

**This is a short story that I had written for my final Short Story assignment during my third year at the University of Plymouth. It is based on truth and details a moment of connection between a young couple that brings them closer. It is humorous and emotional, without being overly sappy.**

## What's Yours is Mine and All That

"How'd you get that scar on your back?" she asked, slowing tracing her finger over the shiny, raised mark near his waist.

His double bed had the monochrome New York skyline duvet cover on this time, with the matching pillowcases and the boudoir red bed sheet underneath. That was his style. Three of the small bedroom walls were 'shag-pad' red, as he liked to call it. These were not his style. But, that's what happened when you moved out at seventeen and your younger brother claimed your room as his own because his room had just enough room for a double bed and a wardrobe, once you sacrificed not being able to open it with the bedroom door open. She'd loved his room from the moment they had spent their first night together. Being surrounded by him put her at ease and made her feel closer to him. He was the first guy that she had ever slept next to.

"Oh," he said, placing his own hand over hers, "I got that at work. A metal beam fell and sliced me. It's ugly, but I kind of like it," he chuckled.

"It's not ugly. I've got a scar like that on my knee."

She pulled a trouser leg up and he felt the short white line with his calloused hand, rough from years of labour.

A small, but fierce tingling sensation would come over her whenever he touched her. He could be brushing the hair away from her face so he could look at her fully, or mindlessly running his fingers through her long hair – which he loved immensely – or accidentally bumping into her in his small kitchen. The feeling felt the same regardless of the circumstance. She wondered if that ardent awareness of him would ever go away.

"I blame the ice cream man," she said with a straight face and exaggerated sigh.

He chortled. "Okay, what?"

She laid on her back and looked up to the ceiling thoughtfully.

"The most *devastating* moment of my life happened when I was much younger," she began, her voice filled with fake gravitas. "I was about eight-years-old and still had my puppy fat."

He smirked, settling back into his groove against the pillows. He angled his head to the side and studied her face. *Her eyelashes were shorter than his.* He'd always been told he

had long, dark eyelashes. *Her eyes were a deeper brown than his*, they were like a mixture of honey and cognac, and they were always *so shiny*. They looked like she was always on the verge of tears or overcome with excitement. *They were brilliant*.

Her hair had fanned out across her pillow and made its way onto his side of the bed. It was impossible not to get everywhere when her hair was that long, she often sat on it and would get confused why she couldn't stand up. It was tickling his cheek when he looked at her, but he didn't want to move it.

"I was at home in my living room. It was right next to the front door and faced onto the main road on my street, so I could see everything that passed. I was playing with my Pregnant Barbie and Ken in their campervan, I think."

She noticed his eyes glint as he looked at her. "I know, *so cool*," she sighed. Smoothly, she flattened the collar of her jumper. "Not to brag, babe, but that shit's collectable now. I'm basically an unclaimed millionaire."

He patted her leg enthusiastically and replied, "What's yours is mine and all that."

She grinned and swatted his hand away. "Anyway, I was doing whatever it was I was doing when I heard the ice cream van's bells not far down the road." Suddenly, she jumped from her back and laid on her side, looking him right in the eyes. "In that moment I knew, *I knew* that I had to get out there quick or I would miss him."

He mimicked her position.

"With how fast I flew out the door, I'm not sure I was even wearing *shoes*." She clenched her fists. "But it didn't matter; that Knickerbocker Glory *would* be mine."

Their eyes met. His silence matched the intense look in her eyes that never wavered. Her stare was so strong that he wasn't sure she'd even blinked since they'd turned to face each other.

"I ran out there. I ran halfway to the ice cream man in his ice cream van, but –"

"– But what?!" He urged.

She paused for a moment, enjoying his impatience. She'd let him suffer in silence for just a few more seconds.

"...I'd forgotten my money!" she cried.

"*No!*" he whispered despairingly.

He imagined a younger version of her, probably with shorter hair, but still long, those same eyes with a hint of fear and the dimple on the right side of her cheek hidden behind a small frown.

She bit the inside of her cheek to fight back a grin.

"I ran back inside to get some, but I tripped on the metal door frame and sliced my knee open. You could see the bone and everything!"

He grimaced; his eyebrows furrowed. He had unconsciously clenched one fist and tightened the grip he had on the side of her waist. When he looked back into her eyes his own had gone slightly wide, the pupils dilated as he searched her own for any sign of pain. In that split second his unconscious need to protect her had kicked in, he shook his thoughts away and reminded himself that this was in the past. *That she was safe. She was with him.*

"I had to get it glued at A&E. But you know what hurt the most?"

"What?" he asked. His voice came out barely above a whisper, but his eyes on hers never faltered.

They looked at each other, her hand on his back and his on her knee.

"I didn't even get my ice cream."