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Water on Wax

Shae Coffman*

*Iowa State University

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He doesn't need you and maybe you like it that way. Maybe you love it that way. And maybe the next time he comes over you'll say fuck him instead of fucking him. And it's a great idea, not fucking him, really a fabulous idea. But by the next time you talk to him, that idea has been replaced with countless others. So many, in fact, that you can't quite recall the original and you'd be lying if you said you wished you could.

His room was hot. So hot it was hard to sleep so you got off the bed at four in the morning, planning to go home. He awoke and asked you what you were doing. After you told him he got up and shut off the space heater. "Please stay," he said. And you did. After that, how could you not?

There was one time when he called you at 3:30 in the morning and asked you to come over. You hadn't seen him in awhile, so instead of being angry, instead of really thinking, you changed from your pajamas into clean jeans and drove across town to see him. But when you got there he was passed out so you just slept beside him and that was okay. That was good enough for you.

The way he forgot things drove you crazy. He'd ask you when you had class in the morning then one hour later he'd ask the same question. Sometimes you would change your answers. You changed them just because you could.

The first time you met him you were both drunk and you left your friend's party together. On the way to your place you snuck into an unfinished apartment building. He found a radio and tuned into an oldies station. Then the two of you danced and talked all night. You remember thinking as the sun was rising and The Beatles were playing that you could love him. You really thought you could.

The only time he would ever see your friends was when you'd come back from picking him up at the bar because he was too drunk to drive home. You'd come back to your place because it was easier than taking him home and then having to take him to get his car in the morning. It was easier, but you were always reminded of how you were being used. So you'd make him stay up with you while you rambled about whatever was on your mind at the time, just to irritate him.

Once you don't see him for at least five days. And suddenly you realized you didn't care. You just didn't give a fuck. Or did you?

After you did something for him, helped him out in some way, he'd always tell you he "owed you." But he never returned the favors, which made you wonder why he said it if he didn't mean it.

But, man, he could make you laugh. He would tell you stories of his misguided, adventurous youth until you wouldn't know what was true and what

was exaggerated, but you didn't care and you'd laugh until tears streamed down your face. Some nights the two of you would just laugh and laugh and laugh.

Once in awhile when he was really loaded he would tell you things he had never told anyone else before, you were sure of it. He'd tell you these things and you would feel like crying, partially for him and partially for you. You don't really know why, but you did.

The phone seems to ring especially loud at two in the morning and you would always wake with a start. When he'd ask you to come over you would resist until he said, "It's up to you." As if you were the one who called him. As if he were suddenly playing the role of the gentleman.

Sometimes after, when you were just lying in bed, you would wait for him to touch you again. Sometimes he would after a couple of minutes, sometimes he'd turn his back to you and go to sleep. You always promised yourself that you weren't going to touch him first, but soon you'd throw your arm around his shoulder, waiting for him to remember you were there. With him, you always seemed to be waiting.

You found out from Jack that he had gotten a job in a city two hours away. That wasn't the way you wanted to hear the news. When he didn't call, you went out with your friends, got smashed and hooked up with some guy you met at the bar. You wanted to forget about him and you thought a random fuck might help.

It didn't. In fact, it just made you feel worse.

He finally calls you and asks you to help him move. So you do. Just the two of you and a storage locker filled with endless boxes containing mismatched plates and cups, old towels and Playboys dating back to 1991. Your job is to get the boxes from the locker and throw them to him in the U-Haul. There's also a huge steel desk that has to weigh about a ton and you can't lift it because it's so heavy. "It must be weird not being able to lift stuff," he says and you want to tell him to finish loading it himself, but you don't.

Instead you just go back to the locker and get the things you can lift and keep on throwing, this time maybe with a little more force than when you first started.

You visit him twice after he moves and the second time everything goes to hell. You've told him you're on the pill, but he doesn't believe you so you take out the dispenser and throw it at him, saying that the last thing you need is a kid, especially from him, a guy who will never own a set of matching plates and will always keep beer signs on his wall. Since you're on a roll you go on to ask if you've ever meant anything to him, or if you're just some girl he fucks. He tells you you're not just some girl he fucks, but you don't really mean anything to him, either. And it's finally out in the open. You're hurt, but somewhere inside, you're also relieved.

Two months pass and you're finally almost over him. Really, you are. So when he calls you one Friday when he's in town and asks you to pick him up from the bars, you're upset. But, you can't just leave him stranded. When you finally get there he tries to hug you, but you resist.

And then he does the most remarkable thing. He tells you he likes your glasses, the ones he's never seen you wear. And you're amazed. Amazed because he noticed (you were never really sure if he ever really noticed) and amazed because he likes them. So you let him come back to your place, just intending to talk, but soon your glasses come off and everything slips your mind like water on wax.

And maybe you're back to square one now. But maybe you like it that way. Maybe you love it that way.