

My Favorite Breakfast

by Jesse Minkert

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Either Mavis is leaving me or I am leaving her; the difference is hard to throw the right light on. She has a man already half-trained to replace me. He is still learning the compromises he will be expected to make, not thoughtfully, but instantly, instinctively. He's still rehearsing. I'm on stage, and in the corner of my eye, I see the hook angling for my neck.

I'm cooperating with the scenario because it presents me with the quickest way out. Were I to say to her, "Go to him with my blessing," the lack of conflict would offend her sense of drama. She would wonder why I am not fighting for her, and she would demand more violent signs of distress. Therefore, as a good prospective ex-husband, I feel I must behave possessively, for the sake of her self-esteem.

I have arranged for no alternative to her, no ingénue waiting in the wings. A happy resolution all around, all plots neatly resolved. We can move into the next act, the next phase of evolution. This is what she wants.

When Mavis is satisfied that her new man and I have met her criteria, and at long last she goes, no one will stand between me and the relentless boredom of my own company. I will be forced, after all these years, to live in that empty room. I will withdraw from human contact. I will allow habits of personal hygiene to lapse. I will lose my job, which will just push more of me down my throat. I will stand on a sidewalk and stare into an open hole in the fabric of space and time.

But here and now, Mavis cooks my favorite breakfast and lies about where she will be later today.