

To Dream of Tigers

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The streetlights turned the snow into diamonds. Gloria stared out the window at the sparkling white, feeling like the luckiest girl in the world. For two days, a rare blizzard had assaulted the Midwest. Plummeting temperatures followed. A foot of precipitation. Record-setting, single digit lows. The conditions were perfect.

I hope I dream of tigers. The thought fled through her mind and then loped off across the frozen landscape.

Gloria skipped to the closet and flung open the doors. The red ball gown beckoned from where it had hung in anticipation since being purchased last spring. The vivid scarlet would play perfect against the alabaster backdrop. She slipped the taffeta dress over her head and let it fall onto her freshly-showered skin. It felt cool against her paleness. After zipping up the bodice and fluffing the crinolines of the tea-length skirt, she retrieved a pair of stilettos in the same deep crimson and slid them onto her feet.

On the bedside table, a bottle of champagne was chilling in a sterling silver bucket filled with crushed ice. Next to it, a plethora of pills were arranged in neat rows. Gloria popped the cork allowing a plume of foam to escape. She poured a crystal flute full of the effervescent liquid, and then dropped onto the edge of the mattress. With great reverence, she picked up a single blue tablet.

In the movies, the actors always popped the entire handful of pills into their mouths all at once. It seemed so disrespectful. Gloria planned to relish the experience. So, she took them one by one, and washed each down with a sip of Krug.

After ingesting all thirty, she grabbed her laptop and, out of sheer habit, checked her Facebook invitations. As she perused the long list of events, a sudden sense of relief set in at not having to decide whether she was interested in going or not. Next, she navigated to her own page. 1863 friends. 226 followers. After a few moments of thought, she updated her status to two words-- cellophane wizard, no caps. Let people ponder. Gloria slammed the computer shut and gave it a haphazard toss across the covers.

Within an hour, the soporific effects of the bubbles and barbituates were beginning to take hold. Time for a change of scenery.

Gloria made her way to the door that led into the backyard, stepped outside, and teetered through the drifts to the Japanese maple he'd planted for her when they first moved in. Trying to disturb as little of the pristine powder as possible, she lay down in the snow. Despite the frigid conditions, a yawn escaped her lips. Then, a smile formed as she recalled what she'd read about hypothermia. *The ingestion of alcohol and drugs gives a false sense of warmth and increases the risk of death through several mechanisms.*

Nestled in the white, Gloria closed her eyes and drifted off to sleep...per-chance to dream of tigers.