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CHARLIE from KEEPING TOM NICE by Lucy Gannon  
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CHARLIE: What is it you're so afraid of, you two? You are, aren't you? You're afraid of something.

Are you afraid that someone will be able to look after Tom as well as you do? Or better? Is that it? It is, isn't it? You want to be the only ones. The holy ones. Dedicated angels. Don't you? You make me sick.

You smooth the bed.

You hang flowered wallpaper in his room. You feed him mush when the doctor told you years ago to let him *chew*.

I'm angry because you leave him in here while you watch the TV in there –

Because all he ever gets at Christmas is a pair of socks. One year a towel. A towel! All wrapped up in Santa Claus paper. But most of all I'm angry because you never, ever kiss him! I have never seen you kiss him. Hold him. In all the years – never! Oh, not now so much, not when he's a grown man, but then. I remember kissing him. How I used to sneak into his room and slide into bed with him, and whisper to him, silly jokes and childish stories - we grew up together but I got all the kisses and he got, what? Soapyflannels? Passive exercises. He needed those things but not only. Not only! (*Softer*) Oh,

how could you not kiss him? His soft, sleeping body. His long, thin limbs. The curve of his eyelashes against his bed-warmed cheeks. For Christ's sake, Mum, whatever happened to him it happened inside you. That should draw you together, shouldn't it? He looks at you as if you were a God. A shining, breathtaking God. You know he does, don't you?

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