



DADDY'S GIRL

He reckons he's in love you know, Rob does. This girl from the shop - one of the Saturday girls, Jenna. Reckons she's lovely. She started about three months ago and would always wait behind after her shift and talk to him while he was securing the premises. At first he thought she just had a crush on him like. Him in his uniform and his muscles and being older and that - thought she was after a tale to tell her college mates. You know how it is, shagging the security guard at work: Ex-bouncer he is girls; reformed bad lad but you can still see

it there, that naughty look, that smile all dangerous and hypnotic. But as the weeks went on it kind of... happened. Like when you stand outside on a sunny day long enough for your shadow to creep up on you. It was like that, the distance disappeared all effortless like. And now he can't even concentrate on his bench presses. He's had to hit the showers early. Home. Ready. Meet her at eight in The Square on Wind Street.

And he's cut. He's actually really cut. She'd not have believed until she saw it for herself. He was obviously a big guy but she thought he was perhaps one of these

who carried their weight well, you know, just... thick. Like the bulldogs her father employs. Wankers. Meatheads all fidgety through steroids and cheap coke. He thinks the same about them, her dad. Jenna, he'd say, Jenna, what you got to understand love is that you got your Reprobates and your Elect. Them who's destined for the Kingdom of Heaven and them who no matter what they do is always heading for eternal damnation. These fellas love, nice as they are, are the Reprobates. Whereas your likes of us, well, we're the Elect. Dip us in shit and all

that wants to land on us is butterflies. You can't feel sorry for them Jen - there's nothing you can do about it besides make them feel a bit special while they're half useful. If dad knew about her and Rob, he would fucking kill him. But if he knew what it was between them, what this really meant to her, she's sure he could be proud.

'Course he knows who her dad is! Terry Williams is one of those names that keep pub conversations hushed in this city. Done a bit of work for him himself - door work, before Rob lost his licence. But that

wasn't... No, it was Rob's fault. He's got to stop blaming Sioned for everything. He did probably only dish out the beating that lost him his licence because of Sioned kicking him out. But Sioned gave him the elbow with good reason. It was the 'roids - made him aggressive. Got to stop blaming Sioned, Rob. She didn't smash the TV when it froze during the Champions League final; she didn't put her fist through the patio window because the barbeque wouldn't light. She didn't do... all those things, all those times he'd fucked up. He'd fucked up. But with Jenna he can feel that better man he wants to be, growing up through his skin. He can see it now. Settle down a bit, make sure she finishes her studies and gets that good job. Get Terry's blessing. He'll have his licence back. Steady relationship. Twelve months down the line he might have proved himself stable enough to see his little boy again. Gavin. God he wished they'd never called the poor bugger that. Not with that spiky haired twat in the papers every other day. She looks a bit like that Charlotte Church though, Jenna. But classier like.

When she found out he used to work the doors in town, Jenna knew he must've known her dad. That made it perfect. Not that she was one of those girls who spent her life trying to get back at their old man. She loves her dad to bits. He's spoilt her rotten and she knows it. But Rob was just too much to resist. When the shop was quiet they'd talk. First of all it was all about his days on the doors - the battles he had invariably won, the characters he got to know, the stag and hen nights, but after a while the conversation turned to how much he missed his son. He was a real tender knobhead at heart. It almost made her feel sorry for him. He was impressed that she was doing A Levels. Thought that working there in the shop to save up for University was the right thing to do. She couldn't go on relying on her dad to dish out the cash left, right and centre. He respected that. It actually meant a lot to her, that. Even from someone like him. Well, not a lot but at least it meant something. She didn't want to just live on daddy's handouts. She wanted to fend for herself - or at least show willing. She wasn't lazy, just hated working there.

He reckons it was the day those two meesh cunts from Blaen-y-Maes came in that she finally fell for him. He'd spotted them a mile off. Now you've got your meesh, and you've got your meesh, but your Blaen-y-Maes meesh are a different class altogether and Rob could spot them a mile off. He had to be a tricky fucker. He left the shop floor, giving Jenna a >>>

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An exclusive short story by **Matthew David Scott**

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look that said Don't worry, Big Rob's got this under control, and went in the back. In the back he sat and watched the CCTV. With him missing, the two meesh fuckers thought it was like all their compo claims had come in at once, and Rob watched Screen One as they emptied a shad-load of Gillette Mach 3 razorblades into the kangaroo pouch zip pockets of their tops. Before he walked back out onto the shop floor he looked at Screen Two, the screen that watched the counter. And he saw Jenna there, unafraid. She trusted him. Adjusting his flies like he'd just been for a piss, Rob hit the shop floor again. And fair play, at least they made an effort, buying some skins from the counter like they were actual shoppers or something. But on their way out he blocked the door. Excuse me boys, would you mind emptying your pockets. He gave them a chance, but they tried to rush him and that's when heads get cracked. He sat on them 'til the police came. Told the coppers his little rouse about leaving the shop floor and the coppers thanked him. Knew them they did. Rob's only regret was that he hadn't told Jenna his suspicions from the start. They were off Blaen-y-Maas after all.

But when he filled in those two kids nicking razorblades from the shop it made her feel sick. It's ironic really, given her dad's line of work. Violence like that makes her feel ill. And it isn't the physical harm - the blood and crunching that makes her feel that way. It's the excitement beforehand, the enthusiasm during, the pride afterwards. It reminds her of all the boxing dos her father took her to. She smiled for daddy and he could never really know how she felt. The fights themselves were just that - fights. Men hitting each other. But the screams of encouragement from the women wearing too much makeup, the gyppo kids wearing little three piece suits sat on their fathers' and uncles' shoulders watching as some member of their extended family was hurt and hurt in the ring, and the lifting of hands, and the magnanimous congratulations for the opponent at the end of the bout as if something had just been achieved, as if these brave men had just done something worthwhile - that sickened her. It was the same look she saw on Rob's face as he sat on those two bits of kids, as he explained to the police what had happened in the best copper jargon he had memorised from The Bill. This is the memory she keeps fixed in her mind as she checks her makeup in her compact and tells the taxi driver to keep the change.

Rob nodded a hello to the two boys on the door of The Square as he walked in. They looked new. One of them looked foreign, maybe eastern European. There were more and more of them turning up on the doors around town lately. Not that Rob had a problem with that, as long as they could do the job. A man's a man as far as Rob's concerned. Unless they're queer.



Homophobic? No. That makes him sound like he's scared of them. It's not even all of them that he doesn't like. In fact, one of his uncles is bent and he's alright. It's just them that have got to flaunt it in your face all the time like. Make sure you know they're faggots before you ever need to know. It's not like Rob shakes hands with strangers and says Alright mate, I'm Rob, I like to fuck women. So why do they need to make everybody know? Vulgar it is. Like that Graham Norton - there's just no need for it. It isn't decent. Makes him scared for the world young Gavin will grow up in. The Square is already quite busy, even at this time, and a big gang of girls on a hen night pile in dressed as construction workers. They're having a laugh bless them, but Rob knows that these tarts are the trickiest of the lot to get to drink up at the end of the night and for once doesn't envy his old comrades on the door.

Jenna walks across Castle Gardens, the remains of the castle totally at odds to the Yates' diagonally opposite. She hates town. She'd usually go down Mumbles but at least here she knows she'd got her dad's boys on the door. Rob'll probably feel more at home. And he won't be able to try anything. She's not talking about trying anything sexual either, last night put paid to that. As they closed the shop up she finished the coy game she had been playing and kissed him. They couldn't go back to his place as he was living with his mother. She took the piss out of him about this and he told her all about Sioned and little Gavin. And he was honest; if ever honesty should be described as brutal it would be then. He battered himself with the recollection of all the things he'd done to ruin everything he had lost. So they did it there, on the counter, in the shop, with the shutters down. It was then that she felt it. Guilt. It bubbled up from her guts and spread itself through her chest and then disappeared. But this time it felt as if it had disappeared for good - that it would never return. The guilt was gone. And in its place sat this other, quiet and powerful feeling. She knew what she had to do.

He wonders why she chose Wind Street of all places. Not some nice quiet place near hers in Derwen Fawr. And it can't be that she doesn't want her old man to know - they're bound to be his boys on the door. But Terry's a fair man. He'll understand. Just got to keep it innocent, prove he's a gentleman see. That's why Rob's decided last night was a one off - it should have never happened, not yet. If Terry finds out what they were up to... doesn't bear thinking about. He's old school, so that's how Rob has to play it. Clever man too Terry - always got these little facts and stories he's picked up. Knows all about the Romans, the Greeks, the Nazis. He knows all about that stuff, Terry. Probably where Jenna got her brains from. She's young though isn't she? She likes these places,

with their noise and shirts that match the colours of the drinks. He's getting old now, not old, but grown up like. And he's in love. He's definitely in love.

As she walks down Wind Street to the door of The Square she feels nervous. She even wonders if he knows, if her thoughts and feelings have somehow permeated his own and that he can read her. Don't be stupid Jenna. She nods to the doormen. She doesn't feel bad. You can't feel sorry for them - there's nothing you can do about it besides make them feel a bit special while they're half useful. He's sat at a stool by the bar, a bottle of J20 looking like a raver's glow stick in his huge hands. He stands up all stupid. Big grin across his face, the designer branding of his t-shirt warped by his bulk. He kisses her cheek and asks if she would like a drink as he pinches his money out of his jeans pocket. She watches him hold a halved note between his fingers as he raises eyebrows at the bar staff. He's taken off his wedding ring. But she can't let that get to her. Think girl, think of that poor kid he nearly killed, think of how he treated his wife, his bigotry. Don't think of his tears, for fuck's sake girl pity has no place here. But seeing the money there, the paper money, seeing it, it gives Jenna strength. He has no idea how badly he is about to be fucked over. Soon she'd be paying her own way through college. And if he had half a brain he'd know it was an empty threat, she couldn't really go all the way. It's his own stupid fault. He was born for this.

Rob orders a small glass of medium white wine. He knows she isn't legally old enough to drink but he'll make sure she'll be all right. She takes the glass from him in her little hands, nails all posh and proper. A right little lady she is. What the boys at the gym call 'high maintenance'. He holds her elbow as she sits on the stool next to him and is a little bit disappointed when she pulls the cigarettes out of her handbag. He knew she smoked, obviously, but... no, no Rob. You are not going to try to change this girl. You are going to embrace her for everything she is. He looks down at the handbag as she places it by the foot of the stool. It is still open and in it he can see a tape. A black VHS. He narrows his eyes and makes out black marker on the label: CCTV Screen Two. The counter. The realisation comes quick and sickening. That's why she chose Wind Street - if he goes into her bag those lads on the door will be all over him. Terry definitely gets the tape. She just gets a slap. Gavin loses a daddy. Rob looks at her - a smile on his lips, the kind of hopeless smile you give your brief before he tells you you're fucked. She's fucked you Rob. You're fucked. ■

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