

LIP LINER

K A T R I N A E U G E N I A

BUFFALO AND I HAVE BEEN DATING FOR FOUR MONTHS. He asked me to be his girlfriend a month ago. Today he asked me to help him get his mom ready for her doctor's appointment.

We can't find parking near 142 so Buffa asks me to wait for a spot to open up, while he heads upstairs. I'm terrible at parallel parking. Buffalo gives me his phone, and asks that I call 142 when I am at the door.

A spot opens a few blocks away.

I'm doing breathing exercises like one would do when giving birth, "Okay, Katrina, you got this. This doctor's appointment is the last hope, if you crash the car, you're toast. Please God, let me park this car."

Mission accomplished.

I'm in the car, about to call Buffalo, when I realize I have my boyfriend's phone at my fingertips. I've never looked through Buffa's phone, but it's tempting. After contemplating, I finally decide to give the texts a peak. As I go for it I hear Norman say, "you nosy bitch," and I scream out loud, "oh, shut up, it's just this once!" I find an infinite number of women contacting Buffa. I'm all fired up but I try to cool myself off for Norris.

Norris is sitting at her Vanity table, slightly pissed because she hates the drugs she is on, and "feels like a junky," but other than that she is in great spirits. She points to her closet, and asks me to pick out a dress. I find a nice long comfy one.

"Okay, now open up my closet and find me the matching beige sweater."

I open the closet to find endless sweaters, like forty-seven beige ones. I'm thinking, "Well, at least there's no lack of reading material out there for Buff, this could take a while." I start pulling out the sweaters one by one, and holding them up.

"Nope . . . not that one. Keep going . . . Not that one."

Can you believe that I never find the right sweater? Finally, Norris settles on one. She asks me to grab her brown leather boots. They are tall, fancy boots . . . I say, "Don't you think you should go for comfort? Maybe your UGGs?" She thinks about it for a second, then agrees.

I start talking about my favorite parts of her memoir. I went from rarely ever reading to reading at the speed of light (as far as I'm concerned) because towards the end there, Buffalo never seemed to have good news and I wanted to share every part with her, so I read faster and faster. I found that I read the fastest at work, loaded on Red Bull. So there I was, two in the morning, sitting in the basement of a club leaning on a fridge of Jell-O shots, wearing nothing but a leotard, reading Norris' memoir as fast as I could.

Norris starts putting on beautiful makeup while I brush her hair. It comes time for the lip liner, and I am mesmerized. I start brushing slower and slower. In Jersey, lip liner is like a competitive sport, so I never gave it a chance. But man, I'm reconsidering, because Norris sure makes it look good.

Now she's ready to go. We send Buffalo to get the car.

I suddenly get this sour puss on my face and Norris asks, "What's wrong, Honey?"

"You wouldn't believe all of the woman who are after Buffalo! It's endless! I had no idea but they are texting and calling him constantly! I don't know what to do . . ." I instantly feel better having confessed.

Norris says in a matter of fact way, "Well, Honey, you've just got to tell um' to stop."

Just as she finishes her sentence, Buffalo bursts through the door and pumps his fists in the air as he often does when making an entrance, doing his best to make this outing as fun as possible.

We look at Buffalo, and then at each other, and she says, "I can't imagine why." And we crack up laughing.

I waved them off, and on my walk home, I stopped at a drugstore and got myself some lip liner.

Norris passed away just six days after that. I am so thankful for the short amount of time I got to spend with her. Norris had a magical way of disarming me, and immediately felt like a girlfriend. I was excited to have her down the street, to hold my hand when I needed it. And I suppose now, looking back, I realize why Buffalo wanted me to meet his mom, when we were only just friends, that warm August afternoon when we got ice cream.