

Alabaster

By emeraldstone

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A story of one boys obsession taken too far.

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1 - Ellie

Ellie was undeniably perfect. She was poised before him, a literal work of art. Tyler sighed, smoothing the full lips of the clay likeness, knowing he wouldn't capture her beauty.

"Do you need to break? Maybe readjust so you're comfortable?" Tyler asked, urgently.

"No. I'm fine. But thank you for asking." Ellie answered politely

"You know, you sit so still, I don't know why I'm bothering with the sculpture. I could just sit you on the display and put a card in front. No one would ever know the difference."

"That'd be an experience. It'd be very couture. So, do you like working with clay?"

"No. It's such an ugly material. You have such beautiful skin that I think that alabaster would look better." Tyler answered.

"Really? I like the way that sounds, alabaster. It has such a pretty ring to it." Ellie mused, smiling.

"It's a beautiful material. It's a softer form of marble. I've always wanted to work with it, but have never found the right subject."

"Well, I'm sure that you could find the time to sculpt me in it, if you'd like."

He smiled absently turning back to his sculpture and started to shape the nose. He was working around the eyes, the hardest feature to capture. Large and sultry, the windows to a no-doubt perfect soul. She's more beautiful than any work of art. She's a goddess, more beautiful than Aphrodite, Tyler thought. He flinched when the bell rang and covered the sculpture with plastic. In his next class, found himself doodling Ellie's face in his notebook, still carefully avoiding the eyes.

The next day in art, Ellie was waiting for him, her eyes staring into a wall. He uncovered the sculpture and smiled at the beauty.

"It may not be her dead on, but it was close. She is a muse, the daughter of Zeus himself. She's my muse," He murmured, "Do you remember the pose?" Tyler asked, blushing when she jumped. "I'm sorry"

"It's ok. I was thinking of a debate in my art appreciation course. Some artists only sculpt scenery and objects. That's what they deem as beautiful. Then others only sculpt the female form or vice versus. It confuses me, because I don't know where I stand on that argument." Ellie rambled.

"I've always seen the female form as more beautiful than the male form or inanimate objects.

Mountains are nice, but they don't talk or smile." Tyler answered a slight smile spreading on his face.

"You have a point." She smiled sheepishly, "I guess you want me to stop talking. I must be ruining your thought process."

"No, not at all. I like conversation while I work. Why sculpt something if it's not interesting in the first place?"

She smiled and nodded, but was hushed for a few excruciating moments. To fill the awkward silence he forced himself to make conversation.

"What do you think of love at first sight?" Tyler asked, almost certain of the answer.

"I believe it. I think that sometimes you see a person and you just know." She answered, something glittering in her eyes. He was sure that something was for him.

"You didn't strike me as someone who'd believe that kind of thing." His heart sped up.

"It's an instant thing. There's no real way to describe it than you just know." She stared straight into his eyes. He felt as though his heart would burst. He silently relished this moment as he worked harder on

his sculpture. The ever punctual bell tore him out of thoughts and forced him to go to his next class. He covered his work with plastic and looked up to see Ellie smiling and waving at him. Excited, he eagerly returned the gesture and smiled widely. He might as well have floated to his next class. He didn't even bother getting out a notepad, instead pulling out his sketchpad. For the first time he drew her eyes, finding them startlingly real. They stared at him with same love and intensity as the girl who they belonged to. He smiled and thought there's another one for the gallery. He couldn't wait for the final bell to ring so that he could tack up this new sketch and start another sculpture.

2 - Gallery

Tyler walked into his house and ignored the hello from his mother. He took the stairs two at a time and threw himself into his room. Dozens of sketches and 8 or so sculptures stared at him. They were all of the same lovely girl. "Eventually all of these sketches will be in alabaster. I'll have a gallery, Ellie in Alabaster" he whispered to the room as he started another sculpture.

The next day in art he walked in whistling. Ellie was already there and she was hurriedly writing notes with her free hand while looking in her trig book.

"Hey." Tyler asked smiling, "I need to ask you something. I have to do an oil painting next grading period. Would you model for me?" Tyler asked, smiling.

"Sure. That sounds great." Ellie answered absently.

Tyler glowed and felt his heart give a leap. He went to work on his sculpture. While he worked his mind drifted. How can I see her outside of school. Did she walk home or get a ride? Where did she live? He could look in the student registry and find her address. He had something very important to ask her and school probably wasn't the best place. It was something he knew she couldn't refuse. She was his, after all.

It was late evening. The sun had just finished setting and the street lights only illuminated small bits and pieces of the sidewalk. Ellie hurried along, wanting desperately to get home quickly. She walked faster when she heard footsteps behind her. A tap on her shoulder left her immobilized, eyes going from left to right. She felt like she couldn't breathe, as if her entire body had turned to stone.

"Hey Ellie, you look ... beautiful." Tyler whispered, looking her over, "Can I talk to you about something?"

"Yeah, what is it?" Ellie asked, fighting to keep the panic from her voice.

"Marry me, Ellie. We can go to the justice of the peace right now and we can--"

"What! Are you crazy!? I don't even know your last name or where you live, for Christ's sake! Do you know my favorite color? Movie? Song? I barely know you!"

He stood in front of her, reaching for her, but she stepped just out of his grasp.

"Please. I love you Ellie, you're my muse. I need you. Don't say no."

"No! You're crazy. You need therapy. Something is wrong with you! Go home and stay away from me."

He grimaced, his eyes heartbroken. He stepped backward off the sidewalk into the middle of the street, his eyes still giving her that look. He was staring at her when the light pooled around him and the truck collided with him.

3 - Alabaster

The funeral was cheaply done. There were no flowers, few chairs, and there was no podium for eulogies to be delivered from. Few people even bothered to show up. One was obviously Tyler's mother, a woman with silver streaked black hair and stunned eyes. The others were a cop and a girl about Ellie's age. It felt wrong that no one came to pay their respects. She maneuvered to sit beside Tyler's mother.

"Hello. Mrs. Martinez? I'm Ellie." Ellie whispered,

Mrs. Martinez looked at her and a look of recognition crossed her face.

"You, my son used to sculpt you. There are dozens of sketches in his room. I didn't realize that they were of a real person."

"He did?"

"Yes. Every night when he got home, he would go and sculpt another one out of alabaster of you."

"I... Thank you Mrs. Martinez. I'm sorry for your loss."

Ellie walked to her mom's van. The drive was a thankfully short one but an awkward and silent one. Her mom pulled into their driveway in a matter of a few minutes and Ellie stepped out of the vehicle. She froze. There was a sculpture of her in the yard, sitting in the empty bird bath. It was beautifully detailed, done by someone who desperately loved their subject. It was his work.,br>

"It must be from Mrs. Martinez. We talked at the funeral." Ellie called to her mother.

"Well, bring it inside honey. Its really beautiful. Maybe daddy will like it in her office." Ms. Begley answered.

Ellie nodded and walked over to the sculpture. The panic in her throat felt like stone and when she swallowed her throat froze momentarily. When had this one been painted? Mrs. Martinez said there were dozens. How many more will she be give me? Ellie walked upstairs and swung open her door, she sat down and stared at her likeness. His work was always beautiful. She cocked her head to one side and impulsively imitated the pose. She raised her arm to one side and smiled. But when she tried to move her arm she found that she couldn't. Her eyes moved back and forth trying to find the source of her ailment. They froze on the hand poised above her face. Her mind was screaming, it wasn't possible, she had to be dreaming. There was no way that this was real. The hand had taken on a whole new texture, the texture of alabaster.