

Title: The Picture of Deceit

Author: you know

Prompt: makeup challenge on cues from 9/8/05—random quotes in 750 words or less.

Notes: used 7/10 quotes, and smushed them all together faster than you could imagine.

That being said, this is a bit from life @ 23, pre-wedding jitters for Sophie. I missed this story, and I wish I could get over the 2nd chapter hump. No real warnings. Rated G.

WC: 369 words

Prompt:

'random lines from random pages from random books on Ruth's shelf' challenge. You can do what you want with them; incorporate them, reinterpret them, spin off them in a hundred directions. You can use one or ten or many. You can have a maximum of 750 words for this feat.

1: The Monk Downstairs, Tim Farrington, p142:

She had a sense of moving without particular effort, at just the right speed. Things were very clear at the right speed. It was not intimacy the house resisted, it was falseness: the home she'd made...demanded something real.

2: Big Sur, Jack Kerouac, p107:

I shudder sometimes to think of all that stellar mystery of how [she] IS going to get me in a future lifetime, wow - And I seriously do believe that will be my salvation, too.

A long way to go.

5: The Poisonwood Bible, Barbara Kingsolver, p438:

To live is to be marked. To live is to change, to acquire the words of a story, and that is the only celebration we mortals really know. In perfect stillness, frankly, I've only ever found sorrow.

6:Lighthousekeeping, Jeanette Winterson, p73

There's always a woman somewhere, child; a princess, a witch, a stepmother, a mermaid, a fairy godmother, or one as wicked as she is beautiful or as beautiful as she is good.

Is that the complete list?

Then there is the woman you love.

8: The Metaphor of God Incarnate, John Hicks, p164

When will this happen? Will it happen? Is it perhaps already beginning to happen? The future will tell.

9: The place of Dead Roads, William S Burroughs, p23

Life is an entanglement of lies to hide it's basic mechanisms.

10: Shantaram, Gregory David Roberts, p922

And I loved her. I loved her still so much, so hard, but with no heat or heart at all. That falling love, that helpless, dreaming, soaring love was gone.

Story:

She is moving just fast enough to make a person believe that she is not moving at all. A languishing moment here, and a barely visible movement there, and all is in balance and at the right speed to deceive. Her outsides barely move at all, and she is proud of how it conceals the truth. The slowness is a lie that hides the mechanisms within, the quick flash of her brain, and how she takes it all in at once and never looks back.

She is moving at that speed now, all wondering when it will happen, or if it has already begun to happen. She cannot stand still a moment in herself, though she never moves, or else she knows she will be engulfed in worry over whether she will actually make it, whether he will stay, when he will leave her for good. She is sure of that, though she

loves him so hard and so much, she has loved the heat and helplessness from her love. Everything about her love that was a dream and passion and overwhelming has turned to ashes of what once was fire and light.

And so she moves. She makes her mind busier and busier, readying everything for his arrival and the most important day in either of their lives. She can feel it swelling inside her and she makes herself the picture of calm while her insides roil and churn with anxiety and love. People wonder at her, if she is really all there as she shrugs it off and lets it all wash over her. The picture of calm, and not a sign that she is worried about whether he is going to get her in the future, or if he will be her salvation.

There is a woman somewhere, she knows, that is her very opposite: a woman who is calm inside, but anxious without, as she is calm without and anxious within. That woman is moving faster and faster and faster, until the world was blurred around her and nothing was clear except that there was a man to love her.

Sophie knew it, in her soul, that Daniel loved her in much the same way.