

Elizabeth

MRS. GIVINGS. I think I should die of sorrow, in your place.

ELIZABETH. Die of sorrow? A mother of two cannot die of sorrow.

MRS. GIVINGS. But how do you go on, after?

ELIZABETH. My mother told me to pray each day since I was a little girl, to pray that you borrow everything, everyone you love, from God. That way your heart doesn't break when you have to give your son, or your mother, or your husband, back to God. I prayed Jesus, let me be humble. I borrowed my child, I borrowed my husband, I borrowed my own life from you, God. But he felt like mine not like God's he felt like mine more mine than anything.

God must have this huge horrible cabinet – all the babies who get returned – and all those babies inside, they're all crying even with God Himself to rock them to sleep, still they want their mothers. So when I started to feel something for this baby, for your baby, I thought no, take her back God.

When I first met her all I could think was: she is alive and Henry is not. I had all this milk – I wished it would dry up. Just get through the year, I thought. Your milk will dry up and you will forget. The more healthy your baby got, the more dead my baby became. I thought of her like a tic. I thought – fill her up and then pop! You will see the blood of my Henry underneath. But she seemed so grateful for the milk. Sometimes I hated her for it. But she would look at me, she would give me this look – I do not know what to call it if it is not called love. I hope every day you keep her – you keep her close to you – and you remember the blood that her milk was made from. The blood of my son, my Henry. Good-bye, Mrs. Givings.

MRS. GIVINGS. Good-bye, Elizabeth.

*Elizabeth nods.*

*Mrs. Givings touches Elizabeth's elbow.*

*Elizabeth pulls away and exits, to the nursery.*