

Over-Easy, Sausage, Brown Toast



A short story by Maëlys McArdle

Short Story

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Cover Illustration

An atmosphere of bank-notes and gold

George Du Maurier (1834 - 1896)

Act I: Summer 2010

The diner's neon signs mirror against the street's puddles, the reflection interrupted only by rain drops and the lone work truck. Drunk students and tradespeople are visible through the windows around tables under warm incandescent lights.

Four cajoling queers walk the night. They pass by the glowing "open 24 hours" sign in damp crop tops and fishnets and enter the restaurant.

The walls are cream-coloured with steel cladding. Red stools line a long counter to one side. Double-doors lead to the kitchen's cacophony while tables and booths occupy the rest of the floor.

Hostess: How many?

Nour: Four.

The gaggle of twentysomethings are led to a booth with red vinyl-covered seats and a white table with embedded sparkles. A toaster-sized jukebox is mounted against the wall separating their table from the others. The hostess lays down four large laminated menus; they double as placemats. Nour wipes runny makeup from her face.

Ruth: I need a driiiiiink.

A staff-member replaces the hostess.

Server: I'll be your server tonight. Waters to start?

Ruth: Yes and also a screwdriver?

Nour: Vanilla milkshake with rum please.

Em: Caesar?

Adamie: Just the water, merci.

The server scribbles everything on a notepad that's a few hard strokes from falling apart. Em places her arm around Ruth.

Server: ...a Caesar. Got it. I'll just need some ID.

Ruth, Nour, and Em produce Ontario drivers licenses. The server takes a glance at each as the trio hold them up.

Server: Perfect, won't be long.

The server leaves.

Adamie: Not francophone.

Ruth: mmm?

Adamie: I thought I had clocked the server as franco, he wasn't.

Em: They have a breakfast poutine?

Nour: Where do you see that?

Em: Bottom-left.

Em points to the text on a corner of the menu for Nour.

Nour: Oh I got it. Tater tots and hollandaise? That sounds pretty good.

Em: Going to order it?

Nour: I'll think about it.

Em turns to Ruth.

Em: Do you know what you want?

Ruth: Em, babe, you're being pushy.

Ruth releases herself from Em's arm that had been around her shoulder. A pair of paramedics walk in and are seated.

Nour: Did anyone try the photo booth?

Adamie: There was a photo booth?

Nour: Yeah! Let me show you.

Nour passes her phone over. It's open to Tumblr. Adamie has never seen an iPhone before; he examines the device momentarily before looking at its screen.

Nour: You move it with your finger. There's more pics below.

Adamie scrolls with his index finger then passes it to Em, who does the same, and passes it on to Ruth. The photos are of queers making poses inside a large frame while wearing the silly hats and accoutrements made available in a bin.

Em digs through her purse, pushing aside her brick of a Nokia phone to retrieve a digital camera and some spare AA batteries. She replaces the dead ones and turns on the camera. It takes a moment; there's a jingle and a logo on its screen.

Em presses a button; the camera retracts its lens and a photo appears on the display from outside the community center of Nour and Ruth. Em presses another button and a different picture appears, this time of a sign pointing guests to the queer prom.

The server deposits the waters and Em turns off the camera.

Server: The drinks are on their way. Have you decided?

Adamie: I think so.

Adamie looks around the group as he says it and is met with nods.

Adamie: French toast for me please.

Nour: Nothing for me.

Em: Really?

Nour: I have to watch what I spend.

Ruth: The Philly cheesesteak poutine.

Em: I'll do the special.

Server: How would you like your eggs?

Em: Over-easy.

Server: Sausage, bacon, or ham?

Em: Sausage.

Server: White or brown toast?

Em: Brown.

The server finishes jotting down the order.

Server: Great, thank you.

The server departs. A runner arrives and deposits the drinks. Screwdriver for Ruth, milkshake for Nour, and a Caesar for Em.

Ruth: A toast to Adamie. How long did the pigs cage you?

Adamie: 36 hours.

Nour: That's so illegal.

Adamie: J'té dit Em? The Toronto Police raided the gym we were sleeping in?

Em: Ruth told me.

Adamie: The law didn't matter to them.

Nour: They were showing the police kettling pedestrians?

Adamie: There was a plongeur...

Em: Dishwasher.

Adamie: ...in the next cage who was just trying to get home. He was all bloody. At least in Québec City the SQ released me after they destroyed my film. The G20 they wanted to keep everyone until after.

Em: I heard they locked up a thousand people.

Adamie: I believe it.

Nour: To Adamie, badass.

Ruth: To the Frenchie.

Adamie: Aww, you guys.

The four raise their glasses.

Adamie: Ok so the newest shit about my boss.

Ruth: I love a good workplace drama.

Nour: Spill the tea!

Adamie: So I've been giving workshops to the union of metal workers.

Em: Cool!

Adamie: Big teddy bears. I found out how much we were charging them. I wasn't supposed to but they passed me the cheque. Guess how much? And this woman fought me to raise my wage to eleven dollars an hour!

Nour: A hundred?

Adamie: A thousand. I give three or four workshops a week.

Nour: Shit-tyyy.

Ruth: Your boss is Leah yeah?

Adamie: Yes.

Em points to Ruth.

Em: Your Leah?

Ruth: My Leah. She's no good dude, run away, run away!

Adamie: Oh I think about it every week. Did you know she's dating Skylar now?

Ruth: Baby FTM Skylar? From the camp Leah was counselor Skylar?

Adamie: That one.

Nour: Gross.

Adamie: Leah hired him to work in youth programming.

Nour: Oh super gross!

Em: I'm sorry you have to deal with that.

Adamie: C'est juste comme ça.

The server deposits the cutlery and condiments.

Ruth: Did Em tell you we found a place?

Em: We're 99% sure we got it. Ruth reported the ad so no one else would take it.

Nour: Ruth!

Adamie: That is so you.

Ruth: The walls weren't pepto-bismol pink this time.

Em: It looked grey to me!

Ruth: The place before. Em was saying how the place was nice, and I was like "*nothing about it stood out to you? Really?*"

Nour: Are you colourblind?

Em: Red-green. And I guess grey-pink?

A cop car parks on the street. Two officers enter the diner with fresh smiles that hint that one just said something funny to the other.

Em: So the place that we hope to get...

Ruth: ...that we got...

Em: ...that we got is the upper floor of a century home.

Ruth: The owners are a Vancouver couple with a cute baby. I think he's a firefighter?

Em: Yeah he is. And she was... did she say?

Ruth: Nope.

Em: But what I look forward to most are my parents not knowing where I live.

Adamie: That will be good for you.

Ruth: They wanted me to join an intervention.

Adamie: About Em?

Ruth: Yes!

Nour: They don't know about you?

Ruth: Oh hell no! If they knew they would start he/him'ing me, guaranteed.

Adamie: *Come to the dark side, we have estrogen.* I'm sorry, I shouldn't. Your parents are shitty.

Em: They also tried to get my sister to join the intervention.

Ruth: But...

Em: She didn't but also she won't let me see my nieces anymore because she says my name and pronouns would *confuse* them. Neither of them can even speak yet!

Ruth: The whole family is a treat.

Em: At least I have your parents.

Ruth: Oh sweetie, your standards are low.

Nour: I'm sorry Em.

Em: It sucks.

Adamie: Hugs?

The gaggle hug over the table.

Em: I'm glad I have all of you at least.

Adamie: We got you.

Ruth nudges Em in support. The food arrives. French toast for Adamie, two eggs over easy with sausage and brown toast for Em, and a Philly cheesesteak poutine for Ruth. Nour continues sipping on her milkshake

Em looks outside at the creeping dawn and then at her digital watch.

Em: I didn't realize we had danced so late.

Adamie: What time is it?

Em: Four thirty.

Nour: That was such a rad prom.

Em: It was so good to get a second chance like this; I never went to the one for my high school.

Ruth: You didn't miss anything, trust me.

Adamie: I'm always in awe when queers get their shit together and organise cool stuff.

Nour: Anyone going to the Cliks show next week?

Adamie: Where?

Nour: Zaphod's.

Adamie: Oh maybe.

Ruth: The Cliks! I haven't heard that name in forever. Do you know who they are?

Em: I don't.

Ruth: You're so sheltered - I'll make you listen to a CD. We're in.

Nour: Fuck yeah!

A man walks by on the way back from the washroom.

Man: Faggots.

Adamie: Did he just say what I think he said?

Ruth: I heard it too.

Em: We weren't even doing anything *gay*.

Ruth: Like this?

Ruth French-kisses Em.

Em: Like that.

Em spots one of the bussers, a butch woman maybe two years older. Nour notices Em peeking over the dividing wall.

Nour: What?

Ruth: Em crushes on that worker every time we're here.

The others spot her.

Adamie: Emmmm. But yeah, she's hot.

Nour: You went on a date Monday yeah? How was that?

Adamie: I didn't tell you! We discovered that we both already dated.

Nour: Dated each other?

Adamie: Yes! When I went to add his number, it was already in my phone under a different name. And he had my old name in his phone! We didn't recognize each other on T!

Nour: Ha! So you had gone out before?

Adamie: Yeah! I remember liking him but we both just kind of weren't good at following up. ADHD brain.

Nour: And then you reconnected how?

Adamie: OKCupid!

Em: That's how Ruth and I met too.

Ruth: No sweetie, the C-389 march.

Em: Oh you're right.

Ruth: I know I'm right.

Em: We had noticed each other there, and then you saw my profile, or my yours, on OKCupid.

Ruth: Yes dear.

Nour: C-389?

Em: The bill to add gender identity and expression to the human rights thingie.

Nour: I keep getting couples wanting a third on Plenty of Fish. Or fifty year olds.

Adamie: Boring.

Nour: Right? Not unless they're going to pay me a whole lot.

Outside the diner, the birds are chirping.

Act II: Fall 2015

The early morning sun washes the diner's facade in a gold light. Red and yellow leaves on the sidewalk break up the stretched silhouettes cast by nearby buildings. There's only the sound of a dry leaf scraping against the road.

Ruth is in a jean jacket with pinback buttons and Em in a vintage sweater when they approach the diner's entrance. Nour and Adamie are already sitting at a booth with four placemat-menus splayed out when the pair enter. Adamie hands Ruth a small plastic bag.

Adamie: Gab says thank you. He was able to get his own.

Ruth: Oh good. Did you tell them about the women and non-binary night?

Adamie: They thanked you about that but didn't feel comfortable going.

Ruth: Oh no they would be fine. Too bad.

Em looks at Ruth inquisitively. Ruth pulls the ropes half-way out of the bag and boops Em on the nose with them.

Ruth: Shibari.

Em: Ah.

Ruth sets the bag aside.

Adamie: Did I tell you? I found someone who will take me on without a degree!

Nour: You're going back to uni? I didn't know that!

Adamie: I'm applying for a master's of social work!

Nour: That's exciting!

Adamie: The supervisor is a sweetheart old gay man.

Em: Awwwww.

Ruth: Dr. Adamie?

Adamie: Let's just start with a masters.

The server arrives to drop off waters.

Server: Are we ready to order?

Nour: I think we'll need one more minute.

Em spots her butch crush working. Adamie starts talking as he looks at the menu.

Adamie: I want to study cis gatekeepers and pathologise them instead of trans people.

Ruth: The fuckers blocked my hrt because I was dating a woman.

Adamie: Like that. I want to build a profile of the gender stereotypes from the reasons they give to block care and maybe deconstruct the cis fear of regret but I have to word

my questions to pass the ethics committee. The supervisor gets it but the ethics people are all white Ginettes.

Ruth: So after questions, beatings?

Adamie: Just questions, Ruth.

Ruth: And beatings.

Em puts down the menu.

Em: I hate that the regret bs is everywhere like with the C-279 stuff.

Ruth: Em wants her body to be thrown on Plett's lawn if she kills herself.

Adamie: That's real.

The server returns. Nour looks around, all four have the menu down.

Em: We're ready to order?

Em looks inquisitively to the others who nod in the affirmative.

Server: What it'll be, ladies?

Adamie: I'll start I guess. I'll have blueberry pancakes. Can I get extra maple syrup?

Server: That'll be an extra fifty cents, is that ok?

Adamie: That's fine.

Server: Blueberry pancakes, syrup on the side.

The server looks back up from their notepad.

Nour: Breakfast poutine.

Server: Breakfast poutine.

Ruth: I'll go for the traditional benny.

Server: Eggs benedict.

Em: The special, with two eggs over easy, sausage.

Server: White, brown, or rye?

Em: Brown please.

Server: Thank you.

The departs.

Ruth: *Ladies?*

Adamie: Oh did he say that?

Nour: Have I shown you all pictures of Prada?

Ruth: No!

Em: I want to see the doggo!

Nour reaches for her phone to open the photo app. Adamie has a look.

Adamie: Is he... he?

Nour: He.

Adamie: Is he a bulldog?

Nour: A pug! I adopted him a few weeks ago. He's three months old.

The phone is passed to Em and Ruth.

Adamie: Adorable.

Em: Cute!

Ruth: Praaadaaaaa.

Nour: The rescue think he may be asthmatic.

Adamie: Aww, like me!

The phone gets back to Nour who puts it away.

Em: Is anyone going to see Against Me?

Nour: Are they in town?

Em: Next week!

Adamie: I want to! But I'm babysitting Tova's kid that evening.

Ruth: You'll have your hands full.

Adamie: When's the last time you saw him?

Ruth: At Gender Failure? Luna was still alive.

Adamie: He's still his class' short king. The latest thing is he's learned to weaponize therapy talk against his mom.

Em: Oh no hahaha.

Adamie: She sort of deserves it.

Ruth: That's pretty funny.

Nour: I'll join you, that sounds like fun.

Ruth: Fuck yeah.

Em: I'll send you a link.

Nour: I hope there's a mosh pit.

Ruth: Might not, it's at the Bronson Centre.

Em: Adamie, can we tempt you to come?

Adamie: Kid.

Ruth: They literally just said that, Em!

Em: Right!

The server arrives with a carafe.

Server: Won't be much longer for the food. More coffee?

Adamie: Please.

Em: Yes please.

Nour and Em put their mugs closer to the server as she pours coffee for all four.

Em: Guys, I found a therapist who is queer.

Nour: You got a new therapist!

Ruth: The one she had before was so bad.

Nour: I heard.

Em: She's been teaching me tools to regulate.

Ruth: That's Em-speak for saying she cuts less now.

Em: She also told me self-harm wasn't the problem that needed addressing, which... I feel like a cishet therapist would never say.

Ruth: I still don't agree with that.

Adamie: I already said this at home, but I'm happy for you.

Ruth: I still can't believe you stuck with that guy when he was dropping "shemale" and "tranny" in convo.

Nour: Oh you hadn't mentioned that!

Em: Yeah, he was blaming everything on not being cis.

Ruth: And using Law & Order as his reference.

Nour: I'm glad you found someone who was not that.

Em: Oh me too. She's really helped to deal with my parents.

Nour: It makes such a difference when you find a therapist that clicks.

Adamie pulls out his phone.

Adamie: Oh! My sister came to visit, and Em recorded us throat singing. I hadn't done it since I got on T. Want to hear?

Nour: Duh!

Ruth: No I don't want to hear it. Of course I do! Show it.

Adamie starts playing the video recording of the two siblings throat singing. Outside the diner, locals meander the sidewalks.

Nour: Was it your first time meeting his sister?

Em: It was yeah because the last time she came from Kuujjuaq was...

Adamie: Two summers ago.

Em: And I moved in with Adamie that fall.

Adamie: She's like you Nour. Great fashion sense.

Nour: Aww. I'd love to meet her next time she comes.

The food arrives. Blueberry pancakes for Adamie, breakfast poutine for Nour, eggs benedict for Ruth, and the special for Em.

Ruth: That poutine looks better than I thought it would.

Nour: Right?

Ruth: Can I try some?

Nour: Go ahead! Anyone else?

Em: No thank you.

Adamie: I'm happy with my pancakes.

Ruth: Oh, that *is* good. Want some of this?

Nour: There's ham under the egg?

Ruth: Yeah.

Nour: No I can't, thank you though. Can I get your guys' advice on something?

Adamie: Of course.

Nour: So I'm trying to figure out my career.

Em: Oh?

Nour: I'm turning thirty and don't want to do sex work forever. I've built skills. I curate fashion and am an interior designer, I guide people and navigate their complexities, and I already travel abroad for clients. What can I use that for?

Ruth: Consultant?

Adamie: Life coach?

Em: Doesn't Tova's roommate do life coaching?

Adamie: Yes; you two should talk. She also used to be a travailleuse de seeexe.

Nour: Oh, good - do you know how I can reach out?

Adamie: When I'm at Tova's I'll leave your number. Her roommate is really sweet and she lives to help.

Act III: Winter 2025

Snowbanks reflect the royal blue sky as tires mash slushy roads. Em walks past faded Christmas lights and orange neon signs to reach the diner's entrance. The businesses next door have changed over.

She enters finding bureaucrats and tradespeople. The host leads her to a two-seater by the window; Em mouths something as she removes her coat. She sits down and watches the scene unfold outside as a small metallic teapot and mug arrives.

Snow begins to fall. Em pours tea into her mug and adds milk. Headlights hover in a flurry of white while an elderly woman in a headscarf exits the fruit market tugging a shopping cart.

Nour enters the diner with snowflakes in her hair and brown fur coat. She spots Em waving at her.

Em: Nour!

Nour: Hey beautiful. It's been too long.

Em: I feel like we always tell each other we won't wait, and then years pass.

Nour: Same babe.

Nour flakes snow off of her hair and hangs her coat on the stand between tables.

Nour: How have you been?

Em: Good! I'm trying to remember when we last saw each other. Could it have been pre-pandemic?

Nour: The party with the cake maybe?

Em: The labia cake!

Nour: The one that your church called bunny ears.

Em: I had forgotten about that! That was before Covid! What is time?

Nour: Right?

Nour sits down opposite Em.

Em: Well, let's see. I moved.

Nour: To McLeod yeah?

Em: So I moved again.

Nour: Oh! When had you moved to McLeod?

Em: Pff, I left Adamie's... in 2018?

Nour: It has been that long.

Em: Time.

Nour: Time!

Em: That place on McLeod was a new build with in-unit laundry.

Nour: Important.

Em: Oh yeah, I'll never go back to not having that. But the problem was the apartment only had one window and it faced a dark alley. You needed lights on to see anything at noon.

Nour: Oh no, you need light.

Em: Right? It was fine at first because I treated it like a hotel room - just a place to sleep. But when the lockdowns hit and I was stuck in that dog crate 24/7 my mental health just...

Em makes an aircraft nosediving whistle sound.

Em: Remember how we thought the shutdown would only last weeks and then it was like over a year?

Nour: I do.

Em: So I was like okay, I'll buy a home, and I kept staying because I didn't want to get stuck with a new one-year lease. Only *then* property prices doubled in a year.

Nour: I'm sorry Em, that sucks. Ziad and I got in right before they skyrocketed.

Em: Tell me about him! You look so happy in your pics.

Nour: I am! He's such a sweetheart.

Em: How did you two meet?

Nour: Samba! We were dance partners.

Em: Oh I love this, Nour!

Nour: I noticed him first. Cute guy; tender. I asked him out and he said yes! Turns out he had been interested too but didn't want to be *that* creep. Then a few months later when I was renovicted I moved in with him and we started looking. I know what you're going to say and I thought so too but it felt right. My mom *loves* him.

Em: Ha ha - so not a repeat of Aisha.

Nour: Poor Aisha. Sorry though, I interrupted your story.

Em: Oh no, I gave myself a deadline to buy a home and when that passed, I jumped on a new rental in like a week. This apartment has tons of natural light and I feel so much better. You two will have to come over!

Nour: I'd like that! I'm excited for you to meet Ziad!

Em: I'd love to meet him.

The server comes by.

Nour: Just water for me.

Server: Still good with your tea?

Em: Yes I am, thank you.

Server: I'll come by in a bit for your order.

The server departs.

Em: Have you talked kids with Ziad? I remember you used to not want them.

Nour: He doesn't want any either. I don't know what I would have done if he would have said something else. Maybe I would have? But no, he likes being the cool uncle and that he can give them back at the end.

Em: After you load them up with sugar.

Nour: Oh all the sugar. And the toys that make loud sounds at Eid.

Em: You have to - how old are his niblings?

Nour: Seven and nine.

Em: That's a fun age.

Nour: They're little brats.

Nour delivers the comment smiling.

Nour: What about you? You were doing surrogacy?

Em: That fell through.

Nour: Oh, I'm sorry.

Em: It's okay, it was mutual. I had a lot of big feelings but time is a healer.

Nour: I'm sorry.

Em: Really; I'll be okay. Like I still get upset when straight couples insist that there's hope or that I could adopt. You get it though.

Nour: Yeah, I get it.

Em: I'm still kinda empty inside. I didn't have any plans for my forties beyond taking care of a kid and there's not really any resources out there for being priced out of parenthood. It's all for straight couples and it's just such a different world for them. And then it's like dominoes where this has me thinking about old age and what I'll do because there'll be no one to take care of me like I'm taking care of my parents.

Nour: That's why you have to have friends who don't have kids either, so we can all take care of each other.

The server comes by again.

Em: I'll have two eggs over easy, sausage, brown toast.

Nour: For dinner, I like it.

Em: I love breakfast for dinner.

Nour: I'll have the hot chicken sandwich.

Em: Could I get more hot water?

Server: Of course.

The server enters the order in their phone, and zips away. Em looks around. No butch crush.

Nour: Ziad and I have been talking about having our parents move in when they can't take care of each other.

Em: Are they at that point now?

Nour: Not yet but we're starting to organise our lives a bit for it, you know?

Em: I think about what I'll do too. You know that thing where like when people reach 80 they suddenly age rapidly?

Nour: Yeah.

Em: My parents are going through that now. It's kinda hitting home.

Nour: Funny how our parents went from these god-like beings to just people eh?

Em: Yeah. I used to be so scared of my step-dad, and now he looks so frail.

There's a pause.

Em: You been able to see Adamie at all?

Nour: Since Kuujjuaq?

Em: Yeah.

Nour: No. He reached out when he was here last year, but I couldn't make it.

Em: We should do a Zoom call, all of us.

Nour: That would be nice Em! Want to set it up?

Em: Yeah, let me put in a reminder.

Em pulls up her phone and as she types, says:

Em: You mentioned the house, what else is new?

Nour: Let me think.

Nour takes a sip of water.

Nour: Mmm! I started a side hustle refashioning vintage clothes. I'm still consulting, but with all the uncertainty, companies don't really pay for coaches anymore.

Em: Fucking Trump.

Nour: Fuck that guy. I've had to stop shipping to the US because all the new paperwork and fees isn't worth the few dollars of items. If Ziad didn't have a stable job we'd be in trouble.

Em: What's he do?

Nour: He's a city planner.

Em: Whoa. With a pension and everything?

Nour: Yes!

Em: That's awesome!

Em looks around at the staff. No butch crush. She looks out the window.

Em: I love when it snows hard like this.

Nour: You okay?

Em: Yeah. Nour, how would twenty-five year old you think of you now?

Nour: I don't really think about that.

Nour takes a moment.

Nour: I'd like to think she'd be proud. You?

Em: I'm not sure. It's easier to say for other ages: younger - horrified, older - awe. But at twenty-five I was traumatized and desperate for validation from toxic queer cliques.

Nour: We were all messy then.

Em: That's true.

Nour: What made you ask?

Em hesitates.

Em: Maybe because we were talking about parenthood just now, and that felt like such a future thing at twenty-five, and now it's a past thing, and it doesn't feel long ago at all.

The server comes by with the two egg breakfast and the hot chicken sandwich.

Em: That was fast - that one's hers.

Nour: Your aura is content though.

Em: Yeahhh! I'm about to eat my favourite meal ever.

Nour: Em.

Em: I am, Nour. Things are good now. Same for you?

Nour: Yeah. You'll have to come over! Meet Ziad and hang out with Prada.

Em: Prada!

Nour: He just turned ten.

Em: He was just a puppy!

Nour: I know!

Em: I'll absolutely come over. Your plant pics on insta also make your place look like such a vibe; I want to see them.

Outside of the diner, snow deposits on its sign's lettering. Once glistening snowbanks are covered with a layer of white fluff. A group of pedestrians are heard laughing while being battered by snow as they make their way to the entrance.

The server comes by with two hot carafes of coffee.

Server: More coffee?

Em: Yes please. Decaf.

The server pours from the orange topped carafe.

Em: What else has been going on?

Nour: That's really it! Ziad, job, home. Oh, I've been taking a Farsi class!

Em: That's super neat.

Nour: I used to speak it as a little kid but I forgot it all. I want to learn it and use it next time I'm visiting my aunts and uncles. What about you?

Em: I've been making my apartment extra cozy. I have a theme every few months and this month it's candles.

Nour: I like that!

Em: We've made it, huh. Our survivor bean asses became stable, content, adults.

Nour: Yeah we did.

Em: Oh, and I'm putting together a zine too.

Nour: On what?

Em: Poetry I had written but never done anything with.

Nour: Send it to me when you're done!

Em: I will. DM me your new address.

Nour and Em work on their meals.

Em: After this I was planning on heading to the dog park for Ruth. Want to come?

Nour: Right after?

Em: Yeah. It's the anniversary next week.

Em pulls her winter coat towards her and produces a mickey of Sour Puss from her pocket.

Em: I've even got the sour puss ready.

Nour: She was so into gross stuff. I'd love to but Ziad and I are shopping for a mattress.

Em: Ooo. Say hi to him from me!

Nour: I will!

Nour and Em exit the diner in their winter coats. They hug.

Nour: Let's not wait this time.

Em: I'd like that.

The two walk in opposite directions.