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Elana K. Arnold.				
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What Girls Are Made Of

Some concerns: very graphic sex scenes, child sex, pervasively vulgar, erotica

It's clear from his face when he's close, and I brace myself for a second, for the way he usually pulls out roughly right at the end, but then he looks into my eyes and grins, asks, "Okay?"

"Okay," I answer, and then his eyes close and his mouth twists and a vein on his forehead bulges out and he thrusts again and again hard into the center of me and I want to like it but I sort of don't, and I feel him spasm, and spasm, and he makes a sound that would be funny in different circumstances before he is still.

"Fuck," he says, collapsing against me. I run my fingers up and down his spine, feel a few bumps back there, new ones. He hates that he has acne on his back—bacne, he calls it—so I move my hand away to not draw attention to it. Soft now, his penis shrinks inside me and then slips out.

When I get up to go to the bathroom, a runny path of semen, like egg whites, trails down my leg. I am horrified. It feels like I've just peed myself. I don't know what I expected. I guess I thought it would just sort of absorb inside me, or really, I guess I never thought about what would happen at all. The other times when we didn't use a condom, Seth would pull out and come on my stomach or—those two times—on my back. And then he'd use his T-shirt or a sock to wipe me off. But this time, as I walk to the bathroom connected to my room, the sticky wetness drips down my thigh, a couple of drops falling silently to the carpet.

It's not that I don't have orgasms. It's just that I don't have orgasms with Seth.

Seth pushed down my cutoffs and bikini bottoms and went down to the ground with them, looking up at me as he pressed his tongue to my skin.

My legs were shaking, so I sat down on the edge of his bed, and my legs fell open to make room for his mouth. He licked and licked like a cat at a bowl of cream, and when the inside of me felt as wet as the outside, we tried again.

This time, Seth touched my face and looked into my eyes as he fit his penis up against me, as he pushed inside.

The next day at school, there was Apollonia Corado again, her cheeks dark red with shyness, her gaze cast down, a bow in her hair like a child.

Jesus. I hate her.

School goes like this:

The day begins with zero-period AP Chemistry. I don't like chemistry. But I got in to the AP class, and you don't just not do an AP class because you hate the subject. Most of my other classes are AP, too, and the best thing about that is that it means that Seth is in them with me.

Lunch means either going off campus with Seth or pretending not to care if he says he can't. The day begins and ends with Seth. If his Acura isn't in the lot when I pull in, the breath in my chest can't release until I see him in class.

I know it isn't okay to care this much about a boy. I know it's not feminist, or whatever, to make all my decisions based on what Seth would think. I know I'm pitiful. If Seth wants to hang out on a Tuesday afternoon, I call in sick to the shelter. If Seth wants to have sex and I'm on my period, I'm the one

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"Thanks?" I pull loose the leg ties.
 "Don't take it out of the bag," Seth says.
 So I don't. I just peek inside.
 Not shoes. There's a picture on the box, of what must be inside—a red rubber-knobbed device with a long, black handle. *Three Speeds*, the box announces. And, across the top, *Personal Manager*.

"Thanks?" It comes out kind of like a question, because I don't understand why Seth would give me a back massager. It's not like I've ever complained of back pain.

He grins. "You don't get it, do you?"

"I guess not."

"It's a vibrator," he says.

Then I do get it, and I feel melted by the shame.

"It's no big deal," he says. "Wade says it's hard for some girls to come without some . . . help."

Don't cry. Don't cry. "I don't need one of these," I say, and I hate my voice, the wobble in it, I hate that Seth has maybe talked to his brother about me, said to him, "So you know the girl I'm dating, Nina? She's pretty cool. But no matter how much we do it, or how long I fuck her, she just can't come."

"It's no big deal," Seth says again, but of course it's a big deal. It's been three months, and I still haven't had an orgasm. And now he's tired of trying, so he's giving me this thing, and I don't want it.

But giving it back to him seems like a bigger deal than just taking it, so I swing my backpack over my shoulder and zip it open, shove the box inside. "Thanks," I say, my eyes focused on the teeth of the zipper as they meet and clench.

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and when he throws me onto the bed, the one on the nightstand flickers out. He shrugs out of his sweater, pulls his T-shirt over his head and tosses it aside, then kicks out of his shoes and yanks down his jeans and his underwear in one fierce movement. Then he's there, naked, the thick horn of him wet-tipped and hard, and a rush of wetness floods the cotton lining of my thong.

"Take off your bra."

I feel, thrillingly, like I'm in a movie, like I'm on display for a vast and important audience, like the whole world is watching as I reach behind my back and unhook the strap. My bra falls into my lap and I push my chest forward, pretending that I think my pointed little breasts are beautiful.

Seth thrusts forward onto the bed and between my legs and against the thin lace barrier that separates us. The hard nose of my teddy bear pokes against my back and I twist to reach it, grab it by an arm or a leg, and toss it to the ground.

My thong gets twisted as Seth takes it off, and I hear it rip when he grows impatient and yanks too hard. I shouldn't care but I do, because the thong is brand new and it matches the bra, and lace can't be sewn back together. But I don't say anything, and then Seth rises above me like a wave and smiles, and I smile back and then he pushes into me, hard and fast and it hurts and feels good all mixed together.

He puts one hand on my stomach to hold me still—he likes it best, he says, when I don't move a lot, when I let him be in charge, and I know too that he likes to feel himself inside of me, under his hand, the back and forth motion of it.

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against a tall rock, and before I can worry if someone will come by and see us I go down on my knees like the guy on the bulletin except instead of tightening a harness I'm unfastening his pants.

I pull him out of his underwear and he's soft in my hand. I don't look up at his face before I open my mouth and pull him into it, and I pull and I suck until he grows hard and he makes sounds that mean he likes it, and I keep going and going and when he says, "I'm going to come," I don't pull away.

The jet of him is warm and salty and tastes like thickened sweat. He breathes hard and his hands are tight fists at his eyes.

There's not much water left in the last bottle but what there is Seth gives to me, and I drink it as he arranges himself back into his shorts. We walk the rest of the way back to the car, still not talking, but at least now side by side on the widening trail.

I carry the empty bottle. We drive home.

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*Yet I, least of all men,
 Take Him in my hand
 Eat Him and drink Him,
 And do with Him what I will!*

It's a real thing written by a religious mystic way back in the thirteenth century. She was talking about worshipping Jesus, but come on. She was talking about sex, right? Sex with Jesus?

That was what she wanted—to give Jesus head. And I totally understand it.

When you love someone the way that I love Seth—the way that woman who wrote the poem loved Jesus—you want to serve him. And you want to paralyze him so he can't go away.

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That's the idea. I know what I'm supposed to be, and who I'm supposed to be with Seth, but my desire for him overwhelms me at every turn, it fills my throat like an awful tumor, and I am powerless to define myself any other way.

It's his smell, and his eyes, and the way he cuts his nails straight across. It's the way he looks just after he's come, his face softened and sweeter than normal. It's the way his fingers look glazed like a donut after they have been inside of me. It's everything. He is everything.

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was each and the movies.

The last night of summer vacation, we did it for the first time. We had almost done it the day before, in my bedroom. I laid a towel on my sheet in case I bled, and then I watched Seth roll the condom over his penis, and I rested my head on my pillow and watched his hands push into the flesh of my thighs, spreading them apart, and I watched him remember his latest-wrapped erection, as he pushed and tried to get inside.

I tried to relax, I tried to let him in, I wanted to let him in, but I just couldn't. And Seth was sweet and said it was okay, we'd try again, and then I went down on him instead.

But the next night, the last night of summer, we had dinner at his place with his whole family. There was a big bowl of spaghetti in the center of the table and everyone took turns shaking out Parmesan cheese from the green canister. It was loud and crowded and steamy from the pasta. Anthony and Jade had a friend over, a kid they called Elbows, and even Wade had come out of the garage to eat with us. Their mom looked tired but happy, and it was really nice.

After dinner, his mom—who told me to call her Carol, not Mrs. Barton—offered to take us all out for ice cream to celebrate back to school.

She looked disappointed when Seth said, "Nina and I'll do the dishes." Actually, the look was more than disappointed. She held Seth's gaze until he finally looked away. Then she sighed a little. I guess she thought it would be nice, all her boys together like that, at an ice cream parlor, maybe like they used to do when they were little. But I didn't spend a lot of time feeling bad about it, because as soon as the door shut behind them, Seth grinned at me and asked, "Wanna try again?"

This time, in Seth's room, we didn't bother with a towel.

if I've been bitten.

Then I get up and close my bedroom door. I lock it.

The cord is long enough to stretch from the outlet where my bedside lamp is plugged in to nearly the corner of my double bed. I push down my jeans and underwear, step out of them, leave them on the floor.

I sit on the edge of my bed and flick the switch on the side of the vibrator. The sound as much as the movement startles me—it hums loudly, embarrassingly so.

I switch it off. I find my phone and plug it into my stereo and start a song at random. It's not the song that matters—I'm not setting a mood here. It's the noise I need.

It's an old song, recently rereleased—"I Wanna Be Your Dog." I turn up the volume and yank back the covers on my bed, slide beneath them, and don't restart the vibrator until it's rattled underneath the blankets.

Between the closed door and the loud music and the heavy quilt, no one but me could possibly hear the angry buzz of Seth's first and final gift to me. I let my knees splay open and find my slit with my fingers, the soft hooded nub at its apex, and I guide the red rubber ball against it.

My back arches and I hiss in a breath at its first wonderful, terrible contact. A jolt of pleasure shoots through me and I yank the vibrator away before placing it back against me, this time very gently.

It almost hurts, the hum, the buzz, the stroke of it, so different from the jet of warm water that pours from the showerhead, so different from the press of my own hand, so different from the wet lapping of Seth's tongue.

It's remembering Seth's tongue that pushes me into the

Grandparents tell their grandchildren, "I'll eat you up!" It's the same idea, in a weird way. You want to consume the person you love. You want to eat him so he's inside you, so he becomes part of you, so he can't leave you.

Grandparents eating grandchildren. Chewing the flesh and drinking the blood of Jesus every Sunday in church. Swallowing Seth's cum on the trail. Is it different?

Is it?