

Murderers and Nerdy Girls Work Late - Naughty Bits

First Date 1.0

by Lisa Boero

Preface

The idea for the *Nerdy Girls - Naughty Bits* came from some of my dear friends and fellow writers. Several of them told me that they would love to know what happened right after *Murderers and Nerdy Girls Work Late* ended. They also wanted a taste of the more romantic scenes that the *Nerdy Girls* books suggest but do not describe. As a gift to these friends, I started writing the in-between scenes and circulated them amongst this select group. I have now decided that these scenes would make a fun addition to the *Nerdy Girls* cannon and fondly dedicate them to all my great fans who would like more from Liz Howe, even if it is a little bit naughty.

Lisa Boero

First Date 1.0

We walked out of the restaurant hand in hand. His palm felt warm and smooth against my own. That strange electric feeling wicked up my arm, but I tried to ignore it. We were in a public place, and I didn't trust myself. The valet came up to us, and James handed him the slip. We waited. James let go of my hand and put his arm around my shoulder. I slipped my fingers around his waist. I could feel the sinewy muscles of his back through the thin fabric of his jacket. As the valet disappeared around the corner, James leaned down and kissed me lightly on the cheek.

"Your place or mine?" I said to say something.

"Yours is closer." Then he whispered in my ear. "I don't know how much longer I can wait."

He slowly moved his hand back and forth, rubbing my shoulder. It felt exhilarating, and yet, my stomach hardened into a cold knot. How long had I been waiting? Too long. Things hadn't changed that much since – since a long time ago? Hard to tell. I glanced up at James. This was definitely the worst part. When my brain spun itself around with worry. What would he think when he saw me? Thank goodness I'd listened to my mother about the underwear. And the workouts. That was good, but I still had a lot of jiggle

left. If only I had a dimmer on the lights in my apartment. The darker the better.

The valet pulled the car to the curb. James and I separated. He opened the door for me and then got in on the driver's side. He put his left hand on the wheel. I caught a moment of hesitation, but he put his right hand on the shift. We didn't say anything as we drove back to my apartment. I watched him, trying to gauge his expression. He seemed to be focused entirely on the road. He parked the car and then looked at me. His gaze was intense, but whether it was desire or something else, I couldn't tell.

"We should go in," I finally said.

"That's a good idea." But he didn't move.

"James?" I felt lightheaded for a moment, and realized I was hyperventilating. I made an effort to control my breath. In and out.

"Yes." He shook his head as if to clear it and then got out of the car. He opened my door and pulled me up on my silver shoes.

His touch was light. He held my hand but did make any effort to hold me close. Another stab of anxiety ran through me. He wasn't having second thoughts, was he? I didn't know if I could handle that. I took a deep breath of clean night air and felt better. I looked up. The sky was clear. There were even a few brave stars, fighting through the city lights.

I fumbled with the keys at the door to the building. James stood behind me, impassive and aloof. I felt the edge of panic. Maybe everything he'd said in the restaurant wasn't what I thought at all? But what else could it

mean? Second thoughts. That was the only answer. I'd confront him when we got inside. Otherwise the Hendersons might hear. I looked down the street and didn't see Joe Henderson's car. There was a God in the heavens. Amend that. I wasn't really thinking about God at the moment.

I finally turned the lock and pushed the door open. I stepped inside. James followed, and I shut the door behind him. I was up the stairs before I could lose my nerve. He came up behind me. Another minute while I worked the deadbolt at my own apartment door. Still silence. I felt the anxiety crescendo as the door opened. What would I say? I didn't have any idea, so I didn't turn around until I'd closed the door behind him and done up the lock again. I slipped my jacket off. Another stalling tactic.

When I finally turned around, I found I couldn't really look at him. I threw my jacket on the couch, and then watched my hands as I flipped the keys over and over with my fingers. "So, can I get you anything?" I said hesitantly. "Coffee? Tea? Water?" It sounded lame even to my own ears.

"You know what I want."

I looked up and saw he was smiling at me. A mixture of warmth and mischief.

"What?" I said.

"You." He reached out and took my face in his hands. I dropped the keys as his lips met mine. The kiss was soft, delicate, sweet. And then suddenly it wasn't. I was devouring him and he was devouring me. I could

barely breathe, but still I moved closer. The feel of his lips. The taste of him on my tongue. And that sweet smell of his skin. But I wanted more.

I pushed at the lapels of his jacket. He pulled away long enough to shrug the jacket off his shoulders. It fell to the floor in a crumpled heap. And then his hands were back on my arms. I leaned in to kiss him again, but his mouth moved down away from mine. A line of kisses followed the curve of my neck and then around to my ear. I felt his teeth on my earlobe. A slight pressure that was both pain and pleasure. "Turn around," he said, his voice low and husky.

I turned. I felt his hands on my shoulders, and then he was undoing the zipper of my dress. I shivered as the zipper moved, revealing the skin of my back. The moment of truth. I couldn't breathe. He pulled and with one quick movement the dress was off my shoulders. It fell to my hips and then another little push and it pooled around me on the floor. I stepped out of the fabric but did not face him. My heart was in my throat.

"Turn around," he said again. I could hear his jagged breathing. I turned but didn't look. I didn't want to know.

"Liz." I raised my eyes. "You are so beautiful."

I didn't know if he meant it, but I couldn't resist any longer. My fingers attacked the buttons of his shirt, pulling it apart. And then the tee shirt under it. And then the belt. And then we were on the floor with no clothes at all, and he was kissing me. A frenetic kiss that had more to do with desperation than anything else. And his hands. They were seemingly everywhere, as if he

didn't trust the reality of my body next to his. He pulled me to him, and I could feel him hard and taught.

With my last coherent thought, I said, "We should go to the bedroom – um – protection." His hand was on my breast now. His thumb teasing the nipple, sending shivers of pleasure up and down my spine. "Don't stop, but —"

"Umm?"

"Protection?"

He sat up a little. "Right. Where's my jacket." Without stopping what he was doing, he leaned over and pulled the jacket to him with the other hand. He dug around in the inner pocket until he found what he wanted.

I sat up. "So you knew you'd get lucky?"

"God, I hoped so." He ripped the package and slid the condom on.

"Me too," I replied, pulling him on top of me.

He lowered himself down and then with one thrust he was in. I caught my breath as my body stretched to fit. The feeling was so intense and so wonderful, I felt my eyes tear up. I closed them tight so he wouldn't see. I'd completely forgotten what this was like. But my body hadn't. We moved in time, catching each other's rhythm. The pleasure was indescribable. And then, without warning, an explosion, like a thousand shooting stars behind my eyes. I lay panting and quivering under him. I felt his release a moment later. His muscles went slack. He pulled out gingerly and lay down beside me.

I reached up and covered my eyes with my hand. I could feel the trickle down my cheek. Tears of joy. Damn. How pathetic could I get?

"I'm sorry," he said after a couple of minutes. His voice was very gentle and a little anxious.

I wiped my eyes with my hand and looked at him.

He was propped on one elbow, his brow creased. "Next time I promise I'll take it more slowly. It's just —"

"Next time?" I blurted out. "This time was so incredible that I can barely move."

A grin, like I'd never seen before, spread across his face. "You had me worried. I thought I'd lost my touch."

"That was an off performance for you?"

"I'll try to do better," he said humbly.

"You are clearly out of my league." Then I could have kicked myself. Now was not the moment to admit I was playing in the minors.

"No." His voice was serious. "That was amazing. I couldn't stop – I – well – I just want you."

My heart skipped a beat. "Only maybe not on the floor. I'm going to have rug burn if this keeps up."

He laughed and sat up. "We can't have that. I still have big plans for tonight."

I sat up and hugged my knees with my arms. "And what are those plans?"

He leaned over and started kissing me on the neck. “A little of everything.”

I could feel the desire begin to well up again. “Let’s go before I attack you.”

He stood and then helped me to my feet. I saw him look furtively for his jacket.

“No need.” I took his hand. “I’m as prepared as you are.”

I flipped off the lights and led him into my bedroom. The night was black, but the moon was high in the sky. It cast a silvery glow through the window, covering my bedroom with a strange half light. I felt disembodied somehow. As if I were watching myself from afar. This couldn’t be me. This couldn’t be him. He couldn’t be in my room actually wanting to do all of the things I’d fanaticized about.

I pulled back the covers and sat down on the bed. He sat down next to me and said, “You don’t know how many times I’ve thought about being here and doing this.” He kissed me again, only this time slowly, masterfully. I felt him take my shoulders and push me back against the pillows. I didn’t resist. I melted into him. He was so slow and so gentle this time that every touch caused excruciating pleasure. I wished it would never end. And then when I thought I couldn’t stand another moment, he reached down and touched me intimately, in gentle strokes that made my whole body tense in frustration.

“Stop, or I’m going to —”

“I can do it again.”

“But I want you. That’s what I lay awake thinking about.”

He pulled away. “How do you always know what to say to me?”

“I got it right?”

That grin again. “It’s good to feel needed. You said you were prepared?”

“Night stand to your right, top drawer.”

He pulled the drawer open and started to laugh. “You’re really playing to my ego.”

“They’re not the right size?” I’d taken a chance and gotten the ones for larger men.

“They’re the right size. I’m just flattered.”

“I do have some idea – or at least I was hopeful.” I’d once had a discussion with Nick about this. Comfort is apparently important with protection.

“Please tell me I’m not a disappointment,” James said.

“You couldn’t be.”

He struggled for a moment with the packaging, pulling it this way and that. “Flattering, but hard to open.”

I sat up and extended my hand. “Give it to me.” I took the square between my fingers. Nothing seemed to work. Finally, I bit down on the edge of a corner and ripped it with my teeth.

“Good job.”

“Old trick. Allow me.” It had been along time, but I thought I still remembered. I’d been told by a reputable source that I had a very good technique. Firm but smooth.

“How do you do that?” James’ eyes were heavy lidded and half closed.

“Practice,” I said innocently. He opened his eyes wide. A strange light in them. And then he pinned me with his arms, and we were one person, one body, moving together.

I came as quickly and as suddenly as before, my back arching and my whole body thrown down by the powerful explosion. James followed me. We lay, twisted together. Limp and languorous. Unable to move except to recover our breath. I felt myself drifting softly into slumber. James pulled the blanket up over us and wrapped me in his arms. I slept dreamlessly.

I woke the next morning and blinked at the honey-colored sunlight that poured through the window. Little flecks of dust glistened in the air. James shifted next to me, and I suddenly remembered where I was and what I’d been doing. I looked at him. He was supremely beautiful by the morning light. The cover had shifted exposing his shoulders and part of his chest. I sat there a moment, mesmerized by the smooth lines of his muscles. As if he were a statue. I dared not touch him.

I got out of bed and went silently to the bathroom. I caught sight of myself in the mirror over the sink and jumped. My hair was everywhere. I turned on the water and valiantly tried to get it under control. And the raccoon eyes had to go. My mascara had all migrated south. I rubbed and

rubbed until I got most of it off. Then I brushed my teeth. They felt wooly. I dug around in the cabinet and located the extra toothbrush I'd bought, just in case.

I went to open the door and realized I was completely naked. A wave of shyness swept over me. I wasn't sure about confronting the Adonis still miraculously sleeping in my bed. I grabbed my robe off the hook and put it on. I tied the frayed belt as tightly as possible. The robe was down at the heels, I had to admit. If only I'd thought of a robe when I was buying the underwear. Something frilly and partially see through. An experienced woman would have thought of that. I sighed and opened the door.

James was still sound asleep. I sat very gently on the bed and tucked my feet under me. His hair was down over one eye, so I reached over and smoothed it out of the way. He shifted again, but slept on. I'm not sure how long I sat there watching him, like a child with a prize possession. My mind furiously memorizing every detail.

Finally, he opened his eyes. "Oh good. You're still here."

"This is my apartment."

He smiled. "I thought for a moment I might be dreaming – that I couldn't be so lucky."

I felt my eyes well up again, but willed myself to stop. "You're not dreaming, and I'm the lucky one."

"Good morning, Liz. I hope to have many more mornings like this."

If I didn't say something obnoxious, I'd start to ball, so I said, "You've played your cards right so far."

He laughed. "And I plan to keep at it, so be prepared." He slid out from under the covers and stood up. If I'd been awed before, I was stunned now as he stood in the golden sunlight. He was more than handsome. He was otherworldly. The sun caught the red highlights in his dark hair, like a halo of fire. I realized with a shock that I'd never been with a man before. Boys yes, in all their gangly puppy-dog like charm. But not a man. I couldn't help but stare.

James seemed completely unconcerned with my gawking. Maybe he was used to women sitting slack jawed in front of him. In any case, he walked leisurely to the bathroom. This gave me an opportunity to admire him from all angles. Impossibly, he was even better from behind. I felt completely inadequate and tugged at my robe.

He closed the door, and I heard him washing up. He hummed a little. It was strikingly off key. The god had a flaw. Finally. Then I heard the sounds of teeth being brushed. He turned off the water and opened the door. "You were prepared," he said, holding up the tooth brush. "Now I don't feel so bad seducing you."

"I was an easy mark." Shoot. Why did I keep doing that?

He walked over and sat down beside me. "I hope you don't object if I try it again."

"No." But my heart sped up a little. Daylight was not my friend.

James sensed my hesitation. "Have I done something wrong?"

"Of course not." I crossed my arms in front of me.

James gave me a speculative look. "I don't think you need the robe after everything we did last night."

I didn't answer him.

"I thought you were beautiful then, and I'm not going to change my mind." He gave me that sweet tender look that made me lose all power of speech. "I want you." He started to undo the tie. "But I don't mind having to work for it."

When I lay there, finally divested of the terry cloth monstrosity and anxious with desire, he leaned down close to my ear and said, "Should I tell you what I think of you, or should I show you?"

"'Show' sounds more fun."

He started to kiss me again, but moved before I could wrap my arms around him. "Just lie still," he said as he moved down my neck, touching my skin gently with his lips. I found it increasingly hard to do. His mouth was on my breasts, making lazy circles with his tongue.

"You don't follow instructions very well," he said as I squirmed under him.

"Never have," I replied breathlessly.

I felt his low chuckle against my rib cage. "Maybe I could teach you a few things." His lips moved lower and lower.

“I’m sure I know everything you could teach me.” That was better. I actually sounded like I knew what I was talking about.

“A challenge.” He moved farther down.

I was panting by this point, trying desperately to hold on. I wanted to be a challenge, so I needed to think about something else. But what? I closed my eyes. Torts. There was nothing remotely sexy about that. Except, there was that one case. The guy who grabbed a girl and bit her on the behind at a party. It was some misguided come on or maybe he was a vampire in disguise. Anyway, we spent way too much time figuring out how many torts were involved with that scenario. Unless she wanted him to do it. I suppose it wouldn’t be so bad under the right circumstances. Now if James – I felt James’ tongue right where – oh my God. This wasn’t working at all.

He held my hips so I couldn’t move and ran his tongue slowly back and forth. I felt the warmth pool inside me. It was a burning searing delicious pain. I held it together as best I could. Torts. Think Torts. But I couldn’t hang on. I reached the top too quickly and crashed in flames. My entire body a trembling mass of gelatin.

James was moving his way back up. My skin felt raw to the touch. “You get an A plus for that,” I said, opening my eyes.

He smiled and kissed me on the shoulder. “It takes work to be the teacher’s pet.”

“I think it’s time for me to do some work.” I put an arm around him. “Tell me what you want.”

“I’ll let you do the honors.” He handed me the foil packet. I worked my magic such as it was. The performance couldn’t have been too terrible, because he seemed barely ably to speak. “I – uh – well – I thought you – ah – might like – oh – to be on top – um – this time?”

I stopped. “You are putting me to work, aren’t you? But, I like on top.”

He took a deep breath. “I thought you would. So do I.”

“You do?”

“It gives me a good view of your best feature.” He ran a finger gently around one nipple and then the other. “You have no idea what you do to me.”

“Show me,” I said as I settled myself on top of him. The feeling was even better. Deeper. More intense. I leaned back slightly and thought I might pass out. Had it ever been this good with Nick? Sneaking around didn’t give us much opportunity to really experiment. Speed and stealth were at a premium in those days.

Then again, I shouldn’t have underestimated speed. It didn’t take much for either of us, so we didn’t bother to prolong the agony. Afterwards, we lay curled up together while he gently ran his fingers up and down my back.

“Can we just do this all day every day?” I said.

“I might quit work if this was the alternative.”

“You could,” I said teasing him.

“But you’d always have your nose in a law book. That wouldn’t be much fun.”

“The law is very dry.” Except for Torts.

He chuckled. “You’re funny.”

“I don’t mean to be.”

“That’s why.”

“It mostly just comes out. My mom says I don’t have a good internal filter.” This date had provided ample proof of that.

He pulled me closer. “You’re honest. Don’t change.”

“I couldn’t even if I wanted to. I’m usually a bad liar. Okay actress, but bad liar.”

“Aren’t they one and the same?”

“Not necessarily. With acting, you have to believe it yourself.”

“I wouldn’t know. Acting was never my thing.”

“What was your thing? And no taking that the wrong way.”

“I’m tempted. Science, math, running.”

“Let me guess, cross country.”

“Yes.” He sounded surprised.

“It goes with the science and the math. Cross country teams attract high achieving loners. Not that I think you were a loner. Just the high achieving part.”

“I was sort of a loner. How did we get on this subject? I don’t think cross country has ever come up as a topic of conversation post —”

“It’s not your idea of pillow talk?”

“How about discussing the plans for the day.”

“You’ve got the day off?”

“It is Sunday. They do let us out of the cage sometimes. Unless you’ve got someplace you need to be?”

“I could just stay here.”

“So could I, but that wouldn’t be going all out to impress you.”

“I’m already impressed.”

“That was simple.”

“I’m easy. I think you’ve figured that out.” Another slip. Okay, I was a bad actress too.

He kissed me. “We could try this again, or I could make you breakfast.”

A real dilemma. “Maybe breakfast first and then —“

He smiled. “You read my mind.”

I started to get up and hesitated. “I can wear the robe now can’t I? Otherwise I’ll be cold.”

“If you must. You’re not going to make me wear a robe are you?”

“No. My planning only got as far as the toothbrush.”

“Any more and I might begin to wonder.”

“And you won’t be cold? Not that I object —“ Although it might prevent me from carrying on a coherent conversation.

“Let me go see where my clothes ended up.” He got out of bed and walked towards the living room. My eyes followed him hungrily. He needed to wear something or I wouldn’t be able to handle it. I slipped the robe back on and followed him.

“I’m amazed this is still in one piece.” He held up his shirt.

“I wasn’t that destructive was I?”

He looked at the shirt critically and then picked up my dress and laid them both on the arm of the couch. “It looks like everything is intact.”

“Let me help.” I picked up his belt and one silver shoe. Where had the other one gotten to? I’d almost rolled on top of it at one point. Leaning down, I saw that it was halfway under the sofa. I got down on my knees and pulled it out by the heel. When I sat up, I saw that James had slipped on his boxers. He had the rest of the items in his hands and was smiling mischievously.

“What?” I said suspiciously.

“The robe’s not doing what you think it’s doing for you.”

I looked down and realized that it was open almost to the waist. I dropped the shoe and closed it quickly, knotting the tie twice for good measure.

“I hope one day you’ll be comfortable with me.” There was a note of wistfulness in his voice.

I gave up all attempt at pretense. “I’m comfortable with you. It’s me I’m not totally there with. And I’m still in shock that you’re actually here.”

“I’m not going away.”

“I haven’t scared you off yet.”

“You’re saying that to be funny, right?” he said.

“I hope so. You never know.”

“You don’t frighten me. Now, what can I make you for breakfast?”

As it turned out, pretty much nothing. I had some Grape Nuts cereal and that was about it. I made coffee, and we stood in the kitchen drinking it and picking at the Grape Nuts.

Finally James said, "This is crazy. I don't even like Grape Nuts. Go get dressed and I'll take you to brunch."

"Toothbrush notwithstanding, we should probably stop back by your house."

He nodded. "I promise I won't take too long."

"I'd like to see your house."

"If I know you, you'll go from room to room memorizing every detail of my life."

I blushed. "I can't help it."

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean it in a bad way. I think I'm still in shock myself. All of this was so unexpected."

"Unexpected?" How could that be possible? He had to have noticed the lovesick way I stared at him every time we met.

"You're not like the other women I've known. I wasn't sure you'd ever – I didn't expect to kiss you."

"I'm glad you did, because I would never have had the nerve to ask you out."

"You could tackle a woman with a gun, but you couldn't ask me out?"

"They require different skills."

James laughed and then kissed me gently on the lips. “Go get dressed before I change my mind, and we never leave this apartment.”

After twenty minutes at James’ house, we were off again. He was right. I couldn’t help but look around. His taste was as I’d imagined it. Simple but traditional. And masculine. Nothing, except maybe an over-carved dining room set, said that a woman had lived there.

“Where are you taking me?” I said as his car swung around the curves of Forest Park.

“The Art Museum. The restaurant has a good Sunday brunch.”

“Is that what you were calling about?” He’d made a phone call as I went to change.

He nodded. “And then we can wander around the museum or do something else if you prefer.”

“I’d love to wander. I never have enough time to look at everything I want to see.”

The brunch was delightful. The quiche Lorraine was the best I think I’d ever had – just the right amount of bacon and enough butter in the crust. James and I fell back into that easy conversation we’d always had over food. Only better. The tension that made our meals horrible and wonderful at the same time had dissipated. I could finally sit too close to him and touch his knee under the table.

When we were done, we walked hand and hand through the galleries. I don’t claim to know much about art, but I had the advantage over James

because of my history degree. He'd seen many things in his European travels, but didn't have the historical construct to put it together. He asked me a number of questions. Some of which I could answer. Some I couldn't. My knowledge of Egyptian history is skeletal at best, so I wasn't much help when we stood staring at some burial figurines. And there was a clear-eyed bull head figure that stumped me completely.

After an hour or so, I caught him yawning when he thought I wasn't looking. "You've been very gallant, James, but we can go somewhere else if you are bored. I promise I'll stop talking at you."

He smiled ruefully. "It's fatigue, not boredom. I don't get much sleep nowadays."

"And I'm not helping."

"I don't want to miss a minute." He squeezed my hand.

"Then let's go back to one of our places and rest. I'm not offended."

"Hardly an impressive date."

"You've impressed me enough for one day. And I didn't get much sleep last night either."

"You're serious?"

I nodded.

"You're not just saying it to make me feel less like a loser?"

I shook my head.

He pulled our interlaced hands up and kissed the back of mine. "You are truly the best date ever."

"I'm trying." I smiled at him.

We drove back to my place since it was closer and just managed to miss Joe Henderson. He pulled away from the curb as we pulled up. I said a silent prayer of thanks and then cursed myself. Was there no end to my blasphemy? I needed to direct my prayers to higher and better things.

"That guy is starting to annoy me," James said as he opened the car door.

"He's nothing to worry about."

"Except he's always in the right place at the wrong time."

"Don't tell me you're jealous?"

"I have what he wants. Or at least I hope I do."

"I think I've been pretty clear."

We made our way up the inside stairs, and I struggled with the key yet again. Only this time, James didn't hold back. He stood very very close to me, with his hands protectively around my waist.

When we got through the door, I turned to him. "What was wrong last night? When we got out of the car, you were so distant I thought I'd done something to make you regret coming home with me."

"Regret? Hardly. I had to stand back or I would have ripped your clothes off in the hall."

My pulse jumped. "Maybe we could, um, before we —" I didn't get any farther. James propelled me towards the bedroom. It only took another two minutes of fumbling with buttons and zippers, before I was in his arms again. I

was getting comfortable all right. It was as good as it had been before, but I was really and truly exhausted by now. As my body lay trembling in the afterglow, I fell deeply and profoundly asleep.

When I woke up, it was just getting dark. I turned over to look at the clock and felt James' arm come around me. It was a little after six o'clock.

"Feel better?" I said as I turned back to face him.

"Much better. Did I tell you that you are the best date ever?"

"You may have mentioned it."

"I'll take you to dinner."

"I'd rather stay in. I'm going to have to send you home in a couple of hours."

"You will." He sounded depressed.

"Should we order Chinese for old times' sake?"

"That was the first date if we'd only known it."

"I usually don't scream at my dates," I said.

"I was trying to forget the first part."

"Except that you're not supposed to date when you're engaged to someone else."

"True, but that was the night I knew I wanted you."

"So maybe it's the 0.5 date and this is the 1.0."

"It's way more than a 1.0," he said.

"Depends on your scale."

"And there was the firm party. That started like a date."

“Ended like one too. Except for the police.”

“Your dress was ripped. That was a start.”

“I’m sure I looked pretty terrific by then,” I said sarcastically.

“You did.” He was serious.

“What?”

“Your dress was split all the way up on both sides, and you have great legs.” His hand moved slowly down and rested on my thigh.

“My second best asset?” I said archly.

“You have too many to count.”

“Are you going to keep at it or are we going to eat?”

He sighed. “Ever practical, Liz. We should eat. I need to keep up my strength.”

We called in the order and struggled into enough clothes to answer the door. And then the 1.0 date ended just like the 0.5 date, with laughter and beef with broccoli. James tried to teach me to use chopsticks – this time he could do it properly with his arm around me and his hand over mine. It led to another round of kissing but not much improvement. I resorted to a fork or I would have starved.

After helping me clean up, and more of something that would have gone farther if James hadn’t noticed the time, he headed for the door. We kissed goodbye with a kiss that was too long for any standard of decency, and then James said the sweetest words in the English language. “I’ll call you tomorrow.”

So, as I watched him walk down the stairs, not even the sound of Joe Henderson's car pulling up out front could dampen my enthusiasm for the best first date I'd ever had, or my anticipation of what tomorrow's call would bring.

The End