

Marjorie Tess

MARJORIE PRIME

(Marjorie just smiles pleasantly.)

(More confidential now) Sometimes you're so good, you're so *her*, like that bit with the subtle racism? It makes it harder when something—stumps you.

MARJORIE: Try to be patient with me.

TESS: I wish I could give you a spoonful of peanut butter. That would help.

(Marjorie smiles.)

You could smile less too. That would be more *her*. (Correcting herself) You. More you.

MARJORIE: Thank you for observing that rule. Pronouns are powerful things.

(Beat.)

Why don't you tell me more about myself?

TESS: I don't know where to start.

MARJORIE: I don't smile much, you said.

TESS: Not with your mouth open. Towards the end. You were embarrassed about your teeth.

MARJORIE: I'm vain.

TESS (Smiling slightly): A little.

MARJORIE: That's helpful.

TESS: You had a bit of a temper.

MARJORIE: I sound wonderful.

(Beat.)

Do I have other children, besides you?

TESS (The slightest hesitation): Just me.

MARJORIE: What a lot of pressure for you!

JORDAN HARRISON

(Tess is strangely moved by this. Marjorie wouldn't have offered this.)

Did I say something wrong again?

TESS: No. You didn't.

MARJORIE: You were saying, just you.

TESS: And you have three grandchildren, all grown. Well, ish.

MARJORIE: What do they do?

TESS: Micah is a chef. Mitchell does financial something.

Raping and pillaging. I gave up trying to understand.

MARJORIE (Committing this to memory): "Raping and pillaging."

TESS: Oh I didn't mean he really— Delete, delete!

Raina is the youngest. She's twenty-three. She's in a band.

MARJORIE: That's a job?

TESS: No it is not.

MARJORIE: Who do I like the most?

(Tess smiles a little.)

TESS: That was very Marjorie.

MARJORIE: Well?

TESS: Micah is the best about keeping in touch. Conscientious.

Mitchell not so much, but he makes up for it with charisma. But I think you liked Raina the most.

MARJORIE: She's musical, like me.

TESS: If you can call it music. I went to one of her concerts. She was playing a bag of broken glass.

MARJORIE: Do they visit?

(Beat.)

TESS: Raina doesn't talk to me. Her therapist said it would be better, for now. Someone I've never *met* has advised my