

Pillow Talk

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I never thought Emily and I would ever be apart. Well, I knew for sure we'd be apart—by about two thousand miles—but I didn't think Emily and I would ever be *apart* apart. I guess first loves are like that. Or maybe all loves are like that; I've got no way to tell. Maybe I should have known.

But I didn't, so, oblivious to our diminishing moments together, I absent-mindedly stared at the baked potato in front of me as she chatted with my parents. "Math," she answered.

"Well, yeah, but not just any old math," I prompted, looking up at her. She smiled and kicked my shin under the table.

"Discrete math," she proclaimed with mock self-importance, "otherwise it'd be boring." I returned to my potato.

Later that evening, Emily and I reclined on my bed together, tears streaming down our faces. On the screen in front of us, Basil was forcing Manuel into a burning room. "It's only a drill," I mimicked, despite my spasming throat. Emily sat up in my lap and exclaimed, "Fuego!" before falling on her side and howling. The pledge break didn't rescue me from my desperate struggle for air for several minutes.

We were similarly situated on my bed two hours later, except we sat in silence. Both of us anxiously awaited the end of Leno's monologue, since that meant Conan would be on in half an hour. Emily suddenly asked, "Are you nervous about going away to school?"

"I guess. Are you?"

"Yeah. I keep thinking I'm making a mistake going all the way to the East Coast. I won't know anyone, and I'll be away from my family and..." She didn't finish her sentence.

"You'll know Derek," I said jokingly. She rolled her eyes.

"Great, a bully who can exponentiate matrices. Okay, I won't know anyone worth knowing."

"Relax, Em, you're doing the right thing." I gently stroked the narrow strip of exposed skin above her waist with my finger. "You'll be great over there."

"How do you know?"

"I know." She didn't say anything, so I swept her copper-colored hair to the side and kissed her behind the ear. "Want to know just how great you'll be?"

"Okay, Nostradamus, tell me. First give me another kiss." I leaned forward to kiss the side of her mouth and then squeezed her against my chest.

"Well, let's see: first semester, you'll breeze through multivariable 'calc and linear algebra, so you'll have plenty of time to write me filthy email. Second semester, a bit tougher: analysis and abstract algebra..." Emily turned around and faced me.

"Sounds to me like you're not seeing the future so much as you're reciting my class schedule."

"Hey, it's my prophecy."

"So prophesize already." She let me go on for a few minutes about honor's theses and the William Lowell Putnam Mathematical Competition,

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and looked progressively less amused the more I talked. But Emily tolerated my rambling an inhumanly long while, until finally, she just shrugged and started to unbutton her blouse. I stopped and watched her work her way to the bottom, then gave her a questioning look. “Just taking an active part in the betterment of my own future. Keep going.” She let the open blouse fall from her shoulders and reached back to undo her bra. I coughed.

“And then you graduate. Congrats.” I put my hand over one breast, lifting it slightly, and bent forward to nibble at the other.

“Is that it?”

“No, but further scrying requires a somatic component.”

“Ah, ‘Detect Impending Sex’?” she asked.

“Yep, ‘Range: touch’. And indeed, I sense impending sex.”

“I guess I failed my saving throw.” She giggled and tugged at my shirt while I continued to caress and kiss her soft flesh. “So, have any farther-reaching insights, o Great Diviner?”

“Of course.” I didn’t offer any.

“Wait, I think I might have the Gift, too: after I graduate, do I,” she paused for dramatic effect, “go to graduate school?”

“Good guess, but, no, you’re wrong.” I went back to her breasts to buy some time. “Uhm, but actually you take some time off to write for the Kids in the Hall,” I mumbled between licks while I unbuttoned her jeans and started to work them off her hips.

“I think this is their last season, actually.”

“What?” I looked up. “Where’d you hear that?”

“I dunno, maybe Karen told me,” she answered, propping herself up on her elbows. I sat back against the headboard.

“Crying shame,” I muttered. She kicked her jeans over her socks to the floor, then gracefully twisted her hips around and crawled toward me.

“So, do you need to be consoled?”

“No—I mean, yes.” In perfect cooperative harmony, I unzipped my pants, and Emily yanked them off along with my underwear. Then, she pressed her lips firmly against mine, and as we kissed, she gently stroked my penis with the backs of her fingers. I dragged my palms over her thighs and belly to her ribcage and pushed against her slightly, and she pushed back with matching force (purposely, not just as a result of Newton’s third law). Giving in, I slid my hands to the sides of her breasts, which she crushed into me while massaging my erection more vigorously. I could pull three consecutive all-nighters hacking on Waffle, or watch the entire “Key to Time” storyline in a single ten-hour session, but sadly, my stamina wasn’t applicable to all situations.

“Ahm, Em, I’m gonna,” I began. She pulled herself away from me and sat on my knees.

“Whoops,” she grinned. “Hmm, why don’t you finish your story?”

“Er,” I stammered as she leaned over to fish around in my nightstand, “well, uhm, I guess, uh, yeah, I guess you. . .” I let my mouth hang open a moment. “I guess you win a, uh, a Field’s Medal, or something.” She withdrew a condom from the drawer and raised an eyebrow at me.

“For writing for a disbanded comedy troupe?”

“No, no, for math.”

“Oh, really?” she laughed. “One of the math ones?”

“Heh, yeah,” I gulped. She smirked and twirled the foil wrapper between her fingers a few times.

“So, care to elaborate?”

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“Uh...”

“Take your time,” she said as she tore open the package and began to slowly unroll the condom over me. Once finished, she leaned forward and lowered herself until I just barely entered her. “Ready yet?”

“Yeah!” She didn’t move.

“Oh, er, you discover an algorithm for finding Hamiltonian Circuits in polynomial time.” Satisfied, she slid down as far as she could, and nuzzled her cheek against my neck. She brought herself back up, and then down, and up again, her rhythm gradually accelerating. I kissed her shoulder and held my fingers loosely at her sides, tickling her. Soon, we were both breathing quickly, and a deep flush had filled in the space between the freckles on her face and chest. She clenched her eyes shut and squeezed my shoulders, and oscillated frantically. Then, just as the frequency of her forced breaths, desperate strokes, and the squeals from deep in her throat reached their peaks, her eyes snapped open and she exclaimed, “But that’s an NP-complete probl—ahhhmn!”

She had me there. That could have been the end of my credibility as a false prophet, but luckily for me, just as things took a turn for the worse, she climaxed. And I did too, so I wouldn’t have been able to defend myself from her skepticism anyway. Simultaneous orgasms definitely have their advantages.

Early the next morning, we sat on the steps of her front porch, looking out into the empty cul-de-sac. In a few minutes, she’d have to sneak back up into her room. Her hands were pushed deep into the pockets of her coat, and she sat as close to me as she could. “I had another vision,” I told her.

“Yeah?”

“Yeah.” I ground a clod of dirt into the concrete with my toe. “Some day, when you’re busy gaining international acclaim, a humble software engineer will move out East, and ask you to marry him. And you’ll say ‘yes’.”

“Will this software engineer be cute, shorter-than-average, with messy hair?”

“Of course.”

“Well, I could have told you that,” she said, before turning her head toward me for a long, sweet, kiss.