

1: the lecture (1)

[The set is made up of various paintings on easels in a studio setting. Rose stands next to an abstract painting made with chaotic strokes with a thick brown medium. She looks at it for a while before turning to address the audience.]

Rose It's hard to look at a piece by Miroslav Vangelov and not feel a surge of emotion.

Every single stroke, each meticulous application of the medium: a glorious display of the limitless capabilities of modern art. Every painting in his portfolio contains the DNA, the blueprints that hint at a complex, gifted... and tragically misunderstood mind. To make art... true, honest, uncompromising art – is to suffer. Any and all great works of art that resonate and reverberate in never-ending fractals of human emotions start their journey as a simple act of suffering.

2: the clinic

[Rose and Julius are sitting hand in hand and visibly distraught. A Doctor in front of them consults a clipboard]

Doctor And I see this was your second attempt?

Rose Yes. Yes, it was.

Doctor Unfortunately miscarriage with IVF is just as common as with non-assisted pregnancies.

Rose Right. I was... I was told.

Julius She was told.

Doctor And you're forty three?

Julius Forty four last week.

Rose That's right.

Julius We know she's not young, but there are many women her age – and even older – who managed to have a baby.

Doctor That's very true.

Julius There was a woman in Ukraine who gave birth in her late fifties.

Doctor I'll take your word for it.

Julius But we don't know what the problem could be. She did everything right. She didn't eat cheese, climb stairs, or lift anything. She... were you taking your folic acid?

Rose I was taking my folic acid.

Julius She was taking her folic acid.

Rose And the supplements for iron, calcium and selenium.

Julius And the supplements for iron, calcium and selenium.

Doctor Do you have any questions before...

Rose Yes, do I need to have another... you know... to remove the...

Doctor No. This time it was at a very early stage so you should just menstruate normally. It will be a bit heavier than usual though, so –

Julius *[slumping in his chair]* Ooh... *[The Doctor looks at him impassively.]*

Doctor It will be a bit heavier since it will...

Julius Ooh...

Doctor Is he okay?

Julius I'm fine... Sorry about that. I'll be... don't worry about me. Go on.

Doctor Right. So you can expect a heavier flow since the lining of your... *[Julius looks woozy.]*

Julius Ooh...

Doctor Shall I open the window or something?

Julius There's no need.

Rose Do you want to wait outside?

Julius No... No. I said I'll be there for you and I'm going to be there for you.

Rose You don't have to do this,

Julius I'm not leaving you alone this time. This is what support systems do – dammit. *[to the*

Doctor] You were saying.

Doctor Yes... uh... ... Your next menstrual cycle will be considerably –

Julius Oh God... *[He faints and the others look at him. Rose fans him.]*

Doctor That's unusual.

Rose Yeah... Julius gets a bit... He suffers from eurotophobia so...

Doctor Eurotophobia? I'm sorry... I... I don't believe I know that one. He has a fear of...

Rose Uh... female genitalia. *[There is a pause as Julius opens his eyes weakly.]*

Julius Hey.

Doctor Vaginas?

Julius Oh... *[He faints again.]*

Rose Yeah, he doesn't like the word much either.

Doctor He does know that this is a gynaecology clinic?

Rose Yes. I took this last one badly. I mean... even worse than the one before – so he wanted to come with me to... to support me. *[They look at Julius slumped on Rose.]*

Doctor Right. Well... Thank God he's here.

Rose He's doing his best.

Doctor It says here that you're currently married.

Rose That's right.

Doctor I hope you don't mind the question Mrs Tanner, but your husband... Is he still... Is he still in the picture?

Rose Of course. Very much so.

Doctor Good. It's just that you'll probably be needing a lot of emotional and physical support.

Rose Yes. We're aware of that.

Doctor Right. So maybe next time it might be best if he was the one to accompany you to appointments such as this one.

Rose He did.

Doctor I'm sorry?

Rose Julius is my husband.

Doctor This is your husband?

Rose Yes – of course.

Doctor Right... Of course... I beg your pardon. I assumed that...

Rose What?

Doctor Nothing... Nothing at all.

Julius *[coming to]* Ooh, sorry about that. Phew... What did I miss?

Rose / Doctor Nothing.

Julius Okay.

Doctor Now, if there are no other questions...

Rose Just one more: how long before we can try the IVF again?

Doctor Normally we advise around six months.

Julius Would there be... uh... maybe some kind of discount involved?

Doctor I'm sorry?

Julius Well, this is the second time we tried it. Usually when you buy something that doesn't work...

Rose Julius...

Julius I'm just saying.

Doctor The clinic doesn't make guarantees. I believe it was on your contract.

Julius I know. It's just... it's not cheap.

Rose We'll make it work, baby. We'll make it work.