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## Brevity

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It was always Moons Over My Hammy Two eggs over two hams over two biscuits smothered in country gravy at the local Denny's was a **post-breakup tradition** for Miss Marianne Melissa Maybelline. Marianne Maybelline usually didn't smoke, but within the tradition, after every breakup, each more **tumultuous** than the first, she would lounge for hours upon hours over a midnight breakfast, swooning in a Camel cumulus, inhaling cigarette after cigarette [giving the food just a dash of ash], sobbing out bits and pieces of "Come on Eileen" while tugging on brown, heavy locks and humming to the collaboration of Denny's muzak, and dwelling on the hopelessness of her romantic life.

When she turned sixteen, Marianne Maybelline decided to make an organized effort to date as many men as possible wherein she would find that perfect mate, her cannibal lover. She left it up to **fate**; it was inevitable. But, now, as she was rocketing towards thirty-one, she doubted her idealism. She had the uncanny ability to encounter the most bizarre of people, those who laughed in the face of social morals and values.

It started out as small things, but then progressively got worse. **Fate.**

Edward, the doctor from New Hampshire, was too **conceited**. Jamison Lynch from Georgia was **racist**. Scott Amillion ended up being married with five kids. Carlton came out of the closet, went back in, and then took up nude Celtic dancing. Harold was too dull, and Peter's feet smelled horrible. Marcos Allegro de LasCasas del Sol peddled various drugs and is presently serving sixteen years. Joe Jimmy Bob James had a fetish for snakes. Kevin Chameleon left for another woman, while Martian MacDoogle, Benny, and Brock [all brothers, by-the-way] had blizzard dandruff. The list was more extensive than this, but I think you get the picture.

Marianne Melissa Maybelline did have a certain obscurity of her own. She had another tradition of collecting little memorabilia from her list of lost, loser lovers. As the relationship was making a beeline for Splitsville, Marianne would rummage through the partner's belongings and take something that represented him. She had a rickety, six-tiered encasement adornment above her bed, wherein she erected a **monument, a definitive work of art**, above which a banner read IN MEMORY OF LOVE, and filled it with spoils of her romantic crusades. From Edward, she had an anal probe, and from Jamison, his sacred "Kill Whitey" knit sweater handknitted with love by Mama Lynch. From Scott she stole a wedding ring, hoping to cause some trouble for her time. She had Carlton's plaid nipple tassels, Harold's favorite baby blue bowling ball "Betty Blue", a pair of Peter's sandals, and Joe Jimmy Bob James' prize winning Annie, dead and stuffed in a see-through box. She kept a kilo of Marcos' finest hash, which she reserved for monetary crises, and, from Kevin, the **two-sizes-too-big**-to-be-her's brazier she came across in his belongings. From Martian, Benny, and Brock, she had a bottle of Head and Shoulders and also a bottle of whiskey which she would ritually down in order to overcome the disgust of the scapular dust. Miss Marianne also had pounds of dead flowers, a trophy or two, a police badge, an empty fishbowl, a toupee, many a diaphragm, and an assortment of crusty toothbrushes.

As new men would come over, she would restrict sex to only her room and **upside down** on her bed, so with the progression of the inevitable squish and squiggle she could marvel at her shelf and decide how and where her newest items should be arranged.

And then one day she met a man named Claude. He was a very decent gentleman; medium-height, devoid of facial hair (which Miss Marianne Maybelline loved), had an iodine tan, a humble smile, a twinge of a French accent [which was probably just a gimmick], and and loads of money in the bank. He had no little “discrepancies” and actually seemed to love Marianne. She, however, was just focusing on the negative. She figured he must have problems somewhere; **it was only a matter of finding them.**

But as the relationship wore on, he still seemed **sincere, gen-u-wine.** He never stayed the night and would tuck miss Marianne Maybelline in her bed overnight, **just like a daddy**, and tell her how much he loved her and how he would be here [where? there] for her forever and give little kisses and quietly let himself out. She loved it. And furthermore, she decided she loved **him.** She was beside herself. She was ecstatic and immaculate. She had finally fulfilled her life’s only dream, and was now living **it.**

One morning she awoke to a little, velvet, black box peering at her from her nightstand, with a little note attached’ “To love”. Marianne Maybelline was so excited she bolted up in her bed, grabbed the little box, opened it exposing a diamond ring. She clasped it tight in her hands and kissed it, then pitched it up in the air, like someone might a lucky penny. The ring went higher than Miss Marianne Melissa Maybelline had intended, clinked the top shelf of her monument, and then bounced back to her hands.

“Whew.” She smiled. But **the ring proved to be the straw that broke the camel’s back, for the shelves cracked all the way**

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**the middle** due to centrifugal force, and the entire thing in its full monstrosity, the rings and probes, the tassels and sweaters, the toupees and the toothbrushes, and the serpents and dope, all heaped upon her, locking her in the bed, the crumbled shelving affixing the body to the bedframe like a bug under the fly-swatter, and “Betty Blue” clocking her over the head, rendering her dead. The **IN MEMORY OF LOVE** banner drifted down over her body and covered her like a mortician’s sheet, and there she remained, under a confetti of withered flowers and contraceptives, for poor Claude to find his beloved gone, departed. **Fate.**