

He sat under a bush and watched the rain drip off the leaves. Rain or sweat, the results were the same. He pulled his wet shirt away from his body then put the last piece of his Congo Bar into his mouth. You could not chew the chocolate engineered to withstand temperatures up to 140 Fahrenheit. As the bitter, chalky substance slowly dissolved in his mouth, he closed his eyes and listened to the rain.

He tried to remember the best chocolate he had ever tasted and thought of a chocolate cookie he hadn't seen for years. Two chocolate cookies with a rich chocolate cream between them. Not the overwhelming sweetness of an Oreo. More of a dark chocolate taste from the days before dark chocolate was the cure for all ills.

The rain intensified. The leaves no longer kept the rain out. He could sense a pool of water forming around his feet. He decided to keep his eyes closed and imagined himself in a dry bed, reading and eating the chocolate cookies. With her. In her wacky apartment in the attic, where the bathroom was hidden in a tiny alcove off the steps.

"Where is the bathroom?" she would say to new guests as she encouraged them to wander around, searching.

The apartment kitchen was uncomplicated. It usually contained two cans of Campbells tomato soup, cheese, Triscuits, and the chocolate cookies. He couldn't remember them ever eating the soup. He didn't care that she wasn't a good cook.

Being so close to the roof, you could hear the rain clearly in her apartment. On sunny days, you could feel the heat. He remembered hot summer days, watching her lie naked on the bed in front of the window fan. Reading, cookies, and sex. He tried to remember if there were crumbs in the bed. It was 4 years ago. Which did he remember best: the taste of the cookies or the taste of the sex?

Deep in thought, he didn't hear the steps behind him and startled at the voice.

"Hey sleeping beauty. You trying to get yourself killed? Captain says it's time to move out."

He picked up his rifle and followed. He could feel the water squishing between his toes.