

BETTER THAN FLOWERS

By Eirik Gumeny

Cast of Characters:

ANNA LEE, overly ambitious high school student

MR. TRAVARIS, teacher in Anna Lee's school, recently deceased

LUKE, Anna Lee's older brother

Setting:

Evening. An empty field in the middle of nowhere. ANNA LEE is standing over MR. TRAVARIS'S lifeless body, center stage. She is waiting impatiently for LUKE.

[LUKE enters, carrying two shovels.]

LUKE

Seriously, sis. This is the last time. You can't keep murdering your teachers just 'cause they give you a bad grade.

ANNA LEE

It was a B! It would have kept me off the high honors list!

LUKE

We've been over this, Anna Lee. That's not justifiable grounds for homicide.

ANNA LEE

Well, when I'm president it will be.

LUKE

I'm sure it will. But you're not going to get to be president unless we get this body buried. [LUKE hands ANNA LEE a shovel] Here.

ANNA LEE [rolling her eyes]

I know how to do this, Luke.

[LUKE and ANNA LEE begin digging upstage from the corpse.]

ANNA LEE

He also tried to send me home for dressing inappropriately.

LUKE

Were you dressed inappropriately?

ANNA LEE

No.

ANNA LEE

Maybe.

LUKE

Anna Lee...

ANNA LEE

OK, yes, fine, I was dressed inappropriately! But he didn't need to threaten to send me home! He could've just asked me to put my underwear back on.

LUKE [stops shoveling]

What were you doing, Anna Lee?

ANNA LEE

Nothing! I wasn't doing anything! They were just... making me uncomfortable.

LUKE

Oh, well... that's fine. I guess. [LUKE begins shoveling again]

ANNA LEE [under her breath]

Seriously, YOU try getting fucked up the ass when you've still got your panties on.

LUKE [stops shoveling again]

Anna Lee.

ANNA LEE [stops shoveling]

What?

LUKE

You're just a kid! You shouldn't be having [whispering] sex with anyone, much less getting... [whispering] "fucked up the ass" in school. What the hell were you thinking? Was it that Noel kid you've been seeing? I bet it was that Noel kid. That son of a bitch. When I find him, I'm gonna...

ANNA LEE

I wasn't having sex with Noel.

LUKE

It wasn't one of the McArthur brothers, was it? Those boys... You don't want to get mixed up with them. I've heard... things.

ANNA LEE

It wasn't one of the McArthur boys, Luke. [under her breath] Like I'd waste my time with a BOY.

LUKE

OK, one, I can hear you, we're two feet away. And, two, what does that even mean? I guess... I guess it's alright if you like girls, but you said you were getting... I mean, how does that... how does that work?

ANNA LEE

It wasn't a girl, Luke. I was having sex with Mr. Johnson.

LUKE

OK, now I'm really confused. If you were [whispering] having sex with Mr. Johnson, why would he complain about you being dressed inappropriately?

ANNA LEE [shaking her head]

This [pokes MR. TRAVARIS with the shovel] isn't Mr. Johnson.

LUKE

Then who is this?

ANNA LEE

Mr. Travaris.

LUKE

So... Mr. Travaris... walked in on you... [circling hand] with Mr. Johnson?

ANNA LEE

No.

[LUKE leans on his shovel.]

LUKE

OK, sis. I need the whole story and I need it now.

ANNA LEE

OK, fine! [she takes a deep breath] Mr. Johnson, my math teacher, said I was only getting an A. So I went after school to talk to him and he said that if I let him do me, he'd give me the A+. And, I mean, I wanted the A+, so I let him fuck me. [she shrugs] No big deal. But then Mrs. Jones walks in...

LUKE

Who's Mrs. Jones?

ANNA LEE

My social studies teacher. Let me finish.

LUKE

Sure...

ANNA LEE

Then Mrs. Jones walks in and Mr. Johnson and I both kind of panic, 'cause, I mean, alright, this isn't the worst thing we could be doing, but, still, no one wants to get caught. Mrs. Jones says it's cool, though, as long as we let her videotape us. Her girlfriend's got a voyeuristic streak and this would be better than flowers, she says. So me and Mr. Johnson look at each other and we're like, OK, fine, you can videotape us. But nobody has a camera. So that's when they sent me out to the AV room to get one.

LUKE

Why didn't one of them just go get it?

ANNA LEE

'Cause Mr. Johnson was winded and needed to catch his breath, and Mrs. Jones hates Mr. Travaris.

LUKE

Mr. Travaris...

ANNA LEE

Is in charge of the AV room.

LUKE

OK...?

ANNA LEE

So, anyway, I go up to the AV room to get a camera from Mr. Travaris and he asks why and I tell him it's for a social studies project for Mrs. Jones and he says OK, that's cool, and he gives me the camera and everything's fine, but then, when I'm

leaving, my skirt kind of flares up or something and Mr. Travaris catches a glimpse of my bare ass and pops a fucking gasket.

I'm thinking of too many other things right then to come up with a decent excuse, so I just blurt out the truth. I tell him what we've got going on downstairs, thinking maybe I can just get him in on it, too, but he's not having it. He starts going on and on and on about the declining state of society and how kids today have no morals and how he's gonna report Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Jones and they're gonna go down and we're all fucked and blah blah blah... so I cracked him across the face with the camcorder.

LUKE

Jesus Christ, Anna Lee! You know better than that! You can't just act on every stupid... These things need to be planned! [sighs] Alright, so what happened next?

ANNA LEE

Well, then I grabbed another camcorder. I've met Mrs. Jones' girlfriend and she's really nice and I didn't want to ruin her surprise.

LUKE

I meant with the DEAD teacher.

ANNA LEE

Oh, right. I hit Mr. Travaris with the camcorder and then he fell down and caught his head on the corner of his desk on the way to the floor. He hit it pretty hard and he was just kind of laying there bleeding and not breathing, so I figured I was good for a little while.

LUKE

You know how sloppy that is, sis.

ANNA LEE

I know, I know. But I still had to finish up with Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Jones, and the only other person in the building was

the janitor, and I've got pictures of me giving him head - and his wife's address - so I knew he wasn't gonna say anything if he found out.

LUKE

You can't just leave dead teachers lying on the floor, Anna Lee!

ANNA LEE

I had to! You've been out of high school too long, Luke. You have to do all kinds of crazy shit now if you want to get anywhere! And when it comes right down to it, a dead teacher is a lot less dangerous than two living ones still waiting to drill you up the ass.

LUKE

Can you please stop describing it so... callously? I don't want to know about all the sordid... favors you're performing. It makes me uncomfortable.

[LUKE begins shoveling again.]

ANNA LEE

Fine, whatever. Sorry to offend your delicate female sensibilities.

[LUKE continues shoveling.]

ANNA LEE

Oh, come on, Luke, it was a joke! Jesus, you're always so serious.

[LUKE continues shoveling.]

ANNA LEE

OK, fine. So Mr. Travaris is dead and he's just laying there, so I stop worrying about him and I grab another camcorder 'cause that one's all cracked from hitting his face and then I run downstairs 'cause I still need to... finish what I was doing earlier, only by now Mr. Johnson's got his pants back up and he's yelling at Mrs. Jones and she's yelling back, something

about the Challenger disaster or something. He's trying to argue that NASA was testing the effects of weightlessness on fauna, and she's just screaming, "There were no God damned deer on the space shuttle" over and over. But he's not listening, so she gets pissed and shoves him. He starts falling backwards, trips over his chair, cracks HIS head on HIS desk, and now he's laying there in a pool of blood, too. Mrs. Jones starts flipping out, and then she sees me and starts flipping out even more, grabs a letter opener from the desk and starts waving it at me, calling me a hussy and stuff, so I start calling her names, which just pisses her off even more, and she comes running at me so I back out into the hallway and slam the door shut, only she's really, really close, so when I do she plows into the glass and... and now I've got another dead teacher on my hands.

[LUKE stops shoveling and hangs his head.]

ANNA LEE

Anyway, I call Joe - Joe's the janitor - to help clean all this up, and me and him carry Mr. Johnson and Mrs. Jones down to the incinerator. He starts rooting through the shelves there, talking about how we're going to need bleach and stuff, and I tell him we still need to go get Mr. Travaris, but now Joe's looking at me kind of suspiciously, and I start thinking the blackmail blow- the blackmail PHOTO isn't going to be enough anymore, and... and I push him into the incinerator, too.

[LUKE just looks at ANNA LEE.]

ANNA LEE

So they're all burning up and everything's fine, but there's really not enough room in there for another body anymore, so I go back upstairs, clean up all the blood and the broken stuff and whatever, and then I get Mr. Travaris and I drag him out here and... and... and that's when I called you.

LUKE

Because you needed a shovel.

ANNA LEE

Because I needed a shovel.

LUKE

You said you needed help, Anna Lee.

ANNA LEE

Well, I did, kind of, in a manner of speaking...

LUKE

Look, don't get me wrong, sis. I'm proud that you've got far more ambitious intentions in that head of yours than anything Mom or I ever tried for. But I'm worried that all these... devious machinations of yours are distracting you from the basics. Nevermind all the [whispering] sex - I'll leave that one for Mom - but, seriously, Anna Lee, you didn't think a single one of these killings through. Honestly, I should just let you bury Mr. Travaris here all by your lonesome as punishment.

ANNA LEE

It would've taken me at least another hour to get to the hardware store, Luke!

[LUKE looks at ANNA LEE. She makes puppy dog eyes at him.]

LUKE

This is the last time, Anna Lee. I'm your brother, I'm here for you when you need me, but I'm not your damn gopher, alright? I've got my own problems to deal with.

ANNA LEE

I know, I'm sorry...

[LUKE and ANNA LEE resume shoveling.]

LUKE

When we're done here, you're helping me kill my landlord, OK? He actually deserves it. Had the nerve to charge ME for the

exterminator I had to call to take care of the bedbugs in HIS damn building.

ANNA LEE

But...

LUKE

No buts, Anna Lee. He'd be dead already if you didn't make me come out here.

ANNA LEE

OK, OK. Fine.

[LUKE and ANNA LEE continue shoveling.]

LUKE

You took their wallets, right?

ANNA LEE

Yes, Luke. Jesus.

END