

The Man with Eternity in His Eyes

She saw them for the first time when she was a child. A rainy day and she couldn't go out to play, so she sat at the window and looked out at the wet, wet world. It was then she saw the eyes looking at her. They were like a reflection in the glass before her, and their gray irises were exactly the same shade as the scudding storm clouds above. She knew somebody was watching her and she turned to see who was back there, but there was no one in the room but her. When she looked to the window again, the eyes were gone.

They returned a year later, when she was in school. There was an aquarium in the classroom and when the light hit the water just right, she could see them floating inside. Then the water would ripple and they would be gone, leaving only fish and the hum of the filter. She laughed at that, thinking the eyes were singing to her and the fish.

The eyes appeared in her favorite coloring book. This time she had drawn them with her crayons. She'd had to mix silver, gray, white and periwinkle blue to get just the right shade. She had drawn them floating above an old-time four-masted sailing ship, and she knew deep in her little girl heart that the man who sailed that ship was looking out at her with those eyes.

She drew the eyes later, when she doodled during study hall, or on napkins at lunch, or on her algebra paper's margins when the class dragged. The eyes were always identical, although the objects around them changed. Her friends asked questions sometimes but she fibbed because she couldn't explain without sounding like she liked boys.

Eventually her parents asked her about the eyes. They feared she was in some sort of trouble and the eyes were a symptom of something wrong in her mind. She tried to explain to her father that she knew those eyes, that she had seen them somewhere and that she knew they were filled with kindness and love for her. He huffed and smiled and said she was a silly girl with her head in the clouds. Her mother listened more carefully while she explained that the man who looked at her with those eyes was impossibly ancient. She knew he was already old when Israelite slaves toiled to build a pharaoh's pyramid, and she could see him astride a horse as he hacked down the enemy army with his sword, and that he had gone to sea in a wooden ship with many white sails and left his wife, belly swollen with his child, and that he had never returned. Her mother smiled and congratulated the girl on her vivid imagination. Nothing more was said, but she kept the eyes to herself after that.

As she grew, her dreams changed. Where before she had dreamt only of the eyes, now she saw the body of the man she did not know. He was strong and heavy, and he made love to her beautifully, ferociously, and she would awake sweaty and aroused and be unable to get back to sleep until she had touched herself and cried out into her pillow as he returned to her arms.

As an adult, she became known for painting. She did vibrant seascapes and powerful images of people so in love that you could feel it in the painting. But those were for her public. In her studio, by herself, she painted eyes. She knew that they weren't absolutely perfect in some way, but she was determined to get them right someday.

When she fell in love with a capital L her swain had gray eyes. He had a strong chin and a deep voice and he was wonderful. She thought he was dashing and roguish and she liked that. But he also had a bad temper and a quick fist. Then there came the anger, then the yelling, then the fist and her blood and tears. His eyes masked a heart of lead and frost. He was not the one whose gray eyes she had seen for so long.

She did not see the eyes again for a long time after she had left him. Perhaps she had subconsciously been avoiding seeing them, ashamed that they would see the mistake she had made in her search. Perhaps they could not bear to look on her sadness, and so they stayed away. But whatever the reason, they did not appear.



Many odd and wondrous things are found in auctions. She was there searching for nothing in particular when a man had bumped into her and as she looked up to him her eyes found his and the world fell out from beneath her feet. The eyes that she had seen all her life were right there in front of her. His eyes! Perfect, down to the last lash. The color and shape, the size, even the streaks radiating out from the pupils were all exactly right. She struggled to keep from fainting as flame flashed through her body, and she hoped the fire that was rising in her cheeks wasn't noticeable.

He smiled at her and she almost collapsed. He reached out to steady her and at his touch her body reacted as though she were being caressed by a life-long lover. She tried to speak but her voice was captive in her throat. She was certain he could hear her heart hammering inside her breast but he gave no sign. Before he asked if she was all right she knew exactly what his voice would sound like.

Their first night together was perfect. He touched her with knowledge and skill, unerringly finding all her favorite spots and places to touch. As he undressed her there was no modesty or timidity in her heart. Somehow, she knew, he had seen her naked before. In his dreams, perhaps, as she had seen him. And as they joined she realized that she knew his body fully as well as he knew hers. His scent and the sound of his breathing, the soft texture of his hair and the salty tang of his flavor on her tongue were all strangely familiar. And when his arms encircled her, her heart wept with joy because she had finally found her haven.

That night was only the first of many. Days became weeks, and summers became autumns, and the perfection never ended. She had found what she had sought for so long, and he was everything she had known he would be. Their love was as a phoenix, reborn

from the ashes of the past to fly again with wings of flame. When he wrote their vows he wrote “as I love thee today, so have I always, and so shall I love thee forevermore.”

On the day that his gray eyes closed for the final time, she wept. But inside she knew there truly is no end to forever. The winter never endures, but is chased away by the spring in the proper time. The sun sets, but rises anew when the world has rested. They would find each other again, someday. When her own life came to a close she was not afraid. She knew she was joining him.



A little girl sat at the window, looking out at the green grass of a spring Sunday. She wanted to go out and play on her swing, but she had the sniffles and her mother said she must stay inside. So she colored in her book and wished. Then she looked into the glass and wondered whose gray eyes were looking back at her.

The End

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