

“smoothie”

by

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You should have known, you should have known.

But it wasn't your fault, she *pressured* you.

Even if you had read the book, *that* book that she had given to you with the warning label of a bright pink (bright pink? really?) post-it with big blocky yellow highlighter words

YOU'LL NEED THIS

Even so, you could never have known. You couldn't have, how could you?

Her offer had seemed innocent. A date (oh, but not romantic we're only friends you know) to celebrate the coming of summer, the season that never disappeared, simply waned and intensified. June, the end of high school, the end of four years of *LEARNING LIFE* and she invites you for a refreshing drink of some sort in a frequented *endroit*.

Innocent. Simple. Alluring.

And so you go, dripping flesh and melting bone, swimming through the air all the way to the Place. That monstrous season, summer, the months where the body recoils in horror at Mother Earth's cruelty and misunderstands that she does not love man (no, that is not why she created you), she simply is amused by him. Puppeteer strings lifting up drenched human forms, wet laundry with parched mouths, croaking out

I think my eyeballs have shriveled up in their sockets
and I think my internal organs have committed suicide.

But I digress.

Thus you trudge until you see her, sipping her drink, looking fresh and cool in her air-conditioned paradise. You enter and she orders your favourite: mango peach strawberry smoothie with extra yoghurt. She smiles as her name is called out and comes back with the styrofoam cup, dipping straw into plastic top hole and smiling her wolf smile.

Drink. It's pretty good.

And you suppose that was the moment where you should have realized something truly terrible would happen. But it wasn't your fault. How could it have been? You were stripped of defenses and you needed to calm down your failing body.

She began to speak about the art of making smoothies. You listen to her while she speaks-- soft, full words bubbling from her lips--

You see, you have to put the similar coloured fruits together--mangoes, peaches, they're orange, and they also work with strawberries--

Her words envelop you in a silky coating, warming you from the bottom of your soles to the split ends of your hair--pure heat rippling throughout you and you take that as a sign to drink more

--You don't put dark fruits in smoothies, it doesn't taste quite that good and a lot of dark fruit have seeds in them. The most important part is the yoghurt of course--

Of course, it's the most important. Yes, quite so. You feel tingling pricks all along your skin and deep within the crevices of your eyes. What is this feeling? Perhaps you're sick...

--without it, the smoothie isn't smooth and creamy. But you need to put the right amount of yoghurt to get that consistency. The perfect smoothie isn't so easy to make as you'd think--

No, no, it's not. Quite hard. You are drenched in sweat by now and your throat has constricted while your grip on the cup has left visible marks of fingernail indentations. Your thoughts stall and rush and stop and dribble as vines of flowers and thick ropes of velvet creep up your throat and behind your skull and under your spine and through your marrow and you see her face, her face, beautiful oh god too beautiful, the colours that make up her goddess lips those words that aren't words anymore they are actual letters in times new roman whooshing at you and hitting you in the face, but soft-like and oh god why is the ceiling moving and rippling

--but I think that this is a really good smoothie, one of the best I've ever had. What do you think? Good smoothie, no?

And she flashes that wolf smile again as she sips her drink and lays back in her chair on a beautiful hot June morning.