

Joe Bruner  
Fiction II  
Short Short Story 2

### The Morning After

The room is silent, the sun streams through the tattered curtains, fluttering feebly in the vent's sporadic gusts. Outside, the symphony of dog barks and ambulance sirens, mixed in with the occasional children's scream, plays endlessly.

I lie there naked, half buried and half twisted in the sheets, trying to cling to the last droplets of sleep rolling away from me like rain running down a window. I clench my eyes, trying to remember the night before...

The sunset... the scent of pine... the kiss... the forbidden kiss, and then getting back into the car and driving you home and dropping you off, but not wanting to leave you, until you said 'let's go out' and I said 'alright' and so you climbed back in and we drove off to do something fun.

You suggested we go to the beach and I nodded, squinting through the headlights of all the passing cars.

At the beach, we ran carelessly, the cold, moon-washed sand sifting around our feet, pouring between our toes and tickling the soft, tender flesh of our soles. We chased each other in circles, and when we got bored of that we wrestled until, hot and sweaty, we were down to just our boxers. Then we lay on our backs and counted the stars until we couldn't count any more, each pin prick of light just like the others.

'I'm excited,' you told me, and I looked down and saw, indeed, you were quite excited and then I realized so was I. 'Let's go have some fun,' I said. We piled all our stuff in the car and drove off.

‘Pull off here,’ you said. ‘Here?’ I asked, parking under the dingy and flickering yellow motel sign. ‘We won’t get caught.’ ‘Then put your pants back on,’ I snapped, and you sighed.

I paid the 30 dollars to rent a single-bed room and we walked in. Desire pounded thunderously in my heart, ripping and tearing, trying to get out as I tore your clothes off, before the door was even fully closed. Naked, we fell back on the bed.

‘Wait.’ And I waited, until you handed me a condom and it was my turn to sigh. The ferocity returned and we matched in rhythm and pace, crescendoing faster and louder and faster and louder until it couldn’t take it anymore and we both collapsed onto the bed, my body on yours, floating down on the windfall.

‘Fuck man, what the hell?’ you asked. ‘What did we just do?’

‘We just made love.’

‘Fuck, what if my parents find out? I’ll get kicked out, no they’ll kill me. My parents will literally kill me.’ You sat up, sweating – though from fear or love, I couldn’t figure out.

‘Fuck them. Fuck family,’ I said, ‘they’re not important.’

You stood up and got dressed.

‘Where are you going?’ I asked.

‘Home. To my family, because it matters. To me.’ I lay back on the bed, watching you struggle with your pants and belt, watched as you stormed out the door.

Finally I open my eyes and glance around the room. Everything is just how it had been when you left. The cheap, blurry painting hanging slightly crooked on the wall, the sheets still ruffled from our play, and the two soiled condoms, cast aside, sitting limply on the floor.

I thought about the beach, the sand, the stars, the love. I felt myself get excited again, and then I remembered the way you left, huffing, angry, the hurt frozen in your eyes... But even then, even in that moment, all I think is God, how I would do it all again.