

CAMPUSNET

‘Excuse me – is this seat taken?’

‘Andy! What are you doing here?’

‘Hello, Maggie. Look, I promise, I’d sit somewhere else if I could. But this is the only seat. And it’s freezing out there on the platform.’

‘Never thought I’d see you again.’

‘I know. Still, we’ve managed it for five years. Have to blame the trains for spoiling your plan. Ah, brings it all back, doesn’t it? You, me and Dan – waited on a few platforms back in the day, didn’t we? Yeah. Er, your hair looks nice short.’

‘I had it cut, Just after – after we left uni. Dyed it a few times too.’

‘Sounds like you wanted to hide. Or to forget. Something you did, was it? Like the way you dumped me? Argh! Jesus, Maggie – ’

‘Sorry! Sorry! Ohmigod, I’m sorry! I mean – let me – ’

‘No, it’s okay. I’ll use this tissue. It was only the dregs anyway. But bloody hell, Maggie, what did you do that for?’

‘I’m sorry, okay? I shouldn’t have done it. But I hate you so much, Andy. I tell you, in my dreams you’ve had a lot worse.’

‘We should sit down. Everyone’s staring. You hate me, Maggie?’

‘Just let me calm down a bit, will you?’

‘This isn’t your train coming in, is it?’

‘No, it’s bloody not.’

‘I don’t get it. You actually *hate* me? Listen. I honestly didn’t realise it’d affect you so much. I mean, we were drunk – but *you* were the one who told me how much you loved me. *You* were the first one into the bedroom.’

‘Oh, *that’s* not what I’m talking about, Andy. And you know it.’

‘It was the loveliest night of my life.’

‘Oh, yeah? So why did you do what you did? I was just a piece of meat, wasn’t I? Just an object – that’s all I was.’

‘*What I did?* How do you mean?’

‘Oh, how can you say that? Are you trying to pretend nothing happened?’

‘I’d told you I had to leave early, remember? Had to get back home for my parents’ anniversary. You were still fast asleep, so I kissed you and left. Shouldn’t have taken the bike – I was still half cut . . .’

‘So when did you post those photos on Campusnet?’

‘What photos?’

‘The ones of me. A dozen of them, Andy. Me, naked, asleep on your bed. Some of them – some of them were *close-ups*, you bastard. Don’t tell me you’ve forgotten. Or maybe you do it to girls all the time?’

‘I have no idea what you’re talking about.’

‘Stop it, Andy. I mean it. Or I’ll go and get more coffee and throw *that* over you too. You probably don’t care, but I’m telling you, it was hell. Next day, people all over the campus were sniggering at me. I didn’t know why. Then, Dan told me. Better come and see these, he said. We went to the Campusnet office and found your

camera, still connected to the server. When I saw those pictures, I went to pieces. Dan was very good. Looked after me. Took the pictures down as soon as he'd worked out how. Said he wished he'd never been your housemate . . .'

'Let me get this straight: someone posted naked pictures of you all over Campusnet? And you thought it was me?'

'Don't be stupid, Andy. I was in *your* bed. The pictures were on *your* camera.'

'Whew! So you sent me that text. "I never want to see you again." I can still see it now. I thought it was just because I'd – because we'd slept together. And all the time – Jesus, Maggie, it must've been really hard for you.'

'Maybe I'll forget the coffee and just grab a knife! All this remorse – when you've never even *tried* to apologise?'

'Listen, Mags: It. Wasn't. Me. I don't know how it happened, I don't know who took the pictures. I left you that morning, and I swear to you I was head-over-heels in love with you, girl. I got on the bike and tore up the A1. Then when I got to Alnwick there was a patch of diesel waiting. Came off, wrote off the bike, woke up in hospital three weeks later.'

'You came off your bike?'

'Still got pins in my leg. Maybe you didn't notice the limp? My parents went and searched the verges and found my phone. When I eventually woke up, I wished they hadn't, 'cos I got your text.'

'You're not making this up, are you?'

'You can ask Mum. Dad died a couple of years back.'

'Oh. I'm sorry. It doesn't make any difference though. You could still have posted those photos.'

'I didn't. I had no idea it had happened.'

'But why didn't you say anything? Why didn't you get in touch?'

'Well, your text sort of gave me a hint. And my parents were a bit protective of their invalided son. Put it behind you, they said.'

'So you forgot about me.'

'Well, if I had, that was what you wanted, wasn't it? But, no – I couldn't. I couldn't, Mags. By Christmas I was OK to travel. I'd never been on a bike since, and I couldn't drive far with these pins. So I came this way – took the train to Taunton. Five-and-a-half hours.'

'You came to my parents' house? That Christmas?'

'It was Dan who opened the door. Said you were still upset. It'd be best if you didn't see me – he wouldn't say why. Said he had a duty to protect his wife.'

'Er, yeah, we'd got married . . .'

'So that was a laugh. I'd come all that way to find I was even less popular than I had been. But I guess, if Dan thought I'd posted those pictures – I guess I wouldn't blame him.'

'He never said you'd called.'

'D'you know, although I shared a house with Dan, although we'd worked on Campusnet together, I'd never have said he fancied you. I thought I knew him.'

‘Oh, yeah. He did. He’d tried it on with me a couple of times. We’d just had a row, actually.’

‘What, when I came to your parents’ place?’

‘No, at the party where you and I – where we . . .’

‘The party where you told me you loved me.’

‘And you said – you said you loved me, too . . .’

‘Well. So. And how is your husband these days? Still the same old Dan?’

‘I wouldn’t know. I left him.’

‘Oh. I’m sorry. He was all right, was Dan. Campusnet was fun. Nowadays you’d just use Facebook.’

‘He was a bit possessive. Jealous, you know? That’s why I left him.’

‘There’s no need to justify things to me, Mags. But as a matter of fact, I believe you. At Campusnet, he always made sure people knew which ideas were his. Even the ones that were mine. Possessive, as you say.’

‘So, the photos, Andy. Why did you post them? Why did you even take them? Really, I don’t want to *begin* thinking about the answer to that.’

‘I swear I never did. I loved you, Maggie. I – I still do. I’d *never* do a thing like that to you.’

‘All right, so if it wasn’t you, who was it?’

‘I wonder . . . Mags, there’s only one other person it could have been. It has to be Dan.’

‘Oh, yeah. So why did he warn me about them? Why did he take them down for me?’

‘Let’s think. I had my camera at the party. Probably left it in the kitchen when we got back. Dan was in the house, and he’d have known you were there – we were probably making a lot of noise.’

‘We were. I remember thinking I didn’t care if the whole street knew! Sorry . . .’

‘After I left, he got my camera, came into my room – you remember the door used to stick? And when I left that morning I’d have tried to close it quietly. Maybe I hadn’t shut it properly. He looked in and saw you. Then he took the pictures, went down to Campusnet, and uploaded them.’

‘But he said he didn’t know how – that’s why it took him till the Sunday to take them down. He had to look it up.’

‘No, I’d shown him. Just the week before.’

‘And *I’d* had a row with him . . .’

‘Even if it had been me, Maggie – I wouldn’t be so stupid as to leave my camera there.’

‘. . . I told Dan I’d rather shack up with old Ferguson than with him. He went sort of pale. But Andy, this proves nothing. And I told you, Dan was really good to me. I did think he was in love with me – for a while, at least.’

‘Mags, it *is* possible that more than one person was in love with you, y’know.’

‘I don’t know what to think, Andy. It’s just your word against his. You can’t prove anything. And after all these years . . .’

‘Maybe you could ask him?’

‘Don’t be stupid, I can’t do that. We’re getting divorced, for God’s sake.’

‘No point in you and I going together, I suppose. Get him to face his guilty conscience.’

‘Yeah, like I can see that working. Oh, is this my train? Sorry, Andy, I’d better go . . .’

‘Mags, please – here’s my phone number. Call me, hey? It’d be good to – to – ’

‘I’m sorry about your shirt – I mean – ’

‘Call me? Please?’

‘I don’t know. This is all a bit sudden. I’ll have to think.’

‘Well, thinking’s progress. You’d better get your train. I’ve missed you, Maggie.’

‘Bye, Andy.’

‘Bye . . .’