

“Stop shouting at me! I told you why I am going,” Dan bellowed, throwing his hands in the air as he walked away from his wife. “There is no other woman!”

“It just seems like you are gone all the time, Dan.” Molly relaxed her shoulders and swirled the coffee in her cup, staring into its depths as she spoke.

“I asked you to go to this reunion with me; you didn’t want to.” He said in a sharp tone as he turned his back to her and continued packing.

“When you got the invitation, you said you didn’t want to go, what changed your mind?” Molly asked, sitting down on the window seat.

“My buddy Pete hasn’t called in over a month. Every time I call him, it goes straight to voicemail. A couple of days ago, when I called it said the voicemail was full and couldn’t accept new messages,” Dan said as he stopped frantically packing and sat on the bed, looking toward her.

“That’s odd; you guys used to talk every week.” Molly took slow breaths to calm herself as he explained.

“I’m hoping he will be at the reunion so I can find out what is going on with him,” Dan replied

She turned to look down at the street and let out a long sigh. “It would be good for us to spend time together. I’ll go.”

He hesitated, then hugged her. “Thank you. I wish you would reconsider going to a therapist.” He cringed when he said this, but Molly didn’t get angry, like every other time.

“No one thinks you’re crazy, but a therapist might be able to help you more than we can. And before you say it, I don’t mean with drugs,” Dan said.

“Good. Because I don’t want to take medications.”

“They help, Molly, I’ve researched it,” He held up his hands, palms out, as he saw Molly’s nostrils flare and her eyes narrow. “They aren’t crazy pills, they are a physical cure for physical problems. It’s not all in your head.”

“I’ll think about it. On the way to Madrassa.”

His eyes grew wide. “Wait, you mean it? Does this mean you changed your mind? You want to go?”

Molly nodded.

“Awesome!” Dan said as he fist-pumped in the air. He came over and threw his arms around her in a bear hug. “I’m sorry I’ve been gone so much, I was just trying to give you space.”

“It’s ok, I’ve been different, I know that, and I can’t have been easy to live with.”

Later, the sunlight burned Molly’s eyes as she stepped out of the house for the first time in four months. She put her suitcase in the trunk of Dan’s Mustang and closed it. Molly watched families strolling along the street; neighbors sitting on their stoops. She used to socialize. Now she dreaded hearing the question, “How’re you doing?”

She knew it meant having to lie because most folks didn’t want to hear the real answer. Molly couldn’t just “snap out” of the depression. She couldn’t manage to be around people; not even her best friend, Nicole.

Molly’s stomach twisted with guilt as she thought back to how indifferent she had been during Nicole’s last visit.

“Everybody misses you, girl,” Nicole had said as she sat on Molly’s bed. Nicole Castillo was a beautiful Latina with black hair and chestnut brown eyes. Molly and Nicole had been friends for years.

“Thanks. I should get over this loss, but I’m not as tough as you.” Molly said, picking at her nails and avoiding Nicole’s eyes.

“Yeah, in Queens, you have to be,” Nicole agreed.

“The doctor couldn’t tell me what went wrong; he just said these things happen sometimes,” Molly said.

Molly had been so excited about the pregnancy; She put law school on hold. Dan tried to talk her out of this, reminding Molly that she planned to be an adoption attorney. She discussed fostering kids in this home; it was spacious enough.

Nicole stayed with Molly and Dan for a few days and then returned to her grad studies at NYU Law school. After her friend left, Molly lay in bed, curled up in a ball most of the time. She alternated between sleeping too much and having terrible insomnia. Her mood was either sad or irritated. A dark pall, a cloud of depression fell over her father, mother, and Dan.

“I’m glad you are going with me, Kitten.” Dan’s voice broke into her melancholic thoughts, bringing her out of her memories and back to the present. “Let’s visit the carnival tonight. We can hit the road tomorrow morning,” he said.

“Carnival? Sweetie—I don’t know—all those people. I’m not ready for that.”

Molly sighed and wished he understood. He coped in distinct and different ways. He was throwing himself into work and taking care of her. Molly agreed to the road trip out of guilt for feeling like she had been such a burden these past few months—not that Dan admitted it, but she suspected it.

Molly also picked up on subtle clues that he was seeing another woman. He would go out in the evenings— “*just for a drive*,” he always said. She had zero interest in intimacy, so he had to be getting it somewhere.

She knew it meant nothing. Dan had been one to “hit it and quit it” in college. That was why she refused to date him at first. It made her angry, but she couldn’t confront him without proof.

Strangely, the anger gave her the resolve to live her life again.

He embraced her in a hug and stroked her hair. “If you don’t want to go, I understand.”

She had been neglecting her relationship with him. Maybe she was wrong about him cheating, and he kept his distance because he thought that was what she wanted. She knew they could use some time together outside of the house.

“Sure. It might be fun,” She mumbled against his shirt.

“Atta girl!”

Walking back into the house to pack, Molly stopped in front of the closed door of the nursery. The room had been Molly’s nursery when she was a baby. Taking a deep breath, she opened the door and stood looking around at everything in the room.. The Jenny Lind crib, the rocking chair. A changing table, and a bassinet, all the things she and Dan had bought, in anticipation. She could smell dust mingling with the paint—a dichotomy of past and present colliding.

This is part of a longer story; it’s a portion of the first chapter, and it’s mainly a conversation between a married couple, Dan and Molly, and Molly’s thoughts as she tries to overcome her depression after her miscarriage.

I’m most interested in the following:

1. Did you think that Molly’s depression was accurately described?
2. Was the dialogue too ‘on the nose’?
3. Was there too much ‘telling’?
4. Which sentences did you think were the most compelling? Were there any that you thought were ‘cringy’?

(1090) Thriller

[1162] Flood of Satisfaction critique

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