

All Men With Well Trimmed Beards

by Jennifer Donnell

Holding open the door to the cafe, I swoop under his gentlemanly arm. My boots click clack as I brush against his warmth. He's tall, in a grey striped shirt and beanie- not perfect, but beautiful to me. Is it that, perhaps? Is he merely a warm body to stave off the lonely nights since the divorce. Is moving on always this generic and predictable. Am I falling for all the same tricks I left in my first marriage, or worse. Will the coffee he's about to buy me take such thoughts away, magic elixir that it is.

Not to mention that love thing. How I tell him I love him and it feels real, mostly, when he says it back to me.

Sometimes, the red flags grow teeth. His past two marriages, one more than my own track record. The many women he bedded in between each. The smile I imagine him giving an infinite number of women, as he's sometimes been the cheating type. How he likes enhanced buxom gals and I'm as natural as can be.

Or, do my own red flags counter balance his. My back and forth, my restlessness, my one foot out the door, my 'once a leaver... always a leaver', my pitter patter for a former flame... peppered with my transgressions and mistakes. Worse, the way I have a thing for men with well trimmed beards- all men with well trimmed beards- almost as much of a fetish as his for breasts.

If I could take a vacation from responsibility, I'd go out dancing all night and come home with high heeled shoes in hand. Only, he and I have decided not to do that. If I could go out on a week of dates,

maybe one of them could convince me they were perfect and red flag free. How long with that last?

Doubt reminds me that there might be an infinite number of men who will make me feel exactly like he does- loved, silly, smart, sexual; all at once. However, if there are, what good is one over the other? Isn't all well loved happiness the same.

It's like paradise is loading up a charter cruise and I'm not sure if I should get on.

