

Rabbit Hole

a play in two acts
by David Lindsay-Abaire

TIME
the present

LOCATION
Larchmont, New York

CAST

Becca: late thirties / early forties
Lizzy: mid thirties, Becca's sister
Nat: mid-sixties, Becca's mother
Jason: a seventeen-year-old boy

ACT ONE SCENE ONE

(Late February. A kitchen with a comfortable living room and dining room nearby. Saturday afternoon. Becca, late 30's, is folding the laundry, kids' clothes, and putting it in neat piles on the dining room table. Her sister Lizzy, early thirties, is in the middle of a story, getting herself a glass of orange juice from the refrigerator.)

And everybody kinda steps aside for her, like the Red Sea, or whatever. Just clears a path for her, and I'm like, "What's with *me* and her job?"

But you don't even know this woman.

Never seen her before. I was just sitting there with Keenan--

No. Do you remember Keenan?

She's a friend of mine. I was sitting there with Rexford, and suddenly this lady is in my face. And she's all sexy and yelling and really pissed.

Why?

I don't even know at this point. It has something to do with her boyfriend, why?

Where you living or--?

No, I don't even know who she's talking about. So she's all up in my face and her friend is like--

Becca?

HECCA

Crazy, right?
IZZY

You hit her?
BECCA

Yeah. Right in the face. BOOM. She went down.
IZZY

Oh my god Izzy— You hit that woman?
BECCA

I couldn't get around her. And she was screaming like a retard!
IZZY

Izzy—
BECCA

What would you have done?
IZZY

Well I certainly wouldn't have hit her. Jesus.
BECCA

And you know what they don't tell ya? It really hurts. To punch someone. It frickin' hurts.
IZZY

Well, yeah.
BECCA

They don't put that on TV. It's all "Now that oughta show hurt." But for cue it was like ~~the way that she~~ that killed!" Look at my knuckles. (shows her - then off her look)
IZZY

Nothing.
BECCA

You don't approve?
IZZY

I didn't say that.
BECCA

This lady was ar me.
IZZY

I know. I didn't say anything.
BECCA

But you wanna through.
IZZY

I just worry about you. (beat)
BECCA

Don't worry about me. She was the one on the floor.
IZZY

That's not what I meant. You were in a bar fight.
BECCA

So?
IZZY

A bar fight, Izzy.
BECCA

She was up in my face!
IZZY

I know, but it's for...
BECCA

What?
IZZY

Jerry Springer
BECCA

What's that supposed to mean? You think I'm crazy?
IZZY

You punched a woman in the face!
BECCA

She provoked me!
IZZY

BECCA
Okay

IZZY
I'm hungry. Mind if I get something?

BECCA
Sure when do you ask?

IZZY
You're making me feel sensitive.

(Izzy heads back to the fridge)

IZZY
Where's Howard?

BECCA
He's with Rick. They're playing squash.

(chuckles)

IZZY
Squash. (re: something in the fridge)
What's this? 'Pudding'?

BECCA
It's gonna be creme caramel.

IZZY
Howard's a lucky man. Ya wca'd see me making anyone creme caramel.

BECCA
If you're hungry, Isabel, grab something. Don't stand there with the door open.

IZZY
(holds up an individual creme caramel)
Can I have one of these? There's an extra in here.

BECCA
(beat)

IZZY
Yeah, okay.

IZZY
Well, I won't eat it if you don't want me to.

BECCA
No, go ahead. You're right, there's an extra.

BECCA
~~Yeah, okay.~~

BECCA
Just let me finish it.

IZZY
I can eat it like this.

BECCA
No, then it's just custard.

IZZY
I like custard.

BECCA
~~Right? (takes custard, I make a caramel)~~

(Becca goes into the kitchen. She gets a dessert plate, and over the following she takes the ramekin and runs a knife around the inside edge of it.)

BECCA
How's work?

IZZY
Don't ask me that please.

BECCA
Why not? (beat)

IZZY
You got fired?

BECCA
It never ends with me, does it?

BECCA
Not often, no.

IZZY
Don't tell mom.

~~Becca~~

BECCA

Nothing. ~~There was the first bump~~ had her.

IZZY

People don't scream in your face for no reason.

BECCA

Sure they do. You should get out more.

IZZY

Were you sleeping with him? This Aussie guy, whatever his name is? You were sleeping with him, right?

BECCA

Where ya going with this?

(beat)

IZZY

Well ~~huh~~, Iz, you tell this story like you're an innocent bystander. You say you don't know who this woman was—

BECCA

I didn't!

IZZY

You were having sex with her boyfriend!

BECCA

That is so beside the point.

IZZY

It is?

BECCA

It was over between them for a long time. They were just living together because of the rent situation. She didn't care what he did.

IZZY

Then why did she accuse you in a crowded bar?

BECCA

Because she's a lunatic!

(beat)

IZZY

And Aussie told her I was pregnant.

IZZY

BECCA

Why would he...?

(beat)

(No response. The question just hangs there for a few beats. Becca is not thrilled.)

Oh my ~~gosh~~ Izzy

BECCA

I know, right?

IZZY

BECCA

You are not.

(Izzy just shrugs. "What's gonna do?")

Oh my ~~gosh~~

BECCA

He's a really good guy, Bec. You're gonna like him. He's a musician.

IZZY

BECCA

That's terrible (oozing tears)

No, not like you think. He gets work. He's a working musician.

IZZY

BECCA

Is that why you're here? To tell me you're pregnant?

IZZY

Pretty much.

I knew something was up. You're not one to pop by on a Saturday afternoon.

BECCA

IZZY

I pop by

It comes up very quickly. You wouldn't even believe it.

BECCA

Plus we don't have a lot of room to—

LEZZY

That's okay. I'll keep them here. In the basement. You'll be happy I saved them.

BECCA

But what if it's a girl?

LEZZY

Then I'll bring them down to Goodwill. What's the big deal? You're gonna thank me. A couple years worth of free clothes here. Think of the money you're gonna save.

BECCA

It's not about the money.

LEZZY

Well it should be. You need to start thinking about stuff like that, Iz. Especially if the dad's a musician. It costs a lot to raise a child.

BECCA

It'd be weird, that's all. If it's a boy. To see him running around in Daddy's clothes.

LEZZY

I would feel weird. You would too, I think.

BECCA

No, I'm sorry. Of course it'd be weird. I don't know what I was—

LEZZY

It was a nice offer. I just—

BECCA

You'll get a lot of clothes anyway, Christmas and birthdays. You won't have to worry about that.

LEZZY

No I know but—

BECCA

It would be one thing if they were hand-me-downs but—

Exactly.

(Pause)

BECCA

It's probably a girl, anyway.

LEZZY

You think?

BECCA

I'm definitely getting a girl, 'sides. I'm a little psychic about this stuff.

LEZZY

~~Remember~~

BECCA

Remember I said Debbie was having a girl.

LEZZY

You did.

BECCA

And Karen?

LEZZY

Karen had a girl, remember.

BECCA

I think there's a girl in there.

LEZZY

~~I hope she's getting a girl, 'sides. I want to see her when she's born, and I want to see her when she's a girl.~~

BECCA

~~Maggie?~~

(pause)

LEZZY

What'd Mom say?

BECCA

She was happy.

HOWIE
Lizzy hit someone, she didn't get into a fight. Blows were never exchanged.

BECCA
What is your point? It's okay for a pregnant woman to be punching people?

HOWIE
Well so long as they don't punch her back, it's probably all right.

BECCA
What are you? Why are you defending her?

HOWIE
I'm not. I just think it's silly to get worked up about it.

BECCA
I'm not worked up. I'm just saying.

HOWIE
You're right, it's a mess, but what can we do? Maybe it'll be fine. Lizzy's not a moron
(off her look)

BECCA
Okay, she acts like one sometimes, but... A baby can be good for a person.

BECCA
I know that, Howe.

HOWIE
Alright then.

BECCA
This was good. The creme caramel.
(beat)

BECCA
Thank you. Lizzy tried to cut one upside down.
(Becca clears the creme caramel dishes. She brings them into the kitchen.)

HOWIE
You want more wine?

BECCA
No, I've had two already.

HOWIE
Half a glass, I wanna empty this bottle
(She empties the rest into her glass)

BECCA
Mona's thrilled by the way

HOWIE
She called?

BECCA
Lizzy must've told her I knew.

HOWIE
And how was that?

BECCA
What, two hours on the phone with Mona?

BECCA
(Howie lowers the lights in the room.)

BECCA
What are you doing?

HOWIE
My eyes are sore, staring at that computer all day
(Becca settles onto the couch with her wine.)

BECCA
You think this means she wants baby stuff? For her birthday? Maternity clothes or something?

HOWIE
(Joins her on the couch)

HOWIE
No, wait for the baby shower. Just get whatever you want gonna get her.

BECCA
Good, because I was gonna buy her a bathroom set.

HOWIE
A what?

BECCA
A bathroom set. Shower curtain, tub mat, a little stool for the sink. They sell them as sets.

HOWIE
Thus is for Lizzy's birthday?

- Light Cue

Not really. I guess she took the kids to her mother's this weekend.

HOWIE

Rock didn't wanna go?

BECCA

He has work.

HOWIE

How are the kids?

BECCA

True, I guess. He said that Robbie's doing ice-hall now, and Emily has mastered the pike.

HOWIE

Anything else?

(beat)

No, that's it.

BECCA

You can call her, you know. You can call Debbie and ask her these questions yourself.

HOWIE

I don't wanna call her. She should call me.

BECCA

Okay.

HOWIE

Why can't she call me?

BECCA

I don't know.

HOWIE

No?

BECCA

She's uncomfortable, Bec.

HOWIE

Is that what Rock said?

BECCA

Rock didn't say anything. But obviously if she hasn't called you it's because she doesn't know what to say.

HOWIE

How about "Hey Becca, how you doing? Haven't seen you in awhile?"

BECCA

If you're pissed, you should call her and tell her.

HOWIE

No, Howie, it's her job to call me.

BECCA

Okay.

HOWIE

I would've been there for her if god forbid something had ever happened to Robbie or Em. I wouldn't have vanished the way she did.

BECCA

People get weird, you know that. It's probably hard for her.

HOWIE

Hard for her?

BECCA

I'm just saying. Look at my brother. Spent the whole funeral talking about the Mics. Obviously he couldn't deal. He'd talk about anything but Danny. And that's my brother.

HOWIE

I eat well, your brother's an asshole.

BECCA

(beat)
I should drop her a note.

BECCA

Maybe you should.

HOWIE

"Dear Debbie -- just so's ya know, residents aren't contagious."

BECCA

Okay, let it go.

HOWIE

HOWIE: What? I can't message my wife?
 BECCA: You don't have eye-stream
 HOWIE: So?
 BECCA: "Oh I've been staring at that computer all day."
 HOWIE: Well I do stare at that computer all day.
 BECCA: You're trying to seduce me.
 HOWIE: Am I?
 BECCA: Plying me with liquor
 HOWIE: It worked in college.
 BECCA: Alright, Romeo.
 HOWIE: What?
 BECCA: (gushes him away playfully)
 HOWIE: Enough.
 BECCA: Why?
 HOWIE: You're being very naughty.
 BECCA: Naughty's good. You used to like naughty.
 HOWIE:

(She gets up from the couch.)
 HOWIE: Where are you going?
 BECCA: I still have stuff to bag up.
 HOWIE: Are you kidding?
 BECCA: No, there are piles of clothes up there, Howie.
 HOWIE: Well, if they've waited that long.
 BECCA: I wanted to get it done.
 HOWIE: We'll get it done tomorrow. I'll finish it.
 BECCA: Yeah, right.
 HOWIE: I will.
 BECCA: Uh-huh.
 HOWIE: Becca.
 BECCA: I'm sorry. I'm feeling kinda antisocial right now. You're right, the lady suit gets over my skin.
 HOWIE: Right.
 (He clicks the mouse off. Pause.)

Al Green
BECCA

HOWIE

I thought it was nice. That's all. I was trying to make things nice.

BECCA

Well, you don't. I'm sorry. But things aren't "nice" anymore.

(Silence.)

HOWIE

(after a pause)

I think you should see someone

(beat)

I know you're not one for therapists, but I think you should. We could go together if that'd help. Or maybe you could try the group again.

BECCA

No.

HOWIE

There are a couple new patients now. It's changed the dynamic a little.

BECCA

We've had this discussion. Howie.

HOWIE

~~From a psychiatrist: "Dear—Someone to talk to.~~

~~Howie? Do you have an apartment?~~

BECCA

I think we should sell the house.

HOWIE

Come on, Becca, what?

BECCA

I've been thinking about it for a while, and since we're on the topic—

HOWIE

How were we on the topic?

BECCA

HOWIE

I think it'd help if we moved.

BECCA

He's everywhere, Howie. Everywhere I look. I still see Danny

HOWIE

We love this house

BECCA

I can't move without—I mean, Jesus, look at this.

(grabs a toy from the shelf)

Everywhere. Do you even know?

Here: "Runaway Bunny" for ~~Becca~~. The puzzles. The smudgy fingerprints on the door-jamb.

HOWIE

I like seeing his fingerprints.

BECCA

Because you don't have to sit and stare at them day in and day out. You get to escape. You get to go to work.

HOWIE

Well, if you want to go back to work, Becca—

BECCA

I don't.

HOWIE

—you can call up Sotheby's

BECCA

No I can't. That's not who I am anymore. I left all that to be a mom.

HOWIE

Well...

BECCA

Well, what? Well that didn't work out?

Ohhh
VOICE OF HOWIE

I have magic
VOICE OF DANNY

Oh, I didn't realize
VOICE OF HOWIE

Do you wanna be invisible?
VOICE OF DANNY

Okay
VOICE OF HOWIE

Pfttttt
VOICE OF DANNY

Is that it? Am I invisible?
VOICE OF HOWIE

Yeah. I made you invisible.
VOICE OF DANNY

Did you see me?
VOICE OF HOWIE

Yeah
VOICE OF DANNY

No, you didn't. I'm invisible.
VOICE OF HOWIE

But I can still see you because I have magic.
VOICE OF DANNY

Ohhh
VOICE OF HOWIE

Did you forget that part?
VOICE OF DANNY

Yeah. I forgot that part.
VOICE OF HOWIE

(The lights fade on Howie, watching the video.)

SCENE THREE

(Kitchen. A week later. Evening. Becca, Izzy and Nat, their mom, are gathered around a birthday cake singing Happy Birthday. Nat has a glass of wine.)

NAT AND BECCA

Happy Birthday to you
(end of song)

Blow 'em out.
NAT

(Izzy blows out the candles. All the guys and clapping.)

What did you wish for?
BECCA

I can't say.
(for the cake)
LIZZY

It looks good, Becca.
NAT

Where'd you buy it?
BECCA

I didn't. I made it.
NAT

Of course you did. What a stupid question. Of course you made it.

Izzy--
(catches Izzy scooping off the frosting.)
BECCA

It's my cake.
LIZZY

Well let me eat it first. Watch your fingers.
BECCA

(Becca cuts slices of cake and puts them on plates over the following. Howie enters with a couple papers.)

NAT
Maybe if they had stayed home and watched television once in a while, instead of zipping off to Yail, then none of that stuff would've happened.

BECCA
You have the most interesting theories.

NAT
Don't patronize me.

BECCA
I'm not. I was being serious.

IZZY
This is so good.

NAT
Normal people don't fly around in their own planes for example. I don't know anyone with his own plane, do you? Do you, Howie?

HOWIE
Well, yeah I know one guy but—

NAT
Well, you know someone, but that's not the norm. An average person doesn't own an airplane.

HOWIE
No, you're right, he's not average.

BECCA
He's a member of the jet-set.

NAT
Exactly! That's what that word means! The jet set. Jet-setters! Buzzing around in little Pipers or whatever, crashing off the coast of Massachusetts. All I'm saying is regular people don't have ten relatives die in separate plane wrecks.

HOWIE
It's not ten.

NAT
Just about, if you count Teddy who survived this.

IZZY
Well I think it's sad.

BECCA
Teddy surviving?

(IZZY and BECCA chuckle.)

NAT
Well of course it's sad. All those good-looking people falling out of the sky like that. It's a fuckin' waste. But it isn't a curse. It's just rich people acting stupid.

BECCA
I thought you liked JFK?

NAT
I'm not talking about JFK. I'm not talking about the ones who were assassinated. Although getting shot by a crazed gunman is kinda of a rich-guy problem too, isn't it?

HOWIE
Well, not necessarily.

NAT
It doesn't matter, that's not who I'm talking about. I'm talking about the unqualified pilots. I'm talking about playing football. And skiing. At the same time.

IZZY
That was stupid.

NAT
"Hey, look at me! I'm a Kennedy! I can catch a ball while flying down a mountain on sticks!" Of course he died. Idiot. And I know that's a terrible thing to say, but this was a grown man acting like a moron. The arrogance of these people.

HOWIE
The Greeks would call that hubris. "Arrogance in the face of...". It caught on technically because the hubris actually.

NAT
If hubris means reckless, then that's right.

HOWIE
No, it doesn't mean reckless. It's more about the gods.

NAT
That's probably the right word then. They're very Catholic, those Kennedys.

NAT
Oh right, that makes sense. What was I saying about him?

IZZY
You were saying how he'd get really tipsy and never stop talking.

(Becca laughs)

NAT
You're right. I'm not tipsy. I'm sure I had a very interesting point to make.

(Becca hands a big present to Izzy.)

BECCA
This is from us.

IZZY
Wow. Thank you.

HOWIE
Happy Birthday.

IZZY
It's wrapped so nice. It's a shame to rip it open.

NAT
Becca always makes such nice bows. I don't have the patience. My fingers are too fat.

(Izzy unwraps a very tasteful bathroom set.)

Ohh, look at that.

BECCA
It's more of a practical gift, but I thought you could use it.

HOWIE
It's a bathroom set.

IZZY
I see. It's nice.

NAT
Look at the colors. So pretty.

BECCA
The gift receipt's inside if you want a different style.

NAT
Why would she want a different style? It's beautiful. Isn't it beautiful?

IZZY
Is this your way of telling me you don't like my Three Stooges shower curtain?

BECCA
Of course not.

IZZY
Okay.

BECCA
This is for when you want a change, you'll have it.

NAT
That Three Stooges thing is kinda goofy, honey.

IZZY
The word is kitschy, Mother.

NAT
Look up kitschy, wouldja. Howie? See if it says crap?

BECCA
I didn't know what to get you.

IZZY
This is great. Seriously, thank you.

BECCA
I like your shower curtain.

IZZY
I know. I was kidding.

NAT
And since you're moving in with Augie—

IZZY
That's right. His bathroom needs a little flooring up. Thank you.

BECCA
You're welcome.

No, I'm good. IZZY

So can anyone use those stretch-mark bouons, or just pregnant ladies?
(They sit in silence for a couple beats.)

Hey, how's Taz. HOWIE

He's good. The vet says he needs to lose some weight though.

Really? HOWIE

Yeah, he eats like a trooper. NAT

What are you feeding him? HOWIE

Just regular dog food. Whatever's on sale. NAT

Oh. Because I wrote down the name of what he usually eats on that printout I gave you. Do you still have that printout?
HOWIE

Yeah. NAT

We were feeding him Science Diet. They have this special low-fat mix. HOWIE

Oh that stuff's so expensive though. He likes what I've been giving him. NAT

Except it makes him fat. HOWIE

Howie— BECCA

He's not fat. He's just a little clubbier. NAT

I think the weight suits him. IZZY

Maybe he eats too much because he feeds punished. I think he misses you. NAT

~~Remember Rick's gonna be fat?~~

(to Howie)

That was our dog growing up. She was this enormous... I don't even know what

What breed was Rick's?

She was a trout. BECCA

No, I know, but she was mostly Collie. I think with some German shepherd mixed in. Remember how fat she was? IZZY

Probably because of what you fed her. HOWIE

~~What, yeah, probably.~~

Now I remember what it was. What I was gonna say about Annette Unas. NAT

Mom, do you have to—? IZZY

It was about his son, the one who died in the plane crash. NAT

I'm gonna wrap up the cake for you. BECCA
(she does)

I know, another rich kid in a plane crash, but this was my whole point. You should've stopped the from going off on that Kennedy tangent, because my point was about Onassis, and how when his son died, he was so distraught by the senselessness of it all. NAT

I don't even know what that means.
 NAT

Hey, here's an idea. Let's change the subject.
 IZZY

Didn't I say no wine?
 (to Howie)
 BECCA

She brought it herself. What was I supposed to do?
 HOWIE

What'd I say?
 NAT

Mom, you promised
 IZZY

Promised what? It's not my fault she missed my point.
 NAT

What point? That Aristotle Onassis died of grief because he couldn't find someone to blame?
 BECCA

I'm not talking about blame, I'm talking about comfort.
 NAT

Ohh, comfort. Well then.
 BECCA

You guys, this is supposed to be my party.
 IZZY

Where are you getting it?
 NAT

Comfort?
 BECCA

Yes, if I may ask.
 NAT

I'm not
 BECCA

Well...
 NAT

Well, what?
 BECCA

Well I think you should
 NAT

Okay. I'll get right on that then. See what I can dig up on Ebay.
 BECCA

Don't get flip, Becca. I'm just trying to talk to you.
 NAT

I'm gonna clean up, because I think we're just about done here.
 IZZY

Howie says you won't go to the support group.
 NAT

Oh. Howie said
 (beat)
 BECCA

She was asking how you were doing.
 HOWIE

Why didn't you just say fine? You know she's gonna run with whatever you give her.
 BECCA

I always thought talk was healthy. Is it that what all the books say, Howie?
 NAT

So this is what exactly, an intervention?
 BECCA

If it is, then I'm really pissed.
 IZZY

It's not an intervention
 HOWIE

BECCA
Yes, I am. Of course I am. How nice they all have something that makes them feel a little better. Like I don't feel bad enough, I've gotta go and have that rubbed in my face?

HOWIE
Nobody's rub— You're not being fair.

NAT
I don't know why you don't believe in God anyway.

BECCA
(to Howie)
You see? Now look where we're going!

NAT
I brought you to church every Sunday. You need to believe in God.

BECCA
Well I don't anymore.

NAT
Well you should. What if you're wrong? What if there is a God?

BECCA
Then I would say he's a satistic prick.

IZZY
Whom he's now...
NAT
Becca, please.
HOWIE
Aw, geez.

BECCA
"Worship me and I'll treat you like shit." No wonder you like him, he sounds just like Dad

NAT
You don't need to strike out at me, Becca. I know you're still in a bad place, but I'm trying to help you.

BECCA
Right.

NAT
I wish someone had sat me down when Arthur died. I wish someone gave me a little advice

BECCA
You know what I wish? I wish you would stop comparing Danny to Arthur. Danny was a four year old boy who chased his dog into the street. Arthur was a thirty year old heroin addict who hung himself. Frankly I resent how you keep lumping them together.

(Silence.)

NAT
He was still my son.

BECCA
And I don't recall anyone giving you instructions on how best to grieve for him.

(beat)
I think it's time for me to go to bed now.
(turns to her sister)

IZZY, I hope you enjoy the bathroom set.

IZZY
I'm gonna.

(Becca heads upstairs. Izzy continues loading the dishes into the dish washer. Nat is still shaken by Becca's comment.)

NAT
I was never that mean to anyone. When Arthur died, I was just as upset as she was, but I never took it out on other people like that.

IZZY
Huh. What about Mrs. Bailey?

NAT
Nobody's talking about Mrs. Bailey. Izzy, please.

HOWIE
You know what this was about?

IZZY
(re: Nat)
Yeah, her and her mouth.

HOWIE
I knew the party was a bad idea.

IZZY
(to Nat)
Didn't I tell you not to get into anything with her?

hear a documentary on tornadoes playing. Howie is confused. Something isn't right.

He gets up off the couch and ejects the tape. He examines the tape, panic starts to set in. He pops the tape back in and hits play again. More tornado documentary.)

What is this? Becca? Becca?
(Hits fast forward)

HOWIE

BECCA

What?
(From upstairs)

HOWIE

Becca? Becca?

BECCA

What?
(Coming down the stairs)

HOWIE

What'd you do here?
(Howie keeps pressing fast forward, but it's all tornadoes. He's beside himself.)

BECCA

What's the matter?

HOWIE

What is this?

BECCA

What's what?

HOWIE

The television What is this?

BECCA

(Looks to TV)

It's the Discovery Channel! The tornado program. You said you wanted to watch it. I recorded it for you. Why?

~~Perfectly good OH NO~~

HOWIE

What's the matter?

BECCA

It's Danny's tape. You recorded over Danny's tape.

HOWIE

(Real)

No, I didn't. *Pride and Prejudice* was on that tape. We were watching it last night.

BECCA

I switched them.

HOWIE

How?

BECCA

I watched Danny's tape later. After you went to bed.

HOWIE

Why didn't you take it out of the machine?

BECCA

Why didn't you check to see what was in there?

HOWIE

I assumed it was the TV tape.

BECCA

Jesus, Becca!

HOWIE

It was one of the baby videos?

BECCA

No, it was the most recent, the long one. The park was on it, and Mexico--

HOWIE

How was I supposed to know you smuck down here?

BECCA

And Christmas.

HOWIE



BECCA
(It's as if she's been slapped.)
I didn't know that tape was in there.

HOWIE
I'm not talking about the tape. Not just the tape.

BECCA
And the paintings are downstairs. In a box. You can look at them whenever you want.

HOWIE
The clothes. His shoes.

BECCA
We don't need all that stuff. Why would we keep—?

HOWIE
You're wanting to sell the house.

BECCA
We already talked about—

HOWIE
Taz. Sending Taz to your mother's!

BECCA
There was a lot going on. Howie. We couldn't deal with the dog.

HOWIE
I was fine with the dog. I was the one walking him.

BECCA
Well, he got under foot.

HOWIE
And he was a reminder.

BECCA
Yes, he was a reminder. So what? I wanted one less reminder around here. That's perfectly normal.

HOWIE
And since you never wanted the dog to begin with—

BECCA
Oh, for ~~God's sake~~—

HOWIE
Well, if I hadn't bought the dog—

BECCA
And if I hadn't run inside to get the phone, or if I had latched the gate—

HOWIE
I left the gate unlatched.

BECCA
Well, I didn't check it. I'm not playing this game again, Howie. It was no one's fault.

HOWIE
Not even the dog's.

BECCA
I know that.

HOWIE
Dogs chase squirrels. Boys chase dogs.

BECCA
Are you telling me or yourself?

HOWIE
He loved that dog!

BECCA
Of course he did.

HOWIE
And you got rid of him.

BECCA
Right, like I got rid of the tape. I get it.

HOWIE
(losing it)
It's not just the tape! I'm not talking about the tape, Becca! It's Taz, and the paintings, and the clothes, and it's *everything*! You have to stop erasing him! You have to stop it! You HAVE TO STOP!

(She takes him in. She seems more confused than affronted.)

ACT TWO
SCENE ONE

(Two months have passed. It's early May. Howie is in a suit, holding a clipboard with a sign-in sheet, waiting for people to pop by for an Open House. Izzy is in the kitchen. A car is pulling away.)

IZZY:
They were weird, huh? The last couple? The way they kept opening everything? Cabinets, closets...

HOWIE:
It's an Open House.

IZZY:
Sith, it was kinda nerdy. I'd never do one of these things. Strangers strolling through, looking under my beds.

HOWIE:
That's what you gotta do to sell a house.

IZZY:
Well lucky for me I'll never own a house then.
(comes out of the kitchen with a plate)
What is this, pie?

HOWIE:
It's a torte.

IZZY:
Is it good?

HOWIE:
Yeah, it's good.

(Izzy grabs a fork and carries the plate into the living room. We see now that her pregnancy's starting to show. She's four and a half months along.)

IZZY:
We done?

HOWIE:
Five minutes. We're supposed to go 'til four.
(Howie's looking over the sign-in sheet.)

IZZY:
How many'd ya get anyway?

HOWIE:
Not many. No serious buyers. ~~Maryanne German thought it's hard to talk~~

~~IZZY:~~
Is that what he was, German? I couldn't place the accent. I thought maybe Irish.

HOWIE:
Irish?

IZZY:
I couldn't tell.

HOWIE:
We should probably get a broker. I think a lot of people are afraid of fishos.

IZZY:
Afraid who?

HOWIE:
~~Fishes. For Sale. By Owners. No middleman. I was trying to avoid the commission but we probably need one.~~
~~*(re: sign-in sheet)*~~
~~Texas was a mistake. I thought we had a bite with that family - the little girl. Nothing though. Maybe I priced it too high. Or they were just browsing maybe.~~

IZZY:
You freaked them out, Howie.

HOWIE:
~~*(eating)*~~
You freaked them out, Howie.

IZZY:
No, I didn't. What are you talking about?

HOWIE:
You should've cleaned out Danny's room. Made it look like a guest room or something. An office, or whatever.

IZZY:
Why?

HOWIE:
Because everyone that went in there was like "Oh, you have a son, how old is he?" Did you think people wouldn't ask that?

WELL I don't know. IZZY

No, Izzy. No. Nobody blames you. HOWIE

Okay. (beat) IZZY

So it's just the baby then. The fact that I'm having a baby.

~~HOWIE: I don't think Becca's mood has anything to do with you.~~

~~She thinks I can't do it, right? I'm not cut out to be a good mother?~~

~~She doesn't think that. You should really be having this conversation with her.~~

~~I know I've been a fuck-up, but people get their shit together.~~

~~Of course they do. HOWIE~~

~~And maybe I'm not as organized as Becca, or honey, or whatever.~~

~~Nobody's comparing you. HOWIE~~

~~Really? Because that's a fact. IZZY~~

HOWIE
Everyone's excited about the baby. Iz. But you gotta understand that there's other stuff going on around here.

IZZY
I'm not talking about the other stuff. I'm talking about me being a capable person who can raise a child, and look after it and protect it. I resent the feeling I get from her, and you too sometimes, honestly, that I don't deserve the baby. Or that I'm not mature enough, or smart enough or something, to take care of it. I mean, ~~regard~~ if my mother could do it, how hard could it be?

You'd be surprised. HOWIE

Look, hey, I didn't mean to... I just want to feel like you guys have since faith in me, because I'm up to it. IZZY

Great. I hope you are. HOWIE

Oh, you hope. Thanks, Howie. IZZY

I don't know where you want this conversation to go, Izzy. And I really don't know why you're having it with me. (gives a hot watch)

Aw fuck it, nobody's coming. (HOWIE takes a hot jacket and over-hears door open the couch, then retreats into the kitchen)

Are you ready? IZZY

No. You seem mad. HOWIE

I'm just getting a beer. You want one? HOWIE

Not that I want to hear that. IZZY

★ Can I ask you something else? (Howie gets himself a beer out of the fridge. After a beat...)

What do you get a list? "Things to ask Howie when he's comatose?" HOWIE

No. Not a list. IZZY

What is it? HOWIE

You're not gonna like it. IZZY

IZZY
—but I'd like to think that if things got to a point where they were unsavable, that you'd be man enough to fish or cut bait—

HOWIE
Who said we were having troubles?

IZZY *(M.C.'ing)*
—and not make things worse than they already are by ~~standing~~ around behind Becca's back.

HOWIE
You are way off-base, Izzy!

IZZY
And I know there's "other stuff going on around here" but that doesn't excuse it.

HOWIE
This is so beyond ridiculous, I don't even know how to respond to you.

IZZY
I don't need you to respond, I just wanted to ask the question and say what I had to say. You can do whatever you want about it.

HOWIE
About what? I'm not having an affair!

IZZY
Okay

HOWIE
I was confronting a friend!

IZZY
Great, I'm glad to hear that.

HOWIE
And I don't know where this Reema person gets off making these offensive assumptions about me—

IZZY
She'll be happy to hear it was a misunderstanding.

HOWIE
I mean, god, Izzy. And right after your speech about us not having faith in you. What do you think of me?

IZZY
I'm sorry, it's my sister. I had to ask.

HOWIE
Well you've asked.

IZZY
Indeed I have.

HOWIE
(beats)

I'll tell you one thing, if I ever see this Reema again, I'm gonna tell her what I think of her talking ~~shit~~ about me.

IZZY
You should. She'll like that. *(beats into the kitchen.)*

HOWIE
And for the record, I hope I did stiff her on the hip.

IZZY
Yeah well, for the record, you did.

(Left alone, Howie is reeling, but trying not to show it. He drinks his beer.)

(After a couple beats, Becca and Nat come in through the front door carrying bags of groceries. They're in the middle of an argument. They head to the kitchen and put away groceries over the following.)

NAT
Luckily she had read about it in the papers—

BECCA
Of course she did.

NAT
—so when I explained it, she realized who you were

HOWIE
Heeey, they're back

BECCA
This is why I hate shopping. Everything in there's like "Oh look, Froot Loops, Danny liked Froot Loops. Hey, string cheese, Danny hated string cheese." Everything. How're you've got to do some of the food shopping. I'm sick of saying it.

BECCA got a little upset.

NAT

About what?

HOWIE

There was a boy there.

NAT

He reminded you of Danny?

HOWIE

No. Maybe a little, but not really, no.

BECCA

He had red hair.

NAT

BECCA
What happened was we were in the same aisle as this kid and he wanted these roll-ups, fruit roll-ups, and his mother was being a hard-ass about it, saying she wasn't gonna buy them for him.

NAT

And it wasn't because she couldn't afford it, because you could tell she had money.

BECCA

But the kid was getting whiny about it. Which makes sense, because he's five years old and he really wants these roll-ups, but the mother wouldn't give in. In fact she starts ignoring him completely, just turns her face away and pretends he's not there. Just goes about her shopping like that's gonna shut him up, or teach him a lesson or something. Case-closed sort of thing. But that only gets him more upset. So that pissed me off for some reason.

What did?

HOWIE

BECCA
The way she was ignoring him, instead of trying to explain why he couldn't have them.

So she walked over to her.

NAT

What? Why?

HOWIE

I don't know, I just did.

BECCA

What'd you say?

IZZY

I said "It's only three bucks, why don't you just get him the ~~fruit~~ roll-ups?"

BECCA

Oh no.

HOWIE

BECCA
And she looked a little miffed, but she smiled a little - I don't know why - and explained to me that she didn't want her son eating candy. And so I said it wasn't actually candy, in fact fruit roll-ups are relatively healthy, and they're made with real fruit, and why not give him a treat? And she told me to mind my own business, and then tried to shove her cart around me, but ran over my foot by accident, so I smacked her.

HOWIE

What? (Beat)

BECCA

I smacked her.

NAT

She did. She smacked her. I couldn't believe it. Real hard too.

HOWIE

Becca...

BECCA

I know. It was awful, and then the boy started crying. I felt terrible, but she pissed me off.

IZZY

You hit that woman?

SUI: ~~Howie~~

HOWIE: ~~I'd really like to arrange something if that's possible.~~

JASON: ~~And I just told you how? Scott really a good time.~~

HOWIE: ~~No, I know, but I wasn't talking about right now.~~

JASON: ~~Great. So why don't you take off then? And if we can arrange something in the future we'll do that.~~

HOWIE: ~~Okay. Well I wrote my number down.~~

JASON: ~~(pulls crumpled paper from his pocket)~~

HOWIE: ~~So if you free up at all...~~

HOWIE: Can I just say something to you?

JASON: BECCA
Howie, don't--

NAT: Hey, easy now.

HOWIE: An Open House sign doesn't mean we're holding walking-tours in here

JASON: I know that.

HOWIE: You can't just pop in because the door's open. We were conducting business.

JASON: That's why I waited until that couple left. It looked like things were finished here.

HOWIE: Well they're not.

JASON: Then I apologize.

HOWIE: We live here, okay? This is our home.

BECCA: Alright, Howie.

HOWIE: You don't just walk into someone's home like that. Especially given the circumstances. You should show a little respect.

JASON: I'm sorry.

HOWIE: (looks to the others)

JASON: I'm sorry I interrupted.

HOWIE: (beats)

HOWIE: Sorry.

HOWIE: (Jason exits. They're all silent for a couple beats.)

HOWIE: You believe that? The balls on that kid. Walking in here?

NAT: I'm gonna finish this

HOWIE: (re-groceries)

HOWIE: (Nat heads into the kitchen with the rest of the groceries.)

HOWIE: And what was he, out there hiding behind a tree or something? No wonder Taz was barking.

BECCA: Or maybe he was barking because he's hungry. Did you feed him?

HOWIE: Oh...no. I caught up with—

BECCA: No, of course not. You wanted that dog so badly, but you can never remember feed him (turns to go)

HOWIE: I'll do it.

How're doesn't mind this?

NAT

It was his idea. After that Open House. Seems his grief goes out the window when it comes to maximizing profits.

BECCA

Sorry. I don't even know why I said that. Just being mean. Besides, it's not like we're getting rid of everything.

(They go back to work.)

(Something stops Nat. She's holding one of Danny's sneakers. They're smaller than she remembers. Becca glances over at her and realises what's happening.)

BECCA

Don't do that.

(takes the sneakers)

Quick and clean, like a band-aid. (places the sneakers in a garbage bag)

Otherwise we'll never get through it. (Becca grabs a Kleenex from the bureau and passes it to Nat without musing a beat. She carries on as if the moment never happened.)

BECCA

Did Lizzy tell you I was taking a Continuing Ed. class? While reading *Bleak House*. Isn't that hilarious? He handed out the syllabus and I just laughed. *Bleak House*. Of course do one knew what I was laughing at, which was great.

(Nat looks up at her.)

It's in Bronxville so no-one knows me. I'm normal there. That's what I like best about it. I don't get "the face" every time someone looks at me.

NAT

What face?

BECCA

You know.

(demonstrates - solemn pity)

"Oh, hu. How ya doin'? Hangin' in there?" (Nat laughs a little)

I hate it. (strips the robot sheets off the bed)

And you know what's nice? These ladies, don't even talk about their kids or their husbands. Or any of it. I think they're just so happy to be away from all that. It's probably the last thing they wanna talk about. Because I'm sure most of them are bored housewives, right?

BECCA

I don't know. I've never met these people.

NAT

Well that's who takes Webster Continuing Ed. classes, isn't it?

BECCA

I guess.

NAT

Sure, and they're just so happy to be talking about Dickens instead of what's for dinner. "Yay, we're reading literature." It's like they're in college again. Who'd wanna talk about their families? I know I don't.

BECCA

Anyway, I like it. I like that I'm just a lady taking a class. And next week we start *Madame Bovary*. That oughta get the ol' girls' goat, huh? Toss.

NAT

I don't know that book.

BECCA

No, I know.

(Nat accidentally flips the switch to a ridiculously annoying toy.)

NAT

What the hell?

(trying to turn it off)

How do I—? That's annoying!

BECCA

Try listening to it or hours on end!

(switches it off)

Lizzy give him that. Only people without children give those kinds of gifts. Or people who want to punish parents.

(then...)

You know what? Debbie's kids might like that. We should save it for them. That'd show her.

BECCA
You can talk about Arthur. I just don't like the comparisons.

NAT
Okay

BECCA
It's not like the Arthur stuff didn't. He was my brother, so obviously that was a really hard time for all of us.

NAT
I know.

BECCA
But that was a long time ago, and it was very different. For me.

NAT
Of course it was.

BECCA
Okay then

(Back to work. Becca continues sorting books. Nat finds some papers in a bookcase.)

NAT
What's this?

BECCA
Oh, it's a... It's just a story that boy wrote. He sent it to us.

(rec: the title)

BECCA
What is it, an Alice in Wonderland kind of thing, or—

NAT
No, it's more science fiction.

BECCA
It's dedicated to Danny.

BECCA
Yeah, he asked if he could do that.

NAT
Why? It's about Danny?

BECCA
No, not at all. It's about a scientist.

NAT
Oh

BECCA
Or the son of a scientist, actually. The father discovers this warren of— It's like a network of holes to other galaxies, or parallel universes. I guess, but he dies somehow. And so the son goes into these holes trying to find him. Well not him, because he's dead, but another version of him.

NAT
It doesn't sound very good.

BECCA
It's okay. He's young.

NAT
Keep it?

BECCA
Yeah, we should keep it. I'll just put it in the box.

(beat)
(Nat puts the story inside the KEEP box and goes back to cleaning. Becca contemplates telling her something, and finally relents. She tries to sound off-hand.)

BECCA
I think I'm gonna see him actually.

NAT
Who?

BECCA
Jason Willene.

NAT
Why?

BECCA
I don't know. I just... want to.

BECCA
(she's heard this story many times)

Y up.

NAT

And then Howie was like "Where'd all the chocolates go?" And I said "Danny ate them. Leave him alone, kids like candy." And then Howie said "But those were chocolate covered espresso beans!" Remember?

BECCA

I do.

NAT

But Danny had eaten the whole bowl, so he was, you know, really really weird. And running in circles and climbing up the walls, and putting things on his head, and he was up until like three AM. Remember that?

BECCA

Only too well!

NAT

I didn't know what the damn things were. I just thought they were candy. You get me these fancy baskets with all this crazy stuff in 'em - espresso beans. I tell that story to everyone. People get a kick out of it.

BECCA

More?

(Nat looks up at her.)

Does it go away?

NAT

What.

BECCA

This feeling. Does it ever go away?

NAT

(beat)
 No. I don't think it does. Not for me it hasn't. And that's gonna be eleven years. It changes though.

BECCA

How?

NAT
 I don't know. The weight of it, I guess. At some point it becomes bearable. It turns into something you can crawl out from under and carry around. Like a brick in your pocket. And you forget it every once in awhile, but then you reach in for whatever reason and there it is. "Oh right. That." Which can be awful. But not all the time. Sometimes it's kinda... Not that you *like* it exactly, but it's what you have instead of your son, so you don't wanna let go of it either. So you carry it around. And it doesn't go away, which is...

BECCA

What.

NAT

Fine... actually.

(They're silent for a couple beats. Becca takes the bag of toys and exits. The lights fade.)

JASON
That's okay.

BECCA
He's uh...

JASON
Not really?

BECCA
I was gonna say working, but yeah. *(burp)*.

JASON
He seemed mad. The other day.

BECCA
No, he was just surprised that you dropped by.

JASON
Okay.

BECCA
You just scared him a little bit.

JASON
He didn't seem scared.

BECCA
Yeah well... Maybe that's not the right word. But... Howie's not mad at you. What happened was an accident. Howie knows that.

(beat)
You know that too, right?

(Jason takes a bite of lemon-square. Pause. Taz barks out back. Becca cringes.)

SQ

BECCA

That bark goes right through me. I swear, we better move somewhere without squirrels

JASON

You should have his vocal cords clipped.

BECCA

What?

JASON
That's what some people do. If their dogs won't stop barking.

BECCA
Hub. I've never heard of that.

JASON
Yeah, because some dogs just never shut up. So that's what they have to do. Otherwise the alternative is give 'em every. Or put 'em to sleep. I guess. You should look it up online. I bet there's all sorts of information, if you're interested.

BECCA
No, Howie would never allow it. *(beat)* He loves that dog too much.

Do you have any pets?

JASON
No.

BECCA
Well that's lucky.

JASON
Yeah?

BECCA
Unless you want a pet. Do you want a pet? Because I've got one you can borrow. Just kidding.

JASON
We read that book.

BECCA
Bleak House?

JASON
Yeah, in English class.

BECCA
Did you like it?

JASON: It's just my mom, but yeah, she's happy about it. She's already started picking out sheets for the dorm room.

BECCA

(smiles)

Uh-huh.

JASON: She keeps saying she's gonna apply to the graduate program so she can keep an eye on me while I'm up there. She's just joking though.

BECCA

Right.

JASON: She's not really jodding forward to it, since I'm the only one at home now, but I told her I'd come back on the weekends when I could.

BECCA

That'll be nice.

(re-enters, brings down the milk)

There ya go.

JASON

Thanks.

(puts the milk down)

BECCA

And you graduate when?

JASON

Thursday. Matt Laurer is gonna speak. His niece is in my class.

BECCA

Well that's great. I like Matt Laurer.

JASON

Yeah. So does my mom.

BECCA

So you must have a prom coming up then.

JASON:

It was last Saturday actually.

~~And you speak?~~

~~BECCA-~~

~~JASON-~~

~~Yeah.~~

BECCA

Do you have a girlfriend or—

JASON:

No. I mean, I did, but we broke up awhile ago, so I went with this girl Carly who's just a friend, and this other girl Tina went with this guy Jake whose dad owns this old-fashioned ~~type~~ ^{type} of place that he brings to car-shows and stuff, so we all went in that together.

BECCA

That must've been fun.

JASON

Yeah, it was a tight squeeze though, because no one wanted to sit up front, but it worked out. We had champagne in the back—not to get drunk or anything, just to celebrate—but Carly is really skinny so she got a little tipsy, even though she barely had like one glass of champagne. And she kept telling the driver to put the top down because she wanted to stand up in the back and act crazy, but the car wasn't even a convertible, so we essentially made fun of her all night for that. That part was pretty funny.

(Becca tears up as she listens. And with little warning, she is crying. A lot. It goes on for a few beats.)

BECCA

I'm sorry.

JASON:

No, that was stupid of me.

BECCA

I asked.

JASON

Still. I shouldn't have— Should I go?

BECCA

No. I'm fine.

(She collects herself. She grabs a napkin and blows her nose.)

JASON
Yeah, because infinite space means... it means it goes on and on forever, so there's a never-ending stream of possibilities.

~~BECCA~~

~~JASON
So even the most unlikely events have to take place somewhere, including other universes with versions of us leading different lives, or maybe the same lives with a couple things changed.~~

~~BECCA~~

~~And you think that's plausible.~~

~~JASON~~

~~Not just plausible - probable. If you accept the most basic laws of science.~~

~~BECCA~~

~~Hi!~~

~~So somewhere out there, there's a version of me - what? -- making pancakes?~~

~~JASON~~

~~Sure.~~

~~BECCA~~

~~Or at a water park.~~

~~Wherever, yeah. Both. If space is infinite. Then there are tons of yous out there, and tons of mes.~~

~~BECCA~~

~~And so this is just the sad version of us.~~

~~JASON~~

~~I guess.~~

~~(great)~~

~~But there are other versions where everything goes our way.~~

~~BECCA~~

~~JASON~~

~~Sure.~~

BECCA

~~(great - a change)~~
So those other versions of us exist. They're not hypothetical, they're actual, real people

JASON

Yeah, assuming you believe in science.

BECCA

~~Well that's a nice thought. Sure, but what about those interesting good times?~~

JASON

So, could you tell your husband for me? How I might've been going a little over the limit? I know he's probably still mad but--

BECCA

He's not mad. Nobody's mad

JASON

Okay.

(beat)

Can you tell him though?

BECCA

Sure.

(Jason takes another bite of lemon-square as the lights fade.)

You're welcome. BECCA

Bye, Howie. IZZY

Bye, Sweetie. NAT

Bye, guys. HOWIE

(As they exit)

Bingo's just at St. Catherine's, you know. What's the bum rush?

Can we talk about this in the car, please? IZZY

I didn't even get a laptop square. NAT

They were good. IZZY

They looked good. NAT

(They exit, Izzy carrying the box of stuff. Howie has placed the muffin on the table.)

HOWIE

(for bread)

Alan brought in his zucchini bread again. He made me take what was left. He wants you to try it.

BECCA

That was nice of him. You'll have to thank him for me.

(Howie gets himself a bear from the fridge.)

BECCA

We had pallard if you're hungry. It's in there.

No, Alan kept pushing that bread on me all day. HOWIE

Okay. BECCA

So how'd it go with the kid? (after a couple bears) HOWIE

Fine. It was totally fine. BECCA

What'd he want? HOWIE

Just to...I don't know, introduce himself. I guess, talk a little. BECCA

Did you let him off the hook? HOWIE

What do you mean? BECCA

Well, he seemed pretty intent on sitting down with us. I assumed he wanted to be absolved or something. (no response) HOWIE

Is that what he wanted? BECCA

Not really. Not in so many words, no. HOWIE

Huh. Did you tell him we didn't blame him? BECCA

We don't blame him. HOWIE

No, I know, but did you let him know that? BECCA

I guess so. BECCA

BECCA
It was okay. She said she kept meaning to call, but she felt freaked out about everything and so she kept putting it off, and before she knew it months had gone by, and so then she *really* couldn't call because she felt like such an asshole, and assumed I hated her, so it just seemed easier to not pick up the phone.

HOWIE
And that was good enough for you?

BECCA
I don't know. Probably. We'll see how the barbecue goes.

HOWIE
Are the kids gonna be there?

BECCA
Of course.

HOWIE
That'll be hard.

BECCA
Yeah. It'll be good to see them though. We should get something for Emily. We missed her birthday. She turned four last week.

HOWIE
(pause)
Right. Okay.

BECCA
Danny's us coming up.

HOWIE
I know.

BECCA
That's gonna be a tough one.

HOWIE
Yeah.

(Silence as Becca eats the bread.)

BECCA
It's good. (re: zucchini bread)

HOWIE
I'll tell Alan you liked it.

(More silence)

HOWIE
It's so quiet.

BECCA
That's because I slipped Taz a couple Ambien.

HOWIE
You're funny. (smiles)

BECCA
You think I'm joking.

(Becca takes another bite of zucchini bread. After a beat...)

BECCA
You think we should reconsider the house?

HOWIE
If nobody bids, we might have to.

BECCA
There are worse things, I guess.

HOWIE
Yeah.

BECCA
(beat)
It's a nice house.

HOWIE
I know.

(Becca stops eating, and faces Howe. Pause.)