

“Do you ever drink anything?”

“Of course. Humans can only go three days without water before they die.”

“I mean alcohol.”

“Not much. I may drink a beer occasionally during football season but I never acquired the taste. Plus, I see the damage it does every day.”

“I’m a wino. Guess you figured that out by now.”

“‘Go then and eat your bread in happiness and drink your wine with a cheerful heart’.”

“Shakespeare?”

“Ecclesiastes, the Hebrew Bible.”

“Are you religious?”

“No, I just like trivia.”

“You are full of it.”

“Yes I am.”

“I drink every day. Is that scary?”

“How much do you drink?”

“Most of the time I drink one four ounce glass. Some days I drink two.”

“The rule of thumb is five ounces a day for women.”

“Okay. I’m safe probably seventy percent of the time.”

“So two days a week you’re a lush.”

“Makes sense. Usually Friday and Saturday. What does that tell you?”

“You need a hobby.”

“I have a hobby.”

“What’s that?”

“I drink wine.”

\*\*\*\*\*

“Hard day at work?”

“No. Just loud.”

“The natives got restless?”

“Trauma is always loud. If it was a color it would be dayglo orange with purple stripes. If it was a person it would be a game show host.”

“If it was clothing it would be a game show host’s outfit.”

“Exactly. Like a seventies’ Pontiac with a bad muffler.”

“The laugh track of a bad sitcom.”

“Nice one, Trix.”

“*Merci, mon amour.*”

“Sometimes the greater the pain, the louder the discontent.”

“I can imagine.”

“What’s so...well, I hate to use the word tragic...discouraging about it is that the majority of the time these are acquired conditions—normal, healthy people who got in over their heads. Literally, I guess.”

“Are you going to be okay?”

“Oh, sure. Days like today aren’t unusual. At least once a week there’s a major malfunction somewhere. Part of the job.”

“I don’t know how you cope.”

“Believe it or not, I try to feel it.”

“Why?”

“Because it will only change me if I become so numb to it it seems normal.”

“You are a gentle soul, Honey.”

“I’ve grown a thick skin. Had to. Still have to decompress or I’d go nuts.”

“Well, we’re all snuggly in your bed, soft music in the background, a candle on the dresser, with nearly every inch of our skin in contact. I’d say that’s a pretty good way to decompress.”

“No, Baby. That’s Eden.”

“I love you, Brad.”

“I love you, too.”

“Are you sure?”

“Positive.”

“Do you think it’s too quick?”

“Yes.”

“I know. Barely five weeks... Well, we can’t take it back.”

“I don’t want to.”

“Is it slowly but surely or full steam ahead?”

“How about steady on.”

“Yeah. That’s good.”

“You make it easy.”

“Do I?”

“Lovely in every way.”

“You have such a gentle touch.”

“Your skin is so soft. I get lost in it.”

“...How many times do you think we’ve made love?”

“Fourteen.”

“You kept count?”

“So far. Each one memorable.”

“I guess you really do love me.”

“I’m just getting started, Baby.”

“I’m concerned about you and the baby. Something screws with my family you’ll see just how upset I can get.”

“That’s better.”

“I think I’ll order HBO and Showtime and some of those things.”

“Don’t.”

“Why not?”

“It would mean you’re giving up.”

“... You’ve got to rest. You know that. You shouldn’t even be walking as much as you do.”

“Yeah, yeah.”

“How ‘bout I warm some oil in the microwave and give you a full-body massage.”

“I’d rather you hold me and kiss me like you mean it.”

“That tends to lead to trouble.”

“Not if we keep our clothes on.”

“I don’t have to go back in today. Maybe we can watch a movie or something.”

“I think I could sleep a little.”

“Well, you should do that.”

“With you.”

“If that’s what you want.”

“That’s what I want.”

“Close or apart?”

“Close first. Apart if I manage to fall asleep.”

“Okay.”

“Will you touch me like I’m still pretty?”

“You *are* still pretty. You’ve just got a big belly.”

“And a big ass and fat thighs and bigger boobs, which I didn’t need. And if you say ‘more to love’ I’ll cut your dick off.”

“I wasn’t going to say that.”

“...What were you going to say?”

“Your body is my safe place...Aw, don’t cry. Please. Are you having a hormone rush or are you upset?”

“I’m in love. What do you expect?”

“That’s nice.”

“He’s too young to get married.”

“He’s twenty-four. They’ve known each other for five years.”

“You were thirty-one when we got together.”

“I was a late bloomer. He isn’t.”

“He just started his career.”

“He’s teaching AP Calculus. He knows his stuff. Like his mama.”

“He’s still too young.”

“So you say.”

“You should be his best man.”

“He wanted his fraternity bros to be in the wedding.”

“Still should’ve.”

“You look beautiful in your dress.”

“Thank you. I feel like a mummy.”

“You’re mother of the groom. It’s your wedding, too.”

“It’s Sophie’s mom’s show.”

“Well, weddings are always for the bride’s mother.”

“Do I look that old?”

“No, and don’t be catty.”

“Pretty soon I’ll be as old as you.”

“Funny. Your hair looks nice.”

“The stylist does the color.”

“You should let it go gray. It’s becoming.”

“Well, that’s bullshit.”

“Please. Not in church.”

“Why would you want a gray-haired old lady?”

“I’m not going there with you.”

“Don’t you want me to look pretty?”

“You would look pretty with gray hair.”

“You think I’m trying to hold onto my youth?”

“I said I’m not going there.”

“You really think I’m still pretty?”

“Shhh.”

“What do you think about when we have sex?”

“Good Lord, Trixie. The wedding’s about to start.”

“You’re avoiding the question.”

“You. I think about you.”

“How I am or how I was.”

“It’s the same to me.”

“Oh. That’s sweet.”

“Thanks.”

“He’s too young to get married but doesn’t he look handsome in his tux?”