

Chapter 1: The drive

Adam and Sasha drove down the road in silence. Sasha couldn't believe where they were headed.

Couples therapy. Sasha thought about what the therapist might say as she read a pamphlet about the therapy. "*You need to apologize to Adam*" or "*It seems you are the crazy one in this marriage.*" While she knew the therapist wouldn't really say this, she still couldn't get it off her mind.

"You know we don't really have to do this right, we could just talk to each other like adults," Adam said in a (what Sasha thought to be) condescending tone. Last time they tried, it ended with a fist-sized hole in the wall.

"We tried talking before and we know how that worked out," Sasha complained.

"I know we have, but going to this therapist is just gonna make us spend unnecessary money," Adam added, "money we don't have." Sasha sat there in silence thinking about what Adam had said. "*Is he right, do we not have enough money?*" The rest of the ride there was in silence.

Chapter 2: The room

As they pulled up to the parking lot, they looked at the building ahead.

"*So bougie,*" Adam thought. As soon as they parked, Sasha swung open the door and power walked inside like she didn't want anyone to see her. Adam walked to Sasha as she looked around like she was being hunted by the Predator.

"Why is your head on a swivel?" Adam whispered.

"SHHHHHHHH!, lower your voice," she whispered even though his voice was already low.

"Why are you so worried?" Adam whispered in a harsh tone.

“I don’t want anyone seeing me here,” she exclaimed. After they both stared at each other like they were dumb for a minute, they both walked inside and went to their appointment. Adam and Sasha both sat down in the office. It was homy, comfortable but also unsettling since they knew where they were at. The therapist sat down and welcomed them into the room. Her name was Abigail.

“So, tell me why you’re here, and before you start don’t say marital issues. I already know that.” she said with a smile on her face. Adam thought the smile was nice and warm but also cold.

“We are having issues communicating. Most of our conversations are either out of disinterest or end up turning into fights.” Adam felt a weight lift off of *both* of their chests as Sasha said that.

“So you guys can’t communicate. That’s actually quite common in couples.” Abigail said. Both Adam and Sasha looked relieved like they had already gone through the whole therapy and their problems were fixed.

“Can you tell me what your most recent fight was about?” asked Abigail.

Chapter 3: Let it out

As Adam recapped the fight in the car, Sasha couldn’t help but be mad. She had no idea why. He was telling the story, not from a biased point of view of anything, she just couldn’t help it. After he finished Abigail sensed a sort of need to speak from Sasha.

“I want you guys to be able to speak your minds, after either of you say something I want the other to respond if they need to. But don’t **react** to each other, **respond** to each other.” Sasha and Adam had absolutely no idea what that meant but they both shook their heads in agreement. Sasha sat there, hesitant to say anything but eventually did. Abigail watched Sasha speak but could feel she was holding back.

Abigail stopped Sasha, “please stop, speak how you want. If you want to yell, then yell. Cry, scream, rant, do anything but pretend to want to speak civilly.” Sasha and Adam both thought about what she said for a minute, then Sasha started to talk.

“I just want you to talk to me. You come home from work and just say hi in the most monotone voice ever.” Adam tried to get in a word but Sasha just started to speak louder. “I just want you to talk to me! Is the spark gone? Do you not love me anymore?!” She repeated the question in her head after Adam took entirely too long to answer. She felt as if the whole moment was trapped in time. After a minute of deafening silence, Adam spoke.

“Of course I still love you.”

Chapter 4: The beginning of the end

Adam knew that he lied. Adam could see Sasha’s eyes tear up and seeing her cry always made him cry.

“I’m glad that you were able to get that out, Sasha. Now Adam, can you please *respond* to that?”

Abigail said quietly. Adam didn’t know how to respond to that. He thought that not reacting and instead responding was the dumbest stuff he had heard all day. He wanted to say that but he knew that it would just be pointless.

“Adam, please speak your mind otherwise we won’t get anywhere.” He thought Abigail said that as if she was getting annoyed.

“Okay, you’re right. I haven’t been talking to you a bunch and I do still love you. It’s just...” He said. He couldn’t get the words out.

“Just spit it out!” Sasha interrupted.

“Please Sasha, let him get it out on his own, don't rush him.” Abigail said. Adam didn't like the way Sasha yelled at him. “*She treats me like I'm trash. Maybe I haven't given her the most attention lately but does she need to speak to me this way?*” He thought. Adam felt his face go red and his hands heat up.

“Fuck! Please don't yell at me like that anymore! I'm so sick of you yelling at me like that! I try my hardest in this marriage and yet it's not enough!” He shouted. Sasha quickly interjected.

“No you do not! You don't try your hardest! You're always so cold and distant now!” Sasha also felt her hands heat up. “All we do when we talk is fight! It's never a normal conversation anymore! I just miss that. I want to talk to you because I have never loved anyone like I do you. I just want to be us again.” Her cheeks started to become wet with her flowing tears. Adam was also crying.

“I want that too.” Adam said softly. They both stared at each other with somewhat of a yearning look.

“Good, that's very good.” Abigail stated smiling. “I'm glad you too were able to get that out and express yourselves in that way.” Both Adam and Sasha felt like it had helped. Abigail started again.

“You know, I think that this was a very good first session. Unfortunately, we have sadly run out of time. I do want to send you guys home with some homework though.” Adam and Sasha looked at each other very confused.

“Homework?” they both said.

“Yes, but not in the traditional way. I want you both to go home, sit and talk. Rather, **communicate**. Let each other know how you really feel. Speak your mind and be respectful about it. But I do want you to remember to **respond**, not **react**.” Both Adam and Sasha finally

knew what that meant. As they stood up and left the building, they held hands for the first time in a long time. While the car ride home was in silence, it wasn't deafening or loud silence, but a quiet, peaceful silence.

The Artist's statement

In this statement I will just explain my reasons behind some of my creative choices. I chose the perspectives so that we could see the full, unbiased story. The story connects to the essential questions because by the end of the story they find out that even though they fought, they both still love each other. The snapshot I chose to make was during the big fight where both of the characters were feeling hot. The reason I chose this was because it was a big fight in the story and helped to show my characters emotions. There is an instance of dramatic irony when we know that Adam may not be telling the whole truth. The thoughtshots I included in the story allow the reader to know what both characters are thinking. The dialogue mainly consists of the characters arguing to show that their marriage isn't in a great place. There is also the perspective of the therapist. While we don't ever know what she's ever really thinking about, her dialogue lets us get a sort of third perspective to the story.