

Ferg, Paul. Superstud. New York:
Three Rivers Press, 2005. PRINT.

X. The Storm

On the thirty-eighth day, after a fun-filled afternoon of sight-seeing and shopping, my parents and I headed up to our hotel room to get ready for dinner. As my parents got dressed and I waited, I flipped through my copy of *Scientific American* and decided that, once again, it was far too obtuse and scholarly for me to read. I always bought it both to impress whoever was working the register and because I was ever hopeful that there'd be an article about UFOs or aliens or other things that fell firmly in the fiction side of the science world. I was about to pull the *National Lampoon* out of the bag when my mother emerged from the bathroom and said, "Ready!"

"Finally!" said my father, and I put the *Lampoon* back in the bag.

That night, after we had watched *The Tonight Show* and had laughed all the way through both Johnny Carson's monologue and a panel appearance by Rodney Dangerfield, my dad turned off the light, and he and my mom fell asleep. As my dad snored loud enough to shake the television off the dresser, I turned on my penlight and pulled out the *National Lampoon*.

I started flipping through the magazine and was surprised at how adult it was. It had swear words all over the place, as well as very frank, irreverent talk about sex. But it was a scary irreverence for a 16-year-old who was afraid of the idea of intimate physical contact with another person, this idea of a world of people who had casual sex and then made jokes about it. However, waiting to feel mature, I tried to convince myself the magazine was funny and forced myself not to be shocked.

In the middle of the issue there was a story about the kinds of girls that you can sleep with in college, and it featured photos of unattractive women in "sexy" poses. Nerdy librarian types, angry feminists, uptight theology students—they each had a black-and-white picture of a different coed dressed unappealingly. I read it and thought the article was rather funny, even though I was thrown by the notion that college students seemed to have sex all the time.

And it was then that I turned the page.

There in front of me was a picture of a nude woman that was labeled "Anthropology Major." The gag was that she was a girl who didn't shave any part of her body. And so here was a black-and-white picture of a very hairy woman who wasn't in the least bit attractive.

Except for the fact that she was completely naked.

And except for the fact that I been abstaining for thirty-eight days.

My eyes went wide.

Enter God.

God: "Oh no, c'mon! You've made it *thirty-eight* days. And that woman is horrible. You can't possibly be considering doing this."

Me: "I'm not. It's just . . . I mean . . . are You really saying that I can *never* do this again?"