

Pygmalion: A Workplace Romance

by mreid

An artist meets his muse. Part 1 is complete.

Her Sculptor

Chapter 1 of 1

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She slipped between his sheets and into his dreams.

The exact order of these events is uncertain. At first, she was just a tickling, whispering her way into his subconscious. He did not realize she was there until he began to see her in his waking moments.

He would be doing the most mundane of activities, and there she was. He glimpsed a sleeve, peeking out of thin air in his living room when he was folding his laundry; it did not belong to one of his shirts. A few days later, he sat at his dining room table over a pile of unpaid bills, staring off into nothingness. He felt a breath then, warm and sweet like early summer strawberries, along the shell of his left ear. He wanted to turn his head and inhale it — to sample the layers of flavor.

He wanted to make it solid with his hands.

That thought surprised him, for the sculptor had lacked the desire to create art for so very long. When real-life disappointments forced their way into his internal world of flowing forms, his hands stopped shaping. The need to sculpt was no longer a part of him; it vanished along with his pride.

The evening the first snowflake fell, the sculptor felt a whisp of honeyed hair. And on that night, she inspired him through the fragmented fictions upon which he focused his mind's eye. He finally found her voice in these dreams. Although she spoke to him of facts and ideas, hopes and failures, she used a language too lyrical to be heard during daylight hours; he could not understand her.

But she offered comfort in her reaching out. She knew who he was at all levels and in all directions. Through his actions — his life's work — was he able to touch her as she touched him.

He started with modeling clay. The clean wet smell of it lingered in his cuticles for hours after he cleaned up his efforts.

She was a spark made, if not flesh, at least earth. And once he fired his eleventh experiment, he had her. Long limbs graced an elegant torso; a flippant nose perched above a generous mouth. When his mud-slick hands met fingertip to fingertip after smoothing out her perfect thighs, he did not feel lecherous.

For so long as he crafted her, she was his.

Several months passed before he took chisel to marble to form the roseate curve of her cheek. He had to secure a menial job in order to feed and house himself, but at night worked on her — with eyes wide open in his studio, and eyes gently closed in his bed.

By the time he shaped the irises of her eyes, he knew her soul as well as she knew his own.