

I'm smoking a large spliff with two Italians I already forgot the name of. I also downed four shots of vodka at their expense. It's the crowd one might expect at such a kitsch place: Eastern European models in fake Prada and their PR guys, rich Asian tourists not knowing better, and middle-aged, nouveau riche Italians. In about ten minutes I'm about to have a weed induced panic attack, and one of the bouncers will take me out to the balcony, out of sight so I won't cause an ugly scene.

Hi! My name is K. I am 178 cm's, 48 kilos. My measurements are 85, 56, 87. My last three weeks in Milan have passed by alternating between Xanax and these two sentences.

I am afraid I might be going insane.

Someone bumps into me, and I turn around. It's not him. More bumps.

Someone steps on my feet. I yell, but the music drowns it out. My foot throbs. I can feel my heart take up the rhythm of the music, but it's too fast. I can

feel people closing around me, and I can't breathe. Collapsing onto the guy in front of me, I try to maintain my balance by grabbing onto his shoulders. The word exit keeps on flashing in my mind, and I know I need to get out, or something bad is going to happen.

A pair of firm hands, doors, and I find myself outside, on the smoking balcony. It must be cold, because I can feel my nipples harden, and there is snow on the ground. Looking into my clutch, I find a pack of menthol Marlboros. I light one, I notice my hands shaking, I inhale.

I feel invisible.

I decide to call him on my third cigarette, no idea what to say when he answers.

He picks up instantly. I'm shocked by the sudden appearance of his voice and I remain silent.

"Hello?"

This time, his voice seems far away and unfamiliar. I look around myself. The smoking crowd seems to have been placed behind a sheet of glass.

I feel a wave of panic creeping up from my stomach. I need to get out from behind the glass. I need to focus. I remember that I'm on the phone.

I manage an unconvincing, feeble laugh, trying to hide the desperation in my voice, trying making it sound sexy, arrogant.
But he won't come.

I hang up, starting to shiver. No idea where my coat is, but it does not really matter.

All I need is more cigarettes, maybe a shot of vodka. I head inside unsteadily, pushing the sheet of glass in front of me.

*3 deciliters of warm milk with an optional amount of sweeteners.

10 oranges

two eggs

I've yet to learn how to use a moka machine and I will spend my Milan existence boiling milk in it instead of trying to figure out how it brews coffee.*

He takes me out for pizza. He arrives in a convertible BMW. Cream-colored leather seats and a matt black paint job. There is a rosary tied around his rearview mirror and a Hawaiian girl bobblehead on his dashboard. The smell of the car reminds me of riding in the mother's car of a rich classmate as a kid. Leather mixed with a strong flowery perfume smell from an unidentifiable source, wildly out of place and unthinkable in our own white Suzuki.

It's a small place with three tables covered in nylon table cloths. A dirty glass counter, an oven and a bored-looking, fat man in between.

I pretend to eat by cutting my pizza slice into small pieces. Once the entire pizza is in pieces, I cut the pieces into sub-pieces. I slide the tomato sauce and the cheese off with my fork and let myself eat it.

Once the piece has been stripped, I push it to the left side of my plate.

“Training is important you know.”

I nod, dropping a particularly large piece of cheese in my mouth. I feel guilty and decide to leave the remaining four pieces intact.

“Training and weed. Its what keeps me from going nuts.” – He puts his two pizza slices together, eating it like a sandwich.

“I used to have aggression issues as a kid. They had to take me out of school in Brazil.”

“Do you smoke every day?” – I ask

“Yeah, I’m normal like that. I smoke before boxing training and before going to sleep. Keeps me concentrated you know”-

He has 2 mm blond hair, perfectly defined jaw and cheekbones. Naturally full, feminine lips. When he looks to the distance, his grey eyes slightly drift into separate directions. I wonder what his shirt would smell like if I would take it off and inhale.

*When I wake up in the morning, I rub my hipbones. They stick out. There is only skin separating my hands from them. It feels like an accomplishment. I have taken full dominion over my body. I am in full control over its shape and size. Looking in the mirror scares and disgusts me. I look like a sharp-edged, strange geometrical shape with a large, staring head attached to it. When I touch myself, I’m

afraid I might damage my edges. For the first time in my life I feel fragile.

I have stopped menstruating and I think my hair is falling out. When I go to sleep at night, my body twitches. Sometimes so violently, that I wake up multiple times a night. It's mostly my left foot or right arm. I have decided to see this as a sign that I'm losing weight and that my body is adjusting, which makes me feel accomplished. Sometimes, I'm unable to fall back asleep after a particularly strong twitch. For such cases, I have a bottle of Xanax in my bed cabinet that my mother gave to me as a parting gift when I left Budapest. 2x0.5mg, and on particularly twitchy nights, 3x0.5mg.*

He says he only dates models, not real girls. I wonder what that means. Are models not real? When do you become unreal? Is there a point of no return? Have I reached it?

His place smells like stale weed. The apartment looks very masculine, but when I go to the toilet, I see a pink bath sponge, a pink razor, and conditioner on the top shelf of the bathroom cabinet. I imagine her with waist-length, straight black hair. Also a model. Taller than me, naturally skinny, effortlessly beautiful.

In the apartment, there is an expensive-looking black leather sofa and a marble coffee table strewn with tobacco. There is a large bookshelf at the right side of the sofa. Most part of it is used as a storage for variously sized boxes. One shelf is dedicated only to colorful gadgets. On it, there are what seems like three soda cans next to each other. I pick one up. Its

unusually heavy. He stands next to me, takes it out of my hand, smiling.

"It's not real" he says, and twists it open, revealing a hollow inside holding a plastic bag with around 20 blue pills.

We sit down on the couch and he starts to roll a joint. He picks up a pack of blue camels lying on his coffee table and takes one apart, mixing the tobacco with the weed. By now, my recurring sense of anxiety has distilled into a purely physical experience. I feel my heart tighten, straining the rest of my body from my jaws to my stomach. I curl my toes and take a camel from the pack.

He asks me generic questions about my day. How the castings went. Did I get a callback and how is it living in the agency's apartment. I try to answer as casually as possible, but I hear myself slipping. I weave my emotions and fears into each sentence. I overshare, trying to endow him with agency over my emotions. Even getting some reflection on them that would perhaps legitimize their existence.

"Yes, the apartment is fine. It's just been hard trying to get sleep without Xanax you know.."

"Yes, the castings are fine. The girls are nice. Everything is just a bit hostile you know."

"Milan is great. It's just been hard trying to figure out what to do with my days you know..."

I trail off each sentence. They are unwanted. He either decides not to engage with the unexpected emotional overload or is unable to do so. I light

another camel with the butt of the previous one. He asks me not to smoke the entire pack.

I look at the bookshelf again and spot a large hard-cover book. I reach for it, promising myself to feign interest. The book opens to a hollow inside holding yet another plastic bag. This time, its speed.

He puts on a movie. It's Blake Lively trapped in a foreign island by a drug lord.

*Take a handful of water, swallow hard, wait 5-10 seconds. Find a toothbrush. Hold the toothbrush upside-down, handle facing towards you and slowly insert it into your mouth. Push the toothbrush as far back as possible. Once you feel the fear of choking, you've reached your spot! Stay there. Hold the toothbrush in place until your body reacts to the illusory death threat. It will. If not, push down further. Hit the sides of your throat with the edge of the brush to enforce its presence. Your body will then start to heave. Let it, but do not let the first heaves intimidate you into removing the brush from its established place. Let yourself remove it only when you feel fluid fill the space around the tip of your brush. By now, the need to remove it will be so overwhelming that your instincts will take full control over your body and the removal of the brush won't seem like an active choice anyway. Your body will lurch away from the foreign object. It will extradite the contents of your stomach in consecutive heaves to get rid of its imagined intruders. It will taste sweet and sour, with varying levels of acidity. Depending on how recently you've eaten, you might recognize the taste and even the substance of your meal. Chewed bread, chocolate bocks digested into a

single entity, maybe even whole bites of an apple.

This time it's my flat mate's hidden stash. 3 Milka bars, 2 snickers, a bag of Oreos, and 1/4th of a bottle of Nutella. I've dug it out from under her bed. It starts with aiming for a single Oreo. A spoon of Nutella perhaps. Inconspicuous, unnoticeable. But I start shaking, every fiber of my rectangular body focused on taking in what's in front of me. A disgusting junkie getting her fix.*

He leans in and I let him kiss me. Every move he initiates seems predestined, logical, predictable. Within a couple of minutes, he's interacting with what used to be my breasts and that now resemble the chest of a pre-pubescent 13 year old. He takes off the rest of my clothes, I take off his shirt and unbutton his pants dutifully going through the motions. I feel obliged to act it out. It would be awkward to leave at this point. He pushes on top of me and I can feel my edges cutting into him. I'm starting to have difficulty breathing from the weight of his body and I wonder if maybe I should leave after all. But he's already inside me although I was dry and tightly cramped. He thrusts, I grab onto his shoulders, clawing into him, passing my moans off as excitement rather than pain. He silently flips me into various positions, slapping my ass at random intervals. I imagine someone looking down on us, seeing a large-headed rag doll spread-eagled under a large, muscular man. I let him pinch my right nipple this time, waiting for it to be over, hoping that have a cereal bar in his kitchen.