

Bourne
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Addiction

by Jamie Moore

She entered gently yet assuredly, in the manner of a cat satiated by a saucer of milk, purring for some environment to ingratiate herself with, bare feet placed to absorb energy. Not a terrace but an enchanted moss.

“Hello Charlie!” She greeted him with intent, slipping lithely into the corner of the L to rest against his wilting shoulder.

Two hours had passed since Charlie had let himself in and poured his first drink. The empty bottle of Don Julio Reposado laid claim to the dining table, three empty glasses of diminishing size signalling his mood pathway.

“You have been entertaining Charlie?” she mused.

“I’m always entertaining, Valentina”. He gazed away from her to the ocean horizon, white tips the prelude to another storm, whirligigs that blew in with brusque rapidity.

Charlie had spent the week assimilating pieces of a puzzle he had mistakenly unearthed. Catching Valentina with Jose Castillo had scrambled them again. He’d spent the last two hours trying to forget, establishing meaning and order through the elucidation of agave spirit. Though every piece could still amount to the same conclusion, Charlie could no longer see it, his mind addled, neuroses distended and his ego suffocated. He thought the alcohol might give him boldness of touch, a directness of confrontation both intractable and inarguable. A truth sayer. Now he no longer knew how to begin.

“I saw you,” he said limply. The words never settled as he had hoped, the wind collecting to whip them over the balcony.

“You saw me Charlie, where?!” replied Valentina still smiling, her mood measured. She gathered her durably lustrous hair to tie it back. They waited for a gust to dwindle. Spots of rain marked the table, splatters of indigo ink.

“Castillo farm.” He paused, tipping desperate remnants of an empty shot glass to a parched mouth. “With Jose.”

“Ok Charlie, ok.” Immediately she understood where and when. And how. She stood abruptly. “You followed me Charlie, yes?”

“Yes.”

“How long you have followed me?” her tone still measured.

“Ages,” he replied, “it’s the highlight of my day. I never know where I might end up, it’s the only variety in this bloody place.”

“You need to leave me alone Charlie. It is too much. Is an...addict.”

“Addicted?! To you?! You’re the addict, desperate for love from any man that shows an interest, and you’re never short of that? It’s never too much is it Valentina?!”

“What does that mean?” She raised her voice for the first time, combative in posture.

“You’ve taken everything I’ve had to give, absorbed it like a fucking sponge, and now you’re onto a Castillo, of all people Valentina.” He was absorbed, self-impressed, words to land like a thumping trope.

“You don’t understand Charlie, you know nothing...”

“I think I do... Saw you in his arms. Saw you laughing like.....” Charlie paused, disturbed by how the mental picture that captivated him.

“Charlie you are married man. I am not tied. You can’t give me everything!”

“I wanted to. You know it. We talked... I...”

“You say I am addict. For love,” Valentina interrupted, raising her voice, a fissure in the dry wall. “Many woman, man, we need to belong, to feel, what is wrong with this? I have no husband, you remember Charlie? And you? You are opposite Charlie, you love no one, you... avoid, is why you come to my door...”

The wind gusted again, giving respite.

“I never meant to leave you, Charlie. It is life.” Valentina’s voice cracked. He wondered whether it was real, whether she was as defeated as she sounded. “There are things we all have to do. I need love Charlie yes...I need love. I love too.”

Deep purple clouds stained the sky directly overhead, rain intense, percussive. Valentina turned her head and tripped on the step, then walked slowly inside.