

Laurence and Numb Nuts

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I never liked that joker Dan Blakey. Running after Mister Laurence like a sheep dog. He don't know nothing that Dan. Look at him, right up the arse of Mister Laurence. Loz this and Loz that. Thinks he's the sidekick. Mister Laurence is alright. He's tall. Wouldn't want to get on the wrong side of him but. Might ask him for a job. Bet he's got some rubbish that wants taking to the tip. He's got plenty people working for him. You can tell by the state of his vines. Perfect neat like lines of soldiers getting smaller in the distance. I've seen them workers in the vineyards squatting down, twisting and clipping them vines. I wouldn't want to do that, in the burning sun, dry as a nun's tit.

It's 30 degrees and we're up on some platform in the middle of one of the orchards. Me, Jade, Dan Fucking Blakey and Mister Laurence. The big man's stretching out his freckled arms and grasping that wooden railing that runs around the edge of his stage. Like he's captain of his ship, sailing a sea of all purples and greens in the fields all around him. True, they are his. Not like my dad's piddly, shitty, toy town farm. From up here you can just about make out the dry row ends. He'll be thinking of the cash. Proper cocking business man, he is.

'D'you fancy a ride then, Jade?' Mister Laurence says. His legs are stretched apart. And I can see a couple of black hairs sticking out over the top of his waistband.

Jade looks a bit nervous. She's typical of the sort he likes. Pretty. Skinny arse. Some of them are gobby but not all. And I'm only here 'cos of Jade. She's sweet as. She asked me if I wanted to come.

Excited she was last night when she got back to the shed and told me Mister Laurence'd invited her to his place in the afternoon. Normally she's just hanging about reading or making some jewelery shit she's got in her room. And sometimes she talks to me. Like she did yesterday and asked if I'd come with her to this invite she'd had off of her boss. I could see she liked it. She was all pink in her cheeks so I said, 'Fuck it. Yes, I'll fucking come.'

He's got loads of Maoris working on his farm, Mister LJ, but he never invites them to his fucking little parties. Nor none of them locals with their cross eyes and bad language. He'd never mess with someone's daughter what he knew. It's these backpackers what turn up for a few weeks' work. My dad remembers him and his putting himself about from way back at school. Before all this land and factory and vineyard and shit. My dad was the little guy that no one knew and Mister Laurence Jones, without the Mister in them days, he was always the loud mouth. Always had the big ideas. Think my old man might've been jealous but.

Old LJ's got loads of glasses. Tasting glasses he says for wine tasting. Fucking obvious these jokers. Can't come up with a better name. So when Jade doesn't answer about the ride Mister Laurence says let's have a different wine and he passes a glass to old fucking numb nuts Blakey.

'This little jewel here,' he says as he's passing a glass to fucking rat-face Dan, 'is crisp and fresh like newly cut grass.' He passes one to Jade. 'What do you think of that one, sweetie?'

I get the distinct feeling Jade's not that much of a boozier. She knocks it back like a shot and I'm watching Mister Laurence holding it in his big mouth full of dazzling-white teeth and then he swills it round like he's gargling before he swallows.

I don't normally drink 'cept I might have a tinny if my little bro's friends are round playing pool in the barn. But I'm a bit pissed that Mister Laurence isn't giving me any of his jewel wine.

'I'll have a glass of that,' I say and clock Mister Laurence lifting his eyebrows at Numb Nuts.

He smiles at me cos Mister Laurence is like that. He's a smiler. Wants everyone to like him. 'Sorry Roy,' he says. 'Didn't realise.' And he pours something out of a jug into a glass

I can see it's fucking water. He must think I'm an idiot. 'I'm not

having no water,' I say. 'I want that.' And him and Half-eaten Pasty Face Dan do that dirty look at each other again.

'Oh sorry, mate,' says Mister LJ, 'I didn't know you liked wine.'
Fucking liar.

He pours me a glass and hands it and I neck it. Hold my glass out for another. Mister LJ shrugs and fills it up.

'You like it then, Roy? Got a taste for the good stuff, eh?'

I neck it again and hold the glass out, smiling at him. I see this look like he's not sure now. Am I taking the piss?

He holds the bottle up and squints into the sun. It's beating down and his nice white shirt's got dark bits under the arms. 'Last drop, Roy. You're lucky.' He pours a few dribbles into my glass then straight off opens another bottle for him and Numb Nuts who's sitting nice and open like his balls are on fire

I look at Jade see what she's doing and she's holding out her glass for Mister Laurence. Her eyes are all shiny and she's taken off her sandals. Mister Laurence sits down beside her. Makes her look tiny. He puts a hand on her knee and says, 'So, do you feel like a run out yet, beautiful?'

And she says, 'Can Roy come?'

I'd be well up for that. He's only got a fucking Mercedes-Benz!
We end up out by his machine.

'So this is a 1995 Mercedes-Benz SL Class 350 Sports,' he says and to be honest I'm probably the only one here paying any attention. He opens the driver's seat and strokes it. 'Nothing like leather,' he says then bends his head closer and sniffs it with his big wine farmer's nose.

Jade's just leaning on the hot paintwork making little sweat marks. Last week I saw Mister LJ, he was buying a bag of sugar at Dawn's and he said hello and all that shit and when I said I'd seen he had that nice-looking Merc he told me he'd give me a ride sometime, so I suppose he's a man of his word. Might be alright except it looks like Dan Shit Head is coming 'n'all.

Then I notice that Mister LJ and little Dan are talking very quiet for a change and looking at me and Dan's shaking his head. He's never spoken to me even though he lives along the same road. Even though he came and bought chickens off my old man. Even though my old lady nursed Dan's grandson when he had measles last year.

When snakey Dan came in the house he pretended he couldn't see me.

Eventually Mister LJ steps away and Dan says, 'Shall we go first, Jade? Me and you?'

Course Jade wants me to come along. Not as stupid as muppet Dan thought. So I sit in the back just watching and he's got his hand on her knee right after he's put it in gear. He's talking all the time, full of shit he is about how that engine could get up to 160 in 5 seconds. My arse! He's a crock of shit. Wouldn't do that in half an hour. Anyway the girl is just nodding along like she's interested, so I says 'bullshit' under my breath and Dan says, 'Alright in the back there, Roy?' I nod thinking he got the message. But then when we get a little bit along the road he turns into one of the fields and parks up in the shade under some massive trees and starts necking with the girl. Right in front of me. Just like that. All over her. Hands on her knee, up her skirt, then starts going up her t-shirt and I'm wondering what she's going to say and then she says,

'Oh, I don't think it's right with Roy here,' and pushes him off.

Well I can tell she doesn't like him, not at all, but he says,

'Roy? He's a good lad, he doesn't mind. Do you, Roy?' so I just say, 'Wanker,' and look out the window but anyway I think she's pissed on his bonfire so to speak and he turns the key in the ignition. Smooth as, that engine.

When we get back to the platform Mister Laurence has necked another bottle and he's got sweat patches all over his white shirt now. He leans down to grab Jade's hand as she's climbing up to the platform. 'I'll take you for another drive later if you feel like it, Angel,' he says. He'll be up her like a rat up a drainpipe and when Jade looks at me I can see kipper-face Dan watching her arse from behind.

'What time've you got to be home, Roy?' Mister Laurence is looking at me hard while he's handing another glass of his finest to Jade.

I shake my head. 'Got nothing on,' I say. 'I'm good as gold here.'

'How's your old man cope without you around?'

I hear cock splat Dan snigger.

'We've got it sussed right,' I say. 'He knows.' I pick up my glass

again. 'I'll have another one 'n'all,' and I nod at the dripping bottle in his big brown hairy hand.

Mister LJ looks like he might be going to spit the dummy. And Jade looks like she's not far off throwing up.

Then I see his shoulders relax a bit. He comes over and fills my glass right to the top. 'Why don't you take your jacket off, Roy? You must be sweating like a pig in this heat.'

'Nah. I'm right,' I say and skull the wine. If I had a fucking choice I'd have a super but if Mister Laurence is handing it out... and it's cold. I look at Jade, she's slumped back in her chair and her eyes are near as closed. I think she'd probably be best off back in her room right now. Least if she's going to chunder it'll be in her own place.

Dan the Weasel says, 'Need a slash.' And he pulls his zip down then turns and I can hear this piss hitting the side of the platform. 'I'll not charge for watering your crops, Loz.'

Mister LJ's laugh is getting even louder and he crashes into the wooden railing. 'I'm going to take her for a drive now, mate.' And he leans over Jade and taps her head. I think he meant to stroke it.

'Don't think she's interested,' I say to the Big Man. 'But I'll go with you.'

'Don't you worry, Roy.' Mister LJ shows me his big teeth again. 'She's interested all right.'

'She's definitely up for it.' That puppet Dan nods his head like it's going to come off. 'Girls like her—'

'Why don't you stay here with Dan?' says Mister LJ. 'Here, let me top you up again, mate.' And he fills the glass. 'This is last year's.'

These two shitheads are beginning to get right on my nerves now. Couple of fucking clowns. I've heard shit going off in the bars in town. Where there's a rumour there's some kind of stink. I wouldn't trust either of them with a dead parrot.

'If Jade's going, I'm going with her,' I say and I stand up right in front of Mister swaying-like-fucking-Pisa Laurence. I'm staring straight at the curls of wet hair stuck to his chest.

'Tell you what, Roy,' he shouts, spitting a bit, 'you come back here tomorrow and me and you'll go out for a ride.' He stops and I'm not sure if he's finished but he starts pulling at Jade and tosser Dan grabs one of her hands. It's like watching a couple of retards fucking a doorknob.

Now I've not known Jade all that long. She's been living in the shed next to me in the big barn for three weeks and four days now. I like her but. She's just trying to make some money to get back to England before her visa runs out. She's had some shit going on at home with her ex she says. None of my business but I asked her why she stayed with someone for so long if he was knocking her about. She just said it was complicated. Like I say none of my business but straight up I don't know why she stayed with someone with a temper like that. Anyways I reckon that if Jade wasn't off her face with Mister LJs nice, grass-tasting wine she wouldn't be going for a ride with Mister sweaty LJ.

Jade's shaking her head and her eyes are closed. I think he's going to have to carry her if he wants to get her down the steps. And she holds her hand out towards me.

'Mister Laurence,' I say, 'any cunt can see she doesn't want your dirty dick anywhere near her.'

Both the fuckers stop and drop Jade back on her chair.

'Dirty dick?' the big man says back at me like he's deaf.

'Dirty. And I hear it's not so big neither.'

See like I said. He thinks he's the big guy. Thinks he's better than people like my dad, the little farmers. I heard stories down the tavern.

Dim Dan does a classic clenching of his fists and pulling his shoulders back, hopping around like he's in a boxing ring, fat chance of that. 'That's fighting talk that is,' he hisses at me, 'isn't it Loz?' He's got a lazy eye and when he's pissed it slides right into the corner.

Mister LJ looks like the wind went out of his sails. He looks up into the sky. It's still all clear blue and big as fuck.

'You looking for a hiding, talking to Mister Laurence Jones like that, you little shit?'

That little rat Dan couldn't give a paper bag a hiding but he edges closer to me and he's still got his glass in his hand, slopping the wine on the deck.

I'm not interested in fuck knuckle Dan. I'm concentrating on Mister Laurence Jones who ain't a stupid man but he's well drunk. And I can't see his big white smile no more. He moves towards me 'n'all and the two of them stare down at me sitting right next to Jade. I can't see their faces no more cos they've got the sun right

behind them and they're all silhouette. Like Little and Large. Large is breathing heavy and swaying and Little is fidgeting like a cockroach.

Lucky for me and not so lucky for Mister Laurence he stumbles and crashes onto the floor and smacks his big nose. I can see blood on the wood as he stands up with his hand on his face trying to stop it pouring down his face and onto his not so fucking clean white shirt.

He steps back and says, through his hand, 'Well, that was the last bottle we finished up. I'm going to go and cool down back inside. Dan, shall we run through that little bit of business we were talking about finishing off?'

'Top idea, Bossman,' says dim Dan and moves away and necks what's left in his glass. Then he turns and follows Mister Laurence down the steps and they piss off back to the farm.

I look at Jade and wonder how the fuck I'm going to get her back to our place.