

## The Elite

By Jeff Hill

We meet every Tuesday and Thursday morning for breakfast at the Student Union, and it was a tradition that we had been keeping up for close to three years now. Janice, Tom, Adrienne, and I met at a Youth Leadership Conference the week before our freshman year and were fast friends, sitting in the corner of the conference and quietly judging all those who, God forbid, dared to judge us.

We have all cut the throats of our former selves and become the elite on campus, each a leader in his or her own respective fraternity or sorority house. We are comprised of the best of the best. Adrienne is a homecoming queen and daughter of a wealthy philanthropist. Janice is a very well-respected lab assistant in the biology department and one of the self-proclaimed greatest young minds of our time. I am a journalist and three-time published poet who has my sights on law school. And then there's Tom, a highly-decorated ROTC member who has done everything up to now in order to one day reach the White House. We're unstoppable. But what's our secret? It's simple, really. Our breakfasts.

"Did you see Cameron Alan the other day?" Janice asks, counting the calories on the back of her Starbucks iced coffee and kicking me from underneath the table.

"Didn't she sleep with Kyle Borden?" Adrienne asks, completely missing the fact that the question was aimed at me. "Or was that just another one of her 'almost oops's' that she's so famous for?"

My phone rings, the obnoxious new Lady Gaga hit that I secretly loathe but publicly adore in order to remain credible in more than a few social circles fills the union. Adrienne laughs at me, as I tell our final member we are located in the same John Wilkes booth we have always sat.

"John Wilkes booth?" Janice questions. "Nice."

Adrienne is waving to her arch-rival and near-equal, Tom, as he arrives late to our meeting, dressed in fatigues. It is pretty much common knowledge that Tom and Adrienne will end up marrying each other, though they insist on keeping everyone in the dark about their affair. Tom is dating a girl that he graduated from high school with and Adrienne has a reputation of being somewhat of a whore, but they both insist on keeping up the charade of a love-hate relationship. I'll bet their sex is amazing.

"No, you sperm dumpster," Janice interrupts my train of thought. "That was Cammie Smith. Cameron Alan was that dumb girl who got hit by the bus a while back."

"Oh," Adrienne says, looking a little bit embarrassed by her lack of social knowledge. "No, what

about her?”

“Nothing, really. Just she’s fatter than usual.”

“What the hell does that have to do with anything?” she asks, acting like she actually has a conscience and that this isn’t exactly what we have been doing for the last three years.

“Seriously,” Janice begins again, “She gets hit by a bus, gets a crap-load of money from the university and the city, and then she just lets herself go. Like she’s a fucking celebrity or something.” She goes back to reading the label on the back of her iced coffee.

“Hey, fat girls need love, too!” I say. “Right, Tom?”

He laughs, thinking of the punch line a fraction of a second before I can get there. Simultaneously, we both shout, “They just have to pay!” A well-deserved and extremely fratty high-five happens.

The girls laugh, and I pull my credit card out of my pocket, noticing that I forgot to pop the collar on my polo this morning, and tell Tom to go and get me some Burger King because the line looks like it has died down. Without hesitation, he walks over to the food court and stands in line.

“How do you do that?” Adrienne asks.

“Same way you do, A.”

She looks puzzled, and I fill her in on a secret. “He’s in love with me. Like an abused kitten, he will do anything for anyone who shows him a little bit of affection.”

“So you’re gay now?” she asks, only a little curious. “That’s so ridiculously cliché, Adam. You know that, right? I mean, come on. And besides, doesn’t Tom have a girlfriend?”

I look at Adrienne. “I don’t know. Does he?”

Adrienne gives me the stink-eye and I give it right back to her.

“Well,” she begins, “Are you two just besties with testes or are we going to like, not be able to tell gay jokes now or something?”

“You’re worrying about this much more than you need to, A.”

I can tell that the idea of Tom and I being together really bothers her, so I will keep up the charade as long as it amuses me. He’s a good-looking enough guy, but let’s face it: It’s not my nature. Body hair freaks me out and, well... He’s just an annoying idiot when it comes right down to it. I can’t ever see myself having an intelligent conversation with him. He’ll make a good President someday.

“You mean, like, what do gay horses eat?” Tom asks, returning from the Burger King line that was less than twenty feet away from our usual table. Everyone looks at him, waiting for the juvenile punch line. He raises his arm in the air and lets his wrist go limp, practically yelling, “Haaaaay!” No one laughs, so he

tries again. "Okay. Well, what's a gay man's favorite letter? Anyone? G's!"

"What the fuck is this, Thomas?" I interrupt his attempt at being a comedian.

"What? I got you two croissants, like you always want."

"Jesus, fag. I wanted sausage, not bacon."

"That's what she said!"

Adrienne slugs him and calls him a retarded mutant. Janice is studying for a lab practical she has in two hours.

"Sorry, dude. Is it still okay, or do you want me to go take it back and get another one?"

I don't say anything, just glare at him and take a bite.

Breakfast continues as Tom tells us that Alex Philippe is going to be kicked off the football team. He was apparently arrested for speeding on the interstate and was taken in for possession of some kind of narcotic. Maybe our team will stop sucking now that the worthless sack of shit quarterback isn't going to be in the picture anymore.

When the girls begin lying to themselves and thinking that they actually know anything about sports and start talking about the fact that the defensive line is actually the downfall of our team, we are all thankfully distracted by Simon Craig's failed pickup lines at the café directly behind us.

"If I told you your body was hot, would you hold it against me?" The girl doesn't say a word, and so he tries again. "So, did you know that my dad owns like half of the city?" Still no response, so he gets desperate and tries for a third and final time. "I lost my phone number the other day. Can I have yours?"

At this point, Tom can't contain himself.

"Dude! Robert Downey Syndrome... She's deaf."

The girl turns around and almost knocks the coffee out of Simon Craig's hands. "Hello. Excuse me," she says.

We laugh for a while, and wait for him to leave. He tried to sit with us one day, but we just told black jokes until he left. Who knew black dudes weren't fans of extremely racist humor? "What's long and hard on a black person?" I asked him. "The first grade."

"So... Deaf chick's gone." I say.

"Don't," Janice says.

"Helen Keller, anyone?" Tom suggests.

"Shut up," Adrienne warns. "Seriously..."

"Fuck you, ginger cunt. It's not like you have a soul." I say, furthering the hatred between Adrienne

and myself. She's hated me ever since I wrote an article about her house, exposing them all as superficial whores. In her defense, most sororities are that way.

"Why did Helen Keller's dog run away?" Tom asks.

"You would, too if your name was Naaahrg!" I answer. "What's her favorite color? Velcro. Why didn't she scream when she fell off the icy cliff? Because she was wearing mittens!"

"Hey," Janice interrupts. "I have one! How did her parents punish her? They put a plunger in her toilet! How else? They stepped on all of her books with golf shoes. That didn't work, so what was their last punishment for poor Helen? They washed her hands out with soap! Ha!"

"Jesus, Jan. You're channeling your inner poet," I tell her, impressed with my protégé.

I think I may have corrupted her. Still, we've had moments every now and then, and it's really hard to keep up my playboy charm. One day I may end up marrying her, but there's no sense in telling her that. Sure, she's driven, intelligent, and beautiful in every way, but she'll never actually make as much money as I will. This sad truth will inevitably draw her back to me, where she will raise our kids and vacuum my house.

"Okay, okay, okay. Isn't that enough?" Adrienne pleads.

"One more," Tom says. "Why can't Helen Keller drive?"

It's too easy, I think to myself. Don't finish it, Tom. We're just going to go on another tangent if you finish it. Don't finish it...

"Because she's a woman!" he screams.

Great.

"So are we going to talk about people and judge them, especially for things that they can't help?" Adrienne asks. "You know, like we always do? What about Tanya Sampson? I heard something about her being rushed from her dorm room to the hospital last night. They say that she almost died from alcohol consumption. She's a fucking freshman! Isn't that insane!"

"Speaking of freshman... Whatever happened with that love letter girl, Adam? Did she ever write to you again after that little free-verse poem thingy that she left at your house?" Adrienne asks.

"Yes," Janice nudges, "What did ever happen with that?"

I think about the words of the poem. They still give me chills, a characteristic that is very uncommon among the Elite. I got it the day after one of our huge four-house parties. "You killed me last night," it said. "I'm not sure if you meant to do it. But that's not important. The important thing is that I'm dead. Gone. Permanent. You killed me last night. I wonder if you'll be at the funeral. If you cry doesn't really matter. It's

still your fault. Yours. Always. You killed me last night. I can't help but wonder why. Not that I really care. You're going to figure it out soon enough. Alone. Forever."

"Don't know," I say, almost on impulse. "She probably off'ed herself because she couldn't be with me.

"Pathetic little beef curtain," Tom says.

"I heard Doug Freeman is running for student government again this year," Janice reports, changing the subject. "I wonder if he'll continue to post those ridiculous posters all over campus."

"You mean the ones where his head is always tilted at an angle to make up for his lazy eye?" I'm trying not to laugh, mostly because Doug is a kid that I depledged last semester. You know, one of those ones who doesn't realize just how fucking worthless they are?

Unimpressed, Tom tells a joke... or two... or three... "Why are there so many homes for battered women? Because they just don't fucking listen! What do you call a period? A bloody waste of good fucking time! Why do women take longer to reach orgasm? Who cares?" He laughs at his own jokes, as usual, and I finish my croissant. You know, the one that wasn't ordered correctly.

"So does anyone have any more juicy gossip about the Date-a-Beta?" Adrienne asks. If only she knew.

"I haven't heard much. Isn't it a guy from your house, Adam?"

I glare at her, then change the subject.

"I'm going to go out on a limb here," I say, addressing Janice and Adrienne and acknowledging that Tom is lost in his own little world yet again, "Are you girls planning on signing up for graduate school next year? Or are you actually going to brave the unknown world?"

"Well," Adrienne says, only partially listening, "My daddy's going to be in Portugal for a year or two, so I guess I'll be traveling around anywhere but there with his credit cards for a while. Why do you ask, Adam?"

"We're in college, A. That's kind of the reason. You know, to build and work for a future of some kind. Something that you actually earned, something that you can say is... Nevermind. I have no idea why I'm telling you this, you brain-dead slut-sack."

"Hey! You'll like this one, Adrienne! What's the difference between a paycheck and a penis? Do you know this one? You don't have to ask a girl to blow your paycheck!"

"Shut the fuck up, Tom," I say. "That has nothing to do with anything that we're talking about here."

"Hey, it's relevant." He says. "It's... you know, topical."

“Big words, there guy. You must be a college student,” says Adrienne, giving him a wink. I can’t hold it in much longer. When are they going to just tell us what we already know?

“How do you know when it’s time to wash the dishes and do the laundry, Adam? Check inside your pants. If you have a penis, believe you me, sir... it’s not time.”

Just then a girl with bad acne walks by, wearing a pair of faded blue jeans and a horrendously tacky jean jacket that looks like it was probably featured in a hobo’s Christmas catalogue.

“Someone’s going to the denim party tonight.” Adrienne says.

I want to laugh, but I hate her, so I don’t.

“You know what makes drinking a nice cold beer better than a dating a crazy liberal feminist, Adam?”

“Shut up!” I yell, tired of his shit.

“Dude, it’s a good one!”

He sits there and we’re all silent for about a minute. He’s moping, pouting. “Sorry, Tom. Tell it.”

“The reason a beer is better than a feminist is because it will never leave you, it will never judge you, and it will never accuse you of being a sexist when you reference the new movie starring ‘Gene Hackman,’ as opposed to ‘Gene Hackperson.’” He pauses, then abruptly adds. “Sorry, that was pretty bad.”

“That doesn’t even make sense,” I say.

An emo-looking skinny kid walks by. I’m sure Tom has a bunch of jokes at this kid’s expense, but he stays silent, his eyes drifting noticeably into Adrienne’s cleavage.

“I’m going to Israel this summer, and if that works out well, I may do some grad student work there.” Janice says.

Or not.

“Is that like some sort of Jew thing?” I ask, genuinely pissed that she didn’t tell me about her plans.

“Hey, what do you call free ham, Jan? A Jewish dilemma!”

“Stop it, Tom,” Adrienne interrupts. “This is serious.”

“I was just trying to...”

“Stop.”

“So when were you planning on telling us this, Janice?” I ask, fighting back the rage that is building from within me. “When were you planning on telling me? When we graduated? When Tom and Adrienne finally told us that they were a couple? When the fucking world ended? Jesus!”

I crumple up my Burger King bag and throw it at her, hitting her in the face.

“Two guys walk into a bar...” Tom starts.

“Fuck. You. Tom.”

“I’m sorry, Adam. I didn’t know you’d react this way. I honestly didn’t think you’d even care. None of you. I mean, look at us. We are the Elite. We sit here every Tuesday and Thursday morning and judge the world around us. We sit here and spread rumors about people who mean nothing and count for nothing. All of this, all of what we do... it’s fun, but what’s it all for?”

She pauses.

“Nothing!”

She gets up and walks away. I look at my watch and realize that I’m already late for my class, where the emo-looking kid will unfortunately sit next to me and pretend to fit in for fifty minutes. Tom and Adrienne look like dogs in heat. I’m graduating in a week and I have nothing to show for it. As I walk away, I faintly hear another of Tom’s lame-ass jokes.

“So a dyslexic guy walks into a rab...”

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