

# The Roach Under Her Bed

by Kenton K. Yee

An executive assistant in the financial district, Aurora stepped on a variety of fast foods on her daily strolls home.

Prince, a widowed cockroach, lived alone under Aurora's bed. He slept all day and foraged after lights out. Prince had dug out from a box of Christmas chocolates, which Aurora never opened. The box sat under Aurora's bed stacked next to other unopened gifts.

Every night, Prince crawled out and licked fast-food flecks off the soles of Aurora's shoes. It was good eating, a delicious change from the stale chocolates.

Aurora slept alone and talked to herself in sleep. "I met my ex-best friend in kindergarten," she said.

After listening for several weeks, Prince spoke back within her dreams. "We had a son once. He liked scavenging in the chocolate factory and fell into a vat of gooey syrup. My wife dove in after him. I never saw them again."

Prince taught Aurora to sleep crawl and sleep forage in the dark. They foraged together, he waving his antennas, she waving her arms like antennas. She learnt how to smell and taste the aura of her shoes by flapping an elbow. One night, Aurora kicked a chair accidentally. Startled by the noise, the pair shot back to bed, Prince underneath it and Aurora into it.

"You delight me," she said in sleep, giggling like a kindergartener.

"And you, me," he said from below.

She often teased Prince by rolling him onto his back. She would lie down on the floor next to him while he rocked back and forth like a turtle on its shell, his six legs flailing in the air. They chatted away many nights in this position.

"My wife had been my best — my only — friend," he confessed. "Until you."

"My ex-best friend had been my only too. She moved away for medical school. We lost touch."

One morning, Prince seemed more tense than usual when the rising sun broke through her blinds.

“May I join you in bed?”

Pause.

“I don't know how to...” she said. “We are so different... You're ... my best friend.”

So Prince remained under her bed and in her dreams. He spent nights loving the sound of her voice and Aurora lived to dream.

