



'Deep inside of me, I'm just a girl-hating girl.'

Erin says this without the least bit of facetious condescension. No, she and Jo -both sitting at their table across from one another- have a certain view of their fellow sex.

'Yeah,' says Jo across from Erin. 'I don't think I'd ever want to be a girl again.'

They scan their computer screens, both white MacBooks. There is a large, glittery strawberry sticker covering the Apple logo on Erin's laptop, a bright green alien clasping a peach on Jo's.

'You notice how 'Cunt' has become the new 'Bitch' and 'Bitch' has become almost a term of endearment?'

'I have noticed that, yes. I don't know what that has to do with anything.'

'Have you found any yet?' asks Jo.

'No, you?'

Erin sips her vanilla latte. 'No. There was something on Craigslist, but it's like five hundred dollars.'

'What? That's *way* too expensive.'

'I know, but it's, like, we keep spending like thirty bucks a day on food, and as soon as we get a fridge for the apartment, we'll be able to cut down to like fifty bucks *a week*.'

Jo scratches her cheek. She's tan with impeccable skin; large, brown eyes; bobbed hair pulled back into a tiny, wispy bun at the nape of her neck.

'Are you hungry?'

'Not really.' Erin wears a baseball hat, no makeup, and boasts perfect, tawny skin, with bright emerald eyes, long eyelashes, and a baby face. They're both dressed casually -Joe in a T-shirt, tight yellow hot pants, long green-striped knee socks, and multi-colored tennis shoes; Erin in a white button-up shirt, black jeans, black Converse shoes.

Jo yawns. 'How's it going with Johnny?'

'I dunno. Rob still acts like he doesn't know what's going on, but it's weird: the other night when Johnny went up on stage after Rob, they, like, crossed one another and kinda gave each other one of those weird, uncomfortable nods. I dunno. It's strange, but fuck it.'

'Yeah. Johnny wants me back in the studio again next week.'

'How're the new songs?' asks Erin.

'They're alright. Nothing like his second album, but whatever. I like doing it with him. Except for the fact that his new song has some stuff in it I won't say.' She brushes a wisp of hair away from her agate eyes that are transfixed on her computer screen, her fingers typing away as she hunts online for a fridge.

'Oh, yeah?'

'Yeah. I won't say the F word.'

Erin peeks over her computer screen bent at an eighty-five-degree angle.

'Really?'

'Yeah.' She sips her tea. 'Oh, I mean...' She makes sure no one else watches, whispers conspiratorially: *Fag*. I won't say that word. The other word, I don't fucking care.'

'Oh, I think I found something.' She sets her white coffee cup encased by a flimsy brown cardboard holder on the small table. 'It's...' Her eyes narrow, intent on the advertisement onscreen. '...two hundred fifty dollars. Some guy in Hawthorne. What do you think? Can we get Dave to drive us in his truck?'

'I don't think Dave likes us very much,' reminds Jo.

'Yeah, but he always goes out of his way to treat us so nicely because, I mean, you and Johnny are like best friends, and he knows not to fuck with that.'

'True.' She pinches her nose, goes back to typing. 'Hawthorne's kinda far, though, and Dave's been going back to the gym after work again. He doesn't get done 'til like nine every night.'

'So?'

'By then, it'll be too late. *Way* too late. Besides, he and Johnny are working on re-doing their new tracks because of the Kimmel show appearance next month.'

'So? Maybe we can get Dave to do it on the weekend. Or maybe some night when they're not working on their tracks.'

'They're *always* working on their tracks,' Jo rejoins. 'Besides, they're totally crazy about that kind of thing, and Johnny is the one who usually keeps Dave back at the house working all night, anyway. And anyway, they live all the way down in Baldwin Hills now, so it'll take them *forever* to get to Hollywood, then to Hawthorne, then back here again.'

'Frick.'

'Don't worry about it, we'll find something.'

Jo and Erin type away frantically as though to the manner born.

Neither slows her quest for a new (or, more to the point, *used*) refrigerator for their apartment. Jo turns around when she thinks she hears something, though nothing is there behind her, less the other patrons in the coffee shop.

'Do you think we could get something at Sears or something?'

'We don't have that kind of money. After my last ticket, my dad says he's not gonna pay my insurance anymore.'

'I can't *believe* our apartment didn't come with a refrigerator to begin with. I mean, what century is this?'

'A lot of places don't come with a fridge. I had this one friend who moved into his apartment and his landlord said he could have a fridge...but he'd have to rent it for like eighty a month.'

'That's not so bad.'

'I guess...'

Erin leans back, stretches out her thin arm dressed in her long, white shirtsleeves. 'I'm so tired. Damn.' She opens her mouth for a silent, infectious yawn. Jo follows suit, and they both find themselves distracted by the phantasmagoria of the living coffee shop around them.

Nothing in particular seems to catch either's attention, but it's an odd phenomenon that -at the same time- they've both presently left the reality of their reality for the reality that surrounds them in the café.

'It's so quite,' Jo leans over her computer screen to say in a surd. 'It's, like, I wonder what it would be like if outside was as quiet as it is inside most of these places.'

'That would be so crazy.'

Fingers back on her keyboard, Jo takes a drink. 'Oh, my god. You've gotta see this!'

'Instant Message the link to me.'

Jo IM's Erin the website link, and Erin's eyes light up. 'Dude! That's fucked-up! Turn it off, don't let anyone see that you're looking at this stuff!'

Jo cackles, Erin turns her head to make sure that no one looks over -of course, no one does: everyone's locked into his or her own universe.

'What? You don't like to experiment? What about seeing different sides of humanity?'

'That's fine and all, but you don't have to put it up on the Internet for everyone to see!'

'How many people are really going to go to that website? It's not like *we have* to look at that kind of thing.'

'We do when you freakin' IM me the website without telling me what it is!'

'Oh...'. Jo fires back, '...don't be such a prude. It's funny.'

'I know, but I don't want to be looking at it in a public place. That's weird, Jo.'

'*You're* weird,' she ripostes, sticking out her thick, brownish-pink tongue.

'We're *both* weird. Nyuuuhh.' Erin kicks Jo under the table.

'Ouch!' She smiles. 'You bitch!'

Erin picks at an amorphous mole on her hand. 'Hey, have you talked to Julian lately?'

'Nah. He's all into this weird New Age religious stuff now. The last I heard, he was still trying to record some stuff in a studio in Atlanta or wherever the hell he is.'

'Dude, did you hear he inherited some big-ass apartment in New York? I think he's *living* there now.'

'That guy is *such* a flake. Johnny and Dave have been trying to do stuff with him for, like, the last three years, and he keeps talking big, but then he never comes through to do anything.'

Erin guzzles down the last of her hot libation. 'Yeah, I know. If he didn't have his brother, he'd have to get a *real* job like everyone else.'

'Isn't he, like, twenty-six now?'

'I think so.' Without taking her eyes off of her computer screen, Erin: 'This chick's got a fridge for three fifty. That too much?'

Jo considers, scrunches up her forehead. 'Mmm. I dunno. Some of the ones in the department store are practically that much. I'm *telling* you: I think we can find one for two hundred.'

'Yeah, but you have to remember to think about the delivery cost. Especially since, you know, Dave's probably not gonna help out.'

'Don't we know anyone else with a truck?'

'No.'

'Couldn't we get a U-Haul?' suggests Jo.

'No way! They're so expensive now.'

'I thought they were like twenty bucks.'

Erin titters. 'Chh. Yeah, according to their *ads*. But then you go there, and there's all these hidden charges and things, plus they don't even pay for gas.'

'I thought you get fifty miles for twenty dollars.'

'Yeah, but that doesn't count gas.'

'What do you mean?'

'I mean, the fifty miles is mileage to the...put on the...on the truck. Like, you're putting fifty miles on their tracks -not that they're in the best shape anyway- and then you *still* have to pay for gas. You get the truck with a half-tank of gas, and then have to bring it back with a half-tank, or else you have to pay some exorbitant fee. Like thirty dollars.'

'Shit.'

'I know. It sucks.'

Jo glances up, away from her computer screen and away from Erin. 'How are we gonna get the fridge to the house, then?'

'Maybe we could get whoever we bought the fridge from to bring it to us. We could pay him extra. Think about it: if we get a fridge for, let's say, two hundred -that's only one hundred each- then we could pay the dude maybe fifty extra -twenty-five each- and then everything should be all good in the hood like a young girl should in Hollywood.'

'You think so?'

'Sure.'

'What if the dude we buy it from lives really far away, like that guy from Hawthorne?'

'Then we won't buy it from anybody in Hawthorne. Or maybe we could just fuck 'em, and then they'll bring it to us for *free*.'

'No, thanks.'

'Why not?'

'I'm on the rag again.'

Erin sighs. 'When are you *not* on the rag?'

'On Tuesdays.'

'You are *so* annoying.'

'And cute.'