

DUMPING GROUND

By Kelly Meadows

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TINA: You're wonderful, Carlos. You're handsome, you're witty, you're athletic, you're so much fun to be with—

CARLOS: **(basking in the glow)** Um... wow! Well, Tina, you mean a lot to me as well. I'm so happy we—

TINA: **(can't believe HE doesn't understand)** Carlos!

CARLOS: I never realized I meant so much to you!

TINA: **(trying to be tactful)** Well, you don't. That's my breakup speech.

CARLOS: Even though I'm handsome, witty, and—

TINA: Fun, yeah. I like to butter 'em up before I water 'em down.

(bringing him up, HE gets hopeful) You're wonderful Carlos.

I adore you. **(taking him back down)** But I am dumping you.

CARLOS: If I'm all that? What are you looking for? A calculator geek?

TINA: I've got a calculator, and you plus me? We just don't add up. So we're dividing. **(slight pause)** Like an amoeba.

CARLOS: Amoeba my foot! I'm going back to the abacus.

TINA: **(explaining like HE's a child)** I'm dumping you! There's nothing wrong with you, Carlos. You're perfect. You're great. You're wonderful. It's not even you – it's me.

CARLOS: **(thinks it over for a bit)** It sure is. It's totally you.

TINA: It is not! That's just another thing I say.

CARLOS: No, it's got to be you. You're dishonest, for one.

TINA: That's a lie!

CARLOS: You just said you were. You just said you did all that to break up with me. What are you going to do when you want to get married? Say, **(imitates her)** "You're a despicable sloth but I don't deserve any better?" Here it's time for goodbye and suddenly I'm the sweetest thing that ever lived. You're probably a smash hit at a funeral. So no, it's not me; it's you, in totality.

TINA: How can you say that? After all the good times we had together? After I let you borrow my brother's football jersey for that mud wrestling match!

CARLOS: **(happy)** I beat you, too. You were covered in glop.

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TINA: (***giggling along with him***) I know. I looked like a barnyard pig. (***back to dumping him***) But seriously, Carlos, I just wanted to let you down easy. See? Really, it's *not* me, it's you.

CARLOS: You just said it was you!

TINA: It *is* me!

CARLOS: So it's okay for you to say it's you but not for me to say it's you.

TINA: It's only me when I say it's me. It's me in that I'd rather sit through a Yanni concert than spend another evening with you. It's *not* me in that there's something wrong with me. Unless you think there's something wrong with me if I don't want to go out with you any more, but then it would be *you*; whereas we've already determined, for *my* purposes, at least, that it's me. And by the way, that kind of logic won me the class presidency.

CARLOS: (***confused, obviously***) You're quite the spin doctor. You don't want to tell the truth, (***bitter***) and you won't face up to telling a lie.

TINA: No, I'm keeping *you* from facing it. From facing the fact that you're boring, witless and I don't find you at all attractive. And that I covered the \$75 you owe my brother for muddying up his jersey. I was just trying to be nice.

CARLOS: By lying? By trying to pull the wool over my eyes?

TINA: Not really. (***digressing***) It's not a wool jersey. It was cheap. Polyester. The \$75 was for the logo. Look! Honesty is not always the best policy when you're trying to break up. You take the blame, you say nice things, you say "let's be friends," and then, either you get back together in a couple of weeks or you put a rotten banana in his new girlfriend's locker. When Raymond broke up with Isabella it got really ugly. I don't think you want that.

CARLOS: I remember that. He started it.

TINA: And she finished it.

(They take on personalities of RAYMOND and ISABELLA, taking on New Jersey "tough guy" accents; HE's a jock and SHE's a cheerleader type, both of whom think they're the center of the universe.)

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CARLOS: That's it, Issa! I don't want to see you again. **(making the appropriate hand gestures)** See, this is my car – this is our relationship – my car is running over our relationship.

TINA: **(pleading)** But Raymond! You're my jock and I'm your cheerleader! It's always been that way! And your car's in the shop! **(more to the point)** Raymond, you *have* to see me!

CARLOS: **(pushing her away)** I'd rather see possum guts on the highway.

TINA: No, really, you have to. We have every class together.

CARLOS: I'm sitting in the front row so I don't have to look at you. You're history!

TINA: **(losing it)** History! I'm flunking history! I can't be history or I'll be a failure for the rest of my life! Raymond! **(less dramatic)** Oh, can I get my textbook back?

CARLOS: That's history, too. I lent it to Sheila!

TINA: Please take me back. **(on her knees pleading)** Ple-hee-heeeeee!

CARLOS: Our love? It's roadkill on the New Jersey Turnpike. It's as "history" as King Frederick of Prussia. From now on I'll call you chapter nine.

TINA: Last week you said you'd love me forever! Now I'm just a crushed yellow pompom on the 35 yard line.

CARLOS: Forever? This is high school! Forever ends when the semester's over.

TINA: **(losing it)** I'll tell every girl in the class what you did! Remember that football cheer: Go, Raymond, Go? You'll never hear it again! I'll fix it so you'll never get another date. I'll talk to... **(almost like a witch)** Sheila!!

CARLOS: **(taken aback)** I thought you loved me!

TINA: You're too immature to understand real love. You're nothing to me! Do you hear me! Nothing!

CARLOS: Wait!

TINA: Nothing!

CARLOS: **(starts to cry)** Isabellaaaaaaaaa!

TINA: **(overlapping)** Noooooooooothing! **(SHE breaks out into tears, then morphs back into TINA, looking at CARLOS on the ground in tears)** Is that what you want?

CARLOS: **(snaps back to CARLOS)** Actually yes. It would give me a better sense of finality. Although this shows you off **(HE starts to get spooky, and scare TINA)** as a deadly manta ray

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that I'd want to unhook and throw back into the deeeeepest, darrrrrkest part of the Caspian Sea. **(SHE screams; HE snaps back to reality.)** You're unable to tell the truth at important moments – in fact, you find telling that telling the truth conflicts with your inner being – which gives me a good reason to dump *you* without regret.

TINA: You didn't dump me! I dumped you!

CARLOS: Hardly. You told me I was handsome, witty, and fun. **(with a cowboy accent)** Them's ain't dumpin' words where I come from.

TINA: **(with a cowboy accent)** You are dumped like pourin' lard down the latrine. **(back to normal)** Besides, I already said: it's not you, it's me.

CARLOS: But when pressed, you didn't mean it. You have no idea *who* it is. It could be your mother for all I know. I feel sorry for her.

TINA: **(defending herself)** I *did* mean it.

CARLOS: So you didn't dump me. You're leaving the best thing you ever had. Not only do you lie, but you're stupid on top of it. I don't know what I ever saw in you. I heard about Cedric and Cookie breaking up. She tried to pull the same thing!

TINA: **(as COOKIE, with a deep southern accent)** You're wonderful, Cedric. It's not your fault.

CARLOS: Then why are you leaving me?

TINA: Because we're getting too serious. A girl needs a new beau once the magnolias are in bloom. I do this every spring!

CARLOS: Every spring? I thought you *wanted* to get serious.

TINA: I did. Seriously.

CARLOS: Well we're as serious as ham and green beans. As serious as a Chevy truck in a Mississippi swamp. As serious as-

TINA: Actually, we're about as serious as World Championship Wrestling.

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