

A QUESTION

by

Chidiki Whitley

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

A middle class, suburban home with all the updates. Marble counters, stainless steel fridge and stove and recessed halogen lighting.

DARLENE (45), is dressed in snug pajama bottoms with a white v-neck t-shirt. Her hair is short, almost boyish, but her face is definitely feminine, soft even.

She's talking to JOE (25), who's sitting on a barstool at the island. He's dressed in dusty jeans with a few holes in them and a t-shirt with an abstract design circa 1985. His hair is long.

DARLENE

Do you like mayonnaise?

JOE

Yeah, sometimes.

DARLENE

C'mon I'm serious.

JOE

I know you serious. Sometimes. On that type of sandwich - yeah.

DARLENE

On a turkey sandwich? Okay. Mayo it is. How about lettuce?

JOE

No.

DARLENE

Cheese?

JOE

Yeah.

DARLENE

What's the matter with you?

JOE

Nothing's the matter with me. C'mere.

DARLENE

No.

JOE

C'mere.

DARLENE

What? I'm making your sandwich.

JOE

Come. Here.

She glares at him.

JOE

For a second. I wanna tell you something.

DARLENE

I can listen from here.

He glares at her.

DARLENE

Fine.

She walks over. He grabs her and pulls her down (a bit roughly) to his lap.

DARLENE

Geez!

(beat)

You know I'll cut you right?

JOE

You know I'd like that right?

DARLENE

You're crazy.

JOE

I'm not crazy. The world around me is.

DARLENE

Including me, pumpkin?

JOE

Yeah, including you, cookie sandwich.

DARLENE

I'm not crazy. Although I do talk to myself often...but I never answer!

She laughs for a long moment.

DARLENE

What did you want to tell me?

He whispers in her ear. She slaps him.

JOE

I wasn't finished!

DARLENE

What? And no whispering.

He licks her ear slowly.

DARLENE

Mmmmm.

JOE

See?

DARLENE

You're a freak.

JOE

(serious)

I'm not a freak.

She glares at him.

DARLENE

I didn't mean *literally* - it was a pokey jokey.

She gets up.

JOE

Don't joke about stuff like that.

DARLENE

I can call you crazy in jest but not a freak?

JOE

Exactly, baby. Finish making my sandwich.
I'm hungry.

DARLENE

(aggravated)
Sure, coming right up, asshole.

A long silence.

DARLENE

Now I have a headache.

He laughs.

DARLENE

What?

JOE

You something else.

DARLENE

What?

JOE

'Pokey jokey' - that's cute.

DARLENE

You think so?

JOE

Look, let's go back to bed. What time's
your tubby hubby coming home?

DARLENE

Rick's at work all day. How many times
I have to tell you.

JOE

Things change, y'know. I don't take
nothin' for granted. You shouldn't
either. What are you trying to say?
You take your wardrobe for granted.

JOE

That's a low-blow, plus why are you
irritated?

DARLENE

Don't tell me how to be. I'm wise enough to know not to take anything for granted. Nothing I execute is without a full plan. I'm an architect.

JOE

And an alcoholic.

DARLENE

That's a low blow too! *Recovering*. Mean's I'm not anymore.

JOE

Once a fuckin' alcoholic, always a fuckin' alcoholic.

She laughs.

DARLENE

Once a murderer always an murderer.

JOE

HA! Throw that in my face. It was self defense, Cinnabun.

DARLENE

(cold)

Yeah, whatever.

She slaps on some mayonnaise and puts lettuce and tomato on the sandwich.

DARLENE

(leaving the room)

I have to tell you something.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

A steep, narrow staircase.

Darlene and Joe jog up the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

A large master bedroom, pink with a king-sized dark wood sleigh bed.

JOE

Well: tell me.

DARLENE

Okay: Something.

JOE

Huh?

DARLENE

Something. I said I have to tell you something and so: *something.*

She giggles.

JOE

Don't play with me.

She begins to take off her clothes.

DARLENE

(taking off her clothes)
C'mon, lighten up and brighten up. Geez.

JOE

You must think I'm dumb.

DARLENE

How do I think you're dumb?

JOE

You say you have to tell me something and you say "something" - like I'm an idiot.

She's now naked.

DARLENE

It was a pokey-jokey. Man you're sensitive.

JOE

Put your clothes back on.

DARLENE

No...look at my nipples.

She grins.

JOE

I ain't even motivated no more to fuck you.

DARLENE

You're the one who said let's go back to bed!

They stare at each other for a long moment.

JOE

(getting undressed)

Yeah, let's do that. Only because you insist.

She giggles, they jump in bed and go to work: kissing and touching.

DARLENE

Wait. Stop.

JOE

The fuck - why?

DARLENE

Can I ask you a question?

JOE

C'mon, I'm hard as a rock and you wanna do a pop quiz.

DARLENE

So!

JOE

C'mon. Spread 'em! I always wanted to say that.

DARLENE

Seriously, Joe.

JOE

(holding her down)

...No, DAR-Lene.

She squirms, turning incensed.

DARLENE
GET OFF OF ME!

JOE
No.

She screams, twists.

DARLENE
I'm serious, Joe. Get OFF OF ME!

He laughs. She tries to bite his arm. He snatches them away. She's breathing hard, still upset. She starts to cry.

SUDDENLY she starts to SLAP, hitting Joe in the face, on the arms. She PUNCHES him. He tries to deflect her blows, but she gets a few good hits in on his face. Finally she stops.

JOE
What's up with you?
(beat)
Sorry...

DARLENE
Don't do that again.

JOE
Okay.

She stares at him. He looks down at his lap.

JOE
I ain't that type of guy. I was
just foolin' I mean, I ain't
never killed a fly!

DARLENE
Good for you, because there's more
where that came from.

She puts up her fists and laughs. He laughs too. They LAUGH HYSTERICALLY for a long moment.

DARLENE
I want some marijuana.

JOE
'Weed' sounds better.

DARLENE
Sounds very street.

A long moment of silence.

DARLENE
...Rick does that sometimes.

He knows what she's talking about.

JOE
...Oh. My bad.

Another long silent moment.

DARLENE
I like when you say my name like that:
DAR-lene.

JOE
What was the question you want
to ask?

She thinks.

JOE
Just ask me, maybe I'll change my
mind.

DARLENE
Nope.

JOE
Well I'm gonna have to screw your brains
out then.

They have sex. Really good sex.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

We see a torso standing in the doorway. The name "Ricky" is
stitched above the breast pocket.

JOE
Whoa...

DARLENE

Yeah...

They laugh. Breathing hard until they simmer down:

JOE

Still don't wanna ask me?

DARLENE

No.

JOE

Just ask me the fucking question, damn!

DARLENE

'Kay...Say, I'm pregnant...with your
baby, not Rick's...and...if I get a
divorce, will you marry me and be
with us?

Joe starts to laugh hysterically.

Suddenly, the sound of a cigarette lighter clicks.

They jump to look. It's her husband, Rick, standing there
smoking.

END.