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Two Kinds of Women for Every Dominant Male

Marianna Jensen*

*Iowa State University

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Two Kinds of Women for Every Dominant Male

Marianna Jensen

Maybe you see him sitting in the hallway. He is peeling an orange: the juice flows down his fingers to his wrists in small trickles, and he is licking his fingertips. Or he is chewing on almonds, sometimes taking his time to let one almond rest on the back of his tongue before his mouth moves. You want to look at him, but today you do not want to talk to him.

Maybe you sit down beside him and he offers you three cool slices from his orange, but he probably will not say anything. Not right away. He leans his back against the wall, resting his head and staring up at the ceiling. He finishes his orange, sometimes pausing to look at your mouth or your eyes.

"How have you been?" he asks you.

"I think you know." Then maybe you want to put your head in your hands, but you are making an effort to sit up straight. You tuck a loose strand of hair behind your ear, letting your hand fall slowly until it is covering his. He starts talking about a vegetarian dish he tried last night at a dinner party. Maybe his hand slips away as he is describing each layer. Then he gathers all the orange peels, throws them in the trash.

Maybe you ask him if he is sleeping with her. Instead, maybe someone in the hallway asks him how he's doing and he starts up a conversation about a movie he saw over the weekend. The two of them start walking to class. Maybe he waves to you.

Then again, maybe you see him at the grocery store. He is standing in front of a fruit stand making an "X" with his thumbnail in a small navel orange, and you watch him smell it with his eyes closed. He puts it back on the shelf, then picks up a dozen oranges contained in bright red fishnet plastic. Or perhaps he is nonchalantly cracking a pistachio shell with his teeth and putting the shell in his pocket when you say his name from the other side of the stand.

He turns to you abruptly, scratching the back of his head.

"How have you been?" you ask, weighing an overripe bunch of tomatoes in your palm.

"Not so bad," he says.

Then maybe he decides to accompany you down every aisle. He will talk about foods his mother learned how to make when she found out he was a vegetarian. How sometimes the family would

already be sitting at the table when his mother would suddenly stand up, exclaiming that there was nothing on the table for him, how could she be so thoughtless, and what would he like to eat, his brother arguing with his mouth full that there was nothing wrong with eating meat. He might tell you he remembers what barbecued beef sandwiches taste like, but he might not want to talk about it.

As you are pushing your cart past stacks of canned vegetables whose labels you can hardly read, you will want to ask him if he is sleeping with her and if she is a good cook, does she know how to slice up an onion properly, are her fingers always smelling like garlic and does he like that or does that turn him off. Does she ever ask him if he is cheating on her, is she as pretty as me, all the same kinds of questions you want to ask him except that you can just about imagine everything you don't want to know about her, just like she would. Instead, maybe he will remember that he forgot to look for baking soda in the last aisle and his roommates would give him a hard time for going to the store and forgetting to buy what he came to the store in the first place to buy.

He waves to you, disappearing around the corner.

You throw some artichoke hearts in your basket.