

months? You'll be on the shelf next to all your heroes. It's exactly what you wanted

~~Start~~

OLIVIA. ...

ETHAN. What?

OLIVIA. (*Slowly.*) The deal.

ETHAN. Yeah?

OLIVIA. I'm ... (*After a moment.*) I'm not exactly going to be on the shelf. They're starting a new division. Exclusively ebooks.

ETHAN. No.

OLIVIA. Yes. They want my book to launch it.

ETHAN. They're only going to do it as an ebook?

OLIVIA. Yes.

ETHAN. Then why are you doing that?

OLIVIA. It's FSG. They have big plans for me and about // how they're going to —

ETHAN. If they want it this badly, demand print. They are still a huge force in // the industry —

OLIVIA. We tried but they wouldn't go for it. The deal is contingent // on us agreeing —

ETHAN. So, fuck them. Put it out with someone who will give you the actual book you said you want.

OLIVIA. This is an incredible opportunity. And what it could lead to down the road? // It's —

ETHAN. I can't believe it. After all you've said about what you wanted, that you would actually agree to do it as an ebook —

OLIVIA. This is what I want now.

ETHAN. But if you don't care about the physical book, you don't need FSG. I'll put it out! There's no reason, now, I shouldn't. The launch of the app is going to be huge. But having you walk away from FSG and go with *me*? It would send a real signal. Of how serious what I'm doing is. It would be big.

OLIVIA. Ethan ...

ETHAN. Do this. For me.

OLIVIA. Don't ask me that.

ETHAN. Have I asked you for anything?

OLIVIA. What do you mean?

ETHAN. For what I've done for you.

OLIVIA. Uh, no...?

ETHAN. So, do this for me.

OLIVIA. Why? Because I ... *owe* you?

ETHAN. I'm just saying I was willing to do this before anyone else was in the picture.

OLIVIA. You're saying I owe you.

ETHAN. Well, don't you? Not in a bad way. And it's not like you'll be taking the hit in terms of money. I promise you'll make the same // as what you'd —

OLIVIA. You can't promise that. Look, Ethan, when this deal goes through, I'll be able to quit my job and write full-time. For *a couple of years*. You can't imagine what that means to me. What that could do for me.

ETHAN. I'll match their offer.

OLIVIA. What? No. I don't want you to —

ETHAN. Why not?

OLIVIA. It's not only about the money, Ethan. The more important thing, the *most* important thing is the association — to be associated with those FSG writers.

ETHAN. As opposed to being associated with me.

OLIVIA. I'm not saying that.

ETHAN. You are. You don't want to be associated with me.

OLIVIA. No. I don't want to be associated with *Ethan Strange*. Come on, it's not like you think your book is a masterpiece.

ETHAN. No, but what I'm working on — // what I'm doing —

OLIVIA. Look. I know you're trying to do something else, Ethan. I do. And that's great. But at this point, what you've put out into the world is mostly — (*Olivia stops herself before saying too much.*)

ETHAN. (*Quickly, pushing her.*) Is mostly *what*?

OLIVIA. Nothing.

ETHAN. What? *Shit*?

OLIVIA. No.

ETHAN. (*Quickly, pushing her hard.*) What?!

OLIVIA. (*Before she can stop herself.*) Irrelevant.

ETHAN. I can't believe you just said that to me.

OLIVIA. I'm sorry. I didn't mean — You know // what I'm —

ETHAN. Fuck you.

OLIVIA. Don't do that —

ETHAN. No. Seriously, fuck you. (*Ethan exits. She calls out the door after him to no avail.*)

OLIVIA. Ethan, please don't — ! You said yourself — ! (*To herself.*)  
Goddamnit! (*Lights.*)