

## THE CERAMIC FRENCH PRESS AT OUR AIRBNB IN JOSHUA TREE, CALIFORNIA

You had one job, ceramic French press. You had to make coffee. Not espresso. Not cappuccino. Just regular, everyday wake up joe brain fuel java beans plus water good morning rocket juice. A very simple job. A job completed within mere minutes of its initiation. A job you sucked at. One could argue we were too rough, way too impatient. One could argue you required a little finesse. We were used to the smooth, effortless glide of our glass French press back home. I love that French press back home. If I were ever to divorce my husband, I would sue for full custody of that French press. The problem was you. Or rather, your designer. Who thinks hand-thrown pottery is an appropriate medium for a French press? A French press requires machine precision, the kind of precision only possible with machinery, like machinery found in overcrowded Chinese manufacturing plants. The irregularities of human touch have no place in the manufacturing of French presses. A French press has to be perfect—as perfect as our desert cabin in Joshua Tree, California. Perfect big-window white-gold light filled the interior. There were perfect gray-blue-gray-purple mountains in the distance. The desert was a perfect chalkboard green that year due to an unusual amount of spring rain. We wrote poems and painted watercolors. We listened to Paul Desmond albums non-stop. The rental car didn't move unless we needed groceries. We had a wood-burning stove. We had bourbon—at least, for a little while. It was really good bourbon, and really good bourbon never lasts very long in our vicinity. We played board games because... well, have you met my husband? Board games is his love language. Did you match the cabin décor, ceramic French press? Absolutely. You were as rugged and as rustic and as perfect chalkboard green as the landscape. But no matter how carefully I depressed your rugged, rustic plunger, you chose to spray me with wet, boiling hot grounds every time. The concept of you was great. The execution was sorely lacking. Like Communism. Like smoothies. There was no dealing with you, no compromise. You were not perfect. You had to be perfect. That vacation had to be perfect. That vacation, I was going to sit my husband down. I was going to tell my husband how much I loved him, how much I needed him how dark my thoughts were becoming, how frightening it was all becoming, how I needed to talk to someone, how I needed a professional. It was all too, too, too, too, too much. Like the perfect big-window white-gold light that filled the interior of our cabin in the desert. So I cried and I cried and I told my husband all these things and he said, "Do what you need to do." He said, "It's going to be all right." He said, "We'll get through this." Then, after saying all those nice things, he added, "You know... alcohol is a depressant." Meaning the thin finger of bourbon that lay in the bottom of my tumbler. I wasn't about to let that go to waste. I'm not perfect. My husband isn't perfect either, but at least, he tries. He tries way more than I do. He hasn't given up like I have. I suck at the job of living. I suck at that

job almost as bad as you suck at yours, ceramic French Press. Sometimes, I want to spray wet, boiling hot grounds on a random stranger who just wants to enjoy a good cup of coffee. Sometimes, that stranger is me. I had a feeling you were deliberately trying to sabotage our perfect vacation. Suck recognizes suck. When you're anxious, even the air conspires against you. When you're happy, from what I recall, the world blossoms into a giant pink peony bush crawling with ants.