

*(Mandy smiles but feels the sting.
James gives Sarah a look: "Good work.")*

RICHARD *(Breaking the tension)*: Oh, I almost forgot . . . *Everyone* at the magazine sends their love. They wanted me to give you this. *(He hands Sarah a greeting card)*

SARAH: Oh!

(Richard takes the card out of its envelope for her to read.)

RICHARD: They passed it around for everybody to sign.

SARAH: Sweet.

RICHARD: *You* know how it is: something bad happens, people feel helpless; they want to *do* something.

SARAH: I know. Thank them for me.

RICHARD: I will.

MANDY: I prayed for you.

SARAH: Hm?

MANDY: Even though we'd never met? I prayed for you.

(A beat.)

SARAH: Huh! *(Meaning: "How do you like that!")*

MANDY: It's weird 'cause it's not like I believe in God or anything. 'Cause I don't. Not really. I don't think. But whenever I wish for something? Or want something really really bad? I talk to Him. Like when I was little and my grandpa got sick? I'd go to bed and lay there in the dark and say over and over, "Please God . . . please please let Grandpa get better." When we heard about *you*—Richard was so upset—

SARAH: Were you, Richard?

RICHARD: Uy. *(Meaning: "You have no idea how upset.")*

MANDY: In all the time we'd been together, I'd never *seen* him so upset.

SARAH: How long is that?

MANDY *(To Richard, corroborating)*: Three months?

RICHARD: Almost four.

MANDY *(Continuing)*: Anyway, he was so scared you'd be maimed or brain-damaged or something.

RICHARD: Hon . . . ?

MANDY: I found myself going, "Please God, Richard loves Sarah so much, *please* don't let her die."

(Richard squeezes Mandy's hand but she misreads his signal. Without missing a beat.)

Honey, you're hurting my hand.

RICHARD *(Changing topic; to Sarah)*: You look great, by the way.

SARAH: Yeah?

JAMES: Doesn't she?

SARAH: You like my *Phantom of the Opera* look?

RICHARD: No, you look wonderful.

MANDY: You really do!

SARAH *(To Richard)*: Is that why you haven't really looked at me since you got here?

RICHARD: What? I've been looking at you . . .

SARAH: Bullshit. Even now, you're looking somewhere north of my ear.

JAMES: Sarah . . . Really . . .

RICHARD *(Embarrassed)*: No I'm not.

MANDY: To tell you the truth? I expected much much worse.

SARAH: Gee. Thanks.

MANDY: I mean, you hear "scars" . . .

RICHARD *(Gently)*: Honey . . .

MANDY: You could always have, like, laser surgery or something. I mean, if they bother you.

SARAH *(Pointedly)*: They don't.

(A beat.)

MANDY: Oh. Okay. You mind if I uh . . . ? *(Referring to the bathroom)*

SARAH: Please.

MANDY (*Softly, to Richard*): Be right back.

(*Sarah and James watch Mandy and Richard kiss. Mandy goes to the bathroom. The remaining three sip coffee in silence.*)

RICHARD (*Jocularly*): Fuck you.

JAMES (*Feigned innocence*): What!

SARAH (*Laughing*): We didn't say anything!

RICHARD: You don't *have* to say anything. You guys are the worst poker faces ever.

SARAH: She's darling, Richard, really.

RICHARD: Don't give me that, you don't think she's "darling."

SARAH (*To James*): Don't you think so? Don't you think she's darling?

JAMES: Adorable.

RICHARD: I knew you'd give me shit for this . . .

JAMES: She is!

SARAH: I think it's sweet. You always wanted a little girl.

(*James is enjoying this.*)

RICHARD (*To Sarah*): I don't *care* you're on crutches, I will hurt you so bad . . .!

SARAH: Imagine my surprise: I wake up from *a coma* and Astrid is gone! Replaced by this . . . changeling! This sprite!

JAMES (*Remembering*): Yeah! Good old Astrid!

RICHARD: Oh, *now* she's "good old . . ."

JAMES: I *liked* her.

SARAH: So did I.

RICHARD: You *hated* Astrid!

SARAH: I did not!

JAMES: Shhh . . . She can hear you in there.

SARAH (*Lower*): I never said I *hated* her . . .

RICHARD: You called her the "attack-girlfriend"! Remember?

SARAH: Oh, yeah.

JAMES (*To Sarah*): We did, didn't we.

(*Sarah and James share a laugh.*)

RICHARD: You accused me of *siccing* her on you; said I used her to act out my hostility.

JAMES: It's all coming back to me now.

RICHARD: Astrid was brilliant. Okay? But you know what? *Fuck* brilliant. I've *done* brilliant. I'm sick of analyzing every goddamn thing to death. Deciding where to go out to eat was like . . . arbitration. Maybe I got off on it once, arguing about *everything*. Not anymore. Too much work. I want something *simple* for a change.

SARAH: Well, congratulations.

RICHARD: When have you ever approved of any relationship I've ever had? Huh? Never!

SARAH: This is not a "relationship," Richard, who are you kidding? You're *screwing* this *girl*!

JAMES: Shhh . . .!

RICHARD (*Lower*): What kind of man do you think I am? One of those creepy middle-aged guys who prey on women half their age? I *hate* guys like that! Just because she's young.

SARAH: I have no problem with her being young.

RICHARD: You were young once, too, you know . . . You were her age when I hired you as my intern! Younger, even!

SARAH: Not like *that*! . . .

JAMES: Shhh! . . .

SARAH (*Lower*): I was never like *that* . . . There's young and there's . . . embryonic. This girl is a lightweight. She's a lightweight, Richard.

RICHARD: Make fun all you want! There is nothing remotely cynical about her. She's guileless. Open.

JAMES: And very hot.