A Brief Sketch of the #1 Party Scene  
By Henry Englert

Congrats. Tonight is the two-month anniversary of when you and Monica first met. Most of the people you know stop talking altogether after their casual hook-ups, but you turned one into a two-month relationship. This is good.

It also happens to be Halloween, and you’re dressed as the Old Spice guy from the commercials. It’s a clever and easy costume – calling only for a towel and a small red tube of “Matterhorn” to carry around. It’s flattering too, this costume, because it shows off the arms and shoulders and torso you’ve been working so hard to sculpt, to warp to sizes you never thought you could ever hope to reach. This is good.

Monica will be here later. She’s going to a top-tier frat with some of her sisters first. As a part of the lower tier, your house is usually her secondary destination. You don’t blame her for that. Looking at things objectively, she’s in a top-tier sorority and is accustomed to top-tier treatment. Plus the brothers of your house can be pretty unpleasant if not outright creepy. Scott “Little Pussy” Lovejoy has mild Asperger’s.

That may be why Halloween is such a lively, high-traffic night for DTR, not because of Little Pussy or your frat’s collective creepiness, but because you all get to put on characters that aren’t you – or, in your case, characters that highlight the best parts of you. Tonight you aren’t wearing your Delta and Tau and Rho across your chest, Cyrillic letters now synonymous at Trent State with the more entitled, short, spray-tanned type of guy. (You’ve also heard people say your frat is “pencil-dicked” as a whole, but how could anyone know that for a fact?) No, tonight you are just the Old Spice guy. Look confident for a second. Now look unimpressed. You notice the two looks are kind of similar.

You find you can’t wait for Monica to get here. She’s top tier with olive-skinned, top tier looks – people are always impressed.

You call her and she doesn’t pick up, but you don’t worry too much because she’s with her friends.

The dance floor is packed with girls and your brothers, all in costumes designed to reveal and urge. The room is lit dark purple while pink and blue and yellow lights spin around the ceiling and scuffed-up walls in nice, warm circles. The house looks really nice tonight. You barely notice the fist-sized holes in the drywall.

Everything is going so damn well, but don’t look too excited. Act like you’ve been there before. Act like the DJ. The DJ knows what he is doing with his playlist. Every tune is a hit from yours and everyone else’s middle school days – always a good choice to play songs from those sticky glossy paper years when girls stood on one side of the room and guys on the other. This is good. You’re older now – you, the boys, the girls, and the DJ – and are thus free to finally come together and rub denim on denim. So to speak.

It is 11, your shift to run the front door. You stop outside and find that your costume did not account for the rural Ohio, late October climate. Mark “Number 1” Naimer, a brother from your pledge class, laughs at you as you shiver, but you laugh back because his laugh was one of understanding and not scorn. Like anybody else in Greek
life, Mark knows the pain of being half-naked and cold. Mark – dressed tonight as Batman – cares about you. He
loves his brothers more than anything, which is why the frat ranked him 1st in your class at the induction ceremony.
You were named 4th out of 7, which you have since decided is pretty good. Be thankful you aren't Scott
“Little Pussy” Lovejoy – Number 7, dead last.
It has recently become evident to you that Scott’s the brother they let in to be the Lighting Rod. The Easy
Target, whose membership in the brotherhood is more of a prolonged practical joke. He’s just such a dipshit. Also,
you are also beginning to realize that you spend a little too much time thinking about Scott.
After a minute at the door, two costume-less strangers come up your house steps without a word, not acknowledging
you or Number 1. You step in the way and ask them what’s up. They say their house – a middle tier house – has an
agreement with you guys for open access to eachother’s parties. Number 1 says he was denied access to their party
last week, and “you can’t just show up at our door with two guys and no girls.” One of the guys pleads a little –
“come on man, we had a deal.” Number 1 says, “fair is fair,” and that they aren’t getting in. The other stranger says,
“whatever, low-tier faggots, I don’t want to get roofied in there anyway.” To that you say a pleasant good bye, “buh
bye now,” which makes you seem like the bigger man. A blonde girl with sunglasses laughs lightly through a joint
over on the far side of the porch. The middle-tier strangers leave, shaking their heads and whispering threats.
You find the girl – dressed as the Third Blind Mouse (which explains the sunglasses at night) – is nice and
willing to share her joint with you and Number 1. You miss her name and don’t want to ask again. Her jokes come
quick, and some of them go over yours and Mark’s head for a second. She doesn’t laugh when you try to be witty,
but instead smirks and looks away like she’s saying “can you believe this kid?” Conversation is easy. When you make
a joke about Scott “Little Pussy” Lovejoy she seems to find it more sad than funny. Still, you feel calm and confident
with her. She leans on her white cane and is obviously very comfortable by herself, since the other two Blind Mice
are nowhere to be seen. You wish for a second you could be this comfortable by yourself.
You and her and Number 1 all shiver together when the biting Ohio breeze rolls through.
The fun stops.
You bound down the front steps when you see Monica, dressed as a tiger, being dragged along by two of
her costume-less sorority sisters. Her head is slumped down and her eyeballs slide around when you try to open her
eyelids. You ask the sisters what happened and their heads just roll around, their words slur beyond recognition.
Neither can finish a thought without trailing off, and you find yourself profoundly scared and annoyed. Worse, the
Third Blind Mouse snickers a little at them, and though you understand it’s because Monica and her friends look
ridiculous and the Mouse could have no way of knowing how exactly to react, your skin crawls a little. You pick up
Monica in your arms, make sure your Old Spice towel will stay in place, and order the other two
girls up to your room. One of them mumbles something along the lines of “don’t tell me what to do” as she follows
behind you. On the way up the second-floor steps you shake Monica a little, hoping that she throws up or some-
thing.
Ten minutes later you get your wish. You are holding Monica's hair while her head hovers over the toilet. She
is now conscious, but has yet to say a word in the English language. You hear a kid peeing one stall over, hear him
miss his target a little and splatter the tiled ground, and you wish now that you had a private bathroom. The pee-er
begins to laugh out loud at the dynamic, high-to-low-to-high growling noises Monica makes when she vomits, and
his laughter is in turn bounced around the tiled room, in and out of the cavernous showers in the corner (wherein
you pace back and forth some nights while the water runs hot), then back to you. Your skin crawls again, but you
can’t leave Monica to go fight the pee-er or anything like that. You just have to sit and listen to intermittent puking
and laughing while holding Monica’s top-tier, dark black hair and hoping she’s alright. You make up in your mind
that you are going to break up with her. You kind of hate her right now, though, for some reason it doesn't feel like
your right to do that. Being a DTR and all.

(To be continued)