

8. Perfect Parenting...

* EMMA. When he was little I used to make my hand die. He'd be... screaming or whatever... and if he wouldn't stop, I'd tell him he was hurting me. I'd tell him... I'd tell him he was killing me, actually, that's what I said, I said, "You don't want to kill Mommy, do you?" And then I'd... make my hand die. Like this... *(She makes one hand slowly, sadly, wither and die... Not a joke. A sad, pathetic, emotionally manipulative symbolic death designed to make a little kid obey without question...)* And he'd get this little look on his face... and he'd stop. It was very effective.

I can't help but think now that that was not, perhaps, perfect parenting. But it worked... And I needed things—*anything*—that worked... I was eighteen when I got married. Eighteen fucking years old. Hardly out of diapers. To my first famous leading man. Dixon. Dixon McCready, remember him? No, me neither... Jesus, the way he said his own name should have tipped me off... "Dixon. Dixon McCready. Rhymes with seedy." Oy...

"Sexual harassment that just worked out" we called it. I thought that was so funny and charming at the time. Like we'd beat the system. What did all those "adults" who thought they knew better, that told us to wait, that told me I was too young, what did they know? I *knew*. It was true love! It was perfect.

"What could possibly go wrong?" I asked my mother during one of our stupid, endless fights. "What could possibly go wrong?" Well, as it turned out... *things*. *Many things* could go wrong... And did. Wonderfully, impossibly wrong, and at twenty-two I had my first hit movie, my first tabloid scandal, and I was a divorced mother of a two-year-old son. And the universe said... "Well, good luck with that..."

So, yes, that's right, my point is, indeed, don't judge. Don't you dare judge me.

You've done it all perfectly, have you? Love. Life. Career. Family. Fidelity. Passion. Well, all right then. Now, those of you who are... socially responsible, deeply fulfilled, vegan, charitable, millionaires... who work out and have sex three times a week, *you* can judge. But the rest of you... *shut up*.

I'm doing the best I can. I don't hate him. How could I? I don't hate him. But he does... *bother me*. *

(Music. There is a movement interlude. The stage gets rearranged. Time passes. This represents the flirtings, frustrations, missed connections, broken hearts, unspoken longing etc. etc. of the two days that pass. We see all kinds of dynamics. Nina and Trigorin flirt, in some way. Con is hurt and upset. Emma is... bothered. Dev is focused on Mash, Mash is focused on Con, Con is focused on Nina, Nina is focused on Trigorin... you get the idea...)

MASH. *(To us.)* Two nights later. Drinking. And eating pie. Pie that I fucking made...

9. Actually, Actually...

Con is now starting to lose it a little... things are getting pretty bad and he is moving rapidly towards the edge, towards desperate... Perhaps Doyle and Nina at least remain onstage in some way so Con can reference them...

CON. She's killing me!

DEV. You need to calm—

CON. She's literally driving me insane!

DEV. Literally?

CON. All right, *figuratively*. *(Tiny beat.)* No, *literally*.

DEV. Listen, Nina adores you. She's just—

CON. We were doing fine. I mean... fine-ish. And then along comes that... *swarthy, talentless fuck-headed pirate*... and suddenly it's like I'm—I can't catch my breath, like I'm drowning or something, like I'm, like I'm...

DEV. In space?

CON. No, like I'm... like I'm fucking drowning! I need a beer. Want one?

DEV. No, I'm fine. *(Con walks off. Dev turns to us...)* Yeah, so, this isn't good. Trigorin's a great writer and all, but he's... *kind of an asshole*. I mean, he's Emma's *guest*. And *lover*. And the way he's flirting