

HAZEL EYES

Lily Langstaff

I don't have a favorite color. It used to change all the time, and every time someone asked the most boring question on the planet, I was stumped with my answer. I just didn't know. And people have good reasons for their favorite colors. My favorite person's favorite color is green because it's his dad's favorite color. People that like pastel colors like them because they're soft and cozy. I've never met a baby-blue person without the reason that it simply reminded them of the sky's soft edges. So eventually, after years of lame ice-breakers and Buzzfeed quizzes, I just gave up. I don't have a favorite color.

For so long, though, I had a least favorite color.

Brown was the stench of cow manure. It was squirrels pelting acorns at your head. I spent years stacking box dyes on brunette locks, thinking that there was nothing good in brown. It was mud on white Chucks and dying houseplants. Nobody's favorite color is brown, I thought, because there was no reason to like it. Coffee was a bitter, acquired taste and pennies are pretty much worthless. I ran away from shades of copper and cedar like there was a rabid dog behind me.

And then I met Hazel Eyes.

He's like lightning in human form. Electrifying. Before him, I never noticed how brown eyes look in sunlight. They're two pools of warm honey, feeling weirdly like home. Brown turned into earthy tones of healing. It's the feeling of summer melting into fall and fall melting into winter. It was the Garden of Eden of my Genesis, laden with soil in shades of umber and hickory. I went from raking bitten nails up and down my forearms in failing attempts to ground myself to toying with walnut curls. The way they wrapped around my finger and always sprung into a different place with the same shape was mesmerizing.

The changes were subtle, creeping up on me. I went to Kroger for milk and left with a bottle of tawny nail polish. I tried a sip of his coffee on our first Waffle House night. It was bitter, but not bad. I started toasting my bread for a little bit longer. I took the long way into town to walk past more natural scenes. Yeah, the *dirt*. I pocketed acorns and talked to squirrels. My Pinterest

boards slowly incorporated more of the color, from taupe jackets to bronze jewelry. I scribbled down biology notes with a brown Crayola Super Tip. I turned into a total sucker.

It started slowly and then it got *worse*. I began constantly searching for khaki shorts and frizzy hair. I constantly wanted to crawl inside his skin and live in there with him.

It was a total accident, how it all happened, but my world shifted to hues of mahogany and chocolate and it was like seeing for the first time.

Hazel Eyes makes brown look like God's favorite color.

I always found it ironic when he complimented the blue of my eyes. It's like this: blue eyes will always be there. They will always be in a Nicholas Sparks novel with some perfect blue-eyed blondie. Blue is Lon Hammond in *The Notebook*. Brown is Noah.

Everything about Hazel Eyes is comforting in the same way that color is.

He laughed when he found out I didn't have a favorite color. It was one of the first times we talked. He told me I was an enigma. I lied. I did have a favorite color. From the day I met him, I had a favorite color. △



A Look into Indian Culture

Aastha Banga

Acrylic, charcoal