

AVERY. It sounds squishy. Look, just go get cleaned up and by the time we have some food I won't care about the stain anymore. Probably.

JACK. You're very sexy, Mrs. Perch.

AVERY. Right now I'm more disturbed than anything.

JACK. When I tell you that you're sexy, you're going to need to believe it. That's something you should know about me. I'm not gonna lie to you, not about that. Not about anything, but definitely not about that. Because you are always sexy. Oh, and I don't like sushi or dancing.

AVERY. Oh no, but I love to dance.

JACK. We'll figure it out.

*(He kisses her. There is a knock and LINDA enters without waiting and talks without really listening. She is in a skirt, a sharp jacket and she carries a champagne bottle. She might actually be nice, but it's hard to tell through all of the "acting nice.")*

LINDA. Knock, knock, good morning!

JACK. Uh...good morning?

LINDA. Linda. Linda Imelda. I work in guest services and I wanted to stop by and drop off this champagne. Congratulations. On the wedding. On being married. I hope I didn't wake you. Nope, just look at you all ready to tackle the day. Well mostly ready, she might be a little more ready than you. Oh, I know it's early, but I hate when they don't prepare the honeymoon suites in advance. Feels a bit like I have to do just about everything sometimes.

AVERY. That's so thoughtful, thank you.

JACK. Sure, [thanks.]

LINDA. [And you] must be Mr. and Mrs. Perch.

AVERY. It just sounds weird, doesn't it?

JACK. No.

LINDA. Oh, look, you have an amazing view from this room, don't you? Breathtaking. Between us, it's the best view in the place. It's almost hypnotic, with the sound and

the rushing water. Oh, but don't stare too long. That's my honeymoon advice. Well, keep a few secrets from each other so the mystery is still alive. That's my actual honeymoon advice. But also, don't stare too long at the falls. You'll start to see things; that's what I hear anyway. People see strange things when they look for too long.

AVERY. What kind of things?

LINDA. Ha! Better to get out there and walk around anyway, right? Who wants to be cooped up inside?

JACK. I should get dressed. Thanks for the champagne.

*(He kisses AVERY's cheek and disappears from the room.)*

LINDA. Aw, I love when we have newlyweds. It's so cute and inspiring. I was a newlywed once. Not so long ago. No, really, just a few years.

AVERY. Oh, that's wonderful.

LINDA. It's amazing how much can change in such a short period of time.

AVERY. Oh. Are you still married?

LINDA. Let's not talk about me, all of my silliness.

AVERY. Is that a "no?"

LINDA. Let's not talk about me and unhappy, awful things or lost dreams. All the things I could have been if not for the heart's folly.

AVERY. Wow.

LINDA. Yes. So how are you enjoying the room?

AVERY. Actually, we were going to ask about...no, it's all fine.

LINDA. Fine?

AVERY. Better than fine. Wonderful.

LINDA. You were going to say something else.

AVERY. It's really not important.

LINDA. Please, tell me. It's my job to make this experience unforgettable for you both, to start your life off together with panache. And perhaps somehow

vicariously experience the joy I should have had as a married woman before everything went sour so quickly. I take it all very seriously. I even brought champagne.

AVERY. I thought the champagne was from the hotel?

LINDA. It's from both of us.

AVERY. Okay. Well, it's really not a problem, but there's a stain of some kind on the carpet and it's a bit disconcerting.

LINDA. Oh no, that's inexcusable, and on your honeymoon. Where is it?

AVERY. Just over here. Underneath this chair. It's not hurting anything, but now that we know it's here, it's kind of difficult to ignore.

*(AVERY pulls the chair out of the way revealing the outline. As the stain is revealed, a quiet hissing or humming sneaks into the room. Again, it's almost like a bottle or soda being opened and slowly fades away. LINDA looks at it in disbelief. Then that turns into frustrated anger.)*

LINDA. You know, it's beyond me. Really. I scrubbed this stain myself until it was completely gone.

AVERY. Did you?

LINDA. So frustrating. I'll be back with some soapy water and an industrial strength cleaner or two to take care of it once and for all.

AVERY. Oh, no, you really don't have to [do that.]

LINDA. [Oh, no, I] absolutely do. In the meantime, I'd advise you not to touch.

AVERY. Why shouldn't I touch it?

LINDA. Clearly that's some stubborn grime. Enjoy the champagne.

*(LINDA exits with purpose. AVERY examines the stain. She bends over and touches it. The moment her fingers make contact, the lights shift and a chorus of mixed, overlapping, and hushed conversations fills the room. She pulls her hand away and it all stops immediately.)*

*(She looks around. She gingerly reaches out and tries again. The light shift. The chorus returns, as if someone just cracked the door to a secret party and the sound is escaping. She pulls her hand away and places it over her heart. For a moment, while her hand is there, we can hear her heart beating hard, excited in the silence. There's something to this. She lies down next to the stain on her side and places her hand on the area where the "hand" of the stain might be and closes her eyes.)*

*(The lights shift. The sound begins, hushed, but rises quickly to full volume and then even louder and then, just as quickly vanishes with an intense exhale as...)*

*(LINDA leads BEN into the room. He has an overnight bag. She is already talking, as if the pair had materialized from the overlapping sounds.)*

I have to say, in all the years I've worked here, this is one of the loveliest surprises.

BEN. I really appreciate it.

LINDA. No, no, I'm so glad I could be a part of it.

BEN. That's nice.

LINDA. And what anniversary is this?

BEN. It's our tenth. We planned this whole trip, but I had to work at the last minute. I've been so busy lately, not even busy, just consumed by other things.

LINDA. Consumed. What an evocative word.

BEN. I suppose it is. Anyway, she has no idea I made the time to actually show up here.

LINDA. She's going to be so surprised!

BEN. That's right.

LINDA. I love it. And thank goodness, because this is our honeymoon suite and it would be such a shame to stay in it alone, wouldn't it?