

Asuka and the Floating City

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He became addicted to *Sailor Moon* anime, blood plums and sex in the morning. She carried Donne's "Sunne Rising" in her satchel between her lunchbox and her spare pair of pink panties. 'Monday' was printed in red across their lacy front with a picture of a girl skipping. It was Thursday. He liked to wake with heat coursing through his body and her head in his lap. Noisily nuzzling. He would place his left hand on the back of her jet hair and close his eyes to the most brilliant shade of orange. A warm glow would radiate through his body and collect in his big toes.

She would watch his eyes. Patent pupils bleeding into the pale blue. Once she had told him that she liked to watch his veins throb and touched the tiny veins near his temples. He had groaned. He always groaned when she touched him. She always knew how he liked to be touched. Fleshy fingertips. Searing his skin. Feverish.

He became addicted to her tangerine lipstick in thick circles, purple sheets impregnated with her Picasso perfume and the taste of honey pooling on his tongue. He would watch her luscious lips languorously licking a lollipop. He would sit stiffly in bed. A triangular cushion propped behind his head. Pale blue with a ruffle. Once she told him that her father didn't know what a valance was. He had smiled, watching her long black plait graze the base of her spine as she tipped her head back to laugh. He wondered what a valance was but she was already discussing Cherry Valance and Pony Boy Curtis.

Sometimes she would stop in the middle of a story. Mahogany eyes blank. Her gummy fingers pawing at his neck. "What was I saying?" she would ask him. Terrified goldfish. But he could never answer. He meant to listen to what she was saying. But she often babbled about popular culture and wiggled her hips. And both things were distracting. So instead he pulled her to him. Gathered her in his arms. Kissed her smooth eyelids until they stopped fluttering. And then sometimes, only sometimes, he would let her call him 'Tuxedo'. Only because she would give him butterfly kisses on his buttocks.

He became addicted to the way his chest remained red and blotchy for fifteen minutes after she left. His pupils would remain dilated. His temples still throbbing. Rush. He liked to watch her long hair skim the doorjamb as she slammed the door behind her. She always sucked the top of her pencil when she

wrote. Oral fixation. Tiny indentations in the black tip of the Sanrio *Twinstars* pencil. Once he bought her a pink powder puff pen and she had softly stroked her left cheek all afternoon. He searched for his briefcase and found a pink, strawberry scratch and sniff sticker on the buckle. He smiled as he peeled it off the cold metal and stuck it on the bed head. Only sixteen more hours until he would feel her long ponytail brush over his stomach. The tops of his thighs prickled at the thought of her sticky lips. Everywhere.

He became addicted to Haiku, sake and the back of her head catching the orange light tinting his bedroom a fuzzy peach.

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Cherry blossom season. An eruption of pink. Paper-thin petals sticking to her backpack. She only liked *Twinstars* and *Hello Kitty*. The mermaid *Hello Kitty* was the best character in the Sanrio line. *Keroppi* was overrated. Frog. She remembered the man with the frog eyes and peeked at her watch. If she didn't hurry she'd be late and he wouldn't tip her. Asuka stopped to mail sixteen perfumed envelopes to her regulars. Three wanted her pink lacy panties but the others only wanted navy blue and white panties which had been worn for at least thirty-six hours. There weren't enough hours in the week. Often she had to steal Akemi and Setsuko's panties from the laundry basket.

Cherry blossom season. Pink confetti embedding itself in her hair. Embedding. Bedding. Bed. Maybe she would marry one day. But not while there were so many shoes to buy. She hated plastic bed protectors. Crinkle. Dull tinkle. Like newspaper. Asuka thought about covering herself in newspaper print. The classifieds. Wanted. Man wanted. Tall, dark and handsome. Must be willing to support sixteen year old with expensive tastes. Unlimited used panties at your whim. Call now.

Cherry blossom season. Her pink pager vibrated on her low-slung plastic pants. She stopped to check her watch. Titanic Baby G. Illuminated blue waves sloshed around the face and over the turquoise hands. She pushed a button and watched the Titanic sink again and again and again. She wished it was more accurate and that the company could have made the ship break in two and then mend itself. Mending was the important part. Otherwise it was all useless. Asuka had mended her holographic pink sailor suit numerous times. Setsuko had mended their friendship bracelets when they had frayed. Hearts were different. Asuka thought her heart was like a Baby G Titanic. Less than perfect. A replica. Defective. She loved shoes more than she had ever loved any man.

Cherry blossom season. She criss-crossed pink ribbons around her ankles and stood on her toes to reach one of the higher branches. The twig snapped and petals fluttered. Landing on her eyelashes. Ballerina tears. The first sprig was the luckiest. She tucked in into the front pocket of her satchel. Between her book and her lunchbox. Pink.

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He waited for her in the Snow White room. Mirrors and apples everywhere. She wore a red ribbon tied in her hair. Smooth on smooth. Smooth talker. He climbed onto her lap and she stroked his cheek. The karaoke machine played the opening strain of 'Some Day My Prince Will Come'. And she sang. Off-key. Bubblegum-pop-style. Just the way he liked it. Undiscovered ingenue. He sucked her powdered breast. Milky white. Milk teeth. Milk money. And dreamed he was four years old and in his mother's bed. That was just how he used to like it. She was his. For an hour. His until the clock struck twelve and she dissolved into another fairytale with another salaryman. He tried not to think about it. He tried to believe she was his. But the Disney clock in the corner counted down the seconds until she was someone else's. He ripped her sailor top as he roughly dragged it over her head. She would have to mend it. He would give her some extra money to buy a new one. Later. He pushed her white panties to the side and entered her. She shivered and he covered her with his body. Smooth. He wondered if he could stop time. Just for a second. And enter her again and again and again. Like the first time. Her first of many firsts.

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Pale pink plastic beads hung from the door to the Princess room. Spotlights created prisms on the walls. She remembered another time when she had made shadow puppets. Now she was a shadow puppet. Mr Yosano reeked of lavender and bergamot. The combination always made her want to gag. When the beads tinkled his arrival she sat on the gilded throne and waited for him to kneel. Her mind wandered. She thought about getting two streaks of pink in her hair. Just the two bits of hair that dangled down the sides of her face. She wished she had the courage to get a cherry blossom tattooed on her throat. Silence. Pinkuu. When he undid his belt his midriff rolled against his upper thighs. They swapped positions and he asked her to bend over his knee so he could spank her. Asuka pulled down her plastic pink pants and held the glass tiara on her head with her right hand. His sweaty palm spanked her tiny buttocks as he came

between her breasts. She was glad when he shifted her off his lap to turn on the television.

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It's Saturday. She knows because her panties have Friday written across the front and she hasn't been home. Glitter clings to her eyelashes. But there is something trashy about glitter in the morning. It doesn't have its sparkle. Spark. Sparks fly. Larks fly. It was a lark. She thinks about pink. Not just the colour pink. Pink in all its forms. Pink led her into the water trade. Bare.