

Problems Pretty Girls With Pretty Faces Face

by Roxane Gay

When I am 27, I see a therapist for the first time. His name is Rafe. He doesn't sit behind a desk. He sits in a chair across from the couch where I sit, staring at me until we are both uncomfortable. I clear my throat, look at my fingernails, prepare lies so I can tell him what he wants to hear. He says, "A girl like you is too damn pretty to have any problems." He leans back, his chair creaking beneath his weight. He laces his fingers behind his head, pleased with himself. He is pleased with himself. I uncross my legs, pull my skirt up a few inches. I have great legs. I hate him. Because I hate him, I will fuck him and defeat the purpose of being here. Rafe uncrosses his legs, smiles, moves next to me. He is not subtle. He twists his head to the right and drags one finger from the tip of my chin to the small expanse of skin where my blouse falls open. I think about my husband, who is dead, who has left me in this position. He is, he was, he is a lean, hard man—a long distance runner. He ran and ran and ran. All he loved was me and running, and then one day, he ran too far and his heart gave out. "Yes," he says. "You're definitely too pretty for therapy." I look down and see him, already stiff in his pressed khakis. I know how to play my part. I lay back, one arm draped over my head. I kick off my shoes and drag my foot up Rafe's leg and between his thighs. He groans, climbing on top of me. He says things I don't need to remember. I let him fuck me and I stare at the clock, listening to it tick and tock as he breathes heavily and crushes me, covering me with vile airs. My husband would hate this fat man. The therapist comes quickly and I push him off. He falls to the floor and laughs, staying on the shag carpet. He laces his fingers behind his head again. He is pleased with himself.

