

Waiting For Someone Like You

It begins with a handshake. Paley takes John's hand with just the tips of her fingers the way some women do. They're at a party in a farmhouse in a town known for having a rock concert in the Sixties.

John offers Paley a ride back to school as a favor to a friend who's throwing the party. They've never seen each other before this night. They go to the same university but don't live on the same quad, share the same friends, or even go to the same bars. He's studying insects, she political science.

Without asking his permission, Paley clicks on his car radio. She cranks up a bed-time romance station but continues to shout over it about the internship she's doing with the Assembly Ways and Means committee, something in which John has no interest. He thinks instead about how he'll call their host as soon as he gets home and ask him what he'd done that made his friend want to punish him. Before they're halfway, Paley tells him three times that her position was earned. As she recounts the daily minutia that makes up her life, the injustice of having to wear a skirt and nylons and heels, John imagines a dauber wasp forming a cell from clay, stocking it with paralyzed spiders, sealing off the cell, and starting all over again. Clay, cell, spiders, seal, over and over until an entire nest has been built.

"You don't talk much, do you?" Paley asks.

"No," John says, and after that, Paley falls silent and they're each consumed with their own thoughts. She's wondering whether he'd freak if she pulled out her compact and did a line or two. She reaches into her pocket-book.

He's imagining pulling the car over, ordering her out, and driving off. Watching her in the rearview mirror as she stands curb-side, stunned and helpless. He hasn't had a girl in his car for three months. The last time, Carla had found his woolen ski mask in the cluttered back seat. Despite the warm evening, she'd pulled it over her face, insisting on wearing it as she straddled him. John had immediately envisioned a dragonfly larvae, its



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