

## Light Fixtures

While sleeping, her peaceful countenance was occasionally interrupted by an almost petulant curve of her lip. I watched her intently, flooding her face with my gaze. Her shallow breaths became at once deeper and the spiderweb of her eyelashes fluttered almost imperceptibly. Her eyes began to open and then immediately slammed shut at the sight of me. A tiny groan escaped her lips, which were now threatening a frown. Eyelids still squeezed shut, brow furrowed, she slid her hand out from under the duvet and on to the bedside table, blindly feeling for my base, her fingers roaming until they find the switc---

Brunette's up. She goes across the room. She opens the closet. She takes out then puts back two dresses before she starts changing into one. Once she has it on, she bends across the bed and pulls the curtains back. The sun isn't coming through the window. She sits down to lace up her boots. She picks up her purse, then opens the door, and--

Brunette's back, the door is open behind her. She closes it. She sets her purse on the table. She's bending over to take off her boots. No light is coming through the window. She removes her coat and hangs it in the closet. Walks over to the bed and lays down. She curls into a ball. The duvet is covering almost her whole face. Her breathing is the only movement. Everything else is silent.

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There's nothing else to say. Brunette is asleep. Nothing else in the room moves. No light is coming through the window.

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Brunette moves. She rolls over in bed. She holds her hand to her forehead for a minute. She reaches her arm across the bedside table and hits the switch on the desk lamp.

--eyes barely open and still glazed over with sleep, an almost pained expression on her face. Her fingers lingered on my base, practically caressing me, as though just reaching over and hitting the switch was an act of immense strength that she's still recovering fr---. Oh. Hello. Why are you on?

Brunette took off her purse then boots then coat and laid down in bed.

Yes, of course. She didn't turn you off? Well. Obviously not. She will soon. It's already dark outside, and she has me in any case. Quite an oversight to go to sleep with the lights on.

Light.

Excuse me?

You said lights. But it should be light. Just one.

You're correct, of course. Forgive me. It was quite an oversight for her to go to sleep with the light on. But I suppose passing out drunk can do that to you, coming home after unsuccessfully numbing her pain with alcohol and focusing only on how quickly she can get into bed, how quickly sleep can blot out everything else and let her

Brunette is drunk?

Well, yes, clearly. There's a faint sweetness of alcohol remaining on her breath. Not to mention, she's curled under the duvet in all her clothes. And she's already back asleep, snoring gently, breathing the labored breaths of one burdened by the unending compulsion to numb themselves. You can't see it?

Brunette took off her purse, then her boots, then her coat, then went to the bed and laid down. The duvet was almost covering her whole face. Then nothing moved for a long time. That's what I saw.

Yes, yes, of course, you've said that. But didn't she stumble a bit, have a different cadence to her gait? Didn't she seem a bit dazed, or out of sorts in some way, her eyes glossy and unfocused? Didn't her hands tremble while hanging up her coat? Maybe she closed the closet door with a bit too much force and then reeled at the sudden bang of her own mistake, this act of not knowing her own strength, being unable to fully control her own motion?

I don't know. Brunette hung up her coat, walked across the room, and got into bed. Curled up under the covers. Her breathing was the only movement for a long time. I waited.

I'm sure you did. It must look so very different from up there. I don't envy you, you know. I enjoy being near her face, basking in every pore and fine hair and subtle twitch of her eyebrows. Seeing and hearing and even smelling her breath, understanding her emotions through these intakes and exhales like deciphering a message in morse code. Being indescribably, intimately close. You just get to watch from above, like balcony seats at a stage play. Great seats, of course, but I'm one of the actors. We're just on completely different scales, you and I.

Not to her.

Excuse me?

Not to her. Brunette wakes up, touches your switch. Maybe opens the window. Light comes in. She hits your switch. Gets out of bed, walks across the room, touches me on the wall. Maybe she does some things, hits me again when she leaves. She comes home, hits my switch again. Maybe does other things. It gets dark eventually and she touches you again. Goes over and

hits me for the last time of the night. Maybe stays in bed a bit before always touching your switch. Then repeat the next day, always with some changes, always the same.

You don't have to tell me, I'm here for all of this too, you know! You can't possibly think you know more about her than I do, not when I am so profoundly near. You're quite dull, you know that? I never realized before just how dull you are. I'm glad we don't have the occasion to speak more often.

You just said I was audience and you were on stage. That isn't accurate. We are both set dressing.

Why you impertinent little--! Hmph. I don't think we have anything else to say to each other. Just goes to show that having an overhead view of the situation doesn't necessarily grant one any special knowledge or insight. A pity you'll never get to see how deluded you are.

Okay. Nothing is moving. Brunette's head is under the duvet. There's nothing else to say.

Her face is buried under the blanket and I can just see the outline of the soft rise and fall of her body in the dark as she sleeps. I... Well, I suppose that's all. I guess I haven't anything else to say either.