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## Like Jane

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## Like Jane

Liz Harbaugh

[www.myspace.com/loudliz/blog/saturdayhell](http://www.myspace.com/loudliz/blog/saturdayhell)

Sunday, August 20, 2000

Saturday Hell: Pemberley Dorm Patio, East Texas State University

Current Mood: Pissed Off

At this point, it's a universally acknowledged truth that a single woman in want of a genuine relationship will find herself alone, chain-smoking on a Saturday night/early Sunday morning. I wonder if I'm the only person at this university who feels like there are walls of pressure closing in around her. I feel like a cross between an HIV-patient and someone with a slight case of pink-eye—we're both contagious, but the first is a lingering feeling that never disappears, and the second is that itch you can never scratch. Can I ever be comfortable here, or am I doomed to wander alone through my life, with men staring at me like I have a giant zit, or a third nipple, or a head growing out of my ass? (Okay, that's unfair. Men only stare at me this way when they meet me "professionally.") I know that it's uncommon for a woman to be the Sports Editor for a college newspaper, especially when all the big sports are the men's sports, and especially when the entire staff of male writers quit when I made editor. Nothing like having a five-foot girl in a locker room, or behind the bench. Even though it's not like I say stupid things—I've been watching football with Daddy since I was seven.

Tonight (okay, last night, let's be precise) was our first home game, and of course it was a giant victory, which means I should really stop writing this and start writing the damn article. But I'm so furious that I can't imagine writing about miraculous third downs until I can get this insulting, patronizing, unfair evening out of my system, so I'll smoke and sip at my beer and type this until I'm ready.

I got to the game early, after finally dragging Jane out of the room, beglittered and nervous as hell about her first time as a "varsity cheerleader." She's finally in sight of the "real" team, which means maybe Mother will lay off about her not being able to find a future famous football player. (Not

that it served Mother that well—Daddy can barely stand to be in her presence—too bad she married a star kicker who was majoring in physics and literature. Guess her degree in “education” seemed less martyr-like and more idiotic as time went on...) Jane did look beautiful, with her hair bouncing and her perfect body showcased in that scrap they call a uniform. And I was so proud—she’s practiced forever to perfect her gymnastics, and it finally paid off.

We arrived at the game, and she went off to join Carol (stupid bitch—she patronizes my sister and claims she’ll “take her under her wing,” but I know she’s just trying to neutralize the threat of finally having a genuinely beautiful and sweet girl on the squad) while I wandered into the locker room to get an idea of the pre-game mood—thought it might be good for the article. Apparently, it’s not appropriate for an editor to wear an ETSU sweatshirt, or maybe it’s just not appropriate to be a woman, because all conversation ended when I arrived. After five minutes of deathly silence, I decided to camp out on the field, study the mood of the crowd, and just cover the game.

We won brilliantly—I’ve never seen an offense play better. Billy Darcy threw to Chaz Bingley for what seemed like a thousand yards (okay, it was only 182, but they were so seamless it was unbelievable). They’ve been best friends since high school, and their relationship is hilarious—Bingley comes off all exuberant, running around and pumping up the crowd and the team, while Darcy stands around acting like football was some philosophical issue, and he could only perform properly if he were standing around looking condescendingly at everyone else. Conceited ass.

So, we won thanks to a last-second touchdown (Darcy to Bingley, of course) and the whole stadium erupted. The energy was incredible—as though a million firecrackers had been set off in the middle of the campus. As I took photos of the team celebrating (did I mention my photographer quit, too?), Bingley looked directly at my beautiful Jane, standing away from the draping cheerleaders and just beaming about the victory. I snapped a photo of him standing with his mouth open, gaping at her. She was so serene, so beautiful—he was obviously entranced. I’ll save the photo for when they finally date—I’ve never seen a couple so fitted for each

other. Both ecstatic about everything, him never bothering to hide it, and her afraid to show too much. It was adorable.

I went to take interviews after I thought everyone would be dressed—I mean, Chaz and Billy set a school record—I had to talk to them. Bingley was thrilled, laughing and joking, and he invited me to a party...me, and “anyone I know who wanted to come. Don’t I have a sister who’s a cheerleader?” (So adorably obvious!) Darcy stood by his locker and refused to acknowledge me, so I practically had to pull teeth to get a satisfactory response. Anyway, at the end I agreed to grab my sister and head to their teammate’s house, so we could celebrate with them.

I found a still-glowing Jane, who had gotten an invite to the same party from Carol, and we headed that way. We got there and the party was in full swing, keg stands left and right, and what seemed like the whole campus wandering around drunk and belligerently proud. We hadn’t been there more than ten minutes when Chaz dragged Carol (can’t believe she’s his sister) up and said, “Hey, Lisa—oh, sorry, Liz—this is Carol, my sister. So, who’s your friend?” No sooner had I introduced Jane than he had co-opted her, gotten her a drink, and dragged her off to dance with him. Not that she was unwilling—I could tell she was nurturing a serious crush. I wandered around, taking photos and wondering how long I had to stay, finally ending up leaning against a wall trying to find someone I knew who I could at least talk to.

Chaz left my sister with Carol and rushed over to Billy, who was standing a couple feet away from me. He went into a glowing description of my sister (hot, nice, funny, hot—glowing for a man) and said, “I’m going to ask her to dinner tomorrow. But I’m so nervous...Billy, do me a favor and find someone here to ask, and we can all go together. I want to make sure she’s comfortable.”

Do you know what that arrogant asshole said?

“Please—I’m not taking anyone here out, until the future of the human species depends on it.”

(Okay, he’s good-looking, and a football star being scouted by a bunch of pro teams. But really—he’s not God’s gift to women.)

Chaz was great. He said, “Shut the fuck up, Darcy. There are tons of pretty girls here. Look, take her sister—

that cool girl who interviewed us. She's attractive, and interesting, so we can all go out together."

That bastard responded with the most sexist, snooty, stuck-up comment I've ever heard.

"That weird girl who thinks a sweatshirt is the epitome of fashion? Please. I'd rather spend the evening chewing on your toenails than lower myself to asking some freak who thinks she knows what a football is to accompany me to a meal. I'd rather eat alone for the rest of my life. Take out the cheerleader—she's cute. Her sister can find another idiot writer with pretensions—you know, someone she'll have something in common with."

At first I shrugged it off, and went to find Charlie, the lit mag editor, who always thinks that angsty boys will inspire her to feel something she hasn't felt (since no one will ask her out), and therefore is drawn to parties like an ant to an ant-trap. We had a good laugh about male egos, and that idiot's assumption that because I had interviewed him (hello—it's my JOB) I must be desperately seeking him. I've decided to seriously criticize his ability to pass—unless he's throwing to Chaz, he usually makes his receivers stretch—guess he thinks they're not good enough either.

But I confess. It hurts to be lower than chewing toenails. It hurts to be alone and sad and rejected out-of-hand by a man you don't even like. No matter. Fuck him. We'll see how he likes the review of his performance I'm about to write. I have the power—the pen is mightier than the sword. Or the Hail Mary.