**Something About Her**

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The man who works at the UDF on Corner Street looks like Andy Vacco from high school, so you run up to the counter and say, “I know you.” He has one AirPod in, wears a gold chain with a cross, and has a prominent Adam’s apple that in the 11th grade was overlooked by girls because his crystal blue eyes were so spell-inducing. This particular guy, in his dumpster-colored uniform, reminds you of a revered actor filming a porno, or Tom Brady trying cocaine on his day off—it doesn’t quite fit, and it’s a little depressing. Because, back in the day, Andy Vacco was top of the class in AP chemistry. He was the baseball catcher who threw exclusive basement parties you were never invited to, and he had the best butt. Now you are both 24, his brown hair is receding, and he’s about to ring up your six-pack of Coronas at the register. The sight of his face seems to restart your whole afternoon.

“Andy Vacco,” you smile, handing him your beers. Your lips are chapped, and your eyeliner is stained from the night before, but it kind of works for you, in that “my life is so chaotic” sort of way.

“Lili McGovern,” Andy says, imitating your sing-songy rhythm.

You decide to confess that you used to have a crush on him in high school. This is an overstatement, because while you got excited to see him at school, you only ever really thought about him during those forty-three minutes you were both in the same classroom. Then you would return to overthinking the dorky way you raised your hand and said “here” when the teacher took attendance. It was a shame you used to be so socially anxious; it was noticeable, and it affected how others regarded your objectively pretty face and “hot body.” Luckily, you seem to have left that self-conscious mindset behind, at least for the most part.

“No way,” Andy laughs. “Really? You had a thing for me?”

“Really,” you say, and half-regret. You don’t understand why you felt the need to do this, boost the ego of some guy you were only ever lukewarm about. Because in reality, Andy’s social ease, his meaningless popularity, and the careless way he carried his Jansport backpack, bored you. He would stroll into class ten minutes late and your otherwise strict, female English teacher would somehow find it charming. His mom struck you as the type who would tell him, “Kids are just jealous of you, sweetie,” and Andy would actually believe it. His hands were always noticeably smooth and uncalloused, even now. He wasn’t unintelligent—you were in the same honors classes—but you don’t ever remember him saying anything significant or actually appearing interested. He never held a typical summer job, like bussing tables or a camp counselor.

“You always seemed smart, you know,” Andy tells you. He says this as if he has gifted you a huge compliment and you should feel grateful.

“Yeah, yeah. I was kind of a nerd.” You giggle a little, even though you were annoyed by the condescension. You are immediately angry at yourself for giggling at all.

The reason you were a nerd was because you wanted to move out of Ohio so badly: a state that felt so vanilla, conservative, and unlike you. In 2017, you left Ohio to study at NYU, where you majored in business with a concentration in marketing. You sprinted to Manhattan subways at the last minute, solely for the thrill. You danced on wobbly bar tables and smoked lonely cigarettes on your balcony, even after showering. You fell for a borderline bi-polar, obsessed with Star Wars, whose heart was sweet and original (but still a shitshow). You graduated with a 3.1 GPA (embarrassing), yet you still landed an advertising job working remotely. You are now living right back at home with your pickle-ball playing parents. Five minutes ago, your dad texted you in your family group chat, asking where you were; you never said goodbye before you left the house.

“I should have talked to you more,” Andy says, which takes you aback. “Who knows? Maybe we would have dated.”

Presumptuous, you think, but you feel flattered anyway. He stares at your nipples protruding through your navy halter tank top and you don’t necessarily mind. You want Andy to ask about your job, your relationship status, your accomplishments; you realize that with just a few pretty words, you can portray a different life for yourself entirely. You widen your own blue eyes and stare directly into his, which are still mesmerizing and pool-like, despite reflecting a shallowness.

“I used to work at this UDF, you know, when I was fifteen,” you sort of abruptly tell him. “You used to come in, but you never said hello.” You grab your six-pack without giving him a chance to respond. “It was good seeing you Andy.” You head out the door, not unaware of the way your hips swing from side to side.

When you were seventeen, you used to fantasize about the age you are right now—you would finally be 24, big-boobed, happily single. You would create well-known commercials for Coca Cola or maybe become an actress, date a heartthrob, and live a life girls would envy. “*And she grew up in the middle of nowhere Ohio!”* the reporters would say. “*She barely had any friends in high school! She got dumped by people she was way too good for!* *Look at her now!”* You can picture the tabloids making the most of the transformation from your mundane beginnings. Then one day, suddenly, you *are* 24, and your life is nothing like what you imagined it would be. You run into someone like Andy Vacco from high school, someone you didn’t even particularly *like*. And he thinks, *damn, there’s something about her,* and you walk away, you too believing the image you so hope to sell.