

Lack of Taste

by. L.Gray

Note: I was not high when I wrote that. Honest.

Keira was looking at her reflection, studying the red spots, and she couldn't remember if they had been there before. A couple of fresh ones marred her forehead.

"I am not the only one with those. Of course, I'm not."

She smiled widely and put her fuzzy cap on. After all, it was cold outside.

She locked the door and walked out into the yard. Chilly drizzle poured onto her upturned face. The sun was peering through the clouds, winking at her.

She giggled, thinking it was nearly Christmas. Time to buy presents and all.

A cat sprang out of the bushes and limped past her. A stripy, flabby creature, that reminded her of Mr. Hobbins, who lived nearby. The man had that funny habit of greeting her with a bottle in his hand and an apprehensive grin on his lips. But today he was nowhere to be seen.

Keira gave a loud whistle and jumped into the puddle. The cat dashed aside and squeezed its clumsy body into the basement window. The girl laughed and ran to the nearby store.

"I'm gonna get this teddy bear for Alex. It's so cute. Just like him."

She fiddled with the toy lovingly and looked around the shelves. They were full of glittering festive goods. Eye candy, useless and tempting.

She noticed a cheap jewellery stand, which called out to her with all its might.

- Oh, my god. – she whispered and touched one of the bracelets. The silvery one, with a pale blue stone. – So pretty... This one's for Chris!

Keira moved back without looking, in her hurry to purchase the beautiful things, and promptly bumped into someone. All the wonders scattered around the floor.

- Damn.

She fell on her knees, trying not to let anyone stomp over her treasures.

- Hey, why don't you look where you're going, moron?

Keira glanced up recognizing the voice immediately. Her face lit up.

- Chris!

She stood up and smiled, her cheeks turning slightly red. The girl she clashed against frowned.

- Oh. It's you.

- Hi! ... Um... Nice to see you.– Keira mumbled in her attempt to hide the retrieved objects behind her back. – I... actually... would never imagine meeting you here.

Chris looked around a little nervously and straightened her skirt.

- Yeah... Well, my jerk of a brother dragged me here. He's prowling somewhere. Drooling over bikes or something.

She observed the crowd and turned back to Keira.

- What are you doing here? Like, shopping?

There was something in her expression... something bad. Keira's smile faded.

- Well... is there something wrong with it?

Chris sniffed and rolled her eyes.

- You...Jesus, are you really that slow?

Keira clutched her presents and stepped back.

- I... I don't know.

Chris sighed. Was she upset? Keira didn't mean to make her upset.

- You just look at those. – Chris waved her hand at the jewellery. – What do these people think? This crap is for bums. – she shivered as if it was freezing cold. – Such lack of taste is kinda unique, you know.

- Hey, Chris!

Keira turned her head, which was hard, because it felt heavy. Like it was filled with water.

- Alex. – Chris caught her brother's arm. – I really hope you're done there, cause we're leaving.

- But...

- No "buts". I'm sick of this place.

- But I am not! Why do you have to be such a bitch every time I need something?!

Chris shook her head and moved towards the exit door.

- Chris!

The boy followed her, not giving Keira a single look.

The sun seemed even brighter, when she stepped outside the store. The clouds were gone, together with the remainder of rain.

Keira looked at the cute bear and shiny metal thing in her hands. She frowned.

- You are lack of taste, you know. – she chewed her lips and added. –And you are unique.

On approaching her house, she saw Mr. Hobbins. He was sitting on a bench, smoking a cigarette, with an open yellow bottle by his feet.

- Morning.

- Morning, young lady. Looking good today.

- Thanks. You too, sir.

Mr. Hobbins laughed hoarsely and took a sip of his yellow liquid.

Keira walked inside the house and nearly stumbled over the stripy fat cat, which had been peacefully drowsing by the door. It made an attempt to bolt, but was stopped by Keira, who managed to catch its filthy paw.

- Wait!

The cat fought in vain for a minute, only to realize it wouldn't get away alive. It calmed down and looked at the girl suspiciously.

- Cat... Can I call you "cat"? Anyway, I don't know your name, so you'll have to deal with that.

The cat shrugged.

- Okay. I just wondered... - Keira slowly let go of the cat and set on the floor. – I just wondered if you would like to come by and have something to drink. I got milk.

The cat squinted in the darkness of the corridor and eyed her up and down.

- Okay. – it said. – Only if you don't kick. If you merely think of kicking me, I shall leave.

- I won't.

Keira smiled, got up and opened her door.

- Come on in.

So, in came the cat, striding with care and dignity.

Keira was staring at her reflection, marveling at the silvery thing clasping her wrist. It made her look like a princess. It would surely look better on Chris, who had none of those red spots on her forehead, but still.

- Hey, cat! Isn't it pretty?

The cat raised his fuzzy mug from the milk it was devouring.

- Yeah, delicious. – it muttered getting back to business.

- Share some with Teddy, will ya?

The cat cast a sidelong glance at the toy lying close to the plate, but kept silent.

Mr. Hobbins felt he had enough yellow liquid inside, so he walked home, supporting himself against the wall. As he passed Keira's door, he heard laughter and loud talking. He went on listening for a few minutes, then shook his head and grumbled.

- Must've been some sour beer, for sure.

The End