

You stand by the font, seething inside, repeating a mantra about rejecting Satan and all his works and all his empty promises, but you're not paying attention. You told her that you didn't want him there, that his presence would ruin the day for you, but she insisted. Look what he gave us, she told you, staring into the basinette lovingly. Our little miracle.

It hadn't been your idea to have another man father your child, but you'd gone along with it. It seemed like a joke at first. A way to lighten the mood after the trauma of two years of trying, of visiting fertility specialists, of being forced to accept that it was your fault that nothing was happening. She'd been kind, you'll give her that. She hadn't made you feel worthless or assigned blame. But she'd made one thing clear: she wasn't interested in adopting. She wanted to experience it all. The pregnancy. The morning sickness. The fat ankles. The pushing. All those things that other women complain about.

He was a long-time friend, single, notoriously caddish. He never had a girlfriend for more than a couple of months and he put that down to the fact that he couldn't bear it when they got clingy and wanted to stay in on a Saturday night with a DVD and a bottle of sparkling. You put it down to the fact that he was a coward, terrified of commitment.

She spoke to him about it first and that made you angry, so she burst into tears and said you were being unfair. You could tell there were other things she wanted to say but that she was holding herself back. You were afraid to push her in case she stopped.

So what happens next, you asked her. Are you actually going to sleep with him?

Of course, she said with a shrug.

What about artificial insemination, you asked and she shook her head.

I don't want my baby conceived like that, she said.

Our baby, you said.

You reach your hand out and pull the christening robe back a little from the baby's face and smile at the tiny nose and the snuffling sounds she makes in her sleep; you're human after all, you're not a monster. When it's all over you take your seat, feeling his eyes burning into you all the time. When you leave the church you look in his direction and see his new girlfriend sitting beside him. You've never met her before. She's plainer than his usual type. She gives you a smile, a little more coy than you expect from a stranger. It's a smile you've been given before, a few times in your life, and you know what it means.

You decide that when this is all over, when the photos have been taken and the sandwiches have been handed out, you'll find her and begin a conversation. You're interested to know where that conversation might lead.