

## Nectar

When she had agreed to go over to his place for dinner, she was acting from the desperation of loneliness.

*He has all of his teeth. He appears to have a car. Or at the very least someone trusts him enough to let him borrow a car.*

She glanced toward the steering column confirming that there was a key in the ignition.

When she had arrived, she first noticed his toupee sitting on the threadbare, seventies orange couch, then the wood-paneled walls, then his bald head.

*Maybe he looks like Isaac Hayes. If I just squint and turn my head to the side a little. Is that a terry cloth robe he's wearing?*

She began to feel nervous and squirmy, but she was already there and didn't want to leave. It was embarrassing to just up and leave, the nosy neighbors gossiping in and among their own apartments.

"Would you like something to drink? Would you like to slip into something more comfortable, he asked producing a smaller robe and holding it up, toward her, not at all apologetic that it was velour?"

"Yes. I mean to the drink. Uh..."

"Sure," he said, and disappeared into the kitchen. She was looking toward the window when he returned.

"What are you looking at?" he asked.

"Uh, nothing?"

He handed her a plastic tumbler full of a cloudy liquid."

“Oh, what is this?” she asked.

“Water!” he shouted, then scuttled over to small stand beneath the window, and closed its drawer.

*He looks shorter than he had at the convenience store. I've got to know what's in that drawer.*

He clapped two times. The lights went out and music started to play. It sounded like it was coming from the closets. All of the closets. The one near the bathroom that seemed to be intended for linens pushed out the drum sound. Vocals came from the closet nearest the entrance of the apartment, the one that seemed intended for coats. She realized that some of the sounds were actually coming from the kitchen cupboard.

"You have a clapper?" she asked.

"Of course, lovely lady."

*I don't think he sounded like Barry White at the convenience store, but the wind was blowing and I was trying to drink my slushie, maybe I couldn't hear him that well through the slurping.*

He clapped four times and she felt as if she had been shoved backwards. She fell onto an avocado green couch that felt like it had been upholstered in shag carpet.

"The clapping?"

"It's a habit of mine," he answered. "You haven't touched your water."

Oh, I'm not thirsty." She glanced toward the window.

"What are you looking at!?"

"Nothing. Nothing," she responded.

*Well, no one will ever have to know that I've been here. And if I just close my eyes...*

“I hope you mean that,” he said

He clapped three times quickly followed by two short claps.

The couch began to vibrate.

“I have to go to the bathroom,” she said.

“Oh,” he answered, clapping eight times.

The couch turned into large toilet for two.

Is that robe coming open? Is there a breast in there? Three?

“Never mind,” she said.

He clapped four times and the couch returned, embracing her tenderly in its cover of shag.

She looked toward the window.

“I think I should be going.”

*Why does he keep looking at that little stand?*

“What are you looking at? What are you looking at?!” He flailed his arms, the robe felt down. His impressively round breasts appeared to be dance, one leaking cloudy whitish tear drops.

“I have to go,” she said.

He stomped his feet then clapped thirteen times a third hand sprouting from his back to make that thirteenth clap a super one.

She attempted to stand, but the couch’s shaglings had grown and were holding on to her arms and legs.

“Just where do you think you’re going? I just want to get to know you! Let me love you. Let me love you! You can feast of my body. You can drink my nectar.” he said turning

toward her, the milky breast now leaking not drops but a steady stream. The third hand knocked the stand and its drawer open, just a crack. “Give me a chance!”

Then a molar hopped out of the drawer and began running across the floor like a cockroach sensing danger, the roots proving to be deft feet.

“Oh no!” he howled, and then tried to catch the molar when a second molar hopped from the drawer and ran in the opposite direction. He tried to chase the other molar when the incisors hopped out as a bunch, two of them working together to carry an injured one. They ran toward the front door.

“Oh no! Oh no! Oh no!” he cried. He jumped up and down when two more legs sprouted as he broke down into tantrum. His seven breasts continued to dance, but now a wilder dance, except the one that had been crying. It cried more, the tears pooling at his feet.

She opened her mouth to scream, but the growing shaglings crept across her face. She clenched her mouth shut, afraid to open it.

He looked at her.

“This is your fault! This is all your fault.”

He clapped vigorous and elaborate pattern lasting several seconds, clapping syncopated rhythms that would have made Scott Joplin turn over in his grave itching to get at a piano. He clapped until his palms were red, then purple, then black. He clapped until his hands fell off, grabbed each other by the thumbs and took their chances running toward the toilet.

*What is that slurping sound?*

The couch had grown sharp teeth the size and shape of a standard garden hoe's blade. The couch looked more like a green velour Venus fly trap than a couch. It began to munch.

Without hands, he could not clap to stop it.