

## Step One:

*Find something worth blowing up*

Alexander has his father's eyes, deeply green with flecks of gold. If Meredith focuses on the eyes, not his mouth moving, certainly not his words as he says: "I asked her to marry me," just his eyes, then Meredith can trick herself into thinking she's with her husband, Harry, once again.

"Ma?" Alexander's left hand, already on the doorknob, his right clicking the car's unlock button on his keychain. "Did you hear me? She said yes."

"Is she pregnant?" Meredith slows down her cadence on the word *pregnant*, her brain synapses straining to connect multiple points: would this be happy news or not?

"Seriously, Ma? You're unbelievable." Alexander's tone falls flat, Meredith's tactlessness a constant disappointment, it would seem. She wants to start over, but the fuses in her brain won't spark, and now her attention drifts to the UPS driver who pulls up in front of the neighbour's house. The 27<sup>th</sup> day in a row.

The driver leaps from the vehicle. A young man with shaggy blonde hair tufted out from under his hat, a thick beard stuck to his face like roadkill. His arms strain as he carries a large box up the front steps, leans it against the side of the house, rings the bell and turns to leave before anyone answers.

"What do you think it could be?" Meredith asks, peeling back her front curtains to peer out.

“What are you talking about?”

“The packages. Do you think I should be concerned?”

“I just told you that Olivia and I are getting married, and you’re talking about your neighbour’s packages? This is exactly why Olivia thinks you don’t like her.”

“You don’t think it’s anything illegal, do you?”

“Ya, Ma. I think your middle-aged neighbours are running some sort of human trafficking business through UPS. I gotta go.”