

Carmen, my girlfriend, has been very insistent for several days: she wants us to get a tattoo for our anniversary. "A token of eternal commitment", or so she tries to sell it to me.

I hate tattoos, I dread needles. I imagine the ink puddling on my skin... poisoning it!

"Dinner instead?" I snap at her, trying to get her to stop this one-off fever. "Our first tattoo... Wouldn't that be nice?" she repeats, obsessively, every now and then.

Finally I agree: I love her.

She has it all figured out. A friend of hers is a tattoo artist, he gives us a price: 2 for 1. We get to the studio, she goes in first. I hear the tattoo machine in the distance, the "Relax! Don't move," that infernal buzzing sound!... I get the hot flashes, I pick up a magazine to distract myself. Fuck, it's full of piercings and nipple piercings and earrings!

"What do you think?"

I look at her in fright: she's got my name tattooed all over her clavicular area. I start to panic... the letters snake across her breasts wrapped in cling film. He looks at me, smiles.

"I want it the same size. Here we're even!"

"She's crazy!" She brought me Trankimazin: she knows I'm terrified of needles. I take three: all for love.

Rich in ornamentation, *Carmen* in gothic typography dresses my chest after the session. At the sight of the tattoo she starts to laugh. Nervous laughter.

"I don't know what's wrong with her. It's her name..."

We barely make it home: the effect of the alprazolam still lingers. I open the door. Two friends are waiting for us in the living room, surrounded by suitcases. "They're having a *pyjama party* and I'm the last to know?"

"Fuck you, Gonzalo!" I hear from behind me.

Our friends look at me with contempt.

"Did you think you could fool me, you bastard? Look at me, now you'll remember all your life *who* I am. You've got me etched on your skin..."

"What?" I stammer with saliva between the corners of my mouth. "And you've got me on yours..."

"Ha," he says as he removes the protective plastic. "Ha!" he emphasises as he runs his hand over my name, blurring it. "2 for 1 my ovaries! You're the only one who got a tattoo here."

"It's fake!" I'm completely petrified. Her friends take the opportunity to take my girlfriend's belongings. The switch goes off: "It's her *backup*. In case the pills wear off, in case I do something crazy."

"What? Why?"

"Pili saw you making out with one in Chacotero. So don't even bother..." she says as she closes the door, combing my hair with her ink-soaked fingers.

I sit down on the sofa. The pills wear off; my neurons regain power.

I look at myself in the mirror. "I hate her. How could she do this to me? La Pili... Lying bitch..."

There's a knock at the door. I open the door. It's... Carmen?

Start my film! Does she spit on my chest? She passes her hand: the tattoo smudges.

"Happy anniversary! *Happy 28th December*," she lifts up her jacket, a small tattoo peeking out. "Do you see it? This is the real thing."

I hate her fucking jokes! I hate her, but I love her.



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