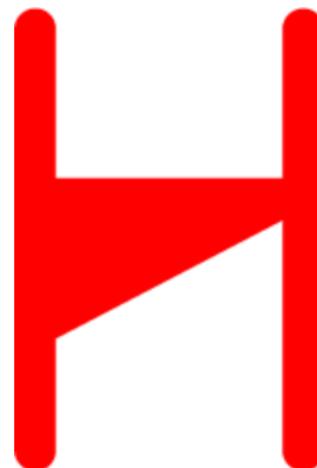




## PICK UP LINE

by DAN LEE



Smoke snaked lazily from his nostrils and up into the spinning chaos of the fan above him. The gentle grey stream began to corkscrew until it had become a violent tornado that crashed into the ceiling and spread out across the yellowed tiles. Strobing lights from the dance floor provided lighting for the growing storm as billiards cracked and thundered over his shoulder. It was a good night for a storm, he thought as the cherry of the cigarette blazed from his lips.

Across the dance floor's teaming sea of sweating flesh was the bar and at the bar sat a girl. She was slender, barely of age with long red hair, freckled skin and perfect curves. Her lips were soft pink and pouting below a thin nose and mesmerizing green eyes. She was wrapped in a low cut dress that had come almost all the way up her thighs when she sat down. She was on her third drink of the evening and starting to feel tipsy. He knew. He was counting. Best of all she had come in alone.

He sipped down the last of the piss water that passed for beer and casually made his way across the dance floor. He swam through the ocean of hot, sweating bodies grinding against each other in the hope that their erratic gyrating would lead to another

type of dance. It was a game he found amusing to watch but tedious to play. In fluid, calculated manoeuvres he lowered himself into the seat beside the redhead and ordered another beer. She didn't seem to notice.

"Buy you a drink?" he asked.

She looked him up and down, shook her head and looked out at the dance floor.

"Sorry," she said dismissively. "I don't go for creeps that hit on me in strange bars."

"You're breaking my heart, darling," he laughed. "Haven't even heard what I'm after. It could change your life." He put his hand on her thigh.

"Get stuffed."

This one had some fire. He fought the grin tugging the corners of his mouth and looked back at the bar.

"Suits me," he said nonchalantly. "Don't normally give it up for scrawny little gingers, anyway."

After a few minutes of listening to the repetitive thumping bass that passed for music she turned and looked at him. Her hand, fingernails painted a deep maroon slid between his legs. Her fingers rolled up along the teeth of his zipper and further to his belt buckle. She leaned up close, the scent of cheap booze and bargain perfume wafting to his nostrils as her breath blew on his neck and ear.

"Sorry," she whispered. Her tongue flicked his ear lobe. "Maybe we could try this again? Somewhere a little more... private?"

"I know just the place."

He slipped his arm around her narrow waist and led her into the parking lot. They walked down the alley around the back of the bar. It was dark and secluded, far removed from the prying eyes of the other inebriates half naked and writhing inside. His free hand slid down to the switch blade in his pocket.

"Is it much farther?" she asked.

"Nah, baby, it's right here."

He grabbed her by the throat and slammed her hard into the wall. The knife sprang out in a flash of silver and stopped just short of her verdant eyes. He made a shushing noise as he traced the tip of the knife softly down her neck and shoulders. He continued his tour along the curve of her breasts, her flat stomach and milky thighs. Slowly he brought the blade up under her skirt to cut her panties away from her only to find bare skin. He smiled, teeth bared as a hungry lion about to devour his prey.

The girl began to laugh. He repositioned the knife in his hand and thrust a single finger inside of her. Her laughter had grown from a light chuckle into a raucous chuckle.

"You think this is funny, bitch?"

"Sorry," she said, choked by the laughter. "I just can't help it. I love playing with my food."

Confused, the man looked up at the porcelain face of the girl he'd found in the bar. Her skin had shattered where her head had struck the wall. Her green eyes had become black mirrors reflecting his face in the inky abyss. Her smiling mouth was filled with rows of shark teeth whirring circles inside her head. He tried to pull away but his hand was caught in a vice grip between her thighs.

"What are you?" Tears were streaming down his cheeks.

"Hungry." she answered.



**Dan Lee** is a horror and strange fiction author in a small, Nashville adjacent town. His work has also appeared on [microhorror.com](http://microhorror.com), [horrorlibrary.net](http://horrorlibrary.net) and in *Dead Letters 2.1*. He has an attempted web page at [dannoofthedeadblog.wordpress.com](http://dannoofthedeadblog.wordpress.com). Dan's micro, "Pick Up Line", appears in the June 2013 issue of *HelloHorror*.

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