

The Memorial

Randi Triant

At eleven thirty at night, Logan Airport is as unwelcoming as a hospital: the lights are too bright and someone is being paged repeatedly over the PA system. My luggage has already arrived, but Monica hasn't. I consider sneaking out to a cab to delay seeing her even further.

I've come to Boston because the only man I've ever loved, Dean Johnson, made me promise I would. Before he died from AIDS, Dean made me swear that I'd co-host his memorial in Boston with the love of his life—Monica. The thing is Monica isn't a Monica. Monica is a man, a black man, which apparently is what mattered to Dean. Me, a white woman, I never got him within twenty feet of the bedroom. Not that I didn't try.

I rush through the revolving doors. There are only two people in the taxi line. No Monica. A serious-looking man is dutifully pointing us to our respective cabs, though there are at least ten yellow, beat-up sedans lined up. Why does he bother? I don't actually say that to him. Although I've lived in New York City for a

year, it isn't a natural fit; I don't have that New Yorker honesty down yet. I wish I could be more like those people I see everyday, barking at the waiter that the bread is stale, muttering at someone who's holding up the line at the Post Office, loudly criticizing a bad theater performance. But I'm not. New York was an escape hatch, nothing more. A way out from Dean and Monica. I'd spent far too many nights with them at the Brattle watching film noir movies, Dean's favorite, or dining in cozy restaurants in the South End, night after night seeing Monica succeed where I hadn't, as Dean and I remained what we'd always been, best friends.

Mr. Taxi Pointer gives me the full up and down. It took me years to get over the fact that I was no longer that gangly, coke bottle-glassed geek I'd been in sixth grade. I still can't see myself as others do, as a tall and striking blond with contact enhanced blue eyes, who belongs in some country where they sip glogg. I start giving Mr. Taxi Pointer the once over right back at him. You're in bad shape when you start to ogle the taxi guy who's a foot shorter than you are and has the earmarks of being out in the cold too long: cement-colored cheeks and a red, dripping nose. Maybe it's because I haven't slept with anyone in months, not since I made the rather unfortunate mistake of picking up a partner at our firm's cocktail party honoring summer associates. Maybe it's what Dean called "the grief factor." After Dean watched so many of his friends die, he used to say that death makes you want to latch onto the nearest breathing thing. Maybe that's what's going on here, I am in town for Dean's memorial after all, but I can't give it much thought because I'm about to make a clean get-away, free of Monica.

In seconds, my suitcase is safely stowed in a cab's trunk and the cab pulls out but then there's a loud bang from the rear. I haven't slipped away fast enough. Monica is running behind the cab, hand outstretched ready to pound on the trunk again. "Stop! Carolyn! Stop!" she shouts through the back window.

The cab driver screeches the cab to a halt and pops the trunk

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