

MY ROOMMATE'S

Girl

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Excerpt from *My Roommate's Girl*

by Julianna Keyes

Headlights approach and slow, and we spend the next thirty minutes in the company of a tow truck driver named Fred who drives us down the road to the tiny town of Hamlet and its even tinier motel. By now it's nearly eleven o'clock and all the residents of Hamlet have gone to bed. Businesses are closed and sidewalks are empty. There's an elderly lady stationed at the front desk of the motel and she puts down her crossword puzzle when we walk in, delighted to have company.

Aster tries to pay for the room but I push away her credit card and hand mine over, ignoring her offer to pay for half. We don't discuss if we should get two rooms, and it's only when we unlock the door to our street-facing unit that I realize we've been given a single, with just a queen bed to share.

If Aster had hesitated or looked uneasy, I swear I would have gone back up front and asked for something different, but her footsteps don't falter. She strolls into the room, parks her suitcase in the corner, and flops onto the mattress. "Oh God," she moans. "That feels good. Anything that's not in a car feels amazing."

I turn my back and spend way too long locking the door and hooking the chain. As though the real threats here are the ones outside this room. I simply can't see Aster, half-drunk, sprawled on a bed and moaning. I'm human. It's too fucking much.

I steel myself, then shrug out of my coat, holding it in front of my crotch when I turn back around. Aster has sat up and dumped her coat on the floor, and now she's sitting on the edge of the bed, bent over as she unties her shoelaces. This gives me a ridiculous view of her cleavage surrounded by hanks of shiny hair, and my dick pleads with me to proposition her. To at least *try*.

But something stops me.

"I'm going to take a shower," I say, striding past her to the dingy bathroom. I shut the door and turn on the water to drown out any more moans—any Aster sounds at all—then strip out of my clothes and step under the spray. There's a bottle of complimentary

shampoo and a tiny bar of soap, and I take my time with each, leaving the water ten degrees colder than is comfortable to try to forget how long it's been since I've had sex.

It doesn't help. After a while I abandon my noble intentions, warm up the water, and wrap a slippery hand around my cock. I brace my forearm against the wall and watch as I stroke myself. I think about the couple from the library, the guy's moans as his girlfriend sucked him off. I picture Aster on her knees in front of me, her hair wet, her cheeks flushed, lips stretched wide.

I turn my face into my bicep and groan into my skin as I come, spurting into my palm. Eventually my shoulders slump and I can breathe normally again. I clean up and get out, belatedly hoping Aster wasn't planning to take a shower since there's definitely no hot water left.

I dry off and pull on my boxers and the T-shirt I had on earlier, then step into the dim room. The only light comes from the ancient television, an old episode of *Gilligan's Island* playing. Aster's tucked under the striped comforter, propped against two pillows.

"Hey," she says, yawning. "Feel better?"

I toss my clothes onto a chair. "Yeah." One of my socks lands on the floor and when I bend to scoop it up I notice Aster's dress is there. On the chair. Not...on her body. My hormones immediately betray me, blood rushing south, balls tightening. Oh fuck. She can't be...

I peek in the mirror and see her shoulders and head sticking out from under the covers. And then I see she's wearing the T-shirt she had on this morning, and I can only pray she's got her jeans on, too.

The room is chilly, an antique radiator rattling away near the door, probably seeing its first action in years. It's generating noise but not heat, and when I approach the bed Aster flips back the covers for me, revealing two things: there's only a comforter and a flat sheet, and her long, bare legs.

My prayers have not been answered.

"I'll, just, um, sleep under the comforter," I say, smoothing the sheet back down against the lumpy mattress, a flimsy barricade. I slide in under the itchy old blanket, inhaling the competing smells of dust and mothballs.

"Fragrant," I mutter.

“It’s called ‘local flavor,’” Aster says.

I adjust my pillows so I can see the television. The fitted sheet isn’t doing shit to keep me from feeling Aster beside me. She could be ten feet away and I’d still know exactly where she was and what she was doing. Her whole body shakes when she laughs, and the hairs on my arms stand on end when she yawns, a feathery, feminine sound that feels far too intimate.

She curls onto her side facing me, hugging her pillow under her cheek and laughing at Gilligan as I try to ignore the curve of her ass against the blankets.

I bend the leg that’s closest to her and use my other hand to adjust my aching cock. If I take another shower, she’ll get suspicious. If I lie down flat, she’ll see the bulge at my crotch. I’ll have to stay like this until she falls asleep, then slip back into the bathroom to jerk off again, like a fucking twelve-year-old.

“Hey, Aidan?” Aster’s sleepy voice makes my fingers curl around my cock, hard enough I grit my teeth.

“What’s up?”

“Do you want...?” She breaks off to yawn, muffling the sound with her fingers. “Do you want to leave a bit later tomorrow? So we can sleep in?”

I want a lot of things, but spending more time in a bed with Aster in which we are not fucking is not one of those things. “Let’s leave around ten. I’ve got stuff to do when I get home.”

She props herself up on one elbow, and for a split second I think maybe my dreams are about to come true. That maybe she’s going to reach over here and cover my cock with her hand and say, *You’ve got stuff to do right now, big boy.*

But of course my dreams don’t come true. They never do.

She frowns. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah,” I lie. “Just tired.”

She leans past me to check the time on the alarm clock that sits on the cheap nightstand, alongside the requisite Bible and town map.

“Figures,” she says. “It’s after midnight and it’s been a long day.”

“Yep.”

“Hey, you know what?”

“What’s that, Aster?”

“It’s Sunday.”

“So?”

“That means it’s not Valentine’s Day anymore.” She smiles at me as she lies back down and closes her eyes, the rest of her words mumbled. “I forgot all about it. Your plan worked.”

My cock jerks in my hand. The plan has *not* fucking worked.

JUNE 12, 2017

Get it.