

*Only Child*  
a play  
by Aaron Ricciardi

AGENT CONTACT:  
Ben Izzo at A3 Artists Agency  
350 5th Ave, 38th Floor  
New York, NY 10118  
(646) 461-9383  
ben.izzo@abramsartny.com

AUTHOR CONTACT:  
165 W 66<sup>th</sup> St., Apt. 12B  
New York, NY 10023  
(954) 803-9101  
aaron.ricciardi@gmail.com

© 2020 Aaron Ricciardi  
Draft 7, 6.25.20

PLAYERS:

- Jess.** female  
thirties/forties  
Pat's wife/owner  
uses her lips a lot: purses, licks, bites, pouts, kissy faces, chews her cheeks  
feels a bit like a faded movie star – delusions of grandeur and glamour
- Pat.** male  
thirties/forties  
Jess's husband/puppy dog  
smiley and giggly, mostly to (convincingly) cover up discomfort
- The Prince.** male  
a teenager  
Jess's student  
wears Abercrombie-type clothes and wears a crown  
bites his nails  
(played by an actor who looks to be a teenager)
- Scott.** male  
a teenager  
Jess's student  
Wears Abercrombie-type clothes and doesn't wear a crown  
bites his nails  
(played by the actor who plays The Prince)
- Abbi.** female  
ranges from infant to prepubescent  
Pat's and Jess's daughter  
wears kid clothes, which are not unlike the PJs of a home-bound cancer patient  
has a sweet, fragile laugh  
(played by an actress in her fifties or sixties, which at times is kind of ridiculous)
- Mom.** female  
fifties/sixties  
Jess's mom, Pat's mother-in-law  
wears the PJs of a home-bound cancer patient, which are not unlike kid clothes  
has a fuckin' great smoker's laugh  
(played by the actor who plays Abbi)

PLAYERS' ASSIGNMENTS:

This play is performed by four actors, who play the following roles:

- Actor 1 plays Jess.
- Actor 2 plays Pat.
- Actor 3 plays The Prince and Scott.
- Actor 4 plays Abbi and Mom.

PLAYING AREA:

Settings change in a flash. Rather like a dream. Or a nightmare.

Perhaps a piece of furniture or something gets added with every new scene, and nothing ever gets removed. At the end of the play, the stage would teem with the stuff of memories.

RULES:

LEVITY: It's crucial that the majority of this play be light and fun and uplifted. These people don't realize how dark or ugly the situation is. Pat, in particular, rarely comes off as miserable.

PACE: Pauses and silences are only indicated in this script when crucial. Feel free to add more.

DOUBLE CASTING: The actors playing Abbi/Mom and The Prince/Scott needn't drastically change their behavior when they switch between the two characters. A subtle shift will suffice. There should be some consistency between the two characters they play.

SCENE BREAKS: Fly through them. No blackouts. If you stop the action for a scene change, make it riveting and fabulous. But you probably should just fly through.

for Mom, Dad, and Ariel

“‘Peter,’ she asked, trying to speak firmly,  
‘what are your exact feelings to me?’

‘Those of a devoted son, Wendy.’

‘I thought so,’ she said, and went and sat by  
herself at the extreme end of the room.

‘You are so queer,’ he said, frankly  
puzzled, ‘and Tiger Lily is just the same.  
There is something she wants to be to me,  
but she says it is not my mother.’

‘No, indeed, it is not,’ Wendy replied  
with frightful emphasis.”

—*Peter Pan*, J.M. Barrie

“Michael took me back to Barrie’s flat a  
number of times, but I always felt  
uncomfortable there. There was a morbid  
atmosphere about it. I remember going there  
one day and it almost overwhelmed me, and  
I was glad to get away. We were going back  
to Oxford in Michael’s car, and I said, ‘It’s a  
great relief to get away from that flat,’ and  
he said, ‘Yes it is.’ But the next day he’d be  
writing to Barrie as usual.”

—Lord Robert Boothby,  
in *J.M. Barrie and the Lost Boys*  
by Andrew Birkin

**I. BY THE AIRPORT**

*Jess and Scott.  
They're looking up at the sky,  
near each other but not touching.  
A long silence.*

**Jess**

My heart is beating so fast, I can almost hear it.

**Scott**

Why?

**Jess**

I don't know. Come listen to it.

**Scott**

That's weird.

**Jess**

It's weird to listen to someone's heartbeat? Why are you making it a whole thing? I'm just saying you should listen to my heartbeat. Scott. Sco-ott. Sco-oooooott. Scott Scott Scott!

**Scott**

Jess Jess Jess.

**Jess**

Listen to my heartbeat!

*Scott, charmed, puts his ear to Jess's heart.*

**Scott**

That's fast.

**Jess**

I told you.

**Scott**

And hard.

**Jess**

That's dirty.

**Scott**

Are you nervous?

**Jess**

A little.

**Scott**

Why?

**Jess**

Just being here with you.

**Scott**

Do you want to go back?

**Jess**

Of course not.

**Scott**

What's wrong?

**Jess**

Nothing's wrong.

**Scott**

You're making me nervous now.

**Jess**

Why?

**Scott**

I don't want your heart to beat fast.

**Jess**

I can't help it.

**Scott**

Mine isn't beating fast.

**Jess**

That's okay.

*The sound of an approaching airplane,  
coming in for a landing.  
They follow it with their eyes and their heads  
as it soars above them,  
going in for a landing.  
Scott finds it beautiful.  
Jess finds it beautiful that Scott finds it beautiful.*

**Scott**

NOW MY HEART'S BEATING FAST!

**Jess**

I WANNA HEAR!

*Jess puts her ear to Scott's heart.*

**Jess**

IT IS BEATING FAST!

*The airplane sounds grow distant.*

**Scott**

Imagine, being up there every day! I don't want to wind up like Eddie, hanging around this place when I'm in my twenties.

**Jess**

He's such a weirdo.

**Scott**

The weirdest.

**Jess**

Pat saw him at Publix the other day.

**Scott**

No way!

**Jess**

Pat said he was really weird, like a stray dog.

**Scott**

Uch, what a weirdo. I can't stay stuck here, Jess. I'd drop dead.

**Jess**

I worry I am stuck here.

**Scott**

You're not stuck. You're young. You have a whole life ahead of you.

**Jess**

Easy for you to say.

**Scott**

Why?

**Jess**

Not all of us have our name on a building, Scott. Some of us are tied to our jobs. Some of us have moms that are GED teachers and dads we never saw. Some of us don't have money to just do whatever we want.

**Scott**

I'm not saying that.

**Jess**

I know you're not. I'm sorry. I'm just in a funk.

**Scott**

Hey, get this. Flight attendants' friends get to fly for free. So you could go all around the world with me. We could go on trips together. And not just to the beach. We could fly to like Paris and Rome and all sorts of places.

**Jess**

Would Pat have to come? And my mom and Abbi?

**Scott**

If you want.

**Jess**

I'd want it to just be us. We can go to our island.

**Scott**

Yeah.

*Jess has tried to hold Scott's hand a few times, to no avail.*

**Jess**

Why are you being weird? Hold my hand.

**Scott**

My hand is gross. I have a wart.

**Jess**

Aw, look at your little wart.

**Scott**

Shut up.

**Jess**

Actually, I take that back. It's not a little wart. It's a big wart.

**Scott**

It's disgusting. I got stuff for it but it's not working.

**Jess**

Let me tell you what to do for it.

**Scott**

The duct tape thing? I've heard about that. It seems bogus.

**Jess**

No, this is different.

**Scott**

Whatever, my mom made me an appointment at the dermatologist. She said they freeze it off.

**Jess**

She doesn't know what she's talking about. Don't listen to her. You don't need a doctor. You just have to talk to it.

**Scott**

I have to talk to my wart?

**Jess**

Yeah, I went to a doctor once when I had a wart and he said it's psychosomatic and medicine won't help it, you just have to talk to it, like, "Go away, wart. You're ugly. I hate you. Get off my skin."

**Scott**

That's silly.

**Jess**

I'm being completely serious. It works. I'm telling you.

**Scott**

Go away, wart.

**Jess**

You're ugly. I hate you.

**Scott**

You're ugly. I hate you. I don't want you on my hand. Go away, you stupid wart. You suck. You're ruining my life. Die, wart, DIE!!!

*They laugh.*

**Jess**

I love you, Scott.

**Scott**

I love you, Jess.

**Jess**

My soul mate.

**Scott**

My soul mate.

**Jess**

You are so very special.

**Scott**

You too.

**Jess**

I'm going to know you forever. You will be sewn into me. Forever Jess and Scott.

**Scott**

Forever Jess and Scott. Is your heart still beating so fast?

**Jess**

Yes. Is yours?

**Scott**

Yes. We should get back.

**Jess**

Noooooooooo...

**Scott**

Come oooooon.

**Jess**

I don't wanna.

**Scott**

We have to work on my monologue.

**Jess**

Just let me pretend a few more minutes.

**Scott**

What are you pretending?

**Jess**

That it's just you and me. Just me and Scott. No Mom, no cancer, no Pat, no grudges, no Abbi, no waking me up at five a.m., none of it, and we can stay out all night. Okay. Let's go.

*Scott walks off.*

*Jess stays put and stares after him.*

## **II. ON THE RUG**

*Jess and Mom.*

*Perhaps Mom plays with a baby or kid toy.*

*Jess is playing the tile game Rummikub by herself.*

*There are two racks set up.*

*Jess is playing for both.*

**Mom**

You're doing it all wrong. You're not taking advantage.

**Jess**

Advantage of what?

**Mom**

Of everything you have. Look: you have these seven in a row here. That's good. But you can split it up into a group of three and a group of four. Or a group of three and a group of three and then you have this extra one to do something else with.

**Jess**

Right.

**Mom**

In fact—always shoot for threes. If you can have a group of three, you're better off. It frees you up. Everything depends on groups of threes. That's good. Just like that. Yeah. Now you can use those two. Exactly.

**Jess**

Is it pronounced Rummi-*cub* or Rummi-*cube*?

**Mom**

Rummi-cub. What kind of question is that?

**Jess**

Scott's family says cube.

**Mom**

They do?

**Jess**

That's what he said.

**Mom**

That's—cube doesn't make sense phonetically.

**Jess**

I think it's Hebrew.

**Mom**

All I know is my mother and my father said cub and I've been saying cub for about a hundred years. Ahp—you missed that one there.

**Jess**

Oh. Thanks. Why didn't they get divorced?

**Mom**

Who?

**Jess**

Grandma and grandpa. They always looked so miserable.

**Mom**

It just wasn't done. You picked someone and you stayed. Grandma and grandpa were together since they're kids. She was at his fourteenth birthday.

**Jess**

That's no different from me and Pat.

**Mom**

But my father and all the men, they all messed around on the side.

**Jess**

I remember you telling me that.

**Mom**

I remember I was about to go to college, and I was sheet shopping with my mother and she said, "All men mess around. All men want their little adventures and that's fine, so long as they don't get her pregnant. You gotta make sure he doesn't run off." I had no respect for her after she told me that. Absolutely totally disgusting. But she was right. Every man I was ever with cheated. Every one. And every time I left the bastard.

**Jess**

I don't think I have to worry about that with Pat. I don't think he'd ever cheat on me.

**Mom**

But, if he ever did, you should leave him.

**Jess**

Oh, absolutely. I wouldn't stand for that.

*Pat enters.*

*Mom shifts to Abbi.*

**Pat**  
Jess?

**Jess**  
Pat.

**Pat**  
What smells so good? Je-ess?

**Jess**  
We're in here.

**Pat**  
Hi tuss.

**Jess**  
Hi tuss.

**Pat, baby voice**  
Whattaw you doo-een on the floowah silly?

**Jess, baby voice**  
Play-een.

**Pat, baby voice**  
By youwsewf?

**Jess, baby voice**  
Abbi's playeen but I'm moveen huhw tie-ohls.

**Pat, baby voice**  
Awe you giwls haveen fun?

**Jess, baby voice**  
Whaaat?

**Pat, baby voice**  
I saaiiid, awe you giwls haveen fun?

**Jess**  
Sorry, I can't do two things at once. What'd you say?

**Pat**  
Nothing. Hi Abbi. Hi sweet girl.

**Jess**

Do you say Rummi-*cub* or Rummi-*cube*?

**Pat**

Cub. Don't you say cub? Didn't Mom say cub? How could it be cube even? That's not phonetic.

**Jess**

Scott's family says cube, isn't that weird? I was just thinking about that.

**Pat**

How is ol' Scott?

**Jess**

How should I know?

**Pat**

When's the last time you heard from him?

**Jess**

A while.

**Pat**

Ungrateful little shit.

**Jess, re: Abbi**

Pat please.

**Pat**

Sorry.

**Jess**

I don't want to corrupt her. Let's let her be a kid.

**Pat**

You're right. I'm sorry. Did your teachers say you had a good day?

**Jess**

They did! You had the best day, right Abbi?

**Pat**

Who's my good girl!?! Who's my Abbi!?! Why don't you smile?

*Jess makes Abbi smile.*

**Jess**

She smiles.

*Pat tries to make Abbi smile.  
Abbi doesn't smile.*

**Pat**

She doesn't smile for me.

**Jess**

I win.

**Pat**

Why would you say that?

**Jess**

I was kidding. Sorry.

**Pat**

It's not funny.

**Jess**

I said sorry.

**Pat**

What smells so good?

**Jess**

I cooked!

**Pat**

You never cook! What? You don't. I'm surprised! It's not—it's a good surprised. Is that Nanny's Macaroni?

**Jess**

And green bean casserole. And cheddar cookies.

*Abbi shifts to Mom.*

**Mom**

These have a real kick to 'em!

**Pat**

"These have a real kick to 'em!"

**Jess**

I can hear now, like she's right here.

**Mom**

Holy shit!

**Pat**

“Holy shit!”

**Mom**

It’s mold!

**Jess**

“It’s mold!”

**Mom, Jess, and Pat**

“These fucking cookies are covered in mold!”

*They laugh.*

*Mom shifts to Abbi.*

**Pat**

You made Mom’s recipes. That’s so sweet. Did you clean too?

**Jess**

I decided to clean.

**Pat**

Amazing.

**Jess**

Yeah I just couldn’t take this yucky feeling I’ve been feeling and I remembered once I heard this speaker who said you should clean your space to clean your mind, or something like that.

**Pat**

Well this is just great.

**Jess**

I think I’m depressed.

**Pat**

You’re not depressed.

**Jess**

Look at me. Playing a four-person game by myself on the floor. Is it gonna be this way forever?

**Pat**

It’s not forever. You’re not depressed. Mom just died. Say Dada. Say Dada. Dada. Say hi Dada. Hi Dada. Hi Dada. Dada. Dada.

**Abbi**

Mama.

**Pat**

Great.

**Jess**

I have this student—he’s new this year. And today he stuck around chatting with me in my office, and he was adorable. Just like, so eager, very bright. He was like, “I know *this* play, and I know *this* play, and I was in *this* musical, and *this* is my vocal range and blahblahblah.” He’s clearly gay. It’s very sweet.

**Pat**

I’m gonna shower. I’m disgusting.

**Jess**

Um, okay, you’re not even listening to me.

**Pat**

Course I am, your new student.

**Jess**

There’s more. Forget it.

**Pat**

No, I’m listening, I want to hear.

**Jess**

Now you’re not gonna even believe me. You’re gonna think I’m making it up.

**Pat**

I’m sorry. I’ll try harder.

**Jess**

So it turns out this boy...is a prince.

**Pat**

A prince?

**Jess**

A prince.

**Pat**

Are you using “prince” as some kind of euphemism or something?

**Jess**

No like an actual prince.

**Pat**

Like a prince prince?

**Jess**

A prince prince.

**Pat**

Is he famous? Would I know him?

**Jess**

I mean, I'd never heard of him.

**Pat**

What's he the prince of?

**Jess**

Some small kingdom. I'd never heard of it. But I looked him up and it's true. He's actually a prince. Like a true-to-life bona fide prince. I guess I should've known because he does wear a crown, but I just thought it was some kind of fashion statement. He's the only child of the currently reigning queen, so he's next-in-line to the throne and will undoubtedly be a king someday, which means that someday I will have taught the king of a small kingdom.

**Pat**

Sounds like he'd be a real brat.

**Jess**

He was lovely, like totally down to earth. You're not letting me get to the point.

**Pat**

Okay okay.

**Jess**

The point is...he's coming over for dinner tonight! He wanted help with a monologue for Thespians, so I told him I'd help him pick one out and I told him I'd make us all dinner.

**Pat**

That's why you cooked.

**Jess**

Yeah! I'm cooking for royalty! I've been a nervous wreck since I got home from school, knowing I have royalty coming to my house. Our house. We've got royalty coming! I hope he's not disgusted by how we live or anything. Like, he's probably never seen a microfiber couch. What's the matter?

**Pat**

Tonight doesn't work for me.

**Jess**

Why not?

**Pat**

Could you not have asked me?

**Jess**

I figured it would be fine. Why doesn't it work for you? We never do anything.

**Pat**

I do things. I work.

**Jess**

Um, I work too. I said we. We never do things. After we come home from work. We come home from work and you make us food and we watch TiVo. We don't even watch live TV. We watch TiVo from the night before.

**Pat**

So we can skip commercials. Commercials suck.

**Jess**

But we never watch anything live.

**Pat**

So?

**Jess**

I don't know.

**Pat**

Do you not like cuddling on the couch and watching our shows? We love our shows. Project Runway and Big Brother and So You Think You Can Dance and America's Got Talent and Survivor and The Amazing Race and Dancing with the Stars and Will & Grace—

**Jess**

You've yet to tell me why tonight doesn't work for you.

**Pat**

Tomorrow we have the big inspection. Corporate's coming to do the yearly inspection of the store.

**Jess**

I thought you said that was next week.

**Pat**

I didn't. It's tomorrow.

**Jess**

Oh. But what does that have to do with dinner tonight.

**Pat**

It has to do with dinner tonight that tomorrow's a big day so I need to go to bed early and I don't want to perform.

**Jess**

Perform? Take a nap before he comes over.

*Pat rubs his temples.*

**Jess**

What's wrong now? Migraine? Well I can't just cancel. You don't cancel on a prince.

*The Prince is revealed, in all his splendor.*

### **III. ON THE COUCH**

*Jess and The Prince.  
The Prince wears a crown.  
There's a pile of books in front of them.*

**The Prince**

My parents are so clueless. They're just idiots, for real, like, total idiots.

**Jess**

The king and the queen?

**The Prince**

My dad is not a king! Hell no. My mom has the royal blood. My dad's a businessman. My dad actually didn't really grow up with any money or anything and it shows. Like, he still doesn't know what fork to use, and it's disgusting honestly. Like, get your act together. At state dinners, he'll ask the waiter to bring him more bread and he rips out the insides because he doesn't like crust—you don't like crust? are you in nursery school?—and he soaks up the bread in the sauce. Absolutely classless. At a state dinner. He embarrasses the kingdom. But, like, so does my mom. She has this obnoxious laugh, like:

*The Prince laughs like his mom, The Queen, laughs.  
He sounds a little like a giraffe.*

**The Prince**

It's so obnoxious. She sounds like a giraffe. She thinks she's this dignified pillar of society but when she laughs she sounds like a giraffe.

**Jess**

How do you know what a giraffe sounds like?

**The Prince**

We went on safari once, me and my parents—

**Jess**

The queen and her businessman.

**The Prince**

The queen and her businessman, yeah. You're kind of obsessed with the whole royalty thing.

**Jess**

No I'm not!

**The Prince**

Yes you are. "The Queen." It's not as glamorous as it sounds. Sometimes we fly on regular airlines. First class, but still.

**Jess**

I'm really not obsessed with it.

**The Prince**

Okay.

**Jess**

I don't want you to think I'm this unrefined bumpkin or something. When I was little my dad had a lot of money. He bought me this toy Mercedes I used to drive around. It worked off a battery. But then he pissed it away. You have an amazing smile.

**The Prince**

Thank you! Braces. You have a nice smile too.

**Jess**

I'm more partial to my eyes. No one ever compliments my eyes but I think they're really beautiful. They're my mom's eyes.

**The Prince**

They are really beautiful.

**Jess**

Thank you. When I cry, they change colors. They turn aqua. Isn't that cool?

**The Prince**

Mm-hm. What was I saying?

**Jess**

You went on a safari.

**The Prince**

Right, we went on safari, which—have you done safari?

**Jess**

We did that safari they have at Disney.

**The Prince**

That doesn't count! A real safari, a *true* safari, is like nothing else in the world. You see the most amazing—we saw these giraffes having sex, just out in the open, we must've been like five feet from them, at most, and they were just going at it like we weren't even there, and they were making this noise, like:

*The Prince makes a loud noise like a giraffe.*

**Jess**  
Shh.

**The Prince**  
Sorry.

**Jess**  
I just don't want my husband to wake up.

**The Prince**  
Right, his migraine.

**Jess**  
Giraffes. Having sex.

**The Prince**  
It's stupid.

**Jess**  
No it's not. Giraffes. Having sex. I'm very interested.

**The Prince**  
Whatever, I just, the female giraffe didn't want it, you could tell because the male giraffe would try to mount her from behind and she'd gallop away and that kept happening, like some sort of dance, until finally he got her, and he's like really humping her, like hard, like it looked violent almost, which was so strange because you kind of can't imagine that a giraffe could possibly be so vicious, but he was, and then the female starts mewling or whatever, making this noise, so it seemed like she was enjoying it, and that's when I was like, "Mom that sounds like you when you laugh," and then my dad snapped at me, like, "Don't talk to your mother like that." And then I called my dad a prick and that started this like terrible day where my parents punished me, they wouldn't let me go on the other game drive that day. So they're off watching lions eat zebra carcasses and I'm sitting alone in a tent—a luxurious tent, but a tent nonetheless. God they're so annoying. I'm an only child so I spend so much time with them that it starts to feel like I'm in some sort of weird relationship with them, you know what I mean?

**Jess**  
Totally. I'm an only child too.

**The Prince**  
Like, I can't find a girl who wants to date me but I have this middle-aged married couple, my parents, who are—not mincing words—*obsessed* with me, but they also treat me like I'm two years old—my mom especially, oh my god, she'd wipe my ass if I let her. And they're so *boring*. Like, I'll say some vocab word they've never heard before, like, I don't know, superfluous or altruism or something, and they look at me like I'm some kind of alien who just landed on their porch, and it's like, Bitch, Read A Book! You're BORING!

**Jess**  
Shh.

**The Prince**

Sorry. I'm loud. My parents are always telling me I'm aggressive. But you know what? I'd rather be aggressive than boring.

**Jess**

You remind me of my friend. Scott. You even look like him a little bit.

**The Prince**

Is he cute?

**Jess**

Scott? He's gorgeous.

**The Prince**

What was that?

**Jess**

I said Scott is gorgeous.

**The Prince**

Scott is what?

**Jess**

Gorgeous.

**The Prince**

And Scott looks like me?

**Jess**

Spitting image.

**The Prince**

Alright. Proceed.

**Jess**

You even talk like him. Like what you just did making me say gorgeous gorgeous gorgeous. He would've done something like that. And he travels a lot like you do. He's a flight attendant. He and I used to pull over on the highway by the airport and watch the planes land. He was so cute about it. He got so excited about everything. And now he made his dream come true. It's really amazing. Pat and I haven't gone anywhere in a long time. I can't even remember the last time we—I think it was when we went to Disney. We took Mom for her birthday. With Scott. Mom got a wheelchair. God, is that really the last time? That's kind of pathetic. We drove there. We didn't even fly.

**The Prince**

Can't Scott hook you up with plane tickets?

**Jess**

I'm not sure.

**The Prince**

Don't flight attendants get to take their friends on flights for free?

**Jess**

I don't talk to Scott much anymore. He became kind of a weirdo. He was my student, too. He needed to find himself, which is fine, but he got selfish about it, and then we lost touch. That happens when you're my age. People just vanish. It's strange. They just disappear.

**The Prince**

What do you mean?

**Jess**

They just drop off. Years go by and you realize once someone used to be the center of your entire universe, and now they're gone. Poof. Disappeared.

**The Prince**

Sometimes I wish my parents would just disappear, so they'd stop breathing down my neck. Did you used to feel that way?

**Jess**

I think I did sometimes. It's hard to remember. My mom just died.

**The Prince**

Oh my god. I'm such an idiot. I'm such an idiot.

**Jess, *crying***

It's okay.

**The Prince**

No, I'm making you cry. Where are tissues? I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.

*Abbi appears.*

**Jess**

I cry about her at the drop of a hat. I wasn't good to her at the end. I got frustrated with her, and resentful. I should've enjoyed every moment I had with her but I didn't. I hate endings. I hate knowing something's going to end. I don't even want to tonight to end. I'm having such a nice time. And we haven't found you a monologue! We've been sitting here all night!

**The Prince**

You're right. They do turn aqua.

**Jess**

My mascara's everywhere. You're very special.

**The Prince**

You too.

**Abbi**

Mama.

**Jess**

Oh my god, honey, are you okay?

**Abbi**

I wuck up.

**Jess**

Come here. It's okay.

**Abbi**

Whoddat?

**Jess**

This is my new friend. He's one of my big kids at school. Can you say hi?

**Abbi**

Hah.

**The Prince**

Hi sweet girl. What's your name? What's your name?

**Jess**

You can tell him your name. She's shy. She's a little flirt. Are you a little flirt? Yes you are.

**The Prince**

What's your name? Is it...Jess?

**Abbi**

No! Das Mama!

**The Prince**

Is it...Minnie Mouse?

**Abbi**

No!

**The Prince**

Is it...Mickey Mouse?

**Abbi**

No! Iss Abbi!

**The Prince**

Abbi! What a pretty name!

**Jess**

Why are you awake?

**Abbi**

I hudda lou noyss.

**The Prince**

The giraffe.

**Jess**

Sure, you wake up but your dad sleeps right through it. Abbi, do you know where our new friend lives? He lives in a castle.

**Abbi**

A cassa?

**Jess**

That's right. He's very special.

**The Prince**

What else lives in a castle? It breathes fire, and it flies?

**Abbi**

A dwagga!

*The Prince pretends to be a fire-breathing dragon.*

*Abbi is frightened.*

*Abbi leaps into The Prince's lap and sits there.*

*They all sit together.*

*Jess points out the window at the night sky.*

**Jess**

Look, Ab: what are those?

**Abbi**

Stahs.

**Jess**

That's right. Stars.

**Abbi**

Moo.

**Jess**

The moon.

**The Prince**

Planets.

**Jess**

The whole universe. Can you say that, Abbi? The universe.

**Abbi**

Da yoonavuss.

**Jess**

The universe. The universe is an amazing thing, Abbi. It has plans for us and it leads us to each other, like magnets.

*The Prince's cell phone rings.*

*He answers immediately.*

**The Prince**

Hi. Yeah, we're just looking for monologues. Oh, I lost track of time. MOM, I LOST TRACK OF TIME. Fine. Love you too.

*He hangs up.*

**The Prince**

I have to go home. It's past my curfew.

**IV. ON THE LAWN**

*Jess, Pat, The Prince, and Abbi.*

*Pat grills.*

*Abbi plays nearby, with a toy, perhaps.*

*They're all snacking on cheddar cookies.*

**The Prince**

These *cookies!*

**Pat**

One time Jess's mom brought a bag of these cookies, and we're eating them—

**Jess**

We were at a resort.

**Pat**

Right, we were away on a trip, and it's late at night—

**Jess**

At a beach resort. It was us and my mom and my friend Scott—I told you about Scott.

**The Prince**

The flight attendant.

**Pat**

Right, so it's late, and we're outside, and it's dark, and Mom brought these cookies—

**Jess**

In a Ziploc bag.

**Pat**

Right, and we're eating them, like human garbage disposals, all of us shoveling them in our mouths—

**Jess**

And remember it's dark.

**Pat**

Right, I said that. And we're really into these cookies but we all think they taste funny but no one says anything. And finally Mom says something, she says, "These have a real kick to 'em!"

**Jess**

I can hear her now, like she's right here.

*Abbi shifts to Mom.*

**Mom**

These have a real kick to ‘em!

**Pat**

And then she brings the bag over to this lamp, because, remember, it’s dark.

**Mom**

Holy shit!

**Pat**

“Holy shit!”

**Mom**

It’s mold!

**Jess**

“It’s mold!”

**Mom, Jess, and Pat**

“These fucking cookies are covered in mold!”

*Mom shifts to Abbi.  
Everyone laughs hysterically.*

**The Prince**

How did it take you that long to realize?!

**Pat**

I don’t know!

**Jess**

That’s why it’s so funny!

*The laughter dies down.*

**Jess**

You want a beer?

**Pat**

Are you—? Jess.

**Jess**

What?

**Pat**

He’s not old enough.

**The Prince**

It's no problem. I don't have to have one—

**Jess**

Since when are you Mister Rule Follower?

**Pat**

It feels funny to me.

**Jess**

Um I seem to remember many times when you and I got drunk off our asses in high school and we were younger than him. Ignore him.

**Pat**

But we never got booze from some married couple we just met.

**Jess**

No, Mom bought it for us. What's the difference? He's a prince. He probably drinks with his parents. Out of goblets.

**The Prince**

I do, it's true. At every social function it seems there's always drinking going on. Usually wine, though. Not beer. I've been drinking since I was a kid.

**Jess**

See? Big deal.

*Jess tosses The Prince a beer.*

**Pat**

Since you were a kid? How old are you, like fifteen?

**The Prince**

Sixteen! I just got my license!

**Pat**

Why don't we give Abbi a beer while we're at it. I bet she can really hold her liquor.

*Jess stalks toward Pat, taunting him.*

**Pat**

Stop. There's a hot grill.

**Jess**

Are you ticklish?

**Pat**

I hate being tickled. She knows I hate being tickled. Stop! Stop!

*Pat and Jess are now on the ground,  
rolling around, her tickling him,  
both cackling, screaming, howling.  
The Prince sips his beer.*

**Jess**

You like that? Huh? You like that?

**Pat**

Okay! Uncle!

**Jess**

That's Aunt to you.

**Pat**

Aunt! Aunt!

**Jess, baby voice**

You bettow watch youw mouf, mistow.

**Pat, baby voice**

I'm sowwy, I dinnit mean it.

**The Prince**

How long have you two been together?

**Pat**

Since we were around your age, actually.

**The Prince**

That's a long time!

**Jess**

Oh no, Pat. I think he's calling us old.

**The Prince**

No! I swear!

**Jess, needling**

I think you aaa-arrrrre.

**The Prince, devastated**

No! I wasn't calling you old! I'm sorry! That's not what I meant!

**Jess**

That's okay.

**Pat**

It's okay. She was just kidding.

*The Prince is on the verge of some kind of breakdown—mortified, distraught.*

**The Prince**

I always do this I always do this.

**Pat**

Always do what?

*Jess gets physically close to The Prince.*

**Jess**

Do you feel embarrassed? It's okay. I so understand that feeling. The amount of times in my life I've said or done things that I regret truly boggle the mind. But people make mistakes.

**Pat**

It's not that big a deal.

**Jess**

Pat, let him have a moment.

**Pat**

What he said was true—we have been together a long time!

**The Prince**

I just feel like a dumb kid.

**Jess**

Even adults make mistakes, kiddo.

*The Prince embraces Jess.*

*Jess holds him.*

**Jess**

Come on, Pat! Group hug!

*Pat, holding a grilling tool, joins the hug.*

*Jess sings "Kumbaya."*

*The Prince laughs and joins in.*

*Pat joins in.*

*They all sing the song, hugging, giggling.*

*There's at least one moment here where they're all simultaneously, purely joyful.  
The hug lasts too long.  
The Prince has recovered.*

**The Prince**

How did you two meet?

**Jess and Pat**

We—

**Pat**

You can tell it.

**Jess**

You tell it.

**Pat**

Jess, I don't care.

**Jess**

You tell it, I like hearing you tell it. Stop being a poop.

**Pat**

I'm not being a poop.

**Jess**

He's so being a poop.

**Pat**

I'm not being a poop you just always correct me when I tell stories so you should tell it yourself.

**Jess**

I won't. I promise.

**Pat**

We met in high school. I was sitting alone after school one day and Jess came over to see if I was okay—

**Jess**

He was crying. I was helping you clarify!

**Pat**

Just tell it yourself. She's a better storyteller than me anyway. She remembers all these details that are not stored anywhere in this brain of mine. Tell it, it's okay.

**Jess**

He said he didn't have a ride home. He was wearing this Nirvana shirt and smoking a cigarette, he thought he was so tough, but he had tears just streaming down his face, just like covering his whole face. So Mom and I drove him back to our house, and she made us dinner, and the three of us just sat around talking all night. Pat told us about his family life which was really sad. His mom had just abandoned him and his siblings to go run off with some guy, and his dad—We both have pretty terrible relationships with our dads.

**Pat**

You told me about your dad that night.

**Jess**

Well, Mom did. She told the whole story. Some parts of it I didn't even remember.

**The Prince**

What's the story?

**Jess**

Where to begin.

**Pat**

He's just a scumbag. Lowlife. Drug addict.

**Jess**

Well, he wasn't always. When I was little, he was this real estate magnate.

**Pat, chuckling**

"Magnate."

**Jess**

What?!

**Pat**

That's not a word!

**Jess**

He's just jealous I have all the big words. My dad had a lot of important friends and things. One of them had a yacht we used to go on. And they'd smoke pot the whole time. So inappropriate. And he had this secretary—

**Pat**

I hate this story.

**Jess**

I guess she was lonely, but whenever I went to my dad's office this woman would talk my ear off about her very active sex life. She taught me about sex. I was like seven. Blech. I did have the

**Jess**

niciest clothes, though. I distinctly remember when my dad lost his money because I started having to wear clothes my mom bought from K-Mart and the fabric wasn't the same.

**Pat**

That's when Jess was like ten.

**Jess**

Mhm. The fabric of cheap clothes just can't compare. That took a lot of getting used to.

**Pat**

He left and was on all these drugs. But he'd been doing drugs for years. All those rich assholes, they're all snorting coke. And they all get away with it. The system is so fucked.

**Jess**

It really is.

**The Prince**

Where is he now?

**Pat**

Who knows. He was homeless at one point. Haven't heard from him in years.

**Jess**

I'm essentially an orphan. Pat too.

**The Prince**

So that's when your parents broke up?

**Jess**

Oh no. They broke up like a month after I was born.

**Pat**

It was always just Jess and her mom.

**Jess**

Me and my mom and you, tuss. And it all started that night, the three of us talking. Freshman year. We talked for hours.

**Pat**

'Til like midnight.

**Jess**

It was one a.m. I remember I looked at the clock and it was one a.m. exactly.

**Pat**

See? Her memory.

**Jess**

We smoked all night. We must've smoked like ten packs between the three of us that night. Mom and I drove him home, and I watched him walk up to his brother's apartment, wearing that Nirvana t-shirt with the list of all the cities they played on the back of it, and I said to my mom, "I'm going to marry that boy." And I did. I knew. I just knew. The universe sent him to me.

**Pat**

The happiest day of my life.

**Jess**

There's a reason he was crying on that staircase.

**Pat**

What about you? You have any ladies in your life? You're a prince for god's sake. I bet you're beating girls off you with a stick.

**The Prince**

There's this one girl—I'm not sure if she even likes me.

**Jess**

That's great! You didn't tell me about her.

**The Prince**

She's—well—she's—you know her.

**Jess**

I do?! Who is it?

**The Prince**

I don't want to say.

**Jess**

Is she my student?

**The Prince**

I don't want to say!

**Jess**

Aw sweetie. Look at him, he's blushing. Okay, she's my student...hmm...Who could it—OH! I know. Is it Lady Flatchest?!

**The Prince**

No.

**Jess**

It's totally her!

**Pat**

Lady Flatchest?

**Jess**

It's this funny name we came up with—she calls herself that—

**The Prince**

They're not that small.

**Pat**

It's okay if they are.

**Jess**

Lady Flatchest. Of course. That all makes so much sense. But isn't she dating—?

**The Prince**

Yeah but I don't get what she sees in him, like, he's not even cute, he plays all these sports so he always has all these scars on his arms and he doesn't smell that good and he dresses like a bum, whereas I'm like always dressed well and always smelling good and I take care of my skin, I get facials, I get manicures, I get my eyebrows done, I take care of myself, and her boyfriend is such a loser, he doesn't do well in school, he doesn't take part in culture of any kind, whereas I go to museums and the symphony and I'm really into the Oscars and she and I have such incredible conversations and it's just like—Ugh.

**Jess**

Girls your age aren't going to understand you. You're wise beyond your years. Of course she likes that idiot.

**Pat**

Before I met Jess, I had the same problem. None of the girls at school were interested in me. They all liked guys like that guy. Athletes. Guys with scars on their arms.

**The Prince**

You didn't play sports?

**Pat**

No way. I'm very unathletic.

**Jess**

He can't even swim!

**The Prince**

You can't?! How is that possible?!

**Pat**

Never learned.

**The Prince**

That's crazy.

**Pat**

It is what it is. And I have this unpredictable medical issue that makes that kind of stuff—

**Jess**

The migraines.

**The Prince**

I didn't realize they were chronic.

**Jess**

Oh yeah, he's gotten them since he was a teenager. It hurts me so much to see him like that.

**Pat**

Some people get them and other people don't and there's nothing you can do about it.

**Jess**

Homeopaths make these herbal supplement drinks that've been shown to work.

**Pat**

I tried it. It didn't work.

**Jess**

He only did it for like a week. They say at least a month.

**Pat**

It tasted like dirt. Spicy dirt. Yuck. Just thinking about it. Jess believes in all that stuff. Homywhatevers, astrology, fairies.

**Jess**

I don't believe in fairies! I believe in energies. I believe in the universe and fate and spirits and everything happening for a reason.

**Pat**

You might as well believe in fairies. There's no difference.

**Jess**

Well, all Pat believes in is being miserable. He gets that from his mother.

**Pat**

I'm gonna go get the hot dogs.

**Jess**

I'll get 'em.

**The Prince**

I can get 'em.

**Pat**

I got it.

**Jess, baby voice**

Tuss, I was kiddeen.

*Pat goes.*

**Jess**

I had a dream about you.

**The Prince**

Really?

**Jess**

We were on a safari in Africa but it was also Disney and it was me and you and Pat and Abbi but Abbi was also kind of my Mom and you were also kind of my friend Scott, the flight attendant, and we were looking at giraffes but they were also dragons and then one killed Pat! I've been dreaming of you every night since I met you actually.

**The Prince**

What happened in the other dreams?

**Jess**

Oh, this and that. Some of them were dirty. God, look at me blushing. I'm beet red. Have you dreamed of me?

**The Prince**

I don't remember my dreams.

*Pat returns, bearing hot dogs on a plate.*

**Pat**

Jess I meant to tell you—out of the way, plate's heavy.

**The Prince**

Sorry.

**Pat**

I meant to tell you when I was at Publix before, I ran into Eddie!

**Jess**  
Oh?

**Pat**  
He was so weird. It was like he was some sort of stray dog, afraid I was gonna hit him or something. I had to be like, “Eddie? Hello? Eddie? Is that you?”

**Jess**  
He’s such a weirdo.

**The Prince**  
Who’s Eddie?

**Jess**  
Former student.

**Pat**  
He used to come here all the time. He was like a member of our family. And then he just stopped coming. Disappeared. And I gotta say: it makes me mad. After everything Jess does for those kids, they’re so ungrateful.

**Jess**  
Not all of them.

**Pat**  
Of course, but some. Eddie. And Scott! Same thing with Scott! Scott fell off the map too!

**Jess**  
Who cares? It doesn’t matter.

**Pat**  
I know it’s part of being a teacher, the whole revolving door—kids grow up, they graduate, new kids come in—but some of them are ungrateful little shits.

**Jess**  
Pat please! Our daughter is right there!

**Pat**  
Sorry. And so privileged. These entitled, demanding—you let them into your life and then they—and their parents!—walk all over you. Scott came from so much money it’s hard to even wrap your mind around it—and I don’t have anything against money. But these people, Scott’s parents, they donated so much money to the school that they put their last name on the Fine Arts Building.

**The Prince**  
Oh, that’s Scott’s family?

**Pat**

Yeah. That building their son basically *lived* in every day, they plastered their name on it. Who does that? It's obnoxious. It's completely out of touch. So you can't expect a kid with parents like that to be anything but...I don't know. All I'm saying is: you guys don't know how lucky you are to have a teacher so one in a million.

**The Prince**

I think she's a great teacher.

**Jess**

You're so sweet.

**Pat**

I'm not anything like that. I don't inspire anyone the way you do, tuss.

**Jess**

He always does that. My husband is the most amazing man in the world but he doesn't let himself see it. He's always selling himself short. He has so many gifts.

**Pat**

What gifts do I have? I manage a retail store.

**Jess**

You are the most special!

**Pat**

Can you help me?

*The Prince helps Pat transfer burgers and chicken from the grill to the plate.*

**Jess**

He's the most amazing man in the world, my husband, but he refuses to embrace it. Are you sure that chicken's done, Pat?

**Pat**

Yes it's done Jess.

**Jess**

It looks like it might still be pink.

**Pat**

It's not pink.

**Jess**

It looks like it might be. Can we cut it and check the inside?

**Pat**

I'm not checking the goddamn inside, it's been on the grill for twenty minutes, it's cooked.

**Jess**

I don't want to get salmonella.

**Pat**

Can I not do anything right? Can I not cook a chicken breast, Jesus! I'm not a little boy, Jessica. I'm a grown man.

*Abbi falls and screams/cries.*

*The Prince drops the plate of meat on the floor.*

**Jess**

Abbi!

**Pat**

You gotta be KIDDING ME!

**The Prince**

Sorry!

*Pat and The Prince pick up the meat.*

*Abbi runs into The Prince's arms.*

**Abbi**

Dada!

**Jess and Pat/The Prince**

That's not your Dada./I'm not your Dada.

**Jess**

That's your Dada, honey. That's your Dada right there.

*The Prince holds Abbi.*

*Pat keeps picking up the meat.*

**Jess**

It's okay, baby. What happened?

**Abbi**

I fehwh!

**Jess**

Let me see. Aw, you have a little bump.

**Pat**

You're fine, Ab.

**Jess**

She's not fine, Pat! She hurt herself! She has a bump!

**Abbi**

I saw Gwamma.

**Jess**

What? What do you mean, Ab?

**Abbi**

I saw Gwamma and we wuh playing and I twipped.

**Jess, crying**

You saw her? I miss Grandma.

**Abbi, crying**

I MISS GWAMMA!

**Jess**

Pat, you see her? She's crying about Mom!

**Pat**

Yeah, I miss her too, Ab.

**Jess**

You are the most amazing little girl in the world. Can you believe the empathy she has? She's just like Mom. I'm telling you—what do I always say, Pat? She's her mini-me! You are your grandma, little girl. God, I miss your grandma so much. Look, my eyes are all aqua.

**Pat**

Now I have to go to the goddamn market again and buy more goddamn meat.

**Jess**

You're really concerned about *that*? Now?

**The Prince**

I'm sorry. I can pay for it.

**Pat**

It's fine. I don't need the king and queen paying for my dinner.

**Jess**

Real nice, Pat. She needs ice. Let's get some ice, sweetie pie, okay? Mama's gonna take care of this bump. You know what you can call him? You can call him Uncle. He's your Uncle.

**Abbi**

He's your Uncle!

**Jess**

Uncle!

**The Prince**

Uncle!

**Abbi**

Uncle! Mama! Dada! Gwamma! Uncle!

*Jess, Abbi, and The Prince go into the house.  
Pat stands alone.*

## **V. IN THE BED**

*Mom, Jess, and Pat.  
Jess and Pat are fucking.  
Mom is smoking a cigarette.*

### **Mom**

First there was your father and he was good in bed. But he was a maniac. Sometimes he'd be so rough I wouldn't let him touch me for a month. The reason you didn't have a middle name was because he and I couldn't decide on one and finally we're standing in the hospital screaming at each other and I'm holding you and he bought the wrong carseat, the moron, and I said, "That's it. She won't have a middle goddamn name." And then I wasn't with anyone for a while because you were little, and then there was Brian and I was with him for a while. He was okay in bed, decent—the gorgeous ones never are that good in bed. They don't have anything to make up for. You remember how gorgeous he was. The most perfect white teeth you've ever seen. And perfect skin. He could make you drool. That ass. You were too young then, you weren't looking at his ass, but let me tell you: what an ass. Like two boulders. Your Pat is many things but he's not such a looker. Those teeth, that skin. But like I said, the lookers are deceiving. They don't have anything to make up for. And your Pat has a lot to make up for. That's why he's so good to you. And then I was with Ken. And Kent. You always called Kent Ken. And vice-a-versa. And Walter. Remember Walter? Now he was great in bed. He had that double chin but he was great in bed. Which proves my point. He had something to make up for.

### **Pat**

What's wrong?

### **Jess**

I can't focus when she's screaming like that.

### **Pat**

She's gotta learn to put herself back to sleep. Come on. We never get to. What's wrong?

### **Jess**

I told you what's wrong.

### **Pat**

I mean what's wrong with everything. I feel like we're playing house but the house has a giant hole in the middle and we aren't talking about it.

### **Jess**

Maybe I'm not happy, did you ever think of that?

### **Pat**

But honey whenever I try to talk to you you're texting Eddie or Scott or somebody else.

**Jess**

When was the last time I texted Eddie or Scott?

**Pat**

You know what I mean.

**Jess**

I'm not always texting them. They need me, I'm these kids' mentor, what am I supposed to do, just abandon them?

**Pat**

Maybe we should make plans with our friends who are our age, with kids.

**Jess**

Oh yeah? Who?

**Pat**

What about Jen?

**Jess**

Jen? I haven't spoken to Jen in like five years.

**Pat**

That's not true. She bought that table from us.

**Jess**

I don't have friends, Pat. I have you.

**Pat**

I don't have friends either.

**Jess**

Isn't there maybe something wrong with that?

**Pat**

With what? Having a soul mate?

**Jess, *eye roll***

"Soul mate."

**Pat**

Wow. I've called you my soul mate since we were teenagers. I write it on every card I ever write you. I put it in my vows.

**Jess**

And that was beautiful.

**Pat**

What don't you like about the word soul mate?

**Jess**

First of all, it's two words.

**Pat**

Stop.

**Jess**

Stop what?

**Pat**

Please be direct with me. I'm starting to get scared.

**Jess**

I'm sorry I said anything. Let's go to sleep.

**Pat**

Why won't you talk to me? What happened?

**Jess**

We can talk tomorrow. It's late.

**Pat**

So this is how this works now? You stop sex in the middle and then you tell me you're not my soul mate and then you won't finish the conversation or the sex?

**Jess**

You're still in the mood to have sex?

**Pat**

Kinda!

**Jess**

Finish yourself off in the bathroom. I just want to cry.

**VI. IN THE GUEST ROOM**

*Jess and The Prince.*

*Jess sits on the floor.*

**Jess**

Do it again.

**The Prince**

I'm tired. It's late.

**Jess**

Do it one more time.

**The Prince**

I hate this monologue. I feel like we should've picked something else.

**Jess**

What are you talking about? You love this one.

**The Prince**

I feel like it's too subtle. The bigger stuff always wins.

**Jess**

So what. You don't have to win.

**The Prince**

What do you mean I don't have to win, I want to win, that's the whole point, it's a competition.

**Jess**

Have I taught you nothing? That's not the point. The point is to make great art. And you're doing that. It's really getting there.

**The Prince**

I feel like you only think that because you're you. The judges aren't gonna be able to see it.

**Jess**

So what. So only you and I will know how good it is but we'll know. We'll know it's good and we'll feel amazing about it. Eddie never won a single Critics' Choice.

**The Prince**

I know but Scott won like a hundred times.

**Jess**

He won a few times.

**The Prince**

Guess I'm not as good as him!

**Jess**

Will you stop? Scott didn't win every time. One year the judges gave him a Good. So it's all a crapshoot. It's just the opinion of a few dumb people who happen to be the judges that day. You're throwing a real pity party. Why don't we just rehearse it and get it there.

*The Prince crumbles to the floor, joining Jess.*

**The Prince**

I don't know howwwwuuuhhh.

**Jess**

Sure you do.

**The Prince**

I suck. I'm not good.

**Jess**

Listen to me. You're the most talented person I've ever taught, okay? You're the most talented person I've ever met. I mean that. And I've met a lot of talented people. I've been a lot of places, little guy, and I've met some pretty cool folks and you're at the top of the list. Look at that smile. Who could resist that smile? Like a movie star. These dimples. I love these dimples.

**The Prince**

I like your dimples. Next to your eyes. Smile. There.

**Jess**

Those aren't dimples. They're wrinkles. Crow's feet. Old lady wrinkles.

**The Prince**

Well they're cute.

**Jess**

You're cute.

*Jess kisses The Prince's neck.*

**The Prince, demure**

That tickles.

**Jess**

I love that spot. Do it to me.

*The Prince kisses Jess's neck.*

**Jess**

A little lower.

*The Prince kisses Jess's neck a little lower.*

**Jess, moaning**

Ahh...

*With his mouth on Jess's neck, The Prince, unsure of what to do, makes a noise like a giraffe.*

**Jess**

Shh.

**The Prince**

I'm a giraffe.

*Jess tickles The Prince's thigh.*

**Jess**

Shh.

**The Prince, demure, ticklish**

Stop.

**Jess**

I'm not doing anything.

*Jess's hand gets progressively closer to The Prince's crotch.*

**The Prince, demure, ticklish**

Stop.

**Jess**

I'm not doing anything!

*The Prince grabs Jess's wrists  
and holds her hands up, like goalposts around her face.  
Jess is having fun. The Prince looks like he's having fun.  
A moment where they stare into each other's eyes.  
Jess pecks him on the lips.*

**Jess**

I love you.

**The Prince**

I love you.

**Jess**

My lover.

**The Prince**

My angel.

**Jess**

My soul mate.

**The Prince**

Isn't Pat your soul mate?

**Jess**

You can have more than one soul mate. Who says you can only have one soul mate? I love you more than...giraffes.

**The Prince**

I love you more than...cheddar cookies.

**Jess**

I love you more than...the universe.

**The Prince**

I love you more than theatre.

**Jess**

I love you more than theatre.

*Jess lays in The Prince's arms.*

**The Prince**

I thought Lady Flatchest was good today.

**Jess**

Yeah, she's doing a good job.

**The Prince**

She's, like, the perfect Wendy. I can't imagine a better Wendy. I texted her to say good job after rehearsal, but she never texts me back. She always says her phone's charging.

**Jess**

Maybe it is.

**The Prince**

Maybe. I think about her all the time. I don't know what I'm doing wrong.

**Jess**

You're not doing anything wrong.

**The Prince**

I just want her to like me.

**Jess**

You really know what to say to make a woman feel desirable.

**The Prince**

What?

**Jess**

Couldn't you have brought up your girlfriend at, say, a different time?

**The Prince**

She's not my girlfriend.

**Jess**

We have to talk about her right now?

**The Prince**

I don't know, I was thinking about her, I'm sad about it, you're my friend.

**Jess**

I *am* your friend.

**The Prince**

I figured we could talk about it.

**Jess**

We *can* talk about it. God.

**The Prince**

What?

**Jess**

I think about *you* all the time, okay? When I'm with you, there's nowhere else I want to be and when I'm not with you, all I think about is being with you. It's like an addiction.

**The Prince**

I think about you all the time too.

**Jess**

I even think about you when I'm having sex with my husband. I don't care about that dumb girl. Really I don't, honey. I promise. Because I know what we have, and it's bigger than some stupid teenage girl. Nobody has what we have. Nobody. Who do you know who has this?

**The Prince**

Nobody.

**Jess**

They've been writing love stories since the beginning of time, and they've never written anything like this before. Not even Shakespeare. We put Shakespeare to shame.

**The Prince, *English accent***

We put Shakespeare...to shame!

**Jess**

Maybe Romeo and Juliet come close. Star-crossed lovers. They couldn't be together either.

**The Prince, *English accent***

"But soft! What light through yonder window breaks? It is the east! And Juliet...is the sun!"

**Jess**

The universe always sends you what you need. I really believe that. And the universe knew we needed each other. We should go away together. Just you and me.

**The Prince**

Where to?

**Jess**

Mmmmmm, an island. No one but us. No one there to misunderstand us. Our own little island. So secluded you have you take a ferry to get there.

**The Prince**

Honk honk! All aboard the ferry! May I see your tickets?

**Jess**

Tickets for two!

**The Prince**

Two tickets for one Juliet and one Romeo.

*Jess kisses The Prince on the mouth:  
she's pretty open-mouthed about it,  
but he treats it as just a peck.  
The Prince's phone rings.*

**Jess**

Can she ever leave you alone? I mean seriously.

**The Prince**

What time is it?

**Jess**

It's not even your curfew yet. We have half an hour.

*The Prince answers his phone.*

**The Prince**

I'll be home soon. Mom, calm down. I will be home soon. I promise.

*He hangs up.*

**The Prince**

We should do the monologue one more time before I go.

*The Prince prepares to do the monologue.*

**Jess**

Who are you telling this to? I think that'll help you.

**The Prince**

I don't know...a friend?

**Jess**

That's not strong enough. It has to be someone really specific, someone where the stakes are really high.

**The Prince**

Yeah.

**Jess**

It has to be someone that you really love, that you really care about. I have an idea. Deliver it to me.

## **VII. AT THE TABLE**

*Pat and The Prince.*

*Pat sets up Rummikub.*

*He puts the tiles on the table, flips them over face-down.*

*The table has four chairs.*

*Pat puts racks in front of three of the chairs.*

*The fourth chair gets no rack before it.*

**Pat**

It's not good for her to go to sleep this late.

**The Prince**

Jess felt really bad about the traffic.

**Pat**

I told her this would happen. I told her there was no way Abbi was gonna let me put her to bed and she had to be home by seven at the latest and sure enough!

**The Prince**

I know. She felt bad.

**Pat**

It's fine. It's just funny.

**The Prince**

Can I help?

**Pat**

No way. Relax. You're our guest. The beach was fun?

**The Prince**

Yeah, you should've come!

**Pat**

It was nice to spend a day alone with my daughter. Of course she spent the whole day saying she wanted you and Jess. And I kept saying, "What about me?" And she'd just say, "Mama and Uncle! Mama and Uncle!"

**The Prince**

That's annoying.

**Pat**

It is what it is. It's good for her to have fun without me. It's healthy.

**The Prince**

Next time you guys should get a sitter and we should go the three of us.

**Pat**

I can't swim.

**The Prince**

Oh yeah.

*Jess and Mom enter.*

*Mom sits in the empty chair that has no Rummikub rack before it.*

**Jess**

She sleeps. Sorry, guys. She kept asking for another book, and another book, and another. She just wanted her Mama. It was very sweet.

**The Prince**

Maybe this means she'll sleep later tomorrow and you can sleep in.

**Pat**

Never gonna happen. The later she goes to sleep, the earlier she wakes up. I think it confuses her internal clock.

**Jess**

Pat I said I was sorry.

**Pat**

It's not a big deal, honey.

**Jess**

You're the one making a big deal.

**Pat**

What am I doing?

**Jess**

I don't know, you're just like—being a butthead.

**Pat**

How am I being a butthead?

**Jess, baby voice**

I donno you awe just beez-een a butthead.

**Pat, baby voice**

I'm sowwy I don't mean to be beez-een a butthead.

*The Prince's phone rings.  
A few times.*

**Pat**

You gonna answer that?

**The Prince**

She's so annoying.

**Jess**

Just get it, it'll shut her up.

*The Prince gets the phone.*

**The Prince**

What Mom. Okay. Okay?

*The Prince puts the phone in his mouth and pretends to eat it.*

**Jess, laughing, cheering**

Eat her, eat her!

**The Prince**

It's not even curfew yet, I'm not late, so why are you calling? Because I'm having fun? Bye.

*The Prince quickly hangs up.*

**The Prince**

I'm putting it on vibrate.

**Jess**

What'd The Queen have to say?

**The Prince**

Her new favorite line is, "I don't understand why you're spending so much time with these people."

**Pat**

That's understandable.

**Jess**

No it's not, what are you saying?

**Pat**

Well she doesn't know us. We're these random peasants to her.

**The Prince**

That's not what she said—she'd never say peasants—

**Jess**

His mom's an asshole.

**Pat**

Jess, that's his mom!

**Jess**

She is. She's an asshole. At Back-To-School Night she was an ice queen. And it's not like he doesn't tell me everything. She's jealous and manipulative. It's pathetic.

**Pat**

What's she jealous of?

**Jess**

Of me. Of us. She resents us growing close to her son, whom she has driven away, by smothering him, and she did that all on her own. I didn't do that. We didn't do that. We just gave him a safe haven. He could be out doing drugs. She should be happy. But she makes it all about her. She's not even taking into consideration what you want. What do you want?

**The Prince**

I want to be here with you.

**Jess**

So be here with us. Do what you want.

**Pat**

He can't do what he wants. He's a teenager. He's a kid.

**Jess**

Okay, *Dad*.

**Mom**

He was always such a killjoy, that Pat. He never let himself have any fun. You remember, you and I would go to the casino for bingo and we'd always invite him and he'd never come. It's not like we were inviting him to shovel horse manure, we were inviting him to play bingo and smoke. But he'd just sit at home and mope. He loved playing the martyr. And I know he had a rough childhood but get over it for Chrissake. Everyone has a rough childhood. That's the point of a childhood.

**Pat**

Okay, let's play. I'm tired.

**The Prince**

We need to rehearse my monologue.

**Jess**

After. We've been looking forward to teaching you. This was Mom's favorite game.

**The Prince**

How do you say it? Rummi-cub?

**Jess**

Well. That's up for debate.

**Pat**

There's no debate.

**Jess**

Some people say Rummi-cub. Some people say Rummi-cube.

**Pat**

It's Rummi-cub. Rummi-cube doesn't make sense phonetically.

**Jess**

Scott said cube.

**Pat**

Okay, everyone pick fourteen tiles.

*They grab fourteen tiles each and put them in their racks.  
Pat and The Prince look at Jess while she talks,  
but Jess talks to Mom.*

**Jess**

That one time we played? You and me and Pat and Scott, and the cancer was eating you alive so you had that babushka on your head and it made you look like a baby. Scott held your hand all night, like he thought his touch could keep you alive, and it kind of did. We were like a family. You and me and my soul mate and my other soul mate. That must've been the gazillionth time we played this game. It was like a religion. It's amazing you can do the same thing with the same three people ninety thousand times and never get bored. But that one time—feh. It makes my stomach turn. It was the day Scott and I went to the beach and Pat played the martyr stuck at home all day with you and Ab. I set up the game and Scott was doing his monologue for us when out of nowhere the doorbell rings and rings and rings, and it's Scott's mother. He ignored her calls all day, but she was a fucking noodge—I mean, let the kid have a life. She tears ass into the house and she's going on and on about why doesn't he answer her phone calls and why does he have to be here with these people, and Scott says he can do whatever he wants, and his mother's like, no you can't, you're a child! You're a child! YOU'RE A CHILD!!!, screaming like that, like a lunatic, and then she looks at Pat and she says, What kind of man lets his wife behave like

**Jess**

this? And that's when Pat swings his arm across the table and sends all the tiles flying across the room, it sounded like someone broke a window, and he goes, I WON'T HAVE THIS IS MY HOUSE! And I'm crying and Scott's crying and we keep saying, WE'RE JUST PLAYING RUMMI-CUBE! WE'RE JUST PLAYING RUMMI-CUBE! His mom drags him out of the house and me and Pat fought all night and you were on so many steroids you were totally gone so you slept right through it and Abbi slept right through it, and you're the only one who ever really understood me, Mom. That's pretty much all the rules.

*They play, silence.*

**The Prince**

Why don't we go on a trip?

**Jess and Pat**

Who?

**The Prince**

All of us.

### **VIII. AT THE BEACH**

*Jess, Pat, Abbi, and The Prince.*

**Pat, Abbi, and The Prince**, *singing*  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO JE-ESS!/MO-MMY!  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO YOU!  
Yay!

**Jess**, *baby voice*  
Yay, I'm owd.

**Pat**, *baby voice*  
No you'we not.

**Jess**  
Do you guys ever think about how you're never gonna get younger? Like how I'm just gonna keep getting older and older until I'm an old woman and then I'll be dead.

**Pat**  
No.

**The Prince**  
I think about that sometimes.

**Pat**  
Jess, maybe you should put on sunscreen.

**Jess**  
It's cloudy.

**Abbi**  
I wanna go inna wadda!

**Pat**  
I'll go with you.

**Abbi**  
Mama Uncle come wif us!

**Jess**  
I don't have a bathing suit on, Ab.

**Abbi**

Mama Uncle!!!

**The Prince**

I'll come.

**Pat**

Stay, relax. You don't have to entertain her all day.

**The Prince**

I don't mind.

**Pat**

It'll be fun. Some Daddy and Abbi time, right?

**Abbi**

Mama Uncle!

**The Prince**

I thought you can't swim.

**Jess**

He can't.

**Pat**

I won't go in far, I won't drown, don't worry.

**Abbi**

MAMA UNCLE!

*Pat and Abbi go to the water.*

**Jess**

I don't understand why you're spending so much time with these people.

**The Prince**

What'd you say?

**Jess**

I said this is nice. To get some alone time. I feel like we never get alone time anymore.

**The Prince**

We get alone time. We saw Eternal Sunshine last week.

**Jess**

Feels like years ago.

**The Prince**

Why don't you go put on a bathing suit?

**Jess**

I didn't bring one.

**The Prince**

You didn't pack a bathing suit? To go to a beach resort? That's silly. Don't you want to go in the water?

**Jess**

I don't want to put on a bathing suit okay? Just drop it.

**The Prince**

Are you okay?

**Jess**

I'm fine. You sound like him.

**The Prince**

Like who? Like Pat? Um, okay.

**Jess**

He's such a miserable little shit. My mother always used to say that about him, that he hates it when other people have fun.

**The Prince**

Yeah but now you're ruining our alone time by taking it out on me when I ask you a simple question about wearing a bathing suit.

**Jess**

I don't want to put one on because I don't need you seeing me in a bathing suit and comparing me to Lady Flatchest who weighs ninety-five pounds. Okay? Happy?

*Abbi runs back.*

**Abbi**

DADA'S DROWNING!!!

**Jess**

Pat!

*Pat comes back on.*

**Pat**

I'm okay. It's okay, Ab.

**Jess**

What is wrong with you!!!

**Pat**

I'm fine. I just went in a little far and she got nervous.

**The Prince**

Are you okay?

**Pat**

I'm fine, it's not a big deal. She just got freaked out.

**Jess**

You are such a typical man it's unbelievable. You have to prove that you can go in the water even though you don't know how to fucking swim.

**Pat**

Can you watch your language in front of her please?

**Jess**

No! You freaked her out! She's terrified! She'll be scarred for life!

**Pat**

She's fine. You're fine, right Ab?

**Jess**

She's not fine. She's shaking. She almost watched you drown.

**Pat**

Daddy wasn't drowning, sweetie.

**Abbi**

Daddy's so scary.

**Jess**

I know he is honey.

## **IX. IN A KAYAK**

*Pat and The Prince.*

*They sit one in front of the other, with paddles.*

**The Prince**

You don't look that old!

**Pat**

You're digging this hole deeper and deeper, buddy.

**The Prince**

I'm just saying you technically *could* be my father. You were a teenager when I was born. Teenagers can have kids.

**Pat**

I don't even want to think about that.

**The Prince**

I think he was just trying to figure out what we are to each other.

**Pat**

Would it have been so hard for that guy to just be like, "Here's your kayak, here are your lifejackets, here are your paddles, have fun." People ask too many questions.

**The Prince**

I think at first he thought we were boyfriends.

**Pat**

I *really* don't want to think about *that*.

**The Prince**

Gross me neither.

**Pat**

He was a sweet kid. Just too chatty for my taste.

**The Prince**

I couldn't get over how handsome he was. Just like an undeniably good-looking human. He had such nice eyes. I was having trouble making eye contact with him. You know people like that, where it's hard to even look them in the eye they're so good-looking? There's this girl at school and it's like, I can't even look in your general direction, you're like a supermodel.

**Pat**

Maybe you guys should hang out.

**The Prince**

No way, she won't even give me the time of day.

**Pat**

No, you and the boat guy.

**The Prince**

Why?

**Pat**

I dunno. Just to make a friend while we're here.

**The Prince**

Why would I want to do that?

**Pat**

So you're not spending all your time with a couple of old farts. He seemed cool.

**The Prince**

I like you old farts.

**Pat**

Okay.

**The Prince**

I guess if someone asks again we could say we're brothers. You're kinda like my big brother.

**Pat**

I always wanted to be a big brother. I hated being the little brother growing up.

**The Prince**

Why?

**Pat**

My brother was...not good. He picked on me. Took advantage of me. 'Cause I was scrawny and quiet. And my dad backed him up. And my mom wasn't there. I couldn't wait to get out of that house. I've never understood why childhood gets glorified by everyone. In movies and stuff. Like it's this perfect, quaint time. Childhood sucks. I don't know anyone who didn't have a rough childhood. I guess that's the point of a childhood.

**The Prince**

This is nice. We never get to hang out just you and me.

**X. IN THE ROOM**

*Jess, Pat, Abbi, and The Prince.  
Jess has a god-awful sunburn.*

**Jess**

Ow ow ow!

**Pat**

I told you you should've put on sunscreen.

**Jess**

There was no sun.

**Pat**

It was overcast.

**Jess**

I think I have sun poisoning.

**Pat**

What the hell is sun poisoning?

**Jess**

It's a really bad sunburn.

**Pat**

You don't have sunpoisoning. We have to go. You look fine.

**Jess**

One second.

**Pat**

She's been doing her make-up for an hour. Abbi, you're a little girl now, but by the time your mom's done with her make-up you'll be an old lady.

**Jess**

You're a little jerk.

**Abbi**

You're a littow jerk!

**Pat**

We're gonna miss our reservation.

**Jess**

I'm done. Thank you so much for your patience, Pat.

**The Prince**

You look beautiful.

**Jess**

Thank you. Are you two gonna be okay?

**The Prince**

We'll be fine. I got this.

**Abbi**

He gots this.

**Pat**

Jess. We're gonna be late.

**Jess**

Pat. I know. I know you think we're gonna be late. The restaurant is two flights down on the elevator. We're literally in the same building as the goddamn restaurant. The reservation isn't for ten minutes. Goodbye, children.

**Pat**

Bye, children.

**Jess**

Call us if you need anything. Thank you for watching her.

**The Prince**

Watching *her*? She's watching me!

**Jess**

I love you.

*Pat leaves.*

*Jess turns before she goes  
and mouths to The Prince, "I love you,"  
which Abbi doesn't see.*

*Jess leaves.*

**The Prince**

What do you wanna do, big girl? You wanna color? Watch TV? We could write a story.

**Abbi**

Write a story.

**The Prince**

Okay. What do you want it to be about?

**Abbi**

Uncle.

**The Prince**

About me?

**Abbi**

Uncle and Mama.

**The Prince**

Why?

**Abbi**

Mama loves Uncle. A love story.

**The Prince**

Is that the kind of story you think your mom and I have? A love story? What about your daddy? What about a story about mommy and daddy?

**Abbi**

Mama and Uncle, Mama and Uncle, Mama and Uncle!

**XI. AT DINNER**

*Jess and Pat.*

*(Perhaps Abbi and The Prince remain in view.)*

**Pat**

It was very sweet. The guy was clearly flirting with him and he just didn't know what to do with the attention. He grabbed his paddle and was like, "Okay thanks!" and fled.

**Jess**

That's sweet.

**Pat**

I felt bad for him. He seems so tense about it, I worry his parents won't be understanding.

**Jess**

What do you want for dessert?

**Pat**

We don't need dessert.

**Jess**

We're on vacation!

**Pat**

I think we've spent enough tonight.

**Jess**

We're not paying for it.

**Pat**

We should pay for this.

**Jess**

Pat. He's literally royalty. His house phone has hold music. The boy can afford it.

**Pat**

His *parents* can afford it—

**Jess**

Did I ever tell you that? The Queen called me once and of course the bitch puts me on hold, and there was music like it was a department store.

**Pat**

Exactly, they're the ones paying for all this, and they already don't like us.

**Jess**

After everything we've done for their son, these people can buy us a nice dinner. How many dinners have we cooked for him. Stop doing that thing.

**Pat**

What thing?

**Jess**

That thing where you obsess over your shortcomings.

**Pat**

I don't do that.

**Jess**

You're doing it now. I can tell. "I don't make enough money, I don't have a good enough job, I'm not royalty." Don't do that.

**Pat**

Isn't that what you do?

**Jess**

I don't spend one second thinking about my shortcomings.

**Pat**

No. Don't you obsess over my shortcomings?

**Jess**

Huh?

**Pat**

Don't you obsess over my shortcomings. If you didn't obsess over my shortcomings, would we even be here with him?

**Jess**

What do you mean?

**Pat**

You know what I mean. Don't do *that* thing. That thing where you pretend to not know what someone's saying like it's a get out of jail free card.

**Jess, baby voice**

You've beez-eeen mean to me.

**Pat**

Stop that. Stop lying.

**Jess**

I'm not—

**Pat**

Stop lying to me. We have a life. We have a home. We have a child. We pay the same bills and we put our clothes in the same washing machine and I know how you like your socks. But we haven't gone on a date in a long time and we haven't had sex in a long time and I don't think I give you what you need.

**Jess**

We're on a date right now.

**Pat**

It was his idea. We're only here because he said we should go on a date and he'd watch Ab. I've proposed we go out for months but you always go out with him.

**Jess**

Well, someone has to watch Abbi.

**Pat**

Is that all I am here? A sitter?

**Jess**

No. No. I feel like you're trapping me in a corner. It's so unfair.

**Pat**

How am I trapping you?

**Jess**

I never feel like you want to go out.

**Pat**

But I ask you all the time.

**Jess**

I never feel like it's genuine. You never seem excited.

**Pat**

About what?

**Jess**

About everything. About me.

**Pat**

What can I do to make you understand—How can I give you what you need?

**Jess**

You give me everything I need. Every single thing. But I need more.

**Pat**

I don't understand what you just said.

**Jess**

Don't you need more?

**Pat**

More than what?

**Jess**

More than what I can give you?

**Pat**

Like what?

**Jess**

I don't know.

**Pat**

No. I don't. I don't need more. And I don't know what you're doing with this kid but it's fucking weird.

**Jess**

What are you saying?

**Pat**

You know what I'm saying.

**Jess**

How dare you. How dare you say that—How dare you insinuate—

**Pat, intense**

IT'S FUCKING WEIRD!

*Pat storms out of the restaurant.*

**XII. IN THE ROOM**

*Abbi and The Prince.  
Abbi is laying on The Prince, asleep.  
The Prince is on his phone.  
Jess comes in.*

**Jess**  
Hi.

*The Prince puts his phone away.*

**The Prince**  
How was dinner?

**Jess**  
It was amazing.

**The Prince**  
Where's Pat?

**Jess**  
He'll be up in a minute. Was she okay?

**The Prince**  
She was an angel.

**Jess**  
Did she fall asleep on you like that?

**The Prince**  
Yeah, we were watching TV and she was laying on me and fell asleep.

**Jess**  
That's so sweet.

**The Prince**  
Is everything okay?

**Jess**  
What do you mean?

**The Prince**  
Where's Pat?

**Jess**

I don't know. Hi.

**The Prince**

Hi.

**Jess**

I feel like I haven't seen you in a million years.

**The Prince**

You saw me right before dinner.

**Jess**

I know.

**The Prince**

And we were together all day.

**Jess**

I know.

**The Prince**

Silly.

*Jess goes in to kiss The Prince on the mouth.  
The Prince moves his face and kisses her on the cheek.*

**Jess**

What?

**The Prince**

Nothing.

**Jess**

Why'd you do that?

**The Prince**

Do what? Where's Pat?

**Jess**

How should I know? He threw a tantrum and ran off.

**The Prince**

What'd he throw a tantrum about? About me?

**Jess**

Of course not. He loves you. What do you want to do?

**The Prince**

I think I want to go on a walk.

**Jess**

I don't think that's a good idea. We don't have anyone to watch Ab.

**The Prince**

I'll just go alone.

**Jess**

Oh.

**The Prince**

Just for a few minutes, to breathe the air, do some thinking. I love the ocean at night.

**Jess**

We made it to our island but we haven't had any alone time.

**The Prince**

It's a whole resort, it's not really our island.

**Jess**

We can pretend.

**The Prince**

I'm sorry.

**Jess**

Why are you sorry?

**The Prince**

I don't know.

**Jess**

I don't understand why you're spending so much time with these people.

**The Prince**

I'll be back in a bit.

**Jess**

I love you, my soul mate.

*Jess goes in to kiss The Prince on the lips.*

*Again, The Prince gives her his cheek.  
Pat walks in and sees.*

**Jess**

Hi.

**Pat**

Hi.

**The Prince**

How was dinner?

**Pat, smiling, not sarcastic**

It was amazing.

### **XIII. AT BREAKFAST**

*Jess, Abbi, and The Prince.*

*Jess's sunburn looks horrible. She looks like a monster.*

**The Prince**

It got worse.

**Jess**

Thanks a lot.

**The Prince**

I just mean I feel bad.

**Jess**

I didn't really sleep. I'm in a lot of pain. I read online I need to take a vinegar bath.

**The Prince**

What's a vinegar bath?

**Jess**

You get in the bath and soak rags in vinegar and hold them against your skin. Can we do that after breakfast?

**The Prince**

Sure. Where's Pat?

**Jess**

He's in the room. He has a migraine. I heard you come back pretty late.

**The Prince**

I was just enjoying being out there by the water. I found this bench and it was so peaceful. I could've sat on that bench all night, just thinking.

**Jess**

Which bench?

**The Prince**

The bench I was sitting on.

**Jess**

Which bench was it?

**The Prince**

Why?

**Jess**

I'm trying to picture it.

**The Prince**

That's funny.

**Jess**

Why?

**The Prince**

Just funny that you'd want to picture me just sitting on a bench.

**Jess**

You don't have to tell me.

**The Prince**

I don't remember which bench. It was like near the beach.

**Jess**

What were you thinking about?

**The Prince**

When?

**Jess**

Last night. On the bench. You said you were thinking.

**The Prince**

Oh, just how happy I am to be here with you. I feel bad for Pat. Partially because he has another migraine but mostly because he's missing out on these biscuits. These are like the best things I've ever had in my life, oh my god.

**Jess**

I saw you last night. With that boy.

**The Prince**

What boy?

**Jess**

Pat said you met some guy. What'd you say to him? Like, I'll meet you tonight, once I find a way to get rid of this old ugly hag married lady and her husband I'm traveling with. I'll tell her some dumb lie about wanting to go on a walk along the ocean at midnight. She's so stupid, she'll believe anything. She's not royalty like me, she's a commoner, and her husband's a loser.

**The Prince**

I love you.

**Jess**

This is not how you treat someone you love! I saw you, sneaking off with him, behind the pool, in those bushes. I watched you! You walked right past me, holding hands with him. You kept kissing his neck. I felt so cheap. I wanted to puke. You must've been five feet from me, at most, and you didn't even see me. I felt like such an idiot.

**The Prince**

Did you follow me?

**Jess**

Don't be ridiculous. Why would I follow you? I went out on my own walk, okay. Pat and I were fighting and I couldn't take it anymore so I left. I was not following you. I would never follow you to watch you have gay sex. I have better things to do with my time.

**The Prince**

I didn't even like it. He tasted funny.

**Jess**

Uch. I don't want to hear this. And my daughter doesn't need to hear this. Please. I want to be able to eat my breakfast.

**The Prince**

He was pressuring me to do all this stuff and I didn't know how to do anything.

**Jess, *crying***

Why didn't you tell me? I'm your best friend. That's my job, to be here for you.

**Abbi**

Mama whya you cwying?

**Jess**

Mama's okay honey. You have to take care of your body. Your body is sacred. It's a temple. You can't just throw it away on some idiot guy. You could get sick. I don't want to lose you. You're sublime. You're the most sublime person I've ever known, okay?

**The Prince**

Okay.

**Jess**

I love you more than I've ever loved anyone. The love I feel for you is deeper and more profound than anything I've ever felt in my life. Ever. And now the good thing is I can be the only woman in your life.

**The Prince**

Yeah.

**Jess**

I don't understand why you're spending so much time with these people.

**Abbi**

I love you Mama.

**Jess**

I love you too, sweetie.

**Abbi**

I love you Uncle.

**The Prince**

I love you, Ab.

**Jess**

I'm all aqua. God, this is so special.

**XIV. ON A CLIFF**

*Jess, Pat, Abbi, and The Prince.*

*Abbi is older, prepubescent.*

*She has a camera.*

*Jess is applying sunscreen.*

*She no longer has a sunburn.*

*The Prince stands apart.*

**Abbi**

Mom *why* are you putting on *sunscreen*?

**Pat**

Can you stop being so nasty please?

**Abbi**

I'm not, I'm just saying it's not even sunny! The sun's about to set.

**Jess**

One time when you were a baby I got sun *poisoning* on a day like this. That's like a really bad sunburn. I had to take a bath in vinegar. Come here.

*Jess puts sunscreen on Abbi.*

**Abbi**

Mom! Stop! I don't need it!

**Jess**

Just in case.

**Abbi**

I don't want it!

**Pat**

You know, you're being a little brat!

**Abbi**

Leave me alone!

**Pat**

Don't talk to me like that!

**Abbi**

Don't talk to *me* like that!

**Pat**

Why do I always have to be the disciplinarian?

**Jess**

You give yourself that role. You like it.

**Pat**

Oh sure. It's totally fun.

**Jess**

Please get away from the edge, honey.

**Abbi**, *faking losing her balance*

Wo-oah! Woa-oah!

**Jess**

It's not funny!

**Abbi**

Wo-oah! Woaaa-ooooaaah!

*Pat grabs her and pulls her away from the edge.*

**Abbi**

Ow, you hurt my arm!

**Pat**

WELL YOU HURT MY HEART! IMAGINING YOU FALLING OFF! IT'S HUNDREDS OF FEET DOWN TO THE WATER AND THERE ARE ROCKS ALL THE WAY DOWN! IF YOU FELL OFF, YOU'D DIE! YOU'E NOT A LITTLE GIRL ANYMORE, STOP ACTING LIKE ONE!

**Abbi**

OKAY, YOU DON'T HAVE TO YELL AT ME!

**Jess**

What's wrong with you?

**The Prince**

What do you mean?

**Jess**

You're being weird.

**The Prince**

No I'm not.

**Jess**

Yes you are.

**The Prince**

I'm just thinking.

**Jess, teasing, dumb voice**

"I'm just thinking" duhduhduhduhduhduh.

**Pat**

You okay?

**The Prince**

I'm fine. I'm quiet for two minutes and you'd think the world was coming to an end.

**Jess**

What are you thinking about? A boy? Abbi, Uncle's thinking about a booyyyy.

**Pat**

Leave him alone.

**Jess**

Okay. Executive decision. Everybody cheer up. Everybody smile. Smile. Smile. I don't see a smile. Look where we are. Look at this view. How lucky are we to be able to look at this view?

**Abbi**

I'm tired.

**Jess**

Will you stop? Puss face. You're the one who wanted to come here.

**Abbi**

Yeah but now I hate all of you.

**The Prince**

You don't hate me.

**Abbi**

No, I like you. Okay, get together, over there, so we can see the ocean.

**Jess**

You should be in it too, Ab.

**Abbi**

Then who's gonna take the picture?

**Jess**

Let's find a nice person to take it.

**Abbi**

There's nobody here.

**Jess**

We can find someone.

**Pat**

There's nobody here, Jess.

**Jess**

Hello? HELLO-O? IS ANYBODY HERE?

**Abbi**

Oh my god.

**Jess**

DOES ANYBODY WANT TO TAKE OUR PICTURE?

**The Prince**

Let me take it.

**Jess, *laughing***

HELP US!!!

**Pat**

Jess, he said he'd take it.

**Jess**

But I want you to be in it.

**The Prince**

I'll take one of the family.

**Jess**

You're the family.

**The Prince**

You know what I mean.

**Pat**

We can take a few.

**Jess**

Can't we use the timer thing?

**Abbi**

We don't have a tripod.

**Jess**

We can try.

**Abbi**

Where are we gonna put the camera, on the floor?

**Pat**

Okay, get together.

*Jess, Pat, and Abbi pose.*

*Time suspends.*

*The Prince, holding the camera,  
addresses the other three.*

**The Prince**

This is how I remember the three of you, a happy little family, and I'm on the outside, capturing you.

*Time releases.*

**The Prince**

One, two, three!

*Click, flash.*

**Jess**

Okay Pat you take one. Come here.

*Jess, Abbi, and The Prince pose.*

*Time suspends.*

*Pat, holding the camera,  
addresses The Prince.*

**Pat**

This is how I remember it. This exact moment, right before it ended. Right before you left us. I can't figure out why you did, though. Nothing really happened.

**The Prince**

I guess it just finally lost its allure.

**Pat**

What did?

**The Prince**

Everything.

**Pat, jealous**

Huh.

*Time releases.*

**Pat**

Okay, one, two, three.

*Click, flash.*

**The Prince**

Abbi will you take one of me and your mom and your dad? Come here, Pat.

*Jess, Pat, and The Prince pose,  
The Prince between Jess and Pat.*

*Time suspends.*

*Abbi, holding the camera,  
addresses The Prince.*

**Abbi**

My memory of all of it is kind of fuzzy.

**The Prince**

Good.

**Abbi**

I mean, I remember you enough to remember you, if that makes any sense.

**The Prince**

I guess.

**Abbi**

I remember you were important.

**The Prince**

To who?

**Abbi**

To all of us. But there were always new kids coming in.

**The Prince**

New boys.

**Abbi**

There were girls too.

**The Prince**

It was different with the girls.

**Abbi**

I'm just saying there was a revolving door. A lot of it blended together for me.

**The Prince**

It's clear for me.

**Abbi**

Right, it would be. The one really clear thing is the pain I felt.

**The Prince**

What kind of pain?

**Abbi**

A void. The absence of you. That was hard for me to grasp. It was like you disappeared without any warning. I mean, I was only a kid.

**The Prince**

So was I.

*Time releases.*

**Abbi**

One, two, three.

*Click, flash.*

*The Prince disappears.*

*(Perhaps he simply steps away, takes off his crown,  
and watches the rest of the scene from a distance.)*

**Abbi**

Hey, that's a pretty good picture of you two.

**Pat**

Let me see. Yeah, that's nice. Jess, look at this picture of you and me.

**Abbi**

I'm impressed. You never take good pictures.

**Pat**  
Hey!

**Abbi**  
What? You're not photogenic!

**Pat**, *sweet*  
Why I oughta...

*Jess stands apart, staring at where The Prince just was.*

**Pat**  
What a view. Wanna head back?

**Abbi**  
Hallelujah. Mom?

**Pat**  
Jess?

**Abbi**  
Mom? Mom, come on!

**Pat**  
Be nice.

*Abbi makes a face at Pat and walks off.*

**Pat**  
Get back here, young lady! Jess, come on. Jess.

**Jess**  
I'm enjoying the view.

**Pat**  
I don't like to let her out of my sight.

**Jess**  
Thank you, Pat.

**Pat**  
Me? What for?

**Jess**  
For everything. For being you.

**Pat**

Seems like a silly thing to thank me for. I can't help being me.

**Jess**

Neither can I.

**Pat**

What's going on?

**Jess**

Nothing.

**Pat**

What made you say thank you?

**Jess**

I was just thinking.

**Pat**

About what?

**Jess**

Just everything.

**Pat**

Thank you for you. I love you.

**Jess**

What do you love about me?

**Pat**

Tuss, Ab's waiting for us.

**Jess**

She's fine, what do you love about me.

**Pat**

I love that you shine. I love that I never know what I'm going to get. What do you love about me?

**Jess**

Everything. Ready?

*Jess takes Pat's hand.  
They walk off together.*

**XV. IN THE HOUSE**

*Scott and Mom.*

*Scott doesn't wear a crown.*

*Mom sits, wearing a turban or other head scarf, looking quite ill.*

*Scott is picking at a spot on his hand.*

**Mom**

Mind if I have a cigarette?

*Scott shakes his head.*

*Mom lights up.*

**Mom**

What are you picking at?

**Scott**

I have a wart.

**Mom**

You're not gonna pick that away. You gotta talk to it.

**Scott**

That's what Jess said.

**Mom**

It works.

**Scott**

Go away, wart. You suck.

**Mom**

Keep going. It'll go away.

**Scott**

I hate you. You're ruining my life. Die. Die. Die.

**Mom**

Just like that. And then one day it'll disappear, promise. Want one?

**Scott**

No thanks. Die. Die. Die.

**Mom**

Ever tried one?

**Scott**

No.

**Mom**

You're better off.

**Scott**

Die. Die.

**Mom**

Hey, hold my hand. Stop picking. I started smoking when I was twelve. Jessy too. And Pat, I think. They've both quit. But, me, what's the point? It's already ruined my skin, my hair, all the smoke. Not to mention everything else. You shoulda known me when I was young. You wouldn'ta believed it. I was hot. You didn't know me back then but I was a real number. Every man I was ever with cheated and every time it was with some young bimbo and in a way, I didn't blame him. All puppies are cute. All of 'em. Even the ugly ones. Ever seen a pug puppy? Adorable. Ever seen an old pug? Ugly as sin. You, my friend, are peak puppy.

**Scott**

Little old me? A puppy? You think I'm cute?

**Mom**

You know you are. You must be beating girls off you with a stick.

**Scott**

Not at all.

**Mom**

Don't play coy with me, buddy.

**Scott**

Nobody even looks at me.

**Mom**

Go on, tell me about these girls who are chasing after you. It'll make me all tingly.

**Scott**

You're crazy.

**Mom**

Youth is wasted on the puppies! Remember that, Eddie.

**Scott**

I'm not Eddie, I'm Scott.

**Mom**

Oh. Right. God, these drugs they have me on. I could never confuse you with Eddie. He's an ungrateful little shit. After all we did for him.

*Jess rushes on.*

**Jess**

MOM! What are you doing?

**Mom**

I'm gonna die anyway, I might as well enjoy it.

**Jess**

You are so selfish, you know that? Not only do I have to wipe my daughter's ass, I wipe your goddamn ass too, and you're sitting here like a queen smoking your cigarettes? You know what? Here. Smoke a few more, see if I care. Smoke 'em fast, hopefully I'll get rid of you sooner and I can have my goddamn life back.

*Silence.*

*Mom extinguishes her cigarette.*

*Jess sets up Rummikub for four players.*

**Mom**

Ab go to sleep okay?

**Jess**

Yeah. She kept asking for another book, and another book, and another. She just wanted her Mama. It was very sweet. I swear to god, Mom, she's like a mini you. Same facial expressions, same face, same everything.

**Mom**

Well that's good. When I'm gone she can be my replacement.

**Jess**

Please don't.

**Mom**

What?

**Jess**

Just don't. Where's Pat?

**Mom**

How should I know?

**Jess**

Probably moping somewhere.

**Mom**

What's he have to mope about?

**Jess**

That Scott and I went out today.

**Mom**

We had fun here, the three of us.

**Jess**

You know him.

**Mom**

Loves playing the martyr. The beach was fun?

**Jess**

It was gorgeous.

**Scott**

And on the way back we pulled off by the airport and watched the planes land!

**Mom**

That's fun.

**Jess**, *wanted that to be secret*

Mhm.

*Scott's cell phone rings.*

**Scott**

I'm putting it on vibrate.

**Jess**

She is such a noodge. Can she not let you have a life?

**Mom**

It's your mother, you should answer her.

**Jess**

She's been calling all day, Mom. She's relentless. Like, enough! You are not the center of the universe! But I mean, listen, if I paid tens of thousands of dollars to put my last name on a building at my kid's school, I'd think I owned the world too.

**Scott**

She's obsessed with me. It's annoying. And creepy.

**Mom**

Every mother's annoying, every kid's annoyed, it's the way of the world.

**Jess**

Not my little girl.

**Mom**

Just you wait. Only a matter of time.

**Jess**

Let's play.

**Scott**

We need to rehearse my monologue.

**Mom**

I wanna see the monologue!

**Jess**

One quick game. We can rehearse once everyone's asleep.

**Scott**

Shouldn't we wait for Pat?

**Jess**

You snooze you lose.

*By now, Jess, Mom, and Scott have taken seats at the table,  
in front of the Rummikub racks.*

**Scott**

I always forget how scoring works.

**Jess**

If you win a round, you add your points to your score. If you lose, you subtract them. So only the winner gets positive points. And don't forget: try to keep your tiles in groups of threes—

*Pat enters, clothed and soaking wet.  
The three others stare at him.*

**Scott**

Are you okay?

**Jess**

What happened to you?

**Mom**

Is it raining?

**Jess**

You smell like chlorine.

**Pat**

I went to the pool.

**Jess**

At the clubhouse?

**Scott**

I thought you can't swim.

**Jess**

He can't.

**Pat**

I didn't go in far.

**Jess**

Are you insane?

**Pat**

I just wanted to feel the water.

**Jess**

You can't just feel the water when you can't fucking swim!

**Pat**

I stayed in the shallow end.

**Scott**

Are you okay?

**Pat**

I'm okay. I have a migraine. I thought the water would help.

**Scott**

You walked all the way to the clubhouse?

**Pat**

I wanted a little break.

**Mom**

I wanna see the monologue.

**Pat**

What monologue?

**Mom**

The monologue Scott's doing.

**Scott**

For Thespians.

**Pat**

The competition's coming up soon.

**Scott**

Yeah.

**Pat**

I'd love to see your monologue. What's it from?

**Scott**

It's from this obscure play we found.

**Pat**

That's good. It's not good to do material that's conventional or expected. That's what Jess always says. You want to make sure what you're doing is spectacular. Always. Right, Jess?

**Jess**

Right.

**Mom**

Go 'head, Scottie. It'll make us happy.

**Pat**

We'd love to be your audience.

*Scott does his monologue, delivered to Jess.*

**Scott**

"When I was a teenager I went on safari with my parents and we saw these giraffes having sex. Just out in the open. We couldn't have been more than five feet from them, at most. The female giraffe didn't want it. You could tell because the male giraffe kept approaching her from behind,

**Scott**

trying to mount her, and she kept galloping away. It was like some sort of dance, until finally he got his way, and he looked violent almost, which was so strange because when we think of giraffes, we imagine them to be these docile, pretty creatures. You kind of can't imagine that one could possibly be so vicious, but he was. And then the female started mewling or whatever it's called, making this noise, like:

*Scott makes a loud noise like a giraffe,  
really embodying the character of a female giraffe.  
It's loud, uncomfortably long, terrifying—a cry for help.*

**Scott**

“She was making that noise, which we all assumed was a noise of pleasure. We assumed she was enjoying this. And we all just sat there and watched.”

*The doorbell rings and rings and rings.  
They all look off in the direction of the door.*

*The End.*