

He and She

He: Mirror Mirror

You look at me, but you don't see me. You see yourself.

You're enchanting, your eyes - a nocturnal scene, a cool pool of impenetrable water, balancing the moonlight afloat its surface. I could get lost in your eyes, lose my way, lose my mind. But I have learned to find my way through the thick arc of your eyebrows. When it comes to your silk translucent lips, I would rather get lost in that tenderness and never be found.

You comb your dark hair with your hands and straighten up your eyebrows with your fingers. You run your hand along your broad jawline, scratching your bristly stubble. You look straight into your eyes, tightening your jaw. The right tip of your lips slightly excites, your brow rising. I know that look. You're going to leave me now. Whose heart will you break tonight?

She: Shirtless

Her hands rubbed me, concentrating on the spot where Nicholas had spilled the wine. She dipped me in and out of the water. She shook me so hard I was hiccupping bubbles. Finally, she twisted me, milking me out of every last drop her strength allowed her to. Then, she pinned me to the line. I couldn't sleep all night.

It wasn't until the afternoon when she came to the window. I was warm and dry by then. She slipped me on her bare body. Her skin smelled of cloves and cinnamon. I lay loosely on her, stroking her gently. She looked in the mirror, buttoned two of my buttons and folded my arms around hers, my whiteness blending in with her skin. We were

perfect for each other. We lay on her bed, looking up at the ceiling, our arms crossed behind her head. Her hair was damp. I soaked the wetness into my arms. I soaked her scent into my skin. She breathed slowly, our bodies rising and sinking harmoniously.

I wanted to know what she was thinking. She wasn't like the other girls Nick and I met.

He: Message from her

I buzz in his pocket. I got a message from *her*, a new number that appeared in my address book last week. He won't answer her. He's in a meeting. But he slips his hand into his pocket and sneaks me out. The message reads,

"Hey, I washed your shirt. You can pick it up anytime."

He slips me back in. He won't answer for at least a couple of hours.

He pulls me out half an hour later. We're in his office. He types,

"Good morning beautiful..." then he erases. He types,

"Hey, thanks..." but he erases again. He types,

"Rose...I can't get you out of my head, I can still remember how you smell," his fingers speed up as he continues typing,

"Keep the shirt, I'll come tonight! Wear the shirt...wear only the shirt..." he erases and throws me onto the pile of paper on his desk.

He picks me up a minute later and types,

"Hey, thanks..." he stops then continues,

"How about tonight, after work I'll stop by?" he pushes my SEND button and throws me back onto the pile.

Ten minutes pass and he opens her message again. He changes my settings from VIBRATE to SOUND. He hasn't done this before.

Another ten minutes pass.

I give an alert ring and almost simultaneously he opens the message.

"Heeey Nikoooo. Cheetah's Club tonight!" He throws me on the table.

I alert him again. This one's from her. He picks me up. She wrote,
"Yea, tonight's fine." He doesn't answer. Another alert from Danny.
"Nikoo mah maan. You in or what?" He doesn't answer. He puts me down and
the next time he picks me up is an hour later. He replies to Danny.
"I'll let you know."

She: Message to him

She slept with me all night. She checked me before she went to bed and right
when she woke up. Now, she holds me. She opens my screen to a New Message. She
types,

"Nick..." she stops. She continues,
"I want to see you again..." she erases. She types,
"Hey, I washed your shirt..." She pauses then writes,
"...and I'm wearing it right now. I want to feel close to you," she erases and
throws me on her bed.

After a while I feel her hand searching for me in the bed sheets. She finds me. She
writes to him.

"I wonder if you thought of me, even just a little, because I can't stop thinking
about you." Her index finger hovers above my SEND button. Instead, she erases and
types quickly.

"Hey, I washed your shirt. You can pick it up anytime."

She buries me in her sheets again only to dig me up a few seconds later. She holds
me in her hands. She checks her messages even though I haven't made a sound. This
habit of hers started a week ago when she got a phone call from him, Nicholas. He told
her he wanted to see her. She couldn't speak for a few long seconds. She held her breath
and I mine.

I give an alert ring. It's *him*.

"Hey, thanks. How about tonight, after work I'll stop by?"

She buries me. She does this every time she gets a message from him. She leaves me, but I know that no matter what she does in the meantime, she is thinking about what to type on me. Too bad she doesn't get that time to think when they're talking on the phone. She can't be too dry on the phone, her voice betrays her.

She finds me and writes,

"Yes, anytime. Anytime for you."

She erases.

"Yea, tonight's fine."

He: Toxic

He's nervous. I can feel it from the way he moves and makes the walls of my cage vibrate. He needs me. He'll come for me. And it doesn't take long until he does.

He flips the top open. I shiver from the gust of wind in the darkness. He runs his cold lustful fingers across my lips, shivers rushing down my spine. He pulls me out, plays with me - rolling me back and forth between his thumb and index middle fingers, then places me in between his warm wet lips.

Light me.

Love me.

Burn me.

The flame of the match ignites my body, his breath running through my veins. His fingers hold me in place, his lips tightening and relaxing as he takes his first breath, ssssssslowly. Burning me.

Killing me.

I ache in pain and pleasure. His lips free me.

Temporarily.

Take me back, I release a lubricious moan of smoke.

His lips seize me again. And again. And again. He sucks slow inhalations, my smoke, my life invading his insides, his tender membranes. He sucks me tenderly, quietly to quench his appetite. He drains me then drops my shriveled leftovers to the ground.

Satisfied?

And all you'll have left from me will be my souvenirs, my particles of tar clinging to the walls of your lungs.

She: Canvas

The coat of gesso had dried overnight. She takes me outside and sands me. I'm half her size. She runs her palm on my blank face. Not smooth enough. She sands me more, pressing harder, white dust dancing in the air. Her hand caresses me again.

Satisfied?

She hooks me to the easel. I'm at her mercy. She stands a few feet away looking at me, a blank face.

Who am I?

Who do you want me to be?

Enchanting.

She wets me with a broad brush. She gives me warm tones. Brown eyes - *a nocturnal scene, a cool pool of impenetrable water, balancing the moonlight afloat its surface. I could get lost in your eyes – lose my way, lose my mind.*

She paints my eyebrows, my forehead, my nose. *But I have learned to find my way, through the thick arc of your eyebrows.*

She takes a few steps back, walks around slowly, her gaze always on me. Then she comes to me. She is my captive. I can feel her warm breath as she paints my lips. *When it comes to your silk translucent lips, I would rather get lost in that tenderness and never be found.*

She gives me a stubble. She gives me black hair. She gives me highlights. She gives me shadows. We have lost track of time. I hadn't even noticed the transition of daylight into fluorescent light. She doesn't stop until she's done. Then, she lets me dry, she huddled in a chair three feet away, looking into my eyes. She's lost her way. She's lost her mind.

He: Rose

It was just the few of us who weren't crammed into a bouquet like the others. The girls and I stood erect in the bucket, wet to our thighs. I hadn't seen enough sunlight and the cold gusts of November weren't too kind on my petals. I hadn't lost any yet.

"Girls, girls! Look alive. We have a customer," said Rosette.

"O calm yourself. He ain't gonna choose no single lady," replied Roza. She had been here the longest, her petals had begun to wilt, and she had lost a few that were now floating in our water.

“I’ll take...this one,” said the stranger. The girls groaned in disappointment.

“A butiful bouquet for a butiful vuman,” said our florist, lifting the bouquet of two dozen red roses to be wrapped. .

It was getting late, fewer and fewer passerbys. The lights of the shops across the street were going out one by one. We too would close soon. The girls were falling asleep, each one leaning in a different direction. I too began to doze off when I heard the voice of our florist.

“How ‘bout a bouquet of roses? You can’t go rong wit dat. It’s a classic.”

I looked up and at the end of the row stood a tall man, glancing over the bouquets in discontent.

“No,” he said and began to walk slowly in my direction, his eyes moving over the sea of flowers like the light of a lighthouse - roses, red and white, lilies and tulips, colorful chrysanthemums and carnations, and...me. His lips hinted at a smile. He reached his hand to me, pulling me up from the cold water. He slowly rotated me around with his fingers, marveling at my red petals.

“A rose for my Rose.”

She: Mirror Mirror

She looks at me, but she doesn’t see me.

She slides red lipstick on her light rosy lips. She combs her light brown eyebrows with her two fingers, and then slides her middle finger down her cheek, around her chin, and down her neck, parting her lips. She looks into her eyes, a gray fog that is beginning to clear.

She shakes her head, wipes off the red lipstick with a tissue, throws the crumpled tissue paper at my face, and leaves.

Moments later I hear a knocking on the door. She rushes back, looks at me, and takes a deep trembling breath. I tell her that she's beautiful. She smiles.

He and She: Exogenesis

She hardly opens me for strangers. She's even hesitant to open up for the UPS delivery men who drop off packages from Victoria's Secret. And she never opens up for people who are making all sorts of offers or asking for donations.

But last night, she opened me for a stranger, or so I thought. Before he knocked, he stood in front of me for a few seconds, breathing slowly. I checked him from head to toe. I had never seen him before. A good looking fellow he was, tall, brooding type of a guy. He made his right hand into a knocking fist, prepared to knock but instead rested his fist against my wooden surface for a few seconds. He wouldn't look me in the eye. Then he took a step back, looked to his left and I thought he was going to leave. But he took a quick step forward and knocked.

She glided towards me, looked through me and I showed him to her. She looked longer than she usually did. Then she stood back, took a deep breath and opened me.

They looked at each other. She gave him a smile and he returned it. Come in, she said. And he entered.

He came again tonight. He brought a rose for Rose. This time, he didn't hesitate to knock.