

**Two Sides of
The Coin**

By

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Chapter One

Staring into the bottom of an empty wine glass, knowing that there was plenty more where that came from was infinitely more preferable than what he had just come from. Twenty-two year old Daniel was still struggling to get the shrill like voice out of his ears. They had been seeing each other for about three months and yet he still couldn't really picture himself sharing a life with her.

'What do you mean you don't want us to move in together?'

'I just feel it's a bit soon...'

'A *bit* soon??? You think three months is a *bit soon*?' She was starting to go ultra-sonic by this point.

'I'm sorry Andrea but the answer's no!'

She glared at him and went white round the mouth before deliberately accidentally whacking him with her handbag and storming off. Lucky escape.

'I said can I get you another?'

He looked up to see a blonde haired young man smiling at him - he picked up his bottle. 'I'm alright thanks!'

'OK!' The man smiled and hopped on the stall next to him and gestured to the barman. 'So...what's a handsome guy like you doing sitting all by himself?'

'Well...If you must know...I'm toasting a lucky escape.'

'Oh really? Bunny boiler was she?'

'Something like that!'

'Hard luck!' He sipped his drink. 'I once went out with this guy - god! Talk about suffocating!'

Daniel frowned. 'How did you know I was straight?'

'No offence...but you just don't have...that quality!'

'Right! Good to know!'

‘I’m Graham by the way!’

‘Daniel.’

‘So what do you do Daniel?’

‘I’m a broker.’

‘Oh? Clumsy are you?’

‘Very funny! What about you? Or are you a student?’

‘I’m an artist.’

‘Oh! One of those!’

‘“Oh! One of those!” I could do without the snide comments thank you very much!’

‘Any good?’

‘Well...I’d hardly be making any money at it if I wasn’t would I?’

Daniel grinned. ‘Fair point.’

‘Anyway! What about you? Dicing with death a bit aren’t you?’

‘How do you mean?’

‘Well...if you lose your clients’ money....’

‘Hey! *They* make the decisions! I’m just the middle man - I mean I can offer advice but it’s up to them if they take it!’

‘Touché!’ He looked at his watch. ‘Midnight! You want to go on somewhere?’

Daniel laughed. ‘Sorry! Not as carefree as I used to be!’

‘Fine! Nice meeting ya!’ Graham got up and started to walk away when he paused. ‘Listen...I’m not coming on to you *at all!* But...well...you know, if you ever did feel like letting your hair down...well...here’s my number.’

He looked at the number on his phone. ‘What would I want that for?’

‘Well...Just for the reason that I said!’

Daniel paused then he got out his mobile, copied the number and sent his. ‘Something

tells me I'm going to regret this!

'You won't! Promise!' Then he was gone.

Chapter Two

Daniel didn't see Graham for the next three weeks - although he was still rather bemused at why they swapped numbers. The following days passed pretty uneventfully - And to be fair, he did get a lot of work done. Then, one day, out of the blue - he received a text.

“Drink?”

He was fully expecting another club - but - to his surprise - the name he was given lead him to a wine bar. He entered and then he noticed him - he was studying his phone.

‘Hi!’

Graham looked up. ‘Oh! Hi! Sorry! Just give me a minute.’ He scrolled down a bit and then snapped it shut.

Daniel smiled. ‘Sorry! Was I interrupting something?’

‘Nah! Just the ignorant wannabe’s who think they know it all!’

‘Sounds familiar!’

‘I got us a bottle.’

‘Thanks!’

‘So...’ Graham poured out a glass. ‘As this is our first date...’

‘Whoa! Slow down! This isn’t a “date!”

‘Of course not! So...Let’s keep it light on our first “date!”

Daniel shook his head. ‘Are you always this unapologetic?’

‘Why shouldn’t I be? Everyone should be proud of who they are.’

‘Very true!’

‘That’s why I got into art, to express my emotions! So...how about you?’

‘What about me?’

‘Well...anymore “lucky escapes?”’

‘I think I’ll give the dating scene a rest for now!’

‘Fair enough!’

Daniel smiled. ‘What about you?’

‘Me?’

‘Yeah? Anyone special?’

‘Well...at the moment I’m chilling.’

‘Oh very American!’

Graham wrinkled his nose. ‘So...how do *you* relax, that’s assuming you’ve heard of that word!?’

Daniel raised his eyebrows. ‘I can relax! I normally just like a glass of wine and listen to music.’

‘Oh how very...boring!’

‘Well...at least I seem to have a more concrete direction in life!’

‘Oh! Ouch!’ Graham grinned. ‘I bet you’ve NEVER bunked off work have you?’

‘Have *you*?’

‘I’m an artist!’

‘Oh of course! Stupid question!’

‘What about you? Can’t be fun - stuck in an office...’

Daniel shrugged. ‘It pays the bills.’

Graham handed him a tenner. ‘If I give you some money - will you invest it for me?’

‘It doesn’t *quite* work like that!’

‘Oh? How does it work then?’

‘The going rate is about ten thousand pounds...’

‘Fucking hell!’

Daniel laughed.

‘What? You haven’t heard anyone swear before?’

‘Oh I’m *very* white collared!’

‘Clearly!’

Daniel frowned. ‘So...what exactly are you after? I may deal in money but that doesn’t mean I’m rolling in it!’

Graham shrugged. ‘Oh I don’t know! I like you!’

‘Nothing else?’

‘Well...it might be handy having an investor as a mate!’

He smiled. ‘Oh! I love being used!’

‘Who doesn’t?’ Graham lent forward. ‘Wanna know something?’

Daniel leant forward too, his heart beating. ‘Oh?’

‘This is the best platonic date I’ve ever been on! Of course it’s the *only* platonic date I’ve been on!’

‘Well...as long as you don’t try to lead me astray...’

‘Perish the thought.’

Chapter Three

‘Are you coming then?’

‘I don’t feel like it!’

‘Oh come on Mate! it’s been ages!’

Daniel looked at his friend squarely. ‘Don’t you think you’re a little old for clubbing?’

‘At twenty-two? Give over!’

‘Whatever!’ He picked up his phone again.

His friend grinned. ‘That’s the sixth time!’

‘What?’

‘That you’ve checked your phone. What’s her name?’

‘It’s no-one! Just work!’

‘Oh come on! Even I’ve noticed a change in you!’

‘Meaning?’

‘Well...you used to be quite solitary - now you seem more...animated!’

Daniel raised his eyebrows. ‘Gee! Thanks!’

‘So come on! What’s her name?’

‘It’s no-one - trust me.’

Graham frowned as he watched the picture getting hung. ‘A little to the left...’ He took out his phone.

‘Hello?’

‘Hi! Daniel!’

‘Oh...hi! Where have *you* been?’

‘Well...believe it or not I’ve been busy - I usually fall off the radar at times anyway!’

‘Right!’

‘So...you’re calling me - I’m guessing you must be desperate...’

‘Far from it! I’m watching a large painting being hung - beats staring at a screen full of figures I bet!’

‘Touché! So...to what do I owe this pleasure?’

‘Well...I just thought you might want to come round to the gallery.’

‘When?’

‘Tonight.’

‘Oh? Is there a viewing on?’

‘No.’

‘Right...so why would I want to come along?’

‘I don’t know...I thought it might be an experience - being in an art gallery after closing.’

Daniel looked at the Monet and smiled - admiring the brushwork.

‘You’re a one for art then?!’

‘I can appreciate it!’

Graham handed him a glass of wine and grinned. ‘To tell you the truth; I’m still in training I mean this could be upside down for all I know!’

‘Oh I’m sure that’s not true!’

‘It is! Trust me! My boss only hired me because she enjoyed my drawings and she took pity on me.’

‘Well... I think you’ve done really well!’ Daniel smiled. ‘I have clients that like to invest in things like this.’

‘Oh yeah? Couldn’t throw any my way could you?’

‘Oh? And we both benefit?’

‘Exactly!’

Daniel laughed. ‘I’ll try my best.’

Graham looked at his watch. ‘Oh well! Best think about closing up...’

‘Then on to a night club I suppose...’

‘God no! I’m not some kind of party animal!’

‘Oh you do surprise me!’

‘They do have the odd cheese and wine tasting evenings here.’

‘Well, I’m not surprised.’

Daniel looked around. ‘There’s something about being somewhere public after closing...’

‘Yeah! I agree!’ Graham suddenly turned to him. ‘Look...if I go AWOL - it’s nothing personal.’

‘I’ll bear that in mind!’

‘What do you think of this one?’

‘It’s beautiful.’

‘Yours for seven hundred!’

‘Fuck off!’