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about 700 words

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STRIKE THREE

by Aryn Free Kelly

A thud booms through the wall as the dawn breaks in through a third-story-bedroom window in a city apartment. Jules in her college tee grumbles, rolls over, and punches her pillow. Another crash causes Jules to rise.

"Seriously. She parks in my spot. makes me walk twelve blocks to my apartment in stilettos, gives me nasty blisters, and noise from her blasted apartment wakes me up early on my day off."

She shuffles across the wooden floor to her front door and opens it into the hallway. She knocks on Kelli's door.

"I can't sleep. Please, keep it down."

The door creaks open.

"Hi, Jules." Frank, ripped and shirtless, answers the door. "I'm sorry about the noise. Kelli and I broke up yesterday afternoon. I'm moving my stuff out."

"Frine-k. Oh, my gosh. I meant to say, 'Fine, Frank.'" Jules blushes.

"I didn't mean to wake you. Sorry." Frank grins with those perfect teeth and shuts the door. Jules backs away, trips over the rug in the hallway, and falls back into her own door.

"I am such a moron." She shuts the door. The creak of Kelli's door makes Jules look through the peep-hole on her tiptoes. Frank passes with a large rug over his chiseled arm, the muscles flex from the weight of the rug.

Jules walks to her kitchen, digs coffee out of her freezer, opens the bag, and sniffs it. She glances outside as Frank puts the rug in his tow-truck.

As coffee drips Jules smiles. The stairway door slams. She semi-jumps across her tiny apartment and opens the door as she performs a perfect hair toss creating a super-model-blown appearance until her face collides with the front of the door from her momentum.

"Do you want coffee?" Jules ignores her collision.

"Woah. No, thanks. I have a bunch of stuff to move."

Jules closes the door. "Strike one."

Jules finishes half of her coffee as she watches Frank put some boxes in his truck. She walks to the door with the next slam of the stair-door.

"Hey, do you want help? I hate moving, but it's easier with help."

"No, thanks." Frank goes into Kelli's apartment.

"Strike two." She shuts the door.

She looks at herself in her mirror. She rolls her shorts at the waist to show more thigh, puts on her sneakers, and smiles at her reflection. "Bitch takes my parking spot. Now, I'm going to take her guy."

Jules leaves her apartment and walks downstairs to the old-school mailboxes. She sticks her key in, looks at the stairs, and taps her foot. The door slams upstairs, and Jules bends over to open her mailbox. Frank exits the stairwell eyes glued to Jules' hips. She pulls out her mail.

"Hey, again." She drops her mail.

"Hi." Frank grins. He pushes the door open. "Do you want to grab lunch?"

Jules follows him outside to his truck. "I'd like that."

He puts the box in the cab. "I've got one more box. I'll drop this stuff and Kelli's car off, and swing back by?"

"Sounds good."

Frank walks back inside.

Jules jumps up and punches the air. "Home-run." She stares at Kelli's antique, parked car. Frank returns.

"Why are you towing your ex-girlfriend's prized possession to your junkyard?"

"She texted me after we broke up."

"You are going to crush it. Aren't you?"

"I could never do that to this."

He attaches chains onto her classic car and switches on the winch.

The wind picks up. Jules coughs, walks past the tow-truck, and sniffs the air. She frowns and walks back towards Kelli's car. When Frank turns his back, she sniffs the tire closest to the curb, and gags.

Frank turns back around towards Jules. "You, alright?"

Jules nods as her eyes water.

Frank gets into the cab and pulls out of the spot. The car lurches and drops at a bizarre angle. The trunk pops open. Frank jumps out of the cab. "Son of...It's..."

"I know. I put her there. Bitch took my parking spot. I forgot she'd smell. Grossness."

"Something is wrong with you." Frank stares at Jules dumbstruck.

"I know what I want and I take it. I texted you to move her dumb car out of my spot after I put her in it."

Frank bolts up the street, his feet pound the pavement.

"Strike three? What about lunch?" She run-limps after Frank.

Frank looks back at the stop sign and sees her following him. "Aaaahhh!"