

Loveless Woman, Draft 1

I unlock my dorm door, set my stuff on the living room table, and why is there a man on my couch what is he doing here?

"John, this is my roommate Natalie. Nat, this is John, my boyfriend," Clara says with a smile. She's sitting next to him on the couch. His arm around her shoulder. A smug grin on his face. I can tell. I always can. His smile would look genuine if his eyes weren't filled with mockery. He's laughing at me. *I stole your friend. Your love is now worthless to her. Now you can't even rest in your own home without the reminder of how broken you are, you loveless woman you.*

"Nice to meet you John." My monotone voice greets him. To her credit, Clara catches it. She frowns at me. *Please be civil*, her eyes say. I nod and decide to make a tactical retreat to my bedroom.

When I hear our front door open and close three hours later, I pop back out.

"Is he gone?"

"Yes, Mom." Ignore it. Push past it.

"I thought we had agreed to alert each other when we had guests over, especially male guests."

"I'm sorry, he kinda just showed up. I opened the door and he was there with flowers and takeout."

Huh?

"Did you tell him where you lived? Did he stalk you? If he doesn't live in this building how did he get in here?" How is she okay with this?

"He didn't stalk me. A friend of his lives here and crossed me in the hall once, so he let John in when he'd said he wanted to surprise me."

A tall man cloaked in shadow slinking in the hall in the dead of night. Hiding in the closet. *Our* closet. A Cheshire grin, he's got a knife, it's in the air, I push Clara out of the way and—

"How long."

"A week now."

A week?!

"And you thought that gave him clearance to be in our apartment?"

"Like I said, he snuck in."

“And you don’t see that as creepy? A red flag?”

“It was cute!”

“There are people out there who believe Jeffrey Dahmer was cute!”

We argue. I’ve never had an argument with any of my friends like this. I’m actually angry. That’s not normal. But my anger is born of fear. Fear for her. Clara says once I get a boyfriend, I’ll understand. I retort that it will be a cold day in hell before I let a man put his hands on me. Her horrified face puts an end to my anger, and I’m back in the circus cage.

I run to my car and cry for forty-two minutes. I come back inside and apologize. She doesn’t need to apologize—I forgave her immediately, because that’s what I do for people I love.

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Recommended Edits

I ~~unlock my dorm door~~ enter my dorm, and go to set my stuff on the living room table, ~~only to find and why is there~~ a man on my couch with his arm around Clara. ~~what is he doing here?~~

~~“John, this is my roommate Natalie.~~ Nat, this is my boyfriend John., ~~my boyfriend,~~ Clara says with a smile. ~~She’s sitting next to him on the couch.~~

~~I can’t stop staring at h~~His arm around her shoulder. He grins at me. It’s smug, cocky. A smug grin on his face. I can tell. I always can. His smile would look genuine if his eyes weren’t filled with mockery. ~~He’s laughing at me. I stole your friend. Your love is now~~ worthless to her. Now you can’t even rest in your own home without ~~the me reminding you reminder of~~ how broken you are, you loveless woman you.

“Nice to meet you John.,” ~~m~~My monotone voice greets him. To her credit, Clara catches it and. ~~She~~frowns at me. *Please be civil*, her eyes say. I ~~nod and~~ decide to make a tactical retreat to my bedroom.

When I hear ~~our~~the front door open and close three hours later, I ~~pop back out, reemerge.~~

“Is he gone?”

“Yes, Mom.” Ignore it. Push past it.

“I thought we ~~had~~ agreed to alert each other ~~when we had~~before bringing guests over, especially male guests.”

~~“I’m sorry, h~~I didn’t know he was coming over. He ~~kinda~~ just showed up. ~~I opened the door and he was there with flowers and takeout.~~”

Huh?

“Did you tell him where you lived? Did he stalk you? If he doesn’t live in this building how did he get in here?” How is she okay with this?

“He didn’t stalk me. A friend of his lives here and ~~crossed~~passed me in the hall once, so he let John in ~~when he’d said he wanted to surprise me.~~”

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Main Comments:

Strong start! Character voice consistent to past passages. Main issue here was economy of style. I recommended some spots where you could get that strong internal thought process with fewer words, letting your audience’s connection to Natalie not be hindered by wordiness. But overall, very solid draft already!

Loveless Woman, Draft 2

I enter my dorm and go to set my stuff on the living room table, only to find a man on my couch with his arm around Clara.

"Nat, this is my boyfriend John," Clara says with a smile.

I can't stop staring at his arm around her shoulder. He grins at me. It's smug, cocky. I can tell. I always can. His smile would look genuine if his eyes weren't filled with mockery. *I stole your friend. Your love is worthless to her. Now you can't even rest in your own home without me remind you how broken you are, you loveless woman you.*

"Nice to meet you John," my monotone voice greets him. To her credit, Clara catches it and frowns at me. *Please be civil*, her eyes say. I decide to make a tactical retreat to my bedroom.

When I hear the front door open and close three hours later, I reemerge.

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