

This is Why We Can Never Have Nice Things

by Chanel Dubofsky

At age eleven, I murder the coffee table. I gouge with every available implement: thumbtacks, Lefty scissors, the plastic hand of my Barbie accomplice (who really should have known better). It is a slow death. In the end, there is nowhere to hide the body. When I am finally caught, the pads of my fingers fill the cracks of my homemade disaster. It is the stupidest lie I have ever told.

When my mother is dying, her skin sucking her bones like tentacles, we discuss important details: her curio cabinet with tiny vases and fragile teacups; clothes in her closet still in their store wrappers. She's saving them for a special occasion; the discovery of a new planet, the victory of a coup in a small foreign country.

The invitation comes at two thirty in the morning. "Would you like to come and see the body?" I am just awake. In the tangled blur of consciousness, there is a woman plucking a perfect nectarine from a blue crystal bowl with slim and beckoning fingers. The most beautiful part is her hands reaching.

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