

RITA. I thought I made it clear.

LISA. *(Snapping.)* You didn't.

RITA. I'm sorry.

LISA. *(To Ben.)* It's just — You don't look like you're dying.

BEN. Looks are deceiving.

LISA. This isn't happening. It can't be. Have you seen doctors —

I mean a second opinion?

BEN. And a third.

RITA. We've had time to adjust. *(Lisa takes a moment and really processes this.)*

LISA. *(Fragile.)* ... You're dying. *(Ben nods.)*

RITA. And we thought, now that it's, well, imminent, we thought you should be here.

LISA. I see.

RITA. It's all right. It is. We're ready. He's ready. Your father's had a good life.

BEN. Not really.

RITA. What do you mean by that?

BEN. What could I mean by "not really?"

RITA. He's had a good life. By most people's standards. He's a very half-glass-empty kind of person, but by most people's standards he's had a very full life.

~~BEN. Says you —~~

RITA. But now, well ... we thought you should be here.

LISA. Of course.

RITA. To say anything that you might want to say.

LISA. Oh.

RITA. Before it's too late.

LISA. *(Beat.)* I see.

RITA. Is there something?

LISA. What?

RITA. That you want to say?

LISA. Oh. Now? You mean, now?

RITA. *(Confidential.)* I wouldn't wait.

LISA. Oh.

RITA. Whatever you like. A poem. Or you might want to share a memory, if you can put your finger on something pleasant. Or just talk about your feelings, whatever they are. You know, something meaningful.

LISA. Of course. Yes. Of course, I'd like to.

RITA. Well? *(Lisa stands by the bed.)*

LISA. Daddy, I am ... I ... well ... *(A long pause while Lisa tries to think of something meaningful to say.)*

RITA. No pressure, dear.

LISA. *(Snapping at her.)* Let me think!

RITA. Sorry. *(They touch while Lisa tries to remember something. Lisa's quite emotional when she finally speaks.)*

LISA. Daddy ... I remember ... when I was little, six or seven maybe, and I was playing on the jungle gym and you were watching, and you looked away for just a second, and I fell and — oh, shit. That's a move.

RITA. *Kramer as Kramer!*

~~BEN. I'm getting sleepy.~~

RITA. I loved that picture!

LISA. It'll come to me! Something will come. It's a lot to process!

RITA. Don't worry about it. Please. Something will pop into your head. I'm sure. Like when you're trying to remember someone's name. You try and try and come up empty. And then all of a sudden — there it is!

LISA. I give up.

RITA. Good.

~~BEN. Well, that was a bust.~~

RITA. *(To Lisa.)* I do wish you'd brought candy or something. I'm starving. And I have a terrible taste in my mouth.

LISA. I could go downstairs?

RITA. No, no. It's fine.

LISA. There might be something in my purse. *(Lisa looks through her purse.)*

RITA. Did you call your brother?

LISA. Yes.

RITA. Good.

LISA. A piece of licorice!

RITA. Red?

LISA. Black.

RITA. Forget it.

BEN. I was sure you'd have *something* to say. Not Curtis maybe, but you, I would've bet on it.

LISA. I could try again?

RITA. Please don't. It was embarrassing.

LISA. *(Defeated.)* Fine. *(Beat.)*

CURTIS. Of course not.

START

RITA. Just tell me!

LISA. He's imaginary.

RITA. I'm talking to your brother.

CURTIS. I have to go.

RITA. I don't understand —

LISA. *(Standing.)* You never met him because he doesn't exist!

RITA. What?

LISA. He made him up.

CURTIS. Shut up, Lisa.

LISA. Tell her. There is no Peter. Go on, tell her. There never was.

RITA. I've spoken to him on the phone.

LISA. That was just some friend, or someone he paid — probably a homeless person.

RITA. I spoke to him!

LISA. *(Taking Curtis' jacket.)* There is no Peter. And remember

Ethan? There was no Ethan.

RITA. Oh my god.

CURTIS. Give me my jacket.

LISA. Imaginary.

CURTIS. Give it to me!

LISA. All imaginary.

CURTIS. Lisa —

LISA. Curtis is alone. That's right! He doesn't have anyone. Or see

anyone or *touch* anyone —

CURTIS. Stop it!

LISA. And I don't think he ever has. It's all a lie. A giant, fucking,

monumental, pathological lie.

RITA. *(To Curtis.)* Is that true?

LISA. A fiction!

RITA. Is it true?

LISA. It's creepy.

CURTIS. I have to go.

RITA. ANSWER ME!

CURTIS. Yes!

RITA. Oh my god.

LISA. A *(Victorious.)* ... And now, I forgive you. *(He snatches his jacket.)*RITA. *(To Curtis.)* Why would you do that?

CURTIS. It was easy. Easier than having you at me.

LISA. Ask him when the last time was.

RITA. The last time for what?

LISA. He's the man in the glass booth.

CURTIS. Fuck you.

LISA. You judge me, but you're just a freak.

RITA. I don't understand.

LISA. There never was a Peter. There never was an Ethan.

Although, sometimes, I think, he thought there was.

RITA. I just wanted you to find someone.

LISA. It's pathetic.

RITA. To love someone.

CURTIS. Like you? Who did you love, tell me, ever, in your whole

life?

RITA. *(Simple.)* You. *(He has no response. He turns to Lisa.)*CURTIS. You are a horrible person. *(To all of them.)* You are all

horrible people. I hope I live the rest of my life and never lay eyes on

any of you again! *(Curtis exits. There's a pause.)*LISA. *(Very bright.)* Wow ... I had forgotten how much fun drinking can be.

RITA. That was cruel.

LISA. *(Teasing her.)* Well, que — as they say in the song — *scrr.**(Rita looks at Ben. His eyes are closed and she realizes he hasn't spoken for some time.)*RITA. Find the nurse. *(Lisa rushes out. Rita walks slowly to the window. After a moment the Nurse enters, followed by Lisa. She approaches Ben, and checks his pulse.)*

NURSE. Mr. Lyons is sleeping.

RITA. Oh.

NURSE. His breathing is shallow, from the medicine.

RITA. Of course.

NURSE. He should sleep through the night.

RITA. Thank you. *(The Nurse nods and exits. Ben.)* I looked at

him, I thought ...

LISA. I know.

RITA. Well.

LISA. Are you all right?

RITA. Of course.

LISA. Good ... I should go.

RITA. Yes.

LISA. The kids.

STOP

BRIAN. Oh, yeah — right. That's my headshot. Commercial. I have something much more serious for theater.

CURTIS. It doesn't really look like you.

BRIAN. I didn't think so either!

CURTIS. You're a lot better-looking in person. I hope that's okay — *(Beat)*

BRIAN. Did I tell you the maintenance?

CURTIS. Maintenance?

BRIAN. On the apartment.

CURTIS. Oh. Eight-something.

BRIAN. Eight-twenty-five.

CURTIS. That seems a little high.

BRIAN. It's average. Really. For the neighborhood. Did you notice the height of the ceilings? And we're only a block from the subway. I expect this one to go pretty fast, even in the current market.

CURTIS. You know I'm at CAA —

BRIAN. What?

CURTIS. As a writer. They represent me.

BRIAN. Really?

CURTIS. Maybe I could talk to someone.

BRIAN. About what?

CURTIS. About you.

BRIAN. What do you mean?

CURTIS. Well, I can't promise anything. But I could talk to someone, make an inquiry —

BRIAN. *(Excited)* You mean an agent? Talk to an agent? About me?

CURTIS. I'm not making a promise.

BRIAN. *That would be amazing!*

CURTIS. I don't actually know anyone on that end.

BRIAN. But you think you could —

CURTIS. My agent must know them.

BRIAN. I would die!

CURTIS. Don't do that.

BRIAN. I mean it! I would die!

CURTIS. I could talk to him, my agent. See what he can do.

BRIAN. That would be fantastic!

CURTIS. Well, well see. I said, I can't make any promises. We haven't been getting along lately. My agent and me.

BRIAN. Oh?

CURTIS. We had a disagreement and he said some terrible things.

But listen, I'll do it. I'll swallow my pride and give him a call.

BRIAN. That would be great!

CURTIS. I'll do it Monday.

BRIAN. God. Really, thank you. *(Beat)*

CURTIS. Has this been on the market long?

BRIAN. Why would you do that?

CURTIS. Do what?

BRIAN. Call your agent — I mean, about me. Why would you do that? I'm just curious.

CURTIS. Why wouldn't I?

BRIAN. You don't even know me. You don't know if I'm any good. I could be completely without talent. I'm not by the way. But I could be.

CURTIS. No one is *completely* without talent.

BRIAN. You know what I mean.

CURTIS. I have a sixth sense. I knew the minute I looked at you —

BRIAN. I don't understand why you would do it — extend yourself for me, really. I'm a stranger. We just met.

CURTIS. Can't I be generous?

BRIAN. You think I can get them to drop the price, don't you? That's it, isn't it?

CURTIS. I can't believe ...

BRIAN. You think I can get you a better price. Is that why? I already told you the seller was motivated. I can only do so much.

They're asking six-fifty — I think they'll take six. But I can't do more than that. So I mean, if you think that dangling an agent in front of me is going to get you some kind of fantastic —

CURTIS. You're very cynical.

BRIAN. I'm just asking.

CURTIS. You're accusing.

BRIAN. You think I'll waive my commission, then. Is that the angle?

CURTIS. No.

BRIAN. Admit it.

CURTIS. I was just being friendly!

BRIAN. I can't waive my commission. First of all I need it to live and secondly I work for an agency. They won't just let me waive a commission.

CURTIS. Why do you assume I have an *angle*?

BRIAN. Because I'm not stupid.

STOP

eyes ... was happiness. It was simple. It was undiluted. Happiness. And what really surprised me — I didn't expect it, not at all — but what really surprised me, is that it made me happy. *(Lia gets her purse.)* I'm going to visit Leonard.

CURTIS. Will you come back?

LISA. I don't think so.

CURTIS. *(Embarrassed.)* Please? ... I'm sort of scared.

LISA. Of what? You'll go home in a few days. Things will be just like they were. Everything will be the same.

CURTIS. Not really. Not exactly. I'll be alone.

LISA. What?

CURTIS. *(Fragile.)* ... I won't have Peter.

LISA. I don't understand.

CURTIS. He did this, to me ... *(Starting to cry.)* Peter. This man.

I watched him.

LISA. *(Gentle.)* Oh.

CURTIS. He did this.

LISA. I'm sorry.

CURTIS. *(Quiet, to himself.)* Doesn't matter. *(She searches for something to say that will assuage her brother's pain.)*

LISA. I realize that I'm no one to give advice, but maybe some day,

Curtis, try people.

CURTIS. Maybe.

LISA. *(Peaceful.)* I'm going to go feed pudding to Leonard. *(She smiles at him, then exits. We can see that Curtis feels very much alone. Despite his best efforts he is sobbing now, and broken.)*

CURTIS. *(To himself.)* Shit. *(After a moment, the Nurse appears in the doorway. Curtis pulls himself together.)*

NURSE. They're all gone?

CURTIS. What?

NURSE. *(Entering.)* Your visitors, they're gone?

CURTIS. Yes.

NURSE. Noisy group.

CURTIS. I guess so.

NURSE. *(Re: his dinner.)* Did you eat?

CURTIS. No.

NURSE. What are you trying to prove?

CURTIS. I won't eat that.

NURSE. Big man.

CURTIS. *Fuck you!!*

NURSE. Hmmmm. You're in a worse mood than usual.

CURTIS. Sorry.

NURSE. Your intuition?

CURTIS. No. No, it's not ... You see a lot of things, people, right?

Life, death in these rooms.

NURSE. *(Running the thermometer across his forehead.)* If you say so.

CURTIS. Does it make sense to you?

NURSE. What?

CURTIS. All of it?

NURSE. *(Amused.)* What? You think I can explain life to you? You think I'm going to have some big insight into the wreckage of your life? Shit. I'm a nurse.

CURTIS. Oh.

NURSE. All right. Here goes. The way I see it, there are no answers. Some people are happy. And some people are just lonely, mean and sad. And that's the world.

CURTIS. Oh.

NURSE. You strike me as the second kind.

CURTIS. Well, thanks.

NURSE. *(Re: dinner.)* Don't mention it — should I leave that?

CURTIS. Stay a while?

NURSE. For what?

CURTIS. To talk. Just ... talk.

NURSE. *(Amused.)* You're not the only patient on this floor.

CURTIS. Please?

NURSE. Grow up already. *(She starts to exit.)*

CURTIS. Wait ... One more thing.

NURSE. *(Amused.)* What?

CURTIS. *(Simple.)* ... What's your name? *(They look at each other for a long moment. And then she decides to tell him.)*

NURSE. Jeanette. *(They look at each other.)*

CURTIS. Jeanette. *(He removes the lid from his dinner and takes a bite. Jeanette watches. After a moment, she walks to a chair and sits down.)*

JEANETTE. All right, fine. What do you wanna talk about? *(He eats. Blackout. Curtain.)*

End of Play

STOP