

Excerpt from...  
**Coffee and Fools**  
by Ethan Downing

**BRIAN AND NICOLE'S APARTMENT -- EVENING**

*BRIAN is writing at a laptop in the living room of the typical" right-out-of-college apartment: crummy, low-rent space, great parentally-donated furniture. He is sloppily good-looking, with all-natural, product-free bed-head. NICOLE enters with grocery bag. She could be more fashionable if she cared, but still sports an attractive thrift-store scarf and Kate Spade shoulder bag. She begins unloading the groceries in the kitchen area, alternating between the conversation and her task.*

*Note on Nicole: NICOLE can be constantly snacking on different foods throughout her scenes with BRIAN, giving her an air of indifference most of the time to the casual observer.*

NICOLE

I saw Deborah today.

BRIAN

Really?

NICOLE

Yeah. No shit.

BRIAN

Where?

NICOLE

Near Tiffany's. You know they already started hanging Christmas lights in Rockefeller?

BRIAN

Yeah, No shit?

NICOLE

Really.

BRIAN

How'd she look?

NICOLE

Like Deborah. It's not even Thanksgiving yet.

BRIAN

If you think that's bad wait until Christmas rolls around

NICOLE

I hate Christmas.

BRIAN

Why's that?

NICOLE

Brian... (beat)

*Nicole stares at Brian hard.*

NICOLE

...I'm fucking Jewish

BRIAN

I know. Why does that matter? I'm Catholic and I don't hate Passover.

NICOLE

A nun didn't call you a murderer in the second grade.

BRIAN

Yeah, well I didn't kill the son of God.

NICOLE

If you thought the first time was bad, wait and see what we have planned for Him when He comes back.

BRIAN

And my mother can't understand how I can be living with a girl like you and not dating her. Every year it seems earlier.

NICOLE

I think it has to do with age. Your perspective expands, so time decreases. She's a little heavier now.

BRIAN

Time will do that.

NICOLE

Yup. But not too bad. I picked up some groceries. I got us some more coffee.

BRIAN

You keep doing that.

NICOLE

So?

BRIAN

Neither of us drink it.

NICOLE

Yeah, my mom always put it on the grocery list.

BRIAN

Did you buy any Tampax? My mom used to put that on our list. (beat) That would have been funnier if you were a guy.

NICOLE

Brian, it's a fucking vagina, get over it. You stick your penis in it, babies come out of them, and once a month they bleed for a week.

BRIAN

B-b-b-b. shh. What do we say? Hmm?

NICOLE

"Babies are to be referred to as little aliens."

BRIAN

And...?

NICOLE

"Periods are God's monthly reminder that women are the root of all suffering." (Beat) What if we have guests?

BRIAN

I'm sure you have extras...

*She looks at him, disgusted, and then tosses a coffee can at him.*

Brian

Besides, when do we ever have guests? We don't even have a coffee maker, how do you expect to make it?

NICOLE

Well, the coffee is cheaper than a machine.

BRIAN

We already have five cans.

NICOLE

Yes, but *that* is hazelnut butterscotch.

BRIAN

*(Brian is almost cradling the can)* Good name.

NICOLE

Yeah.

BRIAN

Is it good?

NICOLE

Don't know.

BRIAN

Sounds good.

NICOLE

I know.

BRIAN

Isn't that what Debbie used to drink?

*NICOLE returns to her groceries.*

NICOLE

Don't know. I wasn't the one doing her.

Brian

Do you have to be so crass?

NICOLE

I'm sorry, I thought I was being too feminine for you again. "I wasn't the one *waking up* with her."

BRIAN

I think it was.

NICOLE

What was?

BRIAN

The coffee.

NICOLE

Oh.

BRIAN

Or was it Buttercream?

NICOLE

*(Looking through cabinets)* We have that one too.

BRIAN

That's kind of weird.

NICOLE

Yeah.

BRIAN

Do you think that she...?

NICOLE

I don't know, she didn't say.

BRIAN

Weird.

NICOLE

Yeah.

BRIAN

She looked good though?

NICOLE

She looked nice. She was wearing a jacket.

BRIAN

What type of jacket?

NICOLE

I don't know, do I look like Donatello Versace? Some sort of Marc Jacobs three-quarter-length, tweed bullshit. It had fur.

BRIAN

Where?

NICOLE

Around the neck. Around the collar.

BRIAN

Real?

NICOLE

I don't know. Since when do you care about animals?

BRIAN

I've always been a quiet proponent of advocacy for animals.(beat) Hair?

NICOLE

That would explain a lot about you and Debbie. I don't think so...chinchilla, maybe?

BRIAN

No, what was her hair like?

NICOLE

I-don't-know, it was under a hat.

*Brian is beginning to obsess about details. And Nicole is getting frustrated.*

NICOLE (CONT'D)

A brown hat, alright?

BRIAN

Alright. She always had great hair.

*NICOLE pops her head into the living room.*

NICOLE

Yeah, she did. Listen, is this going to be a problem for you?

BRIAN

*(Returning to his writing)* No, I'm just curious.

NICOLE

Yeah?

BRIAN

Yeah. Okay?

NICOLE

Okay. *(Exits to kitchen)*

BRIAN

Okay.

NICOLE

Fine. (beat) So when are you going to call her?

BRIAN

It's complicated. It's been a while. (beat) It wouldn't seem to make much sense to. (beat) Besides, it would probably be awkward.

NICOLE

Probably.

BRIAN

I'll worry about it later.

*NICOLE re-enters, handing Brian a slip of paper..*

BRIAN (CONT'D)

What's this?

NICOLE

That's her number. For when later comes around.

BRIAN

No it's not.

NICOLE

Oh, that's my gum. *(Nicole tears the paper in half)* That's her number. She thought you might have thrown it out.

BRIAN

Right. Want to see if we can make some of this coffee?

NICOLE

Which one?

BRIAN

I only like the smell.

*They go to the kitchen area and riffle through the cabinet. The shelves are largely bare. Coffee, accumulated over months of Nicole buying but not drinking, is the most abundant resource.*

NICOLE

Buttercream?

BRIAN

No, too strong.

NICOLE  
Hazelnut?

BRIAN  
Too soon.

NICOLE  
Columbian, dark?

BRIAN  
Sounds ethnic, I like it.