

# EASTERN STANDARD

Him - I'm sorry sweetheart, it's been a mess.

Her - Peter, you know I hate it when people meet me late at restaurants. It's so unpleasant to wait for them.

It couldn't be helped.

I come late myself for that reason. Don't ask me. I'm not talking about Loomis. I'm not mentioning his name; I'm not talking about any of it. I think you have an admirer.

Fine. That's all I need.

You don't think he's cute?

I'm finding that all very irrelevant these days.

His friend is stuck on me.

What?

For weeks now, it's the strangest thing. We've sat at these two tables every lunch hour. He may be marital timber.

Oh, just you're type.

I think he follows me.

What?

So, why are you late?

No reason, nothing. I just had an absurd meeting with CBS.

He's still looking.

Which?

Both.

I pass.

No really, don't you at least want to flirt?

Frankly, the whole idea seems stomach-turning right now.

That's a switch.

Do you object?

Not at all. I never liked you as a tease. I just forgave for it. Anyway, I thought I was the one who was supposed to be having the trauma today. I suppose you saw my news splashed all over the front page of the Post again this morning. I'm not talking about it.

No I didn't I was distracted.

Do you think Loomis will go to jail? No, they'll probably find out he was a little involved not a lot involved and...

An outsider at the insider's ball. Poor Loomis. He always was feckless.

I broke up with him yesterday.

Okay?

No. I really did this time. I told him I couldn't stand it anymore. I told him, if he was capable of this, then I didn't know what we've been having all these years. I was very grand - I said, for five years you've cast your shadow over every crevice and corner of my life. And for some reason, I looked at that shadow and thought it was the sun -

You said this?

I don't know where it came from -

Some Bronte sister, I'd imagine.

I was unbelievably eloquent -

I would say -

All I know is that every second of our life together seems filthy to me now. And for the first time, I realise, I didn't fall in love, I was seduced.

Good for you! I'm proud of you!

And he said I betrayed him.

What?

Yes,

Well, he's just a sleazebag.

Well, that's what I told him. I said, Loomis, you're just a sleazebag.

Did that shut him up?

No.

Look there's something I've gotta tell you.

Me too -

All right,

Mine first...I had a dream last night. It was the most incredible dream. I was dancing on the rim of a champagne glass. I was wearing something shiny.

I'm going to be dead soon.

Peter...

I found out the other day. I was sweating at night and I had this sore throat that just seemed to last. Well, that's all gone now. I feel fine. I think I'm behaving beautifully, don't you?

Oh God...

It can't be that surprising. You knew my life.

Who have you told?

No one.

You'll have to.

No, I don't want anyone to know until it's absolutely necessary.

At least Mother...

You can't be serious. She knows less about my life than strangers who pass me on the street. This is hardly...

It's not fair to...

What, a double-whammy. Mom, there's something I have to tell you. I'm gay. But, it's all right. I'm dying.

What do I do?

Nothing.

That's impossible.

Proceed as usual.

You're the only thing I have left on this earth I still love.

Find replacements.

There aren't any. We're the best couple I've ever been a part of.

Ah, well, so you see...no, I don't want to lead people along anymore and make them fall in love with me just for the sport of it. And I don't want to be envied or even admired because right now, the whole thing seems retroactively disgusting and dangerous. I want to go into an easy retirement from all that, if that's possible. But, don't try to make me tell anybody until the last moment. It would be too out of character.

I know.

Nobody ever looked at me without thinking I'd live forever.