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She stood on the sill of the bar's bay window with one hand cupping a beer and the other flush against the ceiling for stability. Her voice—stronger than I would have thought—poured into the street, overtaking the crowd's screaming and clapping that filled the air since early that morning. Beyond her, an endless stream of marathoners flashed by while signs waved amidst a sea of fall colored clothes.

When her runner passed, she spun around, held her beer out to the crowd and delivered a "HELL YEAH" to the bar at the top of her lungs. As a few gave her one back, she looked towards the ceiling, smiled, and then jumped down to the beer soaked floor. Some friends immediately surrounded her, but so too did a line of guys all praying for a shot to give some patented opening line. With not a clever thought in my mind, I hung back and watched as she shot down and discarded the wannabe suitors like you do peanut shells on the floor at Lone Star.

She was stunning—classic even—like a colorized 1940's starlet who'd climbed out of the tv and into a crap Irish bar on the Upper East Side. Full lips, doe brown eyes and piercing cheekbones came together like on no other woman in the place. But what struck me most was the way her look would change, her beauty deepen from moment to moment. The tiniest stroke of light, a tousling of her hair, a slight change in angle from where I viewed her seemed to reveal entirely new elements of her charm that hadn't existed in the seconds before.

"I know she's some kind of artist" snapped into my ear, breaking the daze that enveloped me. I turned to find my friend Liz, clumsily leaning towards me from her stool with a bloody mary in her hand and an exasperated look on her face.

"What? Who?" I asked.

"Are you kidding? The girl you're stalking!" Some of her drink spilled onto the bar from a graceless tilt of her hand. I conceded with a smile and shrug.

"Like I said," she continued with a slight slur, "I know she's an artist and that she lives up here somewhere. Oh!" a smirk grew from the corners of her mouth, "and I know she ain't interested."

"She said that?" I asked.

"Sorry genius, but it don't take much to see. Cut bait. Move on."

Truth be told, Liz was right. I hadn't even gotten so much as a glance in my direction, except when this beauty checked the time on the clock above my head. I felt like a scrawny, pimply-faced fourteen year old kid, staring across a dance floor with not an ounce of courage or wit. And the more I watched her and tried to plan my approach, the blanker my mind went. The frustration only grew until the beers finally took effect, allowing me to justify my gutless inaction.

By this time, the crowds on the street had thinned considerably and only a few, heavy-footed runners still staggered towards the finish line, hoping to cross before the night grew too dark. It always amazed me what some people will put themselves through, even when so few were still watching.

She continued to drift through the bar, shaking off the line of men, while smiling and laughing with her friends. Even with the stink of stale beer in the air and remnants of salty sweat coating her skin, she looked radiant. It was another light, another perspective.

I don't know if it was the heat from the crowded bar or the alcohol roasting my body from the inside out, but I decided to take off my sweater and threw it onto a chair, leaving me in just an old t-shirt and jeans. And that's when she looked over.

As she walked by en route to some friends in the corner, I noticed her eyes squinting at the three tiny words imprinted on my shirt. She looked at me curiously and continued on. But then, almost an hour later, I caught her peering through the crowd at my chest with her lips pursed and her head tilted slightly as though the view would afford her the answer she seemed to so desperately want. The sweat poured from the small of my back as I watched her eyes climb slowly up my neck, across my lips, and onto my face. Before I could even wince, her shoe moved forward and I watched in horror as she made her way towards me.

"So," she said, grabbing the bottom of my shirt and holding it out to bring the words closer to her face, "this 'Winter Surfers Rule' . . . is that for real? Do you really do that?"

The shirt was one an old girlfriend made, partly as a joke. "Uh. . . yeah. I do it here and in Jersey," was all I could muster.

"What do you wear, one of those dry suits?" Her huge brown eyes squinted at me with her bullshit meter turned to the max.

"Actually, no. I just wear a 5/4." When her face scrunched into itself, I said, "uh...it's millimeters. The thickness of the suit."

She bit her bottom lip for a long time, then smiled and looked directly into my eyes for the first time all night. "That's cool," she said.

And then, I downed the last of my beer, motioned to the bartender for two more and reveled in watching the tiny hook pierce her soft, full lip and disappear deep into her gums.