

Pumpernickel

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A work of fiction, meant for adults. Read something else if you are not an adult, or are offended by stories with sexual content. Then again, if all you're looking for is in-out, in-out, in-out, you should probably read something else. I welcome constructive comments. Enjoy.

Thanks for reading this. There are a few things I should tell you before you read too far. First, the title is misleading. Second, this is a love story, a romance. Yes, it does have sex, drugs, blood, and death, but it's a love story.

Are you still with me? As I said, this is a love story; Jenny wanted me to write it. We work for a small software outfit in Silicon Valley, doing magic with computer based neural networks. I'm the chief scientist and one of the founders; I do the magic. Jenny heads our user interface group. She makes our magic usable by mere mortals.

One Friday morning we had some mortals visiting from the East Coast; actually a very important bunch of mortals -- execs from a Boston finance and arbitrage house. The cross product of our neural net magic and their arbitrage magic makes a lot of money for both of us.

When my boss Mary "asked" me to attend earlier in the week, I tried to pass the opportunity to one of my team; I still needed to unpack after moving into new offices. Mary told me no -- I was the lucky person. When I mistakenly asked why, she started ticking off reasons: one, I was the chief scientist and could be called "doctor;" two, I owned a tie which I would wear for this meeting; three, I bathed regularly unlike some of my team members; four, I would treat these valued clients seriously and with courtesy... I stopped her after four -- unfortunately she was right, but that's why I hired her and made her my boss.

So Friday morning, which is normally an even more casual dress day than the rest of the week, found me wearing a shirt and tie. Correction: I was wearing a shirt with a very tight collar and a tie, and not enjoying it. Adding insult to the tight collar was having to be in the office by eight. Friday is also our bagel day. I hate getting to work before the bagels.

Just before our guests were scheduled to arrive I caught Mary in the hall and asked her the subject of our meeting -- she usually briefs me well in advance. She turned and put a hand on my shoulder.

"Tom, there are two answers -- a bad one and a crazy but true one. The bad one is they're here to discuss the Year 2000 problem."

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I took a deep breath -- this was nuts; we used Macs and didn't have that problem. We could have handled this by mail. She held up her other hand to silence me and continued.

"The crazy but true answer is that it is mid Winter, we are located in Palo Alto California enjoying wonderful weather, and these folks are from Boston where the weather is currently very cold and very, very ugly. Also let me remind you that these are the people that have made you filthy rich and me quite comfortable." She emphasized "you" with a poke at my chest. I got her point.

I nodded and told Mary I understood; she smiled. I was definitely the one to handle this.

That didn't mean I was in a good mood -- before going into the meeting I put a sign up over the spot where bagels would be set out: "Leave me a bagel or else!"

We had our meeting with the East Coast suits. As usual Mary was right; they were here to thaw out and I was the right person to deal with them. We gave them a weasel worded piece of paper from our outside attorneys and they left for their next "meeting" down the coast in Monterey. At least it was fairly painless; thanks to Mary we might even get some follow on business.

I scooted to the bagel tray. There was one lone bagel left, a crummy one covered with seeds. It had a note on it "We love you too!" At least some of the chili and sun dried tomato cream cheese was left to go with it.

I was howling in pain in my cubicle less than two minutes later. One of those damn seeds was caught between my teeth and hurt like hell. I was on my knees digging through boxes and looking for the one with my personal stuff including the dental floss. Good news and bad news- I found the dental floss, but forgot I was underneath a work surface piled with boxes and equipment. I tried to straighten up. Whack! I hit my head, hard. I saw stars and I guess I fell back against a pile of boxes.

Now I'll go with Jenny's side of the story for a while. Her cube is right next to mine. She heard me howling and swearing, then "a loud, dull whack" (thanks, dear) and things falling over. She rushed into my cube and found me dazed on the floor in a pile of boxes holding a package of floss. She sat me up on the floor and managed to figure out I was in pain from a seed stuck between my teeth. Helpful soul that she is, she held my head and tilted it back to try and find the problem.

Remember that tight collar I mentioned? Tilting my head back managed to cut off the blood to my brain. After about twenty seconds and with no warning I passed out. Jenny wasn't holding on to me that well so I fell over and hit my head on the side of my development computer, which was also on the floor.

You know how to tell the engineers in a sea of cubicles? They're the ones running half disassembled computers, live parts hanging out the sides. When I fell, I hit my head on the side of

my partially disassembled computer and the very sharp metal edge of one of the disk drive brackets sliced my scalp open. The good news was that it didn't hurt a bit as I had passed out.

Pretty erotic, isn't it? The next thing I knew, I was on my back in the hallway with Jenny sitting on top of me. This had been something I'd been trying to do for a while. She was holding my head -- this was getting better. She was looking at me very concerned, and talking to me, asking me how I felt -- getting better all the time. She had loosened my collar and tie. I was feeling funky; no more pain in my teeth, so the seed must have come loose, but my head hurt. I smiled and told her my head felt strange. Having her sitting on top of me was great.

Then she looked up and moved one of her hands and yelled at someone to hand her something. I noticed her hand was covered with blood. Even with a Ph.D., it didn't take me long to figure out that it was most likely my blood and I got real dizzy again.

Over the next few minutes she helped me sit up and bandaged my head. With more help I ended up in her car and we drove to the local emergency room. When I saw a nurse walking up with a look of concern, I figured I had gone far enough and passed out again.

The next thing I remember was in the emergency room with Jenny holding my hand. My head was thick, numb, and it hurt. Jenny was smiling and asked me how I was feeling. Another woman, the doctor standing beside Jenny, asked if I remembered what happened. A brief discussion ensued in which I learned that: (1) I now had eleven stitches in my head, (2) some hair removed to show off the stitches, (3) a tetanus booster in my ass, (4) they weren't worried about a concussion, (5) my blood pressure was too high, and (6) I should go home and rest because they were busy and needed the space for the latest roadway carnage arriving any minute and make an appointment for next week to get the stitches removed.

A few minutes later the doctor had given Jenny some drugs for me, instructions for my immediate care, and I'd been put in a wheel chair and hauled out to Jenny's car. Jenny handled the paper work and had managed to wash the blood off her hands. I still had blood all over me and my only long sleeve white shirt, and there was blood all over the front seat of Jenny's car. The good news was my tie was nowhere to be found.

We drove to my little house and she helped me out of the car and into the living room. I was thankful the cleaning service had come the previous day. She sat me in my favorite recliner and traded my bloody shirt for a T-shirt. She flopped the recliner back after putting a towel behind my head, and started my favorite CD playing -- an hour long recording of surf. The drugs I'd taken at the hospital kicked in and I zoned out.

When I woke up, it was a quarter after twelve. I was hungry and what was even better, I smelled food!

"You woke up just in time -- lunch just got here." Jenny helped me stand up and we wobbled over to the table. It was set for two; hot and sour soup, spring rolls, a few other dishes. Our usual Friday lunch was Chinese; today it had come to us.

"This is great." I told her. My head was still fuzzy. We talked as we ate lunch together. She'd called work and let people know I was okay, just not coming back in today. One of her people picked up lunch and some other things for her and delivered them just before I woke up. When I asked why we were drinking 7-Up rather than tea, she told me that caffeine was officially off my diet.

We had just finished lunch when her cell phone chirped. She picked it up and had a short conversation. It went something like "Hi ... Lucy? You can? That's great ... Two fifteen? ... Yeah, just off Waverly ... OK, see you in a bit." I didn't know any Lucy. I did live just off Waverly. What's happening here at two fifteen? I looked at the clock; it was currently half past one. Time was doing interesting things for me today.

As she came back into the room, I started to ask what was going on. She gave me some more pills and more 7-Up to wash them down. Then it was "Come on, let's take you to the bathroom, get you into something more comfortable and get the blood scrubbed off you."

She led me to the bathroom and actually pulled off my pants and sat me on the can. I didn't know whether to laugh or cry at the sudden attention I was getting. While she was rummaging in my bedroom I managed to finish my needed business and pull my jockey shorts back in place. She returned with an old pair of sweat pants in one hand. She looked around the bathroom, and said "No, we're better off in the other room." She grabbed a washcloth, towel, and some soap, then led me by the arm back to the kitchen.

She turned one of the kitchen chairs around and sat me in it backwards by the sink, then pulled off my T-shirt and started the water running. "I should get a picture of this -- you're a mess." I looked at my shoulders and chest and saw dried blood: mine. Scalp wounds really bleed like crazy. When the water warmed up, she took the washcloth and soap and slowly and gently scrubbed the dried blood from my neck, shoulders, back, and chest. It felt great. I was leaning against the chair, enjoying the attention, and zoning out again.

I had just gotten dried off and was almost asleep when the doorbell rang. I looked at the clock; two fifteen. Jenny pointed to me and said "Stay." Since I didn't think I could stand up, I made the executive decision to let her get the door. "Hi, Lucy -- thanks for being available on such short notice. Let's set up in the bedroom."

Bedroom? Set up? What was left of my mind was curious and maybe concerned. Jenny came back and helped me stand up, then took me into the bedroom.

Lucy was a gal in her mid 30's. She's thin with short brown hair, a terrific smile, and incredible energy. She was putting a sheet over a table of some kind, with thin wooden legs and a lot of bracing and wires underneath.

She extended a hand to me. "Hi, Tom, I'm Lucy. Have you ever had a professional massage before?"

Things started to click into place as I admitted I had not. Jenny was really into massage, and had been trying to arrange on-site massage at work for some time.

Lucy told me "You are really going to enjoy this. Take off everything but your briefs and get on the table, face down, please." Jenny helped me. Both of them commented on the needlework on the side of my head. "Now Tom, I want you to relax. Take a deep breath when I ask you, but otherwise breathe normally. When I do something you like, let me know. And if I do something you don't like, let me know and I will stop. OK?"

I heard her ask Jenny "How would you like him?" Jenny replied "Al dente." and Lucy laughed. "You've got it."

I'd never had a professional massage before. After a few minutes I knew I had been missing out on something. It was hard to believe how good it felt to have Lucy massaging my back, neck, and shoulders.

Not surprisingly, I zoned out again. Someone must have levitated me to the bed; I know I couldn't have gotten there myself. I was extremely relaxed, laying on my back on top of the bed. I thought "al dente" meant flexible but still firm. I felt way too limp for that. I zoned out again.

The next thing I knew, there were a pair of warm, soft lips on mine. They were followed by a wonderful warm body on top of me. As we kissed I ran my hands over Jenny's naked body. I tried to talk, but she wouldn't let me, quieting me with her mouth and her tongue. She raised herself up and brushed my chest with her nipples; the feeling was electric. She let me kiss and suck each soft, warm nipple, and then she moved down and pulled my underwear off. I could feel her nipples on me once again, sliding slowly up my body. She came up between my legs, spreading them gently. When she got to my cock, she teased me with her breasts, touching me lightly with them, then grinding into me as I moaned and held her shoulders.

She slid up the rest of the way and plunged her tongue into my mouth, grinding her hips into me, straddling me and pulling my legs together. I stroked her sides, ran my hands through her hair, and filled my soul with her perfume. Then, with one motion, she took me into her and started sliding back and forth on me. I moaned; it had been so long. She whispered "Relax and enjoy." I certainly did, but not for very long. I started moaning as I felt myself getting to the edge; her motion slowed and strengthened and we kissed passionately.

I came deep inside her; quickly. After a while when she pulled her lips away from mine, I opened my eyes again and started to say "I'm sorry ..." She told me "Shhh. It's all right." and put a nipple in my mouth. I fell asleep with her holding me.

Afterwards, laying side by side, I told her "This is a dream come true. Why did we take so long?" We lay together and talked until the sun went down. When she first started at the company, I was still getting over Karen. She was with David. When she broke up with David, I was still getting over Karen and didn't respond to her advances. When my dad died she wanted so much to help, but I tried turning to Karen again. When I finally turned my attention to her, she was rightfully pissed and ignored me. The last few months had been chaos, getting code delivered

to customers, financing, a new building, business plans. Neither of us knew why we didn't connect at the last company party.

Whatever the reasons, they were in the past. We spent the rest of the weekend touching, talking, sometimes crying, and making love. We talked about our past. We talked about the company. We talked about our customers. We talked about each other. We also never left each other's touch for very long. I had forgotten how important it was to touch and hold someone, and be touched and held.

There was one thing I didn't do that entire weekend. I had one bedroom set up as an office, complete with computers, laser printer, fax, you name it. I walked to the door once; I think it was late Saturday afternoon. The door was closed and a hand lettered sign was taped to it: "Off limits!" I felt Jenny's hand on my shoulder. I turned to her and she told me "If you feel the urge to go in there, it means we haven't made love enough." We kissed and managed to make it back to the bed.

We were two very different people when we showed up at work on Monday morning. Mary had called about half past eight to see how I was doing. Jenny answered the phone; I think this surprised Mary. Jenny told her I was doing well, and we'd be in a little past nine.

My car was still at work, so Jenny drove us in. We walked in together from the parking lot. As we reached the door, I stopped and turned to her. "Do I have the same incredible smile that you do?" I asked. "You should." she told me. We hugged and got in one more kiss before we went in. I felt as if I was glowing. I know she was.

It was funny; people would come up to me to ask how I was doing. They would see the two of us together, or see the look on my face, and they knew. Some would ask anyway.

Mary caught us in the hallway. She looked at me and smiled. "Gee, you should slice your head open more often if this is what it does for you." She gave Jenny a big hug and zipped back to her office.

When we got to our cubicles, I looked carefully at the carpeting; not a spot to be seen. I was surprised. Greg, who sits on the other side of me, saw me looking around. "Mary had a crew out here by lunch time cleaning things up." He handed me a square of carpet with a large stain on it. "I saved you a souvenir. They said the easiest way to clean things up was to replace the stained chunks."

My office had been organized; boxes unpacked and computers set up. Some wiseass left a bag of marbles on my chair. My development machine was nowhere to be seen. "What happened to my hacking box?" I asked. Greg smiled. "You're getting a new one. Slice-o-matic got cannibalized, the parts that you didn't bleed on at least." "Where did the disk drives go?" I was worried; a lot of my life was on those drives. "Don't worry," Greg told me, "I have your drives, and we backed up everything; you won't lose a thing. You're getting a brand new speed demon and the same configuration for home. Just noodle on the net for a while and get caught up on mail -- I'll take care of things."

Over the next few weeks my life took on a new definition of normal. I'm sorry Jenny, our lives took on new definitions of normal. For the first week I wasn't allowed to drive. Mary told me not to drive and Jenny had my car keys hidden. We were thrown out of the office by five thirty and locked out on weekends. I had a very thorough physical examination at Mary's insistence; my first in years. Mary and Jenny both read me the riot act when the results came in. No more caffeine, more rest, more exercise, learn to delegate more and rely on Greg, Lois, and Mike -- these were some of my marching orders. Mary was serious; if I didn't shape up, she was going to throw Jenny and I out for at least two weeks on an enforced vacation and make sure our dialup access was blocked. I think I surprised Jenny; I know I surprised myself: I told Mary I'd behave, and felt that we'd probably be taking some time off together, maybe not soon, but certainly by the end of the year. Jenny sucked in air and grabbed my hand. Mary just smiled. We didn't talk about that particular conversation for months.

A month later things were looking much better. My blood pressure was down without medication. Jenny and I took walks together daily, longer ones on the weekends. She had also moved in with me. What had taken me so long to see how wonderful she was and how much I needed her? We also had Lucy over once a week for massages. I really looked forward to it, and very quickly noticed when my back or shoulders got tight. I surprised Mary by asking to bring in an ergonomic specialist to help me rearrange my work area. I surprised her even more at our monthly all hands meeting by recommending that we make on-site massage available. Jenny's interface group broke into cheers and applause; I got several really good hugs. I guess I had been the one holding this up.

At home, our lovemaking was wonderful. After the stitches came out of my head I could go down on Jenny the way she loved. The first time I went down on her, she got jabbed in the thigh by suture ends, and also opened up my injury a little. Of course we were distracted and didn't notice until later.

She has been so patient in teaching me how to please her. She also has the most amazing ability to get me dizzy and turn off my mind when we're making love, or even when she's just holding me. Living together, having someone to hold and to hold me has made a big difference. I finally felt the place I lived in was becoming a home, not just a house. Hearing her tell me how much she needs me to hold her fills me with feelings I've never known before.

One of the things she really enjoys is getting me after Lucy had finished giving me a massage. Lucy would leave me incredibly relaxed with my brain pretty much disconnected. Then Jenny would climb on top of me and drive me crazy, leaving me drained. We would drift off to sleep in each others' arms. I asked her about it; I was concerned that while it was incredible for me, I wasn't lasting long enough, doing enough for her. She really surprised me by telling me I was much more responsive and passionate after Lucy finished with me. We agreed I needed to learn to let go. Jenny was definitely the person to teach me.

We didn't get any follow on work from the East Coast suits that precipitated this wondrous mess. We got something better; they gave our name to a British house. It took weeks to get the confidentiality agreements worked out; these high flying arbitrage types are very

secretive. After the first week though, we were certain we'd arrive at an understanding, so Jenny and I started talking to Peter, the leader of their technical crew. By the time agreements were in place, it was clear we needed to visit. Jenny and I would need about a week working technical matters, then Mary would fly in to beat out the business details.

Jenny and I were apprehensive when we met with Mary on this proposal. We were quite surprised when she agreed with it, and even more surprised when she said we could go only if we agreed to some conditions. Jenny and I looked at each other. Conditions? We asked Mary what she had in mind. She smiled and told us that we had to fly first class, and we had to spend at least three weeks away from the office. We had to give her a detailed schedule of our trip so she could be sure we took enough time off, and she would work with Peter to insure we actually took the time off. We smiled and held hands; Mary was turning this into an enforced vacation, reminding us that we hadn't taken any time off in too damn long.

We worked out an agreeable schedule. We would fly out on the 6PM Virgin Atlantic nonstop Friday evening, arriving Saturday noon in the UK. That would give us until Monday morning to get our minds and bodies back in synch; we planned to spend the time in London, possibly museum hopping. We had both visited London before, so we knew how to get around.

We packed Thursday night, and Greg took us to work Friday morning. He even managed to run some important errands for me. After our usual Chinese lunch, the afternoon was a party; Mary hugged us both and Greg took us to the airport. Since we were flying first class, check in was a breeze.

The flight was great, the flight was boring; the flight was long. We both took medication and slept about seven hours. That left us a few hours to explore, talk, snuggle, and kiss. One of the crew asked if we were newlyweds. I was quite surprised when Jenny piped up with "Not yet!" I guess it was pretty obvious how serious we were. Every time Jenny got near my carry on bag, I was terrified she was going to find the box with her engagement ring.

Heathrow was a mess; some things never change. We got through immigration and customs and had planned to catch the tube to our hotel in the South Kensington section of London. When we left the Customs area, I started pushing our cart to the tube station when Jenny spotted a chap holding a sign with "Dr. Miller Dr. Chang" written on it. Peter had hired a car to haul our weary bones into town. We were really looking forward to meeting him. The ride was gray and drizzly; perfect weather for this time of year -- we wouldn't be bothered by tourists.

Jenny was thrilled at the place Peter had picked for us. It only had about twenty rooms; ours was delightful. The staff was great; it was no wonder Peter's firm put visitors here. From the time we walked in the door, they knew who we were, and always called each of us "Doctor."

We were standing in our room at about three thirty in the afternoon, our bags delivered and most things put away. We had a small bottle of champagne and a note from Peter to call if we would be interested in joining him for dinner Sunday evening; otherwise he looked forward to meeting us in his office Monday at ten.

We decided the best way to reset our biological clocks to London time was to shower, make love, and then walk around scouting dinner. We had a great shower. We towed each other off, and I turned down the bed and got in. It was wonderful to be horizontal again; I closed my eyes and my head buzzed. Jenny joined me; as she approached the bed I could tell she'd put on perfume. She knows how much I enjoy going down on her, especially right after a shower, and she certainly seems to enjoy it as well. She was warm, delicious, and responsive as I kissed my way down between her legs welcoming her to London. I had just started on a second welcome when she pushed me away and on my back. She straddled me and buried my face between her perfumed breasts. I moaned and gave in, letting my body respond to hers. It was incredible; the combination of being in London, jet lag, champagne, and the wonderful woman I was with that had me dizzy and in another world. I had never experienced an orgasm like that. As I held her I felt Jenny shudder on top of me as she came once again.

We fell together and kissed. I would have loved to have just gone to sleep in her arms, but after a few minutes she kicked me out of bed. We got dressed and headed downstairs to walk around and visit the world.

We walked around in the cool gray London mist, arm in arm. We looked in shop windows, hugged, and quickly learned to look both ways before crossing streets. Our exploration and a recommendation from the staff led us to an Indian place for dinner; Tandoori of Chelsea on Fulham Road. By the time we finished a very leisurely meal, we were once again wiped out. We stepped briefly on to the street and decided to take a taxi back to the hotel -- we were tired and lost.

We were greeted by the ever helpful staff, who inquired about our meal. We thanked them; it was very good, and I knew we would go back. Jenny also commented about one of the shops we'd passed, Smallbone, and how she'd like them to redo our kitchen. "Our" kitchen? I laughed and gave her a hug.

We went up to our room and made love again, gently, quietly. We went to sleep in each other's arms. It's hard for me to believe how much I need to hold her, and how much I need her to hold me. I can't explain the feeling I get when she tells me she needs me to hold her as well.

I awoke about three in the morning; she's still asleep as I write this, updating the last couple of hectic days. I had a brief chat with Peter before we left; he's arranged something special for us at Stonehenge through a Ministry friend. We'll be taken in a couple hours before they're open to the public, and will be able to walk amongst the Stones. That will be the place I ask Jenny to marry me.

That's the story so far. We agree on a lot of things. We disagree on a lot of things; the title of this story, for example. Jenny thinks it should be "Sesame" -- as in sesame seed and "open, sesame." She says that seed opened my eyes, my heart, and both our lives. I agree, but still like "pumpernickel," but that's because I'm boorish and male and it appeals to the sex fiend in me. You decide.

Pumpernickel

FINI

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