



The Beautician

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Every morning, on her way to the office, Faustine would stop and stare at the windows across from her bus stop. More often than not, the blinds were drawn, and stark silhouettes of geometric plantlike forms criss crossed the frame of the double glazing.

Faustine's work was in the interpretation department of the company, who used neurological data to decide on the marketing strategy of beauty products. With an army of EEGs headsets, and a handful of fMRI scanners, her team would go through hundreds of brains, and link up the latest visual ensembles with emotional reactions, to see if the publicity excited, or distracted from the desired outcome.

One morning, the rain fell so hard that Faustine had to take cover. Rushing across the street, she cowered in a door way, and was joined by an older lady laden with bags and hidden under a giant poncho, keys in hand. Normal chit chat ensued - the usual celebration of nature's strength, and for Faustine, the perfect alibi for a late start at work. The woman, with a generous tone, invited Faustine to wait in her apartment whilst the storm passed, and with the sky darker than night at 9:30 in the morning, it was an offer not to be turned down.

A particular issue had developed over the course of a few months, and Faustine had to exaggerate excuses in order to buy some more time in front of the datasets. Apparently things were not matching up - not going as predicted, and this meant it was partly due to her work. Faustine had seen the silky smooth, self indulgent soft lit advertising stimuli that they were trying to tweak a million times, and there was no real problem, all the results just showed a sense of familiarity, the images might as well of been a curdled brown mess, now that they were referencing almost every commercial visualisation of the past ninety years. The same intonation in the narration, same close ups, same body type and computer aided complexions.

Upstairs, with a hot tea in hand, and a towel round her shoulders, Faustine looked over towards the window in awe. The arrangement of flowers that she had witnessed as shadows or refracted images was something foreign, an image that she was unaware of. The older woman explained her system of harmony through the arrangement of her flowers, highlighting a few parts of her code. Divisions of attraction and repulsion were illustrated by curves and select material, whilst a sense of anticipation could be heightened with complimentary colours and textural ensembles.

Months had passed, and Faustine sat in her newly decorated office. Swarms of people were busy at the central table beyond the glass wall. They were almost finished with the colossal task of a new line of enquiry, and after all the scans, fabrications and calculations were complete she wondered if she had been successful. Little was known of the effects of the research that she had started, but the results were clear. A personalised aesthetic for each customer could start a revolution, or be just another passing fancy. Faustine looked again at her own private version of beauty, angular and subtle, it still didn't make sense.
