

The Triangle

I sat on the other side of Charlie, directly in front of the TV, which was showing repeats of *That 70s Show*. I was all too aware of the fact that Tucker sat on his other side with a perfect view of me. Sometimes I just pretend to be immersed in whatever is on the TV screen to escape the reality of my situation when I'm down there in the cave with two of the most important men in my life: my best friend, Charlie, and our friend Tucker, who I share Charlie with and who has also shared a bed with me on more than one occasion.

In this instance, however, there was no need to pretend; I was sucked into the TV like the little girl from *Poltergeist*. Charlie had just drunkenly theorized that each character in the show accurately represented each one of us and our other best friends. Tucker had asked for clarification on who was who in Charlie's theory, but was furiously jabbing away at his cell phone at the same time. I had laughed and began to try to visualize it as the show played on, but just as I had decided that I was bored with it, a scene began that rooted me to my seat.

The fictional characters, Eric and Donna, were outside in the driveway alone, having left their other friends in the basement, so that they could have a private moment away. They had just recently broken up- a few episodes back, I think- and they were arguing about each others' behavior following their split.

Eric said angrily to Donna (or something to this effect), "You're in there, sitting all pretty like you don't even care that we broke up, and, hey, let's just watch TV. Tra la la la!"

Donna replied, "Eric, I was faking it. I'm miserable and I hate this whole situation." Eric looked shocked to hear that she felt that way and they had an important moment of honest communication, right there in the driveway.

I didn't have to look to know that Tucker was as glued to the show as I was. The fighting couple, or ex-couple, said things that I had felt many times myself, sitting in *our* basement. It was like it was scene from my own life. Or should have been a scene from my own life. A long time ago.

I felt my face burning slightly. I used my right hand to shield my face as if it were just a comfortable way to relax. I really wanted to block the emotion etched out on my face from the one guy who has ever left me at a loss for words, sitting with a direct line of sight of me. I squirmed as the scene played out. It had my full attention, but I could feel Tucker's presence all around me, smothering me, as I watched.

The episode ended after a few more brief lines of conversation between Eric and Donna.

"Let's just pretend we're fine for the sake of our friends," Eric said.

“I can do that,” Donna agreed.

“But you have to stop looking so hot when you come over here!” Eric added indignantly.

Donna immediately made to protest, but then realized it was true, and nodded along. The scene blacked out and commercials began to roll.

Charlie avoided looking at the both of us, feigning interest in his phone all of the sudden. Tucker jumped to his feet and mumbled something about having a cigarette, slamming the door behind him. Charlie turned like he was going to say something, and I could tell by the sheepish look in his eyes that it was about what had just happened, so I also jumped to my feet and left the room, calling over my shoulder, “Be right back. Bathroom.”