

Baker-Miller Pink

by Megan Rose Thomas

(A therapy room of a medium security NHS psychiatric hospital. There are three chairs - one on one side of the coffee table, two on the other. Only one of those two chairs has a cushion on it. KIM stands, looking at the seated LOUISE for longer than is comfortable.)

KIM: Aren't you supposed to say the thing?

LOU: What thing?

KIM: The 'this is confidential' thing.

LOU: Things work a little differently in inpatient.

KIM: Different how?

LOU: It is confidential, but I have an obligation to make sure you're as safe as you can be.

KIM: So if I say I want to kill myself?

LOU: There's a difference between you saying you've been having thoughts of harming yourself, and you telling me you've been actively planning and seeking out the means to actually do that.

KIM: What if I had?

LOU: Been making plans? Then I'd tell you that I was concerned about what you'd said, and I would like to get the psychiatrist involved to see how we can best help you. *(Pause. No reply.)* Now, erm...

KIM: Lost your train of thought?

LOU: Considering how to begin.

KIM: I think you're doing a good job. *(Beat.)* Not that we've really got started yet.

LOU: What would you like to talk about? *(Pause. No reply.)* There's no wrong place to begin.

KIM: We're just here to talk.

LOU: Exactly.

KIM: You're just here to listen.

LOU: Would you like to sit down?

KIM: Do I have to?

LOU: You don't have to do anything.

KIM: Oh, cool, so I can go then?

LOU: If you want to end the session, you can, I'm not keeping you here.

KIM: Yes you are.

LOU: The hospital might be. I'm not.

KIM: You'll tell the doctors though.

LOU: I'd have to put in your notes that you terminated the session.

KIM: That's not confidential.

LOU: I don't have to tell them why you terminated the session.

KIM: You're new.

LOU: To Woodview? Yes.

KIM: And as a counsellor too. You're doing good, but I can tell. (*Beat.*) Is this a test? (*Beat.*) The chairs.

LOU: Could you explain a bit more about what you mean?

KIM: Is it a test - which chair you choose to sit in?

LOU: No, no, not at all. I'm / sorry if you

KIM: / Cos it looks like a test.

LOU: You can sit in whichever chair you want.

KIM: Can I have your chair? (*Beat.*) That's a no then.

LOU: I'm just interested in why you're asking that. Do you often / feel like...

KIM: /Do I often feel like people are judging me for my choices?

LOU: Do you?

KIM: Can I sit on the floor?

LOU: If you want.

KIM: Which would you choose?

LOU: Angela told me about what happened in the workshop.

KIM: Angela's a fucking liar. Which one? Cushion or not cushion?

LOU: Not cushion. You don't have to talk about what happened if you don't want to, but I think / it might be

KIM: /Ah, afraid of comfort, I thought you were the type, it's the shoes.

LOU: No, the other one is just closer to the radiator.

KIM: You get cold easily?

LOU: Sometimes. *(Beat.)* Angela told me you tried to hit her.

(A pause. Eventually, KIM picks up the cushion off the chair. She holds it for a while, then sits in the other chair; the one closest to the radiator.)

LOU: I already know what happened, but I'd like to hear your side of it.

KIM: You really don't recognise me, do you?

(Silence. Tension.)

LOU: I think we should probably close the session there.

KIM: It's only been five minutes.

LOU: Your nurse will reschedule your session.

KIM: So you do know who I am?

LOU: I'm terminating the session.

KIM: Why doesn't anyone in this fucking place say that they mean?
'Terminate the session...'

(LOU stands and is starting to pull out her radio.)

KIM: Have you just pressed that? You have, haven't you?

LOU: Not yet. But I will. If I have to.

KIM: Then let's talk. (*Firmly.*) Sit down Louise.

(*A stalemate. LOU sits, holding onto the radio.*)

KIM: Do I really look that different?

LOU: You've changed your name.

KIM: So have you.

LOU: Look, I don't know what you're trying / to do

KIM: / I'm not trying anything. I'm just here. (*Beat.*) Do they know?

LOU: What?

KIM: Do they know?

LOU: Who?

KIM: This place.

LOU: I don't know / what you're

KIM: / I bet they do background checks don't they? (*Beat.*) You never said thank you.

LOU: Thank you for what?

KIM: (*Gesturing expansively.*) This. All this.

LOU: Without you...!

(*LOU snaps but can't find her words.*)

KIM: What? Without me what? (*Pause.*) Your little panic button might get them to drag me away, but it won't stop me showing them where the bodies are buried...

LOU: What do you want?

KIM: ...So to speak. (*Beat.*) I told you what I want.

LOU: This... it nearly ruined my life.

KIM: I dunno about that, your life seems pretty fucking great. You know, just judging by who's on which side of this table.

LOU: That's just... situational. We're not that different, none of us are.

KIM: Do you really think that, or is that just something they tell you to say? I've seen so many of you since everything that happened. In young offenders, inpatient, outpatient... And you all say you don't judge but I see it in you, I see it in your eyes.

LOU: I'm not judging you.

KIM: First, just because I am where I am. I'm the one in the tracksuit with no cord at the waist and the trainers with no laces. And then again when they find out what I did. (*Beat.*) Because they don't know that we did it. Do they?

LOU: I'm sorry, I really am, for what happened and how that's clearly had a... a serious impact on your life.

KIM: I protected you.

LOU: You were the one driving.

KIM: I wanted to stay, remember? You begged me. 'I'm sure they're fine. Let's just go'.

LOU: No.

KIM: But they weren't fine. Were they?

LOU: ...No.

KIM: And I never told them. And you never visited.

LOU: I'm sorry.

KIM: That's not what I want you to say.

LOU: It was really hard for me.

KIM: I'm sure. We were both really young.

LOU: Yeah.

KIM: I really did love you.

LOU: I loved you too. I was just a coward.

KIM: You weren't.

LOU: I had to go to the funeral.

KIM: Really?

LOU: With everyone from school crying. And act like I hadn't been there...
Hadn't seen... *(Pause.)* Thank you. *(Pause.)* What do we do now?

KIM: I really don't know.

LOU: If you want me to tell people...?

KIM: I didn't lie for all those years to ruin it for you now. And it worked,
didn't it? You wanted to be a doctor, and here you are. I'm proud of you.

LOU: I'm not a doctor.

KIM: Doesn't matter. You're on that side of the table. That's all that matters.

(End.)