

## CHAPTER TEN

### PURPLE HYACINTHS

"The best blow job I ever gave, the guy's cum tasted like flowers. Honest, the entire experience of being with this guy was a blessing. It was the first time I realized that people could work for the angels. I wanted to do that for people, what he had done for me. I better go back a bit. There are still aspects of this which are completely mysterious to me. Like how he appeared, without warning, when I needed him. Present and accounted for.

"It was a bad time for me. My mother had just died. Justina had sold the house and gone to live in southern California to be selfish for a change. She had always loved movies. She was old enough, she told me, to do what she wanted for a change. She still thinks that California is heaven on earth. I wouldn't dream of disagreeing with her, heaven is where you find it, after all.

"People like to pretend they have the same reality. Nobody wants to be alone. But sometimes old people and little kids who don't know any better, will tell you how they really see the world. It's like taking a peek at one of those model universes or model cities. Everyone has things figured out their own way, the way that makes sense to them. Some people's personal view corresponds with what is generally considered reality, especially now that mass media has unified definitions. But there are fissures in the cement, where grass blades and wildflowers grow, each blade, each petal an infinity of independent sentience.

"I was out of my mind with unhappiness. I missed my mother. And Justina was far away. I'd get up and go to work in a haze, go home, walk the dog, watch tv, then lie in bed and blend into the darkness outside my window, listen to the chimes, stare at the streetlight, hum old songs my mother taught me, sleep holding my own hands. Then a friend of mine at work who was really into breathing, she thinks everything comes down to the way we breathe, and I was looking peaked, she suggested that I come with her to a yoga class, her treat.

"I went. It was ok. I didn't feel that I fit very well with that crowd. The guys were kind, pale and wispish, the women were earthy. Everyone was nice but it just wasn't my scene. Everybody whispered. After the class there was some kind of emergency meeting that my girlfriend was part of somehow. She had the car so I was stuck there for about an hour hanging out in the lobby, waiting for her.

"This guy comes in. He's not wispy at all, I mean not at all. He's tall and broad. He has a beard and long hair, but he doesn't look like an anorexic Christ, he looks like a pirate. Talk about breath, when I saw him my breath went all musical on me. Rhythm and motion. Symphonies. The pathways the blood takes inside my arms, inside the creases of my thighs, where they meet my hips, the crucial pathways, warmed.

"I was breathing a lot when he said hello. I stumbled over my tongue. I said hello back. He smiled at me. I thought he was laughing at me. I really couldn't breathe normally. I laughed, thinking that my friend must have been right about breath. He asked me what was funny. He sat down beside me, all attention for the answer. He was extraordinarily focused for such a simple question. I could not lie to his grey eyes.

"You are so beautiful," I said.

"He looked at me and nodded, thoughtful, respectfully. I did not get the feeling that he was stuck up about it.

"You're beautiful too," he said.

"My breath steadied but my heart was going like blazes, on fire. It hurt.

"You took my breath away," I said.

"He looked very serious but he was still leaning towards me and very attentive. *Now would be a good time to die.* I couldn't be more embarrassed. But later, when I was going over it all in my mind, I realized that this was the first time since I'd gotten the phone call from my aunt that my mother had died in her sleep, that I wasn't thinking about her, about the past, about the future. I was pulled into the moment, into a pirate's presence.

"I would like to come and see you," he said.

"I'd like that," I said.

"He turned so that we were now sitting side by side, facing out a bay window onto some big old willows. It was raining. After a few minutes, my heart and my breath got themselves synchronized again. He took my left hand in his right. I felt more warmth. We exchanged names, where were we from, how many brothers and sisters did we not have. We're both only children.

"We saw some interesting birds through the window. We didn't know their names. He told me that he was a saxophone player. *I'm going to get hurt here.* I felt myself pull inside again. I thought of my mother dealing with my father sleeping around. Breath going through the sax, breath going through my heart. *He is so beautiful, he must be a con artist.* I took my hand back. My friend came out of the meeting. We went home and I never went there again.

"He knew where I lived because I had told him. He didn't come over. He didn't call, even though he knew my name and my number was in the book. *I was right,*

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*he's a con. Good thing I saw through him.* But part of me wasn't sure. Part of me trusted my breath.

"The lock that my mother's death had placed on the house of my heart, had been deftly opened. I was never again as obsessed by her passing. The fire that had zoomed through my life pathways had melted the lock. The lock was gone. This was the miracle of loving.

"I saw him, in the park sitting on a green bench. I was walking my dog. This was weeks later. He was sitting alone. *He's waiting for me.* It was 7:30 in the morning, before work, in the dew fresh air of a spring morning. He did not rise as I neared him. My dog raced up to him and licked his hand. He tickled her stomach. He left room for me to keep on walking but I didn't want to. I wanted to sit down next to him. So I did.

"I wanted to lay my head on his shoulder and have him hold me but I didn't because I was scared of being pushy, because I was scared of being vulnerable. "I dreamt that you were looking for something. In the dream we are friends, we go swimming in the ocean. We dive under the water, we can breathe there and the fish are very beautiful. We swim with the beautiful fish in a blue light which is dark blue and light blue and illuminated with wonder, crystalline. We don't come up. The ocean becomes a meadow and we are children in the meadow, on a sunny day, playing in the dirt in tall flowers. The dream ends when we kiss. It is a sweet kiss. It is my dream to be a priest. I mean, really, I am trying to get to the place in myself where I can make that commitment. I've been to India twice. I'm going again next week. I'd like to be with you before I go." He said.

"I didn't speak. I took his left hand with my right and walked him back to my apartment which was deep in the disarray of my grief. I called my office to say that I was indisposed. This was Friday. We stayed together til Monday. We walked the dog but otherwise we stayed inside. We walked the dog at night and in the morning and in the afternoon. We went to the park. The flowers were out and they suited us. It rained all day Saturday. We didn't mind. We went to the park in the rain, got wet, came home and got warm.

"When he left, he said, "Thank you for making it possible for me to go."

"He cleansed me, returned me to a state of grace. He said that I had done the same for him. I couldn't see how. He said that it was important, incredibly important for him that, even if I couldn't understand it, that I must not forget what he had said until I understood. I had given him, with my trust and my love, the clarity of himself, with that, he could find the strength he needed to do the work he must.

"I know it sounds like a line, like he was just another guy splitting, making a romance out of his own selfishness. But isn't that how the liars get away with it? They ape the words of the good. They pose the postures of the true.

"As much as I did not understand my power, I understood his need to go, it's too difficult to convey without telling you what actually happened between us, how it was for those three days, what I saw in him and felt inside myself, how I came to taste the man of flowers.

"He was like anybody else really, in externals. But inside he felt funny, different, odd, out of place. He said that as long as he could remember, he had heard a voice in his head talking to him. Mostly it told him funny things that blew holes in the hypocrisy of his parents and teachers, even in the insignificant lies of his friends. Later he felt that he had x-ray eyes and could see what was going on inside people.

"I used to feel like the guy in the Walt Disney movie who could hear people's thoughts. Totally invaded by the sound." I said.

"He thought that I had the female, receptive version of his male outward extending sense. It was comforting. It was like having a magic mirror. Through me he could see himself and I could hear myself through him. And I had visions too, when we were making love, I saw things, he heard things and sang, not moans, happy sounds.

"You read all the time about love that is accepting, that expects nothing, but you never hardly see it between adult peers. It's something that mothers do for children or priests for their congregation, if they're saintly, or army fellows do for their mates. Often it involves sacrifice, martyrdom or death. Love is to die for, protect and defend for. This was a different kind of love, a love to live for, a life for a life. Useful joy, tested in the furnace of the mundane, strengthened, tempered, Michael's sword taken to meet the dragon. We made love. A sword was born. A sword to fight the demons. A sword to defend the gates of heaven. Sword of truth, the sharp blade of the possible.

"His penis inside me was a hollow filled, like a puppet animated, not by hand, but with his heart, his mind and his intentions. His penis touched the sides of my vagina as his hands might touch my back, inclusive, tender, awakening my blood vessels, the teeny ones, the capillaries, caressing my nerve endings. Pulses were set off between the outside, living skin, of his puppet-filled-with-heart-and-mind-penis and my life-filled-with-love-alive-vagina-walls. Intoxicating pulses, like the roar and beat of ocean waves. How you feel after a day on the beach, when the wind is up, but not pushing the sand upswinging swirling stinging against you, just strong enough to pulse itself against your skin and set the waves strumming the shore. You go home a crested conch shell, the sound, roar and pulse of the sea in you. Like that.

"We made love like that. Exhausted by the pulses, the pleasure, the peaks of orgasm sustained without coming, we laughed, sang, howled, danced, got drinks of water, juice, or wine. I opened my legs to cool my vagina in the air. We told secrets, the usual sort of lover's chat except we skipped the morbidity that often infects sexual encounters. It's hard to describe because it never happened again. Sometimes I've thought I must have imagined it all.

"We were rich. We were abundant. When we came it was smooth, not cataclysmic, smooth like flying in dreams. His penis, in its entering and re-entering, brought my vagina order, cells organized, atoms' orbits' steadying, life focusing deep through thudding, jumpstarting my center. *This is important. This is good. This is worth waking up for.* I felt our hollows align and with a rush, merge, echo opportunity.

"Men usually flail their penis around, bouncing this way and that, content to jam themselves in higgledy-piggledy, rubbing. There is magic in the body, absolutely, without question. Maybe you can analyze all the parts but what the whole is capable of, is beyond analysis or imagination. It must be experienced.

"When the hole in his penis lined up with the hole in my cervix, my uterus went crazy with contractions, sucking itself in and out until it created a vacuum of such power that it pulled his cum right out of him and into me. If we'd been trying to make a baby, if I hadn't been wearing my diaphragm, we would have had a direct line between the giving opening and the receiving opening. We saw eye to eye. We knew each other's emptiness. We knew each other. It isn't an accident, people are made this way, to facilitate union to come into contact with the infinite within each."