

While some obsessed about excessive cleanliness and tidiness, others washed their hands and face repeatedly; he obsessed about sheets. Sheets of the moment, sheets of the day and finding the appropriate sheets for every occasion to fit the mood and ambience. Each day was like a piece of music timed and paced perfectly for a grand finale. To end on a good note when he was ready for bed, it was imperative for him to have the appropriate sheets in the right tone and colour scheme to reflect his mood of the day.

He sorted them by basic colours and would have them freshly ironed before crawling into bed each night, so that he could nestle in the warmth, clean fresh sheets. When he slept alone, he would only use simple sheets in various colours, occasionally stripped or polka dotted to document a more eventful day. Given how he loved to organize everything in perfect order, he was never capable of one-night stands as it was imperative for him to first assess the girls before deciding what sheets to use and when was the opportune moment to take them home with him. He's never gone home to their place either as he couldn't bear the thought of making love and sleeping on the wrong sheets for a night. For him, the dating game was a lovely investigative chase of search and discovery. He needed an average of a few weeks to get to know the girl before he could be certain that they were compatible in bed.

He was especially particular about having sheets that corresponded with the personalities of all the women he shared intimate moments with. He categorized them

primarily by their scents and sometimes their personalities with matching sheets. Every sheet was subsequently gathered with all organic fluids all in tact, vacuum packed and hung up in his wardrobe to keep them in its most natural, earnest form. At times when he felt lonely, he'd open up the sealed sheets to relive his pleasant memories with the individual he'd once been with.

Each sheet represented a detailed documentation of his sexual conquests- almost like an individual file on each woman tucked carefully into his wardrobe. Instead of making mental notes of the different women he's been intimate with, he simply collected the sheets that corresponded to his fixed categories. Mostly, he repeated the same motifs on sheets as he carefully organized each woman into different categories; he loved peculiar scents, as it was a challenge for him to find the right sheets to match it. He would always wash new sheets at least twice before he could use them. This was to ensure a fresh scent, uncontaminated by the chemical agents that were used on the fabric, giving it a synthetic smell of newness.

It infuriated him when he couldn't find the exact shades and tones he was looking for or to match it to the individual women. While most went out to do grocery shopping every week with a list, he shopped with a list of different new sheets, almost like an obsessive habit of finding the right amount of ingredients to bake a most marvellous cake. Fortunately for his stringent selection of the girls he brings home, they were fixed personality types that he fancied, and on these occasions, he repeated

the same type of sheets, while the subtle motifs could change according to his preferences.

He loved tomboys. Their callous nature and feminine masculinity are reflected in baby pink sheets with motifs of cartoon-style elephants on a stand at a circus show. They tended to smell like baby powder and are soft and succulent inside. He found their androgyny particularly charming, but it was equally challenging for him to take tomboys home with him. They tended to be a little quirky, too self-assured and definitely more difficult to coax into bed. Of his sexual conquests in the recent years, he'd only taken three of them, separately of course.

For a complete meal of the visual and sensory, he used fresh sheets with mushroom motifs in psychedelic colours. These he used for the girls that he couldn't quite place in a fixed category but of whom he was really fond of. That set up never fails to get him in the mood. The right sheets always heightened his sexual pleasure as well as the post coital nap. Occasionally he dabbled in the wild foxy types, lain upon safari print sheets to further enhance the experience of the animalistic rituals. They tended to be rough, loud and expansive. That however, became a little too routine for his liking as these women tended to be the easiest to pick up and it was losing its appeal. Like all men, he loved challenges. While most men shied away from difficult preys, he took the initiative to approach the subject subtly, diligently studying their behavior and body language before he leapt.

His best collections were of passive tender love for girls who smelt sweet, salty or plain odd. Sweet girls were served up to him on sheets with motifs of cakes and cream, while the salty ones reminded him of his childhood memories by the beach. For that, he had sheets with motifs of spades, buckets, sand and starfish in shades of blues and yellows that took him down memory lane. Girls with the odd scent that he couldn't put a tab to were laid upon sheets with cheese motifs. As he devoured them, he thought about the corresponding cheeses to their scents. So far, he's encountered a great variety, a splendid way to wrap up the evening, almost like traveling the world over to taste the authentic cuisine of mysterious places.

Then he met her. She was the embodiment of sheets; her multifaceted personality was a reflection of all the women he's ever been intimate with and her colourful demeanour took the place of his sheets. She smelt different each time, every other day. It was an extraordinary olfactory experience. He was absorbed into a wheel of regression, where he no longer had absolute control over how to wrap up the day. He had found the perfect set of sheets and would never have to get them changed for the rest of his life. Of course, he had to make major adjustments on his part; his life, his habits and his sheets.

They dated for some weeks, but the more time they spent together, the more he was certain that she was perfect for him. Before long, he invited her to move in with him as she was already spending most nights at his place. He was careful not to appear too fussy about the sheets to

distress her in anyway, but sometimes it made him very uncomfortable when he didn't have sufficient time to change the sheets to the corresponding moment and scent. Some girls that he grew very fond of had left him because of this habit and this time, he really didn't want to ruin what he had built up with her.

As she took the progressive step of moving in, she made herself at home, rearranging the furniture, repainting the house and unpacking her belongings- only to find out more about his hidden secrets.

"What's with you and all these assorted sheets? It certainly spoils the composition of your home... all these jarring colours and tones. You're not a little boy anymore! I'm sure you can sleep on normal white sheets like an adult!" her impatience coming through as she found his vast collection of sheets, vacuumed packed, neatly lining his walk in wardrobe. It seemed that she took it all in very calmly without reacting adversely to it.

"Who gave you the right to go through my things! Maybe it didn't occur to you to ask, but I'd really appreciate if you did the next time!" he retorted nervously.

"My goodness! And they are packed in order? I feel like I'm going through the drawers in the morgue. Taking a walk through the remnants of other people; people with a past, with an extensive history that I don't know about! You are sick! You're really sick in the head!" as she lashed about the plastic vacuum packs bordering on hysterics.

She remained cool and allowed him to explain the situation. She was never judgmental and he tried as best as he could to salvage the situation.

"Well sweetie, people have hobbies regardless of age. Some people collect cars, others collect stamps, and I collect sheets. I don't think there is anything wrong with that." He explained defensively.

"Look I don't think we should get into an argument over this and if it bothers you so much, I'll try to change, ok? Change takes time and you'd have to be patient with me... please, honey."

She liked her sheets white and usually slept without pillows. To her, a bed was just a bed, a place for rest, for having sex and in times of boredom, it doubled up as a trampoline. And she didn't like pillows because people forge a bond with pillows and she didn't want to ever be reliant on finding the pillow with the right curvature for a sound night's sleep. In her true Buddhist nature, she was detached from everything material and could not understand the physical attachment others could have with inanimate objects.

In fact, on days when she couldn't be bothered, she slept without sheets. White was her favourite colour. She hated colours and never felt the need to make a statement with vibrant hues because her personality spoke for itself. Like an artist's palette, she could be any colour she

wanted to be, and any scent she chose to be. She weaned him off his obsession by throwing out his disturbing collections of sexual artifacts and forced him to sleep without sheets.

"I don't know how long this is going to take, but I just keep having this feeling that you're not making an effort and you're taking it for granted that I'm going to give in to you in a matter of time. Because that isn't going to happen. So, it might be wise for you to get that into your fetish laden head to stop all this crazy nonsense."

He loved her immensely. For her, he made a resolution to change and compromise. This woman was perfect. She was his sheet. Occasionally, he slashed his arms from frustration and lolled about in the clean sheets reminiscing over vegetable prints from play school during art class, to mark his emotions. He couldn't live with the thought of daily white sheets and he needed in some way to leave a mark or print that would reflect the mood of the day. While he tried to curb his obsession with sheets, he came up with the best idea to remain in close proximity to them. Gathering his excess sheets of different themes, he brought them to the tailor's and had them made into pyjamas to enhance the experiences of the different nights he felt at the end of the day. However, he didn't want a repetition of the same sheets, so he requested for the tailor to embroider on the arm of the right sleeves a small bed motif, in different scales of sizes; the larger the bed motif, the bigger was his sexual appetite, the better the sexual experience.

The tailor was amused by the strange requests and had initially refused to do as he asked, but he paid four fold the price for each pajama set he wanted made. The tailor relented and agreed to have the clothes made in a week although he was puzzled by the urgency and pressure. A dozen sets of new pyjamas. So happy and proud of his ingenious idea, he left behind the collection receipt in his haste to get home and assume his role as the dutiful boyfriend who had recovered from his obsessive-compulsive disorder.

Little did he know that the receipt was to reach him in the post the next day, before he could hide it from his loved one. He couldn't explain the exorbitant bill from the tailor's for a dozen sets of pyjamas. And he recognized that look of grave disappointment on her face.

Disappointment. That would be the worst emotion that anyone had to deal with. It was alright if someone was angry, since that intense emotion tended to pass. But disappointment was different. It spelt so much more; it ate at one's conscience. And it was hard to ease the situation as disappointment lingered like parasite.

"I can't believe what you've just did. You are completely obsessed and this is not normal. It's not healthy. You are what you are and you don't need silly sheets to define moments of the days!" as she looked at the costly collection receipt from the tailor's in disbelief.

Old habits die hard, but she was determined to have them crushed at the core. She had exhausted all means of forcing him to kick the habit, but she wasn't prepared to live with his disturbing habits. She resolved to impose the change in their most intimate moments.

As a prelude to making love every night, she ripped off his pyjamas and destroyed them, convincing him to sleep naked, pure and untainted as a baby. He gradually relented because it was a different sort of routine. And for the first time in his sexual encounters, he didn't feel the need to take control.