

*Excerpt from...*  
**[pwnd]**  
by Kitt Lavoie

TODD, his fiance JESSICA, and his best friend GABE, all in their mid-twenties, are in a heated discussion in their shared outer-borough apartment.

JESSICA

Why do you have to do this? Why, Todd?

TODD

Do what?

JESSICA

*This.* Make this a *thing*. You're right, you work 65 hours a week. And *he's* right - that means he and I spend, like, twenty hours alone in this apartment every week. And we've become friends. Good friends. But *friends*, Todd. And the one night in a month you get home early and *this* is what you want to do with it?

TODD

Believe me, Jess, there are a million things I'd rather be doing right now.

JESSICA

Then let's.

A beat.

JESSICA

I didn't say "yes" because I didn't want to get shipped back north. I said "yes" because I wanted to stay here with you. But at this point, I don't know why we're getting married anymore, Todd. I mean, I do, and I want to. But I can't look forward to sixty years of this.

TODD

Of what?

JESSICA

Of sitting home in my pajamas playing video games. And watching movies. And playing parcheesi. And watching fucking girlie porn with your roommate. And yes, we do. Sometimes. *And I look forward to it.* Because I have nothing else in my life. I had you, and I don't know where the fuck you are anymore.

TODD

I'm working.

JESSICA

And *he* doesn't know where you are anymore.

TODD

*I'm working.* You know where I work.

JESSICA

I don't mean I don't know *where* you are. I mean I don't know *where you are*, anymore. We're young, Todd. I'm twenty-four. It's 11:20 on a Friday night. I should be getting ready to go out to paint the town, you know. I should be out at a bar with my friends. I should be in that bedroom doing loud and terrible things with you because he's out for the night. But I'm sitting here in my pajamas yelling "musou" and storming castles because I didn't think I'd see you before two. And then you'd be too tired to do anything.

TODD

*I'm working.*

JESSICA

*Anything*, Todd. And you've left me and you've left him with nothing to do but each other. To hang out. And that's what we do while you're gone. We pass the time and we wonder out loud to each other when you're going to get here.

(a beat)

I used to sit on the back of the couch and watch you guys play video games all night - and the three of us had a great time. Do you know it took us three weeks of me sitting on the back of this couch *watching* him play by himself before it occurred to either of us that I could pick up the other controller and play, too. And now we do. And we have a great time. And I miss you. And it has to stop.

TODD

You think I *want* to go to the office all day then sit security for six hours every night?

JESSICA

Then don't.

TODD

I don't have a choice.

JESSICA

Of course you have a choice.

TODD

I really don't.

JESSICA

We all have a choice. Me. Gabe. We go to work all day, we come home and play video games.



TODD

Well, that's you.

JESSICA

You could, too.

TODD

I really can't.

JESSICA

And what I'm saying is, you'd better.

TODD

*I can't.* I have to pay for that fucking ring.

A beat.

JESSICA

Excuse me?

TODD

That fucking ring. I have to pay for it.

A beat.

JESSICA

I thought you said it was your grandmothers.

TODD

Well, it's not.

JESSICA

You said it was--

TODD

Because you wouldn't take it if I didn't.

JESSICA

I didn't need a ring, Todd.

TODD

I know.

JESSICA

*I told* you I didn't.



TODD

Yeah, well, I know a certain person who shoved you out of her vagina who wouldn't have let me hear the end of it.

GABE

The girl from Fort Lauderdale?

Todd wheels on Gabe.

TODD

Fuck you.

JESSICA

I would have helped pay for it.

TODD

A girl doesn't pay for her engagement ring.

JESSICA

Why not?

TODD

They *don't*.

JESSICA

Eventually they do. I mean, community property and such, eventually they do. And in any case, this girl would've.

TODD

Well... I just wanted to get you something nice.

JESSICA

The nicest thing about it is I thought it was from your grandmother.

TODD

Well, it wasn't, so...

JESSICA

How much was it?

TODD

It doesn't matter.

JESSICA

It does.



TODD

It was my money.

JESSICA

Well, your money's gonna be my money before too long...

A beat.

TODD

\$12,000.

A beat.

JESSICA

Are you fucking stupid?

TODD

Hey.

JESSICA

No, seriously, are you fucking stupid?

GABE

Holy shit.

JESSICA

That's a down payment, Todd.

GABE

Holy *shit!*

TODD

Shut the fuck up, I don't need to hear from you about this.

GABE

I think you might.

TODD

Remember those things I said are between a guy and his girlfriend? Well what I do with my money is *at best* between her and me.

(to Jessica)

And until we're married, I'm not totally convinced it's that.

GABE

Fuck you.

TODD

Fuck you.

GABE

Do you not get it? That you have an impact?

TODD

Yeah, my impact is I work fifteen hours a day to pay for that ring - and I'm sorry, Jess, that I wanted to get you something nice to celebrate our fucking *love*. And to pay for that Playstation and that stereo and half the fucking cable. All this so you can get out at five o'clock, come home, and play Playstation with my girlfriend all night on *my* fucking PS2. And we're talking best fucking scenario here, Gabe, is that you're just playing playstation with her.

GABE

I thought you said I could use any of your stuff.

TODD

Fuck you, little man.

GABE

You know, you're right, Todd. I do come home every night and play Playstation with your *fiance* - who is living in our apartment with us because *I* invited her to. When her visa was up, all you could do is blah, blah, blah into your pillow all night about how much you were going to miss her. Until *I* came in and said she should just move in here.

TODD

Jess--

GABE

She should just move in here - and you were ready to drive her to the bus station and send her on her way for eight months of late night phone calls and IMs and emails until you broke up because *it's just too hard*.

TODD

I didn't want to ask.

GABE

*You didn't have to*, is what I'm saying. I was glad to do it. And she moved in here. And it was fine. It was great. And I actually saw you again from time-to-time, which was really great. And given a few months of free shelter, she wrangled NAFTA and she got herself a job. Which was fine. And great. And between you you've got two-thirds of the money coming into this house and I'm still paying half the rent.

TODD

We've got the wedding to pay for.

GABE

The wedding of you and this girl I barely knew until I said, "Let's take her in" and decided to be her friend because I thought it would be something nice to do for you.

TODD

This has really been bothering you.

GABE

For the past year-and-a-half? Yeah. When I had to sell my Rockhopper? Yeah. When I couldn't go to Atlantic City with you guys and Mark and Erin? Yeah. When I gave my mom a pair of fucking *gloves* for Christmas? Yeah, it did.

TODD

I didn't know.

GABE

You didn't *notice*. And now the icing is you come in and accuse me of fucking her.

TODD

Well, you should have said something.

GABE

I didn't want to have to ask. So yeah, I play with *your* girlfriend in *my* apartment on *your* PS2. Because I can't afford to go anyplace *but* my apartment or to buy my own PS2. So that's what I've got - your Playstation, the *Godfather* on TMC. And a BJ every now and then while you're at work. I think I've got it coming, is what I'm saying.

Todd glowers at Gabe, trying to get the measure of him.

GABE

I'm kidding.

TODD

You're a funny guy.

GABE

Not that funny.

A beat. They stare at each other.

GABE

I'm moving back in with my mom. When you get married? I've got nothing saved and I can't live in this city on my own. So all I'm saying is, if I ever *did* do anything--



TODD

Did you?

GABE

If I did, maybe it wouldn't be entirely about fucking *her*.

Gabe turns and stalks into his room, slamming the door behind him.