*Self Made:* Eleanor Audition Side

ELEANOR

I knew *about* Ren before I actually *knew* Ren

I mean, she was the kinda person who like

Everybody in our class had heard of by October of freshman year

So I like, knew her name

And I’d definitely seen her around a bunch of times—

On a campus this small that’s kind of what happens—

And I was following her on Instagram.

I distinctly remember this one day in like December of our first year

When she posted a full body mirror selfie and captioned it “just fucked your sister”

.

And like

I noticed it and remembered it even though I didn’t really know her

And I definitely thought she was attractive but, I don’t think it started as like—

I mean, I’d never been into women before

So I just wasn’t thinking about it in those terms

.

Sophomore year, I was writing for the school newspaper

Arts and Entertainment

So I was sent to review the Theatre Department’s Fall Play

I went in expecting like a 42nd Street or Hello Dolly

The kinda shit that my high school used to put up but it ended up being this

Experimental movement-based rendition of Virginia Woolf’s *Orlando*

Ren played Orlando

And by the time act one ended, I was just like

Holy shit

Like there was this scene at the end of the act where Orlando woke up after centuries of being asleep

And Ren stood up and walked forward and looked over the top of my head and

I felt something like the earth in my stomach, moving on its axis or

Holding itself up

.

I interviewed Ren after the show

For the article

And was

a) trying *so* hard to sound smart in front of her and

b) suddenly acutely aware of like

Every blemish on my body

But she was just so

There

Like it all came easily to her, the conversation, the jokes, the answers to my questions

I remember thinking that I wanted her mind

Not to have it myself but like

To hold it in my hands or

To paw through it until I’d seen every part of it

.

We talked for four hours backstage, until two in the morning

I had no idea what to make of it

I wasn’t calling myself anything at that point

And even later, when I knew for sure that I was *into* her,

It felt like that had more to do with her than it did with me.