

JULIA

I don't wear panties. That's a confession I should have made a long time ago. I like when people smell me as they walk by. I like it when they get disoriented. I like it when they don't know if they're attracted by it or not.

At first, he was just another man who was attracted by my scent, who imagined the smoothness under my skirt like a hotel room. He told me that he was in no hurry, that he'd keep his hands to himself until the time was right. It was fun to play with his willpower. To see how long he could take the hunger. To see his face crumple with desire. To see how he sat down at my table and no one came to take his order. Just my preference for a certain kind of man.

Later came the bed. A room that was nothing special, on the sixth floor with no elevator, the densest part of the city. The balconies looked out over the pedestrian street. There was no top sheet or blanket. The hour was counted down by a clock with a noisy second hand. I thought that clock was the perfect anti-aphrodisiac. That no man could perform well with that clock ticking. I thought there wouldn't be much in his pants. I belittled him in my head, I got ready with no seduction.

I went into the bathroom to give him a chance to change his mind. You'll never be as good as that first encounter, when you kissed me badly (well). I thought it, I didn't say it. You're going to become part of my quaint gallery of makeout sessions in entryways. People don't make out in entryways anymore, but in my book of mental images, those are two recurring elements.

When I came out of the bathroom, I found something different. He hadn't left, and he hadn't rushed. It seemed he did know how to keep his hands to himself until the exact moment. His body was a tying post that wouldn't give. Uncovered, we embraced; uncovered, we fell onto the mattress; uncovered, we pushed inside each other. That's when the second surprise came. My retractable uterus, his penetrator with a soft arc that fit perfectly. We were face to face, fastened together. Enjoying the spams that demanded no extra movement. I tried to be elegant, or at least indifferent. Exhausted and happy, I got dressed in a cinematic frame. If I'd been wearing pants, I'd have been sure to make a grating sound with the zipper, but my skirt was undramatic. It slipped up on its own, settling onto my hips, while my tights flowed along obligingly and my sweater fell on, followed by my winter coat. All of this in silence, in beautiful and harmonious silence.

I saw him smile with satisfaction. His body was still bucking. I had my moment of doubt. I thought about bringing him in on my excitement (I was excited). I wanted to tell him no one had ever fit inside me like that, like Tetris blocks. I wanted to scream that he was a stallion and become his object. I wanted to tell him I hated garter belts, and I'd never wear one for him or for anybody. Instead, I put in my zippered boots (I did make them grate) and walked out, leaving the door open. He lay there naked with no top sheet, visible to anyone walking through the hotel hallway. I left without paying my half for the room. I'd never paid, but that was the first time I wanted to.

And months went by.

Then everything exploded. The encounters became frequent. We couldn't get enough. We stumbled along in a constant state of eroticism. People could tell. They could see it on my face, in my hair, in the dark circles under my eyes. My body was no longer mine, it was borrowed clothing, clothing that changed sizes. Sometimes it was too tight. Other times, it was enormous. His body (which used to be mine), responded without contradictions. His body (which was still his), acted on it, made love to it when I was there and also when I wasn't. It was like a game of chess played by a single player. He was the white pieces, the black, and the hand that moved both. Or maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I was one of the two because I could feel everything and was immensely happy. I wanted him to love me in every room in the city, in all the bar bathrooms, in all the entryways that no longer existed. I wanted to want to wear a garter belt, but I didn't.

And months went by.

The casual sex gave way to sex that wasn't casual at all, and the casual love did the same. And I, an older woman with no children, began to want one. I wanted him to raw dog me, I wanted him to give me a son. Every time I reached orgasm, I screamed the same thing: "Cum inside me! Put a baby in me!" and he would spill it on the sheet or on my rounded tummy with my generous belly button that became a loving pool. The desire that filled me

was rough, and it disappeared as soon as we were dressed. When he was naked, I wanted him to breed with me, and, when he was dressed, to propose a new spot for an encounter. In the middle, there was nothing. Just days with no meaning, countrysides, calendars with no red Xes that awaited the next room, bathroom, entryway, train station, backseat of a taxi, love motel bathtub, street corner with a closed convenience store, bus stop. In the moments I wasn't with him, I thought of him when I was awake, and I was run over by a car, or two, or three. I died of dehydration, I forgot to wash my hair. In the moments I wasn't with him, the hours weren't divided up into minutes or seconds; all time was stalled. A dirty swimming pool. And I screamed again (always, always) "put a baby in me, put a baby in me," and again he would put it outside of me, a beautiful baby, and another, and another. A room full of babies printed onto sticky sheets. One baby a week. One baby an encounter. And we had more than a hundred. It was so expensive to support them, to feed so many babies, to teach them how to do things right, to have the same last name, to knock up a young, fertile girl. To continue that enormous family. And again, I dreamed of him while I was awake. Of him and our babies. Their faces, mine. Their bodies, his.

And months went by.

We finally discussed it with our clothes on. One day, a late encounter, a long line at the love motel. Mute and cold. I told him I thought I meant it. He said he'd do it, he'd put all the babies in me I wanted, but I was old, and he couldn't be responsible for any more kids. He said he'd been making them for years, that women always asked him for the same thing, that he was considered a populator of villages, the father of entire summer resort. He told me he made beautiful kids, always boys, always with a dimple in their right cheek, always well-built and vigorous, always attentive to women's requests. He made "real" men, men who "spread your legs and fill you with cum."

I felt strange. On the one hand, I was relieved that that desire wasn't mine. It was a borrowed desire, or at least a shared one. All women were destined to ask him for the same thing. They all wanted his seed, they all wanted him to make their bellies swell. But at the same time, I couldn't help but feel like a copy of a copy. One of those hundred kids that we made but didn't make. I wanted what all women wanted, and if I wanted it so much, and they did too, and if I needed it so much, and they did too, it was because he was in charge. He

called the shots, not me. I'd been at his mercy the whole time, begging him for the same kid the last woman had begged him for.

And I thought maybe I should start wearing panties.

And months went by.

I accepted. I said yes. "Put a baby in me anyway." And we planned it out. It was going to be special. We were going to make him in a waterbed. Make a liquid baby that would grow and be born just as easily. That wouldn't hurt inside or out. And he told me not to worry. That he'd done it a thousand times, that it never took more than one try, and it would be the last. After the baby he was going to give me, he was ending the line. "I'm shutting down the factory."

I wore the garter belt I said I was never going to wear, but he asked me to, and now I obeyed. It was in a hotel he picked out. It was expensive, but this time I wanted to pay for it myself.

He said he wanted to do it from behind, grabbing my neck with his right hand, leaving his left one free to pull at my mane, his voice right in my ear, urging me to ask him for it again, "but this time be sure when you say it, I want to hear that you really want it, that you really want *me*." And I screamed it again and again, and my throat hurt, crushed by his hand, and my waist hurt, ridden by his weight, and my eyes hurt, crying with excitement, and I could hear the sound of all that cum (of all that baby) bursting out from inside him. And I could feel the moment when he spilled over, and I could smell it, I tasted it. And the smell was sweet, its avocado flavor, its slippery texture, like the ice cube in a drink. And I took it all. My body absorbed it with the thirst of my forty-five years. And suddenly my skin was smoother, and the bags under my eyes shrank. And my nails grew long, and my hair became strong and shiny. And I screamed. I screamed so much that everyone in that hotel came out into the hallway and listened solemnly. They all watched the new year's fireworks. All of them with a glass of champagne in their hand and a grown child in the other. Hundreds of potential families heard my scream of a woman in heat, and then, hours later, they would fight each other for the room with the waterbed.

And months went by.

Three months and I bled.

He said I was the first woman who hadn't been able to incubate his gift. He called it a "gift," and I was horrified. I'd never heard him talk like that, and I didn't like it. I didn't like bleeding our kid away, and I didn't like being the exception. It was the first time I wanted to be all women, part of a group, of a clan, a colony. I wanted to live in Utah, in polygamy territory. I wanted to say "we" and not "I."

That day, he didn't take off his clothes. He said I didn't deserve to see his body, that his body was for breeding and that I'd disobeyed him, that I had to earn his nakedness again. That I had to really want him.

I described every part of him. I thought if I proved that his body was my only map, if I showed him that on the days I wasn't with him I didn't live anywhere, if I managed to explain to him that between one fuck and the next there was nothing, I would earn his forgiveness and another kid. One that would last.

But he didn't want to take off his clothes. He unzipped his pants, and without even showing me his earthy chest, he mounted me face-to-face and hard, really hard. I screamed, crazed. But no one came out into the hallway, we were on the tracks of an abandoned train. There was tall grass everywhere and filth, so much filth, the kind that only builds up after years of abandonment. The smell was nauseating, and his rhythm was exhausting. His hands covered my mouth, and his legs dug metal spurs into me, or sneakers with sharp laces. He told me to ask him for it, and I asked. He told me to ask him harder, and I did as I was told. But he didn't give it to me. He exploded on my abdomen, filled with pain, almost adolescent, filled with the hormones of a baby that hadn't been and that he didn't want to put in me again.

And months went by.

The phone didn't ring. My cell didn't play his ringtone. There was no message in my email. Twitter didn't retweet, no double blue checkmarks appeared in WhatsApp, he was

invisible on Skype, there were no views on Facebook, no hearts on Instagram. And I kept bleeding once a month.

We were no longer something unique in our species, a monster, two in one, and one and the same. There was no more playing, not even a bit of the forbidden, signaling desire and then leaving it for a while. That while was all the time, and now the calendar had no Xes, none at all. I felt like Lorca: barren, green, a girl.

I thought about killing myself. I wanted to do it in the hotel with the waterbed. I called a cab, but after two hours of driving around, I couldn't find it. We had fucked in all the hotels on that long highway, and in so many others. I wanted anyone to do it to me (make love to me, put a baby in me), and I lay down on the tracks of the abandoned train, but I didn't last long. A skinny horse came over to graze next to me. I thought it was a sign. It was him, thinned by desire, skinny from missing me so much, decrepit from the terrible life he was living without wetting his pink gums on my lips. It was him, sick with bronchitis because he'd lost his phone where he saved all my information, because he had no way to contact me. Missing me endlessly. Nearly dead. The stallion who used to rail me had become a zombie pet.

And months went by.

The withdrawal from his body gave me cramps, vomiting, extreme thinness, hair loss, bags under my eyes, dark circles under the bags, nails that I chewed during the night, nightmares of a headless horseman, cold sweats.

At first, my crazed ovaries menstruated in complete disorder, both of them ready to get pregnant again at any moment. I felt identifiable pinpricks, "that's the left one, that's the right one." I was ready, I was fertile ground, I was the Pachamama, I just needed to be bombarded by sperm, his sperm, his babies.

After a while, that viscous swamp full of flora and fauna that my sex had turned into dried out forever. I screamed, "methadone, I need methadone" and stained the sheets with water and yearning. Of the woman who didn't want to wear a garter belt and then did, little was left. No one whistled at me in the street anymore, I couldn't make men starve to death anymore. I started wearing panties. I had no scent left. I didn't smell like hotel room anymore, like a night that promised a thousand shrieks. I didn't smell like anything.

At dawn, I walked the streets of my neighborhood, of other neighborhoods. I walked down highways with toll booths and onramps. I walked through cabarets, bars, wide avenues, I walked up walls and I walked all over myself. I kept screaming “methadone, I want my methadone,” and people looked at me with disgust or sadness. Every so often, someone came up to me to check if I had a fever. They would put their hands on my forehead, they would ask me questions I couldn’t hear, they would get bored or scared and keep walking. When the sun came out, I would go back to my room. Not to my house anymore. I’d moved into a hotel. I thought that if he was looking for me, if he was poring over the city guides, collecting the addresses of roadside motels, love motels, and other places like that, he would be able to find me right there: in one that was nothing special.

But months went by.

The withdrawal became a lifestyle. My extremities would always itch. My dry mouth wouldn’t produce saliva again. And I would never get wet for another man. His voice was still in my head. That voice that, the moment it appeared, settled my organs inside me and told my body to do what he said, to distill itself down, to tingle, to raise its temperature ten degrees. “Heat up, my little pussy, get all wet because I’m going to tear you up good, I’m going to kiss your insides with my curious head, I’m going to make little stallions inside you all night...” (He’d never said anything to my pussy, but it listened.) My body was his, I could no longer reclaim it.

Meanwhile, people come and go talking of Michelangelo. I imagined myself naked, penetrated by the horse statue. Pierced by the cold marble tip. Smiling for the passersby. Fucked good, that’s what I was, fucked good.

I turned forty-six. I tried to harvest my eggs by hand. I could hear them, they talked about their curved penetrator, they talked about his cum, they talked about that stallion’s

body that pierced them and made them smile. They missed him. They didn't want anything else. They didn't want me. I didn't, either.