

Obsessive/Compulsive

Two words:

word one :obsessive.

Monday.

Gene lay out his clothes before work, the outfit composed of a button-down (white-starched), navy pants (perfect crease), argyle socks (black), leather shoes. He liked to lay them out like paper doll cut outs, ready for the paper doll to step into them. He put his hand to chin as he stared at the silhouette spread across his bed. It would do, he thought, as he grabbed a silk necktie.

He ate a banana sliced in a bowl of yogurt and granola.

He drank coffee from his Keurig coffeemaker, half a cup.

He had to leave room for an espresso at his favorite coffee shop.

He had to see her.

At the coffee shop, where she was a part-time barista, he eyed her long golden flecked brown hair that was twisted in a bun, he watched her silver bracelets dangle as she pulled the shot. He counted beats in his head as she smiled at him, he noted gold sparkle eye-shadow.

He got a smile from her that morning.

Yet, she was staring out the window.

He jingled change in his pocket.

Tuesday.

Gene lay out his clothes before work, white button down (starched), black pants today (perfect crease), crisp socks, the same leather shoes. He once again examined the cut out that now took shape on his bed.

It was fine, he nodded to himself, fine. He took two steps to his dresser, counting the steps in his head although he already knew.

He grabbed a silk pink tie.

He had his sliced banana, his yogurt, his granola, his half cup of coffee.

He hopped off the bus.

Today she wore a floral scarf tied in her hair.

Heartbeats played on the Pandora station. The Knife. He knew the song.

He waited for her to look up at him.

Pale pink eye-shadow that day.

She handed him his shot before he asked.

His heart fluttered as he counted time to the music along with the jingle and jangle of his change.

Her fingers grazed his.

Wednesday

Gene placed his clothes across his bed.

The paper cut out man stared at him from blank pillowcase eyes.

Starched white shirt: check.

Crisp pleated navy pants: check

Argyle socks: check

Leather shoes: check

He grabbed a silk necktie with a diamond pattern, he was feeling wily.

That was until he realized he was out of bananas.

He was unsure what to do. He stood dumbfounded in the kitchen for a long while as the faucet dripped.

He turned in two circles.

He thought of slicing an apple, it beckoned to him from the counter. He shook his head in the direction of the apple, it did not feel right.

He turned in two more circles.

He ate his yogurt and granola plain.

He got on the bus with mixed emotions.

At the coffee shop, she was engaged in conversation with a very young man. Tall, seemingly athletic, his jeans fit him nicely. He wore his ball cap backwards. She was laughing, she pushed her hair out of her face when she laughed. He had seen her do that before.

The young man grabbed her hand, he seemed to be reading a fortune from her palm.

Gene could not make out what they were saying.

He was pretty certain Crystal Castles was playing on the Pandora.

Everything felt wrong.

He swished the change in his pocket, he could not keep time with the music.

His head began to feel foggy.

He turned in a circle.

Maybe he should leave, he thought.

He turned in one more circle.

She finally noticed him, she waved. She placed his shot on the counter.

Gene did not reach for it because the young man still stood there.

He did not want to take his shot until the young man left.

But she (the barista) and he (the young man) paid him no heed. He looked down at his diamond-patterned tie and felt silly. He began to count the diamonds.

"Gene."

He looked up.

She was leaning over the counter, extending the shot to him.

Both she (the barista) and he (the young man) were staring at him.

He took the shot.
He set it back down on the counter.
He nodded at her, she nodded back.
He (Gene) turned and walked out of the coffee shop. It took seven and a half steps to get to the door but he made the seventh last half step as long as he could so he could count it as eight.
He liked doing things in twos.
He smiled as he approached his office.
(She ((the barista)) had said his name).

Thursday

Gene pulled on his usual outfit. He saluted the cut-out man.
Today, he had decided he would mix things up. He had bought some bananas but they were definitely not ready to be eaten yet so he chose to have cereal and milk today.
He chewed slowly, counting the bites. He drank his one half cup of coffee.
He walked out the door and to the bus.
Once at the coffee shop, she was not there.
A grouchy girl was working.
Grouchy Greta, he thought in his head.
The music was bad.
The espresso was too bitter.
He swished the change in his pocket, wondering where she was.
He imagined her with the young man on a motorcycle in Italy. They both had sun-soaked skin and dark hair.
He swished his change and walked out the door at the seventh and a half step. He grimaced and thought about walking back in and then back out so he could make it eight. He stopped outside the door debating what to do. He finally turned in two and a half circles. That would make things even.

Friday

(This is where we encounter word two:compulsive)
Gene got dressed very slowly, cautiously. He didn't want another upset like the day before.
He chose the exact outfit he had worn on Monday. Monday had been a good day.
He made his breakfast calmly.
He decided one of the bananas looked good enough to consume so he sliced it.
He topped his yogurt and granola with the sliced up banana.
He drank his half cup of coffee.
He counted his steps out the door.
He got off the bus and walked into the coffee shop, the warm sun at his back.
She was there today. Large red hoop earrings.
She smiled at him.
Gene looked to see if anyone else was watching.
He walked up to the counter.
"What is your name?" he asked her. He counted the seconds until she responded.
One.

Two.

Three.

(An odd number, he didn't like that)

"Fleur."

He walked around the counter.

He grabbed her and kissed her.

She sputtered.

He pulled away and stared at her.

He took his shot of espresso and winked at her.

(This is where we encounter word two: compulsive)

He turned and left, the change swishing in his pocket.

He counted seven steps, taking the seventh step very long to match up with the three seconds from before, to make things even.

He saw the very young man entering and he smiled at him.

He was going to find another coffeehouse.

But now he knew Fleur was not a great kisser.