

## Sleepers

Josephine was a sleeper. The best I ever knew. She could go to bed early and sleep the whole next day, wrapped in beams of diffused sunlight and a fluffy white comforter her mom had bought her one year for Christmas. She lived in an apartment, a big fourth floor studio that looked down on an old, industrial, mostly abandoned section of Chicago.

The city never seemed to touch her. You had immunity when you were with Jo; everything slowed down. Time could even reverse.

She had posted a personal ad in a coffee shop. That's how I first met Josephine. It was a very intriguing flyer, hanging there with all the other banality that spoke of nothing but the practical:

*Roommate Wanted  
Apartment off Red Line  
475.00 mo plus utilities*

*1998 Honda Civic  
Low Miles  
CD/Cassette player  
5500.00 or B/O*

Josephine's ad was simple:

*Sleepy girl seeks same in boy.*

It had a phone number at the bottom.

I called the number and got her voice mail. I said I was calling about the ad. Two o'clock that morning I got a message from a very sleepy sounding girl saying that if I wanted to get a hold of her, I should call tomorrow at such and such a time. Eight PM, I believe it was. I called her, and we ended up getting together that night.

I thought she was real pretty, even though she was quite pale and looked like she

would bruise easily. She had a babyish face. Her lips were small but fat; they sort of pursed out in a cute way. She had long lashes and light blue eyes that were slightly droopy, as if someone had placed their thumb and forefinger on her cheekbones and pulled down gently.

She didn't dress for it, but her body was sexy. Soft and curvy and maybe twelve pounds heavier than most girls her age would want to be. She was like a cross between Drew Barrymore and Zelda Fitzgerald.

She sat up in her bed and talked to me. It was an interview, really. I think she wanted to make sure I wasn't the kind of guy who would expect her to go places, someone who was "into life" and would complain that she wasn't.

"D'you like movies?" she asked.

"I love movies."

"What kind?" she said.

"I don' know... good kind."

"Yeah, but like what?"

"Um, well I love apocalyptic motifs in film."

I later found out that scored me quite a few points.

"Do you like to do a lot of stuff?" she asked.

"Um... yeah, I like to do stuff. I mean, whatta you mean?"

"Well I just mean like, do you do a lot of stuff? Like go places and stuff?"

"Ah... no, I guess I really don't. I like to do stuff at home."

"Like what?" she said.

"I like to watch movies," I told her. "I love food. Sometimes I like to cook."

"Do you drink coffee?" she asked.

"No, don't touch it."

"Me neither," she said.

Then she said, "Do you like to sleep? You ever sleep in?"

She cut right to the chase with that one.

"I love to sleep," I said, and watched her think it over.

She was wearing a thin pair of blue and white striped boxer shorts and a white t-shirt. She ate three bowls of Cheerios in the course of the interview and was good enough to offer me some, which I accepted. She kept a pair of slippers by her bed but I noticed they were too big for her. She slipped them on when she got up to go to the bathroom or get something to eat, and slid across the hardwood floor without lifting her feet. I later found out she wore boxers and a t-shirt almost all the time. She would occasionally get dressed to go to her mom's or go out and buy groceries, but she spent most of her time in that old building.

I liked her. She was sweet, in her sleepy way. She wanted a friend to hide away with, and I guess I wanted that too. That's why we found each other.

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