

The Almost Moon

By Alice Sebold

I wanted to fuck him. I closed my eyes and waited. A moment later, I could feel Hamish gingerly—too gingerly—place his body over me. ...“Hell,” he said. “I’m . . .” He glanced down his body instead of finishing the sentence. ...I felt his erection against me, the tops of my feet jostling the middle of his shins, his face to my right, his ear a seashell tunnel beside mine. ...I brought my right hand up and ran it along his side until I found the edge of his T-shirt, then slipped my hand up under it and onto his bare skin. He grunted beside me, an animal waiting to be touched. Sarah had had a crush on Hamish, growing up. “We can do anything,” I said. It was as if I’d turned a key. He raised his head. His eyes looked dreamy and distant in a way I’d never seen the eyes of my best friend’s son. “Sure, baby,” he whispered, and I tried not to hear the tone in his voice. A tone I was aware he adopted with the women I’d seen riding on the back of his motorcycle. ...His lips were pendulous, ridiculous, young. I reached my arm up and pulled his head down to kiss them. ...I would have wished it could be different than this, that I could have fucked my best friend’s son without having to be made aware of it. ...I tugged upward at Hamish’s shirt, and taking his weight away from me for a moment, he peeled it off over his head. ...I turned my eyes away from his face and unbuttoned my pants. As he rushed to help, he bumped his head on the inside of the passenger-side door. ...“Jesus,” Hamish said. He rubbed the back of his head and left my pants to fester around my ankles, the immediacy dangerously threatened once again. I bit my lip. I writhed. “Fuck me,” I said, and hoped that no one’s God was watching. ...With a final tug, he threw my pants onto the gravel drive. I winced when he ripped off my underpants. They were not high waisted or gauzy or old like handmade paper, but his stripping me cut too closely to what I’d just done to my mother. I propelled myself up and grabbed for Hamish’s penis, which had poked above the

waistband of his briefs. As soon as I had my hand on it, I tugged him forward and down. He moaned in pleasure as I spread my legs and wrapped myself around him. “Oh fuck, oh fuck, oh fuck!” he wailed. I lay there in disbelief. He had ejaculated on my stomach. My fingers, sticky and enraged, squeezed. “Ow,” he said, and placed a hand on my wrist. “Let go.”

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I reached for his penis, hoping this time for the ejaculation that I could wipe off of my stomach and pretend was disappointing. After his initial pleasure, he stilled my hand. ...He parted my legs farther than was truly comfortable. He worked at me roughly, as if I were one of the action figures that had littered his floor as a child. I tried to help him along. I pulled my own string and spoke to him in phrases I’d heard myself say in the midst of actual passion dozens of times. I stared at the small tattooed dragon below his collarbone and mimicked my former self for him. Finally, just as the muscles on the insides of my thighs felt strained beyond recovery, the joints in my hips the dry ball bearings of a woman my mother’s age, he came. He shuddered and fell on top of me with all his weight. My breath went out of me, and for a brief second I thought of the prostitute in Arthur Shawcross’s car, how she had spent the next three days doing speedballs. ...“You’re a good fuck too,” he said bitterly.

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