

The Session

Steven Gould

E - The armchair is nice. Some people like to sit or stretch out on the couch. Whatever you're most comfortable with.

K - Well, lying down makes me nervous. I think . . . the chair. ^{↳ intro} It was good of you to see me on such short notice.

E - I don't "see" people. I help them see themselves.

K - I feel quite strange coming here like this. I'm not sick, you know.

E - Nobody said you were. Sometimes all we need is someone to talk to, to sort things out in our heads. It doesn't mean were sick. It often means, though, that were unhappy with some aspect of our lives.

K - Well I guess that's right. It's not as if I shouldn't be happy I have the whole happy - ever - after package: wonderful husband, baby girl, servants, fines clothes. I don't know why I shouldn't be happy.

E - Yet you aren't happy.

K - Right I'm not. There's tension between me and my husband.

E - Tell me about it.

K - The first year was great. All my problems were over. Then my father died, and we moved back there to take over running things. But there were all the childhood memories.

My husband and I apart longer, but I was pregnant by then, picking out baby clothes and interviewing nannies.

It was when she turned one that I started getting these fits of depression. Usually while watching my daughter play.

E - What did you feel? Grief? Anger?

K - Sad. I'd leave my daughter to the nanny sometime I don't trust myself with her. When she's being bad. I know - that's normal behavior for a two year old. My temper is probably not normal.

E - Why do you think that is?

K - Can't you tell me? This is what you do?

E - Yes and no. I know a great many things and suspect others, but for me to tell you what I know or suspect is not going to do any good unless you're ready to see it for yourself. I know this seems roundabout, but what we're doing is exploring

things in a way that lets you discover what causes you the feel and behave as you do. If I reflect things back at you or ask questions, it's to steer you to where you can find insight.

K - Oh.

E - So, why do you think your temper isn't normal?

K - Well, I react to things way out of proportion. Something that I know is a trivial annoyance still causes me to fly into a rage. Sometime it feels like if I let myself get really angry.

E - It sounds like you've been holding anger for a long time.

K - Well yes, that's right.

E - Let's talk about that.

K - About what?

E - Well, why don't we start with how you met your husband?

K - Oh every body knows that.

E - I want your viewpoint.

K - He saved my life. I was suffocating and the next thing I know this guy is giving me mouth to mouth. We were no where near a hospital and those bozos I was working for were useless for something like that.

E - Bozos?

K - They come to the Christmas dinner, and always bring my daughter something nice.

E - Why did you run away from home?

K - You talked to my stepmother all the time.

E - My relationship with your, uh, stepmother was not a two way thing.

K - I don't see why she has anything to do with my problems with my husband!

E - Don't you?

K - No!

E - You're angry right now. Why?

K - I'm not angry!

Maybe I am! Especially when I think about that bitch. She tried to kill me.

E - Tell me bout it.

K - Well I don't see why we have to go over the thing again. . .

E - Please.

K - She burst into my room, raging, furious about something. She grabbed me by the back of the neck, and dragged me down stairs. Karl was there he looked white, and really grim, So I didn't ask him any questions until we were deep in the woods.

"What's going on?" I finally ask.

"It's that woman, lassie, she's gone crazy. I'll try to convince her that you're dead, now. Run away or we're both dead."

E - How do you feel about that?

K - Feel? How do you think I felt? I was so mad that I wanted both of them dead. But Karl took the lamp with him. I got lost.

E - So, she abused and betrayed you, yet again. You're pretty angry right now?

K - Yes.

E - How angry?

K - Extremely angry. I feel like I'm going to ex--

E - Explode?

There's a handkerchief on the end table.

K - Sorry I don't know what came over me.

Is that what you mean? That I had to see things for myself?

E - This is a start.

K - So this rage I have is really against my stepmother.

E - Well let's talk about that too.

K - What do you mean?

E - What happened to your mother?

K - She died when I was little. She was beautiful and kind and she sang me lullabies.

E - So your father remarried?

K - Yes. But I don't remember the wedding. I remember the first time she came into the nursery. She hit me. Later that year she pushed me down the stairs.

E - Why?

K - I was bad.

E - Do you really believe a child deserves to be push down a stairway? Whatever they've done.

K - Well, no, but a little discipline is necessary. My father did say she got "carried away".

E - I see, what do you remember of the funeral?

K - I don't think I went.

E - You don't remember the funeral?

K - No.

E - Why do you think that is?

K - It was horrible. My mother died and I didn't want to deal with it. I read in *Damsels Who Love Too Much* that one can suppress memories like that.

E - So why do you remember all the things that your "stepmother" did?

K - Maybe after the death of my mother -- someone who loved me-- the abuse of someone that didn't care wasn't significant.

E - I think it's very significant. Do you accept that I've been around long enough to meet your mother?

K - You knew my mother?

E - Oh, yes.

K - What does that mean?

E - Your father never remarried.

K - What are you talking about?

E - I don't lie.

K - That doesn't make any sense. Of course she died. Or that creature wouldn't have come to ruin my childhood.

E - Mothers love their children.

K - Of course.

E - Your mother would never push you down the stairs.

K - No she wouldn't.

E - Your mother held you and sang you lullabies and was kind.

K - Yes

E - I'm sorry. Your mother didn't die until she "overdid it" at your wedding. Your father never remarried. It's the truth.

—
Sometimes its' easier to believe a parent has died and been replace by an evil creature than to believe they would_

K - No! It's not true.

E - You know I don't lie. Why are you crying? Why does it hurt so much?

K - Why? Why would she hurt me so?

E - I don't know why. I only know what she did.

—
I see we're going to need more handkerchiefs. Don't stop. It's a good thing to cry, a healing thing. I'd hold you if I could, but that's hardly possible. You deserve to be held, just as you deserved to be loved and held as a child. That's something you need to grieve for, a childhood you weren't allowed to have.

—
Try the couch. It's almost like a hug . . . Is that better? Good.

You're already farther from danger than you were when you walked into this room. Recovery takes work, but it isn't impossible. Overcoming denial is a major step and you've already done that. You can do the rest.

—
It's all right. I'll help you all I can.

K - Really?

E - I don't lie. I can't. That's what started this whole mess in the first place, isn't it.

K - It wasn't your fault. She didn't have to ask. She was the one who was obsessed with asking the question.

E - Yes

K - I hope my daughter is as beautiful as she was. I mean, that's all I ever wanted to please her, and she hated me for it.

E - Better hope for your daughter's happiness instead.

K - Could I ask? I mean would it be too much trouble if I checked?

E - Checked?

K - You know--mirror, mirror on the ---

E - You really don't want to do that.

K - I guess not. When should I see you again?

E - Same time next week.

K - All right. I'll have a servant bring up more handkerchiefs--and I'll have him clean your glass while he's at it.

E - Thank you, Your Highness.

K - No, no--thank you, Mirror.