

Results

by Tyler Koch

"I don't want to talk about this right now."

"Oh you don't want to talk about it now? When, then?
When I'm too old?"

The woman threw her purse on the ground and walked into the kitchen, throttling a piece of paper in her right hand. The man widened his eyes, lips parted slightly. But no words escaped. Only a sigh. He closed the door with his foot. He bent down and picked up the woman's purse and placed it over his shoulder.

Ooh! New style? she might have joked if the results were different.

In the kitchen he saw her, the back of her, head bent down, an attempt to smooth the crumpled piece of paper even though they both knew what it said. As though reading it for the hundredth time would somehow change the words on the page. He pictured her face. Her nose flared, eyes narrowed, the slow, inevitable beginnings of a scowl hardening into a permanent expression.

"Well?" she called.

The man waited for more but nothing followed. Which naturally meant whenever she did decide to complete the sentence, it would be thick with sarcasm. The same, *It's alright. Don't worry about me. After all my body isn't the one that's malfunctioning, not like yours. Too bad everything I want in this life depends on you. But please, don't worry. I'm fine.*

He walked into the kitchen with her purse still around his shoulder. She saw him, saw the purse, her eyes doing what they always did when she was like this, searching him, a quick up and down of his body, like he was some inanimate thing she could figure out by a simple glance. He set the purse on the marble countertop.

"Do you want anything to drink?" he asked.

"What do you think?"

There it was. Except she forgot the last part. *What do you think, liar?* or *What do you think, you fucking stupid son of a bitch?* He poured water for the both of them and set her glass in front of her. It clinked on the countertop.

"Well?" she said again.

The man looked at the crumpled piece of paper, how the edges refused to straighten. She'd held the results in her fist the entire way home, choking the life from them. He hadn't said a word, but then, he didn't to. He had a new voice now, typed, not spoken.

"Well?" she repeated, louder.

"I don't know what you want me to say."

Her eyes flashed. "You don't know what to say? Is that a joke? I don't know. How about: *well it looks like all these plans we've made were pointless*. Or no. How about: *good thing I didn't plan on spending the rest of my life with you*."

"I'm sorry."

"You're sorry. Huh."

The man took another drink of water. The woman hadn't touched hers.

"You can look again if you want. Here."

She threw the results at him. The paper shot straight to the ground and skid across the tile floor, coming to a stop in the hallway.

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"I didn't know."

"You didn't know?" She threw her hands in the air and let them slap against the counter. "How could you not know? What happened the last time you went to the doctor?"

"They told me everything was fine."

"They told you everything was fine," she repeated slowly.

As in, *are you really that stupid?* or *Jesus Christ what the fuck is wrong with you?*

"So what are we supposed to do now?"

"There's other options for us. I asked the doctor after you walked out. He said there's infertility—"

The woman balled her hands into fists and hit the counter.

"No. I told you that already."

The man's eyes flicked to the results on the ground.

"I don't know, then."

The woman smirked. That might have been the worst of it. He could have handled everything else. *Of course you don't know*, she said without speaking. *Why did I ever think you would?*

"Maybe the test is wrong," he said, hating himself for it.

"Oh, you think so?"

"Maybe."

"Oh yeah. Maybe. Sure. It's definitely the test that's wrong."

"I can go for a second opinion."

"I'm your second opinion," said the woman, her voice hardening around the edges. "Me. Haven't you thought of that." She put a hand on her stomach, fingers splayed. "If there wasn't anything wrong then don't you think—"

She waved him away and pinched the bridge of her nose. *What am I doing here?* the expression seemed to say. *How did I end up like this?*

"You know what? Fine. Go for your second opinion if it'll make you happy. Maybe then you'll realize the truth. Yes. That would be good. Then once that's firmly established we can talk about what to do next. I'm going to the bedroom."

Don't follow me.

She walked past the results without looking at them. Up the stairs. The door slammed, echoing.

The man finished his water, refilled the glass, and drank some more. He picked up the results and set them on the counter. He heard a muffled yell from upstairs, as though someone screamed into a pillow, as though someone said, *Get me the fuck out of here.*

