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# Aubade

Cassandra Atherton

Oberon became addicted to Donne's *Sunne Rising*, marmalade and sex in the morning. He liked to wake with heat coursing through his body and her golden head in his lap. Noisily nuzzling. He would place his left hand on the back of her head and close his eyes to the most brilliant shade of orange. A warm glow would radiate through his body and collect in his big toes.

She would watch his eyes. Patent pupils bleeding into the pale blue. Once she had told him that she liked to watch his veins throb and touched the tiny veins near his temples. He had groaned. He always groaned when she touched him. She always knew how he liked to be touched. Fleshy fingertips. Searing his skin. Feverish.

Oberon became addicted to her tangerine lipstick in thick circles, purple sheets impregnated with her Picasso perfume and the taste of honey pooling on his tongue. He would watch her luscious lips languorously licking a lollipop. He would sit stiffly in bed. A triangular cushion propped behind his head. Pale blue with a ruffle. Once she had told him that the Head of English didn't know what a valance was. He had smiled, watching her long ponytail graze the base of her spine as she tipped her head back to laugh. He wondered what a valance was but she was already discussing Cherry Valance and Pony Boy Curtis.

Sometimes she would stop in the middle of a story. Blue eyes blank. Her gummy fingers pawing at her neck. "What was I saying?" she would ask him. Terrified goldfish. But he could never answer. He meant to listen to what she was saying. But she often babbled about popular culture and wiggled her hips. And both things were distracting. So instead he pulled her to him. Gathered her in his arms. Kissed her smooth eyelids until they stopped fluttering. And then

sometimes, only sometimes, he would let her call him Angel. Only because she would give him butterfly kisses on his buttocks.

Oberon became addicted to the way his chest remained red and blotchy for fifteen minutes after she left. His pupils would remain dilated. His temples still throbbing. Rush. He liked to watch her long hair skim the door jamb as she slammed the door behind her. 9.00 a.m. British History lecture. She always forgot her Tudor notebook and would have to transcribe the notes she had scribbled on the back of Uni News at his kitchen table. His favourite lecture notes were the ones she transcribed in April onto the third page of her notebook: "Elizabeth was a great monarch. Use halcyon days somewhere in reflective essay. She had red hair. Her mother was Amber Lynne." He was glad she had other, more cerebral talents not associated with academia.

She always sucked the top of her pencil when she wrote. Oral fixation. Tiny indentations in the black tip of the HB. Once he bought her a pink powder puff pen and she had softly stroked her left cheek all afternoon. He searched for his briefcase and found a pink, strawberry scratch and sniff sticker on the buckle. He smiled as he peeled it off the cold metal and stuck it on the bed head. Only sixteen more hours until he would feel her long ponytail brush over his stomach. The tops of his thighs prickled at the thought of her sticky lips. Everywhere.

Oberon was addicted to sonnets, Handel and the back of her golden head catching the orange light. Tinting his bedroom a fuzzy peach.