

A Collection of Random Fleeting Moments

Written by

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by **Vesperae**

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As I've said before, I believe that a Fetish is essentially a Personal Mythology that gives special meaning and narrative and value to that which is Fetishized. Once we begin to gain a persistent focus on the objects of our desires, a Fetish becomes a lens and a screen for every subsequent encounter with them, and each of these encounters serves to further fine tune our reactions to them, and to deepen our feelings and responses to them.

I believe that what we experience when we have and reflect on "sightings" is the essence of what I'm talking about. An enthusiasm for sightings is perhaps the most fundamental thing that anyone in any Fetish Community shares, regardless of age, gender, underlying sexual orientation, or that which is Fetishized. We're going along about our mundane day to day affairs, and suddenly, the objects of our desires present themselves to us out of the blue, and sometimes we see something that not only titillates us, but surprises us, and our awareness of the world and ourselves suddenly shifts in a very dramatic and intimate way. As we all know, it can be very startling, although often very pleasant, so long as the distraction doesn't overwhelm us.

I think that the real power of sightings is that every time they happen, they act like an echo of the very earliest memories that underlie our Fetishes – the sudden emotional arousal, the awareness that this reaction is unusual in its strength, and should probably be kept to ourselves, as well as very likely a certain amount of ego gratification in the ability to keep these reactions to ourselves. Few things are more powerful than having a Secret. And the vast collection of random fleeting moments that we experience in secret give rise to, comprise, and allow our Fetishes to blossom and flourish within us...

* * *

In December of 1977, I went to see *Close Encounters of the Third Kind* with my parents. I was 13. We saw it at a multiplex in a fairly upscale mall in the upper middle class outskirts of a good sized Midwestern city, and I was as much looking forward to walking through the mall before

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and after and waiting in line for tickets as I was to seeing this movie that everyone was talking about. My little kink was still largely undefined for me, but I pretty much knew that I was a lesbian even though I'd never told anyone, and I had a pretty good handle on what the funny feeling in the pit of my stomach and between my legs was about whenever I saw an attractive woman smoking, even though I had no idea what to "do" with it.

Since this was 1977, smoking was allowed pretty much everywhere in the mall, except for inside the actual screening rooms and stores. Large brushed metal cylindrical ashtrays were scattered throughout the open spaces, in large pit-shaped sitting areas at the center and each end of the mall, inside the public restrooms, and even inside the lobby and concession area of the theater. People could be seen on the upper and lower levels and on long escalators between the two at every turn, smoldering cigarettes in hand, dragging, exhaling, and trailing smoke as they people watched and window shopped and moved lazily from point A to point B. And of course, many of them were attractive women and girls.

When you're shy, 13, and with your parents, about all you can do is sneak furtive glances here and there. But in an environment like a large suburban mall in 1977, it was ridiculously easy for anyone with an emerging or established SF to see something of intense interest at almost every turn. It was, in fact, rather overwhelming, and my recollection of this particular experience is mostly a blur of confusion and pleasure, culminating in the last thing I saw as I was walking with my parents to the mall exit after the movie was over.

We were almost to the doors, and as I was putting my coat on, I looked over at a small group of three older teens, two girls and a boy, who were laughing and talking loudly. The boy was standing in front of the two girls, who were seated on a circular bench surrounding a large planter. The boy and one of the girls were both looking at the other girl, a very attractive brunette with long hair. The pretty dark haired girl was wearing heavy makeup, a tight sweater and jeans, and very sexy high heel boots, and sitting in a very poised and confident way with her legs crossed. I can still see the smile and the satisfied, flirty look on her face as she held up her freshly lit cork tipped 100, tilted her head back, and exhaled an enormous plume of smoke that seemed to stream on and on at for at least 10 feet before it dissipated in the bright light that shone down directly above her.

It was the final straw. Fortunately, I at least made it to the darkness of the backseat of the car, and we were a few miles from the mall parking lot before it happened. With the tall highway lights leading away from the city strobing through the window, I couldn't get the image of the girl's face and that incredible plume of smoke out of my head. The moment looped over and over in my mind, and I suddenly saw her shapely breasts moving as her chest contracted and

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she pushed the smoke out from deep inside her lungs, and I had my very first orgasm without touching myself as silently as I possibly could, and in absolute horror that it was all happening with my parents only a few feet away and I could do absolutely nothing to stop it. My mom instantly noticed that I was breathing irregularly and asked if I was O.K. I managed to mumble "cramps", and prayed that I wouldn't have the complexion of a tomato by the time we reached home, although between the arousal and my embarrassment, I couldn't imagine how that would be possible.

* * *

In December of 1990, I was midway through finishing my second undergrad degree in Art, but had taken some time off because I was getting very burnt out on school and needed a break. I had moved to Seattle that Summer (for absolutely no other reason than because it was there and because it was a part of the country that I hadn't lived in before), was working my first full time crummy retail job, and was trying to find some sort of creative inspiration in the endless mist, chill, and darkness that is the Pacific Northwest in Winter. I was 26. When I wasn't involved in literally punching the clock at the mindless economy gathering exercise that barely funded my very frugal existence, I spent a lot of time soaking black Uni-Ball ink into the pages of 9 3/4" x 7 1/2" black marble cover Mead journal composition books in any one of a dozen coffee shops that I regularly haunted in the Belltown and Capitol Hill neighborhoods.

Superficially, I looked like I belonged on the local scene at the time without even trying or thinking about it. Goth-y, black wardrobe, lots of eyeliner...except for one thing. I didn't smoke Camel Lights. It seemed that *everyone*, and I mean *everyone*, smoked Camel Lights, and very rarely even 100s. It was the most incredible thing I'd ever seen, and very, very disappointing for my particular SF tastes, since the only thing I found less appealing than Camels were generics. I was so underwhelmed with the sameness of it all that very quickly, when even a very attractive woman pulled out her pack of Camel Lights and lit up, she almost might as well have been a non-smoker in terms of my interest. In retrospect, I tend to believe that Camel Lights were so popular among so many of my peers at the time for two reasons. First, they were popular because they were popular, in the sense of any "herd mentality" trend. And second, because there were many popular fashion accessories at the time that were popular because they had a kind of clunky, grungy "anti-aesthetic" aesthetic about them, and I think that Camels were the perfect accompaniment to Doc Martens boots and ripped, stained clothing, both of which were also very much in vogue at the time.

There was, however, one place that I loved to go, especially during the midday hours, even though it wasn't really the sort of place that you'd find a lot of counter-culture art school chicks.

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But as we all know, having a Fetish can often lead you well out of your usual element. The place was another cathedral of consumerism, a bastion of polished suburban fashionistas, and a zone of "non-Camel Lights-ness," where 100s and even Virginia Slims 120s were commonplace among female shoppers and office and upscale retail workers – Westlake Mall, in the heart of downtown. On those rare occasions when the sun was out, the generous outdoor balcony and sprawling stepped plaza in front of the mall would be packed with elegant ladies drinking coffee and smoking throughout the day, and there was even one section of the food court indoors where smoking was still allowed at the time. I could often be found there on my days off scribbling *deep thoughts* in my journal, or reading Anne Rice or Noam Chomsky, smoking my Virginia Slims or Benson & Hedges menthols (nothing provides better access to smokers than being one yourself), drinking my Americanos, and waiting for the next killer sighting to titillate me and linger on and on in my mind.

I had obviously "come a long way" from the overwhelmed teenager who hadn't quite yet figured out that she could release her sexual tension before it built up so much that it released itself, but the situation was so wonderfully familiar from all of the visits to various malls I'd made in the time since then. And ironically, due to the beginning of increasing public smoking restrictions, there was the advantage of having *one* concentrated area where I knew that a virtually endless stream of smokers who interested me could be found. It was thrilling to take in the scene from a quiet corner of the first and last "nicotine ghetto" inside the mall, and especially to watch the approach of various women who had chosen to seat themselves in this particular spot for one reason, and one reason only. And then there was the delightful anticipation of what brands of cigarettes they would produce from their purses and pockets, as well as what sorts of smokers they might be.

Within a few weeks of settling into my favorite day off routine at one of the food court tables that provided a good overview of the entire section, a very well-dressed woman about my age appeared shortly after the lunch rush in the early afternoon who I hadn't seen before. She was absolutely gorgeous, and physically, everything about her was absolutely "my type." She seated herself facing me a few tables away next to the large bank of windows where I was also sitting, and immediately produced a soft pack of Benson & Hedges full flavor menthol 100s (which, as fate would have it, I happened to be smoking that day as well) and an elegant slim refillable black butane lighter from her very expensive black leather purse. Judging from the speed with which she produced them and lit up, it seemed very likely that she was taking a work break, that she hadn't had a cigarette in quite awhile, and that she really, really needed one.

It was everything that I could do to not stare wide-eyed and slack-jawed, and I became so suddenly turned on that I got light-headed and feared I might actually faint or have a repeat of my "mishap" from early adolescence. But somehow, I managed to remain conscious and composed, and began to take in the scene in front of me in increasingly longer and longer

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glances. The diffused pale light of the grey overcast sky glowed softly through the window on her cherubic porcelain features, deep hazel eyes, and long chestnut curls, and it illuminated her Benson & Hedges smoke perfectly. It was like a dream, and fortune smiled with unbelievable kindness on me, since it seemed that she hadn't taken notice of me or of my reaction to her, and was in fact so lost in her own thoughts as she stared absently out the window that I could watch her smoke essentially uninterrupted; and not only that cigarette, but the second one that she lit as soon as she had finished her first.

Of the countless smokers I've observed and known over the years, Benson & Hedges smokers have always been extremely rare. Which I've always found odd, because I've always believed that, in terms of pure design, the original and first revision of the pack and cigarette were easily the most elegant and beautiful of any brand ever; even more so than Virginia Slims! And like Virginia Slims, Benson & Hedges, which shared the same blend and formula, were absolutely the best tasting and most satisfying cigarettes in my opinion, which is something that, in most cases, only an experienced smoker would know after trying a lot of different cigarettes. The "For People Who Like To Smoke" advertising campaign was absolutely perfect.

Fortune continued to smile on me even after that day, since I saw her smoking again several dozen times in the same spot over the course of the next few months during my lingering day off visits. I'd always vary where I sat, in an attempt to remain as much "under the radar" as possible, and to give me as many different perspectives on her as possible. I wouldn't always see her, but always looked forward to the next time I would, and always felt as excited as the first time every time I did.

Not only was she incredibly attractive to me, and somehow managed to become even more attractive to me every time I saw her, she was also obviously a woman who loved to smoke, and for whom smoking was obviously very important. Her expensive lighter suggested it. Her "non-mainstream" choice of brand suggested it. Her taste for the strength and the unique richness of the full flavor version of the brand suggested it. But the style with which she smoked said it loud and clear, and unequivocally. Every drag was a long, tender kiss. Every inhale was a deep penetrating caress that she held and savored. Every exhale was a focused stream of pleasure and release. And it appeared to me that every time she smoked, the experience was very much for her and for her alone, which absolutely drove me wild.

For a very long time after that first day I saw her, I switched to Benson & Hedges Menthols full time because they made me think of her every time I looked at the pack and smoked one. They made me feel close to her and close to the visual poetry of her solitude and her indulgence.

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After about six months or so, by the following Summer, she'd apparently moved on to another job, because I never saw her again. And by the Winter of 1991, the smoking section inside the mall had been closed.

But she'll always be a part of me...and maybe even a part of you now.

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