

RS#1 Marie & Hertha

Start 

MARIE. Oh I'm terrible, come in.

HERTHA. God, journalists are pigeons, you can't get rid of them before they shit on everything.

MARIE. I wish I'd known you were coming. We don't have much food or wine.

HERTHA. I told you I was coming. I wrote you five times.

MARIE. Five times?

HERTHA. When I didn't hear back I said, "Dammit now I'm nervous, I'll just get on a boat."

MARIE. I'm sorry. I stopped opening the mail. It's full of such loathing.

HERTHA. Task number one, then. Loathing has never had much effect on me. I'll go through the mail, I'll get food, I'll buy a saber of some sort to wave at those gossips.

Marie doesn't know what to do with this kindness.

MARIE. Thank you. You didn't have to come.

HERTHA. I know that. You didn't have to have an affair with Paul but you did. These things happen. We do things for people we love that make very little sense. And you love him, and I love you, so I got on a boat, punched a few journalists, and am now ready to comfort you. God, I'm furious about all this. I'm livid. I can't imagine what you're feeling.

MARIE. I might've finally *stopped* feeling actually. I can't decide if I'm shattered or slowly evaporating. I can hardly fathom that when they say "homewrecking harlot" they mean me.

HERTHA. Goddamn the press for doing this to you. They wouldn't do this to a man, you know. They aren't! I hear all manner of vileness about you, but Paul is called only an "unfaithful husband," and even that is said with a bit of congratulations.

MARIE. Even I look at what they write and think, "What a terrible woman that Madame Curie must be."

HERTHA. Don't you think that. Not for a minute.

MARIE. A minute can be such a long time.

HERTHA. Don't worry. I've already worked out a list of people to murder.

MARIE. Hertha.

HERTHA. It's not a *long* list.

MARIE. Don't even joke of such things.

HERTHA. Oh believe how seriously I would take it. I'm an engineer darling, we fix things any way we can. Now what else can I do? Tea? Coffee? Or I can start another list.

MARIE. I don't know, I don't know...anything. Every day it's not over it pulls me under a bit more. I'm starting to think I can't survive it.

HERTHA. Marie.

MARIE. Or that I shouldn't.

HERTHA. *Yes you damn well can and should.*

MARIE. *Not when they're dragging me and my girls deeper into hell each day.*

My girls, Hertha.

Nothing is worth this.

HERTHA. I know. I know that. That's why I'm here. How are the girls?

MARIE. They're trying to be strong but they don't know what to think.

HERTHA. Poor, sweet things. I'll distract them with suffragist ideology and chocolate.

MARIE. Can I have some chocolate too?

HERTHA. Only if you eat your dinner which will be steak because that's the only thing I really know how to cook. Good? Good. ← **End**