

Schemers Scheme

By Rumble_deWriter

Published on Stories Space on 13 May 2019



A girl's gotta do what a girl's gotta do.

<https://www.storiesspace.com/stories/young-adult/-schemers-scheme-.aspx>

Newly polished toenails safely propped on the crowded coffee table, Darlene Barnes let out a long plume of cigarette smoke and waited for her friend to come back from the kitchen.

Waiting in silence, however, had never been her 'thing'. The thirty-something bottled-blonde looked around at the empty doorway to the kitchen. "You know it's hard for me to believe you're this messed-up. You've always been so self-confident. Now, it's like you don't know whether to fish or cut bait."

Renee Blanchard, the sexy, petite, former high school cheerleader and notorious object of much local gossip and lust, came back from the tiny kitchen carrying a bottle of Tab. "It's not that bad, really. I've just got this feeling, call it a hunch, that something's not right and I don't know why or what to do about it." She reclaimed her spot at the other end of the sofa. "The thing is, Jerry and I went out twice last week. Once for a swim at the country club, then a real date last Saturday. Both times he seemed, well, sort of distracted. Like, it was nice to be with me, but no big deal, either."

"You think maybe he's jealous and pouting because you went out with Rowdy the weekend before while he was out of town?" Renee shrugged and reached for her own cigarettes. "Could be. That's what I counted on. We've done the casual dating bit long enough. It seemed time to start getting serious. I figured a little jealousy would do the trick."

She shook her head. "Maybe I read things wrong. I mean he never asked about what I did. At first, I figured somebody had told him about my dating Rowdy and, like you said, he was pouting. Now, I'm beginning to wonder if he just doesn't care."

"I doubt it." Darlene leaned forward and inspected the second coat of bright red polish she'd just applied to her toenails. "Maybe he's just trying to act cool."

The women smoked in silence, pondering the situation, until Darlene started rummaging through the clutter on the coffee table. "Have you seen my nail file?" She paused and looked over at Renee. "You

know, I just had a thought. You think it might be something that happened during your date?"

Renee picked the file off the floor and handed it over. "Well, I might have carried on more than usual, you know, showing how much I'd missed him and all, doing a lot of the talking, trying to act like I was interested in whatever it was he'd been doing. Other than that and a bit more action when parking, nothing."

"Didn't you say his old buddy, Abby Mitchell, and another couple went with him to that wedding? You and Abby aren't exactly best friends. Think she might have put a move on him just to spite you?"

"Maybe. Who knows? Miss High Society would do anything, and I do mean, anything, to get at me."

"Speaking of doing anything," said Darlene, "I take it you and Jerry still haven't done the old, dirty deed?"

"No, not yet. The timing's never felt right. She shifted uncomfortably, then smiled. "I mean, you don't think I went out with Rowdy just to make Jerry jealous, do you?"

"Is that why you're keeping Rowdy on a string?"

"You know it. Jerry's nice. But sometimes he can be, well, too damn nice. Rowdy's not my idea of a husband, but he's a great party guy, which can be," Renee winked at Darlene, "you know, real nice."

They both giggled. "Honey, maybe old Jerry's just getting tired of waiting for some action. Look, this is 1970, not 1870. Even if nookie depravation isn't the main problem, give that boy some good lovin' and I promise you'll have his undivided attention.

Renee grinned. "I would hope so."

"The trick is," continued Darlene, "to act just a little confused and vulnerable afterward, like it was so incredible you're all shook up. Say you never felt this way before. It's a sneaky little way of suggesting that, even if there might have been one or two others, he's the best."

Renee pretended to take notes. "Act confused and say, 'felt.' Is that right, Professor Meeks?"

"You got it, girl. That way he'll get all full of himself and want to be your knight in shining armor and go around saving your honor—for himself, of course. Once he's your big, brave protector, you say something about Rowdy, and then start reeling old Jerry in."

"Darlene, you won't do. Does any guy ever have a chance around you?"

"Not if I have my way, honey. They never have and never will. Just ask my poor husband."

"So you think it's time notorious Renee let Mr. Jerry have that special present he's been wanting?"

"A girl's gotta do what a girls gotta do. And just between us, I've heard some say its kind of fun."

Renee laughed, then checked her watch and stood. "I've gotta scoot. But do you remember that joke you told Buddy, about how you were giving up sex because it was too messy, too much work, and the positions were ridiculous?"

"Oh, yeah. I had him going for a minute. You should've seen his face."

"Well, to tell you the truth, that's pretty much how I really do feel. I love everything leading up to it. You know, the flirting and the dates and making-out. And there are times when I do get a little turned-on and really want the guy. But most of the time, even with Rowdy, well, you know. Still, I suppose if it has to be done, it has to be done."

"That's the spirit."

"Because I promise you," continued Renee, in a flat, dead-serious voice, "Abby Mitchell knocked me out of everything I wanted in high school. But this time, I'll be the winner with her best friend as the prize."