

A lifelonG cOmpanioN

By

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**Note:** the word Agon is an ancient Greek word with many meanings. The word typically refers to a physical or athletic competition. Agon may also refer to 'a test of will' or 'a struggle within the soul.' The word also refers to a part of ancient Greek drama in which a struggle or verbal dispute between two characters is scripted as a way of supplying a basis of action for the story.

SAM sits at her dining room table. It is midnight and a desk lamp illuminates her work station which consists of two chairs, stacks of notepads, and several text books on ancient Greek history. She types feverishly on a laptop. After a few moments, she pauses, rubs the wrinkles of her forehead and takes a sip of coffee from her mug. MARLOWE enters as SAM begins to type once again. She fails to notice him until he speaks.

MARLOWE

Hello, Sam.

SAM

Jesus! Marlowe...?

MARLOWE

Yes.

SAM

My God. What the hell are you doing here?

MARLOWE

You were on my mind...so I thought that I would just stop by.

SAM

Marlowe, you can't do that! You can't just walk into my home...my family is sleeping.

MARLOWE

I won't wake them. And don't you wake them, either. Let them dream.

SAM

What are you...? How...time...It's been all this time and I...You know you can't be here...you know you shouldn't be here.

MARLOWE

I know, but it's been a while, that's all.

SAM

Get out of my house.

MARLOWE

Hold on. I just want to talk.

SAM

I have nothing to say to you. Get out.

MARLOWE

Hear me out for a moment.

SAM

No. We're not about to do this again.

MARLOWE

Look at me. Just look at me.

*(Pause. She looks at him.)*

Jesus Christ, Sam. It's been years. You look...great.

SAM

Yeah, well I've done well to preserve myself.

MARLOWE

You have.

*(Little pause)*

Your hair, it's-

SAM

I wear it straight now.

MARLOWE

Right.

SAM

If you're here to dish out awkward complements, I suggest you cut the crap and let me get back to my work.

MARLOWE

I'm not here to complement you, I'm here to visit you, that's all.

SAM

Well please, spit it out. I'm drowning in the epic works of Homer and Euripedes.

MARLOWE  
I'm sorry if I came at a bad time.

SAM  
Bullshit...you live for that.

MARLOWE  
(Pause.)  
There's something wrong.

SAM  
I'm fine.

MARLOWE  
Tell me. I can help.

SAM  
Look, you're the last thing that I need right now. It's been a very long day.

MARLOWE  
Maybe some fresh air is what you need. We could take a walk.

SAM  
No. I'm not going anywhere with you. I know what you're getting at.

MARLOWE  
I'm not here to hurt you or to make you feel uncomfortable. I want to help you.

SAM  
I know you do. But you need to understand that this is *my* life. These are *my* problems.

MARLOWE  
You haven't been sleeping well, have you?

SAM  
I...No, I haven't. I don't see how that's any of your business. I don't know why you're here right now, but I'm going to have to ask you to leave.

MARLOWE  
How's your family?

SAM  
Don't ask me about my family.

MARLOWE  
Derek, your husband, right? And Kayla, your daughter.

SAM

Yes. You remember?

MARLOWE

How could I forget? They're all you ever spoke of.

SAM

Why are you here?

MARLOWE

I told you, I was thinking about you...and I missed you. May I have something to drink?

*(Pause)*

SAM

I have water.

MARLOWE

That would be lovely.

SAM gets up and walks offstage to the kitchen. MARLOWE smiles at the sounds of her rummaging and takes a seat in the chair left of hers. He picks up her papers and glances through them. SAM returns with a tall glass of water. A poorly cut slice of lemon is drifting in the glass. She hands it to him.

MARLOWE

You remembered the lemon...Thank you.

SAM

You're welcome.

MARLOWE

*(Drinking)* Is that a paper you're working on? I remember when we used to work on those in undergrad together...right when we first met.

SAM

You used to help me push through those all-nighters. It's my graduate thesis. I decided to go back to school.

MARLOWE

What are you studying, sociology?

SAM

Greek literature.

MARLOWE  
Wow, that's impressive.

SAM  
A lot's changed.

MARLOWE  
You must be really under the gun.

SAM  
You have no idea.

(Pause)  
Why don't you take off your coat? You're making me uncomfortable.

MARLOWE  
Oh, yes. Of course.

MARLOWE removes his coat and places it on the back of his chair. He stands and paces, glancing at a bookshelf with family photos, S.L.

SAM  
You haven't changed. You look exactly as I always picture you in my head.

MARLOWE  
You think about me?

SAM  
Well...yes, more than I'd care to admit. More so these past few months.

MARLOWE  
I'm flattered.

SAM  
Fuck off.

(Pause)

MARLOWE  
Is it your marriage?

SAM  
What?

MARLOWE  
There's something wrong with your marriage.

SAM  
My marriage is fine.

MARLOWE

Now I find that hard to believe.

SAM

Why do you say that?

MARLOWE

You're working *downstairs*, your left hand...no ring, and the very fact that you have yet to kick me to the curb.

SAM

How do you know that I don't prefer the temperature downstairs, I accidentally dropped my wedding ring down the drain last week, and I'm simply curious?

MARLOWE

Well, I suppose I don't, do I? But I've got a hunch.

SAM

A hunch...there's just...a lot of strain. Bills, and...work, and...school.

MARLOWE

Sometimes you just need to forget.

SAM

Yeah, forget.

(She catches his eye)

I, uhhh...maybe you...maybe you came at a good time.

MARLOWE

Now why's that? Tell me, Sam.

SAM

It's just that...I've been having these...thoughts, and...doubts. I don't know. Here I am, going back to school, getting a masters degree in a field that even I can't deny has no presence in today's job market. And the work...these papers...this fucking thesis.

Derek and I...we owe money, a lot of fucking money and...Kayla. She's going to be turning eleven next week and all I want for her is to grow up in a world where she feels safe and supported and loved and...sometimes...Sometimes I find it really hard to find it in me-

MARLOWE

Breathe.

(She exhales)

And that's why you want me. That's why you...miss me.

(She nods)

Let me help you, let's sit together, let's talk. I can help you work this out. Together, we can wrap our minds around

(MORE)

MARLOWE (cont'd)

things. We can work out a payment plan on your loans, or I can reevaluate your paper or-

SAM

Marlowe, you know I can't accept your help anymore.

MARLOWE

Well, why not?

SAM

We're different people...I'm...different. I have a life. There's nothing left here...there can't be.

MARLOWE

But there is. I can see that glimmer in your eyes...that fire burning beneath you. The one that wants freedom...adventure...a burden lifted off of your shoulders. I can do that. I can free you.

SAM

Marlowe-

MARLOWE

Tell me you remember the long nights...the tears...dipping your feet into the Long Island Sound. The speeches we would write, the kisses that we would share.

SAM

I...of course I remember-

MARLOWE

What we once had, that's still there. I still love you, Sam and I will wait my entire life for you. I don't need anyone else, I just need you. Who cares what other people might say about us? Who gives a flying fuck.

We could have a life together. You wouldn't have to tell your family...they would never need to know. Or they could. I would hide for you, I would lie for you and I can promise you that I will be there for you in every dark moment of your life...every wound, every tear of joy. I'll whisper secrets in your ear...like we used to and you can hold me, forever...like a trove. Breath into me, Sam...and I'll breathe into you...and we'll become one again. Take me back, Sam. Kiss me...and I'm all yours.

SAM

No.

MARLOWE

What?

SAM

No...I...I don't think that's a very good idea.

MARLOWE

Sam...

*(Pause)*

You're kidding. Just think of what we could-

SAM

There is no we...or...us. That was years ago.

MARLOWE

You're a damn fool if you think that we're no longer attracted to one another-

SAM

You broke me, you fucked with my mind, every heart-wrenching moment of our relationship scared me...because I knew we couldn't be together, yet I dreaded a life without you. You kept me sane, you accepted my anxiety, and my compulsiveness...and my giddiness, and practically every flaw that I had when not even my own husband could. But you know what really fucked it up? You thought you owned me...and you did. I couldn't go a day without seeing you...and Kayla...I was afraid that she would grow up and meet someone like you...fall into the same trap that I did. I was afraid of you. Afraid of what people would say when they saw you with me...when they saw me changing my clothes, or...putting on perfume when you would visit me at work...to cover up what you would do to me...the smell.

Yet everything you did always brought me back. Your voice...when you called me. The way it resonated. Your smile and how it curls up into a smirk. God, how I needed you. But my family knows you, and they hate you. I used to lie to my husband...say that you weren't with me when I took Kayla to school. But he knew. He just didn't say anything...there was nothing to say. And then one day, my little girl, five years old came up to me and said 'Mommy, why do you bring that man to school with us? The other parents stare. Please don't let them see.' And she was right. The looks that we got. The lies that you made me tell. To have your little girl be ashamed of you. That's what did it. And I knew from that moment that you could no longer be in my life. I've always loved you, and I still do. But I made a choice. Now I will ask you one last time to please...get out of my house.

MARLOWE's demeanor changes. Suddenly, cold and calculated, he pounces. A fire has been lit beneath him. He stalks SAM around the room.

MARLOWE

You're tired, Sam. You're stressed. I can see the bags growing under your eyes. You're overworked. And you're hanging on tight...gripping as hard as you can but...your going to fall...and you need me to catch you. I remember the nights when you would crack...sob like a pathetic child and fall right into my lap. I know your thoughts. That's one thing that you and I have always had that no other man can ever understand. I can see the thirst. I can see the desire that's pulsing through your blood.

SAM

How dare you. You know nothing about me. You haven't seen me in five years, and you think you can show up in my house demanding a piece of me that is no longer yours?

MARLOWE

See, the thing about people like you Sam, is that once you fall for men like me, you'll forever be wrapped around their finger. The moment you saw me tonight you were infatuated. And I use the same charm every time. I showed you more than you could have ever possibly imagined and you fell for me...you loved me. Sure, I begged...I seduced...but it boils down to the simple truth that you need me. You needed me even after the moment you decided to discard me like a filthy whore.

SAM

What are you saying? Stop talking like that!

MARLOWE

You need me Sam. You always have.

SAM

Get out of my house right now. I'll wake Derek.

MARLOWE

No, you won't. He would be very upset if he knew that I was here in the first place.

SAM

Why are you doing this to me? Why won't you get out of my life?

MARLOWE

You made the mistake of inviting me into your home fifteen years ago. You told yourself that we would just be

(MORE)

MARLOWE (cont'd)

friends...but it was always going to be something more. I found you...I hunted you and although you tried to forget about me while your daughter was growing up, here I am, knocking on your door when you're most weak. I've got your heart.

SAM

You do not own me, I will not let you own me. You disgust me.

MARLOWE

Your fury...It's exciting. Come on...keep testing me.

SAM

Get out! Now!

MARLOWE advances on SAM who runs for the door, knocking over her chair. MARLOWE trips, quickly recovers, and corners SAM.

MARLOWE

I can leave, but I'll be back. When you're feeling all alone...when your body begins to crumble...when you no longer think it's worth it...I'll come knocking on your door. And like the miserable embarrassment that you are, you'll invite me in...and I'll give you a good time until you feel like shit again. Maybe I'll even come back for your little girl in a couple of years...maybe she will fall for a man like me.

SAM

Don't you talk about my daughter. She will never go near you...you're sick!

SAM lunges for MARLOWE, pinning him to the ground. He lets out a roar of fury and grabbing Sam by the back of the neck, pulls her in for a kiss. Stunned, she momentarily loosens her grip and returns the embrace, kissing him passionately. Then, deciding the correct course of action, she throws herself off of MARLOWE, letting out a scream.

BLACKOUT.

(Pause)

Slow lights up on SAM who stands at the table with her hair disheveled. MARLOWE is gone. He

was never even there. In one hand, SAM holds a cigarette - MARLOWE. In the other, she holds a lighter. After several long conflicted moments, SAM places the cigarette in her mouth and slowly holds up the lighter so that it doesn't quite touch the butt. She flicks on the lighter, momentarily pauses, and then...

BLACKOUT.