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**LASCIVIOUS SOMETHING**  
a play by Sheila Callaghan

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## LASCIVIOUS SOMETHING

### AUTHOR'S NOTE:

A stroke (/) marks the point of interruption in overlapping dialogue. When the stroke is not immediately followed by text, the next line should occur on the last syllable of the word before the slash— not an overlap but a concise interruption

### ACT ONE

AUGUST is a weathered, emaciated, older-than-his age 35. He's covered in dirt and his fingers are stained red and covered in small cuts.

He is out in the field, tending his vines.

It is 1980.

### AUGUST

My one hand. This hand, with its million minor cuts. Watched it move through the air. Watched it stretch its fingers toward the neck. The middle one trembling like a thin live wire. Curling as they reached the neck, curling around the back, finger finger finger finger thumb, then TOUCH, cool, like everything good in life, you know that kind of cool, and the red inside... the word I want to use is LUSH, red lush like the million minor cuts on my hands... but cooler than blood...

I knew what I was doing.

I held it by its neck, I felt its cool. I wondered if my blood would cool with it. I wondered if it could sense my touch somehow, if the atoms spun differently beneath my palm. I stood a respectful distance from it. Gripping. Not gripping, something more respectful than gripping. Because *I* was the one being gripped, you see. So.  *Holding*, and I let the air between us fill and fill, with. With. That emotion you reserve only for the most holy of objects.

I held it by its neck. Then, after several moments, I lifted it. With this hand. Then I moved this hand beneath for support. A new touch, the circle of ridges pressing into my thumb... A pattern of small black lines crested my thumb, the soot and oil from between the ridges. 70 year old soot. Cris-crossing my minor cuts.

Brought it upstairs, placing both feet on each step, and allowed it to be taken from my hands just long enough to be placed into my carrier. How much, I heard myself asking. And she told me. My heart did not race as I thought it would, but I *did* bite my tongue. My blood was warm.

I barely saw the money leaving my fist, damp cash, barely saw the roiling concern in the woman's eyes—she had noticed my cuts, I suppose, or maybe the worn soles of my sandals—and when the carrier was handed back to me its weight was sweeter than any weight that had *ever* loaded my pockets.

At home... You did WHAT, she said... but I hardly heard her. She looked like a little brown bean, a little naked brown bean on the white sheets while I was plaster and roof and sky and clouds and black space. You did WHAT she said again, but with less conviction, and I realized she was making herself okay with it. With the prospect of leaner dinners and even leaner laundry trips. With using the cheapest of chemicals in the sink of our darkroom-slash-lavatory. With splitting open her empty paint tubes with a razor just to get the tiny half-brushful still inside...

And then she said. In her smallest, warmest voice. I hope you know what you're doing.

I did.

He disappears.

DAPHNE is seated at a worktable on a porch. She is 24 and poised, striking; a dark flower with a long willowy stem. She wears a work-shirt and jeans.

A modest, aging home sits behind her. She is surrounded by a trellis with grape leaves and bunches of fruit hanging down. She wears a sweater—it is slightly chilly. November in the Mediterranean.

She is scraping into a clay block. Every now and then she will consult a photo of the property.

LIZA appears. She is 35, also weathered beyond her years, out of breath. She carries a small book and a small bag and wears a large-brimmed hat.

LIZA

H-hello, I.

DAPHNE looks up and smiles. LIZA flips through her phrase book.

LIZA (cont.)

Sorry, *Ya-mas, Keery Moo. / Eethen*

DAPHNE

(Greek accent- much like Spanish)

I speak your language.

LIZA

(out of breath)

Oh, Super. There's a. Sign actually. TWO signs, but. A man with a donkey. Could I sit?

DAPHNE

Please.

LIZA

Thanks. I'm so winded! Kept thinking I was at the Summit but then there'd be ANOTHER... so and gosh the donkey had like a beard?

DAPHNE

Ah.

LIZA

So I started up the Thing again, but the path was all overgrown

DAPHNE

My husband has been very busy. He means to cut down the wild grasses but it is harvest and we have only one boy full-time.

LIZA

Do you know the donkey I'm talking about?

DAPHNE

You are American?

LIZA

I am. It had a beard. And eyebrows.

DAPHNE

My husband is American. He does not see Americans often. We get British, Germans. Mostly the summer.

LIZA

And the fella was SUCH an excuse me asshole. I think he hates your. I don't know what he hates exactly.

DAPHNE

You say that why?

LIZA

He kept spitting. *Ftou, ftou!* Greek-greek-greek, *ftou!*

DAPHNE

He is short and like a prune

LIZA

Prune-like, yes, and. Wheew. Angry?

DAPHNE

My husband will come up for his omelet shortly. Will you have some omelet with him?

LIZA

Um. Sure

DAPHNE

You have arrived on a special day. It is the last day of harvest for the season.

LIZA

Terrific.

DAPHNE

How long do you anticipate staying with us?

LIZA

Hadn't figured / actually

DAPHNE

We charge ten American dollars per night, or we have a weekly rate of sixty American dollars.

LIZA

Okay.

DAPHNE stands and retrieves a decanter filled with wine from the corner. She hands LIZA a glass and fills it.

DAPHNE

Welcome to our Island.

LIZA

Oh, it's... kind of early but what the heck! I'm on VACATION. Salut.

LIZA raises her glass.

LIZA (cont.)

You aren't having any?

DAPHNE

I cannot drink. I am expecting.

LIZA

Well. That is. N--wonderful news. Congratulations!

LIZA drinks deeply from the glass. DAPHNE returns to her sketching,

LIZA (cont.)

SWEET.