

Re-enchantment of a Pervert

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The first thing you will notice about Lovely at first glance is how she walks like a panther in a crowd of hounds. She struts into your office with her static-zapped hair and heels like daggers and you will resist the urge to hum “Toxic” by Britney Spears. You ask her to sit on the chair you’ve asphyxiated with Lysol too many times that day. She crosses her legs. One hand rests on her knee. A fingernail is unpolished. You feel confident that this is her first application for a PR firm yet you ask her anyway.

“Second,” she says. You blush a little.

On the header of her resume, she listed down ghoddezz42285@yahoo.com.ph as her e-mail address. You will not look at the resume again for the entire interview.

You ask about her expectations from the staff position, her skills, her reason for application. She wants the job for the money, she can operate a PC (“I know how to change the screensaver.”), also just for the money. You admire her for her honesty. And maybe for the strands of hair on her cleavage.

Holding her folder, you walk her out to the door. You touch her gently on the small of her back. “We’ll give you a call,” you tell applicants you have no plans of seeing again. This time, you mean it.

She doesn’t answer. You only see her get smaller and smaller as she walks down the hallway, your eyes fixated on her cellulite-ridden thighs.

You exhale. You close the door to your office and collapse back onto your swiveling chair. Her folder falls on your lap. Underneath it is the biggest boner you’ve had in years.

The garage will reek of oregano and pickled onions when you get home. In the kitchen, your wife is hunched over a skillet of sautéed whatever-the-fuck-you’re-having-for-dinner. Gloria smiles at you. Only now you notice the new toes on her crow’s feet and you wonder if your wife is secretly ten years your senior. You rest a hand on her right shoulder. It pokes you somehow. You remember the only time you told her you wanted “a little meat” and she flung her chagrin at you in the form of a tantrum. You didn’t know 27-year-olds still threw around tantrums.

She asks how your day went. “Great,” you say. She has a surprised look on her face. You press your lips to her hair and head straight to the dining room.

On the television, the same broadcaster rambles on about the same rapist in custody. Civilians are gathered outside the court with their phones in the air. A footage of the courtroom hearing appears on the screen. The lawyer loosens his tie. The rapist wears a placid face. You think he is a bit too attractive for a rapist.

You sense Gloria's eyes on you as she pours tzatziki over your chicken. She sits down across you and waits for you to start eating before she dunks her spoon into her mouth.

"How is it?" she asks in between chews.

"Perfect." It's a little gritty.

Her grin reaches her eyes. You feel guilty for lying.

You read the last seven pages of *The Magic of Public Relations* in bed. Gloria steps out of the bathroom, fresh from a shower. She slowly walks to her side of the bed, slipping the robe off her shoulders and hanging it on the dresser stool. She is wearing the satin slip that you bought her for her birthday five years ago. The last time she wore it was during your trip to Burma. You told her she looked cute. She said it "fit like a sack."

Upon hearing the bed springs squeak, you close your book. You reach for Gloria's hair, always her hair. After enough rubbing, you turn to one side. You are facing the wall. You can hear her controlled breaths, her polite disappointment. You close your eyes. She crawls under your arm and falls asleep. For the rest of the night, you will feel snuggled by a cold chop of wagyu beef.

On her first day, Lovely is late by thirteen minutes. Annita, your accounts officer, gives her a brief orientation. Lovely's desk is beside Joanna's. Joanna is away for the entire week and Lovely's ankle is already coiled around the base of Joanna's chair, her other foot tapping the pedal of her trash bin. Earphones are plugged into her ears. She sways her head to a song. Prima from marketing is staring at her. So is Manuel from accounts. You want to kick Manuel in the nuts.

On Wednesday, you sit beside Annita and Tomas for lunch. "May I?" you ask. A millisecond look of doubt passes between the both of them, but Tomas shrugs and Annita pulls you a chair.

They talk about the pope. Tomas says his grandmother's heart ailment improved after the pope's visit. Annita says the pope has crazy eyes. Tomas disagrees, but you know he secretly wants to fuck her.

You see Lovely samba her way into the cafeteria. Jenny, another staff member, waves at her from another table. Today, Lovely is wearing shorter heels but an even shorter skirt, her hair tied into a ponytail she separates into two weaves that dangle on her shoulders. They look like snakes.

Jenny's mouth opens and closes at an inhuman speed and not once do you see food enter her mouth. Lovely doesn't look at Jenny. She slurps on her spaghetti like she's the queen of all things filthy but wipes the sauce off her lips with a carnality you've only seen from Monica Bellucci. Then you realize she looks a little like a young Monica Bellucci.

You come home one night with Gloria lying on the couch in nothing but her only pair of lace underwear. All the lights are off except for the luminance of a naked woman with blonde hair on the television being swung around by two black men in fedora hats. A bottle of Tavernello, a quarter-filled glass, and an empty glass (which you assume is yours) are on the table.

“Where’s dinner?” you ask her.

“Right here,” she spreads her legs.

You look away. “Cover up, Gloria, it’s cold.”

“I will be if you don’t—”

You walk to the kitchen. The faucet is running. Orange light peeks from the refrigerator door. The marker to the magnetic white board is missing. You groan a little. You rummage through the fridge for anything edible, and you find a plastic container. Inside it is a zucchini. You don’t remember buying a zucchini. It’s wrinkled like a prune. You toss it into the trash bin.

Gloria is on the floor, gulping down the contents of the bottle. You plop onto the space beside her. You snatch the bottle from her, holding it as high as your arms could possibly reach. She screams at you. You rub her hair. She pulls the hem of your polo and sobs onto it. You hide the bottle behind your back.

“Do you still love me?” Gloria faces you, snot running down to her mouth.

You blink. “Of course.”

She grabs your hand and pushes it against her tits and you feel nothing but dimpled skin and bones. Your fingers whiten from the pressure. She looks at your face then down to your crotch. Your arm falls limp on your lap.

She slaps you with her tiny hand—a force you never thought she was capable of producing hits you hard on the head. Your left ear rings a little. She grabs the couch pillow and covers her body. Her shadow looms over you and you dare not look at her. Running to the bedroom, she yells at you to kill yourself before she slams the door.

One man on the video thrusts into the woman’s mouth while the other plays with himself. You drink whatever’s left of the bottle. You also take Gloria’s glass. The last drops of wine glide down your throat and it burns your stomach. The only sounds you hear before you flake out on the carpet are the frantic whimpers from the television screen.

When you get to the office, everyone avoids looking you in the eye. Joanna delivers two week’s worth of unattended paperwork to your table. She tells you that four requests from companies are in pending and are only waiting for your approval. You massage your temples. You nod slightly, and Joanna walks out of the room.

You hear a rampant ratata against the floor. Lovely is late again. Her hair, still wet and uncombed, is webbed all over the sides of her face. Her lips are a bright shade of red, Coca-Cola red, fire alarm red. She is wearing a silver dress. She slams her bag

onto the desk. She sits back and combs her fingers through her hair. Her legs are crossed, as usual, but you pray she pulls off a Sharon Stone.

Joanna taps Lovely on the shoulder. She snaps her head to the other side. Her hair whips in the air, gliding off her bare shoulders. Joanna mouths something to Lovely, pointing to your office with her lips. Lovely raises her eyebrows. She looks in your direction. From her desk, through the glass, she is looking at you now.

You hold her gaze. Your pants tighten.

Annita breaks your line of vision and walks over to Lovely's desk with a folder. Lovely stands up with her cup of coffee. She gets the folder and Annita leaves. Lovely struts out the door and disappears around the corner.

You lean back on your chair. You stretch your arms over your head. You smile to yourself and think, too bad, you're a bit too attractive for a pervert.