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Nick Barrett

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Nick Barrett

CAVIA: VIOLET

He knew nothing of her but particulars.

She liked the green pellets better than the brown, preferred shredded newspaper to the asphyxiating incense of fresh cedar. She shunned the “Pig Ball,” and covered her squeaky miles slowly and only in the blunt hours of night, fearful of the model planes that dangled from the ceiling like birds of prey.

Stocky, short-legged, short-eared and tailless, it is believed her kind dates from the middle Miocene, domesticated by the pre-Incans of Peru. The Abyssinian variety—the Rude Boys of the species, with their wild, anarchistic hair—is best suited for experimentation. Angoras evidently taste good. She was an English and had the manners and name to prove it.

Once, he tried to tell a girlfriend about Violet’s death, so that he might better explain his love for her, but it seemed too precious: the black, crepe-paper glued to the inside of a shoe box, the Popsicle-stick cross, the feral perfume he wore proudly on a shirt that remained unwashed for days.

Now, he can hardly believe how easy it is, the way he kneels down and with a hand-shovel just buries it.