

Lemons

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"THERE'S NOTHING MORE BEAUTIFUL THAN A SILENT LIBRARY," says the only man left in the dusty library, hiding behind the shelves of unopened books that hold dust within their pages. He feels inspired by the emptiness that surrounds him. Only here alone with his pencil does he feel he can let his dreams breathe, only here in the silent dusty library does the page in front of him start to fill with words, only here with cold empty seats around him does he know himself.

"There's nothing more unsightly than a crowded library," the man thinks to himself. He works on burying the thought of the morning crowd of students. All the students swarming in and out, thinking only about themselves and not about the wonders and work that was put into the books that were so close and available to them. Not one of them stops to notice him sitting alone in the corner and this doesn't bother him. It doesn't bother him in the slightest. It's always been like this and he doesn't want it to change.

He could so easily breathe in the scent of leftover stress and the words of all the spoken conversations that surrounded him earlier. It smelled the same every day, it held the same amount of dust and just the right measure of leather from the couches placed so carefully around the room, yearning for students they would never get. A scent he didn't recognize filled the insides of his nose and tickled his thoughts for a moment. Maybe he did remember this sudden change.

A sniff of a warmth and citrus that came together to be freshness. He was remembering the smell. He was remembering who it belonged to. He was gaining sight of her red curls that came down to kiss the arch of her back.

"Hi," her soft voice said casually.

He looked up from the mulch he was kicking around in his size 2 tennis shoes. He had

just moved up a size and he was really excited about it. He wouldn't dare tell anyone this though. Her full blue eyes were gazing down at him, so curious and full of young life.

"I said Hi," her voice wasn't any less soft than it was before. It was like she was simply reminding him of something he had forgotten to do earlier that week.

"Hi," His voice came out rusty like a bike turning it's spokes after being kept up in the garage for the winter. On the playground he sat on the broken swing that no one else would want. He did this on purpose so that no one else would bother him. This was the first person that had bothered to notice him over here in the land of unwanted swings.

"Did you know monkeys lay eggs?" She said, obviously wanting this to be a new fascinating fact he had never heard before.

"Monkeys don't lay eggs." He said, looking back down at the ground. He was drawing a monkey in the mulch now.

"Yes they do, silly!" She said like it was ridiculous for him to suggest such a thing. She motioned at him to follow her. He thought about for a long time and thought he saw the monkey he had been working on in the ground nod yes.

He followed her and the scent of lemons was trailing behind

her.

"Why do you smell like that?" He asked

"My mom rubs lemon juice behind my ears every morning." She said, phased by the question just enough to answer it. She was more focused on what she was about to show him underneath the bleachers that were there to watch a kickball game that would never happen.

He looked around in silence. There were drawings of all different kinds of monkeys that she had so carefully hidden under these bleachers. Purple monkeys, baby monkeys, monkeys big enough to be gorillas, they were everywhere.

He smiled at her and immediately realized that he felt something different. He felt something much bigger than the emptiness of the broken swing and the movement of the mulch under his size 2 shoes. He felt like he belonged here under these old bleachers with this girl that smelled like lemons.

"See, these are their eggs!" She said like she was proving a point with her hand illuminating rocks shaped like dinosaurs eggs.

He thought to himself while he gazed at the gap where two teeth use to be in her smile, "Maybe monkeys do lay eggs. Maybe anything can happen under these bleachers."

"Sir, the library is closed."

He thought maybe it could've
been her in the library, the girl that
smelled like lemons, telling him it
was time to take his books home
with him.

He still loves the girl that
smells like lemons.