

CHAPTER ONE OF CAPRICORN

IN WHICH

*Capricorn enumerates,
Virgo instigates,
and Taurus counts*

Two thousand and six was the year the Bride and I graduated high school. That is why, as my wedding gift to her, I chose to donate two thousand and six bricks to the estate's botanical fund.

I wanted to

1. Celebrate the love of my best and closest friend, the Bride,
2. Memorialize her special day, and
3. Establish myself as the Runner Up Bridesmaid* in the eyes of everyone who will witness my Brick Bequeathal Ceremony*.

*Runner Up Bridesmaid and Brick Bequeathal Ceremony henceforth referenced as RUB and BBC respectively.

I had all two thousand and six bricks laid right here, in the center of this Garden, in the center of everything, where everyone will see them and come to know of our friendship.

I order Taurus to do a recount.

"Two thousand and six," she says.

Wonderful.

"Why didn't the Bride pick you as a Bridesmaid?" Virgo asks.

"Because she picked her sisters," I say.

"Impossible," Virgo responds, "There's no way those two Bridesmaids are sisters. The Red Head Bridesmaid makes the Blonde Bridesmaid look like a charity contest winner."

"I meant sorority sisters, Virgo. She went to a different college and met new people, OK? We grew apart, alright? It happens."

"Which means you and the Bride aren't close anymore."

"We are close, Virgo. We've just grown apart."

"Which means you're far away now. That's what that means."

I ignore her and focus on my objective: establishing myself as the RUB

in the eyes of everyone witnessing the BBC.

It's an act that requires

1. Exactitude,
2. Perseverance and,
3. Poetry.

Exactitude can be checked off the list because Taurus has already assured me that two thousand and six bricks are here and accounted for.

Perseverance is an evolving attribute that lasts as long as the process.

Poetry, as the third and most important requirement, additionally involves

- a. Inscribing each brick with lines from well-known love songs, which I've already done, thereby ensuring that,
- b. The witnesses to the BBC have something immortal with which to equate my position of RUB, as well as that,
- c. After having performed the BBC, the witnesses are so changed by the experience as to acknowledge and answer to my title of RUB as instinctively as they acknowledge and answer to their own name.

"It means you're far away now, Capricorn," Virgo says, "If you were close, the Bride would've picked you as one of her Bridesmaids. That's what that means."

I focus on the bricks, OK. My bricks. *Our* bricks. The Bride and I, OK. The bricks I donated to prove our friendship to everyone who will witness the BBC, OK.

The Bride and I are still close.

Dry spells happen in every relationship. I know the Bride like the back of my handbag and she knows me and everyone who witnesses the BBC is going to know this too.

"The point is, Virgo," I say, "if she had another Bridesmaid, it'd be me, OK. I'm the third girl, alright. The Runner Up Bridesmaid. RUB. That's me. End of story."

"Really? Is that what the Bride said to you?"

"The Bride will know what she says after I tell her."

"I don't think that makes sense."

"Well I don't think your opinion is correct."

"Well I don't think incorrect opinions are nearly as sad as incorrect facts."

“Well I don’t think this conversation is going to continue.”

“Well I don’t think that you really know what you’re saying.”

“Thank you, Virgo. Thank you very, very much.”

I order another recount.

“Two thousand and six.”

Perfect.

Everything is perfect.

The BBC will go off without a hitch and the Bride will acknowledge me as the perfect RUB. I know it and everyone else will come to know it too because that’s what happens with facts: people eventually come to know them.

Oh, I can’t wait.