

[The Daylight Marriage, excerpt]

Thirty hours after he had kissed Hannah good-bye and headed off for work, Lovell waited, his chest pounding, on the front steps of a brick bunker, where by a set of automatic glass doors he met Bob Duncan, a short, doughy detective with sprawling black eyebrows and a crushing handshake.

“You’re not a small man,” Duncan said, looking up at Lovell’s face.

“My parents are both tall.” At six feet, five inches, he heard this sort of thing all the time, but it sounded different now.

He followed the detective into an overheated office barely large enough for its desk and two metal chairs. Lovell had contacted the police himself this morning and reported her missing. He had no idea what else to do. Should he have come out and told the kids that she was probably in the process of leaving him? She had taken off once about a year ago and spent the night at her sister’s, although she did return early the next morning, before the kids woke.

Duncan had already spoken with Janine and several of Lovell’s coworkers and Ethan and one of his teachers, who had seen Hannah yesterday morning. Lovell knew that the detective had talked to Sophie, whom Hannah had called that morning, and even a neighbor, who had confirmed that Lovell’s car had remained in the driveway during the nights before and after she went missing. Wasn’t interrogating the neighbors and the rest of them a little much? A thought materialized: What if one of them had heard his and Hannah’s exchange? What if the kids had said something to Duncan?

The detective had called about an hour ago and gave no indication that he knew anything about an argument. He had asked Lovell to come down to the station and bring one of Hannah’s hairbrushes, “one full of hair, if you’ve got it.” Duncan said that a bracelet, maybe hers, had turned up. A hairbrush? A bracelet? Lovell had thought that this was beginning to seem more like an investigation than a search effort.

Now Duncan said, “Just so you know, we found the bracelet on a beach in South Boston.”

“Southie?”

“Yes. Carson Beach. Be right back.” He left Lovell alone.

Lovell dropped his eyes to the eggplant-colored carpet. The room was still. He had the sensation of standing alone in the eye of a storm. Every second of this grew stranger and more unnerving.