

*Valentine's Roulette*

The silver gun spun wildly.

Its acrobatics on full display at the center of the table.

Ginnifer admired its dance, David Instagram'd a video.

Shawna sought to conquer it, Mayumi solemnly studied it.

Herb didn't like loud noises, Carol held her cross tightly.

The gun slowed.

Its barrel pointed directly at David. The video he'd been recording would have its own surprise ending for David's 418 followers.

"No way."

"But we agreed."

"You cheated!"

"Nobody cheated, this is what we decided. Together."

*Together*, David thought. *We're in this situation because we couldn't decide anything together.* He reached forward and caressed the grip on the pistol. It was a familiar cold. He racked his brain for some sense of where that familiarity had come from. His journal! A leather-bound booklet, a series of rice-pulp pages arranged delicately from front to back. As he lifted the gun he felt it as a pen. Like any good writer, the best work comes from intense introspection; he lifted the gun to his head. *Is this how I'll be remembered?*

"This is beyond fucked."

He pulled the trigger, the gun clicked.

The smile that had adorned Ginnifer's face as David picked up the gun had disappeared. For everyone else, there had been some sense of relief accompanying their fear. Who would be

next? *Will it be me?* They all quietly wondered. Except Ginnifer. Whose mind raced with all variety of swear words.

David stood up and removed his chair from the kumbayah circle of (self) hatred. He wore the same, disgusting smile on his face that Ginnifer had endured for countless years — specifically six. She could practically hear the triumphant music blaring between his ears. His glee threatened to boil over at any moment. He threw the gun back onto the table and everybody jumped.

“Be careful, you moron!” Mayumi called out.

“Don’t need to! Someone upstairs is watching our for me.”

Carol nodded her head in agreement. Ginnifer had just about as much as she could stomach.

“Don’t act like God’s got a boner for you, David.”

Shawna, who’d been sipping tea from her flask, suffered a spit-take.

“There’s a one-in-six chance you’d bite the bullet. It’s not a miracle this happened.”

Her venom was palpable, everyone in the room could taste it.

“Yeah. I suppose you’re right...” David began as he grabbed the gun and spun it again.

All looked on as the dance began anew.

David, with fire in his eyes. Ginnifer, death now her only escape.

Shawna, busy with the image of God’s erection, Mayumi, her fear beginning to swell.

Carol began to make her peace, Herb looked for another solution.

The gun slowed.

The barrel pointed at Mayumi, the gun mired in the reflection of her glasses.

“But now she’s got a one-in-five chance,” David offered. “And your odds ain’t gettin’ any better.”