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Moving On

Madeline Jefferies
College of DuPage

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Moving On

I picked up Ricky's shirt. It was almost tucked under my bed. Looking at it, I remembered the night we had danced for hours at the club a few blocks away. It was like any normal dress shirt, purple and black stripes, the arms wrinkled and buttons undone. It wasn't until I lifted the shirt to my nose that it happened. I could smell the mixture of his cheap cologne, sweat, and the beer spilled along the front.

As if back in the moment, I tripped over the heels he requested me to wear, almost six inches tall, as the beer splattered on his chest.

"Oh my God!" I had screamed over the pounding trap music. "Babe! I totally didn't mean to!" Swaying towards him, I buried my face into the damp shirt. "Forgive me!"

"It's fine," he yelled back over the music. "Let's just get out of here."

I held onto his hand as he led me to the exit, his eyes wandering from girl to girl. As the memory flashed behind my eyes, my heart pinched. I crumpled the shirt into a ball, shoving it in the cardboard box sitting on my bed. Along with the shirt went his Ironman DVD, his toothbrush, his contacts, his XBOX and games, and a few of his comic books he'd left next to the toilet.

Just before I left, I took a look at my corkboard, covered in pictures of us and letters he had given me. Maybe if he read them again, maybe if he saw how happy we were, we could go back to the way things had been.

Without a second thought, I ripped the pictures and notes down. I dropped them into the box, a glimmer of hope beginning to sprout in my chest. It followed me as I got in my car and drove the few blocks from my apartment to his, the drive slower than normal.

I glanced at the box sitting next to me in the passenger's seat. The pictures of our smiling faces staring up at me. Just looking, the photos made me feel better, like we could get there again. They were taken only a couple months ago, how could we have changed so much since then? Maybe we didn't. Maybe this was all a misunderstanding.

I pulled my Prius in to the parking lot, turning into an empty spot and shutting off the car before grabbing the box and getting out.

Maybe that's why he wanted me to come here. He said he had to give me my stuff and he wanted his stuff back. What if he really just wanted to talk things through? To see me at least one more time? He probably doesn't think he has a chance after the argument. He said so many horrible things, but I love him still, of course. Maybe he just needs a little bit of encouragement.

I hurried up the stairs, being sure not to trip. What would I say to him? That I still love him? That I think this was a mistake? Or, should I play a little hard to get? After all, he was really rude. But love conquers all, right?

Stepping up to Apartment 2B, my chest tightened. My gut felt like a kid was stretching it like silly putty, about to snap at any moment. I could feel the heat in my cheeks as my heart raced and my palms got sweaty. Meekly, I lifted my fist and knocked twice. It took a few seconds for Ricky to come to the door, but finally I heard the locks turning and he whipped open the door. His dark hair was disheveled, face

unshaven, glasses crooked, and he wore nothing but his Thor sleep pants.

"Dee," he said. "Er, Deanna," he corrected himself, obviously trying to be formal.

"I have your things," I said awkwardly, shaking the contents of the box.

"You're a bit early," he murmured, his voice still sleepy as if he'd just woken up.

Shifting the box onto my left arm, I looked at the watch on my right wrist.

"It's ten," I said to him. "You said to come by in the morning."

"Uh, right," he said waving restlessly on his feet.

It was now or never. I had to tell him how I felt, or I would forever regret it. I did still love him, and if he felt the same way, we should try again.

"Listen Ricky—"

"Dee, I don't think—"

We both spoke at the same time, cutting each other off. My eyes were wide as I looked at him, was he going to say the same thing?

"I—" I started, still unsure of what to say. "I've been thinking over the past two weeks, and, I mean, I was moving on, but something inside me just...isn't letting go."

Ricky grew pale, breaking eye contact with me as he sighed.

"I think what we had was really special, and I think maybe I'm not the only one. I just wondered if—" I was cut off as a voice sounded from inside the apartment.

"Ricky?"

My insides melted to goo as a woman emerged from his bedroom. She was tall, with long tan legs and a freckled nose. Her sandy blonde hair fell past her shoulders in lazy waves, her face blank with obliviousness. Everything about her, down to Ricky's Hulk shirt hanging off of her sharp shoulder screamed "Bimbo."

"Are you coming back to bed?" she asked with a sexy smile.

Ricky looked at me, his mouth gaping and face pale. Feeling physically nauseous, I shoved the box at him without a word and spun on my heel.

"Deanna, wait!"

But I kept walking towards the stairs, ignoring his yells. I could hear his bare feet running after me.

"Dee!"

"What?" I said, whirling on him.

"Here," he said apologetically.

He handed me a tattered box filled with my things. I recognized the book I gave him for photography, the air fresheners I put in his bathroom, and on top of the rest was the Marvel comic book dress he bought for me. The one he liked me to wear when we would have sex.

"I'm sorry," he said, scratching the back of his head.

The anger radiated through my limbs, every ounce of me about to explode. He finally turned away and retreated back into his apartment, the sound of the locks clicking back into place echoing in the hall. I stood for a second, staring down the hall as he disappeared. With a heavy heart, yet with a touch of closure, I brought myself down the stairs, feeling indifferent by the time I got to the bottom.

As I got to the door, I begrudgingly realized that the box I was holding was unfortunately heavy. Sighing, I got close to the exit, trying to keep my arm under the box as I twisted my hand to reach the door handle. Suddenly, the door swung open, knocking the box out of my hands, spreading its contents amongst the dirty floor.

"Oh my God, I'm so sorry!" the man exclaimed.

My eyes remaining on the scattered items, I sighed and stooped to pick them

up, throwing them back in the box. Jefferies: Moving On
"Here, let me help," he said, also squatting down.

He grabbed the photography book and placed it in the box. As I looked up to thank him, I couldn't help but notice how attractive he was, and flustered as he picked up the things.

"Uh, thanks," I mumbled. "You didn't really have to help."

He looked into my eyes, his lip quivering slightly as if he didn't know what to say as he looked at me.

"I—it's my pleasure," he smiled.

I couldn't help but smile back as he grabbed the Marvel dress.

"You like Marvel?"

Inwardly rolling my eyes, I answered, "Not really, no. My ex wanted me to wear it because he liked Marvel."

I waited for him to laugh or make fun of me, but instead he simply said, "That's stupid."

I giggled a little. "It is, isn't it?"

He laughed too, then put out his hand. "I'm Ed, by the way."

ALLISON QUINN



Balanced

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