

Alice and Sally. Mr. Hantz comes along sometimes. I've invited Abby but she doesn't like the exercise

ABBY AND MARILYN #1

START ↓

MARILYN. We missed you in the dining room. You should see it down there. They have it all done up for Halloween now. Pumpkins up on the walls, skeletons, black cats. You'd love it.

ABBY. Why would you think that?

MARILYN. They're like classroom decorations. And Mr. Hantz said you used to be a teacher. Grade school, he said. I don't know how he got it outta ya, you won't tell *me* anything.

ABBY. (*Looks to the windowsill.*) My plants are droopy.

MARILYN. But teacher makes sense. I can picture it. I bet you were very stern with the children. (*Abby grabs the watering can and heads into the bathroom. We hear the water running.*) I was an office manager. In my husband's business. Did I mention he was a skydiving instructor?

ABBY. Several times.

MARILYN. We were based down at Alexandria Field. I could tell you some stories, boy. My children run the business now. They're good kids. And they'd do *anything* for me. (*Abby comes out of the bathroom with the watering can filled. She waters her plants over the following.*) Did you hear that Mrs. Moore died? Poor thing. Went in her sleep. Such a nice woman.

ABBY. Such a nice *room*.

MARILYN. Room?

ABBY. It's too bad she's dead, but silver linings, right?

MARILYN. How do you mean?

ABBY. That room is prime real estate in this place. First floor — between the mailboxes and the day room. Less walking, more space.

MARILYN. Are you thinking of changing rooms?

ABBY. What? No, I'm not thinking of changing rooms.

MARILYN. Oh, you sound so enamored of it.

ABBY. I'm not. I only mentioned it because I thought *you* might want it.

MARILYN. Oh no, I'm perfectly happy where I am. There's much more sunlight up here.

ABBY. No there isn't.

MARILYN. (*Moves to the windows.*) Sure there is, we don't have that building blocking our view like they do downstairs. And I can see the park from up here. There's your bench where you like to sit and read. It's a lovely view.

ABBY. I guess I've never noticed.

MARILYN. Well that's a waste, with you so close to the window. Maybe you'd like to swap beds?

ABBY. I would not.

MARILYN. No, I don't blame you. It's the nicest spot in the room. (*Abby, annoyed, may go back to reading. Marilyn smiles, then takes a child's painting from her dresser.*) Did I show you this? My grandson made it for me. Caleb. So sweet. Do you know what it is?

ABBY. A Pap smear?

MARILYN. It's a fire truck.

ABBY. I don't see it.

MARILYN. He loves fire trucks. Ambulances too. Anything with a siren. He can hear one from blocks away. He gets this big grin, and flies to the window to see them pass by. They make him so happy.

ABBY. That's creepy.

MARILYN. Creepy?

ABBY. Those sirens are blaring because people are dying.

MARILYN. (*Chuckles.*) Now come / on.

ABBY. They *are*. Or their homes are going up in flames. Or there's a car accident, or some old man has fallen down some stairs. That's what those sirens mean. People in pain.

MARILYN. Caleb doesn't know any of that. It's just a fire truck to him.

ABBY. Well, when you've heard as many sirens as I have ... They're nothing to be happy about. Is he alright? In the head I mean, or is he a little ...

MARILYN. What kind of question is that?

ABBY. Well if he's chasing after fire trucks, you have to wonder. *My* son never did that. Normal boys don't do that.

MARILYN. Of course they do. You're just trying to get a rise out of me. (*Pause.*) So you have a son, huh? What's his name?

ABBY. Barbara. *(A moment, then Marilyn turns her attention to Abby's tray of food.)*

MARILYN. You should eat. There's cobbler. It's very good.

ABBY. You know I can't taste / anything.

MARILYN. Oh is that still going on?

ABBY. You know it is. *(Looks under the lid.)* And I love cobbler.

MARILYN. I know, I'm sorry.

ABBY. I don't think you are. I think you're gloating. I think you're angry I made fun of your grandson's painting. *(Takes a bite of the cobbler.)*

MARILYN. Oh, I don't get angry.

ABBY. *(Beat.)* You don't get angry.

MARILYN. Not anymore, no. There's really no point. It always leads to an ugly place. And I don't care for ugly places. *(Beat.)* How's the cobbler?

ABBY. Tastes like paste.

MARILYN. It's peach. I remember you mentioning it was your mother's specialty, so I put in a special request.

ABBY. *(Shoves it aside.)* Well it's much too late for peaches. It's a summer fruit. *(Marilyn takes out her Sudoku puzzle book and sits on her bed.)*

MARILYN. Have you tried these? Sudoku? I do them every day to keep my brain limber. *Sudoku.* They're from Japan.

ABBY. Yes, I know.

MARILYN. Would you like to try one?

ABBY. No thank you. *(Marilyn looks disappointed. She works on her Sudoku. After a couple beats ...)* What do you mean, you put in a special request?

MARILYN. I talked to Miss Larusso. I said, "Is there any way to get some peach cobbler on the menu?" And she said, "I bet we could arrange that, let me talk to the kitchen."

ABBY. You just asked her and she said, "No problem."

MARILYN. She's very nice to me. *(Scotty reenters with their medication.)*

END ↑

gonna have to cut you off. *(They have a little laugh.)*

MARILYN. *(To Abby.)* We do that every day.

ABBY. Yes, I know. *(Marilyn swallows her pills down, then hands the cup back to Scotty. He moves over to Abby, and hands her her pills.)*

SCOTTY. Here you go.

ABBY. *(To Scotty.)* Talk to Larusso for me. Please. Just put in the request.

MARILYN. What request?

ABBY. Chicken and dumplings. If you can ask for cobbler, I can ask for dumplings. *(Downs her pills.)*

MARILYN. Did Scotty show you his card? He's an actor, you know.

ABBY. You're an actor?

SCOTTY. Well, not professional.

ABBY. *(Smiles.)* No?

MARILYN. Give her a card, Scotty.

ABBY. Yes, Scotty, give me a card.

SCOTTY. Sure. Here ya go. *(Gives her a postcard.)*

MARILYN. He was handing them out at lunch. It's a postcard for the play he's in.

SCOTTY. It's not a play.

MARILYN. Oh, I misunderstood. I thought it was a play.

ABBY. *(Reading from the card.)* "Beelzebub's Den."

SCOTTY. It's a haunted house.

MARILYN. Well that's even *better* than a play.

SCOTTY. Some friends of mine rent out a warehouse in Pottsville every year and decorate it, and we get into makeup and costumes. It's pretty scary.

ABBY. Weird thing to invite residents to.

SCOTTY. I thought it'd be fun for everyone to see what I do outside of this place.

ABBY. Does Miss Larusso know you want to give us all heart attacks?

SCOTTY. No one's gonna have a heart attack.

ABBY. It says on the card, "Heart-stopping horror!" *Heart. Stopping.*

MARILYN. I'd like to go.

ABBY. Yes, I think that's a wonderful idea. You *should* go.

MARILYN. I'm gonna!

SCOTTY. Excellent! Thanks, Marilyn. That puts me at thirty-nine!

ABBY. Thirty-nine what?

SCOTTY. Tickets. Me and my buddies need to sell forty each to break even on the cost of that warehouse.

MARILYN. Oh, you have to come, Abby. You'd make it forty!

ABBY. No, I don't think so.