

beauty of life—sometimes something that seems wholly ridiculous is the one and only thing that truly makes sense. Actually, it reminds me of the one thing I truly do love about China. The way people sometimes meet you and immediately trust you for no apparent reason. It's not based on anything logical. It's just a connection—a feeling, an intuition. *(She points to a picture on the table.)* There. That's her—Shen.

GARTH: *(Ellen nods at the photo. He looks at it.)* She's adorable, but . . .

ELLEN: But what? Ms. Li's life has been a living hell, Mr. Diggs. She would have loved to study and go to school like us, but she was forced to work in the fields. She would have loved to travel to other places and visit, maybe write stories, but she's a woman. She would have loved to watch her babies grow up, but she donated blood to the government for forty yuan to help pay for shoes. She told me once, "When I look at my daughter, I see hope." She wanted her to go to the U.S. one day. Her hope was fading. That is until she saw you at the hospital. She knew you were the one. *(Beat.)* So are you? What do think?

GARTH: I think—I think, this is crazy, I think this is an incredible story, this is nuts . . . I, I think—I think—I think I better call my wife.

ELLEN: Your wife?

GARTH: She likes when I consult her on these matters. You know, when I buy a car. When I switch jobs. When I decided to adopt a baby from China. She's funny that way.

ELLEN: I knew we could count on you.

GARTH: I'm not promising anything yet.

ELLEN: I know. There's the phone. *(Beat.)* You won't regret it.

GARTH: And the story?

ELLEN: Tell it. Tell it when you get home with Shen.

## GRIEVING SPACE

*Kim and Andy's four-year-old daughter was kidnapped from her bedroom while they were making love one night. Kim's mom, who lives with them, had taken a trip, their little girl was sound asleep, and they were enjoying their romantic time alone. Kim blames Andy for the incident since it was his idea to make love. Maybe if they weren't preoccupied, she thinks, they would have heard something. It is now seven weeks since this event took place. The couple, both in their late 20s, has organized searches, papered neighborhoods, and nagged authorities in order to find something—anything. Unfortunately, there have been no breaks in the case. Tips have led only to dead-ends. The pressure and frustration has begun to destroy their relationship. Tonight, as usual, Andy has not been able to sleep.*

KIM: What are you doing?

ANDY: Just listening. I couldn't sleep. I hope I didn't wake you?

KIM: No. *(Beat.)* I didn't know you liked classical music?

ANDY: Yeah, I used to listen when I was in college more. I thought I was being so sophisticated.

KIM: Really? Did you take that pill?

ANDY: Yeah. Took two. Didn't do anything. Come sit?

KIM: I should go back to sleep actually. Maybe I'll take one.

ANDY: I forgot how moving it is. This music can grab you. Right in the gut. Reach inside. Stir up the entire spectrum of emotions—from deep sadness to rage to incredible passion. Ya know?

KIM: Sure. Did you ever check with your brother-in-law?

ANDY: About the friend? The FBI friend? *(She looks at him.)* I forgot.



KIM: You forgot? I thought you said you were going to call him yesterday so he could get started right away?

ANDY: I said I forgot. I'll call him tomorrow.

KIM: Oh. I just don't know how you could forget something so important.

ANDY: I don't know. Maybe I'm losing my mind. Maybe *you* should take his number down and call him.

KIM: Maybe I should. I know you didn't mean to, but—

ANDY: Fine. His number's next to the phone where I left it. Where I planned to call it. Now, why don't you sit with me for a second? Just for a second, Kim. Please?

KIM: I'm tired. Don't you think we ought to get to bed?

ANDY: What's the point? We don't sleep anyway.

KIM: Yeah, but we can rest at least. We have a bunch of places to search tomorrow. Lots to do.

ANDY: Yep. "Lots to do."

KIM: Why'd you say it like that?

ANDY: Because that's what you always say—every damn day. "Lots to do." What? What can we do now, Kim? What can we search? We've been everywhere.

KIM: We haven't searched the East River region. Margie got a team together.

ANDY: What do you think we did last week?

KIM: That was so quick.

ANDY: Eight hours is quick?

KIM: It wasn't as long as Sheridon Park. Besides Detective Thompson said they received a tip about that area. He said he's optimistic.

ANDY: Just like the three million other tips he received that never panned out.

KIM: Hey. He's trying. It's what we have right now.

ANDY: Let's be honest. We don't have anything. We don't have a God-blessed thing.

KIM: I'm going to bed.

ANDY: Wait! I don't mean to be blunt or discouraging about this, Kim.

KIM: Then don't!

ANDY: I'm just being honest with myself for the first time.

KIM: Sometimes you have to weigh whether it's better to be honest or it's better to have a little faith. That's always been your problem, Andy, that you have no faith in anything.

ANDY: No faith? So it has to do with God then? Having never converted to Catholicism? This is why our child was kidnapped? Is that what you're saying?

KIM: No. And don't put words in my mouth.

ANDY: Look, I'm frustrated as hell with this too. I can't think anymore because all I do is think over and over, all night about what I should have done. What could have happened? Where she could be?

KIM: So do I! I think about what it would be like if my mother didn't go away for the weekend. If we didn't suddenly get the idea to be romantic.

ANDY: That was so bad? That was so terrible and horrible of us?

KIM: No, no. I didn't say that. I just think if we maybe weren't so self-involved in the moment we might have heard her. That we would have checked on her before we did that.

ANDY: You mean if *I* weren't so self-involved, don't you?

KIM: (*Beat.*) All right. All I'm saying is that we might have been able to run after whoever took her. *Might* have. I don't know for sure. We can't do it over anyway, so I don't know why we're talking about it.

ANDY: Maybe we would have been sound asleep. That's a possibility too. Or maybe they never even made a sound, so it doesn't matter. There are all kinds of possibilities.

KIM: I agree with you.

ANDY: Would you prefer that I never made love to you? Maybe that was my mistake. Making love to you. Now, we're being punished. By God. Because I have no faith, and I made love to you when we should have been checking on our sleeping child.

KIM: Stop being ridiculous!



ANDY: I'm ridiculous?! Ever since this happened, you keep making a point of that. How we should have checked on her. How we were so self-involved. What you really mean is *Andy* was self-involved. I was the one all hot on doing it then. I was the one wanting to take advantage of the fact that your mother wasn't staying with us. I was the one being loud and excited so we couldn't hear her. Right?!

KIM: I said it doesn't matter now.

ANDY: Yes, it does. It matters because it's how you treat me now. Like I'm the villain. I'm the evil one. If I didn't exist this never would have happened. Let me tell you something, Kim, if I didn't exist, neither would Isabella. Don't you see? I'm hurting as much as you are.

KIM: There's no point in going over and over this. I just want to make sure I didn't miss anything. I won't give up. That's all. And I need sleep to make that happen.

ANDY: And I don't really care? It doesn't bother me one way or another? She was my four-year-old baby girl and I'm just totally numb to it and ready to give up?

KIM: I never said that!

ANDY: Directly, no. But it's the way you make me feel. *(Reaching out to her.)* Please, Kim, don't push me away. I miss her like you cannot believe. I'd rather give up my life for hers.

KIM: You say that like she's dead.

ANDY: No. I just—you misunderstand me. I just want you to know that this is the worst thing that has ever happened in my life. I'm her father. I was supposed to be protecting her.

KIM: I know that. *(Touching his head.)* And I don't mean to make you feel guilty.

ANDY: Then don't! I'm already doing it to myself.

KIM: I know. It's just . . . sometimes I think you've started to give up. I can't do that. I won't! You may be in that place right now, but I'm not.

ANDY: It's not like I don't want to believe she's out there.

KIM: Yeah, well, I can't even stand talk like that. I'm going to bed.

ANDY: Wait! Please. I think this is good. I think talking this out is good.

KIM: I don't feel like sitting in a dark room screaming over classical music at three in the morning. Call me crazy, but that's not my idea of what I should be doing right now.

ANDY: What should we be doing?

KIM: Everything possible.

ANDY: Haven't we been doing that already for the last six weeks? Where has it gotten us? Besides angry at each other.

KIM: Next thing I know you're going to tell me that you want to go back to work.

ANDY: *(Beat.)* Well . . .

KIM: Have you given up so completely?

ANDY: No! Definitely not! I'm not giving up. I'll paper a bunch of neighborhoods on the south side tomorrow night. I'll stay out till I finish, but I've got to go back to work sometime, Kim. How do you expect us to live?

KIM: We'll borrow from our parents.

ANDY: They don't have that much. I'll wait until next week. That'll give us a chance to make sure we've covered at least twenty square miles.

KIM: Why do you have to go back so soon?

ANDY: It's been seven weeks already. They've been covering for me and paying me this whole time.

KIM: It doesn't matter about the pay.

ANDY: It's a small office. They can't handle the workload anymore. I really need to get back.

KIM: I would think they could understand. It's not like you're taking time off for a long vacation or jetting around some island. Your child is gone.

ANDY: It's different for teachers. This is your summer vacation.

KIM: It doesn't matter if my summer was off or not. I wouldn't be going back to work yet.



ANDY: Well, I don't have seniority there. They aren't going to be understanding forever. They do have a business to run.

KIM: Then quit. You don't need that job. My brother will help us out. We'll take out a loan. It doesn't matter. You can find something else.

ANDY: I don't want to do something else! I want to go back to work!

KIM: *(Beat.)* What?

ANDY: I want to go back to work. I want something to be normal. I want a routine and a schedule.

KIM: Fine. Go then. Get out!

ANDY: I want to get away from your anger too. *(Kim looks at him.)* You'd think that we could be together on this, be sad and supportive together, but you want to do it without me. And worse than that, you act as if I don't feel it. That's what really hurts.

KIM: *(Pause.)* I don't mean to do that.

ANDY: Some nights I just wish we could hold each other and cry together instead of separately. *(Kim listens.)* I keep seeing so many days in my head. When you first told me that we were pregnant. At the hospital when I watched you give birth. Her first crawl and step and the way she held up her spoon in a triumphant, "I'm done!" But there's one night in my head that keeps coming back to me. I think Isabella was about one and a half. It was fall. Some of the neighbors were burning leaves. I like that smell. Poor little Bella cried all night because she had that terrible, miserable cold. She couldn't breathe—all stuffed up. *(Beat.)* She couldn't breathe. And you'd just about had it. You were so tired. Nothing had worked. She was fighting taking her medicine, and she just wouldn't stop crying all day. Not even Boo Boo could make her feel better. But I told you I'd stay up with her. And you fell asleep on the couch almost immediately. God, I'm so grateful for that night. I talked to her and played with her and cooed at her and rocked her. Finally, in the morning, right before dawn, she fell asleep. I was still

holding her when you woke up. She looked so peaceful. I felt really good. Like I had done something right. You put your feet on my lap. We didn't say anything at first. You just smiled at me. Your face was so warm. Both of us were looking at Isabella. And you said, you said—

KIM: *(Quietly.)* You're a wonderful father.

ANDY: You remember?

KIM: Of course. I loved that morning. I didn't know it meant so much to you.

ANDY: Yeah. I guess I never told you that.

KIM: I don't mean to blame you, Andy. I know you're hurting, but I don't know where to put this anger of mine. There is no place for it. It's just there in everything. Why did God do this?! And I can't have space for grieving because I refuse to believe that there is anything to grieve about. Can you try to understand?

ANDY: Yes. *(Beat.)* I just don't want us to lose each other.

KIM: I know. Somehow or other I know we won't. I promise you we won't.

ANDY: Can I hold you?

KIM: I don't want to start crying again.

ANDY: Please? *(He looks to her.)* We can cry together.

*(Kim slowly starts to open her arms. They hug each other tightly.)*