

feel the cold water rushing around my ankles, my feet pressing into the tiny stone bed that holds up the stream. Silver guppies nosing their heads into my calves . . .

MARY SIDE 1

Quiet for a moment. We hear suburban wind, perhaps a car passing on another street. Perhaps some teenagers laughing, some kids in the house across the street, listening to music in their room.

SHARON Were you a Girl Scout?

MARY Yes.

SHARON I thought so.

start

MARY leans over, or squats down, into the bushes, and pukes. And pukes. She leans back up, wiping her mouth.

MARY Oh god, my head. I think I need some water.

SHARON Mary, have you ever thought about getting some help?

MARY Some help with what?

SHARON With your drinking problem.

MARY looks at SHARON like she is an alien from another planet.

MARY I thought I could just come to you and talk.

SHARON You can, you did.

MARY Because you cried at my house and—

SHARON (*simultaneously*) I know.

MARY I thought that was awesome. That you felt comfortable enough to do that . . . it made me feel like a good host that you felt okay letting go. In that way—

SHARON You are a good host. But you can be a great host and still have a drinking problem.

MARY gets loud. Too loud for this neighborhood. She no longer quiets her curse words.

MARY You know what? FUCK YOU. (*she stands up and stumbles a little*) I come over here asking for HELP and what is the FIRST THING YOU FUCKING DO? Accuse me of being a fucking DRUNK? I MEAN IF THAT IS NOT THE BLACK CALLING THE KETTLE POT. God. My husband is offering the two of you his services FOR FREE. He wouldn't even blink to ask for payment. Wouldn't even BLINK. And look at you. This fucking yard.

BEN walks up. He is obviously not drunk. He is stone-cold sober, and it takes MARY a little while to see him.

MARY There's not even a single FERN. You've made no effort.

SHARON Well, we just moved in—

MARY (*MARY grabs onto SHARON*) I was hiding behind our bushes. I snuck out the door to get some air. I JUST NEEDED SOME AIR. I needed to get out of the house. And he wouldn't let me. He kept locking the door on me. And so when the commercial came on, I snuck out the front door and just squatted there behind the bushes. He called and called. My toes were in the mulch, I was breathing, I was not answering.

Because he doesn't like me, nobody likes me, and I just wanted to breathe.

And then I thought, "Sharon likes me. She cried in my yard."

end

MARY hugs SHARON, and pukes over SHARON's shoulder. SHARON has to kind of brush it off her back and the back of her arm. BEN catches MARY. KENNY opens the door, half asleep, in his boxers. MARY notices it's BEN.

MARY GET AWAY FROM ME! GET HIM AWAY!

BEN pulls MARY to him and speaks to her softly in her ear. She's listening. She's saying these words as he whispers in her ear.

MARY Uh-huh. Uh-huh. My head is pounding. It's like there's cats inside. I know. I know I'm a good person. I know, Tootsie-Too. Yes. Yes. I want to go home. I want to get in the tub. Ow, my foot.

MARY is quiet in BEN's arms. BEN looks at SHARON and KENNY. Everyone except MARY sees someone approaching. BEN tries to hold MARY up a little better. We hear the sound of footsteps jogging by. All at once BEN, SHARON, and KENNY give a quick wave, as if they are waving back to someone.

BEN That's her?

SHARON That's her. How dumb is that, jogging at eleven at night.

KENNY And she'll be back at it at six-thirty.

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SHARON Show-off.

KENNY I really need to start exercising again.

Pause for a quick moment as they watch her go.

BEN I'm really—

SHARON and KENNY No, really, it's okay really.

BEN We'll buy you a new shirt—

KENNY Don't worry, please—

SHARON We've been through this—

KENNY Remember?

BEN I'll see you tomorrow, Kenny.

KENNY One-thirty!

BEN starts to walk MARY home.

BEN Please don't worry about your yard—

MARY (her foot hurts as she walks) Ow. Ow.

BEN It's going to be a nice yard. I like that new plant.

BEN and MARY are almost to their house. SHARON speaks softly.

SHARON The funny thing is, it's fake.

SHARON and KENNY watch them go for a few seconds. A quick kiss, then they head back inside. Before the door closes—

Blackout.

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KENNY goes inside as MARY comes out. She has a very big plastic cup of vodka tonic. MARY goes to Ben, speaking with her voice a little hushed.

MARY SIDE 2

start

MARY Ben, there's nothing in there.

BEN What?

MARY They've lived here five weeks. And there is no furniture in there. Nothing. Except the coffee table we gave them and this one armchair with stuffing coming out of it. It looks like a dog ate it. And a tiny TV sitting on a cardboard box . . .

BEN Well, they said they had no furniture.

MARY Yes, but *no furniture*.

BEN They're starting from scratch.

MARY And I think there is a smell. Like a bad carpet smell. Like a sick carpet smell.

BEN Oh, come on.

MARY Even the bedroom—*(she takes a big gulp of vodka tonic)*

BEN You went in their bedroom?

MARY There's not even a bed. I mean, there is this mattress-looking thing, and some sheets hanging off it onto the floor, and that T.J.Maxx suit hanging like a carcass in the closet.

BEN You looked in the closet?

MARY I don't know it just makes me feel strange. I mean, who are we talking to?

BEN They're getting it together. I'm sure they have no credit cards, no nothing. I don't even know how he bought this lumber.

MARY They did buy curtains.

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BEN Only for the front, did you notice?

MARY Well. They're trying to be good neighbors, I guess.

BEN I don't know, I think they're great. And Kenny's got a good game plan now.

MARY No furniture, no clothes.

BEN Mary, will you just shut up about it? You're being judgmental. How much vodka is in there?

MARY It's not yours.

BEN I can smell it over here.

MARY It's just strange. I feel strange.

end

KENNY enters.

KENNY Ladies and gentlemen, drumroll please!

KENNY holds the door open. SHARON enters with a rusty cookie sheet with some snacks on it.

SHARON All right so you all the theme is white trash, because I'm trying to own up to what I am these days, ha-ha, and anyway the Cheetos are always the first things to go at a party, right? Even when they're sitting right next to the Brie. So, we've got Cheetos, saltines, a canned bean dip, and Cheez Whiz, and then I made Delta caviar—ha-ha no really, it's like anti-caviar, so we don't kill Kenny. It's got a can of corn, red peppers and yellow peppers, a can of black-eyed peas, and some Italian dressing—and salt. At least we can afford salt! Wait till you taste it!

BEN I have a weakness for the bean dip. *(he digs in)*

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