

Two Eggs, Over Easy

I kissed her shoulder, which was peeking out from the sheet. Her skin was light and speckled with red and brown freckles and birthmarks. She stirred slightly, but didn't wake up.

We walked next door to the restaurant and sat on the back porch that stretched out over the lake. The sun was high in the cloudless sky and it beamed off the water and we both kept our sunglasses on because the reflection was blinding. The waitress came over and poured water into the glasses on our table from a large glass pitcher that glistened with condensation.

Caitlin took a sip of the water and looked out at the lake. We hadn't said anything to each other since we left the room. The waitress came back over.

"I'll have oatmeal with cinnamon and a fruit cup."

"Okay," the server responded, her hands clasped behind her back. She looked at me.

"I'll have two eggs, bacon and wheat toast."

"Sure, how would you like your eggs?"

"Over easy. Oh, and can I have an orange juice as well?"

"No problem." She walked back into the main room of the restaurant.

Caitlin leaned back in her chair and stretched her legs out. She was wearing a blue loose skirt and a white tanktop. Her glasses, which she still wore, were tortoise shell Wayfarers. She looked at me. "I know my actions don't really support what I told you."

I smiled, "No, not really."

"I know." She leaned forward and put her arms on the table. "I was going to tell you at dinner last night, but then we just got started talking and drinking and, honestly, I forgot about it."

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“The funny thing is, is that I have been wanting to talk to you about all this as well,” I told her. The waitress walked by and I motioned to her. “Can I have a Bloody Mary please instead of the orange juice?”

“Sure.”

“I guess I’ll have a champagne,” Caitlin added.

“Okay,” the waitress responded to us and went inside the restaurant.

We both stared out into the water. The sun had shifted and was not as bright off the water as before and I took my sunglasses off, folded them and hung them from my shirt. I rubbed my eyes. “So, yeah, I did want to have a version of that conversation.”

“Yeah,” Catlin said to me in such a way that I couldn’t really tell if it was a question or a comment.

“Yeah,” I stated back to her. “But my thinking is a little different.”

“I know.”

We were the only people on the porch. I got up from the chair and walked to the part of the porch that stretched the furthest over the lake. The waitress brought out the drinks and I called out to her and she brought mine over to me. I took a long pull from the straw and noticed the strength of the drink and its spiciness, which I liked.

In the middle of the lake was a small boat, maybe 10 feet long or so. It had a single motor on the back of it. A lone man sat in the boat and he was holding a fishing pole and the line was cast in the lake. He had on a tan hat and it looked like it had lures hanging off of it, but I wasn’t sure. The pole jerked down in his hands and he cycled the reel. After a few moments, a fish broke the plane of the water and the man pulled it into the boat. I thought it was probably a trout, which was not surprising because they stock the lake with trout every spring.

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I took another long pull from the straw and walked back over to the table and sat down. The server brought out the food on a tray and set the plates down in front of us. I stared at the eggs. “So, yes, I did want to talk to you as well,” I said after the server had walked away. “Do you remember a few months ago when we had that conversation and I kept on talking about hoping that we would get together?”

“You mean after the first time we actually did?”

“Yeah.”

“I remember.”

“Well, I had been hoping for that and it did happen. And it has sort of, kind of kept on happening, sporadically and without planning.”

“I know.”

“Maybe hope is the wrong word. It was probably desire. Anyway, that doesn’t really matter, what matters is that the feeling I was having - that desire - it became something more over the past few months. And I never really brought it up because I value our friendship and our time together and I didn’t want to screw it up. I think that I also didn’t want to endanger the moments where we got to be with each other. A part of me worried that once I said it out loud that we would have to deal with whatever this was or is and I think I knew that this is how you felt and so it would stop. Even though I don’t want it to stop and I was fine with hanging out and spending time together and seeing, what, if anything, our thing could be.”

She had finished her champagne and motioned to the server for another one. The server nodded from the doorway. Caitlin leaned forward and put her hand on top of mine. “Why didn’t you tell me that this morning?”

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“Because you were doing all the talking.” I took another sip of the Bloody Mary and finished it. “And, I don’t know, I didn’t want to tell you that I wanted to be with you as you were telling me that you didn’t want to be with me.”

She had taken off her sunglasses and was looking at me. She had bright blue eyes, the kind that stood out across a room. “Why are you telling me this now then?”

“Because why not?” I said with a sad smile.

The server came over with the glass of champagne and I asked her for another Bloody Mary.

“But you agree with what I said this morning?”

“That this is over?”

“Yes, I’m sorry, I don’t want to hurt you, but we just can’t do this anymore.” She took her hand off of mine and sat back. “Anyway, we are good friends and maybe lonely and sort of just, I don’t know, justifying whatever this is to ourselves.”

I laughed unhappily. “I’m fine that this is over, but I think what you just said is bullshit.”

“I don’t.”

“I know and I respect you and I respect this friendship. I just want you to know that while I’m not sure if I’m ready to commit to anything, I did want to see what we could have if we actually tried to have something instead of finding each other when we’re drunk and using that as an easy excuse the next morning.” I sighed and took a sip from the new Bloody Mary that the server had just placed in front of me. Neither of us had taken a bite yet.

She waited a couple of moments before she responded. “I want you know that I don’t regret anything that has happened or that was done. And the fact that you respect my feelings

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about this makes me know that we are actually friends, which hasn't always been the case in other situations I've been in."

"Good. I want you to feel safe and comfortable with me. When my feelings for you were growing and I wanted to be with you more and more I tried very hard to never let it get in the way of our friendship."

"I know."

"And so now I will go back to doing that again. Honestly, I probably would have never told you how much I wanted to be with you anyway so this is good in a way because now you know." I grabbed the fork and cut into the eggs with the side of it, spilling out the yolks onto the plate. I looked back up at her. "I guess that now I will take these feelings and push them back down again until they fade away."