

~drug abuse prevention panties~

by aksania xenogrette

Nicole decided to make some D.A.P. colored panties. She felt like an insane witch mixing the Rit dye in a soup pot, carefully blending cardinal red and sunburst yellow, plus a few drops of blue Easter-egg dye to get the right shade of hot orangish pink to match the Drug Abuse Prevention pamphlet that Joe read to her in a hilarious voice at Denny..'s the night she met him. She tossed in a 6 pack of Hanes Her Ways, stole one of her mom..'s beers from the fridge and went out on the back steps to smoke a cigarette while they boiled.

That night at Denny..'s he gave her some mini-thins. They talked till 3 in the morning. Nobody had ever called her beautiful before-not like that, not seriously. She had watched him drawing in his notebook for 20 minutes, her heart all aflutter, till finally she just grabbed her coffee cup and walked over to his table and sat down across from him. When he looked up at her, he smiled so honestly, she thought she would die. He looked steadily into her eyes. He just said hi. Nobody ever did that. She knew she was blushing.

She said, ..Hi, I just wanted to see what you..'re drawing...

He said, ..Here, check it out... and turned the page around.

She just said wow. He lit a cigarette. It was like

looking in a weird mirror. He had turned her into a cartoon. She was there on the page in black ink, pigtails and all, wearing a see-through bra and panties and fishnets. He asked her what kind of music she liked.

She said, ..Uhm, rock, I guess... I like Nirvana and shit like that. And Beck. I like Beck. Especially Mellow Gold...

He said, ..Right on, yeah, Beck..'s fuckin cool. And Nirvana, fuck, I mean Nirvana..'s like the coolest. You ever listen to Radiohead?

She said, ..Well, yeah, but just the stuff on Mtv. What..'s that song.. Creep. I love that song. What does he say on that one? I..'m a Creep I..'m a winner.., I..'m a window? I can never tell. He kind of mumbles...

Joe started laughing. He said it was widow. He made her feel all sparkly the way he looked at her. She timidly asked him if she could look through his notebook. She was worried he might be like her, one of those people who don..'t like anyone to see what they write. He was like yeah go ahead, the pictures are mostly in the back, there..'s songs and stuff in there too. Are you hungry? I..'m going to get some fries. She was like uh huh.

The steps felt nice and cool on her thighs. Crickets never sounded so good. She sat there smoking. She thought about her panties. The night smelled like lilacs and firecrackers. Some kids across the street were running around with sparklers. He was so fucking exotic in her mind. He was 21, just 3 years older. He

had dropped out of U. Chicago. She didn..'t have any idea if that was like going to Harvard or Idaho State, but the way he said it, she was definitely impressed. Everything he said blew her away. They talked about music and writing and drugs and how people suck, and what a shithole Pocatello is. The titles of his songs sounded menacing, like spiders don..'t have bones, and heroine, but they were so pretty and smart and intricate and strange, she wanted shrink down to the size of a comma and live in one of them.

She put her cigarette out and walked back into the kitchen, found some oven mitts and poured the panties into the sink. She picked them up one by one with salad tongs and dropped them into the pot, thinking of what Billy Mathers used to say to her in 8th grade, mimicking his voice, ..Fuck Nicole, don..'t get your panties in a bunch,.. laughing like hell. She was totally pleased with herself because they were the perfect shade-just like the drug abuse pamphlet they had joked about that night. They called it orink, then porange. They settled on porange, cause its poor kids who sniff glue and huff gas. She steeped the panties in vinegar to make them colorfast and then poured them into the bathtub.

She locked herself in the bathroom, turned on the tap and poured lavender Suave shampoo all over them and rinsed them till they no longer bled. She took off all her clothes and tried on a pair, turning in front of the mirror, thrusting her hips, pouting her lips, trying to make her eyes look sultry, laughing at herself. She liked how they looked all wet, the color contrast against her skin, how they felt, how they clung to every curve.

She lit a candle and turned off the lights. She started to take the panties off, but decided to keep them on and got into the bathtub. She slid around and kicked the other five pair around in the waves so they swam like jellyfish. She felt like a lunatic sea-monster. She held her breath underwater trying to send Joe telepathic messages. She ran her fingers over the fabric. She snapped the elastic. Nicole had a vigorous and imaginative sex life, despite being a virgin by any conventional definition.

That night she dreamt she was lying on her stomach on the grassy bank of a stream, arms and hair dangling over the edge, reflected in the surface of the pool. D.A.P. colored fish were swimming up and kissing her fingertips. Then she saw Joe..'s reflection smiling in the water. He said, ..Hey, gorgeous,.. and took her hand and lifted her up, held her in his arms and kissed her. She heard a crinkly noise. He laughed and said, ..Look,.. and pointed down to the water where she could see she was wearing a cellophane dress. He said, ..Nice panties,.. and pulled a magic marker out of his jeans pocket. He was drawing a chain of flowers on her waist when she woke up.

Nicole got home from work at 5:30 made a pot of Ramen noodles and sat down on the couch and turned on The Simpsons. She thought she would wait until 7 to call Joe. They said they..fd try getting together on Tuesday and it was Tuesday, but she couldn..'t think of what to say or what they might do. She wasn..'t sure she..'d have the nerve to call, so she stared at the TV with butterflies in her stomach trying to send him signals..- call me, call me, call me. She was watching

the credits roll when the phone rang.

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Hello?..

..Hi, is this Nicole...

..Yeah, hi Joe...

..Hey, whatcha up to?..

..Oh, I was just watching The Simpsons...

..Really, yeah I was watching it too. I love that episode. I wish they did more shows starring Maggie...

..Yeah that one was good. I hadn..'t seen it before...

..Mmm.. hey, so uh, you wanna get together tonight?..

..Yeah, totally. Whatdya have in mind?..

..Well, I..'m kinda broke and we already did the hell outa Dennys. I thought maybe we could hang out over here at my place and smoke or something. I promise I..fll behave myself...

..(She laughs) I..'m hardly worried about that. No, that sounds totally cool. I was wondering what we..'d end up doing. I can..'t really think of anything to do in this lame-ass town, besides maybe go bowling...

..(He laughs) Yeah well maybe we..'ll have to do that sometime. It..'s funny you say that cause I borrowed The Big Lebowski from my friend Brandon...

..What..fs that?..

..Oh you haven..'t seen it? Well it..'ll be a surprise.

We..'ll watch it and you..'ll see why its funny you mentioned bowling. You..'ll love it. It..'s like my favorite movie...

..Ok, well cool, that sounds great. I don..'t know where you live though...

He gave her instructions. When he hung up he started walking around the apartment, straightening up the clutter, talking to himself, saying things like ..fuck

yeah!.. and ..god, I love that girl... He changed his shirt and fixed his hair, put on some deodorant and popped a couple of zits. He leaned his guitar against his P.A. speakers at an angle to show off the sticker collage he..d stuck all over it with the specific goal of impressing the right girl. He lit some incense, checked the fridge, and seeing there were only 3 beers, ran across the street and bought a 12er of Olympia. He ran back up the stairs, stuck them in the fridge, knocked all the crumbs off the couch, picked up some cigarette foils and gum wrappers off the carpet, emptied the ashtray, and went downstairs on the porch to smoke cigarettes while he waited for her.

Meanwhile Nicole, after hanging up the phone with an ecstatic screech, raced into her room, took off all her clothes down to her panties and began constructing an outfit to match the cartoon image of her he had drawn at Denny..fs. She put on fishnets and a black bra. She put a faded thread-bare yellow t-shirt from 6th grade on over it, and a blue polyester skirt. She put on eyeliner and mascara and after 3 attempts, finally got her pigtails right. She left a note for her mom saying she was spending the night at Amanda..'s, even though she knew it hardly mattered. She grabbed her keys and purse and buckled herself into her beat up car. She lit a cigarette, cranked Nirvana and drove across town, trying to sing low and scratchy like Kurt.

Joe led her up the steps and into his attic apartment. She thought it was really funny how, just like any guy, he had naked chicks all over the walls, except Joe had drawn them all himself. There were a few abstract paintings, and magazine ads and album covers,

but mostly there were just tons of naked cartoony girls with see-through clothes and wings and horns and antennas and stuff like that. Her eyes were stuck on the walls.

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Hey do you wanna beer?..

..Yeah, sure. God, these are really great. I love this one of the pixie chick with the cat on a leash.

They..re all so like sinister.. but cute...

..Thanks. I..m glad you like them. I get pretty bored, I guess. It..'s something to do besides getting stoned and watching TV, or I guess it..'s more like something to do while getting stoned and watching TV...

..(She laughs) I wish I could draw like that. How do you come up with the ideas for them? I mean they..'re really..... unusual...

..Dreams, mostly. Sometimes I see stuff like that when I hallucinate. I think how I got into giving them horns and boots and stuff is because I wanted them to be tough, like they..&..39;re not just these stupid delicate girls, but menacing, like a real hellatrix who could kick your ass if you fucked with her..

..(She laughs, keeps looking around the room) Wow, so this is your guitar. Fuck, I have that cat sticker on my car...

..Really?..

..Yeah, will you play something?..

..Yeah, totally, but not right now. I think I..'d be pretty nervous, but I do want to play for you. Maybe when I..'m a little drunker. Do you wanna watch the movie?..

..Yeah, right on. Let..'s see it...

He never played guitar for her that night, but it hardly mattered. By 3:37 in the morning Joe and Nicole

lay nestled like two S's on the mattress. He breathed slow like a whale in his sleep while her heart rattled like a spraypaint canister-- her whole body buzzing from the memory of his lips-on her stomach, her nipples, her neck. She thought about laughing and smoking and sweating and drinking on the couch. Her mind was cotton-- photonegative images played on her eyelids in pinks and oranges, silver and black... the Center St. train underpass. The fumes, recklessly scribbling dripping flowers and slogans, their voices echoing in the yellow light. Joe showed her he could stand sideways, he just stuck his body horizontal between the walls of the narrow passageway like an acrobat. She dropped the silver paint and started singing London Bridges Falling Down and kissed him on the stomach. He let gravity take hold and slinked to the ground. She gave him her hand and pulled him up. He took both of hers and stretched her arms wide and tacked her to the wall, pressed his weight into her body and kissed her so hot she thought she'd fucking die.

SPIDERS DONT HAVE BONES

stopped my heart but I had to laugh
a spider fell out of my hair
she crawled across the floor
and at first I didn't care
but now I can't get to sleep
cause she's everywhere

final net and epoxy enamel
me with a smile stretched cross my face

cause she wasn't impressed by insecticide
shiny and black and dancing in place
she held the cards and she threw the ace

spiders don't have bones
and they don't have sockets
and this is just a story
so you can mock it
but don't laugh too loud
cause she's still in my pocket
she waits by the door
if you dare to knock it

I woke up and went to get a drink
you can bet I was annoyed
she's still dancing in the sink
and next time I'll be careful to avoid
breathing aerosol fumes makes you paranoid

playing a word game with manifestation
the sun came up and I started to wonder
if knowing too much is such a good idea
cause faster than lightning and louder than thunder
the ground opened up to swallow us under

