

An Apology

Fingers fluttering. Feet pacing.

Anxious, I am anxious. This is normal though, right? How long has it been? Too soon to check. Stop being so flustered. Calm down. Jesus.

My hands still speckled with drips. I wash them. I sing the alphabet, 30 seconds long, that's what teachers taught in elementary school.

Only a little bit longer. It sits on the edge of the sink. I sit on the bathtub ledge. I stand. It's time.

I squeeze my eyes shut and pick it up. My eyes well up, and I laugh. I am already in love.

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My hand clutches his across the kitchen table, our kitchen table. His hand wriggles. He stays quiet.

"I know this is sooner than planned but that's okay, we can rush the engagement and the wedding." The chair's legs moan against the wood floor as he stands.

"Dianne." He sighs. I know. He's already said no.

"Don't." I stand up, cross my arms. It was too early. "I'll do it."

"D."

"Good thing I didn't tell my parents."

Silence.

I walk to the bedroom door, ease it shut. I walk over to the bed, reach under the mattress, grab the pamphlets, stand up. I walk to the trashcan, release the pamphlets. I walk to the bed, reach for my pillow. I shove it in my face. I sob.

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3:55 AM, the neon clock reads, glowing on the ground. We hadn't bought a table yet, no dresser either; just a bed stands alone in our bedroom.

Four more hours. I roll over on my side, and my pillow squishes against my wet cheeks. Have I slept at all? He snores.

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He leans in and kisses me.

"I know I just messed up your lipstick, and you hate that, but I love you. So much." He waits for my reply. I disappoint, turning my face away and reaching for the doorknob. "Are you sure you don't need me to-"

"My sister's coming, I'll be fine."

"Okay, I love you D." He waits. I close the door behind me. I disappoint.

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The clock ticks loudly on the wall. How long do appointments take? Would it hurt me? Would it hurt it? I meant to research, but I hadn't. No time.

"Are you sure?" My sister shifts awkwardly in her seat. She hasn't been able to sit still. I haven't been able to move.

"Yes."

"Jesus, I was just asking."

"I know. I'm sorry."

Silence again. Another apology, that's what this has turned into. I notice the clock ticking loudly in the background. My fingers twitch. I sit on my hands.

"Dianne Goodison?"

We both stand up. She hugs me.

“You don’t have to do it.” Her whisper lingers in my ear.

I shake my head and walk to the door.

You don’t have to do it. But I do. I’m always too early.

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“I did it.” I stand in the doorway, coat on, arms stiff.

“I did it.”

“It was the right thing, honey.”

“I did it.”

“Dianne? Are you okay?”

“*I* did it.” My voice shakes. My head shakes. I shake. He steps forward.

“Dianne, it’s okay.” I close my eyes. A bloody taste fills my mouth. I did it, me. “Look, we did it, together.” His arms wrap around me, but they feel cold and distant. “We chose this together.”

“I am so sorry.”

I am already in love. I sob. He snores. I disappoint. I’m always too early.

“I am so sorry.”