

SCHOOL SLUT

The first thing to do the first day in the new school in the new town, another new town, was to find the prettiest girl in the school. Everyone watched me when I entered a classroom, which allowed me to stare back, seeking some girl that looked like heaven. And staring back made me seem – seem -- tough. Finding the prettiest girl was a way to make the school mine, a game I had played too many times in too many schools as my mother dragged my sister and I around the state looking for the ‘right place’. If no girl in my grade struck me as being the prettiest, I could expand my search, but there she was in fourth period algebra, looking around as if she were playing the same game for boys.

Dark-eyed, dark-haired, tall, flat chested, and vibrant, she stared into my eyes with pursed lips as though it was terribly sad to see me nervous my first day of school. She came up to me after the bell rang to shake hands and welcome me to the eighth grade. She moved as though floating, and knew that I was watching her walk away, because she turned back to look at me, this time as if all sadness should be gone.

Catching a glimpse of her around campus, I’d pause, and she would find my eyes looking past others, and we’d smile and wave, but I couldn’t approach her, not knowing what to say -- it was too new: she was everything I wanted in ways I had never wanted girls before. We didn’t talk, but others did. In the locker room it was, ‘She’s doing older guys in high school too’, and ‘She told me I wasn’t nice to her, so she wore panties when we were in bed.’ In the boys line to signup for something, ‘The thing is she can’t say no, but doesn’t say yes, so you have just keep going.’ They weren’t talking for me.

I stopped pausing when I saw her in the hallways and walkways, stopped staring at her in algebra. I was embarrassed because of all the talk, but mostly afraid, of showing an ugly face or seeing what I had heard in hers. And then I found her walking alongside of me as I was going to fifth period. She was going in the wrong direction for her next class, and then we were both going in the wrong direction. We walked out from the covered walkway and onto the grass of the quad. Her big dark eyes were sadder than ever, but whether for her or me I couldn't tell.

'It's too beautiful a day to be in school', she said.

I said something stupid about bright, sunny days.

'I know that you have a crush on me. Right?'

'Yes. When I see you, all I want is to keep looking at you.'

'But you haven't talked to me much.'

Her voice was like a flute whispering.

'I know, but now I'd like to talk to you all day, everyday.'

'We could skip the last period, and grab a snack at my house. I don't live far, and my mother works. She's divorced.'

'Mine too, and we don't live far either, but I think your house is the right place.'

As though we had decided before deciding we had already crossed the quad and were heading towards a side gate. Along a suburban sidewalk I said,

'I want to be your only boyfriend. The only one, do you understand?'

'OK, I love this game.'

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