

AN ORDINARY

DAY

Last Saturday night was awesome, he reminded himself. They ate fish, lots of fish. He loved fish. Only dead fish, but he still loved fish. A two hundred dollar dinner was not his idea of a good time, but it was definitely worth it. And the wine. And the cocktails. And the fresh, cool, salty water they swam in when they jumped into the bay under the stars next to the restaurant, with that Venezuelan woman stripping for everyone unannounced and unheeded, exposing her everything to the horned little pricks that surrounded her to the beat of the Latin music playing loud and hot in the summer night.

It was wonderful. She even gave Loli her own personal strip show, as Hussein's jaw locked and his drool collected on the inside of his lip, while Avi anxiously strutted across the beach trying to figure out a way for her to take the rest of her clothes off (the thin, silvery thong she kept on all night) for him behind the tree on the other side of the bay. Ian drank and swam with Loli, while the rest of the girls that were with them couldn't stop laughing, meeting people, dancing, and having a jolly good time.

It was a fun night. He hadn't had a fun night of laughter and sheer bliss in a long time. And that dodgy hotel room. Loli. It was a great weekend.

He needed a great year. Anger! Hatred! Why was he so unlucky when he was in fact a very lucky guy? He needed a way out.

He needed a great year.

Bohemia oh sweet Bohemia. When Charles was King and Emperor and life was sweet and dirty. Poor old Lebanon was just another village town and the world hadn't met the BlackBerry. When buildings looked good and when people worried about the loaf of bread they might not get at the end of the day.

Ian loved the twenty first century. Damian and Ian both wanted to put technology in the back seat, so that maybe people could notice each other again. Maybe then Bohemia oh sweet Bohemia could come back to life, his family wouldn't be so bad, and Loli could be happy.

He went to sleep. Morning came and went, the sun rose and went back into hiding, his phone rang a few dozen times, and he eventually decided it was time to wake up from his slumber and answer the many calls from Loli. His mom had called more times than Loli did (obviously) but he was in no mood to talk to that now.

He got up. Washed his face. He needed

to wash his face or shower to wake up. Otherwise he'd drop back into oblivion in minutes.

He hit play on the Mac and Michael started slipping and moonwalking to his latest album, the one he had released postmortem, with the perfected tracks all over and his money flowing back in for his kids just in time for them to divide his estate and still manage to live pedophile free for the remaining years of their lives. Not that he was a pedophile. It just seemed like little kids would believe anything anyone told them to believe, even if they knew it wasn't true, so that their parents could make a few million off a slanderous lawsuit.

Anyway, he washed his face and listened to Michael, then Across the Universe. He smiled. Brushed his teeth too, thinking he might as well. Picked up the phone and dialled. She knew he hadn't felt so great the night before.

"Morning!" Mumbles.

"Hey baby, feeling better today?"

"Yea, I guess." "Did you sleep through the day." "Hehe. Yea. Sort of. Sorry!" "No no it's fine, I had a lot of work to do anyway. What you wanna do tonight? You wanna come over? Go out?" "I wanna kill a few things, but seeing you tops that a little. What do you feel like?" "I dunno. Come and we'll decide." "Okay. Ciao sexy!" "Bye baby." He could hear her smile over the phone. Click.

He hung up and stared at his naked self in the mirror. Maybe he'll get lucky and her parents won't be home. He put on a pair of his jeans. Flip flops or shoes? Flip flops. The black ones.

Or he could spend whatever money he had left on getting them a hotel room. She'd have to pay for all the rest, but he liked paying for the hotel (even if that meant he couldn't cover any of their other expenses, it felt good to him knowing that he's supplying shelter. The chauvinism was hilarious, especially to him).

Black polo? Black tee? White tee? Green polo!

He was done getting dressed. Now he needed to pack. It was Friday and if the mood hit him he might not be home till

Sunday, especially with the newly oppressive rules and dis-friendliness of his home towards his woman.

Swimming trunks, a fresh pair of socks, two other t-shirts, a pair of shorts. And he was wearing his favourite jeans. Ah, yes. Shoes with the flops he was wearing. Deo and cologne both in the bag already. iPod too. A book for the road, just in case there was any alone time waiting.

He checked his pockets for the essentials, keys, phone, wallet, cigarettes, etc, walked out and into his car.

He got into his car and kicked it into gear. Fuck it. He couldn't wait to get away from this depressingly memorable building.

Racing into the city, bitching at the traffic, getting cut off and sandwiched in at least once by cars around him every five minutes, by the time he got half way to her house, his car, as usual, had to slow down to a complete stop. He was now entering Beirut city and the mess of broken down Peugeots and smoky Mercedes from decades long gone choked him, while Infiniti and BMW four wheelers from last week's edition tried to muscle him off the road. Literally.

He never managed to make it to her place without at least a little road rage. It helped though: instead of venting at Loli, he'd vent at the other cars. And she had her assistant at the office. The poor kid had no way to defend herself from her constant battering. Still, Damian didn't mind, and neither did Ian: it was better than him and her fighting all day long.

Picked up his bag, hit the buzzer, took the old elevator up to her apartment, and crashed on the coach after saying hi to her mom and brother.

She was still getting ready. He didn't know they were going out, but he had learnt not to question things when they were unexpected and she was at her mommy's place. She might have had a minor fit with them too. It was not highly unlikely. "Hey baby! I'll be out in a minute. Just

changing!" From across the house in her room.

"Okay, but should I change out of my flip flops? Where we going?"

"Just Dany's, you don't have to change."

"Okay cool. Take your time." He always added that. She hated feeling rushed and so he preferred to remind her that he's not rushing her. Whenever he didn't tell her to take her time, he knew she'd know to hurry. Made things a lot easier than telling her to hurry when need be. She could snap and that would make him go loose on her too. Not healthy.

They'd figured out a few quirks about them keeping each other sane. Like how she doesn't get mad anymore when he's mad, unless she's mad at him and him at her. Not to raise their voices, because that tended to just make them more agitated. Not telling her to hurry. Not bitching about his driving. Small things. Simple things. Like those.

She was ready ten minutes later. They bid adieu to everyone and bugged off into the night. It was well into the night by now; he'd only woken up at eight in the evening anyway. His brother had been going through some shit lately. He couldn't get that off his mind.

"Morning baby." Another smile and a light touch of his arm, she interrupted his thought patterns. It was a gorgeous interruption. He glanced at her, smiled, and turned back to look at the road. He was trying to drive to Dany's. Wasn't far now. Car stopped in front of him. He turned back to her, smiled, stared, and kissed her.

"I'm sorry I was gone today. I had to lock myself up for a bit. I've been thinking."

FARES
BOUNASSIF