

Decoding Valentina

The water lapped at my ankles jumping its way up to my calves the deeper in I walked. I took it all in, paying attention to all the fine details. The way the water sparkled as the sun danced across it hypnotized me. Slight ripples snaked around me as I walked carefully up stream. My mind was thriving and at the same time completely inactive. My thoughts were absorbed by my environment paying attention to it all and nothing at all.

“Valentina!” I was snapped from my trance. The sounds swarmed back to my ears; the water, the birds, an easy breeze, all the noises orchestrated together to fulfill the outdoors. I turned to see him standing in the middle of the stream with his sunglasses perched on top of his head. The sun’s reflections off of the water zapped your retinas in an instant so there was no use for me to wear any now. I smiled at him. “I thought you weren’t going to get your shorts wet?”

He looked down to see the edges of his dark green shorts wet, “Yea well that’s kind of hard to achieve whilst in a river isn’t it?” His smile flashed allowing his bright teeth to contrast against his dark skin. A few sparse hairs stood on his chin. He’d never been able to successfully grow a beard or really any collection of facial hair. His hair was loose and hanging over his shoulders nearly down to his mid bicep. It shined like onyx in the sunlight, shining almost as much as the water did.

I splashed my way towards him and wrapped my arms around him. My head nestled perfectly in the middle of his chest. He was significantly taller than me which made it very easy for me to feel small and feminine when I was with him. Which is what all females desire in a relationship, isn’t it? He kissed the top of my head and wrapped his arm around me picking me up and catching my legs with his other arm. I squealed and held on to him as best as I could. I couldn’t help but laugh.

“Me warrior. You white princess,” his face turned into a comical stone faced position. I changed my voice to that of a desperate southern belle, “Oh no! I’ve been captured by a savage! Somebody, do help me!” I kissed his sharp cheekbone before making an overly dramatic face of despair. His face broke into a grin while he made his way up stream towards the lake.

“You my woman now,” his arms tightened around me gently as the water climbed up his legs towards his waist and higher to his chest. The coolness of it felt good against my skin compared to the harsh Arizona heat. He moved in the water so he floated on his back while I was still in his arms. The ends of his hair moved slowly and soothingly through the cool water. I looked at him and let my mind fade back into its own self.

“Atsa?” His nut brown eyes looked at me softly. I watched as he studied my face, observing my pupils and the muscles in my face. He loved how hard I was to read. Of all the people he knew he could read them all like books. He had spent hours sitting at tables covered in books ranging from the psychoanalysis all the way to romance novels. He said that out of all the genres romance novels held the most information on the female mind. He was absorbed by the study of the human brain and emotions. Nobody that he had faced could trick him or confuse him. Other than me of course, since I’d met him he had always struggled with trying to decipher me just by looking at me. He wouldn’t know anything about

what goes on in my mind if I wouldn't tell him. He picked up on my mannerisms easily throughout the beginning of our relationship but was never able to pick up on any way I was feeling, and it drove him crazy. I think that might be one of the biggest reasons why he loves me. Or at least that's what I like to think.

I looked at him stoned face, "Will you marry me?" The water grasped onto my hair and spun it around slowly. He watched me again this time taking into account how tense my muscles were in my arms, behind my knees, and even my neck. I could read him as easily as I confused him. I loved that about him. He smiled, "Only if I can wear the dress." He turned to look around the edges of the lake and paddle his way slowly to shore.

"Atsa I'm serious. Will you marry me?" The water decreased slowly the closer we reached the bank. He still had me in his arms. His expression now stiff and as transparent as the water. I could see his mind ticking and calculating. His feet reached the bottom as he walked out of the water sitting me on my feet. He looked down at me and held the sides of my face in his palms. His pupils dilated as they looked into mine. I held his wrist gently while his thumb stroked my cheek. I rested my thumb over his veins to feel his pulse, which was out of its regular steady rhythm and instead stepped up to a slightly quicker pace. He knew exactly what I was doing considering he was the one that taught me all I know on the subject, but instead of stopping me he let his body tell me everything. From his pupils, his pulse, and the tension in his jaw I knew the answer was yes. I smiled at him and kissed him quickly before turning and running towards the jeep. I could hear his heart beat in my head from laying my head on his chest while we napped. It played like a sound track on repeat. I had done my best to memorize everything about the one I loved and I was sure that I had. I was also sure that he had done the same with me but also to study as well. He was such a science nerd and I loved it.

Her hair swung from side to side as she dashed towards the jeep. I stood and watched her and let out a sigh. I loved her more than I could ever tell. I loved her more than I even imagined. It scared me senseless. I didn't understand how I could know so much about a person and still nothing at all. It scared me that I was so in love with her. We had been together for over a year and still she was my favorite subject to study and she knew it. She still finds new ways to challenge me mentally after all this time.

When I tried to get into a pre med program she had sat up with me for over 24 hours searching online and making calls. We both knew I could easily find a government hand out since I was Native American but I wanted to do it without a hand out. I wanted to do it on my own. Except when you're from a small town like I am it seemed impossible. I could pack my things today and leave off to a bigger city to make connections and start building my way up.

Except I couldn't leave and I knew that as much as I knew that I could easily drive away. I couldn't leave this small dusty town because the only thing I can't decode is here. The only heart beat that I can't get bored of and can't live without. I can't live without her and I can't even imagine trying to.

I want to give her a much bigger life than what is here, but without achieving my goal of becoming a psychiatrist I know it's impossible. She is one of the biggest reasons I want to achieve this goal and the biggest reason why I can't go and start achieving it. She was my own personal catch 22. I wanted to marry her and be with her forever but I couldn't do that without being positive I could provide her with the life she deserved.

The image of her was as permanent in my mind as the feel of her lips on mine. Her hair was coarse and a dusty blonde color. It went nicely with her pale skin and amber eyes. I was obsessed with her from the moment I saw her. She was studying tomatoes at the grocery store while I was stocking the shelves. Her hair was piled on top of her head and frizzed from the humidity. I was use to seeing people look at produce and easily being able to tell what they were thinking. Though the more I watched her the more I became confused. I couldn't decipher her at all and immediately I was in love.

Her name was a spice on my tongue, a luxurious taste on my practical pallet. I was accustomed and raised in the culture and world of the modern Navajo while she was from the much softer living. Our different cultures were obvious by the color of our skins. My skin was deep from being outside, whether it is due to an odd job for money or simply exploring the elements of the wilderness, while hers was light and soft. Her nails also were nicely kept and long indicating she didn't use her hands for a living. She was different and I wanted to know more about her.

I remember after our first date her name ran through my mind every minute of every day. Valentina was the pinnacle of all names. As was Valentina herself the pinnacle of all females. Although after her incessant insisting on me to call her Val I finally gave in long ago. Her sharp eyes could bring me to my knees and at the same time lift me higher than I've ever been. I love her more than the human emotional capacity is able to express. Love is relentless and ruthless. My heart is completely drenched in love for this woman and yet I have no clue how to understand her.