

2,500 Member Short Story  
Alice Winters

Lane's POV

"Thanks again," I tell my professor.

Now that I'm not working with the police department any longer, I planned on quitting the horrible classes I was being forced to take, but I realized that now that I didn't *have* to take them, I wasn't as reluctant about going. I'm not sure I'll ever completely figure out this braille thing, but I'm giving it a shot.

"Of course, have a great day," he says.

I head down the sidewalk with Copper by my side. While I've made this trek once or twice a week for months, I'm still glad for his guidance. He's a whole hell of a lot better at this than Felix. Which is a huge joke seeing as you'd think the human would be better.

The issue with Felix is that I'm positive he has attention problems and gets distracted horribly easy.

Copper starts picking up speed, telling me that he has locked on to Felix. It doesn't matter that I use Copper as my seeing-eye dog, he will always and forever be more in love with Felix. But every moment that we're not working, Felix is hugging and kissing on him. Seeing as Felix *did* save him and he was Felix's dog first, and I also happen to love Felix the most, I can't help but agree with the dog.

"Baby! You worked so hard today!"

"Hey," I say.

"I was talking to the dog."

Of course he was. "The dog that slept the entire class? He literally worked for about one minute leading me up to the building and one minute leading me away."

"It's hard work being cute, Lane. Don't listen to him, Copcop. I know how hard it is having to deal with him all day," Felix says. "Alright. Now hurry up, both of you. We have plans."

Now I'm more than wary. Especially because I can hear the excitement in Felix's voice, which tells me that whatever he has planned will probably not go well. "Felix... what are your thoughts on going home,

reading a book, and snuggling under the blanket? You know, normal things.”

“Sounds horrible,” he says as he gives me a shove toward the car before taking Copper from me. He must be in a hurry if he’s planning on taking care of Copper himself. Before I even grab the door handle, the door’s yanked open and I’m being stuffed inside.

“Get in there!”

“I’m trying!” I say as Felix pushes and shoves as I try to keep from hitting my head on the top of the car.

“Try harder!”

He smacks my ass and when I stumble over his feet that are, somehow, in my way of getting in the car, he takes that opportunity to continually smack my ass.

“If someone sees you violating me, I’m going to lock the door every time I work out.”

He gasps. “You wouldn’t! And how’s anyone going to see me? Everyone leaving is blind!”

“You think you’re funny and you’re not,” I say as I manage to climb in.

“You know I’m hilarious.”

“I think the best joke would be if you told me where we’re going,” I say as I listen to him get into the driver’s seat and shut the door.

He sets a hand on my leg that worries me even more. “You really want me to ruin the surprise?”

“Yes, please. Because I might still have time to get away,” I say as I start rolling the window down. “Help. Someone. Please. Help me,” I call out it.

“Don’t listen to him, he likes it!” Felix says as he rolls the window up. I barely have time to get my fingers off the ledge before he rolls them up with the window.

“I definitely like the prospect of losing my fingers!”

“Shouldn’t have been trying to escape, then,” he says. “You’re mine and you can never leave. I’ll see to it.”

I turn my head toward him as I raise an eyebrow. While I can’t see Felix’s expressions or whether or not he’s smiling, his words always clearly show his emotions. It’s easy to hear the smirk he’s wearing just with words

alone. It's hard to describe, and I don't know why he's so much easier to understand than the others, but he is. And right now, he's far too excited. From past experiences, I've learned that an excited Felix leads to some strange things. While I might take a little responsibility for the messes we've been in, I'm positive danger follows him.

"So?"

"So what?" Felix asks.

"So where are we going?"

"Dinner date."

Well, that sounds nice and normal. "I can handle that."

"In the dark!"

"What?" I ask, unsure of what he's getting at. "The date's in the dark? So... like a normal date?"

"No, dark for both of us! It's one of those date in the dark places where there are no lights on, and everyone just fumbles around and has orgies and stuff."

"I really feel like at least one of those things doesn't happen, but then again—"

"Then again, you're usually wrong, I know. It's sad that you're wrong so often. Do you feel sad about it? I feel sad *for* you," Felix says.

"So... are we going on a date or an orgy, then?"

"Yes."

"Yes to what?" I ask.

His laughter fills the car and I'm reminded again how much I love the sound. In a world without light, I have to rely on my ears more than anything, and his laughter always makes me smile.

"Yes to all things. But if it's an orgy no one's allowed to touch you. They may look at you, you can bench press them, but that's it. I want them to see what they can't have, then they can fuck off. You're mine."

"Let's just skip the orgy then, eh?"

"Fine, fine. It really would just become a group of people aching for your body while I battled them off you."

"Hold on..." I think about this scenario for a moment. "You're going to be battling them?"

"Well, of course. I'm not going to just stand there and watch them suckle on your abs. Those are *my* abs. I worked extremely hard for those

abs.”

I feel confused about what he means about “my abs” and “I worked extremely hard” for them since I’m pretty sure whenever I ask him to work out with me, he just lies around and cheers me on from the sidelines.

“Did you exercise this morning?”

“I did!” Felix says. “I walked from my desk to the fridge three times! That’s two more times than yesterday!”

“Wow! I’m extremely proud of you,” I say sarcastically.

He snickers as I hear him press the turn signal. “Thank you, babe. Your encouragement is what gets me to wake up and face the day every day.”

“Good, good,” I say as if any of this is true.

“I tried getting the dessert-only menu at this restaurant, but they told me that was unhealthy and they serve all of their meals with three different courses.”

“How dare they refuse to only feed you junk food?”

“I know, right? I’m knocking a star off just for that,” he jokes. “Cares about my health and doesn’t want me to have a sugar overload. Four stars.”

“Disgusting. Are you sure you even want to go there?”

“First no orgy, now no dessert. I’ll just... suffer through it for you, babe.”

“You... you do know you could take me to McDonald’s and it’d still be a date in the dark for me, right?”

“AIIIIII for you,” he says.

I snort, knowing I’m not going to get anywhere with his ludicrous ideas.

When we reach the place, he parks and then I get out to get Copper. Together, we head up to the front door, where Felix pulls open the door before ushering me inside.

“Hi, we had a reservation for Wake,” Felix says.

“Two?” the man asks.

“Yes.”

“Have you guys been here before?”

“No, we haven’t! I thought it’d be fun to make Lane eat in the dark,” Felix says, as if every meal I eat isn’t in the dark.

The man is silent for a moment. Probably looking at my seeing-eye dog and the sunglasses and questioning Felix's level of sanity.

"Your waiter will be here in just a moment."

"The thing is, this might be a completely normal restaurant and I'd never know," I realize.

"I could be taking you anywhere and you wouldn't know. Strip club, horse racing, you'd be oblivious."

"I think I'd figure it out," I say, confident in my deduction abilities. Really, I don't need them when Felix rarely stops talking which will tell me exactly what he's up to.

"Evening, gentlemen. I'll be your waitress. My name is Hannah. So once we're beyond this door, it's going to be completely dark. But don't worry, I'll lead you to your table. If you need anything at any point, you have a little bell on your table that you can ring. Do you have any questions?"

"What's for dessert?"

She chuckles. "I guess you'll find out."

I'm not sure if she leads Felix, but he grabs on to me and with Copper to aid me, we head deeper into the restaurant.

"Ooh, it's so dark in here. Like ridiculously dark," he says.

I can hear other people eating or moving about as we're taken toward what has to be the back of the restaurant.

"And here we are. This is your chair." She must be directing Felix because a moment later, she comes to my side to help me into a chair. At first, I feel ready to tell her I don't need help before realizing that she does this to everyone. She has to help everyone because most people aren't used to navigating the world in the darkness. "I'll be back in just a moment with your drinks."

"Lane!" Felix says a moment before my face gets smacked.

"What the hell?" I cry.

"Oh, there you are. I thought maybe you left me."

"I couldn't even if I tried."

"Aw, that's so sweet."

"It wasn't meant to be said that way," I assure him.

"Well, I took it that way." He doesn't sound deterred as he pats my face again. "Our waitress was blind. Is there like some secret language you

guys can speak with each other?”

“Yeah, it’s called English.”

“Ah. Interesting, interesting. They always say you learn something new every day. Lane?”

“Hmm?”

“Is this a butter knife?” he asks as I feel something jab into my stomach.

“Ow, what the hell?”

“Is it a butter knife?”

“Yes, it felt slightly rounded when you stabbed me with it.”

“Ah, good. Good. I knew you’d be best to ask.”

Suddenly, I’m being stabbed with something else. “Is this a fork?”

“You *do* have another hand to feel it over with so you don’t have to jab me with everything.”

“It’s too dark, I can’t find it!”

“It’s attached to your arm!”

“Where? Where? I’ve lost all sense of being. Who am I? What is my name?”

“Oh no. Now you have amnesia?” I ask.

“Yes! Save me, Lane.”

I hear the woman walk up but Felix must not because he’s still goofing around with his knife and fork.

“Here are your drinks and some bread. The first course will be out shortly.”

“Thank you,” I say before she heads off.

“Bread, she says,” Felix mimics as I hear his hand smack the table repeatedly. “She’s lying. She didn’t put any bread on here. She just wanted to make us look crazy by waving our hands around—oh no.”

“What?” I ask.

“How do you feel about me spreading the butter with my fingers? I might have stuck my whole hand in the butter.”

“Oh lord.”

“Maybe it’s not butter. Smell them, Lane.”

“I don’t want to smell your butter fingers.”

“Lick them, Lane.”

I get jabbed in the cheek and I suddenly realize how terrifying it must be for Felix when I reach for him. “I now get why you cringe or dodge every time I reach for your face.”

“Right? Like will he cup my face today or try his hand at scooping out my eyeball? It’s like a coin toss.”

“What if we keep our fingers to ourselves, then?” I ask a moment before his buttered fingers reach my lips.

“Oh... I thought you’d suck the butter off.”

“I... fine,” I say before grabbing his hand and running my tongue over one finger.

“Those aren’t *my* fingers,” he says.

I jerk back. “What?”

“I’m joking!” he says, before cackling to himself.

“Suck your own fingers,” I growl.

“No! Lane! I’m sorry!”

“You deserve to be punished for that,” I say as I reach out and feel the breadbasket.

“How?”

“Oh, I’ll find a way.”

I set the breadbasket on my lap before pulling a roll out and buttering it. All the while I hear his hand pat, pat, pat all over the table as he tries to find the basket.

“This bread is delicious,” I say as I tear off a piece.

“Where’s it at?”

“Right on the table.”

He pats away again. “Don’t lie to me, Lane. The bread is gone.”

“It’s not gone! I have a piece!”

*Pat. Pat. Pat.* “Dammit, Lane, where’s the bread? I’m literally lying on the table at this point. I’m covering it with my body, waving my arms back and forth, and there is no bread. Do you think they have night vision cameras and are watching us? Do you think I’ll get thrown out for this?”

I tear off a piece and press it against his lips.

“What is that?”

“Bread,” I say as he opens his mouth and I push it inside. “See? There is bread.”

He chews silently. “She must have taken it. That’s alright. I still have a baguette and dinner rolls,” he says as he reaches over. I realize he’s smacking at my groin when he nearly knocks the basket of bread off my lap.

“Dammit, Lane! You liar! You were hoarding the bread!”

I grin, slightly proud of myself as he grabs the basket. “How about a toast?” I ask.

“Sure. That sounds lovely after you’ve tortured me and hoarded the dinner rolls.”

I grab my glass and hold it out. It takes him a bit longer before he crashes something into my arm that sure doesn’t feel like a water glass.

“Let’s toast to a future where you’re nicer and don’t hide the bread from me.”

I reach out and touch his glass before working my fingers up to run over hard things in the cup. Straws? Who needs that many straws? That’s when it dawns on me what it is. “Felix, you’re holding a vase of flowers.”

He’s silent for a moment. “No, I’m not.”

“Yeah... you are.”

“Who the *frig* puts a vase of *flowers* on a table when you can’t see anything?”

I hear it slam back down and that’s the moment I start laughing. I never knew drawing someone into my world could be so amusing, but it sure is.

“Lane, I suck at this.”

“Most people do at first. Do you know how much I sucked at it? Enough that I threw a tantrum and refused to move or get up or do anything for weeks.”

“I guess you did, didn’t you?”

“I hated everything. I thought life would never be worth living again because I couldn’t do the things that brought me joy. Then you came along and just shattered every idea and thought I’d become fixated on. You pushed away all the negativity I’d become obsessed with and made my life worth living.”

“Don’t make me cry, Lane.”

“No one can see you.”

“But they’d hear me. There’d be like snot and animal sounds and everything.”

I snort before leaning into him. He must have been leaning in at the same time because our heads crash together.

“Oh my god. Thank god I have lightning-fast reflexes because I’m seeing now that the two of us without sight would just be disastrous. Your doctor would all be ‘Is your boyfriend abusing you?’ because you’d be covered in bruises.”

“That’s cute.”

“What?” he growls.

“I mean I guess they could say that until they see you.”

He pinches me. “I was going to give you a kiss but now a pinch is all you’re gonna get.”

I slide my fingers into his hair and guide his head over to me before leaning in and kissing him softly. “Is that better?”

“Much. Now can you help me find my glass. I don’t want to drink out of the flower vase.”

“Sure,” I say as I reach across the table until I feel it before handing it to him.

I hear someone coming near us.

“Here is your appetizer,” she says as she slides a plate between us before setting down two plates that sound empty. “Enjoy!”

“What is it?” Felix asks.

“That’ll ruin the surprise!” she says before merrily heading off.

“I hate surprises.”

“Really? I never would have imagined with all of the strange surprises you seem to drag me into. Here’s a surprise dog, and a surprise cat, oh and a surprise pig!”

“I’m not dragging you into anything. We’ve already discussed this. You’re the one who gets a boner for action and life-threatening adventure. Since I don’t want to deprive you of any of that, I’m going to make you sample this first. Open wide!”

“On a normal day, I’m terrified to open my mouth. But now, I’m even more scared because who knows if you have a flower or food.”

“Oh, it’s food... I think. You know what? It felt really weird in my fingers. I’m sure it’s food.”

“Just like the flower vase was a drink.”

“Yes. Stop judging me. Do you enjoy judging me?”

“Yes.”

“Alright. That’s understandable, so open your mouth and let’s see what we find!”

The thing is, I never know what Felix is going to do, but he has this power to convince me to do what he wants when he asks for it. So I open my mouth and bite down. Whatever it is, it’s delicious. Some type of crab something.

“Oh god, don’t try it,” I say. “It’s disgusting.”

“Are you lying to me? I feel like you’re lying.”

“I’m not lying. I’ll eat it all for you, okay?”

“This is a trick.”

“No trick. I’ll sacrifice this for you. I’ll do this for our relationship.”

“Oh, shove it. You’re such a liar. Oh my god, this is delicious and you were trying to deprive me of it!”

“I would never do that!”

“Liar! You were going to eat it all.”

“I didn’t think you’d like it.”

He snorts and when I go to get a second piece, I notice the plate is missing.

“Felix!”

“Yes, babe?”

“Where is it?”

“All mine.”

“Give it back or no half-naked push-ups for you.”

“Dammit.”

It’s strange how much fun this is. It’s like every other dinner for me, but maybe it’s just that Felix makes everything exciting. Nothing is boring with him involved and that’s perfectly fine with me. My world might have become quite a bit darker, but somehow there’s more light in it than there’s ever been.

“The light! It burns my eyes!” Felix cries as he leads me out of the restaurant.

“Huh. Seems alright to me.”

“Nobody likes a bragger.”

I grin as I reach out to him. He takes my hand and leads me after him.

“I wonder if Copper was confused as hell. All ‘These humans are at it again with their bullshit.’”

I shrug. “He might have appreciated it since he didn’t have to chew on any bad guys or anything.”

“He loves chewing on bad guys. You both do. You’re both weird. But that’s alright. I love ya both.”

“I love you too.”

“Now, let’s go home and have dessert!”

“We literally just ate like half a cheesecake.”

“I’m talking about the other dessert.”

Ah... that does sound fun. “Oh, I could handle the other dessert.”

“I know. When your mom brought those cookies over, I tried telling her we already had too much, but I couldn’t.”

Oh my god. It’s like riddles talking to this guy. “Hold on. Are you talking about sex or food?”

“Maybe a bit of both.”

“I can go for that,” I say as we walk out to the car, hand in hand.