

## CHAPTER ONE OF SAGITTARIUS

IN WHICH

*Sagittarius can't liken Love,  
Leo drinks,  
and Aries directs*

\*\*\*

Our wedding gift doesn't represent Love. It doesn't express what Love is. It's just a crystal bowl wrapped into a drum.

"One gift. Two uses. Boom baby," Leo had said, playing it on the way over.

And in that sense, it is nice—but even if I used the bowl to drum the most beautiful rhythm of love, it still wouldn't capture what I needed it to capture.

You know?

It still wouldn't say what I needed it to say.

You know?

It would still just be a bowl, and something as huge as Love has to translate into something more than just a bowl.

You know?

Love must be like...

Something.

It must.

I won't accept Love as unlike nothing. I can't. It's too doubly negative. It doesn't make any sense.

Love has to be like...

I don't know.

The simile always falls apart.

For example, many guests have assembled for the wedding tonight. Together we say, *'Love is a miscellaneous collection of semi-erotic hopes, huzzah!'* But take each of us aside, and ask us as individuals, and our message loses strength. We don't have the language. Love becomes empty like our bowl is empty.

Oh!

If I could only express myself in a fuller way!

Sometimes expression is so cruel.

You know?

Think about it: it's effortless and beautiful for some people, but impossible and excruciating for others.

Oh!

It's just like...

Something.

I'm glad I hid our bowl in the palm fronds. It cannot be presented on the gift table. Not yet. No way.

I find Aries and Leo near the bar:

"Our gift, ladies, our gift is total shit," I say, "It's not what Love is like."

"It's fine," Aries says, "Where have you been?"

She slams my drink in front of me. Her force tells me she's been fighting with Leo again.

"But it's not representative," I say, "It doesn't translate what Love is. It's barely a piece."

"It better not be a piece," Leo says, and I hear the extension of their argument in her tone, "Zod knows we dropped enough on it for shitty one-shot cocktails."

"Leo, don't be embarrassing. Please, hush," says Aries.

"You hush," Leo responds, "I should've brought my cask flask."

"You mean your thermos?"

"Yes, Aries. Oh, but it would've clashed with the elegance of my black dress, no?"

Aries turns back to me and the force of her swivel confirms their fighting status.

"Where have you been?" she says.

"I've been at the gift table," I say, "Thinking..."

"Wow. For Zod's sakes, Saggy. Calm down. Don't worry. We got the bowl monogrammed. They're gonna love it."

"But it doesn't say anything, Leo. It's just a bowl. And a bowl is the emptiest representation of Love there is. Holy Zounds! A bowl is the shape of emptiness! A bowl accentuates lack! Oh, I have to smash it!"

Aries puts out a hand.

"Sit," she says, "empty or not it was still expensive. Sit. Stay."

I sit. I try to relax. I watch the sunset. Oh, the sun!

It's so miraculous!

Think about it: it's a universal and expansive force, illuminating all who turn their face to it, prejudicing no one, totally powerful no matter where it is in the entire world, a mighty thing maintaining its beauty even while it breaks...

Oh!

I can't help but think it's like...

I don't know.

My thoughts return to Love.

"But this is important!" I say, "This is a marriage! This is Love! Our friend is

committing her life to this thing and I don't even have a simile to put it on the map! So what's it like? Don't you care? Don't you wanna know?"

Leo leans across the table and picks up my empty glass.

"Honey," she says, "We're here for the wedding. Not the marriage. Now, I don't know what a marriage is, but I know a wedding is drinking and dancing and judging. So, another round of Comets? Hmmm? Samsies?"

She clinks the glasses and exits toward the bar.

"She's right," Aries says, "Relax. Chill. Have another drink. It'll be OK."

"Ok," I say, "One more drink. But then I've got to figure this out, Aries. I've got to know what Love is like."

What it resembles...

Or has connotations of...

"I've just got to know."