

SMOOTH

Oh, but he's smooth. From the neat whiskers on his chin to the bottoms of his Jimmy Choo shoes. And I can imagine his scent – pine needles with a hint of musk, as if he'd been in the woods. But look at his suit – urbane, understated – a body doesn't have to try when he looks like that. I imagine him rolling out of bed, springing up and into the day without a hair out of place.

I ignore his first attempt to attract my attention. A casual raising of the face, lips stretching a little to reveal perfect white teeth within. I swear, they caught the light and sparkled. Goddamnit, they *sparkled*. But I play it cool, turn away. Pretend I'm totally engrossed in something on the other side of the room.

That's when he sends me a cocktail and the timid waitress in her fluffy bunny tail and ears points to him as she delivers it. He looks so hopeful I relent, flash my own sparkling teeth. For a moment, he looks disconcerted, but he rallies, sashays over to my table and pulls out a chair.

'What's a beautiful thing like you doing in a place like this?' He puts his own cocktail on the table. It's the twin of mine.

I take out a cigarette and he's beside me, cupping the flame of his silver cigarette lighter. I say nothing, blow a smoke ring, then a second. The cocktails sit between us untouched.

'What's your name,' he asks, and I tell him one. I think it suits me.

We sit in silence, watching the dancers. They gyrate on the dancefloor, turning this way and that in time to the beat of the music. I have to twist my body to see them, so I can't see him, but I catch the slightest movement behind me. I turn back, but everything appears the same. The drinks still sit between us. A single bubble rises to the top of mine.

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‘Cheers,’ he says, and we raise our glasses and both take a sip, put them down again.

I stare over his shoulder, eyes widening in alarm.

‘What is it?’ He twists to see what I’m looking at. A dark figure disappears through the doorway.

‘It’s okay,’ I say, and pat his arm. ‘Someone I – no one, nothing.’

I smile at him again and he seems perplexed. ‘You remind me of someone,’ he says.

I grab my glass and raise it. ‘To lost memories. Bottoms up!’ I slam the whole cocktail down. The empty glass hits the tabletop with a thump.

‘Girl after my own heart,’ he murmurs, and does the same.

We stare at each other for a time, both of us grinning wickedly.

‘Let’s get out of here,’ I say. ‘I want to get to know you better.’

His face cracks into a grin. ‘You’re reading my mind, babe.’

I grab his arm and we weave through the patrons, slamming into someone in our obscene haste. She spills her drink on her leather dress, but we’re gone before she realises who has caused it. We burst through the back door together and spill out into the dingy alley behind the night club. The door swings shut, silencing the music, apart from the deep bass beat. It matches the beat of my own heart, and I wonder if his pounds with the same rhythm.

He smiles, toothy, confident, pulls me into his arms. He presses me against the rough brick wall, grinds his body into mine. The intensity in his eyes deepens. They capture mine and I feel like everyone else must have felt before me. I’m falling into those golden pools. I twist, pulling him around until it’s him leaning against the wall.

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He blinks. 'Haven't I...don't I...?

Confusion clouds his eyes.

'No. And yes.' I smile up at him, taking my time to enjoy this moment. 'No, you've never met me before. And yes, you know me. At least, you should know my twin sister. You brought her here, didn't you? To this very spot.' I point to a rust-coloured patch of concrete at our feet.

'Wen – *Wendy*?' He sways now, squeezes his eyes shut and opens them again. I imagine he's seeing a dozen of me, or a dozen of Wendy, all swaying in unison.

'Wha'd you gimme?' His words are slurred and his head drops forward. I slip my wig off, stuff it into my bag, and reach for something else. Right now, the only thing holding him up is me and the brick wall. A sweat breaks out across his forehead.

Smooth.

That's how the knife went in. Between that fourth and fifth rib. Just like on youtube.

I didn't have to put all my weight behind it, but I did.

For Wendy.

Ends.