

## CLEMENTINE

Dear Mrs. Post--

I have a question about:

Writing a letter to a man who is not my husband.

This man is my doctor, and he's been very helpful to me over the last two years. The poor soul is a widower and I feel-- Look, Mrs. Post. I understand that you strongly advise a married woman to NOT write a letter to a man who is not her husband, but I strongly feel my doctor deserves my letter of gratitude. Where does this rule come from? I don't agree with it. As a matter of fact, I don't agree with most of your rules--

I know you're a divorcee. Most halfway intelligent women know you've been a divorcee for over fifty years. So my question is why do you give us, the female sex, so many rules that only contribute to a man's freedom? I want you to answer my question--

You're not going to print my concerns, are you, Mrs. Post?

You never do--

I--

(Clementine takes in a breath.)

In any case. Other than this:

Letter to a man who is not my husband, my life is just--

*Lovely.*

Yours truly:

Exasperated Epistler--

From North Orange, New Jersey.

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I'm feeling that feeling again. Like something is buried somewhere between my breastbone and my pelvis. Like perhaps there were still pieces inside of me when you removed my...And now the pieces have turned dark. Like rotting leftovers. Sinking. Deeper.

It will be two years next week.

Every fall, I knit a red scarf for Arthur made of superfine Alpaca. One of my "wifely" duties. I just want to finish the damn scarf, but I am completely and utterly distracted. Guess what I'm distracted by? A letter. I'm writing you a letter to show my gratitude--

Oh, I know I shouldn't. It's not proper. And I'm sure Mrs. Grundy and Mrs. Bruno would find a way to get their grubby hands on it--

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I simply want you to tell me that you slept with my husband.

I will give you money--

It can happen however you'd like it to happen. A dinner in Manhattan and a night at The Plaza. You'll have to enter through the back door, but still, Arthur will treat you nice. He's actually not a bad conversationalist when he's loosened up with some spirits. I will pay you a year's salary so you can leave town, no questions asked. But either way, I'll need my *proof*. Which includes a receipt and your panties, preferably soiled. This is for my children. They're the innocent victims here. You love *children*, don't you? You can let me know your answer in a few days.

I'm sorry. I don't know what came over me. I've never threatened somebody's life with knitting needles before.