

"To Andrew"
LA Henderson

"Oh, Andrew, Andrew - Thine eyes art too blue-"

"Your poetry's lousy," I said without glancing up from the book I was reading. "Not everything has to rhyme, you know. And I thought his eyes were brown."

A long silence answered, and I sighed. Leave it to Cara to sulk in response to constructive criticism.

I looked up to find her worrying her lip as she gazed into the fire, the scrap of paper containing her latest ode to pre-teen crushes crumpled in her hand.

"Do you really think so?" she asked, chin trembling.

"Well, yeah," I replied, "but that doesn't mean that you aren't a good writer. You just try too hard sometimes, and it sounds stilted."

She blinked.

"No, I mean, do you really think his eyes are brown?"

Well, she certainly knew her priorities.

I lowered my eyes back to my reading, the firelight dancing solemnly over the words.

"I don't know," I muttered. "He's *your* 'soul-mate' thingy."

"One can never know *everything* about one's beloved!" she declared grandly as she flung herself beside me on the couch, bouncing the tome to the carpet with a distinct crumpling of delicate pages. "That's the charm of true and long-lasting love!"

I glared at the girl, her cheeks rosy with youthful exuberance, her grin wide with naivete, and I felt a twinge of some strong emotion:

Irritation.

"Cara..." I growled. "Are you aware that this boy doesn't even know you exist?"

"Well, they didn't know Nobody Special existed either, until they tried the magic mushrooms, now, did they?" she retorted, her jaw gone obstinate.

"That's just a story!" I protested. "A philosophical musing that has no application whatsoever to real life, apart from reassuring mousy women that they are charming in their own way! Besides," I sniffed, plucking the text off the floor, "the mushrooms serve only to cast doubt on the reality of the situation; it is never explicitly stated that seeing Nobody Special can be contributed to their effects. What, will you feed your Andrew hallucinogenic fungi until he notices you, and follows you as the dagger on the way to murder his sleep?"

"I can do that?" she asked, eyes lighting up. "Cool!"

She bounded up, headed towards the kitchen, before I grabbed her wrist and nearly fell off the couch.

The volume landed on the floor again.

"No!"

Cara pouted.

"But you said--"

"--It in a sarcastic tone," I finished. "By no means do I approve of you drugging some boy you like so that he has delusions that prevent him from sleeping at night."

The determined indignation in her eyes did not lessen.

"Besides," I continued, "they would probably be hallucinations of Pamela Anderson rather than of you."

"Oh...." She looked down at her own undeveloped chest. "I guess that's not such a great idea, then."

I sighed in relief, releasing her to pick up my book, settling back into the comfort of the couch and the fire before flipping to the right page.

"I'll just write a really good poem then. And I'll give it to him and he'll love me forever!" she bubbled, spirits revived.

"Every fool in love will learn to dance..." I murmured, starting a new chapter. "And everyone in love is a fool."

~*~

TO ANDREW

*I am true-
I am no illusion,
Conceived in fantasy and raised in fiction,
Gone by morning's light -
The intangible dagger that cuts away at your slumber.
I am real,
Perfect in my flaws,
Sewn of softer stuff than even dreams are made of.
Be solitary no more, my love,
For I will pad your sleep with satisfaction,
And still be solid and smiling for you in the morning.*

-Will you please proofread this for me?

Cara <3

I set the poem back down on my desk beside my morning coffee and granted that some fools learned to dance well.