of them and your story will suffer.”

Holding her breath she waited tremulously for his response.

“Those are excellent thoughts,” he smiled brandishing the dimples he rarely showed.

I want to drop vanilla vodka in those lovely little caverns, and use the tip of my tongue to-

“See you all next week,” he declared breaking into her decadent thoughts. “Miss Parker, would you stay behind for a moment please?”

Shit. Okay, just calm yourself. He’s probably going to scold you for not paying attention.

Lord, I hope so. I’d loved to be scolded by him.

Pulse racing, she tried to settle her nerves as she watched her classmates meander out the door, but had to grit her teeth when she saw Mrs. Adams stop at his desk.

You’re so frickin’ obvious. Must you fawn all over him?

Agitated she wriggled in her chair, then impatiently gathered her books and tumbled them into her satchel, constantly eyeing the conversation between the gorgeous Mr. Patrick Doyle, and Mrs. Adams. They were speaking in hushed voices, and when Mrs. Adams finally moved away and headed out Isobel rose from her desk.

“Please, stay there,” he directed.

Dropping back into her seat, her eyes followed him as he moved towards her.

My gosh, I love your walk. You don’t walk, you stride, like you have a place to be, or a purpose, or-

“Now then,” he said firmly, sitting at the desk next to hers, “you and I need to have a little chat.”

Mmmm, what is that smell? Ralph Lauren? No, Givenchy? No, I know exactly what it is, it’s L’Occitane, the original.

Isobel prided herself on recognizing a man's aftershave lotion or cologne, and she was convinced what he chose reflected the type of man he was. L'Occitane's first was one of her favorites, and she smiled her approval.

"Miss Parker, are you listening?"

"What, I'm so sorry, I was thinking about your bullet points," she apologized.

"This is why I need to talk to you. To be truthful, and this is confidential," he said soberly, "I think you're probably the most gifted writer in this class, but--"

"You do? Really?" she bubbled. "Oh, my, gosh! It means so much to hear you say that."

"But," he continued, raising one eyebrow and staring at her intently, making her toes curl, "I was going to say, you seem to have trouble focusing. Is it me? Am I boring? Do I not deliver the information in an interesting way?"

"Please don't think that, not for a minute," she protested. "You're the best teacher I've ever had. I mean, I've been out of school for ages, but I don't remember ever having a teacher like you."

She realized she'd fumbled her response and had sounded young and inarticulate, but that's what he did to her; made her nervous as hell which made her behave like an idiot.

"So, what is it then? Why does your mind wander?" he asked, his voice tinged with tenderness. "Do you have a problem? Something personal?"

Hell, yes, I have a problem. You! Can't you see I have a ginormous crush on you? I think about you all the time. How am I supposed to focus on some random grammar question when you're so incredibly hot?

"Miss Parker? Did I just lose you again?"

"Isobel, my name's Isobel," she offered.

"I'm afraid I keep things formal in my classroom," he replied with a slight smile. "Is there a problem?"

"Not the way you think," she answered quietly. "I'll try to do better."

"If you need to discuss anything I'm always available," he said warmly.

What if I don't turn in my assignment? Will you spank me? Ooh, to be spanked by you, talk about a dream come true.

"Can Three Dark Hours be about anything?" she asked, trying not to fall completely apart as she stared into his cobalt eyes.

“Of course,” he nodded.

“Can it be confidential? I mean, can it remain private, just between you and me?”

He shifted in his seat, dropped his eyes, and thought for a moment.

“That would be a yes,” he replied. “Please make sure you write confidential on the title page, and give it to me in a sealed envelope.”

“I’ll remember,” she nodded. “Thanks for being such a great teacher, and for saying what you did about my writing,” she twinkled.

“I meant it,” he nodded. “Now I must go. I’ll see you next week.”

“Will you walk me out to my car?” she asked. “It’s late, and the parking lot will be empty and dark.”

“Yes, I should have offered,” he frowned, “my apologies. Do you have everything?”

“Uh-huh,” she replied picking up her bag.

He ushered her forward, and as they walked into the hallway he flicked off the lights. Falling in step beside her he noticed the full plumpness of her bottom encased in the tight, white jeans. He’d dallied with students in the past, and had always managed to handle the delicate balancing act.

Patrick had been a ladies man since he was old enough to notice that girls were interestingly different to boys. It wasn’t something that he consciously chose, it was that the girls flocked to him...in droves. His dark hair and bright blue eyes were alluring, and his natural athleticism and confident personality completed the magnetic package. Patrick had a serious taste for kink, and his popularity with the fairer sex allowed him to experiment as much as he wished. Eager girls wanted him to be their boyfriend, and if he chose to tie them up, or spank them, or blindfold them, they didn’t complain.

Writing allowed him to explore his BDSM fantasies, but his books did not find the success he’d hoped. Denied by a stream of publishers he entered the realm of self-publishing, and teaching night school kept him afloat.

He enjoyed the work, especially when it offered up nubile young women like Isobel Parker, and as they neared her car he covertly studied her body.

You’re interesting Isobel. I might just dip my toe in the water. You’re cute and sexy and bubbly, and you might just prove to be quite fun.