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POST-LOLITA

Cassandra Atherton

For CWC who is sick of recurring themes including nymphettes, dancing and mirrors.

She thought, perhaps, she had outgrown champagne cocktails and sex in dance studios. But she persisted with them all the same. Treasures. Trophies. Temptations. Like her first pair of pointe shoes or the religious education teacher from her secondary school. The one with the long fingers and the golden hair. She should graduate to bigger and better things. Like Veuve Clicquot and advertising executives in grey pinstripe suits with shiny gold buckles on their briefcases. Like Darren in *Bewitched*. The first Darren with the angular face and the brown eyes. She wondered if it would still be acceptable to envy that woman on *The Last Night of the Proms*. The one who kissed Jeremy Irons and gave him that bottle of champagne in cellophane. Blue silk dress. Brown poodle hair. Diamond tennis bracelet. She never did understand why they were called tennis bracelets. She'd never seen Anna Kournikova with one. She thought that the most devastating sight would have to be Jeremy Irons performing some of Noel Coward's classics with a long-stemmed cigarette holder between his nicotine-stained fingers. Surely that was an improvement. It was more cultured than adoring Charles Bronson in *Twinky*. Susan George. Krufts. Blue and yellow school scarf. Mouse. Could a pet really destroy a relationship? She looked at her little white dog. Powder puff. Polar bear. Endangered seal. He curled up on her feet. Wet black nose on her middle toe. Did Jeremy Irons have an entry on one of the *Fantales* wrappers? She picked up her Doll Baby mirror from the ledge on her bed head and pulled out her apple bobbles. The tiny silver bell on the end of the elastic tinkled. Tinkerbell. Disneyland. Did older men really feel like Peter Pan when they touched her? That's what he had told her. How much longer? Her Lucky Carebear stared at her from the corner of the bed. Just above the space where her head would rest. If she was asleep. Next to him. She reached across and caressed the bottom left section of his ear lobe where it connected with his face. Like a miniature apricot hanging from a deliciously golden tree. She ran the pad of her index finger across his cheek. Prickly pear. Pineapple. Custard apple. She licked his cheek. His marmalade kitten. She reached back to secure her hair in a low bun. Six bobby pins. Once he told her she smelt like peach fizz. She hadn't really contemplated it before. Baby peach bubbles. His eyelids flickered when she kissed his lined eyelids. She reached across him and switched on the fish lamp. Blue. Aquamarine. Aquarium. The lamp rotated behind its mini screen casting fishy shadows on the walls. She watched the fish swim over his smooth back and across the pale pink sheets. She unclasped the heart-shaped crystal. It brushed against the hollow of her neck and slid between her breasts. She caught the shiny pendant in her palm. Warm. Misty. Perfumed. She placed it on her Holly Hobbie pillowcase. For him. She picked up her white dog, a martini glass that never fit into the dish rack properly and a Michael Hill jewellery catalogue with a baguette diamond on the front.

She left her pointe shoes, the religious education teacher from her secondary school and her heavily annotated copy of *Lolita*.