



YOGA FOR YOU

Mother has always been incredibly flexible. The muscles in her calves and thighs are long and lean, and she moves with the supple grace of a ballerina. There's not an extra ounce of flesh on her lovely, sculpted arms, raised now over her head as my sister and I pull her wedding gown into place, smoothing it over her narrow hips and adjusting the peasant ruffle at the top. It fits her as well as it did when she first wore it forty-four years ago. Sylvie has brought a picture of our parents on their wedding day and thinks we should get a picture of them today, the day of their vows renewal, holding this photo. I don't argue with Sylvie, but I'm going to need some serious liquor to get through this.

We fasten the loops of pearls she's wearing and brush her shoulder-length gray hair. Sylvie insists that she wear it exactly as she did the first time she and Dad married although I think it would be lovely in a chignon at the base of her neck. Mother was something of a hippie back in the day, but she has an elegant self-assuredness now that will undoubtedly elude me always.

The minister is already here, the small cake and champagne are assembled on a table in the enclosed courtyard of this nursing home, and the photographer should arrive at any moment. Dad is in his room, unaware that his daughters are readying his wife in a room down the hall, although he hopefully remembers that today is the big day. Sylvie had the florist make a bouquet of tiny pink tea roses with a ring of baby's breath encircling them, the final nod to authenticating Mother's original wedding day ensemble.

"Isn't it so sweet, Kit?" she asks me, her voice pleading with me to share her excitement.

"So sweet," I echo as I offer a silent prayer: Please, Dad, recognize Mother today. Pull it together.