

## Delicious, Delicious Muffins

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A short play

By Mark Chrisler

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## DELICIOUS, DELICIOUS MUFFINS

Bradley and Vanessa. A table between them. On it, muffins.

BRADLEY

We fell in love over our mutual appreciation for muffins. We were in fifth grade and it was field day. Capture the flag, tug-of-war, something called “roly-poly,” and the rest of it. And the reward, for all of them: muffins. Delicious, delicious muffins. Our favorite. But neither of us were big “winners,” exactly. Vanessa’s photosensitive, and I’ve got a condition oft diagnosed as “bad attitude.” Co-morbid to that: a lack of cooperation, bad social skills, lack of hand-eye coordination. Being a very, very bad loser. The important thing was... no muffins for us. No muffins earned. At the end of the day, once all the scrumptious trophies had been handed out, there was only one muffin remaining, and we were told by our teacher to divide it among ourselves.

“Muffins are my favorite.”

VANESSA

“Muffins are MY favorite.”

“We could play for it,” I suggested to her.

VANESSA

Play what?

BRADLEY

I don’t know... Mario 3?

VANESSA

How about... truth or dare?

BRADLEY

Nah. How about the opposite.

VANESSA

What’s the opposite?

BRADLEY

Dare to lie.

VANESSA

What’s that?

BRADLEY

It's easy. Whoever can tell the biggest lie wins the muffin.

VANESSA

Okay. I'll go first: I don't have a crush on you.

BRADLEY

Which was, it turned out, a pretty good one. But I countered with something superior:

"I haven't wet my pants in two years."

Tada: the muffin was mine. And so was Vanessa. Over time we got real close: first date, first kiss, first time saying "I love you," first... all the things. And whenever there was one muffin around, we'd play:

"Dare to lie."

VANESSA

Um... I didn't wear this bra yesterday.

BRADLEY

Nice, well done.

VANESSA

(moving the muffin to her)

Thank you.

BRADLEY

Hold on, hold on. Good, but I can beat that. Let's see... Oh! Got it. I really like your parents.

VANESSA

Bravo.

BRADLEY

Thank you.

VANESSA

How do you do it?

BRADLEY

"I care. That's what it comes down to."

And I did. Care. About her. About muffins. About winning. And it's not often that one muffin is sitting around, begging you to compete. But it happens. On occasion. And I always won. Except the last time. A PTA meeting for our oldest daughter, Kiley.

Talking about changing the playground from pebbles to cedar chips. In the back, coffee. Orange juice. And, by the time we made our way to the table, one muffin.

VANESSA

Dare to lie?

BRADLEY

I'll go first. Let's see... Oh! How about "I definitely fed the cat before we left."

VANESSA

Really?

BRADLEY

Yep.

VANESSA

You're off your game, Bradley.

BRADLEY

Oh? Prove it.

VANESSA

Easy. Ready?

BRADLEY

Sure.

VANESSA

"I don't know what happened to the bumper, someone must've nicked it while I was in the store."

(moves for the muffin)

I'll be taking that.

BRADLEY

No, no. That's not better.

VANESSA

You didn't feed the cat for an hour? I wrecked the car!

BRADLEY

Wrecked... it was a ding. Let's go again.

VANESSA

You're such a bad loser.

BRADLEY

I'm not. Let's go again.

VANESSA

Fine... I really love when your friends come over to get drunk and play poker every week.

BRADLEY

Okay, okay. Try this one: "I would never, ever cheat on you, honey."

VANESSA

What?!

BRADLEY

I'll be taking that...

VANESSA

"Oh God! You make me come over and over."

BRADLEY

"I'm so sorry your mother died."

VANESSA

"You're so funny."

BRADLEY

(pause, then walking right up to her face)

"I love you."

(taking the muffin back to his side)

What? Speechless? Don't have anything?

VANESSA

Just one. One last fucking lie, Bradley.

BRADLEY

Yeah? I'd love to hear it.

VANESSA

"Muffins are my favorite."

(she exits)

BRADLEY

So, that last one, I lost. But at least I have my muffins.