



Dallas Angguish

A Good Bloke

Prague, Czech Republic.

“How drunk were you?”

“Mate, you don’t want to know!”

Matt had passed out in most of Europe’s cities. Not for him the tourist traps and sightseeing other travellers go for. He was on a three month binge tour. He’d been to London, Paris, Berlin, and now Prague. He didn’t remember any of them. He had however left traces of his DNA in the back alleys of each of them, either in the form of urine or vomit.

Matt is what women call good looking or a ‘spunk’. His sandy blonde hair has a slight curl to it and his body is tightly muscled and smooth. He’s what foreigners picture when they hear the phrase ‘bronzed Aussie male’. He has a sort of relaxed underwear model feel about him. Women follow him to bed as easily as he smiles. Men reckon he’s ‘a good bloke’. A great drinking buddy. A lark in strip joints and

topless bars where he is a regular. This trip is his first overseas, if you don't count Bali. It's also his first non-surfing trip. He feels a bit odd so far away from the beach, and without his board, but he's making the most of it. After all, he's twenty-one, has no ties, and is endowed with an adventurous spirit.

I was surprised to find him looking so depressed, sitting at the kitchen table of our guesthouse, staring blankly at a dripping tap. He followed each drip as it fell into the sink with a concentration I wouldn't have thought possible. His continental breakfast sat untouched in front of him. I attributed his gloomy expression to a hangover, brought on by more alcohol than it took to pickle Phar Lap, that monumental Aussie racehorse. Later, I discovered the real reason for his deflated mood.

"Killer hangover?"

"Well, a bit of one mate but that's not what's got me down."

"What has?"

"I'd rather not talk about it." He paused for a long moment then mumbled, almost to himself. "I just wanna go home.... just wanna be home."

"You sure you don't want to talk about it?" I asked, worried that something terrible had happened to him on one of his many unaccompanied tramps through the seedier parts of Prague. "Talking usually helps."

"I don't think it will in this case mate, no amount of talking will fix my problem... if only it would...."

"Geez Matt, what's going on? You can trust me."

I'd not known him ages but we'd become fast friends. We'd met on the street outside the old Jewish cemetery. I'd been for a quiet stroll among the tombstones, he was staggering back from a bar around the corner; his shirt long discarded, his 501 jeans unbuttoned and the fly open. For some reason, perhaps because I'd just spent over an hour in a Jewish graveyard, his open fly reminded me of the legendary veil of the Temple of Solomon, the heavy curtain behind which the Holy of Holies rested. The tattoo on his lower abdomen added to the effect. It read, in black Gothic script, **Paradise.**

I learnt later that this was not a theological reference but rather recorded a visit to Surfers Paradise when he was sixteen. A trip on which he had attained his own version of the Holy Trinity: winning his first major surf comp, getting drunk for the first time and losing his virginity to a mate's older sister.

"I know I can trust you mate... it's just, I'm just too fuckin' ashamed...." I couldn't imagine what debauchery could shame the same man who boasted that he had, in one evening, urinated, vomited and ejaculated into the Vltava, Prague's pretty river. Whatever it was, it must be bad. Therefore, I was desperate to get it out of him. I summoned my most earnest expression. Convinced him I could be trusted. After a pause he spoke.

"You noticed anythin'... weird... about the sheilas 'round here?"

"No, except they don't shave their legs, and their voices are a bit husky, but that's common in Eastern Europe...."

"You don't know the half of it mate!"

“Pardon?”

“Swear not to tell anyone?”

“I swear.”

“I went out drinkin’ last night...”

“As you do every night.”

“I went to this place and... met this... girl.”

“Don’t tell me the Matt-man’s in love!?”

“Shit no mate, no.... It’s not that. It’s just...”

“What?”

“Swear you’ll never tell?”

“Yes already.”

“Well... I met this chick, she was real nice, like a model you know, just fuckin’ extraordinary tits, and I really got hot for her. Went back to her place, this squat near the river and... you know... I took her to bed. We went at it like bunnies man....”

“What’s the problem with that?”

“What’s wrong is we did it like three times!”

Now I was really befuddled. Everyone who'd ever met Matt was well aware that he liked sex. Nay, Matt loved sex. Sex and surfing were his very reason for existence. This was a fact as irrefutable as the elegance of a breaking wave.

"I don't get it...." I murmured.

"It turns out this sheila, Anicka, was... was..."

"Was what?"

"Was a... a... a fuckin' bloke."

"Good lord..., you mean a transsexual?"

"I don't know what the right word is. All I know is I'm fuckin' freakin' out."

My curiosity got the better of me and I had to ask,

"So, was Anicka a pre or post operative transsexual?"

"What? Whaddya mean?"

"Well, had she had the snip, down below?"

"Oh I wish mate, but no, no, she had a bloke's junk...."

"Ah, I see." The reason for Matt's trauma was now painfully evident.

"Anicka reckoned she told me about it up front, at the bar before we went back to her place, but the music was so loud I couldn't hear what she was sayin'." He slumps forward, knocking his head against the table.

“What’s worse...” he mumbles, his voice muffled by the Formica tabletop as a fly lands on his continental breakfast and the tap drips, “I was so drunk, I didn’t even notice until this mornin’!! And I really... I really fuckin’ loved it....”

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