

# SCHISM

By Jeff Dunne

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## CHARACTERS

EVE	A lonely woman, perhaps late 20's or early 30's, who was married to Mark before...
MARK	A distraught man, slightly older than Eve and Katherine.
KATHERINE	Mark's current wife, roughly his age.

## SETTING

A small cabin in the middle of the woods.

SCENE

*(Eve is sitting at a table in a small, wood cabin. There's a rattle at the door, and she jumps up.)*

EVE

Mark?

*(Mark enters.)*

MARK

Hi, Evy.

*(There's an awkwardness between them, a desire to hug but they aren't really sure, so they don't and just look at each other.)*

You look... beautiful. You haven't changed a bit.

EVE

You like? *(She turns to show off her outfit.)*

MARK

You know I do.

EVE

It's a little much for the cabin, huh.

MARK

It's perfect. It's... it's good to see you, Eve. Really good.

EVE

I wasn't sure you'd come.

MARK

Honestly, I wasn't sure I would either.

EVE

I know this must be difficult for you. And it's been so long, I...

MARK

It's... not easy. Either way.

EVE

I'm glad you're here.

*(They pause and consider each other. Then...)*

What did you tell her?

MARK

Nothing. What could I say? That I'm still in love with you? Katherine doesn't want to hear that.

EVE

Of course. But if you just vanish without saying anything, she's...

MARK

I told her that I needed to get away. Reconnect with my past for the weekend. Work through some things.

EVE

Oh, Mark. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

MARK

Don't be. I'm glad I came. Seeing you is... it's like a warm blanket on a cold night.

EVE

It's been cold, my love. Cold and lonely.

MARK

I'm sorry. I'm sorry I couldn't come sooner. Or more often.

EVE

I understand. You have a new life now.

MARK

I still think about you. Every day. I miss you so much.

EVE

You want to hear something funny? Sometimes I still make lunch for you. Isn't that absurd? I mean, I know you can't...

MARK

That's not absurd at all. I still walk in the park in Trevor Heights. Not as often any more, but at least once or twice a week. And I always imagine that I'm walking there with you. Like we used to. I stare up, and remember when we'd talk of myths and the constellations. I still remember that first walk. Do you remember it?

EVE

Oh, love. Of course I do. You know I could never forget that.

MARK

I couldn't believe that you were actually with me.

EVE

You said you thought I wasn't real. You said I was a dream, and that I was sent from the heavens.

MARK

And you said that maybe all the stars in the sky are really dreams. Just dreams that were waiting for the right dreamer to come by and...

EVE

And then you kissed me.

MARK

I think you kissed me.

EVE

Maybe it was a little bit of both.

*(They stare at each other, awkward and unsure of how to proceed. Eventually Mark says...)*

MARK

I brought you a present.

EVE

A present? What on Earth...

MARK

Close your eyes.

*(Eve gives him a look, but then does. Mark goes outside and gets a box of Froot Loops with a bow on it. He brings it in and puts it on the table.)*

MARK (CONT)

Okay.

EVE

Froot Loops. My favorite dinner.

*(Mark smiles, remembering. Then they laugh together, appreciating something that is clearly special and private to them.)*

MARK

Happy anniversary.

EVE

I have something for you too. It's in the kitchen. Wait here.

*(Eve exits, and Mark wanders the cabin, reminiscing. After a few moments, there's the sound of someone approaching and then the door opens and Katherine enters.)*

MARK

Katherine... what are you... how did you...

KATHERINE

I followed you.

MARK

You—

KATHERINE

What are you doing out here?

MARK

Nothing.

*(Katherine walks over to the table, looks at the box of cereal with a bow on it.)*

KATHERINE

Nothing.

MARK

Look, I just... I just needed some time to be alone.

KATHERINE

Alone? Really? Interesting.

*(Katherine walks around, looking at the cabin as she continues...)*

You just happened to drive to some run-down cabin in the middle of the woods and said, “hmm, this looks like a nice spot to come be by myself”.

MARK

It’s more complicated than that.

KATHERINE

I’m sure it is. My husband says he’s going away for a few days, to... connect with his past. He then stops at a Hallmark store to get a ribbon, and a grocery store to buy a single box of Froot Loops.

MARK

You followed me?

KATHERINE

Yes. I did. I was worried about you. Although I’ll say that when I saw you walk out of that supermarket with nothing more for an entire weekend than a box of cereal, my reasons for following you changed.

MARK

This looks bad, but it’s—

KATHERINE

You don’t even like Froot Loops. In fact, the one time I bought a box you specifically asked me to never get them again.

MARK

You can’t understand.

KATHERINE

So explain it.

MARK

This isn’t just some random cabin.

KATHERINE

Don't treat me like I'm an idiot. Like I'm going to be distracted by some Paul Bunyan story about how you like to kick back with a little casual lumberjacking...

MARK

I—

KATHERINE

Are you alone here?

*(Mark hesitates, unsure of just how to answer.  
Finally...)*

MARK

Yes.

KATHERINE

That took a remarkably long time to figure out. Honestly, Mark, you can't lie to save your life. You're having an affair, aren't you?

*(Mark looks at her, unsure what to say.)*

Well, I guess that answers that.

MARK

No.

KATHERINE

No?

MARK

Like I said, it's not what it looks like.

KATHERINE

Okay. This should be interesting. Tell me what it is.

MARK

This cabin...

*(Katherine starts to interrupt, but Mark pushes on.)*



MARK (CONT)

No, just listen. This cabin... it's important to me. Remember how my parents would go away in the summers for their research, and I'd go stay with my grandfather? He used to take me here. Each summer. We'd come out for about a week, and we'd rough it.

KATHERINE

For a week? There isn't even electricity.

MARK

Right. That's what made it so wonderful. We'd bring a stove. One of those portable jobs. And we'd hunt. Well, Pappy would. And we'd cook whatever he caught. *(Pause, as he remembers.)* A lot of stew. I'd get water from a stream that's nearby and...

KATHERINE

Mark...

MARK

This isn't just some random place. This cabin is my past.

KATHERINE

*(Assessing...)*

And yet you never mentioned it. How is it that in the eight years we've known each other, you never once mentioned something that you are now describing as such an important part of your childhood?

MARK

Because later, some stuff happened here that... it's hard to talk about.

KATHERINE

I didn't see a stream when I drove up.

MARK

It's back that way. Away from the road.

KATHERINE

Uh huh. Okay. I tell you what, I'm going to go look. And there better be one.

*(Katherine exits, and a moment later Eve comes in from the other room.)*

EVE

She left?

MARK

For a moment. She'll be back soon.

EVE

Oh, Mark... What are we going to do?

MARK

I don't know.

EVE

I should go.

MARK

Go? Go where?

EVE

Do you want me to stay?

MARK

Of course I want you to stay. How could I not want you in my life? You're...

EVE

What? I'm what?

MARK

I don't want you to go. I can't lose you again.

EVE

And I don't want to go, but what is Katherine going to say if...

MARK

I don't know. I just don't...

EVE

Love... Here. Sit. I'll go put on a kettle and make some tea. That always helped you find some peace.

MARK

You're sweet, but I don't think that will help.

EVE

You never know what might help. Sit. Here. I'll be right back.

*(Mark pulls out a chair and sits as Eve exits into the kitchen. A moment later, Katherine returns. She stares at him, then goes and sits in another chair at the table, her back to the door to the kitchen.)*

KATHERINE

Mark...

MARK

I know. I owe you an explanation.

*(There's a long silence.)*

KATHERINE

I'm waiting.

MARK

You know that I used to be married before we met.

KATHERINE

Yes. But you said that Eve left you.

MARK

That's right.

KATHERINE

Mark, I'm trying to be understanding here, but if you've got something to say, you better spit it out, because my patience is wearing very thin.

*(There's the whistle of a tea kettle from the kitchen, and Mark looks over at the door.)*

What? *(She looks at the door.)* Where does that... No. Are you telling me that she...

MARK

When I said that she left, that wasn't... exactly true.

*(The whistling stops.)*

KATHERINE

Oh my god. She's here, isn't she.

*(Katherine starts to get up, but Mark reaches out and takes her arm.)*

MARK

No, please. Just... just... let me explain.

*(Katherine sits down, clearly at a loss for how to feel – angry, devastated, numb...)*

The loss of Eve was very painful for me. I thought I could get over it. Past it. Through it. That it would grow easier in time. But it never really did.

*(The door opens, and Eve appears, a cup of tea in her hands. She slowly starts making her way to the table.)*

About five years ago, I... I started seeing her.

KATHERINE

*(Whispered, to herself...)*

Oh my god.

MARK

Not often. Just once in a blue moon... we'd find each other... somehow. We'd talk. And then as time went on, I began seeing her more frequently. I finally realized that I never got over the loss. It never diminished, never...

KATHERINE

So all this time. Nearly our whole marriage...

MARK

Please. Let me finish. You don't understand.

*(Katherine puts her face in her hands as Eve reaches the table and places the tea in front of Mark. Eve goes to stand behind him, close but still not touching.)*

When I said that Eve left me, that wasn't... She didn't... just go away.

*(Katherine looks up at Mark. We suddenly discover that Katherine can't see Eve.)*

KATHERINE

So what am I supposed to do? Just smile and wish you all the best? What are you telling me, Mark? Just spit it out.

EVE

Tell her, Mark. You have to tell her.

MARK

I don't think you'll understand, but...

KATHERINE

I'm trying, Mark. I'm trying to be understanding, but you're making it impossible. How can I understand what you won't even tell me?

EVE

Go on.

MARK

Eve's here.

KATHERINE

I'm not an idiot, Mark. I figured that part out. She's in there, isn't she. (*She points to the kitchen.*)

MARK

No. She's right here.

KATHERINE

What the hell are you—

MARK

In the room. Here. She's standing right behind me.

KATHERINE

What are you talking about?

MARK

Eve... When I said that she left me...

KATHERINE

Mark?

EVE

Tell her, my love. She needs to know.

MARK

Eve died. Ten years ago. Today. On our anniversary.

KATHERINE

I see. So... When you said that you've been seeing her...? Do you mean...

MARK

Yes. Seeing her. She appears to me, and we... talk.

KATHERINE

She's here right now?

*(Mark nods, and stands up. He motions to Eve.)*

MARK

She's right here.

KATHERINE

*(Standing...)*

I don't know what... What do you...

MARK

I don't know. I don't know. But it's true.

KATHERINE

I... *(She breaths a deep sigh.)* It kind of makes sense, I suppose. In some nonsensical way. I noticed things changing these last few years, although I could never put my finger on what it was that was different about you.

MARK

That's why it wasn't easy to answer when you asked if I was having an affair. Is that what this has been? I don't know. But I had to come here today. You see, this is where...

KATHERINE

Where?

MARK

This is where she died. It was an accident. We were rafting, and...

KATHERINE

I see.

MARK

That's why I never told you about this place. Why I never came back here. Until now.

KATHERINE

So what does this all mean? What are you telling me? That you want to... That you want... what?

MARK

I don't know! I don't know what I want. I don't know what I... what I expect you to say. I love you. I love you so much, but... I love her too.

KATHERINE

Mark. I can't even begin to know what to tell you. I suppose I do understand. At least a little. I mean, I know I can't really understand what this all means for you, but I do understand the need to hold on. But I have needs too.

MARK

I know.

KATHERINE

If you can't move into the future, you need to tell me, because I can't live with half a husband. That's not unfair of me, is it?

EVE

Love, you won't leave me, will you?

MARK

No.

KATHERINE

And maybe not at this exact moment... but soon...

EVE

I love you so much. You know that you're everything to me, don't you?

KATHERINE

You have to make a choice.

MARK

I know.

*(Lights out.)*