Cold Feet

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Cold Feet
By Mariah McGuire

“No, I don’t like the wood floors in this one.”

“Well, you didn’t like the tile in the last house either.”

“I don’t want my toes getting cold when I’m walking in my own house.”

“Then wear socks.”

“I don’t want to wear socks. You know how much I hate wearing socks.”

“Well, then your feet are going to be cold.”

“Is it too much to ask for some goddamn carpet in my home?”

“In the bathroom and kitchen, dear, yes.”

“It’s not like I’m asking for anything ridiculous.”

“You’re asking for carpet in the bathroom.”

“I just don’t like the wood floors in this house.”

“If you don’t like the wood floors then what do you like about it? It’s easier for the realtor—”
“I like that it has a roof and four walls.”

“Technically there are more than four walls.”

“There goes that, then.”

“So do you want to avoid wood floors?”

“No, I like wood. Just not the wood in this house.”

“Okay. Did you like the wood in the house on Mortensen?”

“No.”

“No. Of course not.”

“Okay, what’s with the tone?”

“My tone?”

“Yes, yours.”

“All I’m trying to do is find a house for us to live in, Jordan.”

“And I’m saying I don’t like the wood floors.”

“If that’s the only thing you don’t like, then we can get different flooring. This place is twenty thousand under budget.”

“New flooring won’t change how closed in it feels.”

“It’s an open floor plan.”
“Yes, but there aren’t any windows.”

“Jordan, you are literally standing right in front of a picture window.”

“Okay, no south-facing windows then.”

“What do ‘south-facing’ windows matter?”

“Well, we’re in the northern hemisphere, so if we have south-facing windows, we can always get some light. You know, see the sunrise and sunsets.”

“I thought your area of focus wasn’t terrestrial observation.”

“It’s not, I—”

“And I didn’t know you liked the sunrise so much, especially since you never get up early enough to see it.”

“Is it such a problem to want some sunlight?”

“It’s a problem when you say you don’t like anything about any of the houses we’ve seen.”

“I just want some sunlight, Elle.”

“Maybe you could get some if you rolled your ass out of bed before two.”

“Why is it a problem that my work doesn’t require me
to get out of bed until then? That’s when the work day starts in Hawaii.”

“We’re not in Hawaii any more. That’s the problem. Now can you tell me which house you like best?”

“The one in Hawaii.”

“The one in Hawaii isn’t an option right now, that’s why you haven’t been rolling your ass out of bed until two, remember?”

“‘Telework’ you said. ‘That’s the best of both worlds,’ you said. You made us move again and so I have to telework again and that means keeping Mauna Kea hours. I don’t control when the sun rises over the fucking observatory or when the data rolls in.”

“No, no, no. You don’t get to blame this on me.”

“Blame what on you? That I’ve had to modify my career to satisfy everything you want for yours? That I’ve had to put my research on hold for you? This is the fifth damn move, so sorry if I don’t like the fucking wood floors in this house.”

“You said it was okay. I asked you and you said, ‘Okay.’
I never strong-armed you into anything, Jordan.”

“Well what am I supposed to say? ‘No, Eleanor. I want to be selfish and keep us in one place when you’re achieving everything you’ve ever dreamed of’. What kind of person would that make me out to be?”

“You can tell me these things Jordan, because this is the first time you’ve said anything about it and now I feel like a bitch.”

“Sorry that I didn’t want to be a selfish asshole.”

“What am I supposed to do about it now? Tell them I don’t accept the position? Beg for my old job back?”

“No, Elle, I want you to think for one second about what I’ve had to give up, what I keep giving up, for you. Always for you. Why can’t you ever give something up for me?”

“…So it’s the wood floors in this house?”

“Yeah. Just the wood floors.”