

A Touch of Innocence

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I know that it wasn't the very first thing I noticed about her, but it was definitely among the top ten. Her hair was shaped in the latest style, one of the few that had become a "classic"-- it was still a very popular hair style, even though it had come into fashion nearly three years ago. A "mushroom", her hair clipped short along the sides of her head, and then on top, her hair permed and hot-combed into straightness, and then brushed and picked down into a dome around her head, like a halo.

Her face becomes the next central feature; a milk-chocolate honey brown shade, rounded, and soft; her eyes, a light, mocha-brown color, where you could see into her heart and know her thoughts-- or you could, at least, when she allowed you eye contact; her nose, long, a little thin, but very elegant; her mouth, with soft wet lips that called for attention at all times.

My eyes take in her breasts, next; soft, round, firm, and light even in relief of support; they would fit into the palms of my hands very nicely, their weight definitely, deliciously, noticeable.

A slight bulge, her tummy, not just from fat-- though a little I absolutely adore. To me, it is the mark of a real woman, a woman who has decided that the trivialities of life-- like having a waist like Jane Fonda-- can wait a while; more pressing matters need attention. Her tummy was soft and curved, not just from fat-- but from the four children she had. So young! At twenty-two, to have so many children, to have children at all!

Her hips are next, a gentle explosion from her not-so-narrow waist, a soft, curving femininity that screams of *woman!* Her waist is not much smaller than my own, and her hips only slightly larger than mine. She turns around, and I can see that hips are not the only curves she possesses around her waist. There, she is rounded and soft, with a feminine touch, yet firm and muscular in a nice way. She bends over, and it is a pleasure watching her move, a gracefulness that most would not, could not, acknowledge, unknowing of the lithe form and stunning beauty within the outer skin of her mere prettiness that was as innocent as it was not.

Her hips change into thighs-- thick, strong, juicy, meaty; I had to turn away when she walked, or else simply stare; her thighs begged to be touched, caressed, soothed and relaxed. Her thighs changed again into legs, as they tapered down to her knees, and from there to her feet-- all the way, enfolded with the soft gentle strength of frequent use. Her feet were small, delicate-- she wore a size six in men's sneakers.

I step back a bit, in my visual scope, to look at her completely. At five-three and about 195lbs, she was definitely not born to be a model; her features were not quite hard enough-- by meaning of facial definition or expression; her body not quite poised enough, lacking that look-but-don't-touch quality; her form not quite lithe enough, made more for actual experience than for window dressing displays; her skin not quite smooth enough, lacking the porcelainity, the calm, and the ephemeral freshness-- which, like its name, is ephemeral-- that is necessary; her eyes not doe-y enough; her hair not straight enough, not light enough; her general personality, her physical appearance, all not feminine enough, not a part of the American stereotypical model-esque that the powers that be determine that the American male wants.

The klaxon-like sound of the drive-thru sensor breaks me out of my appraisal, and I turn to the microphone speaker with a distinct lack of enthusiasm for the task at hand. A voice squawks harshly at me, nameless, and for the moment, faceless, asking inane questions, and making asinine demands that I rightly cannot accommodate.

I turn to her.

She is approaching me, in slow-motion to me; I watch her every step-- the slight bounce of her breasts, the pitch and roll of her walk, the difference in the way she looks toward her task and the way she looks at me. A small smile comes to her lips, a rich rose red hue now. I tear my eyes away from her, and give my attention to the face in the window. I repeat their words back to them-- some, their minds lost, either in drugs, alcohol, or in just plain vapidness-- making sure that I don't have to deal with them any longer than necessary. They leave, and once again, for a moment, it is quiet. I play around with the antique electric keyboard in front of me, tapping in numbers and food items, and then erasing them with the touch of a few more buttons. She comes closer, and brushes my arm in passing. She fixes a cup of hot cocoa for herself, and then adds some vanilla milkshake. *It cools the cocoa*, she says, in a voice that both belongs to her and

does not. It fits her; like her beauty, it seemed both innocent, and yet not. She takes the coffee stirrer out of the cup, and licks the length of it, her small pink tongue sliding along the plastic, lapping up the sweet treat. I do nothing but watch, taking an extra notice of the way she savors the taste on her tongue. She notices me looking at her, and the tiny smile on her lips grows, her tongue peeking out at me from between her lips. She begins speaking to me, and I respond. I walk the three steps to the little counter in the drive-thru window where she is standing, and move closer to her, my arm just brushing hers; we chat for a bit.

I return my attention back to her for a moment, my attention having slipped away from the beauty beside me, and I notice she is gazing at me, a particular look in her eyes that I don't see at any other time during the workday when she and I are together. It gives me something to wonder about.

She tells me that eight-hour days of standing has her back aching on a nearly constant basis, and even now, her back aches. I need a massage, she says, almost nonchalantly, almost to herself; I offer to give her one, after we've closed the restaurant. She looks at me, again the smile appearing on her face as if by magic; *Sure*, she says, *okay*. I look over her again as I feel my senses being stirred to attention by her womanness, and I shudder momentarily with the sensations she engenders within me.

She pushes off of the small surface, and walks back to her register, less than twenty feet away. She walks away from me, and again I smile, wondering how America couldn't see her figure, her personality, her entire womanhood, as I saw it, how they couldn't believe that she was as desirable to men as the anorexic-bulimic, 36-24-36, 98 lbs-soaking-wet, computer-enhanced-and-airbrushed, stick limbed, platinum-bleached blonde and blue-eyed models were that practically lived on the front covers of every fashion magazine and hung on the posters on the walls of college men.

She finishes her order, and turns to look at me. Instantly, my brooding about this horrible job disappears; her smile is something kinda impressive. There are so many things that she seems to be saying in that smile, but I don't wanna try to interpret or misinterpret anything, so I accept it at face value.

I walk over to her, now, and lean against the countertop. Again, we start talking, and I notice the look in her eyes again. I begin to think about just what that could mean,

but we are interrupted by a co-worker of ours. He sort of butts his way into our conversation, wedging himself into our talk, which very quickly turns to dating and relationships. Apparently, he has a definite attraction towards her, and she quickly reminds him that she is already involved. Tenaciously, of course-- as always-- he seems to ignore this fact.

I'll be here when you want a real man, he says, and goes back into the kitchen of the restaurant. *Shoot*, she says, *if I wanted a real man, I'd get with you*, and she gives me a quick look and a smile. She stops suddenly, seeming to realize her words. She looks at me again, and I can see that look in her eyes again, and I know now. But, how do I use this information?

The drive-thru sensor sounds, and again I have to tear myself away from this woman who feels as I do, this woman whose senses are attuned with mine, and go to a job that I do not like. I turn back to her, just for a moment, and she still has that look. I would gladly lose my job for that look.

I can barely hear the voice this time, over the rumble of her muffler-less car, and over the din from the street, as a couple of fire trucks roar past, their sirens momentarily overpowering the sound of the car and driver at the speaker. She finally calls her order, and even before I punch the price buttons, I already know how much the total will be. I give an inward shudder; I've been working in this place for too long.

Five minutes, I hear from the back of the store. It is the voice of the manager on duty tonight, and I smile, for the first time this evening. His statement means that, very soon, I can close up this window, and turn off the lights. Fatigue washes over me briefly; I can feel the five minutes taking their time in passing.

The woman in the window reminds me that I still have time to complete her order. She begins to get upset; her order isn't ready, and I have to go in the back to make it. Again, I remark to myself, I've been working here too long. Only someone who had been around as long as I had would know how to run both the front and back of the store. Lucky me that I knew how to do both.

I go into the back, and only now are the hamburger patties coming off of the grill. The smell of the grilled meat makes my mouth begin to water, and my stomach start

growling like mad, reminding me that I hadn't eaten at all tonight. Maybe the manager will let me fix some food for myself.

Almost intuitively, without my asking, she takes over my position at the window, telling the woman that her order will be up in a couple of moments, and asking her if there is anything that she can do for her in the meantime. In the month that we've been working together, that we've been leaving together, she and I have come to work like a team. It's a good relationship, and is the only thing that I think I like having gotten out of this job. I can hear the smile in her voice, and I know it's there for more than just one reason, there for more than just the fact that we're about to close for the night.

I finish the sandwich, wrap it up, and carry it and the rest of her food up to the front of the store. She is already there, putting the food into the woman's bag. I go and get the woman her drinks; she comes up behind me, and leans against me out of the window, handing the woman her food. I can feel her pressing up against my back; I can even feel her heartbeat. As I hand out the drinks, she doesn't move. I can feel her heartbeat speed up, and my own attentions become similarly aroused.

The woman drives off, and then she gently pushes off of me, and I turn around. She smiles at me, and out of nowhere, I decide to give her a hug. She doesn't seem surprised about it; in fact, she accepts me with open arms-- no pun intended-- and we embrace for a moment, the store forgotten, holding each other as if it were meant to be like this.

She looks at me, and now I can see that look in her eyes up close, and the look is intense. I can feel it coming from her, and I know she can feel it coming from me-- in the way that I hold her, in the way that I look at her. I know, and I know that she knows, that this is a mutual sensation.

We part, and I turn around to lock up the drive-thru window. Our timing is perfect, it seems; the guy comes out of the back of the restaurant an instant after we part.

I thought you had a man, he asks almost accusingly. He knows that she is already involved, and he knows that she and I are simply friends; he only wants to see what kind of trouble he can cause.

I do have a man, she responds, and steps into her don't-fuck-with-me stance. I know she's not truly serious about it; her stance is too relaxed. This is a game she's played

before with him; more often than not, I'm also involved in their little face-offs. I continue to pretend that I'm doing my work. I walk past them, and over to the lights panel, and flip off the outside lights.

Then what are you hanging up under him for? He asks, and I can almost feel him pointing at me.

He's my friend, she states to him simply. Personally, I think they like playing this game. They've been acquaintances for as long as I've known them and he's always flirted with her, mentioning that if he weren't married..... The man is okay, I think, but he needs to stop messing with her. She is eight years younger than he is, and she's already involved. But then I have to ask myself if I'm thinking this because it's true, or because of what I've seen in her eyes. Is it fact, or a tinge of jealousy?

The two guys who make up the night crew come into the back of the store, talking and making noise. I know them, and shout words of greeting to them. I decide that it's jealousy, hoping that he doesn't have a clue as to the fire that she possesses, that I'm fairly sure that her boyfriend doesn't know she possesses, and all over again I'm jealous. I know I'd be aware of something like that.

I go into the back of the store, and change out of my uniform shirt and cap, grab my stuff out of the cubby hole with my name on it, and go into the bathroom. On the way there, I pass her coming into the back of the store. She smiles at me in passing, and I smile back.

I'm pulling on my pants when there is a knock at the door. I'm fairly dressed at this point; I invite the person in. I'm almost positive of who it is even before she opens the door. She comes in, and watches me as I finish tucking my shirt into my pants and fasten them up. *Hmm,* she moans, smiling, taking notice. I smile back, a bit embarrassed that my thoughts are so visible to her. I finish dressing, and stand to look at her. She approaches me, and we embrace once again. She pulls back slightly, and then-- by thought or by chance, I don't know-- we kiss.

Her tongue gently pushes into my mouth, asking me of what I want, of what she can give. I push my tongue into her mouth, telling her what I want, what I would ask of her, and I know she knows this-- by my kiss, by my body, by my touch, by my embrace,

by the look in my eyes. I know she knows this because I can feel her answer me-- in every way that I let her know what I want, she lets me know that it is what she wants, too.

The muffled sound of a horn comes through the door, and we part immediately. She pulls open the door, and rushes out to the lobby. I take a moment or two to let her get outside first, then I follow, more slowly. As I come out of the doors, she is about to get into the car. Her boyfriend waves at me; I wave back. I know he's jealous, thinking that I'm trying to take his girlfriend from him, even though he knows that she and I are just friends.

I'll see you tomorrow, she says, and takes a brief second to give me that look again. Then, she gets into the car, and she and her boyfriend drive off, leaving me alone in the parking lot.