

House C & House D

A DELIGHTFUL QUARANTINE

27

~~Knox Memorial High School Class of 19\_\_.~~

BETHANY. Did you have to include the "Philander" part?

CLARK. (*Pointing to BETHANY.*) Miss Knox High. (*Pointing to himself.*) Mister Knox High. How's this for a convenient little class reunion?

SHIRLEY. Can I get you a Pepsi? (*ROY shakes his head.*) How about a Diet Pepsi?

ROY. (*Continuing to shake his head.*) I don't want anything in the Pepsi family, thank you.

BETHANY. I know where this is headed and I'm going to tell you this right now, Mr. Knox High: you put on the pneumatic brakes. Right here. Right now.

SHIRLEY. I hope you didn't think I was prying. Just now.

ROY. I know you weren't prying. I also know that you know there's something wrong between Bethany and me.

CLARK. Don't care to relieve the halcyon days of our youth?

BETHANY. There was nothing halcyonic about them.

SHIRLEY. I didn't know that you knew that I knew.

BETHANY. I dated you because you were the most popular boy in our class and you dated me because I was the most popular girl in our class. It was mandated. But it wasn't fun.

CLARK. Ever?

ROY. I thought you had to have known because Clark knows.

SHIRLEY. You're right. Clark *does* know.

BETHANY. I didn't love you, Clark. I didn't know what love was until I met Roy.

CLARK. I'm crushed.

BETHANY. Be crushed.

SHIRLEY. And he told me everything he knows. But he doesn't know much. And he doesn't now why.

ROY. He doesn't know why he doesn't know much or he doesn't know why Bethany and I aren't getting along?

SHIRLEY. He knows why he doesn't know much, because he knows only what you've chosen to tell him. What he doesn't know is why you and Bethany are having problems. Neither do I – obviously. All I know is that I've had the feeling that there was something wrong between the two of you for quite some time now.

ROY. What was the give-away?

SHIRLEY. I don't know, honey. When I see the two of you together there always seems to be tension. (*ROY nods.*) This, this underlying friction. Right under the surface. I can pick up on things like that. (*ROY nods again.*) Are you seeing a marriage counselor? (*ROY shakes his head.*) I think it would help. Clark and I saw someone for a while. He helped us work through Clark's anger toward my father for not giving him the money to quit the car dealership and open up that pancake restaurant. Daddy said nobody would eat at a place called Wigglin's. Things are better now. They'll be better between you and Bethany, honey, but you can't just sit back and hope that whatever's broken fixes itself.

BETHANY. Just stop looking at me like that.

CLARK. Like *what*?

BETHANY. Like you're figuring out some way to get your paws on me. If you put one paw on me – even a finger of one paw, Roy will hear about it and Roy will be very unhappy. Are we clear?

CLARK. Your eyes – they're just as pretty as they were

in high school.

BETHANY. Now how in Heaven's name do you remember what my eyes looked like in high school? The whole time we were together you never glanced above my neck.

CLARK. That was an unkind cut. What was I supposed to do – pretend that you weren't blessed by the God of Boobs?

BETHANY. *(After a sigh of frustration.)* I do not, for the life of me, know how Shirley puts up with you. And if you think that I am going to give even a millisecond's worth of thought to rekindling something that was never even warm to begin with –

CLARK. *Never warm? (HE laughs.)* Pigeon, you were so hot for me, it's a miracle we never got past second base.

BETHANY. I might have thought you were attractive, Clark. I mean, after all, you weren't voted Mr. Knox High for your grade point average. But I wasn't looking for shallowness and vanity in the man I planned to settle down with. I was looking for someone more like –

CLARK. Like Roy.

BETHANY. And guess what? I made the right choice. We have a wonderful marriage.

CLARK. I see. Well that's all very interesting.

ROY. Bethany won't see a marriage counselor. She won't go because she'll have to talk about "it."

SHIRLEY. What's "it", Roy?

ROY. I'm not quite sure I can –

SHIRLEY. You can tell me. I'm only here to listen.

ROY. You won't judge?

SHIRLEY. No honey, I'm not here to judge.

ROY. *Still I –*

SHIRLEY. You just take your time, honey. We have three whole days.

ROY. Three days. You're right. *(Looks around.)* I think I'm going to like it here.

SHIRLEY. And I think I'm going to like having you.

CLARK. Wonderful marriage, hmm?

BETHANY. Yes.

CLARK. That isn't what Roy tells me.

*(CLARK starts out. BETHANY follows.)*

BETHANY. What are you talking about? Clark?  
CLARK?

*(CLARK and BETHANY EXIT. ROY and SHIRLEY sit quietly for a moment, not speaking.)*

SHIRLEY. Remember how you used to carry my books for me in school? *(ROY nods.)* And you would kill spiders for me. I didn't like spiders. *(ROY nods.)* We went roller-skating. We were thirteen. I couldn't wait for "couples only."

*(ROY nods. Long beat.)*

ROY. I like to dress up in women's clothes.

*(SHIRLEY takes a step back. SHE requires a moment to compose herself.)*

~~SHIRLEY. Does Bethany know?~~

~~ROY. *(Nodding.)* She does now. I did keep it hidden from~~

*(end!)*