

Carolyn Adams

A play by

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Characters:

JOHN - 70, store owner

TOM, 70, store owner

MATT - employee, around 30

KEVIN - a local business man and local team coach who is a close friend of the owners, African American, 50

COOPER - John's grandson, 20

GRACE - Cooper's girlfriend, 19

Setting:

The back room of a used sports equipment store in a small town in Northern California.

Lights up on the messy back room of Replay Sports, a used sports equipment store. There is equipment lying about, tools poorly hung on walls and scattered on a work bench, half-finished projects, and an old "Replay Sports" sign leaning against a wall, vertically. Sports icons are posterized on the walls. One wall is full of photos of customers. Newspaper clippings of great SF 49ers moments are everywhere. There is a fridge. On top of it is a microwave. A wash basin. An open doorway - covered by a hanging 49ers shower curtain that's cut in strips - leads out to the shop. A bathroom is off left. It's the kind of place that's been around a long, long time and it shows. It's a little after five in the evening. A Monday night. November. We hear the chatter of a few voices coming from the shop, and the distant chime of the front door. JOHN enters. He's around 70, but moves like a much younger man. He's happily and dramatically humming the theme from Monday Night Football. Excited, he grabs a folded up card table leaning against a wall and attempts to unfold it. He struggles, but his happy mood is undeterred. He turns the table upright. It is wobbly and old, and one leg sticks out. MATT, around 30, appears from the shop with a bag of footballs.

MATT

Coach Henning just dropped off some Tom Brady signature footballs.

JOHN

Fuck Tom Brady.

MATT dumps them in the middle of the floor. They are all deflated.

JOHN (cont'd)

Deflated footballs. Funny. Bag them back up.

Laughing, MATT starts bagging them up. Turning the table over, JOHN works on it.

MATT

Coach Henning said they're still good.

JOHN

Tell Coach Henning the next time you see him that Tom Brady can lick my nuts.

MATT

(laughing)

He said this might get a rise outta you.

JOHN

Did he?

MATT

What is your deal with Brady?

JOHN

He's a cheat and a crybaby, but the media won't stop blowing the guy.

MATT

He's only the greatest quarterback who ever lived.

JOHN

Get real, Matty. Brady couldn't hold Unitas's jock.

MATT

Why would he want to?

JOHN

Don't be stupid. Johnny Unitas invented the two-minute drill.

MATT

Ooh, I'm tingling. The two-minute drill is right up there with penicillin and the wheel.

JOHN

It changed football as we know it.

MATT

Unitas wouldn't even make a current NFL roster.

JOHN

What?!

MATT

If Unitas were alive today, he would be working the loading dock at WalMart.

JOHN

Johnny Unitas could round up any 10 fat asses at any WalMart in America and still go out and beat the Patriots.

MATT

Oh, please. Today's athletes would run circles around Uritas. And Nitschke, and Sayers, and-

JOHN

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Hold on now. Take a breath, Matty. Gale Sayers? Today's guys would run circles around Gale Sayers?

MATT

That's right.

MATT dumps the bag of footballs into a bin.

JOHN

Matty, I love you like a son, but you're a dumb fuck and you have no respect for history.

MATT

I respect you, don't I? You're kind of historical. What are you, 80 now?

JOHN

Fuck you, 80. I'm a lifetime from 80, but I'll tell you, big mouth, I'll be goddamned glad to get there. Now, if you'll excuse me, I have a very large prostate dry humping my bladder.

JOHN goes into the bathroom. MATT turns the table over. It wobbles badly.

MATT

(to John)

Wow, I am hungry! Where are Kevin and Tommy?!

JOHN

(from bathroom)

Should be here any time! The game is in five minutes!

MATT

You ordered the pizza yet?!

JOHN

No!

MATT

But I'm starved!

JOHN

Just wait until everyone's here for fuck's sake!

MATT holds up a glove from the work bench, looks at it, sits.

MATT

Glove is coming along! Mrs. Fisher's son really beat this thing to death!

JOHN

May I piss in silence, please?!

There is the faint sound of urine hitting the toilet water.

MATT

Basket web turned out pretty nice, I think! I'm gonna start conditioning it!

MATT grabs conditioner.

JOHN

Again, can I piss in fucking silence, please?!!

The toilet flushes. Sort of.

JOHN (cont'd)

Goddammit!

MATT

I didn't say anything!

JOHN

No, it's not you! Can't even take a piss in this thing without it backing up on me!

MATT

I think the pipes are bad!

JOHN

I know the goddamn pipes are bad, Matty!

JOHN comes out of the bathroom, struggling to zip up.

JOHN (cont'd)

Remind me to call Stan over at C and C tomorrow. Come take another look.

JOHN tries the faucets at the wash basin.

JOHN (cont'd)

Are you kidding me? The fucking faucet is out now. Son-of-a-bitch.

JOHN goes to his desk, looking in the drawers.

JOHN (cont'd)

This place is falling apart.

JOHN grabs some hand sanitizer, using it. MATT looks up at the sky through a window.

MATT

Whoa, something big and bad is rolling in. Sky's almost black.

JOHN

It'll be dark outside soon enough, and then you won't have to look at it.

MATT

Gonna mess with the TV signal, isn't it?

JOHN puts the sanitizer on the wash basin.

JOHN

Yeah, any kind of storm and the dish goes out. Of course, cable was fucked, too, half the time. Is it too much to ask for shit to work?

MATT

I've been meaning to ask you, John. You coming over for Thanksgiving again this year? Kristie said she'd love to have you.

JOHN slides a couple of folding chairs around a big screen TV.

JOHN

Oh, that'd be nice. That wife of yours is a sweetheart.

MATT

I know.

JOHN

Why she picked you, fuck knows.

MATT

Because I make the big bucks.

JOHN laughs.

JOHN

She gonna serve the stuffing?

MATT

I would guess so, yeah.

JOHN
Ohhhhhh, I love Kristie's stuffing. The best!

MATT
Her mother's recipe.

JOHN
Put a little gravy on it. Are you kidding me? OK, now I'm hungry.

MATT
Don't forget, I'll be making my yams, too.

JOHN
(barely hides his dislike of
the yams)
Ah, yes, the yams. Mmmmm.

The door chime sounds again from the shop.

JOHN (cont'd)
I hope this is Tommy with some grub.

JOHN steps to the open doorway to look.

JOHN (cont'd)
It's Kevin. Oh, boy. He's gonna be unbearable.

MATT
He didn't miss a single game yesterday, did he?

JOHN
No. Brace yourself. He's got food, at least.

JOHN backs away from the doorway as KEVIN enters, grinning, full of himself. He has several plastic bags with beer and chips.

KEVIN
Total domination.

JOHN
Oh, my God, here we go.

KEVIN
I nailed them all, baby!

JOHN
You got slop-ass lucky and you know it.

KEVIN
A perfect sheet!

JOHN

You threw a bunch of darts, give me a break.

KEVIN

Muy perfecto! And two hundred bucks!

JOHN

Yeah, yeah, we'll see after tonight.

KEVIN

Oh, we'll see all right! We will see tonight as the start of the Kevin Whitfield era! Ha ha ha!

JOHN

Why in the hell did you pick Miami over New Orleans?

KEVIN

I had a feeling.

KEVIN puts the chips and beer on the table.

JOHN

The Dolphins haven't beaten a good team on the road since Marino and you put 10 on them to go into the Superdome and beat the Saints?

KEVIN

It's called balls, John.

JOHN

It's called bullshit, Kevin. You better have beer.

KEVIN notices the table, crooked.

KEVIN

What's with the table?

JOHN

It's old and fucked.

KEVIN

Like you?

JOHN

(grabbing a beer)

Stiegl Radler?

KEVIN

It's a grapefruit beer.

JOHN

This is a joke, right?

KEVIN
 (taking the beer from him)
 Jessica's into it. Now I'm into it.

JOHN
 Aw, your girlfriend's into it and now you're into it? That's
 sweet, Kev. I mean it.

KEVIN
 I got you your piss water Budweiser right here.

KEVIN pulls it out of a bag. JOHN
 takes one.

JOHN
 (opens beer, drinks)
 Thank Christ. Matty? Beer?

MATT
 Let me finish conditioning the glove here and then-

JOHN
 No, no, put the glove down. Seriously. Work day over. Have
 a beer.

MATT
 OK, OK.

MATT puts away the glove as JOHN gives
 him one of the Budweisers, which he
 opens. KEVIN opens his Stiegl Radler.
 They drink. JOHN puts the rest of the
 beer in the fridge, takes out some
 hummus and puts it on the table. The
 hummus wants to slide off the table.
 Doesn't. JOHN piles things
 precariously. All this as:

JOHN
 I got cheddar if anyone wants to nuke it with some chips.
 Here's some of Matty's hummus shit from last week. Tommy is
 supposed to bring some wings tonight, too.

KEVIN
 Is this table gonna hold everything or-

JOHN
 Shut up about the table.

KEVIN
 (knowingly)
 How was *your* sheet this week, John?

JOHN

The Niners fucked me, the Raiders fucked me, and the Rams *really* fucked me.

MATT

Yeah, that fumble return was something.

JOHN

That fumble return was the biggest bunch of garbage I've ever seen in my goddamn life. Jared Goff should kill himself.

MATT and KEVIN laugh.

KEVIN

Your problem, Johnny, is you bet with your heart.

JOHN

Story of my life.

Opening a bag of chips, JOHN eats bitterly.

KEVIN

(to Matt)

How did you do, Mr. Spreadpicker?

MATT

I did all right.

KEVIN

When are you gonna go with your instincts and stop relying on the line?

MATT

When I'm betting with someone else's money.

KEVIN laughs.

JOHN

You are betting with someone else's money! Your wife's!

MATT

Ha ha. I'm still in the top ten for the year.

KEVIN

That isn't gonna get you shit. When was the last time you won a week?

MATT

Next week.

KEVIN laughs.

JOHN

Yeah, you're happy now, Kevin, let's see how happy you are when the Jets torch your perfect sheet tonight.

KEVIN

I must admit, the idea of counting on the Jets for perfection scares the shit outta me. You guys ordered the pizza?

JOHN

When Tommy gets here, we'll call it in. (beat) How's your brother, Kev?

The mood shifts.

KEVIN

Oh, you know. Good days, bad days. He's comfortable enough, I guess.

JOHN

Good to have him home?

KEVIN

Well, it's my home. And not his. But it's better than that facility down in Sacramento.

JOHN

No doubt.

KEVIN

Hate leaving him all day to go to work. But, you know, I got a funeral home to run. And dying never goes outta business.

JOHN

Ain't that the truth.

KEVIN

Anyway, I got a woman who comes by the house. She's staying late tonight so I could hang with you assholes.

JOHN

You can bring Chris whenever you come over.

KEVIN

Yeah, well, he's not really in any condition to get up and around. It was nice of you to come by the other day, Johnny. Meant a lot to Chris.

JOHN

Happy to.

(turning to Matt)

Matt, you never knew Kevin's brother, Chris, but he was one of the greatest high school pitchers in this area. Ever.

MATT

Yeah, Chris Whitfield. I've heard of him. Of course.

JOHN

(with awe)

But you didn't see him. The ball just exploded out of his hand.

KEVIN

It was a gift. They used to plop me at first base because I had a noodle for an arm. But Chris...

JOHN

Like a cannon!

KEVIN

One day, he couldn't find the plate. And that was that.

JOHN

I have a photo of him somewhere...

JOHN goes to the wall of photos, takes one down.

JOHN (cont'd)

Here. Chris is on the left.

MATT approaches. KEVIN, too.

MATT

Is that you, Kevin, on the right?

KEVIN

It is.

MATT

He dwarfs you.

KEVIN

Yes. Not anymore.

Beat.

KEVIN (cont'd)

Chris said he wants an open casket. (beat) And he wants me to make him up so when people come to see him he looks just like that powerhouse kid who used to stand on the mound over at Renfro Field and blow everybody away. (beat) I wish I could do that for him.

MATT

I'm sorry, Kevin.

Me, too. KEVIN

Hey, forget all that. He's gonna be the first to beat it.
He's gonna be fine. JOHN

Yeah. Sure. KEVIN

KEVIN puts the photo back on the wall.

Chris made it to the big leagues, didn't he? MATT

One stint with the Orioles. JOHN

September call up. Walked two guys and then Ken Griffey Jr.
hit one outta Camden Yards. KEVIN

It was a 3-0 count and Chris was just trying to throw a
strike. JOHN

It's on youtube titled "Griffey's Big Bomb." Has like four
million views. KEVIN

If Chris had pitched to Griffey back in high school, though,
he would have owned Griffey. And anyone else. Sosa. Bonds.
Line them up. Chris was that good. JOHN

Yeah. Maybe. (beat) We gonna turn the game on? KEVIN

Oh, shit. JOHN

JOHN looks at his watch.

Get it going, Kev. JOHN (cont'd)

They rush around the TV, sitting.
Using a remote, KEVIN turns on the TV.
The TV screen should not be seen by the
audience. When it comes on, we hear
announcers, loud and clear.

Sound off, sound off. You know the rules. JOHN (cont'd)

KEVIN
Got it, got it.

KEVIN deletes the volume.

KEVIN (cont'd)
We missed kickoff.

MATT
Who's got the ball?

KEVIN
The Falcons. And they're driving. *Shit.*

JOHN
Look at you. You're tight already. You have to win tonight to win the week, don't you?

KEVIN
Penelope Farris, surprise, surprise, has only lost one game and three points, and I have four on the Jets. Naturally, she took the Falcons. I lose this, I lose the week, I lose the money-

JOHN
You lose perfection, pride, dignity, self-worth-

KEVIN
Penelope Farris has to be cheating! Has to be!

JOHN
Why? Because she's a woman?

KEVIN
How does a five-foot two cat lover wipe us out every week?

JOHN laughs.

KEVIN (cont'd)
I'm serious!

JOHN
She knows her shit.

KEVIN
Oh, bullshit she does! If she knew her shit, she wouldn't apologize every time she ran into me in town. "Oh, I'm sorry, I guess I just got lucky again, gosh darn it. He he he." It absolutely chaps me!
(at the TV, standing)
He's wide open. First and goal. *Shit!*

JOHN
 (laughing)
 Yeah, you're tight as fuck right now.

MATT laughs, too.

KEVIN
 (sitting back down)
 And when are you gonna put some fucking barcaloungers back here so we don't have to sit on these hard fucking chairs all the fucking time, you cheap fuck?

JOHN laughs.

JOHN
 That's first and goal Falcons talking right there.

KEVIN
No, it isn't!! It's my sciatica talking!!

JOHN and MATT laugh. The front door of store chimes again.

MATT
 Must be Tom.

JOHN turns in the direction of the store.

JOHN
 (calling out)
 Tommy?!

TOM
 (from the store)
 Yeah?!

JOHN
 Hit the lights, would you?! Lock up the front door!

The lights from the store go out.

KEVIN
 How many high first round draft picks do the Jets have to have before they land somebody who can make a fucking play?
 (to the TV)
 Stick someone!

TOM, about 70, comes into the back room. He has food for the party and the cash register drawer.

MATT
 Hey, Tommy.

TOM

Matt. Kevin. Kev, how's your brother?

JOHN

Don't talk to Kevin right now. The Falcons are at the two. And Kevin took the Jets.

TOM

Game is still early.

TOM quietly unpacks his food. Some of it he has to put on the floor because it won't stay on the crooked table.

JOHN

He's got a perfect sheet riding on this. And he's gotta get it to win the week, too.

KEVIN

Touchdown, Falcons. GODDAMMIT!

KEVIN moves away from the TV, pacing.

JOHN

This is gonna break my heart.

KEVIN

I hate the NFL! I hate it, I hate it! Why did I take the Jets?! Why?! What is wrong with me?! They suck!

JOHN and MATT laugh. TOM crosses to the desk, putting the cash register drawer down, and sitting.

KEVIN (cont'd)

The New York Jets haven't beaten anyone since Namath beat the Colts in the Super Bowl! And, yet, here I am, taking them like I have no idea they've been shitty for the last 50 years!

JOHN

Let us know when we should dial 9-1-1.

MATT and JOHN laugh.

KEVIN

Fuck!!

KEVIN grab some food. JOHN looks over at TOM, who is quiet, staring into space.

JOHN (cont'd)

You want a ginger ale, Tommy?

TOM
(snapping out of it)
No, thanks.

JOHN
What's going on?

TOM
With what?

As JOHN crosses to him, TOM starts counting the money out of the register.

JOHN
You look like you just came back from the urologist, Tommy, and it didn't go well.

TOM
I did just come back from the urologist. Couple days ago.

JOHN
Ah, shit.

MATT and KEVIN look over.

MATT
You have prostate cancer, Tommy?

JOHN
Matty, Jesus.

TOM
I'm fine. My psa is at an all-time low, actually.

JOHN
Really? Fuck you.

TOM
Yeah, my numbers are like 0.002 or something.

JOHN
All right, all right, it's not a contest. And gloating, Tommy, is ugly.

TOM
Yeah, the doc says my prostate is like the size of a chickpea.

JOHN
Because you never fucking use it!

They laugh. JOHN sits opposite the desk, on a bin.

KEVIN

So you're not worried about the urologist?

KEVIN sits back down in his chair.

TOM

Not at all.

JOHN

Then what's the problem? You came in here awfully quiet.

TOM

I ran into your grandson in town. Just now.

JOHN

Coop? Yeah?

TOM

At Safeway.

JOHN

I didn't know he was in town. How's he doing?

TOM

He's fine. Looks good. He was getting some cereal. Said his mother didn't have anything at the house.

JOHN

OK. So cereal buying has got you all gloomy?

TOM

No, of course not.

JOHN

You invite him to come over and watch the game?

TOM

I did. He's coming.

JOHN

Great. You leave the front door unlocked so he can get in?

TOM

I did. I met the girlfriend, too, Johnny.

JOHN

Oh, yeah? He brought the girlfriend down from school? She's coming to watch the game, too?

TOM

She is. Have you met the girlfriend, John?

JOHN

No. This is the first time Coop's brought her down from Chico State as far as I know. Her family is from up near Eureka, I think. Coop says she goes home a lot. Homesick, I think.

MATT

Homesick? For Eureka? It's a shit hole.

KEVIN

My parents were originally from Eureka.

MATT

Oh. I mean, it's beautiful there. The ocean, the redwoods-

KEVIN

Fuck off.

TOM

You ever seen photos of the girl, Johnny?

JOHN

She's pretty new. Coop likes to keep the girls close to the vest. Why?

TOM

His Mom's never emailed you a photo or texted you a photo or you never seen one on Facebook?

JOHN

You know I don't do that technology shit and Katie isn't talking to me right now. What are you getting at? You walk in here all fucking ashen, what's going on?

TOM

It's the girlfriend, John.

MATT

Uh-oh.

JOHN

Keep your fucking uh-ohs to yourself, Matty. What about the girlfriend, Tommy?

TOM

There was something about her, John.

JOHN

What does that mean?

MATT

Can I guess?

JOHN

Keep your fucking guessing to yourself, Matty.

MATT

She doesn't like sports? She's like an Eskimo or some shit? She's in transition?

JOHN

Goddammit, Matt. Shut up. Tommy, there's something about her...*what?*

TOM

Something familiar.

JOHN

What's fucking familiar about her?

TOM

She reminded me of someone.

JOHN

Who?! Stop making a meal outta this! Spit it out for God's sake!

TOM

She reminded me of Carolyn Adams.

Beat.

JOHN

Carolyn Adams?

KEVIN

(at the TV)

Acquiring satellite?! What does that mean?!

TOM

You remember Carolyn Adams, John?

KEVIN

The TV is out, guys!

MATT

It's the new dish. We get a lot of clouds, like today, sometimes the TV goes.

KEVIN

For how long!?

The TV comes back on.

KEVIN (cont'd)

Wait, it's back. It's back. It's back, it's back. We're all good. Everyone calm down. Calm down!

JOHN

Have you been drinking today, Tommy?

JOHN takes the counted money from
TOMMY.

TOM

I have not been drinking today.

JOHN

Don't tell me you haven't and then come in here with some
hallucinatory Safeway story.

JOHN crosses to an old coffee can on
the workbench and stuff the money
inside.

TOM

I haven't had a drink in 22 days.

MATT

Who is Carolyn Adams?

JOHN

A young girl, from this town, who died when we were 17. How
did Coop's girlfriend remind you of her, Tommy?

TOM

Well, first, she kind of looked like her.

JOHN

I figured that. Anything else?

TOM

She had a way about her, too. The way Carolyn had. Women
have ways, you know.

JOHN

I know all too well what women have.

KEVIN

You've got three exes, right, John?

JOHN

Fuck off, Kevin, and watch the fucking game. What ways are
we talking about, Tommy?

TOM

The way she looked at me. The way she smiled. Her
countenance, you know?

JOHN

No, I don't know. Her countenance? Her fucking *countenance*?

TOM

Yeah.

JOHN

Don't use one of your bullshit poetry words, OK?

TOM gets up from the desk and crosses away.

TOM

I just mean her face, OK? The look on her face. The whole thing was spooky. I got light-headed. Shit started spinning. I had to grab onto the lip of the deli display to keep from hitting the deck.

JOHN

Be honest with me right now. How much have you had to drink today?

TOM

I haven't had shit to drink, I told you.

JOHN

22 days, right. You stagger in the grocery store and you're saying you haven't had shit to drink?

TOM

I was unsteady because of the girlfriend, not because I was-

JOHN

Right, it was the girlfriend. *The girlfriend.*

TOM

You have no faith in me, Johnny?

JOHN

Faith? The only thing I know is patterns. And I know yours.

TOM

Can we not make my alcoholism be so goddamn front and center right now?

JOHN

I'm sorry.

TOM

This is not an AA meeting.

JOHN

I'm sorry.

TOM

I'm not on a binge.

JOHN

OK, great, wonderful, I'm thrilled.

TOM

I am bone-ass dry. End of story.

JOHN

Thank Christ.

TOM

But thanks for bringing beer, whoever brought it. I've only been battling this shit all my life. Having it around doesn't make it difficult at all, no siree. 22 days I've been A-OK, except for all the sweating and the headaches and not being able to sleep and the goddamn anxiety, so don't you guys worry one second about me, all right? I'm not fucking tempted in the least.

JOHN

Oh, don't fucking guilt trip us right now when you knew good goddamn well we were gonna have fucking beer here. We're watching a football game!

TOM

Guilt trip?!

JOHN

And half our shit is grapefruit beer, which is hardly beer, so calm the fuck down.

TOM

I'm an alcoholic, John!

JOHN

I thought this wasn't an AA meeting?

TOM

It's not!

JOHN

I'll apologize for the beer if you apologize for bringing a pile of barbecue wings!

TOM

Why should I apologize for the wings?

JOHN

I got acid reflux! You're not the only one with problems!

TOM

That is not the same thing!

JOHN

I'm not doing this song and dance with you right now, OK?
 We'll all agree that your issues are superior to ours, and
 we're assholes for not being sensitive enough. OK? And you
 are, right now, stone cold sober. OK? Now, you met my
 grandson's girlfriend and she reminds you of Carolyn
 Adams...so what?

KEVIN

(to the TV)

Fourth down. We're punting. Shit!

JOHN

So what, Tommy?

TOM

Well...

KEVIN

Shit!!

JOHN

Pipe down asshole!

(to Tommy)

There something else to the story, Tommy?

TOM

Kind of.

JOHN

What? What else?

TOM looks at the others, who are now
 looking at him, and then back to JOHN.
 TOM sits at the work bench.

TOM

I know this is gonna sound nuts, but I think this isn't just
 a resemblance thing. I think the girl is Carolyn. I mean,
 you know, her spirit. Her person. Brought back. Somehow.

JOHN

Brought back?

TOM

Yeah, brought back.

JOHN

What do you mean "brought back?"

TOM

Returned or whatever.

JOHN
Like from the grave? Like a zombie?

TOM
No, not like that.

JOHN
Like a ghost?

TOM
No. Jesus.

MATT
(crossing to the work bench)
You mean, like, reincarnation?

TOM
I don't know. I guess.

JOHN
Reincarnation?

TOM
Yeah. I guess.

JOHN
Reincar-fucking-nation?

MATT
You do know what reincarnation is, right John?

JOHN
I know what it is, smart guy. I finished college. Did you finish college? No. So shut up.

MATT
You went to Yuba City Technical College.

JOHN
Whatever. I graduated, didn't I? And fuck you.

KEVIN
Hey, are we gonna watch the game?

JOHN
(sitting next to Tom on work bench)
Just a second, Kevin.

KEVIN
This story is all fascinating and everything, but can it wait until halftime?

JOHN

No.

TOM

I know it sounds nuts, John.

JOHN

You're right. It does sound nuts.

TOM

Wait until you meet her.

MATT

You guys ever see that seventies movie "The Reincarnation of Peter Proud?"

TOM

No.

MATT

Cool film. I hear they're doing a remake.

JOHN

Shut up, Matt. Nobody gives a shit.

KEVIN

Tom, do you really think Cooper's girlfriend is the reincarnation of this Carolyn Adams girl?

JOHN

I thought you wanted to watch the game?

KEVIN

(gesturing to the TV)

It's a commercial now.

TOM

I just think the girl is Carolyn Adams somehow. Reincarnation, not reincarnation, whatever, call it any name you want.

MATT

I thought reincarnation was all about coming back as a cow or a praying mantis or something.

TOM

Maybe. I don't know. I don't really know anything about it.

MATT

How can you say she's the reincarnation of this other girl if you don't actually know anything about reincarnation?

TOM

I'm not calling it that. You are. All I know is what I saw.
And heard.

JOHN

She sounds like her?

TOM

Yeah.

KEVIN

This other girl died, what, over 50 years ago and you
remember what she sounded like?

TOM

Yeah. You remember, don't you John?

JOHN

Yeah.

MATT

How the hell do you remember that?

JOHN

I just do. Some things you don't forget.

MATT

Yeah, but 50-some years ago?

TOM

Trust me. I can still hear the shrill of my mother's voice
like it was yesterday. And Carolyn was...

Beat.

KEVIN

What?

TOM

She was...one of a kind.

MATT

She'll be two of a kind if your story pans out.

TOM

(mocking Matt)

Ha ha.

JOHN

Carolyn had this laugh.

JOHN thinks on it. Smiles.

JOHN (cont'd)
You remember it, don't you, Tommy?

TOM
Oh, yeah.

JOHN
It was amazing. She would smile first, like the sweetest smile, and then she'd laugh. It was very full. Alluring. Contagious. It was a long, happy laugh. And then at the end of it, she'd sigh. It just killed you.

JOHN and TOM smile. A great memory.

KEVIN
So did Cooper's girlfriend have the same laugh?

TOM
I didn't hear her laugh.

MATT
Is there a photo of her online or anything? Would like to see who we're talking about.

TOM
No. There's nothing online.

MATT
You know for sure?

TOM
I do.

MATT looks at TOM, and then to JOHN, and then back to TOM.

MATT
Man, I don't think I've ever seen you two get bent outta shape like this before.

KEVIN
Do you have an actual, you know, physical photo of her somewhere? That you kept maybe?

MATT
For over 50 years? That would be some torch.

KEVIN
I just wanna know what this girl looks like.

JOHN crosses to an old desk.

KEVIN (cont'd)
You do, don't you? You got a photo.

I do.

JOHN

JOHN pulls out of the drawer a yearbook. KEVIN follows.

KEVIN

What is that?

JOHN

My high school yearbook.

KEVIN

You keep your high school yearbook in a drawer in a desk at work?

JOHN

This is my desk from high school, so, yeah.

KEVIN

It is?

MATT
(crossing to them)

It is. I can vouch.

KEVIN

You still have your desk from high school?

JOHN

I keep shit. I repair shit. It's what I've done my entire life.

MATT
(re: the yearbook)

Does that say 1967? Holy crap. The Stone Age.

TOM

I have a photo, too.

KEVIN

You have a photo, too?

JOHN

You have a photo, too?

TOM goes into his wallet.

MATT

You have it on you?

JOHN

You have it on you?

TOM

I have it on me.

MATT

This goes really, really deep for you both. Wow.

JOHN opens the yearbook as TOM pulls out the photo from his wallet. It's laminated.

KEVIN

(re: the yearbook)

Where is she?

JOHN

(pointing)

Right here.

KEVIN looks at the yearbook.

TOM

There you go.

TOM hands his photo to MATT.

MATT

You laminated it?

MATT and KEVIN take in Carolyn's picture. Beat.

MATT (cont'd)

She's beautiful.

KEVIN

Yeah.

After a moment, MATT puts the photo down next to the yearbook photo.

KEVIN (cont'd)

It's the same photo.

TOM

I cut mine outta the yearbook.

MATT

Did you guys know that one of you kept the yearbook here and that the other one walked around with a cutout of the same photo in his wallet?

JOHN and TOM look at each other.

No. JOHN

We didn't talk about it. TOM

MATT looks down at the two photos again.

MATT
I see she's got something on her neck. Is that a smudge in the paper or...what is that?

He rubs a finger on each photo.

It's a birthmark. JOHN

Looks like a bird. KEVIN

I guess. Sort of. JOHN

Did Coop's girlfriend have the birthmark? MATT

Did she have the birthmark, Tommy? JOHN

TOM looks at them.

She had it. TOM

Oh, man! KEVIN

Holy crap! MATT

Are you sure, Tommy? JOHN

I am sure. TOM

Holy crap! MATT

Are you sure you're sure, man? KEVIN

TOM
I just said I was, didn't I?

MATT
This is...this is...

KEVIN
Freaky!

MATT
Totally!

TOM and JOHN look at each other.

MATT (cont'd)
What time are Cooper and his girlfriend getting here?

TOM
I don't know. They just said they were coming. They didn't say exactly when.

JOHN sits at the desk, and one by one,
the other sit around the desk, too.

MATT
You both were in love with this Carolyn girl, weren't you?

They don't respond.

MATT (cont'd)
You were in love with her.

JOHN
We all loved her in some kind of way. Those of us that knew her. And it wasn't just that she was pretty. She had a kind of kindness that was...I don't know. It changed you.

MATT
Are you sure you're not just idealizing the girl?

JOHN
No.

MATT
But isn't this what guys do? Idealize young girls?

TOM
That's not this.

MATT
Yes, it is. When are we gonna put on a pedestal some middle-aged lady with a shitload of baggage?

JOHN

I can put a ton of women like that on a pedestal.

KEVIN

No, you can't, and for obvious reasons.

JOHN

Bullshit I can't.

MATT

Name one.

JOHN

What about your grandmother, Matt?

MATT

She doesn't count. She's past middle-aged and she's, like, Depression-Era. Depression-Era women are in a whole other category. They don't count.

TOM

We're veering here.

MATT

My point is we too much look back at things with the old rose colored glasses.

JOHN

Not all the time. Ask my exes. Ask Tom about his screeching, gin-swilling mother.

TOM

Thanks, John.

KEVIN

It's human nature to look back and paint a different picture. Or build people up into something they aren't. I know the way people in town remember my brother sometimes. Like he was their Mickey Mantle or something.

TOM

He was like Mickey Mantle, Kev.

KEVIN

It isn't fair to do that, Tommy. We all got a right to be who we are, and not what everyone else wants us to be.

Beat.

JOHN

There hasn't been a day that goes by when I don't think about her.

MATT

That really true, John?

JOHN

She died, Matt, on Sutter Creek Road, which I take every day to and from the shop. It's completely outta my way, but I take it anyway, just so I can pass the bend where it happened. And sometimes, sure, I zone out and it's just a fleeting thought, like, oh, yeah, there's that curve where Carolyn's car went off. And I forget it as quickly as it came to me. But there are other days, I promise you, when I make that turn and it's the rest of the fucking day I'll be thinking about her. This morning I did something I've never done. I put a flower by that bend in the road. Sometimes I think the older I get the more I think about her.

TOM

Me, too. Every year in the fall I get sober. Sometimes it's six months, sometimes it's two months, sometimes it's a month. This year it's been 22 days. But no matter what, when the anniversary of her death comes...

JOHN

...you start drinking again.

MATT

Boy, you two got it bad.

KEVIN

So when is this anniversary?

JOHN and TOM look at each other.

JOHN

Today.

KEVIN

Today? Oh, man.

MATT

This is incredible. Can I Facebook all this later?

JOHN

No, no Facebook. Or Twitter. Or Instagram. None of it.

KEVIN

Now you're gonna tell us this girl's the reason you never got married, Tommy, and why you, John, can't stay married?

JOHN

Don't be an asshole, Kev.

KEVIN

How can a guy as bitter as you, John, who has been married three times, think about this young girl this way?

JOHN

Because Carolyn Adams was different. I never had to force it. Or fake it. Or even try and be the white knight, which has been my problem pretty much ever since. Wanting to swoop in, you know? (beat) Carolyn was a good person. A happy person. When you were with her, she just shined a light on everything, you know? With nothing but pure sweetness. (beat) She lived next door to me, out behind the old drive-thru, out past what is now the White River golf course, off Oro Dam Road. (beat) We did so much together. Bike riding and going to the Third St. pool hall and getting candy or ice cream at Mr. Nelson's drug store. Had birthdays together, stayed up late together. Homework together. She'd come out when I was shooting hoop in front of the house and we'd be out there for hours. (beat) I remember we'd go down to the creek and she'd hold my hand because she seemed so grateful to have me there. (beat) I can still feel her hand. (beat) Strange, we'd walk to school together, but when we got there, she never said two words to me. And I was OK with that. Our time was back home. That was our place. My parents hated each other, and her parents hated each other, and there we were. With our Dr. Pepper's and our stupid Donovan records, just happy to be together, all the time in the world. (beat) It's funny. I never even kissed her. Or even told her how I felt. (beat) I loved her. Yeah, OK, I was a kid, and I didn't really know fuck from shinola back then, but I'm old enough now to know the difference between bullshit and real love. With her it was real. It really was.

Beat.

MATT

Wow. That was profound.

JOHN

(getting up and walking away)
Oh, kiss my dick, Matty.

MATT

No, I'm being serious, Johnny! That was very moving!

JOHN

Suck my ass!

KEVIN

Maybe you feel this way about this girl, Johnny, because it never had a chance to go bad.

JOHN

Maybe. If you wanna be a cynical fuck about it.

KEVIN

Oh, *I'm* cynical? Well, if that isn't the pot calling the kettle-

JOHN

Oh, fuck your pot and fuck your kettle.

KEVIN

Thanks, Matt. Look at the mood you put him in.

MATT

I didn't do anything! This is his normal mood!

KEVIN

Why didn't you tell her how you felt, John?

JOHN

Because everything was perfect the way it was.

MATT

Don't you regret not telling her?

JOHN

Of course! I have a mountain of regrets and that one's right at the top.

KEVIN

So, did you and Tom never talk to each other about Carolyn Adams?

JOHN

Not really.

MATT

Why not?

TOM

Just not a thing we talked about.

MATT

But it's clearly important to you.

KEVIN

You two have owned this store for over 40 years. Not once in all that time have you two sat back here and talked about this girl?

JOHN

No.

KEVIN

All those hours here, just the two of you, and Carolyn Adams never came up once?

TOM

No.

KEVIN

With the photo in your wallet, Tommy, and the yearbook stuffed in that desk right over there, and you, John, driving by that bend in the road all the time, and you, Tommy, falling off the wagon every year, not once did you-

JOHN

No, Kevin, no. No, we didn't talk about her.

KEVIN

Why not?

JOHN

I don't know.

TOM

Some things you just can't talk about. Like talking about it spoils it.

MATT

We're talking about it now.

TOM

Yeah, and I don't really like it.

KEVIN

Do you suppose Cooper knows about Carolyn Adams?

JOHN

It doesn't come up. Not with me it hasn't.

TOM

Young people aren't gonna know her. It was a long time ago.

KEVIN

I don't even remember her.

TOM

Your parents buried her, Kev.

KEVIN

They did?

JOHN

(irritated)

Hold on. Hold on a second.

KEVIN

What?

JOHN

I gotta take a piss, so nobody say anything while I'm away.

JOHN heads towards the bathroom.

MATT

You gotta go again? You just went.

JOHN

I live in the can now. Unlike Tom, my prostate's a fucking bowling ball, all right? Now everyone just kill all talk until I come out, got it?

TOM

Fine.

MATT

OK.

KEVIN

Whatever you want, John.

JOHN

Just fucking wait for me before anyone says another word!

KEVIN

Jesus Christ. We just said we would.

JOHN goes into the bathroom. The guys are silent, looking at each other stupidly. There is the faint sound of urine hitting the water in the toilet bowl. After awhile, the bell chimes from the store.

TOM

That's them!

Hurrying, KEVIN goes to the doorway opening to the store, and peers in to look. TOM sort of retreats. He's not ready for this. MATT goes quickly to the bathroom door.

MATT

(knocking on the door lightly)

John?

JOHN

(from bathroom)

I thought I told you earlier that I like silence when I'm taking a piss?!

MATT
Yeah, but they're here!

JOHN
What?!

MATT
They're here!! Your grandson and his girlfriend!!

JOHN
Shit!

KEVIN
He's showing her the store.

MATT
(to John)
He's showing her the store!

KEVIN
They're dicking around with the wet suits.

MATT
(to John)
They're dicking around with the wet suits!

KEVIN
They're at the kayaks now. Now the water skis.

MATT
(to John)
They're at the kayaks now! Now the water skis!

JOHN
I don't need a goddamn play-by-play!

MATT
(to Kevin)
Can you see her?

KEVIN
I can't see her face. The lights are out.

MATT
Where are they now?

KEVIN
They're behind the baseball bats now. I think.

The toilet flushes. Sort of.

JOHN
(from bathroom)
Goddamn toilet!

JOHN comes out, quickly, trying to zip up.

JOHN (cont'd)

Where are they?

KEVIN

They're at the baseball gloves.

MATT moves to the doorway next to KEVIN to look, too.

JOHN

(struggling with the zipper)

Oh, for Christ's sake! Come on!

Getting the zipper, JOHN uses the hand sanitizer at the wash basin.

KEVIN

They're at the baseballs.

MATT

Now the cups.

KEVIN

They're giggling at the cups.

MATT

Uh-oh.

JOHN

Stop with the fucking uh-ohs, Matty. Everyone giggles at the fucking cups. Especially kids.

JOHN runs his fingers through his hair, like he's prepping for a date. MATT notices.

JOHN (cont'd)

What?

MATT

Nothing.

MATT turns back to look for JOHN's grandson and his girlfriend.

JOHN

The yearbook! We have to put away the yearbook!

JOHN rushes to dump his yearbook back in the desk.

JOHN (cont'd)

Tommy, take your photo!

TOM hurries over and JOHN gives him his cut-out photo back, which TOM stuffs quickly into his pocket.

KEVIN

Here they come.

JOHN

Would you two get away from the door!

JOHN runs at MATT and KEVIN, and they scatter. COOPER, around 20, enters with GRACE, 19. GRACE is beautiful. Slender, long hair.

COOPER

Hey, everyone.

No one says anything.

COOPER (cont'd)

What's the score of the game?

No one says anything. The men all stare at GRACE. No one moves much. Their postures are awkward, frozen, as if they've been caught in an embarrassing act. JOHN looks at TOM, who looks back. JOHN'S look is "she looks just like Carolyn." COOPER notices everyone being weird.

COOPER (cont'd)

Why is everyone being weird?

GRACE

Hi, I'm Grace.

JOHN and TOM exchanges glances again. JOHN'S look is "she sounds like Carolyn."

COOPER

Oh, shit. I'm sorry. This is Grace, everyone. Grace, that's Mr. Whitfield, he runs a funeral home in town.

KEVIN

(nervous)

I also run the local Little League. I keep this store well stocked.

COOPER
That's Matt, he works here.

MATT
(nervous)
I work here, yes. But I'm not technically an employee.

COOPER
You're not?

MATT
I don't actually take a salary.

COOPER
Oh. OK.

KEVIN
You don't get paid, Matt?

MATT
No. I started helping out here a couple years ago after Johnny, you know, did the Heimlich on me at the hot dog stand at the Black Bear Lodge charity baseball game.

COOPER
Wow.

MATT
I was *so* grateful. Johnny's become like the father I never had, because I never had one. Plus my wife is totally loaded. So I work for free. I don't know why I just said all that. I feel like I'm way overtalking right now. I'm nervous. Sorry.

COOPER
OK. (beat) Anyway. You met Mr. Worthington already.

TOM
(nervous)
Please, call me Tom.

She smiles.

TOM (cont'd)
We're all on a first name basis here.

KEVIN
Right. Call me Kevin.

COOPER
Hey, Grandpa.

JOHN

(nervous)

Hey, Coop. Good to see you.

They hug. It's not a big happy one, but it's clear they like each other.

COOPER

Grandpa, this is Grace. Grace, this is my grandfather. Mr. Stephens. Or should she call you John? Or Johnny? Or Grandpa? I'm confused now.

JOHN

John is fine. Hello.

JOHN steps forward to say hello. When he does, she takes it as an invitation to hug him, which she does. It's a very sweet hug. They separate. She steps away, and JOHN sort of backs up, a little stunned. Then, suddenly, he stumbles backwards, and falls, fainting. It's rather dramatic. He takes out the table with the food on it, and maybe even a chair or two.

KEVIN

Johnny!

MATT

Holy crap.

COOPER

Grandpa?!

They rush to JOHN.

MATT

Is he dead? Is he dead?

KEVIN

John? Are you OK?!

JOHN

Get your fucking hands off me!

He pushes them away.

KEVIN

I think he's fine. Get him up.

They grab JOHN and put him in a chair. KEVIN, MATT, and COOPER surround JOHN, who is woozy in the chair.

COOPER
You fainted, Grandpa.

JOHN
I know that, Coop.

COOPER
Should we call an ambulance?

JOHN
No, I'm all right.

COOPER
But how could you be all right? You looked like you had a brain aneurysm. Did you have a brain aneurysm, Grandpa?

JOHN
Just give me some goddamn air, would you? And something to drink.

KEVIN
(into John's ear, like John is deaf)
Where's your beer?

JOHN
I'm not fucking deaf. My beer is in the bathroom.

KEVIN goes for it.

MATT
You didn't break a hip or anything, did you?

JOHN
Oh, stop it. I'm not made of glass.

COOPER
But you're very old, Grandpa.

JOHN
Thank you, Coop.

COOPER
Grace's grandfather busted his hip last week, and he's nowhere near as old as you.

JOHN
OK, OK, all you doctors in the house. I'm all right, OK? Let's not make a fuss. I'm embarrassed enough.

Returning from the bathroom, KEVIN hands JOHN his beer.

KEVIN

You? Embarrassed? That would be a first.

JOHN drinks his beer.

JOHN

Why don't you point your attention to the game, Kev? I'm sure your interest is more in the Jets than me. And someone please get the newcomers something to munch on and drink, if I haven't torpedoed everything.

MATT

You basically torpedoed everything.

JOHN

There's more beer in the fridge. You guys want a beer? Or a soda? I think I have some Coke in there.

COOPER

I'm good, Grandpa. Grace?

GRACE

I'm fine.

JOHN

Matt, Kev, clean up the mess, would you? Tommy, look alive, man.

They all help clean up the mess. All except TOM, who has no idea what to do with himself. And he doesn't want to get too close to GRACE.

JOHN (cont'd)

Coop, you and Grace don't have to do anything.

COOPER

We don't mind.

GRACE

Happy to.

JOHN

But you're guests. Tommy, *please*.

COOPER

It's all good, Grandpa.

They can't get the card table to stand at all now.

JOHN

Forget the card table. Just load everything on the work bench.

Moving the clutter, they load up the work bench.

KEVIN

Did anyone order pizza?

MATT

We forgot about the pizza.

JOHN

Matt, can you call it in?

MATT

Absolutely.

MATT pulls out his cell.

JOHN

No, no, go use the shop phone.

MATT

The cell is quicker. By a lot.

JOHN

The fuck it is. It takes that Siri woman a half hour to figure out what you're saying. Go use the landline. I have Enzo's on speed dial. Just press 2.

MATT

All right. What does everyone want?

JOHN

Coop? Grace? What do you guys want?

COOPER

Anything's fine.

GRACE

Whatever everyone else is having.

KEVIN

I like artichoke.

JOHN

I know you do. Just get a large cheese and a large pepperoni, OK, Matt? We all good with that?

Mumbles of "sure," "OK," and the like.
MATT exits. GRACE scans the store.

GRACE

So Cooper told me you've had this store for 44 years.

JOHN

Yeah. Time goes fast. Doesn't it, Tommy?

TOM

Sure does.

Both TOM and JOHN are very nervous.

JOHN

It's funny, the whole idea of used sports equipment seemed colossally stupid back then. Who knew "Replay Sports" would actually last all these years?

TOM

You were much more hopeful than I was.

JOHN

Back then, Tommy had it in his mind he was gonna be a poet.

GRACE

What happened?

TOM

After high school, I went to live in the Bay Area for awhile. It was the late sixties, and everyone was a poet. But real life just intervened.

JOHN

We did a poetry reading here once. A total disaster.

TOM

No one showed except for these three old, half-deaf church ladies. And there I was, the only poet, standing next to a bunch of bald basketballs trying to sound important.

JOHN and TOM chuckle nervously at the memory. GRACE smiles.

GRACE

Who's in the photos?

She approaches the wall of photos.

JOHN

Oh, just some of the people that have passed through here over the years.

Rising, JOHN goes over.

COOPER

Easy, Grandpa.

JOHN

I am fine, Coop. Leave me alone.

JOHN and GRACE stand at the wall.
COOPER lingers behind them.

JOHN (cont'd)

(pointing)

There's old Mayor Clark, what a supporter he was; the Sanders twins, they ended up playing tennis at Cal; Penelope Farris, who is currently crushing us in a football pool.

KEVIN

Penelope Farris is the town witch.

JOHN

(laughing that off)

She's not the town witch.

KEVIN

She has three black cats and can clearly predict the future.

GRACE

(pointing to a photo)

Oh, my God, is that you and Tom?

JOHN

It is. We're about 30 there, I think.

GRACE

The hair!

JOHN

Hey, it was the seventies. What can I say?

GRACE

Was this taken out front? Looks deserted.

JOHN

There was nothing around here back then, Grace. Basically country roads.

COOPER

Love the Giants uniforms. You look good.

JOHN

Two non-athletes trying to look like athletes.

GRACE

That's some car you're standing in front of.

JOHN

Oh, Jesus, yeah. It was Tommy's mother's old hulking '55 Chrysler limo.

TOM

'53.

JOHN

We drove it right into the ground. But it hauled a ton of stuff.

GRACE moves on to another photo.

GRACE

(pointing)

Who are you with there?

JOHN

Oh, that's my daughter, Katie.

COOPER

My mother.

GRACE

She looks just like you, Coop.

JOHN

She must be 15 there. Maybe 16. She worked here a few summers. I was a bit of a smotherer, never wanting to see her get hurt. I think she's taken after me in that regard.

JOHN looks at COOPER. COOPER knows the story.

JOHN (cont'd)

I hope you get along with her. She's really a good girl.

GRACE

So far, so good.

GRACE smiles at COOPER. JOHN turns back to the wall.

JOHN

Look here. There's Kevin and his brother Chris. Chris is a local baseball legend.

KEVIN

He was.

JOHN

Is.

KEVIN

He's got ALS now. The Lou Gehrig thing.

GRACE

That's terrible. I'm so sorry.

KEVIN

Thanks.

JOHN returns to the wall.

JOHN
There's Matt and his wife. There's the Little League team
that went to Williamsport. That was '87.

KEVIN
Chris was on that team.

JOHN
He was the team.

KEVIN
There was a parade when the team came home.

JOHN
It's all people talked about. For years.

GRACE scans the whole wall.

GRACE
Everyone's smiling.

KEVIN
People appreciate Johnny wanting to hear about their lives.

JOHN
Everyone has a story. Every piece of equipment, too. I
always wanna hear it. I think that's what this wall is all
about. Stories. Preserving them.

They all look at the wall a moment.

JOHN (cont'd)
I'm gonna get sentimental, if I don't watch it.

JOHN crosses to sit back down.

KEVIN
Nobody wants to see that.

COOPER
Tell Grace the '81 NFC Championship story.

JOHN
Oh, God. That story is not about me being sentimental
exactly.

COOPER
Yes, it is.

JOHN
No, it's not. It's a humiliating story.

COOPER

All the more reason to tell it.

GRACE

Coop, don't make your grandfather tell a story he doesn't want to tell.

COOPER

Tell it, come on.

JOHN

Fine. My mother-in-law died. There was a wake. She was a huge Niners fan. We put the game on. Clark caught the pass. The Niners won. I jumped and screamed "yeah, baby" and accidentally punched my father-in-law in the face. He stumbled backwards and fell head first inside her casket, which crashed to the ground. He tumbled out of it, and she did, too, on top of him.

The guys are laughing. GRACE smiles, then laughs, too. It's a big-hearted, happy laugh. At the end of it, she sighs. The men stop laughing and look at her, stunned, as she laughs and laughs. Then they look at each other. *Carolyn's laugh.*

GRACE

You know, Mr. Stephens, I have to say, you remind me of someone.

Beat.

JOHN

What?

GRACE

You remind me of someone. Very much.

JOHN

Who do I remind you of?

GRACE

The janitor who cleans the main library on campus.

JOHN

(disappointed)

Oh.

GRACE

Right, Cooper?

COOPER

Oh, yeah. Never noticed it before. Weird.

GRACE

He's the sweetest man, too, just like you, Mr. Stephens.
Sweet and funny.

GRACE turns to the TV.

GRACE (cont'd)

What's going on in the game?

They all get around the TV.

KEVIN

14-3 Falcons. Eight minutes to half.

GRACE

Falcons are up? That's surprising given how Matt Ryan has
been a turnover machine this year.

They all turn to her.

KEVIN

You into football, Grace?

GRACE

Definitely.

KEVIN

She's into football, Johnny.

JOHN

Yes, I heard her. I'm standing right here.

COOPER

Is that important?

KEVIN

I don't know. Is it important, John?

JOHN

No, Kevin, it's not.

GRACE

I have four brothers. They all played football. Big part of
my childhood. (beat) Looks like the Falcons got it deep in
Jets territory.

COOPER

Falcons will probably blow them out. I can't imagine anyone
who'd take the Jets in this.

This irks KEVIN. Beat.

KEVIN

I took the Jets. In the pool. That I'm in. With Matt, and John, and Tom, and a whole bunch of other people from town.

COOPER

Oh. OK. Probably shouldn't have taken the Jets. Don't they suck?

KEVIN

Yes, they do.

COOPER

So why did you take them?

KEVIN

Well, Cooper, I took the Jets because they're at home. Because they're playing the Falcons, who have lost three in a row on the road, and against some really terrible teams, too. Because Julio Jones isn't playing. Because Matt Ryan, as Grace just said, has been a turnover machine this year. Because Sam Darnold, the Jets quarterback, has been playing out of his mind recently. Yes, the Jets are 3 - 6 and the Falcons are 6 - 3, but sometimes you have to be willing to take chances.

COOPER

I see. Sounds like you really thought this out. Except the Jets are losing 14 - 3.

KEVIN

Yes. I know that, Cooper.

They all sort of look at the TV.

COOPER

You want to sit, Grace?

GRACE

Sure.

She sits. COOPER stands behind her, putting a protective, tender hand on her shoulder. He moves some of her hair and puts it across her shoulder carefully, lovingly, revealing her birthmark. They all notice. TOM is about as far away as he can be and still be in the room.

GRACE (cont'd)

Are you guys going to turn up the sound on the TV?

JOHN

Oh. Uh...we don't watch it with the sound on.

GRACE

You don't?

JOHN

No. Who wants to listen to those loudmouth Monday Night guys?

KEVIN

Thank God Gruden got a coaching gig. He was the worst.

JOHN

Are you kidding? Cosell was the worst.

TOM

Cosell was the best.

KEVIN

Dennis Miller was the worst.

TOM

Definitely. He'd compare a touchdown to the Huns overrunning the Goths.

They laugh. This lightens the mood.
It doesn't last.

COOPER

Ryan to Freeman. Touchdown!! YES!

TOM

There go the Huns again.

COOPER goes nuts.

COOPER (cont'd)

Freeman takes it to the house, baby! Sorry. I have Devonta Freeman in my fantasy league.

KEVIN seethes quietly.

COOPER (cont'd)

Looks like the turnover machine is managing fine without Julio Jones.

KEVIN

Seems that way.

Beat.

COOPER

You doing OK, Grandpa?

JOHN

Absolutely. I picked the Falcons.

COOPER
No, I mean because you took the header.

JOHN
I'm fine, Coop. You don't have to keep after me. Please.

MATT returns.

MATT
They had me on hold for forever. Pizza will be here in 30.

JOHN
Great.

Beat. Silence. They all stare at the TV. MATT notices no one is speaking. He sort of tip-toes over and sits around the TV, too.

MATT
(breaking the tension)
So...you and Cooper met in school?

COOPER
Yeah.

MATT
Chico State, right?

COOPER
Yeah.

MATT
What's your major, Grace?

GRACE
Social Work.

MATT
OK, yeah, that's cool.

GRACE
I'm hoping to spend a semester next year at a hospice in Susanville.

MATT
Cool.

COOPER
We met in Anthro class.

GRACE
Cooper was sleeping in a puddle of his own drool on a desk.

COOPER
I was drooling for you.

GRACE
Yeah, right. I woke him after everyone had left the room.

MATT
Romantic.

COOPER
That's what I say.

GRACE
I thought he had the flu. He was so pale.

COOPER
I'd just been up all night writing.

MATT
You're a writer?

COOPER
Journalism major.

MATT
Yeah?

COOPER
I write sports for "The Orion," which is the school's newspaper. I have a column. "Coop's Corner."

MATT
That's great.

COOPER
I incorporated Grace into the column after we met.

GRACE
He referred to me as "Kind Girl."

COOPER
Cute, I thought.

GRACE
I make occasional appearances now.

COOPER
She has a cult following.

GRACE
I don't have a cult following.

COOPER
But wouldn't you like to have a cult following?

GRACE

No, I would not like a cult following.

They make playfully mean faces at each other, but there is an undertone of real conflict. Beat. They all return again to the awkward silence.

KEVIN

So...Grace...you into Dr. Pepper?

GRACE

Uh...it's OK, I guess.

KEVIN

What about Donovan?

JOHN

Kevin.

GRACE

Donovan? What's Donovan?

KEVIN

He was a folk singer in the sixties.

GRACE

Oh. No. Sorry.

KEVIN

People often said he sounded like Dylan.

GRACE

Bob Dylan?

JOHN

Kevin.

KEVIN

Yeah, Donovan's song "Catch the Wind" was a lot like "Chimes of Freedom."

(singing)

*For me to love you now
Would be the sweetest thing
It would make me sing*

JOHN

Kevin!

KEVIN

Ah, but I may as well try and catch the wind

JOHN

Enough!

GRACE
Sorry. Don't know that song.

KEVIN
Well, it was awhile ago.

MATT
I think I remember that song.

JOHN
Forget the song.

MATT
You into folk singers from the sixties, Kevin?

KEVIN
I can't be into folk singers from the sixties?

MATT
Well, sure, yeah...

KEVIN
I like all music. Folk, funk, rock, jazz, pop, hip hop-

JOHN
Drop it, man.

KEVIN
Just making conversation, John. Just trying to get to know our guests.

JOHN
I know what you're doing, and don't do it.

KEVIN
But don't you wanna get to know our guests, John?

COOPER
Well, he already knows me. You all do.

KEVIN
Right.

COOPER
So you mean guest, singular. You mean Grace.

KEVIN
Is that a birthmark on your neck there, Grace?

JOHN
Kevin, would you show some goddamn respect?

KEVIN
I'm not being disrespectful.

JOHN

Is this because the Jets are getting toasted and you're pissed?

GRACE

It's not a birthmark. It's a burn mark.

Clearly, this is a subject she does not want to talk about.

GRACE (cont'd)

(standing up)

Do you have a bathroom?

MATT

Yeah, right there.

MATT gestures to the bathroom. She starts towards it.

JOHN

Hold on, one second. Let me...

JOHN rushes into the bathroom. We hear him rustling around, then the sound of the toilet attempting to flush.

JOHN (cont'd)

(from bathroom)

Goddamn toilet.

JOHN re-enters with a handful of toilet paper, which he clearly wiped to clean in and around the toilet. He has a few sports magazines under his arms.

JOHN (cont'd)

Sorry to say that the thing won't flush.

He dumps everything into a trash can.

GRACE

Oh.

JOHN

I know that's kind of disgusting.

MATT

Has to be. You've been going in there all day.

JOHN

She doesn't need to know that, Matt. I'm sorry. There's a Burger King next door if you wanna try that.

GRACE

This is fine.

JOHN

I plan to call my buddy Stan over at C and C in the morning. He's been here twice.

GRACE

I'm good. Really. I have four brothers.

She goes into the bathroom, closes the door. JOHN turns on KEVIN.

JOHN

What is your fucking problem, Kevin?

KEVIN

Don't you guys wanna know? You and Tom are all clammed up.

JOHN

I'm not clammed up.

KEVIN

Sorry, Cooper, I didn't mean to pry about the mark on her neck.

COOPER

It's a sensitive subject.

KEVIN

I'm sorry.

COOPER

What's going on? Everyone's being weird.

The guys all look at each other.

MATT

Cooper, do you know who Carolyn Adams is?

JOHN

Matt, for Christ's sake, man.

MATT

He's asking why we're being weird. Shouldn't we just get to it?

COOPER

Get to what?

MATT

Do you know who Carolyn Adams is?

COOPER

Carolyn Adams?

JOHN

She was a girl who Tommy and I knew when we were kids. She lived next door to me.

COOPER

OK. So?

JOHN

Tommy, are you gonna take part in this conversation?

TOM

I am taking part.

JOHN

You're not doing shit. You're over there like a coat rack. Tell Cooper what happened to Carolyn Adams.

TOM

She died in a car accident one night coming back from a school dance.

COOPER

Sounds sort of, kind of, familiar, I guess.

The bathroom toilet flushes. Sort of.

MATT

Tell him why all that is significant.

KEVIN

Before the girl comes outta the bathroom.

COOPER

This is about Grace?

JOHN

Yeah.

KEVIN

Show him the photos.

COOPER

What photos?

JOHN

We have some photos. Well, two copies of the same photo. Of Carolyn Adams. Over here.

JOHN gestures to the desk, which he opens, pulling out the yearbook, which he opens. COOPER goes over.

Here she is.

JOHN (cont'd)

COOPER looks down at the yearbook.

COOPER

Yeah? So?

JOHN

You don't notice anything strange about the photo?

COOPER

Other than it's really old, no.

JOHN

Really?!

COOPER

Grandpa, don't talk to me like you talk to Mom.

JOHN

OK. I'm sorry, Coop. I don't wanna do that.

KEVIN

What he's getting at Cooper is that the girl in the photo looks just like Grace.

COOPER

She does?

He looks again.

COOPER (cont'd)

Oh, yeah. Huh. That's weird.

GRACE enters from the bathroom.

GRACE

Is there a place to wash my hands?

JOHN

The wash basin is out, too, unfortunately. There's some hand sanitizer there.

She gets it and rubs the sanitizer all over her hands. Everyone watches her. She notices.

GRACE

What's going on?

COOPER

Nothing.

GRACE

Why is everyone quiet and looking at me?

COOPER

They just showed me this photo of this girl Grandpa and Tom knew a long time ago. She looks like you.

GRACE

("What does that mean?")

All right.

COOPER

You want to see it?

GRACE

Sure. I guess.

COOPER gestures to the yearbook. GRACE goes over.

COOPER

This girl right here.

GRACE considers the photo.

GRACE

Yeah. She does kind of look like me.

COOPER

Yeah.

GRACE

What's so special about that?

COOPER

I'm not really sure.

JOHN

You look a lot like her. A *lot*.

GRACE looks again.

GRACE

Yeah? So?

JOHN

You sound like her, too.

GRACE

I do?

COOPER

She does?

JOHN

Yeah.

GRACE

That's strange. How do you know I sound like her?

JOHN

Tommy and I remember what that girl sounded like. And you sound like her.

She looks at the men.

GRACE

(uncomfortable)

OK.

TOM

You laugh like her, too.

GRACE

I do?

JOHN

You kind of move like her also. Your mannerisms are similar.

TOM

Exact, actually.

GRACE

Um...this is getting a little creepy for me.

JOHN

I'm sorry. This girl, her name was Carolyn Adams, was a very special person to Tommy and me.

GRACE

OK. That does not make things less creepy.

TOM

Carolyn died a long time ago.

GRACE

Cooper, I think we should go.

COOPER

Me, too.

She and COOPER start out.

COOPER (cont'd)

Sorry to leave in a rush, Grandpa, but-

JOHN

Wait, please.

COOPER
Grandpa, I-

JOHN
Don't go.

COOPER
No, this is getting more than a little-

TOM
(stepping towards them)
Don't go!!

They stop. Turn to TOM.

TOM (cont'd)
(calming down)
Sorry. Don't go. Please.

MATT
Yeah, don't go. We have pizza coming.

KEVIN
Do you believe in reincarnation, Grace?

GRACE
What?

COOPER
Reincarnation?

JOHN
Yeah, you know, the idea that we come back in another life.

GRACE
Oh. I don't know.

COOPER
That's a really weird question, Grandpa.

TOM
It's been a really weird day.

MATT
Have you ever felt connected to something you didn't understand? Have you ever felt outta place?

COOPER
Out of place? Haven't we all felt that?

GRACE
We should go. *Seriously.*

JOHN

No, no, please don't go. Please, Grace. *Please.*

COOPER

I thought we came over to watch a football game, Grandpa!

JOHN

You did! Tommy invited you, but then he came back here and told us he saw you and Grace in Safeway and he thought, I don't know, because Grace was so much like Carolyn that, somehow, she *was* Carolyn. And I know that sounds like lunacy, but you're here now, Grace, and I have to say, I think Tommy is right.

COOPER

What?

JOHN

I know it seems like we're out of our minds. I know it.

COOPER

Yeah, you could say that, Grandpa.

JOHN

Today is the anniversary of Carolyn's death. And here you are, Grace. Someone just like her. Isn't that incredible?

GRACE

OK, I'm really starting to freak out.

TOM

Can't you stay and spend a little time with us, Grace?

GRACE

And do what?

TOM

Nothing. Just sit here. Be with us. Talk to us.

GRACE

Why?

She looks at all of them. Almost demanding an answer.

MATT

Hey, I never knew the girl. I'm just here for the football game.

KEVIN

Me, too.

MATT and KEVIN retreat a little.

JOHN

Grace, have you ever had, you know, deja vu moments or anything like that?

COOPER

Oh, my God, Grandpa.

GRACE

Deja vu? I don't think so.

JOHN

What about dreams? Of a past life or something.

COOPER

Grandpa!

GRACE

I don't know if I have or haven't.

COOPER

You don't know?

GRACE

What if I have had dreams?

COOPER

(stunned)

Grace?

GRACE

I'm not saying I have or haven't.

COOPER

If you haven't, then say you haven't.

GRACE

I'm not going to say that!

Beat.

MATT

Holy crap.

GRACE sits back down.

COOPER

Grace? What are you doing?

GRACE

I just need to sit for a second.

COOPER

We should go.

GRACE

Hold on.

COOPER

What for? We can sit in the car or go to my mom's house and sit. We don't have to sit here-

GRACE

I need something to drink.

COOPER

Sure, cool, let's go get something to drink. There's an In-and-Out on the way back to my Mom's-

JOHN

She can have her drink here. I have water, Coke-

GRACE

I need a beer. I really need a beer.

JOHN

A beer? No problem. We have Budweiser and this grapefruit stuff that Kevin brought.

JOHN goes to the fridge.

KEVIN

Aren't you underage? You're 19, right?

GRACE

Yes.

MATT

Wasn't there an initiative in 2016 that lowered the drinking age to 18?

KEVIN

It never got put on the ballot.

MATT

Are you sure? Because I saw on Reddit that-

JOHN

Who gives a shit?! I'm giving her a goddamn beer!

JOHN offers her one grapefruit beer and one Budweiser. She snatches the Budweiser, pops it, and drinks. JOHN puts the other beer back.

COOPER

Grace, you don't have to sit here with these guys.

GRACE
I just need a moment, Cooper.

Beat. She takes another drink.

JOHN
So you've had strange dreams?

GRACE
I mean, don't we all have strange dreams?

MATT
Oh, yeah. I once dreamt I was married to Andre the Giant.

COOPER
This is stupid!

GRACE
Don't yell.

COOPER
I'm sorry.

GRACE
I don't like it when you yell.

COOPER
OK, OK. I'm sorry. I'm blind-sided right now.

GRACE
You're blind-sided?

COOPER
For you. I'm blind-sided for you.

She drinks. They all wait for her to speak.

GRACE
So...yeah, I have strange dreams.

JOHN
You do?

GRACE
My mother says it's because I carry stuff around. Heavy stuff.

TOM
Like what?

COOPER
You don't have to answer that.

I want to, Coop.

GRACE

Beat.

The burn mark on my neck. Had it since I was a baby. No one in my family seems to know or remember how I got it.

GRACE (cont'd)

Really?

JOHN

Sometimes I think they don't want to tell me because it's something awful. But I don't know.

GRACE

Why would it be something awful?

JOHN

I don't know. I had a happy childhood. But I still wonder. Wouldn't you wonder?

GRACE

Yeah. I would.

JOHN

How is it no one knows? My mother thinks I'm making too much of it. I don't think so.

GRACE

Maybe it's not a burn mark. Maybe it's a birthmark.

JOHN

Maybe. But no doctor's ever called it that.

GRACE

Beat.

What are your dreams like, Grace?

TOM

You don't have to tell them, Grace.

COOPER

I want to tell them, Cooper. Can't you see that?

GRACE

COOPER sits.

Most of my dreams are just, like, flashes of stuff. Hallways. And woods. And classrooms. Nothing I recognize. But there's one that's different. Longer. Vivid. Detailed. Like a little movie. I don't have it all the time.

GRACE (cont'd)

Just now and then. But I've had it most of my life. In the dream my heart is broken, and I don't know why. I know we're not supposed to feel things in our dreams, right? But I can feel a weight on my chest, and it's really heavy. I'm crying hard. It's raining, too, and the sky is dark and the road is soaked.

TOM

The road?

GRACE

I'm driving in the dream.

TOM and JOHN look at each other.

GRACE (cont'd)

I'm driving and I can't see clearly because I'm crying and it's dark and raining, and I can't slow the car down. I look down at myself and I'm wearing a really pretty dress. It's no dress I know or have owned. I don't even like dresses. But there one is, on me. And it's cream colored and torn. I'm alone in the car. I don't know the road at all. But it seems familiar to me in the dream. And I know that I am headed home. And I know there is someone there, waiting for me. Someone who makes me feel safe.

TOM, MATT, and KEVIN look at JOHN, who never takes his eyes off GRACE.

GRACE (cont'd)

I don't know who it is. I wish I did.

JOHN

Grace...?

GRACE

Yeah?

JOHN hesitates. He wants to tell her he was the one waiting for her. But he can't do it.

JOHN

Are you OK?

GRACE

Yeah. I'm OK. I need to finish. (beat) So I'm driving, and it's wet, and I can't see, and I'm sobbing, and I come to a bend in the road and I try to turn the wheel, but I can't. It's stuck. The car goes off the road and I can hear the sound of the crash. Crunch of metal. Shattered glass. There is a fire, and I can feel my neck burning, and I'm trying to get out of the car, but I'm trapped. I'm screaming for help.

By this time she is crying.

GRACE (cont'd)

I'm certain that the someone from home is going to come and save me. But they don't. And then I wake up.

She looks at them.

GRACE (cont'd)

Do you think the dream means anything? Do you think it has anything to do with this girl you knew?

JOHN and TOM don't respond immediately.
Then:

JOHN

No.

MATT

John?

JOHN

I'm saying no, it has nothing to do with Carolyn.

GRACE

It doesn't?

JOHN

No, it doesn't.

KEVIN

Johnny, did you not hear what the girl just said?

JOHN

I heard her just fine.

JOHN goes to GRACE.

JOHN (cont'd)

Grace, I'm sorry you've been struggling with this. But you try to forget about your dreams. They don't mean anything.

MATT

John, what are you-

JOHN

They don't mean anything, Matty!

JOHN turns back to GRACE. He sits next to her, faces her.

JOHN (cont'd)

You go live your life, Grace. You're not Carolyn Adams and we were stupid to even think such a thing could be true.

GRACE

But I was almost hoping it was true.

JOHN

It's not. I'm sorry. Life is hard enough without old people like me trying to make you something you're not.

GRACE

I get scared at night sometimes thinking I'm going to have the dream again.

COOPER

I'm sorry, Grace. I didn't know any of this.

JOHN

I'm sorry, too, that this is happening to you.

MATT

We're all sorry.

KEVIN

Dreams can be pretty scary. My brother has them. They're no joke.

GRACE

What do I do?

JOHN

You just try to remember that you're 19. And what happened with the burn mark when you were a baby doesn't matter. You have everything in front of you.

She smiles at JOHN.

GRACE

But what about all those similarities? Between me and this Carolyn?

JOHN

Just similarities, that's all. They don't mean anything.

She looks at all of them.

JOHN (cont'd)

So you go and try not to think about all this stuff. And if you dream, I'll pray that you don't dream that terrible dream anymore.

GRACE takes his hand. Holds it.

GRACE

Thank you for listening to me.

Beat. GRACE and JOHN look at each other.

COOPER
Come on, Grace. Let's go.

JOHN
You be good to this girl, Cooper.

COOPER
I will, of course.

He gestures for GRACE to follow him. She hesitates. She doesn't want to leave.

COOPER (cont'd)
Grace?

COOPER and GRACE look at each other a moment.

COOPER (cont'd)
Come on, Grace.

GRACE rises, reluctantly. They start out and she stops at the door.

GRACE
It was nice to meet all of you.

KEVIN
Take care, Grace.

MATT
Bye, Grace.

GRACE turns to go.

TOM
Goodbye, Grace.

GRACE stops, turns, looks at TOM, who just stares at her, still dumbstruck by her story.

GRACE
Goodbye, Tom.

TOM
I'm sorry. I'm really, really sorry.

GRACE
I hope I see you all again.

GRACE turns and goes, right past COOPER. COOPER turns to the others. He wants to say something, but doesn't. The front door chimes. GRACE has left. COOPER just turns and goes. After a moment, we hear the sound of the front door chime again and the door closing. MATT turns to JOHN.

MATT

What was that, man?! It was obviously her!

JOHN

Was it?

MATT

That girl's car crash story, how close was it to what happened to Carolyn?

TOM

It was right on the money.

MATT

Then why did you let her walk outta here, John?

JOHN

She's a person, too, Matty. Carolyn's gone.

MATT

But is she gone?

JOHN

I don't wanna hear any more about all this reincarnation shit.

MATT

But it's staring you right in the face!

JOHN

Really? Carolyn didn't have four brothers, she never went to college, she didn't have a boyfriend named Cooper, she-

MATT

Oh, come on, John! That girl is Carolyn Adams! She's identical to the photo! Hair! Eyes! Smile! Birthmark! It's unbelievable!

JOHN

Grace has got a right to live her own life. Isn't that what you said earlier, Kev? About your brother?

KEVIN

Yeah.

JOHN

"We need to let people be who they are and not what we want them to be." Wasn't that you about a half-hour ago, Kevin?

KEVIN

Yes, yes, it was me!

JOHN

So there it is.

MATT

But you had a chance, John. A chance to say to Carolyn what you couldn't say to her before.

JOHN

What couldn't I say, Matt?

MATT

That you love her!

JOHN

And then what? I'm a 70-year old man and I'd be talking to a 19-year old girl.

MATT

I'm not saying you and Grace should run away together.

JOHN

Thank Christ.

MATT

All I'm saying is that was your chance to tell her how you felt.

JOHN

So what? What if it was?

KEVIN

What about your "mountain of regrets?"

JOHN

My what?

KEVIN

Isn't that what you said? "I have a mountain of regrets and that one" - not telling her how you felt - "is right at the top." Isn't that what you said?

JOHN

Yes, I said that.

KEVIN

You're not the only one who gets to quote people.

JOHN

She's not Carolyn. Her name is Grace. She's from Eureka. She majors in social work at Chico State. And she's dating my grandson. OK?

MATT

But, John, you could have helped her by telling her what her dreams meant. It was a win-win situation.

JOHN

I tell her, and then she's haunted by Carolyn all her life.

MATT

But isn't it better to know things than not know things?

JOHN

It's time we all let it go, Matt.

MATT

But Grace is gonna Google Carolyn Adams, and you know she will, and what if Tommy's wrong? What if there *is* something online about Carolyn Adams, and what if Grace finds it, and then what?

JOHN

Let it go, Matt. I gotta take a piss.

JOHN disappears into the bathroom.

MATT

Jesus.

Beat.

KEVIN

I guess it's back to the game.

KEVIN goes over to the TV and plops himself down.

KEVIN (cont'd)

Fuck, these chairs are rock hard.

Beat. KEVIN looks at the TV.

KEVIN (cont'd)

Two minutes left before half. 35-3 Falcons. Penelope Farris strikes again. (beat) Did you all know Penelope Farris also cleans up at bingo at the Community Center? And she got closest to the number of gumballs in the big barber pole outside Mr. Bannister's Barber Shop. Hair cuts for life she gets now. The woman is a genius. I bow before her greatness.

MATT stands there with TOM.

MATT

I don't get it. I don't get it at all.

TOM says nothing. KEVIN focuses on the game. We hear the faint sound of urine hitting the water in the toilet bowl.

MATT (cont'd)

Do you get it, Tommy?

TOM

Get what?

MATT

What John just did!

TOM

I don't know.

MATT

John has been hanging on to this girl's ghost - just like you have - for more than 50 years and life up and hands you two an opportunity and-

TOM

Forget about it, Matt.

MATT

Forget about it?!

TOM

Yeah. It's over.

MATT

Over?!

TOM

I don't know why you're upset. This has nothing to do with you.

MATT

I know. You assholes just matter to me.

TOM goes and sits by the TV. JOHN tries to flush the toilet.

JOHN

(from the bathroom)

Goddammit.

MATT

What would you say to Carolyn, Tommy, if you had the chance?

TOM

I'd tell her I'm sorry. I'm really, really sorry. Which is what I just did. So I got to say what I wanted to say. It's over, Matt.

MATT

Why did you need to do that? To apologize?

TOM

For breaking her heart.

MATT stops. KEVIN turns to TOM.

KEVIN

What?

MATT

What did you just say, Tom?

TOM

It wasn't an accident Carolyn went off the road.

JOHN comes out of the bathroom. He rubs the hand sanitizer at the wash basin.

JOHN (cont'd)

I should call Stan over at C and C right now. Hell, I got his damn home number. I should call his ass at home. You know, he's been over here three times about that fucking toilet. "Got 'er fixed, Johnny!" Now the water faucet's out, too? The guy ought to fix everything for free.

JOHN looks up at them.

JOHN (cont'd)

Shit. What did I miss?

MATT

Tell him, Tom. Tell him what you just told us.

TOM says nothing.

JOHN

Tell me what?

TOM

It's nothing.

MATT

No, no, no, you two are done not talking about shit. Right now, we talk about shit. Tell John what you just said, Tom, because this is not over!

TOM

Fine. (beat) It was my fault what happened to Carolyn.

JOHN

(crossing to sit by the TV)

Oh, shut up. You heard Grace. We all heard it. Carolyn was hoping someone from home would come for her. And save her. In the car. And they didn't come. She was talking about me, Tommy.

TOM

How could you save her, Johnny? You didn't even know she had crashed.

JOHN

It doesn't matter. I was at home. I should have been there.

TOM

Listen to me. You have it all wrong. The whole thing was my fault what happened to her.

JOHN

Stop it, Tommy!

TOM

I know, Johnny, that everyone assumed Carolyn going off the road was an accident. But it wasn't.

JOHN

What was it?

TOM

I'm the reason she went off that road.

JOHN

What do you mean you're the reason she went off the road?

TOM

I was at that dance.

JOHN

OK. I know. So? What does that have to do with anything?

TOM

The dance the night she died. The homecoming dance.

JOHN

I know. So fucking what?

TOM

At the dance, she told me she loved me.

MATT

Oh, shit.

Damn.

KEVIN

Wait. *What?*

JOHN

TOM

She told me she loved me, John.

JOHN

What does that have to do with...she told you she loved you?

TOM

Yes.

JOHN

Now don't start getting creative with your storytelling.

TOM

It's the truth. She told me she loved me. But I didn't reciprocate.

JOHN

She actually told you she loved you?

TOM

Yes.

JOHN

Why would she do that?

TOM

We weren't just friends, John.

JOHN

What does that mean?

TOM says nothing.

JOHN (cont'd)

What were you then, Tommy? Were you...were you seeing each other?

TOM

Yes.

JOHN

How? I never saw shit.

TOM

She was usually with you after school or on weekends. But we'd meet up sometimes. At the movies. The lake.

JOHN

All this time, and you never said a thing.

MATT

You two need to seriously start talking to each other.

KEVIN

Seriously.

JOHN

Carolyn never said anything to me about it. You gotta be lying.

TOM

I'm not.

JOHN

You gotta be. You wouldn't do this to me, Tommy. Not now, not then, not ever.

JOHN gets up and walks away.

TOM

I'm sorry, John.

TOM follows.

TOM (cont'd)

She really liked the poetry, John.

JOHN

She liked the fucking poetry?

TOM

She liked Emily Dickinson.

JOHN

Fuck Emily Dickinson!

TOM

We were very close, the two of us.

JOHN

What does "very close" mean?

TOM says nothing. JOHN looks hard at TOM.

JOHN

Did you two...?

TOM doesn't respond. JOHN looks at TOM, stunned.

Uh-oh. MATT

This is not good. KEVIN

Oh, Christ, you did. You fucking did. You slept with Carolyn. JOHN

JOHN shoves TOM.

No, no, no- TOM

You did! I can see it on your face! JOHN

No, we didn't! TOM

Where'd you do it? JOHN

We didn't do it, John! TOM

Where and when?! JOHN

MATT and KEVIN try to get between them as JOHN goes after TOM.

Johnny, we didn't- TOM

Where was it?! The fucking baseball diamond?! JOHN

What? TOM

You take a fucking blanket out to the grass in center with your fucking Emily Dickinson and- JOHN

No! TOM

Where, then?! Back seat of your mother's half-cracked piece of shit limo?! JOHN

TOM
No!

JOHN
Where?!

TOM
Nowhere!

JOHN
TELL ME!

TOM
THEN LISTEN TO ME!

Beat.

TOM (cont'd)
Her parents had gone into town and I went over to her house. My mother was passed out. I took her limo. I was paranoid, so I parked down by the creek.

JOHN
You walked past my house?

TOM
Yes.

JOHN
Across the field?

TOM
Yes.

JOHN
Was I home?

TOM
Your light was on. (beat) She called me. I came over. I'd never been over there before. (beat) But I didn't sleep with her, John. We fumbled around. I was so nervous. She was this absolutely beautiful creature, and I was just this schlub, this *nothing*. I didn't know what I was doing. She initiated it. We didn't say anything to each other. It just got so awkward and everything felt wrong. I stopped and started apologizing over and over. She just put her head in her hands. (beat) I went home. I was feeling like shit. My mother was still on the kitchen floor. I thought about killing myself.

Beat.

JOHN
So how were you the reason she went off the road?

TOM

A couple days later, at the homecoming dance, she told me she loved me, but I broke it off because I didn't feel like I deserved her. Plus, I knew, John, how you felt about Carolyn, all the time you spent together, so I just pushed her away, hoping, honestly, to push her to you. But she left the dance sobbing. I mean, she was just devastated. I knew it was pouring rain and I didn't want her to drive home. I grabbed her, her dress tore. Carolyn got in her parents' car and took off. Alone. Her heart was broken. She was crying so hard. She was crying because of me. And I think she pulled that car off the road deliberately.

JOHN

There's no way to know that.

TOM

She went off the road, John, at a place she'd passed a thousand times.

JOHN

It was raining. The road was slick.

TOM

She was distraught, Johnny! Because of me!

JOHN

So what? That doesn't mean she drove off on purpose.

TOM

Yes, it does!

JOHN

Stop this shit! Carolyn wasn't the kind of girl who would do that kind of thing!

TOM

No one is ever that kind of person until they become that kind of person!

JOHN

I know you're trying to take a bullet for me right now and I'm not gonna let you do it. It wasn't your fault she died. It was my fault.

TOM

No, it was my fault.

JOHN

It was *my* fault!

Beat.

Mine.
TOM

Mine.
JOHN

They go back and forth with "mine" until it becomes silly. Then they grin at each other like two old friends.

JOHN (cont'd)
You're 70 fucking years old, Tommy, and a helluva lot closer to the end than the beginning, so for fuck's sake, stop beating yourself up over this, because I know you, and I'd bet you've been beating yourself up over this all your life, and goddammit, I want that bullshit to stop right fucking now. Do you hear me?

TOM looks at JOHN.

JOHN (cont'd)
You hear me, Tommy?

TOM
I hear you.

JOHN
We gotta let Carolyn go. We gotta let it all go. (beat) True that some of this shit is brand new to me, and stings like a motherfucker, but it was over 50 years ago. I'm gonna let it go. I'm gonna to try to.

Beat. They regard each other.

JOHN (cont'd)
You and me, from now on, looking forward. No more backward. We're too fucking old.

JOHN throws an arm around TOM.

JOHN (cont'd)
Agreed? (beat) Agreed?

TOM
OK.

KEVIN
Hey, now we're talking.

MATT
This is how it should be.

JOHN
You're my best buddy, Tommy. Coming up on seven decades now.

TOM
Since first grade.

JOHN
Since you pissed on my shoes during the duck and cover drill.

TOM
My mother "accidentally" gave me gin and juice at breakfast.
Apparently, I took to it.

They chuckle at the memory.

JOHN
I think we're looking backward again.

TOM
I think so.

JOHN
Hey, let's all have another beer and watch the game.

KEVIN
Great idea.

JOHN goes into the fridge.

JOHN
Beer, Matty?

MATT
Absolutely.

JOHN hands him a beer.

JOHN
Here you go. Kevin? Take a fucking Bud would you and put
away the girlfriend beer for tonight.

KEVIN
All right, all right.

JOHN hands KEVIN a beer.

JOHN
Good man.

KEVIN
But full disclosure, I'm the one who likes the grapefruit
beer. Jessica only drinks it because of me.

JOHN
Seriously?

KEVIN

There was a sale at the Quick Stop on Ponderosa Street. And I got some and liked it.

JOHN

That's great, Kev. Truly. Tommy, ginger ale?

TOM

Thanks.

JOHN hands TOMMY a ginger ale and they all linger near the TV.

JOHN

Halftime. Nice pick, Kev.

They all sort of laugh a little, breaking the tension. The TV goes.

JOHN (cont'd)

Ah, fuck.

KEVIN

"Acquiring satellite."

TOM

Maybe that's a good thing for you.

Above, on the roof, the tap, tap, tap sound of...

KEVIN

What the hell is that?

MATT goes to the window.

JOHN

Is that rain?

MATT

It's hail.

TOM

We never get hail.

They all go to the window and look out.

MATT

Wow, that's loud.

They all look up at the ceiling. It goes on for 10 seconds or so, and then dies out.

TOM
Wasn't that something?

KEVIN
(noticing)
TV's still out.

As everyone sits back down in front of
the TV:

MATT
You guys ever see that seventies movie *The Last Wave* with
Richard Chamberlain?

JOHN
Fuck, you and the seventies movies.

MATT
It had a huge hail storm in it!

JOHN
Nobody gives a shit!

They look at the blank TV screen.

KEVIN
So where do you think we go after we die? You think we all
come back?

JOHN
Are we gonna do this again?

KEVIN
This isn't about Carolyn or Grace. We're just talking.

JOHN
Can't we talk about something else?

TOM
If I'm coming back, I hope I'm a giant sequoia.

MATT
I'd like to be grizzly.

JOHN
I'll probably be a cockroach.

They all laugh.

KEVIN
That mean you all believe we come back?

JOHN

I don't know, Kevin. Circle around and do it all again? The idea of it exhausts me.

MATT

You're old is your problem.

JOHN

Look, sure, there are things, yeah, I'd love to get right, with another go at it, but, you know, I had my shot.

TOM

*When all that we know or feel or see,
Shall pass like an unreal mystery*
Shelley

JOHN

Jesus, the poetry.

They laugh.

MATT

Given your job, Kevin, you must have some opinion. You think we come back? Or is there a judgment on the other side? Or is it all a big, black void?

KEVIN

Sometimes I get to thinking about things when I'm at work, and I look down at some unfortunate soul, it feels like life is just too short. Gotta be more to it. Too many people get a raw deal otherwise. My brother got a raw deal. But then I think about eternity with God and all his followers. And then I think the idea of spending the rest of time with all of my mother's self-righteous family makes my skin crawl.

JOHN

Do me a favor, Kev. When I go, and I'm on that slab in front of you, skip all the thinking about shit and just shove me into the furnace, OK?

They laugh.

TOM

What about you, Matt? What do you think?

MATT

I think the afterlife will be totally unexpected.

TOM

How so?

MATT

I just think what's waiting for us is something that would never have occurred to us in a million years. But when we get there, we'll all look around and just go "of course."

TOM

I hope we come back. I do.

KEVIN

You do?

TOM

Yeah. Then Carolyn gets a second chance. She deserves one.

Beat.

KEVIN

This has been quite an evening, I have to tell you.

JOHN

Sure has.

TOM

Absolutely.

KEVIN

Why don't we toast?

KEVIN lifts his beer.

KEVIN (cont'd)

To right here, and right now.

They all say "here, here," touch cans and bottles, and drink.

KEVIN (cont'd)

If I forget to mention it, I hope you guys have a good Thanksgiving this year.

MATT

Sure will. John's coming over. You wanna bring Chris and Jessica and join us? You could come join us, too, Tom. We have plenty of room.

TOM

So I've heard.

MATT

My wife would love to have all of you. So would my mother-in-law.

TOM

What's she like?

KEVIN

You looking for a date?

They laugh.

MATT

She's a properly educated, wealthy Boston transplant. But she's tolerant of me as long as I produce grandchildren.

JOHN

Uh-oh.

MATT

I'm working on it, I'm working on it.

JOHN

Really? What the hell are you doing here then?

MATT

Well, even a stallion needs a break.

JOHN

Oh, a stallion is it?

They all laugh. KEVIN whinnies, like a horse.

KEVIN

Matty the stallion!

JOHN

Drink up, stallion! Put some hair on that hide!

They all laugh.

TOM

You want us to bring something to Thanksgiving dinner, Matt? I have plenty of alcohol I'd like to unload.

MATT

Nah, we got it covered.

JOHN

No, bring it, Tommy. Bring every last goddamn drop. You don't need it anymore, buddy.

TOM

Right.

MATT

Well, then bring what you got, Tom. The important thing is to come and enjoy the meal. Especially the yams. I make yams every year. Good stuff, right, John?

JOHN

(lying)
Oh, yeah, Matty's yams are top notch.

The TV blinks on.

MATT

TV's back.

JOHN/TOM

Hooray!

KEVIN

Second half is starting. It's gonna be brutal.

JOHN

Pretty much.

TOM

Maybe the Jets will make a big comeback.

KEVIN

The Jets? Not likely.

They all laugh again. The front door
to the shop chimes. They all turn,
except for JOHN.

JOHN

Must be the pizza.

Lights out.