

# Tell 'em Together

“You shaved,” I said in mild shock as I saw the skin of Danny’s face for the first time, his head peeping around the corner of the bathroom door. Its rich, olive complexion was discernible even though its long estrangement from the sun had left the flesh pale and new looking, though also densely studded with dark, freshly-shorn follicles.

Danny stepped into the bedroom where I was dressing. “You like it?” he asked, looking a bit sheepish and unsure of his new self.

“You look very handsome,” I said supportively and in all honesty. “What will Ed say though? Are you quitting?”

“No.”

“Well, what are you going to do if you’re shaved? Will he have another job for you? Did you talk to him about this before you did it?” I asked.

“I don’t know. I wasn’t really thinking about that when I did it,” Danny responded a bit sullenly.

“OK, well... I mean. You’ve sort of given your job away, haven’t you?” I pressed, but perhaps not as gently as I had meant.

“Are you so worried about that? Is that all I am to you too? Just a freak to be stared at, and if not that, then nothing at all?” Danny bridled. I was taken aback by his sudden passion. I’d never known him to be excitable, though in all fairness I’d only known him for a couple days.

“Danny, of course that isn’t true. You know that, don’t you?” I soothed.

“Yeah, maybe,” he relented, still defensive but cooling off already.

“So, what made you take this leap?” I ventured.

“I don’t know. I just... I did it for you,” he admitted in a fresh surge of vulnerability. I didn’t respond right away. I looked at him affectionately, but still in a mildly probing manner, waiting for him to continue whatever revelation or declaration he was clearly working up to. “I want you to see the real me—to know the real me. Maybe even love the real me. Not just Danny the Dogface Boy.”

The last sentence was delivered with a creeping vitriol, and a sudden break in eye contact as Danny looked away in frustration and embarrassment.

I walked over to him, lightly taking his silken cheeks in either hand. “When I look at you, I see the same kind, brave, stunning man that rescued me from that submerged Ferris wheel. Hair or no hair, I see you Danny—you. That’s all I’m interested in. Not the dog-faced boy, or the baby-faced boy, or whatever. Just sweet Danny.” He glowed at me, and a smile softened the already soft face I held in my hands like a newborn animal, still wondering what the world would do with it.

“You mean it?” he asked, gazing at me with the same adoring look that had melted my heart when we first met just days ago.

“Oh, I mean it, baby. Come on, let me clean up your eyebrows a bit and we’ll go tell Ed and all the other freaks what’s what together,” I assured him, and I did mean it.

Maybe he could get bumped up to Ferris wheel operator. Danny has the grit and smarts for it, I know he does. And I also know that the last operator recently drowned. I could still see that operator’s eyes staring into mine, boring into me over the surge of the tide. How I wanted to get lost in those eyes, if only they hadn’t been snuffed out by the pulsing, yellow waves that took him.

But I, in turn, pushed away and drowned those thoughts with thoughts of Danny. I’ll never know how happy I could have been with the old Ferris wheel operator, but if life looks kindly upon me, I just might be pretty damn happy with the new Ferris wheel operator.



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