

F-STOP
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DRAFT 1.6

Cast of Characters

MARLA, thirtysomething

PERRY, same age, her husband and a photographer

(Late afternoon. A living room. MARLA, thirtysomething, holds a cardboard dog and looks out a window, which might be indicated by a hanging frame. A stool is the only significant furniture. PERRY, same age, circles with a camera. Each time he tries to take her picture, she turns away.)

MARLA

You were taking pictures of our toddler while he was drowning in the fountain.

PERRY

I didn't know he was drowning.

MARLA

He went underwater three times and turned blue.

PERRY

And what were you doing besides screaming?

MARLA

I was trying to get your attention. You kept bitching about how the picture was out of focus.

PERRY

It was.

MARLA

You let our son die.

PERRY

He didn't photograph well. Why do you think that was?

MARLA

You killed our son!

(Perry again tries to take Marla's picture.)

PERRY

Smile.

MARLA

What?

Say cheese. **PERRY**

No. **MARLA**

Not cheese then. Hickory smoked salmon. Richard Nixon. **PERRY**

You're changing the subject. **MARLA**

One photo, and we'll sit down and have a wonderful talk about it. **PERRY**

Our son is an "it?" **MARLA**

No. Of course he's not an "it." But the incident is an "it." **PERRY**

You're changing the subject again. Let's talk about our son. Let's talk about our son's death that you're responsible for. **MARLA**

One photo. **PERRY**

No. **MARLA**

One. **PERRY**

Not until you admit you're responsible— **MARLA**

For? **PERRY**

For F-Stop's death! Jesus Christ, how'd I let you talk me into naming our son F-Stop? **MARLA**

It has to do with light. A name about light. **PERRY**

MARLA

Say you're responsible. Admit it.

PERRY

OK—I'm responsible. Let's take the picture. Smile!

MARLA

What kind of admission is that?

PERRY

What do you mean? You say admit I'm responsible, I admit it. Let's not fight anymore.

MARLA

We'll fight until I get a sincere admission—

PERRY

That's ridiculous if my sincerity is entirely based on your subjective evaluation.

MARLA

I'll know if you're being sincere.

PERRY

I could just *take* your picture. Sooner or later, you wouldn't turn fast enough. I'd catch you.

MARLA

I won't be smiling.

PERRY

How do you know?

MARLA

I'll think miserable, Prozac-addiction inducing thoughts.

PERRY

I'll crack jokes.

MARLA

I'll visit cemeteries.

PERRY

"Marla with flowers." "Marla by a perpetual care headstone."

MARLA

I'll break your camera, rip up your film and burn the pieces.

PERRY

I want to do a series of you. I want to photograph professionally again. I want to photograph you. For everyone to see: this is my wife!

MARLA

What—while I'm falling in a grave or being buried alive or getting gang-raped by the sex-starved cemetery staff—

PERRY

We won't take them in a cemetery then. You're the one who wanted—

MARLA

Stop blathering. I don't actually expect to be raped by the cemetery staff. I doubt there are any rapists on the cemetery staff. I was just using it as an example of how bad things happen to people you photograph.

PERRY

I've been photographing you for years. Until . . .

MARLA

My son died.

PERRY

One time. One time a bad thing happened.

MARLA

I only had one son.

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