

The Big Ask

by

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EXT. SCHOOL CAMPUS

MATT PORTER, 20, short and built, scruffy beard, now alone after a long night of drinking. He sits on a curb, muttering, trying to keep his balance.

He sips a beer before growing frustrated, throwing the can, stomping it and walking away.

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING

Open to a college dorm. The room is filled with light. Matt is fully clothed on top of his covers. A person is heard walking up to the door and sliding a note underneath.

Matt is awoken by his phone ringing and squirms around until he falls off the bed, realizing he is victim of a bad hangover.

He fumbles around on the desk behind his head until he mistakes a bottle of vodka for water. He drinks it and spits it out, coughing and sprawling back out on the bed.

JAMES, 20, tall and thin, wears a flannel and blue jeans. He opens the door to find Patrick asleep in his bed.

JAMES

Yoooooooo.

James stops for a moment and picks up the note at the door. The door slams and Matt groans and turns onto his side to look at James.

MATT

What's up J.

Matt rests his head back on the pillow while James walks over to the bed and sits down.

JAMES

How you feeling?

MATT

Not great... What is that?

JAMES

I guess there's a formal next weekend.

Matt sits up and looks at it.

(CONTINUED)

MATT  
Fuck yeah, I love these things.

JAMES  
Who you gonna take?

MATT  
I dunno I'll figure it out.

Matt puts the note down before letting out a deep breath and rubbing his temples.

JAMES  
Dude you were on some next level  
shit last night.

MATT  
Uh, what do you mean?

JAMES  
When I left Vail St. you were  
wrestling with David Baker in front  
of the whole party.

MATT  
Shit.

JAMES  
Yeah, he kicked your ass.

MATT  
Brutal... What else happened?

JAMES  
I dunno I left early with Gina,  
text the group chat.

MATT  
Good idea.

Matt grabs his phone and they are silent for a few moments,  
each glued to their devices.

MATT  
Oh god.

JAMES  
What?

MATT  
Kate is telling me to look at  
Ryan's snapchat story.

(CONTINUED)

JAMES  
Ooooo this should be good.

MATT  
Fucking Ryan, kid will probably  
live stream his own funeral.

James sits down on the bed next to Matt as he plays the video. It's a short clip of Matt running naked around the party yelling at various people before tripping and falling directly on his face.

Matt's face goes white.

JAMES  
Oh. My. God.

MATT  
No.

JAMES  
What was that!

MATT  
No no no no no no.

JAMES  
Whyyy did I leave early!?

MATT  
I'm calling Ryan.

Pat dials Ryan on his phone. Ryan doesn't answer. James sees he is on the verge of having a mental breakdown.

MATT  
It's over. It's all fucking over.

JAMES  
Dude it's just a video.

MATT  
That's easy for you to say! My  
fucking dick is live on the  
internet for everyone to see! Ryan  
has over 500 friends on snapchat!  
What if it was your little three  
incher, huh?!

JAMES  
Alright alright just calm  
down, let's go get some food and  
get this all figured out.

(CONTINUED)

Matt gives James the death stare before starting to pace back and forth.

MATT

Ok fine. I could use a drink.

INT. SPORTS BAR - NOON

James and Matt walk into a sports bar. Matt wears a grey hoodie and a baseball cap pulled over his eyebrows. The waitress shows them to their table. Matt walks directly to the bar.

BARTENDER

Hey Pat how's it going?

MATT

I'm alright, yourself?

BARTENDER

Doing great... the usual?

MATT

Yes, make it a triple.

Blank faced Matt looks at the TV, thinking about the night before, anxious about how far the video has traveled through cyberspace. He checks his phone to see if Ryan has gotten back to him, he hasn't.

Matt's eyes wander down to the other side of the bar, where a group of girls are sitting. They are all looking at him, one of them smiles at him, ALEX, 20, his long time crush. Matt's excitement takes over and he smiles back giving a small wave.

Matt turns back to the TV and remembers the video. His face flushes with embarrassment, praying the girls haven't seen it yet. He pays for his drink and hurries back to his table.

He sits down before taking a long pull from his drink.

JAMES

Dude cool it.

Matt drinks even more to spite him. Then gives James an exaggerated quenching sound and a sarcastic gaze.

JAMES

I get that you're upset, but drinking won't fix anything.

(CONTINUED)

MATT  
I'll be the judge of that.

JAMES  
How do you think you got yourself  
into this in the first place?

MATT  
I was rufied, I'm sure of it.

At that moment, Matt sees the three girls all look over to him at once, giggling. The girl in the middle holds her phone, showing something Alex and the other friend. Matt knows what they're looking at.

MATT  
Get up, we're leaving.

JAMES'  
What?

MATT  
I said get the fuck up, we're  
leaving.

Matt picks up his drink and chugs the entire thing.

JAMES  
What's your deal?

Matt leans in and muffles his words, liquor on his breath.

MATT  
The girls at the bar, they know.

JAMES  
Can we at least get our food?

Matt gets up from the table.

MATT  
I'm out.

Matt pulls his hood over his head and walks out. James groans and follows him out.

INT. CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Matt sits in a classroom alone typing away at his computer, waiting for someone. He checks his phone constantly. Ryan still hasn't answered him.

AVERY, 20, enters the room. She is short with brown hair, bright and trustworthy, Matt's good friend.

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MATT

Hey.

AVERY

Hey Matty.

Matt gives Jane a sad look, they both know about the events that have played out. Avery gives him a empathetic look while walking over and giving him a hug. Matt holds back tears.

MATT

Did you see it?

AVERY

Some of it.

MATT

Ugh.

AVERY

I'm sure he didn't mean to.

MATT

Well I think he did... fucking idiot.

AVERY

Oh come on Matt, you've never made a mistake?

MATT

Not like this! Not a mistake where I put my friend's naked ass on social media for the whole fucking world to see.

AVERY

It's just a video, people will forget about it.

MATT

No Avery, they won't.

Matt's phone begins to ring. It's Ryan. Matt's known him for a few years now and this is the first thing that has come between them. He stands up and picks up the phone.

MATT

Take that video down right now you dumb motherfucker before I come beat the shit out of you!..... I don't want to talk about it!.....

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MATT (cont'd)  
delete it right fucking now!.....  
good!

Matt hangs up and throws his phone on the desk while sitting down. He is shaking.

AVERY  
Just take a deep breath.

Matt takes a huge breath, the air fills up his diaphragm while Jane rubs his back.

AVERY  
Let's talk about something else.

MATT  
It just keeps replaying in my head  
over and over again.

AVERY  
Ummm let's see... Have you heard  
about the formal?

MATT  
Yeah.

AV  
Who are you going to take?

MATT  
No one.

AVERY  
Don't be like that, I'm sure you'll  
find someone.

MATT  
Who in their right mind would agree  
to go with the fucking bare ass  
bandit?

AVERY  
Stop it Matt. People won't be  
talking about it forever.

MATT  
Wanna bet?

He looks into Avery's eyes.



JANE

Don't do that to yourself, there's nothing you can do about it now. The more that you dwell on it, the more other people will too.

Matt knows she's right. He looks away.

AVERY

It will be alright, I promise.

Matt gives her a doubtful look, then embraces Avery.

MATT

I hope so.

EXT. SCHOOL CAMPUS - LATE AFTERNOON

It's raining. Matt exits a building with his earphones in, razor scooter in hand. His hoodie is pulled over his baseball cap with his earphones in.

Matt rides his scooter through campus with his head down, looking only at the pavement in front of him getting eaten up by its little green wheels. He cruises along listening to Simon and Garfunkel's "Bridge Over Troubled Waters". For a moment he is at peace. He gains confidence with each pedal, now almost laughing at the thought of the video. Avery was right.

He looks up and around at the scenery. It's gloomy out, but he finds a certain pleasure in the overcast ambience. He notices a group of guys standing near the pathway.

He sees one of them pointing at him. They all turn to look, and begin to laugh hysterically.

GUY 1

Nice ass Baker!

GUY 2

Put your clothes on Matty!

Matt is shook. He takes a turn off of the path, pedaling faster and faster until he is at top speed. Tears and raindrops stream down his face, blurring his vision. He needs to get back to his dorm.

He makes a sharp turn to the right and his scooter slips out from under him. There is a loud thud as he hits the concrete. He moans deeply and curses loudly, squirming on the pavement for a moment before becoming motionless.

INT. BEDROOM - EVENING

Matt sits on his couch in his sopping wet clothes, a nearly empty fifth of vodka lies in his hand. He stares at the fireplace that burns and crackles on his TV screen, now finding anger and sorrow where he usually finds comfort.

He closes his eyes and takes a giant swig from the bottle, finishing it off. It burns his throat but he doesn't care.

Matt sets the bottle down and gets up to walk over to his desk. He pulls out the bottom drawer and reaches towards the back, pulling out a small wooden box. It's hidden but he knows exactly where to find it.

Inside is a picture of him with his dad and a obscure looking, deep blue sea shell. He looks at the picture for a while, twirling and inspecting the sea shell. He closes his eyes and firmly grips the shell. It is sacred to him.

He carefully places the picture and shell back inside the box and closes it.