Our Wars Will Be Our Own

by misura

Summary

Three perspectives on a relationship.

Notes

written as a treat

There are days when Danton finds himself wanting to grab Camille and shake him, yelling at him, I am trying to seduce your wife, how can you sit there and pretend not to notice?

It's convenient, of course, this way people have of ignoring what you're doing when there's nothing they can do about it anyway. To have angry husbands come knocking on his door, or accost him in the streets would be a nuisance, but little more than that.

Some of them, Danton imagines, might be genuinely ignorant. Honestly stupid, which doesn't seem to have prevented them from having a political career, but then, often as not, people may vote for what they know, for names or faces that are familiar.

Camille is neither stupid nor particularly honest.

He'll come home, finding Danton and Lucile sitting close together, conversing, and smile, as if the sight gives him nothing but joy, and Danton will ask himself, what does he think is happening here?

What is happening here, anyway?
"You should be careful," Camille says. His face is blank, unreadable.

Lucile knows it would show if he was angry, but then, of course, there's nothing for him to be angry about. "What do you mean by that?" she asks, putting a hint of anger in her own voice, as if to say, who are you to tell me to be careful, when you don't even seem to know the meaning of the word?

She doesn't yet know where he's come from this evening. She'll find out soon enough, though. Someone will tell her. People are always eager to tell her these kinds of things about Camille.

Camille shrugs, picks up some of the notes on his desk. "Just that. He's a heavy man; I imagine he might crush you in his sleep if you fell asleep next to him. Or even when he's awake, possibly." He selects a new pen, locates some ink. "Gabrielle seems all right, though, so maybe there's a trick to it."

"Are you suggesting I ask her?"

Camille looks up, his expression intrigued. "Not unless I'm there to see her reaction," and Lucile thinks, what terrible people we are, to laugh about something like this. She quite likes Gabrielle, even if the feeling has become less mutual recently, but then, what can you do?

Would I mind if she slept with Camille? Lucile asks herself, and the answer that bubbles up immediately is yes, yes, oh, I'd scratch her eyes out if she dared make a move on him, that cow. What hypocrites are we all.

It is, Camille knows, much easier to get close to someone when they have provided you with a legitimate reason to do so; friendship may extend you some liberties, but when someone is attempting to kiss your wife - why, then very few things remain outside of the realm of the permissible.

He does not think Danton knows the least of what goes on in his head. At the core of him, Danton is a simple man, with simple ambitions, simple appetites, regarding the world around him and assuming that, basically, all people are just like him, only less popular, less lucky, less strong - well, the list goes on for a good long while.

Danton is not a man to whom one can say, well, you want my wife; you can have her only if you take me along in the bargain as well. (And it's not that Camille would be so crude as to imagine Lucile is like some property of his that he can offer her to others; rather, it's that, to some degree, he thinks this is the formula in which to phrase things that Danton would understand. The language of males.)

Lucile knows him better than Danton does: luck, rather than any foresight on his part. Divine providence, perhaps, if one may believe in such things. She makes room next to her, between her and Danton, masking it as the natural reaction of a wife, shying modestly away from a welcome guest on the arrival of her husband. How far do we have to go, Camille thinks, before we may call ourselves rational human beings, before we may claim that we are all of us equal, men and women alike.

Camille slips into the gap, filling it, and like that, there is no more room between the three of them.
Danton frowns, looking down on Camille. He cannot say, I prefer your wife, go away, so instead, what he says is, "Camille. Welcome home," and for a moment, Camille allows himself to imagine this state of things, a state where Danton will, in truth, make his home in these rooms and wait up for him on some nights, with Lucile.

"I'd bid you welcome as well, but I'm sure Lucile has done so already," he says, pleasantly.

"Yes," Danton says. He doesn't say, I was looking for you. Danton shies away from hypocrisy, when doing so mightn't cost him his neck, or his money, which is rarely, these days. Camille suppose he should treasure this instant, this glimpse of Danton as an honest man.

"I could get some wine," Lucile says.

"No," Danton says, and then, before Camille can tease him on the brevity of his replies, what's this, aren't you supposed to be one of the greatest public speakers of our time? "I should go."

"Ah," Camille says. "Back to work, then?" He can't imagine Danton making love to Gabrielle, thinking of Lucile. It would be too close to actual cruelty, too alien an idea to someone like Danton.

"There's always work." Danton remains seated. Camille feels the solid heat of his body.

"Our bed is full of angels, would you like to see?" he asks. "It came with the house, as part of our wedding gift, and it's really very comfortable for the most part, so we were never quite able to bring ourselves to get rid of it, even if, really, it's ridiculous." Camille abruptly remembers the fate of the man who gave them the house, and the flow of words stop.

He is, he realizes, a little nervous. Well, when two of the people he trusts and loves most in the world are by his side, why shouldn't he be? Those we love, we give the power to hurt us; those we are indifferent to may hurt us all the same, but at least we'll know we didn't allow them to do so. Small comfort, perhaps, but you take what you can get.

"I've seen it," Danton says.

"Isn't it lovely, though?" Lucile asks.

"Very," Danton agrees. His eyes are on Lucile; his tone adds, yes, your bed may be a marvel of waster artisanship, but I'd happily take you wherever you would let me.

Camille feels a little hurt. Lucile's arm slips around his chest, claiming him, you're not unwanted here.

Danton notices the gesture, interprets it not quite correctly. "I should go," he repeats.

Camille considers the situation. There's an opportunity here, but none of them is yet so drunk that there aren't any risks, that they can meet one another again tomorrow and say, we were drunk, we didn't mean it, let us never speak of it again.

He puts his hand on Danton's arm: don't go. There is no place in the Revolution for men who refuse to take any risks, and Camille is the Revolution. People call him reckless; they know nothing. They are small-minded, with small lives and small concerns. They will never amount to anything at all.

Don't go.

Danton sits very still. Camille doesn't move his hand. This is not a sudden, mad impulse. We are
not drunk; you can't leave here now and meet me tomorrow and assume I'll pretend this never happened.

Time to make a choice.

"You mentioned wine?" Danton says. I'll make my choice in my own time.

Camille laughs, moves his hand. He feels a little light-headed, as if he's drunk already.

"I'll go and fetch a bottle," Lucile says, rising. "Camille will find us some glasses."

"Yes." Camille gets up as well. We do this together, or not at all. "Three, I think."

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!