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The Perfect Smile

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Author Bio

Aubrey Link is a first year student attending Gettysburg College. She is an intended English Major with a writing concentration. She also plans to complete minors in Philosophy and Business. At this point in time she is considering a future career in law.

The Perfect Smile

Aubrey Link

Since my birth there was something *curious* about me—at least that is what they told me. I was an oddity, obsessed with the twisted aspect of human nature. My fascination surrounded the black pitch of the earth, my thoughts the thoughts unpleasant to the rest of the world. Was there a part of the human brain that inspired cannibalism, murder, or torture? Were the hearts of murderers spotted with black? Was the blood of the insane tinted ebony? These questions led me into the field of medicine, a profession rarely entered by a member of my gender.

During my schooling, I discovered my inclination for dentistry. The joy of ripping a tooth from its socket was unparalleled by any of my past experiences. There was a certain euphoria attached to removing the faulty, impure pieces that marred the perfection of the mouth. It was at this time that I learned of my obsession with perfection, my desperate pursuit of it. Everywhere I looked I studied people, their mouths in particular. I judged smiles and open mouths, searching for *perfection*.

Once I graduated university, I took on an associate, a loyal pet that I could rely on for discretion. He appreciated my tendencies. His disfigurement had forced him into the fringes of society where I found him. In return for taking him under my wing, he looked to me as his personal deity, whom he loved and served faithfully. He had a towering build, extraneous length of limbs, and the ribs of a skeleton. When he came to me he had the teeth of a shark, pointed and sharp like daggers. I saved him. Yes, I saved him, by filing those abominations into *almost* perfection. It was one of my most successful procedures and made me even fonder of my dependent friend, whom I affectionately renamed “Molnar”. Worship blazed in his small, glowing eyes.

In my small section of Philadelphia, I opened up a discreet office which, to my pleasure, evolved into an excelling business that was ahead of its time. I had it opened under Molnar’s name to prevent any legal disputes based on my sex. Molnar followed me as I walked the dark, cobblestone streets under sentinel street lamps, always searching.

“Molnar,” I whispered, leaning toward him like a co-conspirator. “Look at that lateral incisor! Perfection! Such a shame the rest of the mouth doesn’t match.” He looked at me with admiration and understanding in his beady eyes. That was the day of the first incident, the night Molnar began

his midnight procedures. The next morning, the very tooth I had remarked about appeared on my lab table, gleaming like the most precious of pearls against the worn wood. That was when I began my collection, held in a glass of the finest crystal on my shelf of trophies. It was a hobby of mine to sort and arrange them in an attempt to recreate a flawless ensemble, but the different sizes failed to produce the desired result. Putting together pieces of multiple puzzles that might fit, but never match.

I was beginning to lose hope. Even the rush of an extraction failed to pull me from my malady. Even the satisfaction of removing faulty, infected teeth reminded me of impurity and furthered doubt of my dream's existence. Molnar started to go on more ventures in an attempt to lighten my spirits, producing enough gleaming ivory gems to fill three glass goblets. He started to stink of the semi-sweet chemical he used on these expeditions and grew sloppy, leaving occasional blood stains on his chin or in his hair from the night before. I fiddled with his gifts more and more yet I could not get PERFECTION.

As I grew more desolate, Molnar stumbled into the office on his unbalanced legs. "I've found it, Mistress, I've found it!" he cried out, his grin revealing my excellent work. I knew at once that he had found my dream, and I rocked to my feet, grasping his thin arms.

"Where, Molnar, where?" I said, my heart racing at the speed of a drill. He smiled, offering his long arm to lead me into the dusty streets.

"Excuse me, Mister Dens, this is my associate, the one I was telling you about," Molnar began, but his words faded as the man turned, revealing the glory of his mouth to the world. It was a perfect, harmonious occlusion! The pearls were a perfectly shaped anatomy—even the molars had a cusp of carabelli! They were brilliantly white, complete with square tapering arch form, my favorite. I tightened my hold on Molnar's bony limb. He truly had found it! My eyes could not move. I was transfixed in my own personal heaven.

Something in either my or the man's expression made Molnar stiffen, but he remained silent. Though I could not look up from the man's mouth, I could guess that his eyes held the stare men usually wore when they saw me. I was not unattractive and had been told I would make any man a wonderful wife if not for my distasteful inclination for my profession. Yet I could not deny that I was in love—in love with his teeth.

Over the course of the next month, he called on me at the office at least twice a week. My attachment and joy was only renewed every time he smiled and revealed the breathtaking masterpiece that had been bestowed upon him. Soon I told Molnar that his nightly deeds were no longer necessary. I had found what I had been searching for and I feared that if Mr. Dens discovered that Molnar was behind the mysterious attacks, he would

leave. Then I would never see those stunning, impeccably constructed treasures again.

I could tell Molnar was hurt by this, but I made it up to him by requesting more of his assistance in procedures and by sending him on important errands. Though as Mr. Dens' attachment grew, so did the odor of alcohol lingering on my companion's breath. I would have spoken to him about it if I had not been so infatuated, so irrevocably addicted to the sight of those precious white stones nestled in pure gums.

The more time I spent with the object of my obsession, the more disconcerted Molnar grew. He feared I was in love with the whole man, not just his teeth. When Molnar began to threaten to leave me, I was afraid that I would not have the strength to choose my faithful companion over my fixation. As time went on, it became clear to me that I could not live without them. Molnar realized this I think, and something snapped within him. The thin thread of sanity he had once grasped onto was now fraying at an alarming rate.

Then the tumultuous evening came when Mr. Dens made a fateful decision. He offered his hand in marriage and made the folly of doing so in front of Molnar. That thread split in two the moment Mr. Dens' knee made contact with the floor. It all happened in a flurry of calculated movements, forcing me to think Molnar had meditated upon this moment for a long time before he acted on it. His thin, but strong hand grasped one of my instruments, a pair of forceps, and he plunged it into his enemy's throat. Sprays of blood cloaked my procedural chair with every brutal connection of the gleaming forceps and Mr. Dens' neck as lightning flashed from the storm raging outside. Mr. Dens' eyes went wide and glassy. Molnar stood over him with the exhilaration of a victor.

"Molnar! What have you done? How are we ever going to get rid of this mess?" I said halfheartedly. In truth, I was not upset with him. I bent down and studied the corpse, relieved that the maxilla and mandible were still undamaged. Pulling up the cold lip, I discovered that my perfection was still untouched. I smiled at Molnar as something very important dawned on me. *It could be mine now.* I ordered Molnar to help me lift the body. We placed it on my chair and began my operation. With caution, the utmost caution, I performed a Lefort I Osteotomy, removing the upper jaw just below the nose. Next, I claimed the whole mandibular for my own.

Molnar disposed of the now useless carcass in a cavity in the ground, an appropriate place for the rotten and insignificant. I did not ask where, only insured that it was taken care of so that my office's involvement would never be suspected. While he was gone I polished my prize, finally in my possession. It was beautiful, the most beautiful thing I had ever seen. I placed it on the center of the shelf on a pedestal of silver, the item of

utmost reverence. In the middle of my study of it, Molnar came back and started to obliterate all traces of the incident. He did not disturb me until it looked as if nothing had ever happened. Everything looked exactly the same as before, except for the new ornament.

“Thank you, Molnar,” I said. I turned to face him and waved him forward with my hand. Placing my palm on his cheek, I felt a rekindling of my fondness for my strange minion. He smiled with eyes wide and full of devotion. “It is alright, my friend. Better actually. They are mine now,” I said. He nodded and stepped back, sensing he had been dismissed for the night.

As he reached for the door, I called his name one more time. “You know, Molnar I think this pair would look even more exquisite if it had a companion. Don’t you?”

He grinned like the prince of darkness himself and replied, “Of course, Mistress.”