

CONDITIONAL LOVE

Written by

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COLD OPEN:

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

A plate is set down on a kitchen table with a gourmet meal of grilled chicken, veggies, and rice.

At the table is REESE, (22), a blonde, big-eyed young woman in a pageant-like baby blue dress. She stares at the dinner before her.

GUY, (late 30s), clean cut and dressed in a button-up tucked into nice pants, sits at the other end of the table with a plate of food and a glass of wine.

He digs in. She stares at her meal.

GUY
I hope you like it.

Slowly, she grabs her utensils, cuts into her chicken.

He chews his food as he watches at her.

GUY (CONT'D)
You look lovely tonight.

She brings a bite of chicken to her mouth, hesitates. Then, eats it. Chews. Swallows.

Guy continues to dig in.

GUY (CONT'D)
Thank you for doing this with me,
by the way.
(re: food)
How is it?

Reese nods.

REESE
(soft, quiet)
It's good.

Guy smiles, takes another bite.

GUY
Good, good.

He takes a sip of wine.

GUY (CONT'D)

Remember Caroline? The realtor who sold me this house.

(beat)

You met her. A couple weeks ago at the restaurant? She stopped by our table to say hi?

REESE

(soft, quiet)

Yes.

GUY

I ran into her at the market this morning. She asked about you.

Reese looks up. For a quick moment, she breaks a small smile.

GUY (CONT'D)

She was wondering if we were still seeing each other.

Reese's smile fades.

Guy takes another bite of his food.

Reese picks at her rice.

GUY (CONT'D)

I told her, yes, we are.

(beat)

Drink your water.

Reese looks at him, sets her utensils down. She takes a sip of water.

Guy takes another bite.

GUY (CONT'D)

She mentioned something about a ladies night. You know, that silly stuff with wine and girl talk. She said you were invited.

Reese hesitates to respond.

REESE

(soft, quiet)

May I go?

Guy looks at her, stops chewing his food. He sets his silverware down with some restraint, upset.

GUY
 You know how I feel when you ask me
 these things.

Reese bows her head in shame.

REESE
 (soft, quiet)
 I'm sorry.

GUY
 I'll invite her over for dinner one
 night soon. I'm sure she'd love to
 see you again.

Reese closes her eyes, as if she shuts away a memory.

Guy stares at her, studies her.

GUY (CONT'D)
 You feel sorry for her, don't you?

Reese shoots a glance up at Guy, then looks back at her meal.

GUY (CONT'D)
 You do.

REESE
 (soft, quiet)
 I didn't say anything.

Guy continues to study her.

GUY
 You know I love only you, right?

REESE
 (soft, quiet)
 Yes.

GUY
 The other women, they don't mean a
 thing to me.

Reese opens her mouth to speak, but stops herself.

GUY (CONT'D)
 What is it?

REESE
 (soft, quiet)
 ...then why do you invite them
 over?

Guy studies her once more, exhales. He reaches for his wine, takes a sip.

GUY
You know why.

REESE
(soft, quiet)
She doesn't deserve it.

GUY
Finish your meal.

REESE
(soft, quiet)
None of them deserved it.

A pause in conversation, before Guy picks his utensils up.

GUY
Eat.

REESE
(soft, quiet)
I'm not hungry.

Guy stares at her. Then—

BANG! He POUNDS his fists on the table.

GUY
EAT!

Reese flinches. She reluctantly grabs her utensils and nibbles at her food.

Guy resumes eating.

A long silence hovers over the two as they sit across from one another at the kitchen table.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Reese sits on the sofa, still in her dress. She seems reserved, her hands folded and tucked into her lap nervously. She stares before her, lost in thought a thousand miles away.

Guy stands in the kitchen, on the phone.

GUY
Yes. She said she'd love to. When are you free? Next Thursday? That sounds perfect.
(MORE)

GUY (CONT'D)

I'll make a roast, for the three of us. No, no, just bring yourself. Absolutely. We'll see you then, Caroline. Bye.

He hangs up, then walks over to Reese, stands before her. She looks up at him quick, before darting her gaze away.

GUY (CONT'D)

Time for bed.

Reese remains on the sofa.

GUY (CONT'D)

(stern)

Crate.

She takes in a soft breath, exhales slowly, then stands.

GUY (CONT'D)

I want you in this dress for dinner next Thursday. No wrinkles, no rips, no stains. So, behave.

Reese steps through the living room. Guy follows behind her.

She stops at a door. Guy reaches around her, unlocks the door for her. He opens it to darkness. He flips a light switch from within the darkness, reveals—

INT. GARAGE - NIGHT

A large dog crate sits in the middle of the space.

GUY

You know what to do. I'll be watching.

Reese gulps. Guy leans in to her ear.

GUY (CONT'D)

I love you. And only you.

She closes her eyes. A tear falls out.

REESE

(soft, quiet)

I love you too...Master.

The two walk into the garage. The door shuts behind them.

CUT TO BLACK.