

MAGGIE

I hope you won't be too disappointed if you don't catch a ball.

DYLAN

I won't.

MR. JENSEN

You won't?

DYLAN

No.

He looks at them, and his mother and father, then up at the sky, and then out at the game.

DYLAN (cont'd)

Because it's a beautiful day. (beat) A beautiful day.
(beat) A beautiful day.

He takes a bite of his hot dog and watches the game. Everyone looks out at the game.

Long slow fade out.

The End.

MAGGIE
Who wants a bite of my chili dog?

MR. JENSEN
I'm good.

MAGGIE
Dylan? You have to try this. It's insanely tasty.

DYLAN
I don't like chili.

MAGGIE
Chili is as American as baseball and blowing shit up.

DYLAN can't stop staring at MAGGIE'S
sweat-soaked clothes.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
What?

DYLAN
You're sweaty.

MAGGIE
I warned you. By the seventh inning, I'll be dripping. My
ex was always "you're like a slip 'n' slide!"

They eat and drink.

MR. JENSEN
This is nice. Our first game of the season.

DYLAN
Yeah.

MAGGIE
You think you'll catch a ball, Dylan?

DYLAN
Yeah.

MAGGIE
You do?

DYLAN
Yeah.

MR. JENSEN
Well, if you do, it would have to be a home run from where
we're sitting.

DYLAN
I know.

He stretches it way out, towards EMMA.
Then he holds up his right hand,
stretching it out towards BRUCE.

DYLAN (cont'd)

And Dad is my right.

They reach out to his hands, nearly
touching. DYLAN closes his eyes.
After a moment, he opens them, and
brings his arms in. They pull their
arms in, too.

DYLAN (cont'd)

Mom liked raspberry truffles. Dad liked cookies and cream.
Mom liked camellias. Dad liked hot dogs. Mom liked
California. Dad liked home runs.

DYLAN turns to EMMA.

DYLAN (cont'd)

Hi, Mom.

EMMA

Hello, my little lambkin.

He turns to BRUCE.

DYLAN

Hi, Dad.

BRUCE

Hi, son.

DYLAN

You were right, Dad. You are here. You and Mom.

MR. JENSEN and MAGGIE return with food
and drink. Fanning herself, MAGGIE is
sweating through her shirt.

MR. JENSEN

Here we go. Two hot dogs and one lemonade.

MR. JENSEN gives DYLAN the food.

DYLAN

Thanks.

MAGGIE

What did we miss?

DYLAN

Not much.

MR. JENSEN

Not funny. At all.

MAGGIE

I heard if you get your prostate removed your willy shrinks.

MR. JENSEN

This is an inappropriate and terrifying conversation!

MAGGIE laughs, then DYLAN laughs, too.

MAGGIE

It's OK to laugh, Mr. Jensen.

DYLAN

Your willy shrinks.

MR. JENSEN

Now look what you've done!

MAGGIE

So?! The whole world needs to chill out! Say it, Dylan!
Your willy shrinks!

DYLAN

Your willy shrinks!

MAGGIE

Your willy shrinks! Say it, Mr. Jensen!

MR. JENSEN

(unenthusiastically)

Your willy shrinks.

DYLAN and MAGGIE burst out laughing.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

All right, all right! Let's go! Please!

MAGGIE and MR. JENSEN exit. DYLAN slowly stops laughing, then sits alone for a bit. He turns his hat around forward and watches the game. Just then BRUCE and EMMA enter and sit on opposite sides of DYLAN at the ends of the row. EMMA is on his left, and BRUCE is on his right. Just then, DYLAN holds up his left hand.

DYLAN

Mom is my left hand.

DYLAN
Two. I like lemonade, also. With ice.

MR. JENSEN
Me, too.

MAGGIE
Like twinsies you two. Are we all going?

She rises.

MR. JENSEN
Dylan, you want to stay here?

DYLAN
Yes.

MAGGIE
It's OK for him to be here alone?

MR. JENSEN
He's already been alone. I've taken three bathroom breaks since we got here.

MAGGIE
Wow-zie.

DYLAN
He blames it on his prostate.

MR. JENSEN
It's like the size of Jupiter! Jupiter is pushing against my bladder!

DYLAN
I don't think that's true, Mr. Jensen.

MAGGIE
Dylan, you promise not to go anywhere.

DYLAN
Yes.

MAGGIE
Even if someone wants you to move, don't move.

DYLAN
Got it.

MAGGIE
Come on, Mr. Jupiter.

MR. JENSEN rises.

MR. JENSEN

Thanks for all your help, Maggie.

MAGGIE

You're welcome, Mr. Jensen.

MR. JENSEN

From now on, I want you both to call me Charlie. No more of this Mr. Jensen garbage.

MAGGIE

OK...*Charlie*.

DYLAN

Charlie. I like that name.

MR. JENSEN

Who wants hot dogs?

MAGGIE

Uh...yum.

MR. JENSEN

Dylan?

DYLAN

I only eat hot dogs when I watch baseball.

MR. JENSEN

Then aren't we in luck?

MAGGIE

I hope they have them with chili. Gotta have chili. And hot sauce. And ketchup. And relish.

DYLAN

Aunt Maggie, that sounds disgusting.

MAGGIE

What?! Uh, it's to die for, young man.

DYLAN

I like them plain.

MR. JENSEN

Me, too.

MAGGIE

Yeah, this is gonna be a fun afternoon.

MR. JENSEN

One or two, Dylan?

MAGGIE
 (eyeing the stands)
 Not much of a crowd today.

MR. JENSEN
 I think it's the heat.

MAGGIE
 You're telling me. I feel it already. And I sweat like a horse. Great seats, though. Our right fielder is cute! Tremendous ass. Oh. I almost forgot.

MAGGIE digs through her large purse.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
 I got this. You said you needed a new shower curtain, Dylan.

She hands it to DYLAN.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
 It's the solar system.

DYLAN
 Cool.

MAGGIE
 We can hang it tomorrow night. Don't forget that Sunday is my night to stay over.

DYLAN
 You've been staying over on Sunday for two months, Aunt Maggie.

MAGGIE
 Oh, Mr. Jensen, I also did the final meeting with his EC teachers at school yesterday. Congrats on graduating, Dylan. Oh, and they want you to come in for an interview at that ice cream shop downtown. The one off the plaza. I told them tomorrow at 11am. That cool?

DYLAN
 Cool.

MAGGIE
 My nephew scooping ice cream. Nice!

DYLAN
 I like cookies and cream.

MAGGIE
I love cookies and cream! Oh, my God, I am going to get so fat now.

DYLAN

I like grilled cheese, and mac and cheese, and pizza.

MR. JENSEN

I know you do.

MAGGIE comes whirling in.

MAGGIE

I am so sorry I'm late. Hi, Dylan.

DYLAN

Hi.

MAGGIE sits, on the other side of DYLAN so he's between her and MR. JENSEN.

MAGGIE

I got hung up behind this pride march, but then I decided to detour around it, and then next thing I know I'm at a trailer park in Hillsborough and this confederate dude is shouting all this Q shit at me, and I'm thinking, my map app sucks. Is this my seat?

She looks at her ticket and then at the number of the seat.

MR. JENSEN

It is.

MAGGIE

Thanks for leaving it at will call. The girl behind the glass was kind of a bitch. What's the score?

MR. JENSEN

We're losing three zip.

DYLAN

We haven't even gotten a hit yet.

MAGGIE

I'm not worried. We lead the International League in batting and we have four guys hitting over three-twenty.

They look at her, a little surprised.

DYLAN

Whoa.

MAGGIE

Hey, I'm a fan, what can I tell you?

MR. JENSEN

That's great.

Scene Eight

Early summer, a hot, sunny day. A row of bleachers at a Durham Bulls baseball game. Right field. DYLAN sits alone. DYLAN has his glove. He has a Bulls hat on backwards. He watches the game. After a bit, MR. JENSEN appears.

MR. JENSEN

What did I miss?

DYLAN

Wool E. Bull was shooting T-shirts into the stands. Two old ladies came to blows.

MR. JENSEN

I meant the game.

There is the crack of the bat. MR. JENSEN follows the ball, excited.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

In the alley, extra bases! Awwwwwwww!

The sound of fans going "awwwwwwwww," too. MR. JENSEN sits down.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

(disappointed)

Thought for sure that was at least a double. Great play that center fielder made.

He turns to look at DYLAN.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

Did you see that catch?

DYLAN

(unenthusiastic)

Yeah.

MR. JENSEN

We'll get them next inning. What are we down?

He peers out, as if looking at a scoreboard.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

Three nothing still? Only the top of the fourth. (beat) By the way, don't forget. Tomorrow night. Dinner. My house. Come on over around seven. My son and his family are coming in from Berlin. I'm going to finally meet my grandkids!

He is left in spotlight. The sounds of the city rise up - cars honking, trucks rumbling, people, lawn mowers, etc. He covers his ears, and then let's them listen to the noise. It's hard for him, but he listens anyway, with courage. Lights slowly fade, as the city sounds fade, as the sounds of a baseball game come up.

DYLAN

You can't work on a book if you're dead, Dad. You can't.
Even I know that.

BRUCE

But I'm not dead!

DYLAN looks at his father. He suddenly
gets emotional.

DYLAN

You are. You're on the ground in the yard. This is all my
imagination, Dad.

BRUCE

What?

DYLAN

Goodbye, Dad.

BRUCE starts to get down on the ground.

BRUCE

No, son, no, I'm not ready!

DYLAN

Goodbye.

BRUCE

Wait! Wait!

DYLAN

Thanks for being good to me.

BRUCE

Hold on, Dylan!

EMMA and FOREE don't move. They say
nothing. BRUCE lies down, closing his
eyes.

BRUCE (cont'd)

No! No...I'm not ready...

BRUCE goes still. DYLAN looks at him a
long time.

DYLAN

I love you, Dad. I do. I do love you. I do. I will always
love you. You and Mom. Until the end of time.

DYLAN takes a deep breath. He turns,
looking around, feeling very, very
alone. Darkness falls all around him.

BRUCE turns to his father.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Pop, what the hell is going on?

His father, like EMMA, is perfectly still.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Pop?

He turns back to EMMA.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Emma? Say something!

DYLAN enters, with the pizza, sees the mess, and his father. He stares, emotionless.

BRUCE (cont'd)
What is happening?!

DYLAN puts the pizza down and starts cleaning up the mess of papers.

BRUCE (cont'd)
What are you doing, Dylan?

DYLAN
Putting away your book.

BRUCE
You don't have to do that. I can do that. I don't want the pages mixed up.

DYLAN
It doesn't matter.

BRUCE
Put those papers down. It matters to me.

DYLAN
It shouldn't.

BRUCE
Why not?

DYLAN
You're not going to finish this book, Dad.

BRUCE
I've written 12 books. I can finish a book.

Papers scatter. He hesitates before going to her in the yard. A long moment.

EMMA

Hi.

Beat.

EMMA (cont'd)

I'm so sorry.

Beat.

BRUCE

I want to tell you a story you don't know. About the night you died. When I got home with the NyQuil, I didn't know you were gone. I was in the kitchen taking the medicine when there was a knock at the door. Two policemen came to tell me that my wife had been on a bike, our son's bike, a bike our son didn't even know how to ride, and that she'd been hit by a car. She was going the wrong way. With a bottle of vodka in her hand. She had died on impact. Did I want to come to the hospital and see her, they asked. I woke our son and I had to tell him what happened. And because your parents were on yet another cruise, I couldn't call them. I couldn't tell them what happened, and they couldn't drive down and help with our son. So I had to take Dylan to the hospital with me. It was his birthday. I wanted to go in and see you and he didn't leave my side, so he saw you, too. They had cleaned you up, and you looked asleep. He tried to wake you up. He didn't understand what was happening. He didn't believe you were dead. There are nights when I still don't believe it. There have been nights I have been so lonely and so mad at you I can't even see straight. The driver of the truck said you swerved directly into his lane. That you let your hands off the handle bars and opened your arms wide. It's almost like you did it...like you did it...*on purpose*. And if that's the case, THEN HOW IN GOD'S NAME DO YOU EXPECT ME TO FORGIVE YOU!? HOW?! (beat) Our son needed you. I needed you. (beat) TELL ME YOU DIDN'T DO IT ON PURPOSE!

He starts to cry. She does, too. The lights change. Something moodier. BRUCE notices. EMMA suddenly goes still.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Emma?

She doesn't respond.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Emma, what is it? What's wrong?

FOREE (cont'd)

He looks more and more like her every day, doesn't he?

BRUCE

Yeah. Sometimes it's hard to look at him. Sometimes all I want to do is look at him.

FOREE

I wish I could have met her.

BRUCE

You would have loved her, Pop. She was so sweet.

FOREE

She'd be almost 50 now. And I'd be... *very old*.

BRUCE

I wonder what you would have looked like old. It's hard to picture. (beat) I think everyone should get the chance to be old.

Beat.

FOREE

Still working on your book?

BRUCE

Yeah.

FOREE

How does it end?

BRUCE

I die.

FOREE

How does it end for Emma?

BRUCE

I know. You want me to forgive her. To make it right. But some things never are made right. Because they can't be.

FOREE

Can't they?

BRUCE

No. You of all people should know that.

FOREE

The clock is ticking, son.

FOREE steps away. BRUCE thinks. After a moment, EMMA appears in the yard. BRUCE stands spilling the book.

DYLAN

You like to write, and you don't drink alcohol, and you can cook pretty good, you seem to know the answers to all my questions, and sometimes you yell really loudly, and sometimes it's scary, but only because you care about things a lot. And you miss Mom and I know that because every now and then I hear you talking to her. And your favorite thing in life is whenever I'm with you.

BRUCE

Yeah.

DYLAN

Don't worry, Dad. I won't forget you.

BRUCE

I mostly want you to remember that you were deeply, deeply loved. By me.

DYLAN

OK, Dad. (beat) Let me get your pizza.

After a moment, DYLAN exits. BRUCE sits there a moment.

BRUCE

Pop?

FOREE appears.

FOREE

Hey, son.

BRUCE

I don't feel good, Pop.

FOREE

Just breathe.

BRUCE

I'm scared. (beat) Is he going to be OK?

FOREE

Think about how far he's come. They said he'd never do half the things he's done.

BRUCE

I know.

FOREE

And that's because of you. You gave everything to him. Well, not his looks. That he got from his mother.

BRUCE smiles.

BRUCE
He's going to die.

DYLAN thinks about this.

DYLAN
Why are you writing about that?

BRUCE
It's all I think about.

DYLAN
Sounds like you have a bad thing stuck in your head, Dad.

BRUCE
Yeah, I think I do.

DYLAN
You should only write about nice things. Like Mom.

BRUCE
I am writing about Mom.

DYLAN
Are you writing about how her ears were always cold, and she cried when she sang and how she always called me her little lambkin?

BRUCE
I am. Among other things. (beat) Tell me about me, Dylan.

DYLAN
You?

BRUCE
Yeah. So you don't forget.

DYLAN
OK. You like cookies and cream ice cream.

BRUCE
Like you.

DYLAN
Like me. You like hot dogs. And home runs.

BRUCE
We both like hot dogs and home runs.

DYLAN
Go Durham Bulls!

BRUCE
Go Durham Bulls.

DYLAN

Why?

BRUCE

So it can be published. So there is money coming in.

DYLAN

I made a frozen pizza. Do you want some?

BRUCE

(turning to him)

You made a pizza?

DYLAN

I didn't make it. I just cooked it.

BRUCE

That's great. I'm not really hungry, but, sure, I'll have a piece. I like the apron.

DYLAN

You should wash it once and awhile.

DYLAN starts out. Stops.

DYLAN (cont'd)

What's your book about?

BRUCE

It's about a father and son.

DYLAN

Like you and me?

BRUCE

Like you and me. And the father is not feeling well.

DYLAN

Like you?

BRUCE

Like me. And his son is really, really special.

DYLAN

Like me?

BRUCE

Like you. And his father worries whether his son is going to be OK after he's gone.

DYLAN

Where's he going?

MR. JENSEN

Right.

BRUCE

I just want what's best for him, and I feel like you're what's best for him.

MR. JENSEN

Oh.

BRUCE

I have money for him in a trust, it's not a lot, but I do have my books that bring in a little bit of cash, and my newest book should have a decent initial bump, the house is really close to being paid off, and the roof should last a few more years, and I'm definitely going to replace the Datsun real soon-

A cell phone goes off.

MR. JENSEN

Sorry. This is me. Hold on.

He pulls out his phone.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

It's my son. Just give me a second and I will...don't go anywhere...I need to take this.

He answers.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

Hey, son. Two calls in one day? Wonderful! (beat) No, I'm not trying to be funny.

He wanders off towards his house.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

What's up? Are the kids excited to meet me? (beat) Sure. Let me check the attic. I put a lot of your stuff up there.

He exits. BRUCE sits a long moment. He's a little lost. It's hard for him to get back to writing. DYLAN enters from the house. He's wearing an apron that says "Chef Bruce."

DYLAN

Writing again, Dad?

BRUCE

Yeah. I'm just trying to finish.

MR. JENSEN

(rising)

Well. I'd better get back to packing. I'm obsessing a little over what to bring, so it's painstaking. Take care, Bruce. Good to see you.

BRUCE

You, too, Mr. Jensen.

MR. JENSEN starts out. He is almost out of the yard, before...

BRUCE (cont'd)

Wait.

MR. JENSEN stops, turns.

MR. JENSEN

Yeah?

BRUCE

Uh...nothing.

MR. JENSEN turns to go again.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Hold on.

MR. JENSEN

(turning again)

What is it, Bruce?

Beat.

BRUCE

I'm not going to make it much longer, Mr. Jensen. Could be weeks. Could be days.

MR. JENSEN

I'm sorry.

BRUCE

I should be in the hospital. But I can't do that. (beat)
Would you look after my son after I'm gone?

Beat.

MR. JENSEN

Oh. My.

BRUCE

I hate having to ask you after what you just told me about going to Berlin, but...

BRUCE

Oh, yeah?

MR. JENSEN

Out of the blue! I haven't spoken to my son in...well, it's been a long time. He invited me to come out to Berlin!

BRUCE

Wow.

MR. JENSEN

His wife, something about her father, there was some regret on her part, so she wanted him to reconcile with me. He didn't seem all that interested in seeing me, honestly.

BRUCE

Oh. Gosh.

MR. JENSEN

Whatever. I'm going. I've never met my grandkids!

BRUCE

Really? Then you should definitely go.

MR. JENSEN

I'm really excited. Even if my son isn't. I'm going to stay a month. No kidding. Why go all the way there if you're not going to stay a bit, right?

BRUCE

Right.

MR. JENSEN

So what did you want to talk to me about?

BRUCE

Oh, uh...nothing, really. Just thought Dylan might like to come over and see your radio again.

MR. JENSEN

Oh, sure. Any time. Any time at all.

BRUCE

Well, how about this weekend?

MR. JENSEN

Well, I'm leaving tomorrow morning for Berlin, actually. So, when I get back?

BRUCE

Sure. Thanks.

MR. JENSEN

Oh, that kid is something. You know, your son has started putting out my trash cans for me.

BRUCE

I know.

MR. JENSEN

He's more precise about it than I am!

BRUCE

He's that way.

MR. JENSEN

My "precision" used to drive my teachers nuts. You should have seen my progress reports. "Overly focused." "Obsessive." "Anal retentive." Ha! I showed *them*, though.

BRUCE

I imagine so working for NASA.

MR. JENSEN

A good lesson for teachers and parents. You just never know about a kid.

BRUCE

Right.

MR. JENSEN

Dylan really is an amazing young man, I have to tell you. When he's happy, his happiness kind of gets inside you and just takes over your whole body.

BRUCE

I know. It's nice we're all finally getting to know each other.

MR. JENSEN

Definitely.

BRUCE

You're not exactly who I thought you were.

MR. JENSEN

I'll take that as a compliment. You really can't get to know a person until you join their world.

BRUCE

That's right. You know, I don't even know your first name.

MR. JENSEN

It's Charles. I was Charlie until I became a septuagenarian. Now I'm Mr. Jensen. Hey, I have great news. My son just called me.

She smiles, goes inside. He gets up on the porch. Sits. Grabs a blanket hung over the chair and puts the blanket around him. Then he picks up a binder that's on the floor and puts it on his lap. Opens it. Grabs the pen that is there. He leans back. Falls asleep as lights change. Present time. Full, bright day. BRUCE is asleep. He looks extremely ill. MR. JENSEN enters. He sees BRUCE asleep, but doesn't say anything. BRUCE wakes, a little out of it.

BRUCE

Oh, hey, Mr. Jensen.

MR. JENSEN

Do you want to sleep? I can come back later.

BRUCE

No, no, no, it's good. Come up and have a seat.

He does.

MR. JENSEN

How are you feeling, Bruce?

BRUCE

Who knew dying would require so much lip balm?

BRUCE puts it on and stuffs it into his pocket.

MR. JENSEN

Remember, if you need anything, I'm right next door.

BRUCE

I know. Thanks. How are you doing?

MR. JENSEN

How am I? I'm doing well. It's in the genes. My father lived to be 102.

BRUCE

102?

MR. JENSEN

Can you imagine? The man died sailing the Drake Passage.

BRUCE chuckles.

BRUCE

You know, Dylan can't stop talking about you.

BRUCE
Emma, my love.

She smiles again, and kisses him.

BRUCE (cont'd)
What a life we're going to have.

EMMA
You know what's the best part?

BRUCE
Besides me?

EMMA
We have all the time in the world.
(singing)
I could go crazy on a night like tonight

EMMA/BRUCE
(singing)
*When summer's beginning to give up her fight
And every thought's a possibility*

BRUCE
You know what I'm thinking right now?

EMMA
You want to make an offer on the house, don't you?

BRUCE
Of course!

EMMA
But a house? Doesn't the debt worry you? Or having to clean
out gutters? Or Jehovah's Witnesses coming to the door?

BRUCE
I fear nothing.

EMMA
Good for you.

BRUCE
I'll go in and tell the realtor we're going to make an offer.

EMMA
No, let me do it. She thinks you're annoyingly cheerful.

She gets up on the porch, looks down at
him.

EMMA (cont'd)
I can't wait to grow old with you.

BRUCE
Baby number *one*? Oh, look at you getting ahead of yourself.

EMMA
I want a big family.

BRUCE
How big?

EMMA
Not an Irish Catholic situation, but...

BRUCE
Brimming?

EMMA
Brimming. You think you can muster it?

He grabs her, swings her around to him,
holds her close.

BRUCE
Well, so far, so good.

He kisses her.

BRUCE (cont'd)
(happy)
Oh, Emma.

She smiles big.

BRUCE (cont'd)
I love it that you smile when I say your name.

EMMA
You do, huh?

BRUCE
Could you be any more adorable?

EMMA
I doubt it.

He giggles, she does, too.

BRUCE
Emma.

She smiles.

EMMA
Oh, stop.

Scene Seven

Dreamy light. Front porch. EMMA, very pregnant, enters from the house. She's younger, late twenties now. She's smiling, looking around. BRUCE enters from the house, excited.

BRUCE

Well, what do you think? Huh? Huh? Huh?

EMMA

I don't know. I still prefer the dark wonder of our dungeon apartment.

BRUCE

What?!

EMMA

I'm just kidding. I think the house is pretty perfect.

BRUCE

It is! Close to downtown, *four* bedrooms.

EMMA

Big kitchen, too.

BRUCE

Huge.

EMMA

Yeah, it's so huge, where in the world will you decide to hang your "Do Not Enter" sign?

BRUCE

Ha! I'll let you in my kitchen, if you let me on your front porch.

EMMA

Absolutely. *I'm* a sharer.

BRUCE

Hey, what about this?

He steps down into the yard, excited.
She follows him.

BRUCE (cont'd)

A yard, Em. A yard. Us, with a yard.

EMMA

I want to plant some camellias. To honor the arrival of baby number one.

DYLAN

Dad, Dad, it's a snowy, blind curve, and they try to pass a truck going 80? Who does that?

BRUCE

Complete idiots. Don't you ever drive like that, Dylan, if, you know, you decide you want to learn how to drive, which at some point soon, I hope you will, as soon as I get rid of the Datsun-

DYLAN

Let's watch that last one again.

DYLAN hits the left arrow twice, then the space bar. After a moment...

BRUCE

Looks worse the second time. Come on!

DYLAN

I mean, who does that? Come on!

BRUCE

Why do they always go too fast?

DYLAN

Too fast, Dad!

Scene slowly fades out as they watch the video, laughing.

OK.
DYLAN

DYLAN gives BRUCE the computer back, and then drapes his legs across BRUCE'S, wiggling them, getting excited. BRUCE steadies the computer on his son's legs.

BRUCE
Tonight, before bed, I want to talk to you about Mr. Jensen.

DYLAN
Mr. Jensen makes a good grilled cheese, Dad.

BRUCE
I'm glad. Ready? Here we go.

BRUCE hits the space bar. They watch.

BRUCE (cont'd)
(chuckling)
Oh, my God. These people.

DYLAN finds his father's attitude funny. They watch.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Russian drivers are just the worst, aren't they? Always going...

BRUCE/DYLAN
Too fast!

They laugh. DYLAN laughs harder. They watch.

BRUCE
What is that person *doing*?

DYLAN
Dad, Dad, what is that person doing?

DYLAN hits the computer space bar, freezing the video. He's in hysterics. BRUCE finds his son's giggles funny. And so needed.

BRUCE
Snowy, blind curve, and they try to pass a truck going 80? Who does that?

DYLAN

Dad, I hate broccoli and the lawn mower is still scary.

BRUCE

But you tried them anyway. (beat) You taught me how to love more than I ever thought I was capable. I'm a better person because of you.

DYLAN

Are you going to die, Dad? Are you going to die? Like Mom?

BRUCE

Yeah. I am. I don't know when. Maybe soon. But however long I'm here, let's enjoy our time together, OK?

Beat.

DYLAN

Dad?

BRUCE

Yeah?

DYLAN

I don't want you to die.

BRUCE

Thanks, pal.

DYLAN hugs his father hard. BRUCE hugs back.

BRUCE (cont'd)

You want to keep playing the board game?

DYLAN

Not really.

BRUCE

Should we just hit the hay?

DYLAN

Can we watch Too Fast first on YouTube?

BRUCE

Of course. We can do anything you want.

BRUCE gets his laptop, sits back down. He gives the laptop to DYLAN, who searches.

BRUCE (cont'd)

(pointing at the screen)

What about that one?

BRUCE

Some day. A long time from now. Not until after you've lived a wonderful life.

DYLAN

Have you lived a wonderful life, Dad?

BRUCE

Oh, yeah. I got to be a writer. I always wanted to be a writer.

DYLAN

You said we don't always get what we want.

BRUCE

We don't. But I got lucky. I got lucky in a lot of ways. I fell in love with your mom. She was so pretty. And smart. So good to you. Then on top of all that, there's you.

DYLAN

Me?

BRUCE

You know, you're the best thing that's ever happened to me.

DYLAN

I am?

BRUCE

The best. You changed me.

DYLAN

I did?

BRUCE

Yeah, I used to be a little, I don't know, happy-go-lucky, rolling along, annoyingly cheerful. My mom died when I was a baby, and my dad, he...he moved away shortly after, and I think being la-la-la was my way of coping. But then you were born and you taught me to be honest about my feelings. Because you're always honest about your feelings.

DYLAN

I am?

BRUCE

You are. You never fake it. (beat) But it's not just that. You also taught me to live in the moment. And that every moment in life is important. And that all victories are to be treasured, whether it's learning to walk, or talk, or push the lawn mower even though you think it's scary, or trying broccoli for the first time.

DYLAN

Are you going to get better, Dad? Are you going to get better? It doesn't look like you're getting better. What happens if you don't get better?

BRUCE

Dylan...

DYLAN

Are you going away? Like Mom?

BRUCE

Son, listen to me-

DYLAN

I just want to be with you. Forever. You promised me. In the car. Just after Christmas. On the way to the hospital. For your scan. You said, until the end of time, you and me.

BRUCE

Dylan.

DYLAN

Did you lie, Dad? Did you lie?

BRUCE

Look at me, son.

He does.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Most all living things in the world live the same way. One day they're born, they live a little while, and then...and then they die. You know that, right?

DYLAN

Yeah.

BRUCE

And that's true whether it's a tree or a squirrel. Or a person.

DYLAN

Why can't we just live forever?

BRUCE

We just can't. In nature it's just easier to make a new person or a new fish or a new flower than it is to keep alive the old one forever and ever.

DYLAN

So I'm going to die, too?

BRUCE

Can you just go, Maggie? My son needs me, and you are wearing me out.

MAGGIE

What does Dylan actually know about your illness?

BRUCE

Maggie, stop. Get out of here.

MAGGIE

You can't make false promises to him, Bruce. That's not fair to him. You can't wait until you're in a hospital bed before you come clean with him. Or worse, one day, you go to get take out and you die waiting for your food. You never come back home. And Dylan never sees you again. You're just gone, poof, just like your old man.

BRUCE

DON'T YOU SAY A WORD ABOUT MY FATHER!

Beat. DYLAN stops.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Get out of here, Maggie.

Beat.

MAGGIE

I'm sorry. I know I seem like an immature screw up, but I could be there for him, if you wanted. I could. I could be a part of his life.

MAGGIE gets emotional.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

I'm sorry he's upset. I'm sorry you're upset. I'm not a bad person, I swear.

BRUCE

I know.

She exits. BRUCE goes back to DYLAN.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Hey, hey, hey. I'm right here, buddy.

BRUCE grabs his chair and pushes it next to DYLAN'S. He sits, puts his arm around his son.

BRUCE (cont'd)

You OK? (beat) I shouldn't have yelled. It's just that Maggie's got a terrible way with words.

BRUCE

Thank you. I'm aware of that. Can we talk about this some other time? Butt boulders!

MAGGIE

If you think Dylan needs a caretaker, I'm curious why you haven't asked me?

BRUCE

I don't know. I've been pre-occupied.

MAGGIE

You called me up out of the blue to come over for dinner a couple months ago and you didn't think to ask me? What happened? I didn't pass the audition?

BRUCE

Don't say that.

MAGGIE

This why I haven't heard from you since then?

BRUCE

Sewer serpents!

MAGGIE

Who else would you get besides me?

BRUCE

I don't know. Mr. Jensen. Maybe.

MAGGIE

The crazy garbage can guy who lives next door?

BRUCE

Yes.

MAGGIE

The one whose wife got run over under his care?

BRUCE

Right.

MAGGIE

That guy? You're choosing that guy over me?

BRUCE

He understands Dylan.

MAGGIE

He's super weird! And he's old! And he's not family! Do you think this is what Emma would want?

MAGGIE

What's this bad thing?

BRUCE

Maybe you should go, Maggie.

MAGGIE

But I was hoping to play the game, too. I cheat. Is that going to be an issue?

BRUCE

No, you can't join the game.

MAGGIE

It's been a crap night and I could use the company.

BRUCE

It's late, Maggie, he's upset, let me walk you to the door.

He leads her away.

DYLAN

Chemo.

BRUCE

Chocolate log!

DYLAN

Chemo.

BRUCE

Tootsie Roll!

DYLAN quietly repeats "chemo."

MAGGIE

Question. Is Dylan going to live here alone when you you-know-what?

BRUCE

Not now, Maggie. Fudge pop!

MAGGIE

I'd be happy to move in, help take care of anything that needs taking care of-

BRUCE

Not now. And keep your voice down. I don't want Dylan hearing you-

MAGGIE

(super loud whisper)

Dude, you have to start planning for the future.

She looks over the game.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
 You got married yet? Kids? You know, one day you might have your own family. For real. Wouldn't that be cool?

DYLAN starts to rub his head.

DYLAN
 Chemo, chemo, chemo.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
 I was married once, but my ex went and double dipped with a cutie pie out at Maple Farm so, you know, we went El Splitzo.

DYLAN rocks himself. The toilet flushes.

DYLAN
 Chemo, chemo, chemo.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
 Wow, you are a big ball of stress. Here's an idea that could help. Why don't you spend some time with the Maggster? You're father's cool and all, but he's sick, and, honestly, semi-uptight. I'm loosey-goosey. This Saturday we could get piercings, a little Smashburger, and there's this really cool toxic waste site in Chatham County. Wouldn't that be a beautiful day?

BRUCE returns from the bathroom.

MAGGIE (cont'd)
 Puke City?

DYLAN
 (rubbing head, rocking)
 Chemo.

BRUCE
 (seeing Dylan)
 Dylan?

DYLAN
 I got that bad thing in my head again, Dad.

BRUCE
 What happened while I was in the bathroom?

MAGGIE
 The kid is seriously stressed out, dude.

DYLAN
 I can't get that bad thing out of my head.

MAGGIE
Must be the chemo.

DYLAN
It's the medicine.

MAGGIE
What medicine?

DYLAN
For his cancer.

MAGGIE
You mean the chemo?

DYLAN
I don't know. What's chemo?

MAGGIE
It's the medicine for his cancer.

DYLAN
Chemo.

MAGGIE
Yes.

DYLAN
Chemo.

MAGGIE
You sure like to repeat things, don't you?

DYLAN
Sometimes.

MAGGIE
You're stressed. I get it. It's a stressful time. I assume you'll live here when your father...you know.

DYLAN
Chemo.

MAGGIE
You've talked about it, right? I mean, I could come live here, couldn't I? My apartment blows chunks, so I could use a step up. Is this place paid for?

DYLAN
Chemo.

MAGGIE
You're still stressing. Tell me how the game is going.

BRUCE

Wow, the life you lead. Let me get a paper towel.

He starts out.

MAGGIE

I got it, I got it. It was hardly anything.

BRUCE

The board is going to smell like vodka. Or gin.

MAGGIE

Oh, no it's not, Mr. Crabby.

BRUCE

Given what happened to Emma, Maggie, how can you drink that stuff?

She looks at him, quite sober.

MAGGIE

This isn't alcohol. I haven't had alcohol since Emma died.

BRUCE

Why are you drinking out of a martini glass?

MAGGIE

It's more fun. I like fun. You should try it. This is Sprite.

BRUCE

Sprite?

MAGGIE

I know I can be, you know, a bit of a walking catastrophe, but I miss my sister, too, Bruce.

Beat.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Feel free to apologize.

BRUCE

I need to...use the bathroom. Excuse me.

BRUCE exits.

MAGGIE

That was sudden.

DYLAN

Dad's going to puke.

MAGGIE

Because I ordered a drink from the hotel bar around the corner.

BRUCE

You went to the bar at The Do Drop Inn?

MAGGIE

Yeah, it's sweet in a scary sort of way. They do karaoke. And tonight is Thursday Refill Night apparently. Ding-ding-ding!

She sips out of the drink.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

I'm not going to steal the glass, Mr. Perfect. I'm going to return it.

BRUCE

Awesome.

Going towards the table...

MAGGIE

So what are you boys up to? Hey, Dylan.

DYLAN

Hey.

BRUCE

We're playing a board game.

MAGGIE

Ooh, I love board games.

DYLAN

It's the Game of Life. We just started. So far it seems unfair.

MAGGIE

Tell me about it.

She spills a tiny bit of her drink on the board.

MAGGIE

Whoopsy!

She wipes it with her thumb.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

I just dripped on "Win Lawsuit, Collect \$100,000." Ha, I wish. I lost my lawsuit last year against a town councilman who pawed the puppies at a Halloween party.

DYLAN
That's really hard to picture.

BRUCE
Just imagine Mom is your left hand...
(he holds up his left hand)
...and I am your right hand.

He holds up his right hand. DYLAN then holds up his left hand.

DYLAN
Mom is my left hand...
(he holds up his right)
...and Dad is my right.

BRUCE
Perfect.

DYLAN
There sure is a lot of left hand, right hand stuff, Dad.

BRUCE
The hands are helpful in explaining things.

There is a knock at the door.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Wow, what time is it?

BRUCE gets it. MAGGIE enters wearing a slightly trumpy outfit. She has a half-full martini glass in her hand.

MAGGIE
My date stood me up.

BRUCE
It's kind of late, Maggie.

MAGGIE
It's not late. It's like 10:30.

BRUCE
That's late.

MAGGIE
No, come on. We're friendzies now. There's no such thing as late.

BRUCE
Why do you have a drink in your hand?

BRUCE

OK, fine. We'll just pretend you're an astronaut.

DYLAN

Yippee! I really am going to be an astronaut, Dad.

BRUCE

You are? You've never told me that before.

DYLAN

Mr. Jensen said he would help me.

BRUCE

Yeah? You like Mr. Jensen?

DYLAN

I don't know. I guess. Your turn. Let's see what you're going to be.

BRUCE grabs the spinner, stops, then clutches his stomach, moans a little.

DYLAN (cont'd)

Don't puke on the game, Dad. At least not on the spinner.

BRUCE

I won't.

DYLAN

Why are you puking so much, Dad?

BRUCE

The medicine I take makes me sick.

DYLAN

I thought the medicine was supposed to make you healthy.

BRUCE

Well, it makes you sick and healthy at the same time.

DYLAN

How can it do that?

BRUCE

Well, the medicine kills both good cells and bad cells, because it can't recognize the difference between the two.

DYLAN

Do your cells have your mom and dad in them like my cells have you and mom in them?

BRUCE

Yes.

BRUCE

What does it say?

DYLAN

(reading)

"Pay one thousand five hundred tuition." What's tuition?

BRUCE

You have to pay to go to college. OK, so I'm the bank. You have to give me the two thousand you have and I give you back five hundred.

They do this. BRUCE spins.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Four for me. I'm going to college, too.

DYLAN

Dad, you've already been to college.

BRUCE

In real life, yes. I met your mother at UCLA. But here in the game I have to do it all over again. Can't wait! Term papers! Woo-hoo! At least I have money and a car this time!

(moving his car)

One, two, three four.

(reading)

"Collect \$1,000 scholarship."

DYLAN

What's that?

BRUCE

Well, someone is giving me money for school.

DYLAN

What? You get money and I have to pay money?

BRUCE

Ha! You're going to learn a lot tonight. Spin.

DYLAN spins.

DYLAN

Five again.

(moving his car)

One, two, three, four, five.

BRUCE

(reading the space)

"Journalist! (Salary \$10,000) Move ahead five spaces.

DYLAN

I don't want to be a journalist. I want to be an astronaut.

BRUCE stops.

BRUCE (cont'd)
That's probably enough. OK, you're the blue car, right?

DYLAN
No, you are. I'm the orange one. Can I spin the wheel?

BRUCE
Go for it.

DYLAN spins the wheel, bouncing,
excited. The wheel stops.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Five. OK, so you can go this way, into business, and get five thousand every pay day or this way, towards college, and maybe be a doctor, or a lawyer. What do you want to do?

DYLAN
I want to be an astronaut.

BRUCE
Then that means college.
(looking)
But I don't think astronaut's one of the options here.

DYLAN
Why can't I choose?

BRUCE
That's not how you play the game.

DYLAN
Don't people get to choose what they want in real life, Dad?

BRUCE
Sometimes. But sometimes we don't always get what we want.

DYLAN
Why not?

BRUCE
There's competition, timing, bad luck, jerks-

DYLAN
Can I just go?

BRUCE
Yeah, sure.

DYLAN
(moving his car)
One, two, three, four, five.

Act Two

Scene Six

March. A month later. Late evening. At the dining table. BRUCE and DYLAN are playing The Game of Life. BRUCE looks very sick, but he's maintaining as much enthusiasm as he can. He reads the instructions on the back of the game box. DYLAN is anxious to get started.

BRUCE

"You too can be a millionaire in this game of Life. It all centers around the Wheel of Fate."

DYLAN

Can we just start, Dad?

BRUCE

Not until we know what we're doing.

DYLAN

But you said you played this when you were a kid.

BRUCE

My Aunt Jesse loved this game. But I don't remember how to play it now.

(reading)

"You start out on Life's highway, just out of high school, with a car, and \$2,000."

(to Dylan)

How nice. When I left for college, I had about eight bucks and my aunt's wobbly Schwinn.

DYLAN

Dad, I just want to play.

BRUCE

Hold on.

(reading)

"As you travel, you'll meet with success, failure, and revenge. Your luck - your decisions - may give you more than one chance to make good."

DYLAN

Dad, oh, my God, oh, my God, oh, my God, oh, my God, Dad.

BRUCE

(reading)

"You will come to other forks in the road." Blah, blah, blah. "Along the way, you'll get married, and maybe have a fam--"

DYLAN puts the headphones down, not happy.

MR. JENSEN

You can take your sandwich with you.

He does, grabbing it, grumpy, and crossing past his father, exiting.

BRUCE

(to Mr. Jensen)

Thank you.

MR. JENSEN

You're welcome.

BRUCE exits. After a moment, MR. JENSEN puts the headphones back on. Eats. Listens. Strange sounds rise and rise and rise.

Lights fade on Mr. JENSEN as space appears again, majestic and infinite.

Slow fade out.

In the black, all sounds stop suddenly.

End Act One.

DYLAN

It sounds like an evil bicycle!

MR. JENSEN

Bruce, he's fine here. Go nap. I'll bring him back. We won't wake you.

BRUCE

That's really kind of you, Mr. Jensen, but-

MR. JENSEN

It's no big deal. We'll see you in a bit, OK?

BRUCE

No, I don't want him to stay here.

MR. JENSEN

Why not? He's happy here.

BRUCE

HE'S MY SON, MR. JENSEN!

Beat.

MR. JENSEN

Of course.

BRUCE

I'm sorry. I just want to take my son home.

DYLAN

But I don't want to go home.

MR. JENSEN

Dylan, you should go with your father.

DYLAN

No.

MR. JENSEN

Dylan, you can come back any time you want.

BRUCE

Come on, son. Please.

DYLAN

No.

MR. JENSEN

Dylan. Rule number five. If I say it's time to leave, you have to leave.

DYLAN

You have too many rules, Mr. Jensen. You do.

They turn to see him, taking off their headphones.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Sorry to disappoint you.

MR. JENSEN

We didn't hear you knock.

BRUCE

I didn't knock. I rang the doorbell.

MR. JENSEN

I disconnected it.

BRUCE

Ah. You ready to go, pal?

MR. JENSEN

You're early.

BRUCE

I know. I'm not feeling well. And I think I need to take a nap and I'd just like my son home while I do it.

MR. JENSEN

I can bring him over when we're done.

BRUCE

I appreciate that, but-

DYLAN

I want to stay, Dad.

BRUCE

You know, you left your glove at home. And your Santa hat.

DYLAN

I want to stay and listen to space and finish my sandwich.

BRUCE

You can finish your sandwich at home.

DYLAN

I can't listen to space at home, Dad.

MR. JENSEN

Half hour tops. I'll walk him back.

DYLAN

I'm having fun, Dad. I just heard Saturn's rings!

BRUCE

Oh, wow. Well. That's something, isn't it?

DYLAN

Well, my Dad is my friend. He's my best friend.

MR. JENSEN

That's nice. I wish I had that with my son. My son lives in Berlin. He doesn't come home anymore. He's got his own family now. His own life.

DYLAN starts rubbing his head.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

My wife and I used to visit. But my son hasn't forgiven me for what happened to his mother. Dylan, what's wrong?

DYLAN

I got this bad thing in my head.

MR. JENSEN

What is it?

DYLAN

Can we just...can we just keep listening to space?

MR. JENSEN

Of course!

Beat. They put their headphones back on and listen. Eat. A haunting moan, like a ghost, goes on and on and on.

DYLAN

Where are we going?!

MR. JENSEN

Beyond the solar system!

DYLAN

What's beyond the solar system?!

MR. JENSEN

The rest of the Milky Way!

BRUCE enters the attic.

BRUCE

Dylan? (beat) Dylan, I'm here.

DYLAN

I hear my dad! My dad is in space!

BRUCE

No, I'm just right behind you.

DYLAN

My dad wears his, too.

Beat.

DYLAN (cont'd)

Was that really the big bang we heard?

MR. JENSEN

Well, I'd like to think it was.

DYLAN

My Dad said a million things had to go right just for the universe to exist. Just for us to exist.

MR. JENSEN

My wife would say, "And God only needed one." (beat) Did you know that scientists say the universe is 93 billion light years across?

DYLAN

Whoa. That's a big number.

MR. JENSEN

Sure is.

DYLAN

I wonder why God would make the universe so big if he was only going to use a really small part of it?

MR. JENSEN

That's an excellent question, young man. You ask a lot of excellent questions.

DYLAN

I do?

MR. JENSEN

You do. Now you promise not to run out and tell all your friends about this radio, OK?

DYLAN

OK.

MR. JENSEN

Don't want every kid in town banging on my door.

DYLAN

I don't have any friends.

MR. JENSEN

Oh. (beat) Me, either.

MR. JENSEN

What would you like to hear her say?

DYLAN

Mmmm. I don't know. Anything I guess. Anything at all.

Beat.

DYLAN (cont'd)

Why did you say my mom liked alcohol?

MR. JENSEN

Because I was sad. And when I get sad, I say mean things.

DYLAN

Why were you sad?

MR. JENSEN

I was missing my wife.

DYLAN

Why were you missing your wife?

MR. JENSEN

Because it was morning and she liked all things morning.

DYLAN

Why?

MR. JENSEN

You know how when you wake up early, and the sun is coming up, and everything is really still, and it's like the whole world is starting over?

DYLAN

No. Not really.

MR. JENSEN chuckles.

MR. JENSEN

Well, that's what she loved. The newness of morning. You can feel it in the quiet. The crisp air. And when the birds come to the feeder, you know it's going to be a beautiful day.

Beat.

DYLAN

(noticing)

You still wear your wedding ring.

MR. JENSEN

Yeah. We married for life.

Dylan? MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

Turning down the sound, MR. JENSEN takes off his headphones, too.

Dylan? What is it? MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

That was too loud. DYLAN

I'm sorry. MR. JENSEN

DYLAN takes a moment to calm down.

Do you ever hear people? DYLAN

People? In space? You mean astronauts? MR. JENSEN

I don't know. DYLAN

It's not that kind of radio. MR. JENSEN

Oh. DYLAN

You know, when I was at NASA in the seventies, we sent radio messages into space. MR. JENSEN

Did anyone hear them? DYLAN

We don't know. No one has responded yet. MR. JENSEN

What if one day someone did respond? And it wasn't aliens or anything, but the people who once lived on Earth. DYLAN

That would be something. If you had to pick one person in all of history to respond, who would it be? MR. JENSEN

My mom. DYLAN

He turns the dial. After a moment, there is a windy, spinning sound, haunting and a little scary.

DYLAN

What's that?!

MR. JENSEN

Saturn's rings!

DYLAN

It's like an evil bicycle!

MR. JENSEN laughs. They listen. There is an occasional pop sound.

DYLAN (cont'd)

What's the popping sound?!

MR. JENSEN

Dust particles!

MR. JENSEN turns the dial.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

I'm going to try and go a little further out into space!

DYLAN

Yeah, let's go a lot further! Further! Further!

There is a squealing, wa-wa sound. Suddenly, we hear the sound of jet engines and whistles rising and falling.

DYLAN (cont'd)

What is that?

MR. JENSEN

That's a black hole!

DYLAN doesn't like the sound, it's rough and very loud. Suddenly, there is a hiss.

MR. JENSEN

That's the sound of the big bang! The beginning of the universe! The beginning of life! Isn't it incredible!

But this is getting too much for DYLAN. He takes off his headphones. Shakes his head, as if he's trying to get the sound out of his head.

MR. JENSEN

I say so! Right hand only though!

DYLAN hits the switch. There is a loud squeal.

DYLAN

Ahhhhhh!

Startled, but having fun, DYLAN grabs excitedly at his headphones and pulls them away, giggling. Then puts them back on quickly. MR. JENSEN fiddles with some knobs.

MR. JENSEN

Now. Time to eat our grilled cheese sandwiches. Left hand only!

DYLAN grabs his sandwich, takes a bite. MR. JENSEN grabs his sandwich. They eat, and listen.

DYLAN

I still don't hear anything!

MR. JENSEN

You will! I promise!

They wait. Eat. Above them, space appears in all its starry glory.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

We're going out into space!

After a moment:

A humming, distant sound, like computer voices singing.

DYLAN

What's that?!

MR. JENSEN

Jupiter! What you hear are electromagnetic vibrations!

DYLAN

Cool!

MR. JENSEN

Let's go further!

MR. JENSEN

You're about to find out, young man.

DYLAN bounces in the chair. Stops.

DYLAN

Sorry.

MR. JENSEN

I know staying still is hard for you. It used to be hard for me, too. You know what helps?

DYLAN

What?

MR. JENSEN

Headphones.

MR. JENSEN grabs two sets of headphones.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

All right. Put on the headphones.

They each put on headphones.

DYLAN

I don't hear anything.

MR. JENSEN

I haven't turned on the radio yet.

DYLAN

What?!

MR. JENSEN lifts one ear of DYLAN'S headphones and speaks into it.

MR. JENSEN

I haven't turned on the radio yet.

MR. JENSEN turns on the radio, lifting switches and turning knobs.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

Now, hit this switch!

MR. JENSEN points to a switch.

DYLAN

Rule number two! No touching of knobs or switches, especially on-off switches, unless you say so!

MR. JENSEN

Who wouldn't? You ready?

DYLAN

I'm ready.

MR. JENSEN

Now, can you repeat the rules back to me?

DYLAN

Rule number one. No touching buttons unless you say so. Rule number two. No touching knobs, or switches, especially on-off switches, unless you say so. Rule number three, eat with my left hand and touch the radio with my right.

DYLAN hops, excited.

MR. JENSEN

Bingo. Now we sit.

They sit in the chairs. MR. JENSEN puts the grilled cheese sandwich plates in front of each of them. DYLAN bounces in the chair.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

You can't bounce in the chair, Dylan.

DYLAN'S body goes still.

DYLAN

But I like to bounce.

MR. JENSEN

Rule number four, no bouncing in the chair. No bouncing, no wiggling, no nothing.

DYLAN

You have a lot of rules. You do. You do have a lot of rules.

MR. JENSEN

I know. Story of my life. I like things a certain way.

DYLAN

Can't you change the way you do things?

MR. JENSEN

Change is not easy for me, Dylan. You can understand that, can't you?

DYLAN

I don't know. What does space sound like?

Scene Five

The attic of MR. JENSEN'S house. Clean. Neat. Hyper-organized. On a small table is an unusual, large, homemade radio, around which stand MR. JENSEN and DYLAN, who is without his Santa hat and baseball glove. MR. JENSEN holds two grilled cheese sandwiches on two plates.

MR. JENSEN

Rule number one. You don't touch a button unless I say you can touch a button.

DYLAN

I like buttons.

MR. JENSEN

Everyone likes buttons. This is why no touching buttons unless I say so is rule number one.

DYLAN

What about knobs and switches?

MR. JENSEN

Rule number two. No touching knobs or switches. Especially on-off switches.

DYLAN

Unless you say so?

MR. JENSEN

Unless I say so. Rule number three. We eat with our left hand and touch the radio with our right.

DYLAN

When I bowl with my dad we always say "eat with our left hand, bowl with our right."

MR. JENSEN

Words to live by.

DYLAN

Dad says the finger holes in the bowling balls are disgusting.

MR. JENSEN

He's absolutely right.

DYLAN

I like french fries when we bowl.

BRUCE

Yeah, OK, but...uh...I just...

BRUCE turns to look at FOREE, who has not left the stage. FOREE is standing, and has been, in a corner of the porch.

FOREE

It's going to be OK, son.

BRUCE turns back to DYLAN.

BRUCE

Dylan, are you sure you've recovered from the co-op?

DYLAN

When can I see Mr. Jensen's radio?

BRUCE

Now. I guess. Now.

DYLAN starts across the yard.

MR. JENSEN

He'll love the radio. Trust me.

MR. JENSEN follows after DYLAN. BRUCE watches them. He looks to his father, and then back towards MR. JENSEN and DYLAN.

Lights slowly fade.

BRUCE

I do.

MR. JENSEN

Anyway, I told him he can come over any time, if that's all right with you.

BRUCE

I guess so.

DYLAN

Can I come over now?

MR. JENSEN

Now? You want to come over right now?

DYLAN

You said any time and I said OK. I choose now.

BRUCE

Maybe we take it easy here at the house for a bit. The co-op was a lot of excitement for one day.

DYLAN

I want to see the radio now.

MR. JENSEN

He can see it if he wants to see it. I'm OK with that. I'm flexible. Or trying to be. This would be good practice for me.

BRUCE

Shouldn't we have lunch at least?

DYLAN

I want to see the radio now and I don't want to have lunch.

MR. JENSEN

I can make him lunch.

DYLAN

I like grilled cheese and pizza and mac and cheese.

MR. JENSEN

I see a pattern.

BRUCE

You don't have to make him lunch, Mr. Jensen.

MR. JENSEN

I don't mind at all. It's been a long time since I made someone lunch.

BRUCE

I have. I'm fine. You can go now.

MR. JENSEN

Sure.

MR. JENSEN turns to go.

DYLAN

When can I look at your radio, Mr. Jensen?

MR. JENSEN stops, turns around.

BRUCE

Radio?

MR. JENSEN

I told him about my radio.

DYLAN

You can hear space sounds, Dad.

BRUCE

Oh, yeah?

DYLAN

From outer space, Dad.

BRUCE

Sounds great.

DYLAN

It's up in his attic.

MR. JENSEN

I just asked Dylan if he wanted to see it.

DYLAN

You can hear space sounds, Dad.

MR. JENSEN

It's something I built years ago when I worked, briefly, for NASA.

BRUCE

You worked for NASA?

MR. JENSEN

At Langley. In Virginia. I wasn't always an insurance salesman.

DYLAN

You know what NASA is, don't you, Dad?

DYLAN

Why didn't they have orange peppers, Dad?

MR. JENSEN

He was down on the floor. I got down on the floor with him.

BRUCE

You did?

MR. JENSEN

It's what my wife used to do when I was upset. She would join my world. Sometimes, for certain people, you don't ask them to come to where you are, you-

BRUCE/MR. JENSEN

-go to where they are.

BRUCE

I understand the concept.

MR. JENSEN

Anyway, I got him settled, and we got up, and we checked out. He actually did great. Gave the clerk the right amount of money. To the penny.

BRUCE

So why is he still so upset?

MR. JENSEN

When he turned the corner there and saw you, he-

BRUCE

You walked him home?

MR. JENSEN

He wouldn't get in my car.

BRUCE

Oh. I can give you a ride back to the store to get your car.

MR. JENSEN

No need. It's five blocks. I need the exercise.

BRUCE

Thanks for looking out for him.

MR. JENSEN

Sure. How are you feeling?

BRUCE

How am I feeling?

MR. JENSEN

Haven't you started the-

With his hands, BRUCE starts squeezing his son's arms, to calm him down.

MR. JENSEN

They had green ones, and red ones, and yellow ones, but no orange ones.

BRUCE

(to Mr. Jensen)

He likes the orange ones.

MR. JENSEN

Me, too.

DYLAN

I like orange peppers, Dad.

BRUCE

I know, son. But the important thing is that you-

DYLAN

I like orange peppers.

MR. JENSEN

I used to get very particular about my fruits and vegetables, too. I used to get very particular about a lot of things.

BRUCE

You still do. What were you doing at the co-op, Mr. Jensen?

MR. JENSEN

Shopping. Like everyone else.

BRUCE

Right. Of course.

MR. JENSEN

Here's your bag.

He hands BRUCE one of the two bags, keeps one.

MR. JENSEN (cont'd)

This one's mine.

BRUCE

Thanks.

BRUCE looks in the bag.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Kale. All right. This is a start. Next time we'll shoot for more than the first item on the-

He hangs up, disappointed. Seeing something, BRUCE rises quickly from his chair. He starts off the porch, into the yard, where he greets DYLAN, who is emotional, with his Santa hat and his glove in his hands, and MR. JENSEN, who carries two bags of groceries.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Dylan! You did it, buddy! You did it!

He gives his son a big hug, but he knows something is wrong.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Son, why are you upset? You did it, pal!

MR. JENSEN
I found him in produce. He was a bit flustered by the peppers.

DYLAN
There weren't any orange peppers, Dad.

BRUCE
That's OK. Sometimes they don't have what you're looking for.

DYLAN
(showing him the list)
It was on the list.

BRUCE
I know, but we talked about what to do, and I wrote on the back of the list what to do, in case of trouble.

He takes the list from his son and shows him.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Remember? If it's not in the store, then you just move on to the next item on the-

DYLAN
But I like orange peppers, Dad.

BRUCE
Come, son. Sit, sit.

BRUCE leads DYLAN to the porch chairs.

BRUCE
Give me your arms.

FOREE

By recognizing the difference between something accidental and something deliberate.

Beat.

BRUCE

People are always dying. Have you noticed that?

FOREE

Yes. It's an epidemic.

BRUCE

We just pass by, like faces in a train car. Emma's gone, Aunt Jesse, you, my mother. You know, you never told me anything about my mother.

FOREE

It was too hard to talk about. One moment, they handed you to me, and the next moment the doctor is yelling and the nurses are rushing around, and your mother is suddenly just gone.

Beat.

BRUCE

Aunt Jesse used to say you were a good father, but you never got over Mom. Aunt Jesse would say, "Your daddy has demons." But I never saw any demons. None, right up until the day you left. (beat) Can you imagine what it was like being 8 years old and one day your father never comes home?

FOREE

No. I can't.

BRUCE

What happened to you?

FOREE

I wish I could tell you.

BRUCE'S cell rings. He grabs it quickly.

BRUCE

(on phone)

Hello? (beat) Oh. Hi. Yes, this is Bruce. Thanks for calling me back. I come in with my son and get pizza at your place all the time. (beat) Yeah, the kid who likes to wear the Santa hat. I called earlier trying to reach Kimberly. Is she in? (beat) Oh. Wow, that's great. The Peace Corps? (beat) Somalia? Wow. (beat) Yeah, she really liked my son. And he really liked her. (beat) OK. (beat) OK, thanks. Thanks for getting back to me.

FOREE

You looked like a chipmunk. It was kind of funny.

BRUCE

Why did you never get me vaccinations, Pop?

FOREE

I was a very young single father. What did I know?

BRUCE

I wish there was a vaccination for cancer.

FOREE

You can never, ever let Dylan know you can't beat it. Even when you can't beat it.

BRUCE

You don't think I can beat it?

FOREE changes the subject.

FOREE

How's the new novel coming along?

BRUCE

It seems completely and utterly meaningless.

FOREE

So why are you writing it?

BRUCE

Because I'm running out of time.

FOREE

What's it about?

BRUCE

It's about a mother, a father, and a young boy with special needs. Whole thing takes place over a 24-hour period. It's the boy's eighth birthday. The father has a terrible cold and the mother wants to go to the store to get him NyQuil, but she's been drinking, and so the father takes away her keys, but she slips out anyway, on her son's bike, and goes to the liquor store, and on her way back, with a bottle of vodka in her hand, she swerves in front of a flatbed truck. And is killed.

Beat.

FOREE

Son, you need to forgive Emma.

BRUCE

How do I do that, Pop?

BRUCE

He didn't want to do it! Those were his exact words! "I don't want to do this, Dad!" I need to get him a phone.

FOREE

You practiced this, right?

BRUCE

He's been to the co-op with me a million times. We didn't have to practice. He knows the drill.

FOREE

So why are you worried?

BRUCE

He's late!

FOREE

When it looked like he would never walk, he walked. When it looked like he was never going to talk, he talked. Don't give up on him.

BRUCE

All his life, I've made absolutely sure he knows he's safe with me. But what's he going to think now, huh?

FOREE

Bruce, you're not being fair to yourself-

BRUCE

It's my job to keep him safe!

FOREE

He doesn't need you to-

BRUCE

You don't know what he needs.

Out of breath, and dizzy, BRUCE sits.

FOREE

What is it?

BRUCE

I just need a moment. (beat) Jesus. I've only had two treatments. *Two*. What am I going to be like in a month?

Beat.

BRUCE (cont'd)

You know, I remember as a kid getting every imaginable childhood disease. Chicken pox, measles, mumps even. Who gets mumps?

Scene Four

A month after Scene Three. February. Front porch. FOREE sits in one of the two Adirondack chairs. BRUCE paces, stressed, unsteady on his feet. He's bundled up, in a coat and a skull cap. He looks weak.

BRUCE

He's late.

FOREE

Five minutes.

BRUCE

(looking at his phone)

Six. Six minutes and 35 seconds. (beat) 40 seconds.
(beat) 45 seconds-

FOREE

Give him a chance.

BRUCE

I'm giving him a chance. That was the whole point of this.

FOREE

Try and relax. You need to save your strength.

BRUCE

What if something happened?

FOREE

Like what?

BRUCE

It's very cold right now. Maybe he ducked into the Do Drop Inn around the corner to warm up and someone abducted him.

FOREE

Save that stuff for your fiction writing, son.

BRUCE

Pop, he's going to hate me after this.

FOREE

Why?

BRUCE

For forcing him to do this!

FOREE

You didn't force him.

BRUCE
(on the other side of the door)
Yeah?

DYLAN
Come in, Dad.

He does. DYLAN lurches into his father's arms, pressing his chest against him.

BRUCE
Whoa! What are you doing? What did you put on yourself?

DYLAN
It's glue! So nothing can break us apart!

They hold each other.

Lights out.

BRUCE
Superhero Dad.

DYLAN
You don't have super strength, though.

BRUCE
No. Right.

BRUCE laughs. Puts down his arms.
Sits down next to his son again.

BRUCE (cont'd)
Listen. The medicine is going to make me weak, son. You're going to have to take over some of my superpowers.

DYLAN
I am? How do I do that?

BRUCE
It means getting yourself ready in the morning. And walking to school on your own, if I need you to. It means doing your homework when you're supposed to. And your own laundry, maybe. And making your own meals sometimes.

DYLAN
That's a lot, Dad.

BRUCE
I know. (beat) I put your clothes in the bathroom. Show me I don't need to come back in here and remind you to get dressed. Show me your new superpowers.

Rising, BRUCE starts out, stops.

BRUCE (cont'd)
I'm really sorry Mom went away, son. If I could change what happened, I would.

DYLAN
Why can't you change what happened?

BRUCE
I don't have that kind of superpower.

BRUCE exits. DYLAN sits a moment, then goes to his dresser, searching, until he finds a huge jug of Elmer's Glue, which he squirts all over his shirt.

DYLAN (cont'd)
Dad?!

Footsteps.

DYLAN

So you will win, too.

BRUCE

I'm not a superhero, son.

DYLAN

Sure you are. You just have different powers.

BRUCE

Oh, yeah? What are my powers?

DYLAN

You've come with me on every single school field trip. Since I was in kindergarten.

BRUCE

(smiling)

That's not a superpower, son.

DYLAN

It's not? The other kids think it is.

BRUCE

They do?

DYLAN

That's how they act. They always seem so amazed that you show up. Every time.

BRUCE

Well. You're my boy.

DYLAN

I know for a fact Evan Hathaway has a dad and his dad never comes on field trips.

BRUCE

Not every father has my flexibility.

DYLAN

And you're never late in picking me up. And you always play baseball with me. And it seems like you never drop the ball. Watch. Stand over there.

BRUCE gets up and stands by the door.
DYLAN reaches over and grabs a baseball
and tosses it at his father, who
catches it.

DYLAN (cont'd)

See?

Smiling, BRUCE flexes.

BRUCE

No, these are different. These are bad cells. And they won't stop making new bad cells. And that kind of crowds the good cells. And it makes it hard for the good cells to do their job.

Beat.

DYLAN

Are you going to get your medicine today?

BRUCE

Yeah. My first treatment.

DYLAN

What happens if the medicine doesn't work?

BRUCE sits down next to his son.

BRUCE

Hey.

Beat.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Dylan, I am in for a big fight. *Huge* fight. Against the bad cells. You have to help me defeat the bad cells. Do you think you can do that?

DYLAN

Do they have superpowers?

BRUCE

They have incredible superpowers.

DYLAN

Can they run really fast like Blur?

BRUCE

No. But they are resilient. They seem to have no weakness.

DYLAN

Every villain has a weakness, Dad.

BRUCE

Cancer doesn't.

DYLAN

But there's no villain that can't be defeated. Dad, Superman always wins. Spiderman always wins.

BRUCE

Right.

BRUCE

Our bodies are made up of trillions of tiny cells. Hair cells and liver cells and skin cells. And inside each one of those cells is a whole bunch of stuff made up of both your Mom and me.

DYLAN

Really? That's weird.

BRUCE

Yeah, you literally are us. And wherever you go, we go with you.

DYLAN thinks on this. Smiles.
Smiling, BRUCE rises, starts out.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Come on, bud, get yourself up. Let's go. Don't want to be late.

DYLAN swings his legs around. He's wearing Star Wars pajamas.

DYLAN

Dad?

BRUCE

(stopping)

Yeah, pal?

DYLAN

What is cancer?

BRUCE

Come on, Dylan, I've got your clothes in the bathroom, I have a bagel and cream cheese on the counter, let's not-

DYLAN

What is cancer?

Beat.

BRUCE

It's a disease.

DYLAN

What kind of disease is it?

BRUCE

Well, it's a disease of our cells.

DYLAN

Are they the same cells that have you and Mom in them?

DYLAN

Tell me about Mom.

BRUCE

OK. Mom liked camellias. And sunsets. And...

BRUCE waits for DYLAN to finish the sentence.

DYLAN

Sitting on the porch.

BRUCE

Right. Mom liked California, and Michael Chabon, and the Indigo Girls, and...

DYLAN

And waffles. Like me. You like waffles, too, right?

BRUCE

I love waffles. I'd love to be sitting with you and Mom, on the porch, having waffles, watching a sunset. Wouldn't that be a beautiful day?

DYLAN

Waffles at night, Dad?

BRUCE

Waffles anytime, Dylan.

DYLAN

Dad, do you ever dream about Mom?

BRUCE

Oh, yeah. All the time.

DYLAN

In my dream, she told me that she was always here, wherever I go. Is that true, Dad?

BRUCE

Absolutely. I'm with you, too, son, wherever you go, even when we're not together.

DYLAN

You are?

BRUCE

Sure. Your entire person is made up of half me and half Mom.

DYLAN

Huh?

BRUCE

I know what you're going to do next and I'm not going to let you do it.

EMMA

Bruce, you didn't say that.

BRUCE

I'm changing everything. Hug me back, Emma.

She hugs him.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Stronger.

She does. He does, too. Beat.

BRUCE (cont'd)

I'm not letting you go.

EMMA

Bruce. You can rewrite it all you want, but you can't change what happened.

After a moment, he lets her go. This is hard for him. She exits. Beat. BRUCE sits with DYLAN. He looks at him. Lights change to a full morning. We are in real time. BRUCE touches his son on the shoulder.

BRUCE

Hey, bud. Time to get up.

DYLAN doesn't stir.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Dylan? It's 7:30 already. Gotta get to school.

DYLAN opens his eyes, but he's a million miles away.

BRUCE (cont'd)

You OK, buddy?

He doesn't respond. He finds his baseball glove and hugs it.

BRUCE (cont'd)

You have dreams again?

DYLAN nods.

BRUCE

I know. And you're emotional. And you're tired. And you're thinking about things. And I know what you do when you think about things.

EMMA

Don't talk to me like a child.

BRUCE

Don't buy any alcohol. Don't stop somewhere else and drink any alcohol. Any *more* alcohol.

EMMA

(she salutes him)

OK. Yes, sir.

BRUCE

You're drunk, aren't you?

EMMA

Not even close.

BRUCE

I'm not letting you leave.

EMMA

Says who?

He pulls her car keys out of his pocket and shows them to her.

BRUCE

Says me. I'm getting the NyQuil, Emma.

EMMA

Give me my keys.

She goes to get them, but he grabs her, and hugs her.

EMMA (cont'd)

No, Bruce, you're remembering this wrong. You didn't hug me.

She isn't hugging him back.

BRUCE

It's my dream. I can do what I want. You're not leaving this room.

EMMA

Bruce...

Beat.

EMMA (cont'd)

When I get home, don't stay up and work. Go to bed. The novel can wait. Come on. Let's leave our boy to sleep.

She tries to guide him out. He resists.

BRUCE

Give me one second. I want to say good night.

EMMA

Do not wake him.

BRUCE

Never.

She starts out of the room. Just as she's halfway out the door...

BRUCE (cont'd)

Are you OK to drive?

She stops, turns to him.

EMMA

What?

BRUCE

Are you OK to drive? To the store?

EMMA

What do you mean?

BRUCE

You know what I mean, Emma.

EMMA

(a little cold)

No. I don't know what you mean. *Bruce.*

BRUCE

You were drinking. Today. A fair amount.

EMMA

Was I?

BRUCE

Yes.

EMMA

It was a long, stressful day.

BRUCE

Why are you crying? Were you singing?

She turns to look at her son.

EMMA

He might be the most beautiful thing I've ever seen. He's so innocent.

BRUCE

Eight year olds are always innocent.

EMMA

But he's not like the other kids. He never will be.

They look at their son.

EMMA (cont'd)

I hate the neighborhood boys. I hate them.

BRUCE

We shouldn't have invited them to Dylan's birthday party.

EMMA

You shouldn't have invited them to Dylan's birthday party.

BRUCE

I'm just trying to make things as normal as I can.

EMMA

Things can't be normal.

EMMA turns to BRUCE.

EMMA (cont'd)

Are you going back to bed?

BRUCE

No, I have to go get more NyQuil.

EMMA

You don't have to be a hero. I'll go get it.

BRUCE

No, no I can do it.

EMMA

You're sick. I'll get what you need.

BRUCE

No.

EMMA

Yes.

Suddenly, he hugs her hard. She hugs him back.

DYLAN

I'm not going to let you go. I'm going to stick to you. Like glue. And I am going to carry you from my dream into real life.

They hold each other. The lights change from one dream to another. EMMA rocks DYLAN. She sings.

EMMA

*Lullaby and goodnight,
in the sky stars are bright,
beams of light from above
Here to fill you with love*

He's getting sleepy. She lowers him back to the bed, putting the blanket over him. She gets emotional.

EMMA (cont'd)

*Lay thee down now and rest,
May these hours be blessed
Lay thee down now and rest
May these hours be blessed
Lullaby, close your eyes,
May you dream through the night
Soft and warm is your bed
For to lay your sweet head*

By the end of it, EMMA is crying. DYLAN is asleep. She strokes his head on the pillow. She looks down at him a moment, wiping her eyes.

EMMA (cont'd)

Happy birthday, my little lambkin.

EMMA touches his face. BRUCE enters the room. He's got a robe over his clothes. She turns and puts a finger to her mouth to quiet him.

EMMA (cont'd)

What are you doing in here? You have a cold.

BRUCE

Dylan gave it to me. I'd just be returning the favor. Are you crying?

EMMA

Maybe.

DYLAN

Is it that funny feeling in my chest?

EMMA

Yeah. That's part of it.

DYLAN

What are its other parts?

EMMA

Well, love can be the need to protect or nurture someone, or to cherish someone, or just let someone be who they are.

DYLAN

Can it be like how I feel about my Legos?

EMMA

Sure. But the biggest thing is love binds people together.

DYLAN

Like glue?

EMMA

Like the strongest glue in the whole world. And there's nothing that can break two people apart who truly love each other.

He smiles.

DYLAN

Mom?

EMMA

Yeah, honey?

DYLAN

Mom, am I dreaming?

EMMA

Yes, you are, my dear.

DYLAN

Oh. Too bad. (beat) If I'm dreaming, I hope I never wake up.

EMMA

Why's that, sweetie?

DYLAN

Because when I wake up, you'll be gone.

EMMA

Dylan, I am never, ever gone. I am always here, wherever you go. You just can't see me. But I am here.

EMMA (cont'd)
 "Tornadoes are capable of great destruction."

DYLAN
 Mom, I'm a tornado!

EMMA
 And I am a tree!

She stand up next to him, putting her arms out. The blanket crashes into her.

EMMA (cont'd)
 Oh, no! I'm being ripped from the ground!

She shakes. He lifts up the blanket to look.

EMMA (cont'd)
 I'm flying through the air! Ahhhhhhhhhh!

She floats over to the bed and falls, making crashing noises. He jumps on the bed next to her, giggling. She giggles, too.

EMMA (cont'd)
 Dylan, do you know how much I love you?

DYLAN
 Yes, I do. Taller than the Empire State Building. Wider than the Grand Canyon.

DYLAN/EMMA
 Deeper than the deepest ocean.

EMMA
 (sitting up)
 Shall we get back to the book?

DYLAN
 Mom?

EMMA
 Yeah?

DYLAN
 Mom, what is love?

EMMA
 You know what love is, Dylan.

Scene Three

DYLAN'S bedroom. DYLAN is in bed. His mother, EMMA, around 35, sits next to him. The lighting should be a little dreamy.

EMMA

You brush your teeth?

He opens his mouth with an "ahhh." She looks in.

EMMA (cont'd)

Very nice. You wash your face?

DYLAN

Smell me.

She leans in and smells his cheek.

EMMA

Mmmmmm. Who loves Irish Spring?

DYLAN

It's very sudsy, Mom.

EMMA

You have your book?

He turns to the other side of the bed and grabs a book.

EMMA (cont'd)

OK. Where were we?

He hands it to her, getting excited, wiggling. She opens the book.

EMMA (cont'd)

Wait. I remember. Here we go.

(reading)

"A tornado is a rapidly rotating column of air..."

He wiggles in the bed, excited, and puts the blankets over his head, giggling.

EMMA (cont'd)

"...with winds of up to 300 miles per hour."

Getting out of bed, he stands up, giggling, spinning himself and the blanket like a tornado.

MAGGIE

Oh, I get it. This is like some reverse psychology thing. Like he wouldn't want us to move it now because he's so mad, but we do it anyway just to spite him. I love it. I love fucking with people's heads.

She digs out her keys.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

This is fun!

She exits. BRUCE watches her.

Lights out.

MR. JENSEN

Excuse me? You don't know me. You have no right to talk to me like this.

MAGGIE

Got under your skin, have I?

MR. JENSEN

It was an accident!

MAGGIE

Well, yeah, it would have to be, wouldn't it? Unless it wasn't.

BRUCE

MAGGIE, STOP IT!!

This stops everything. DYLAN covers his ears.

MAGGIE

You're upsetting my brother-in-law here, and my nephew, so move along then, Mr. Jensen, strange neighbor guy obsessed with his trash can. You can go on home. You lost this one.

MR. JENSEN turns and goes. MAGGIE turns to them, exited.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Score! We got him, didn't we?! Ha!

BRUCE

Dylan, why don't you go on in the house and wash your hands?

DYLAN exits. BRUCE turns to MAGGIE, not happy.

MAGGIE

(seeing his face)

I know, right? Can you believe that guy?

BRUCE

Would you go move your car?

MAGGIE

Move my car?

BRUCE

Yeah.

He turns to go.

MAGGIE

Wait a sec.

MR. JENSEN stops, turning back.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

I know you.

MR. JENSEN

Me? You know me?

MAGGIE

You're the guy whose wife got run over in the parking lot outside the Harris Teeter in Meadowmont, right?

Beat.

MR. JENSEN

Yes.

MAGGIE

Like a year ago. I was there. When it happened.

MR. JENSEN

Congratulations.

MAGGIE

She was, like, blind, right?

MR. JENSEN

Mostly.

MAGGIE

This big SUV, Bruce, like, totally backed over this guy's wife. Like, just mashed her like a tomato.

(turning to Mr. Jensen)

How come you weren't right by her side?

MR. JENSEN

I was putting the cart away. I turned away for two seconds.

MAGGIE

Yeah, but, you knew she was blind, so...like, what the f?

BRUCE

All right, Maggie, that's enough.

MAGGIE

I mean, Jesus, how careless are you?

DYLAN

Mr. Jensen thinks Mom was an alcoholic.

MR. JENSEN

Hello, Dylan.

MAGGIE

You better not be Mr. Jensen.

MR. JENSEN

I am and I want you to move your car.

MAGGIE

You think my sister was an alky?

BRUCE enters.

BRUCE

(sarcastic)

Mr. Jensen. My favorite neighbor.

MR. JENSEN

Bruce, I am trying to put out my trash can, and there is a vehicle making it impossible to do so.

BRUCE

Trash day is in two days. Maggie will be gone in two hours.

MR. JENSEN

Right, but this is the time when I always take out the can, and I like things a certain way.

BRUCE

I know you do. You didn't come over here just to pick a fight, did you, Mr. Jensen?

MR. JENSEN

I came here to reclaim the space in front of my house.

BRUCE

The space does not belong to you, Mr. Jensen. However, the grass you are standing on does belong to me.

MAGGIE

Oooh, tell him off, Bruce, tell him off!

MR. JENSEN

Miss, would you mind moving your car?

BRUCE

Mr. Jensen, you've got two seconds to get off my lawn.

MR. JENSEN

I won't forget this!

What?
MAGGIE

Dad has cancer.
DYLAN

Bruce has cancer?
MAGGIE

It's all in his head.
DYLAN

I'm confused. You mean he just thinks he has cancer or he really does have cancer?
MAGGIE

He's got a bad thing in his head. I get them, too. Dad said I should think about nice things. This morning, I've been thinking about camellias.
DYLAN

What the hell are you talking about?
MAGGIE

Are you really my mom's sister?
DYLAN

Of course I am Dylan. You know me. I'm your Aunt Maggie. I know we don't see each other much, but-
MAGGIE

You seem very different than my mom.
DYLAN

Yeah. I used to hear that all the time.
MAGGIE

MR. JENSEN enters from the yard.

Excuse me. Is that your purple Honda?
MR. JENSEN

It's mauve, but whatevs. Who are you?
MAGGIE

I'm the guy who can't get his trash can out for the morning pick up because you've parked your mauve Honda in the 12 available feet in front of his house.
MR. JENSEN

Just push the can up against the bumper. Scratch it and I'll sue.
MAGGIE

MAGGIE

That was bizarro right there at the end, wasn't it? Dude's playing a weird game of matchmaker.

Beat.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

You're not cold out here? You know it's January, right?

He doesn't respond.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

So...uh...what are you into? Besides the Durham Bulls. And camellias. And Christmas. Love the Santa hat, by the way.

DYLAN

I like outer space.

MAGGIE

OK, that's cool. Planets and shit. *Star Trek*. I get it. You ever see the first *Alien* movie where the creature, like, bursts out of that guy's chest and blood just goes flying everywhere? That was nuts. Do you mind if I smoke?

He doesn't respond. She digs in her purse.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

You know what? Forget the cigarettes. Cigarettes are bad, right? You don't smoke, do you?

He doesn't respond.

MAGGIE (cont'd)

Well, if you don't, don't start. People look at you like you're strangling a puppy or something. God, people get so precious about their air. "Don't give me cancer!"

DYLAN

Cancer.

MAGGIE

You said it, D.

DYLAN

Cancer.

MAGGIE

I don't remember you being a repeater.

DYLAN

Dad has cancer.

DYLAN

Chocolate log, Dad?!

BRUCE laughs, too.

MAGGIE

I have no idea what's just happened, but it's so great to see you two!

BRUCE

Yeah, great to see you. And you look good.

MAGGIE

I know, I still got it, right? I totally did a college guy last week, too. You're looking a little gaunt, I have to tell you.

BRUCE

(rising)

Are you hungry, Maggie?

MAGGIE

Starved.

BRUCE

Great. I'm going to check on dinner. It's a cheesy mushroom and broccoli casserole.

MAGGIE

Uh, yum. Sounds dee-lish.

BRUCE

Dylan, I'll nuke your mac and cheese.

MAGGIE

Oh, he's not having what we're having?

BRUCE

He has a limited palette. We kind of do our own thing, unless I'm eating what he's eating. Dylan, you want me to put the camellias in a bowl?

DYLAN

I want to hold them.

BRUCE

No problem, buddy. Be right back. You guys just hang out here, OK? You could talk about the Durham Bulls, which you both like. Or you could talk about Christmas. Or whatever.

BRUCE hesitates, then exits. MAGGIE looks at DYLAN. Awkward.

MAGGIE

Yeah, I got tired of dealing with all those little, snot-nosed shits.

BRUCE

That's surprising. I thought you liked kids.

MAGGIE

I've done a major 180. They're all sociopaths, Bruce. The crap they pull...like serial killer stuff, dude.

BRUCE

So what are you doing now?

MAGGIE

Well, to be honest, I squeezed my ex for a little extra and now I don't have to do squat.

BRUCE

That's good. I guess.

MAGGIE

Oh, I'm not just going to sit on my ass. I've started doing abstract art. Out of found objects. My instructor at the community center thinks I can sell them.

BRUCE

Oh, yeah?

MAGGIE

And I don't think he's saying that just to get in my pants.

DYLAN

Get in my pants.

BRUCE

Nice, Maggie.

DYLAN

Get in my pants.

MAGGIE

Come on, he's 19. He should know about getting into pants, and tit jobs, and the ol' reach around.

DYLAN

The ol' reach around.

BRUCE

Oh, man. Chocolate log!

DYLAN starts laughing.

BRUCE

I got you some warm cider.

He points to the other cup on the table.

MAGGIE

You're the best.

She sits and grabs the cup. Sips.

BRUCE

(sitting, too)

We'll go inside when dinner is ready. Let's just enjoy the air for a bit.

MAGGIE

Uh...OK. Air. Sure. I guess. Whatevs.

(re: the cider)

This is good. You make this?

BRUCE

Dylan and I made it.

DYLAN holds the camellias high, looking at them.

MAGGIE

Love the camellias, Dylan.

DYLAN

Mom liked camellias.

MAGGIE

Well, no wonder. They're beautiful. You plant them?

BRUCE

Emma planted them. When Dylan was born.

MAGGIE

Cool. I couldn't grow a Chia Pet to save my life, dude.

DYLAN sits on the lip of the porch.

BRUCE

How's the daycare going?

MAGGIE

Oh, I quit that.

BRUCE

You did?

MAGGIE

Oh, I don't know. Couple years, at least.

BRUCE

We need to hang out more.

MAGGIE

I've been thinking the exact same thing. How old are you, Dylan? You must be, like, 16 now.

BRUCE

He's 19.

MAGGIE

19? Jesus fuck doodle.

BRUCE

Maggie.

MAGGIE

What? Oh. Sorry. Pardon my "Fran-swah." Did you all get religious? Cool.

BRUCE

No, we didn't get religious.

MAGGIE

So, Dylan, you must've graduated from high school already. Time flies.

BRUCE

No, he hasn't graduated from high school yet.

MAGGIE

Oh. No biggie. I repeated 10th grade. I'm sure Emma told you.

(whispering loudly to Bruce)

I got knocked up. Twice.

BRUCE

Have a seat, Maggie.

He gestures to the other Adirondack chair.

MAGGIE

Are we sitting out here?

BRUCE

Dylan likes it out here.

MAGGIE

Titty bit nibly, isn't it?

BRUCE

You don't use my *house* as a landmark?

She's dug out a container of Tic-Tacs,
and tosses one or two back.

MAGGIE

What?

She stuffs it into her purse.

BRUCE

Never mind. Just glad you're here.

MAGGIE

It's so discombobulating to get lost like that. Happy New Year! I saw your new book, by the way.

BRUCE

Oh, yeah?

MAGGIE

I thought all the bookstores were closed down, and one morning I'm doing the ol' walk of shame, and, holy shitsky, a window and some books.

BRUCE

Was mine in the window?

MAGGIE

In the window? No. I went in to pee and a copy of your book was on the floor in the stall.

Still wearing the Santa hat, DYLAN appears from the yard with a bunch of camellias in the web of his baseball glove. He's super excited.

BRUCE

Hey, Dylan.

DYLAN

Look at the camellias! Look at the camellias, Dad!

BRUCE

Beautiful! Say hello to your Aunt Maggie. You remember Aunt Maggie.

MAGGIE

Hi, Dylan. You're huge now!

BRUCE

Tell me about it. When was the last time you saw him?

BRUCE

I can't believe how long you've been gone.

FOREE

My sister was a hero for stepping in.

BRUCE

And that's what I need. A hero.

The sound of a car arriving.

BRUCE (cont'd)

There's Maggie.

FOREE turns to his son.

FOREE

It's going to be OK, son.

FOREE rises and goes in the house.

BRUCE

(calling out)

She's here, Dylan!

MAGGIE enters from the yard, flustered. She's putting her keys, her cigarettes, and any number of other things into her purse.

MAGGIE

Dude, oh, my God, I'm so sorry I'm late.

BRUCE

No worries.

MAGGIE

Big thanks for guiding me back on the phone.

BRUCE

Sure.

MAGGIE

What happened to that fire hydrant?

BRUCE

Fire hydrant?

MAGGIE

(looking)

Across from your house, on the other side of the street there used to be this-...there it is! Fucking kudzu. I hate nature. I used to use that fire hydrant as a landmark to know where your house is.

FOREE

All those occupational therapists he used to see, all those school assistants that took a liking to him?

BRUCE

There was one, yes. But she moved back to Kansas to be with her ailing mother.

FOREE

Aren't there group homes he could go to?

BRUCE

I can't uproot his life so he can live with a bunch of strangers. He needs things predictable and familiar.

FOREE

But this is what those people specialize in. There'd be lots of others just like Dylan.

BRUCE

I need someone to move into this house. Maggie has lived here in this town for 10 years. She's his aunt. She knows Dylan well enough. And she works in a daycare center. We could do worse.

FOREE

Does Maggie know why she's coming over?

BRUCE

No.

FOREE

What if she says she can't do it?

BRUCE

She has to say yes. She has to. Someone has to take care of my son after I'm gone.

Beat.

BRUCE (cont'd)

I have been worrying so much about him. About him without me. And now it's here. And it's a thousand times more terrifying than I thought.

Beat.

BRUCE (cont'd)

I wish I could really talk to you, Pop. I wish you could really help me.

FOREE

At least you can imagine it.

FOREE rises and demonstrates across the porch. They laugh.

FOREE
Can you remember the sound of my voice?

Beat.

BRUCE
No.

FOREE
It was a lot like your voice.

FOREE looks out into the yard.

FOREE (cont'd)
Dylan seems very happy right now.

BRUCE
Yeah. He likes to sit among the camellias. Makes him think of his mother.

FOREE
I'm glad he hasn't forgotten her.

BRUCE
I won't let him.

Beat.

FOREE
You think Maggie's going to do this?

BRUCE
She has to do it. There's no one else.

FOREE
You can't go out and meet someone?

BRUCE
Oh, sure, I'm a real catch. 50-year old man with terminal brain cancer and special needs son seeks wife. Must be willing to sacrifice entire life.

FOREE
What about Emma's parents?

BRUCE
They're not interested. They've never been interested. *"I don't know how to talk to him."*

FOREE

I was in pain, but I rolled over, on my elbow, gas mask still on, sweating, whole body covered in orange fibers, and I looked at her, and I said...

FOREE covers his mouth to mimic his voice through the gas mask.

FOREE (cont'd)

"Take me to your leader!"

They laugh.

BRUCE

You did not.

FOREE

I did! I was trying to break the tension!

BRUCE

What did she do?

FOREE

Panicked! She shoved her walker aside and tried to get out of the bathroom. But her pants were half-down and she tripped. Let me tell you, if you asked me to draw a picture of her ass right now, I could do it.

BRUCE

I don't remember that story at all.

Laughter subsides.

FOREE

What *do you* remember about me, son?

BRUCE

I remember you used Barbasol, Pop.

FOREE

I did.

BRUCE

And you liked Willie Mays.

FOREE

Say Hey Kid. Do you remember the way I used to walk? Like a horse?

BRUCE

(laughing)

What? For real?

Scene Two

It's a few days after scene one. It's early cold January. The front porch. BRUCE and FOREE, early 30s, are bundled up in Adirondack chairs. BRUCE has a cup of hot cider in his hand. There is a second cup on the small table between them. The two men are laughing.

FOREE

So I'm up in the attic putting down insulation. I'm wearing a mask, like one of those Chernobyl-type gas masks. I'm sweating and I'm in a short-sleeved shirt, because I'm a moron, and the fibers are itching my arms like there is no tomorrow, and it's distracting me, so I'm not really paying attention to where I'm stepping.

BRUCE

Oh, no.

FOREE

Oh, yes. I went all the way through. Into the bathroom.

BRUCE

Are you kidding?

FOREE

Into the tub.

BRUCE

Where was the homeowner?

FOREE

On the commode.

BRUCE is laughing. FOREE, too.

FOREE (cont'd)

She almost had a heart attack.

BRUCE

She?

FOREE

She was about 85. She grabbed her pacemaker and let out this blood-curdling scream.

BRUCE

Oh, my God.

BRUCE gets emotional. It's all sinking in.

BRUCE

Yeah, Dylan.

DYLAN

Hot dogs and home runs.

BRUCE

Always remember that. Dad liked hot dogs and home runs. Dad liked baseball in the summer. And Dad liked it best when you were right there with him.

DYLAN goes quiet. BRUCE drives. BRUCE fights to keep from breaking. He looks at the baseball glove that DYLAN hugs.

BRUCE (cont'd)

You really like that baseball glove I got you for Christmas, don't you?

DYLAN

I like it. I'm never letting it go.

BRUCE suddenly looks out at the road, then over his shoulder.

BRUCE

I missed the turn to the hospital. (beat) I have to turn around.

DYLAN rubs his head again.

DYLAN

I got that bad thing in my head again, Dad.

BRUCE

Yeah. I got a bad thing in my head, too, Dylan. I got a bad thing, too.

BRUCE rubs his own head.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Real bad.

Lights fade.

DYLAN

Stop saying that bad thing, Dad!

BRUCE

It's not a bad thing, Dylan! It's not! It's a *nice* thing!
And I would really, really like it to happen-

DYLAN

PLEASE STOP!!

BRUCE

-because I want to believe there's still hope for you!

DYLAN cries.

DYLAN

I just want to be with you. Forever. (beat) Tell me it's
just going to be you and me forever.

BRUCE

It's just going to be you and me.

DYLAN

You promise?

BRUCE

I promise. Until the end of time, you and me.

DYLAN comes out of it.

DYLAN

I want ice cream.

BRUCE

Great. We'll get it after the appointment.

DYLAN

It's my favorite. What's your favorite?

BRUCE

Cookies and cream, of course. You know that.

DYLAN

Just like me?

BRUCE

Just like you.

DYLAN

We're a team, aren't we? You and me? Together forever,
right? We're a team, like the Durham Bulls? We're going to
watch baseball this summer, right? Hot dogs and home runs?

DYLAN

Never. I hope.

BRUCE drives.

BRUCE

Finally, we're moving.

(looking at "traffic")

Look. It's that guy in the truck again. He must've gotten back in. We're passing him. Ha ha!

BRUCE looks over.

BRUCE (cont'd)

(waving, smiling)

You and your ugly-ass mud flaps lose, you homicidal maniac.

BRUCE'S face falls.

BRUCE (cont'd)

He's crying.

Beat. DYLAN rubs his head again.

DYLAN

I got that bad thing in my head again.

BRUCE

Dylan, we can't keep doing this.

DYLAN

Why did you say I was going to grow up and have my own Christmas with my own family? Why did you say that bad thing?

BRUCE

Forget I said it.

DYLAN

I don't want another family, Dad. Why did you say I was going to grow up and be with another family?

BRUCE

Not *any* family, Dylan. *Your* family. Don't you want to grow up and get married and have kids?

DYLAN

Stop saying that, Dad!

BRUCE

It's Christmas time and I thought someday you'd want to tell your kids about Santa Claus, and Frosty, and Rudolph and-

DYLAN

I don't like doctors. Why are we going to the doctor?

BRUCE

(exploding, suddenly)

Because I'm sick, Dylan! I'm sick! I told you! I've told you a hundred fucking times!

DYLAN

A hundred fucking times.

BRUCE

I'm sorry, Dylan.

DYLAN

A hundred fucking times.

BRUCE

I don't feel good, buddy. I'm just not myself. I'm sorry. I shouldn't talk like that.

DYLAN

A hundred fucking times.

BRUCE

Tootsie roll.

DYLAN

A hundred fucking times.

BRUCE

Chocolate log.

DYLAN

A hundred fucking times, a hundred fucking times, a hundred fucking times, a hundred fucking times-

BRUCE

STOP!!

DYLAN stops. BRUCE drives. Beat. BRUCE turns on the radio again. Another Christmas song comes up. He changes the station. More Christmas music. He changes the station. More Christmas music.

BRUCE (cont'd)

It's December 28th and they're still killing us with this music. Christmas now goes from before Halloween to...to when? When is it going to end?

BRUCE kills the radio.

BRUCE

Like you.

DYLAN

You like waffles, too, right?

BRUCE

I do. Mom smiled when you said her name. Her ears were always cold. Whenever she sang, she cried. She liked to call you her little lambkin. She liked salmon, and raspberry truffles, and-

DYLAN

Alcohol.

BRUCE

Alcohol? No, she liked rain. Why did you say alcohol?

DYLAN

Mr. Jensen told me that. He said Mom liked alcohol and that's why I'm in special classes at school.

BRUCE

That is not true.

BRUCE turns to DYLAN, quietly furious.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Mr. Jensen needs to stay in his yard. And you need to stay in ours. You understand?

DYLAN

Mr. Jensen said Mom liked alcohol because you wouldn't get a job.

BRUCE

Mr. Jensen is hung up on traditional roles. In our family, your mom had "the job," in RTP, and I stayed home with you. You were my job. You are still my job. I'm also a writer. I've always been a writer. So, technically, I have two jobs.

DYLAN

Mr. Jensen said Mom liked alcohol and that's why she died.

BRUCE

Dylan, don't talk to Mr. Jensen anymore. He is a bitter, deranged, obsessive-compulsive, lonely old man.

DYLAN

Where are we going?

BRUCE

(impatient)

The doctor. I told you.

DYLAN
Where are we going?

BRUCE
The doctor. I told you.

DYLAN
I don't want to go to the doctor. Why are we going to the doctor?

BRUCE
For another pointless scan.

Grabbing the wheel, BRUCE honks the horn.

BRUCE (cont'd)
We are *so* late.

DYLAN
Tell me about Mom again.

BRUCE
I don't want to talk about your Mom right now.

DYLAN
You have to. So I don't forget. You told me that.

Looking at his boy, BRUCE changes his mind. He puts his son's feet back on the floor.

BRUCE
Mom liked camellias. And sunsets. And...

BRUCE waits for DYLAN to finish the sentence.

DYLAN
Sitting on the front porch.

BRUCE
Right. Mom liked California. And Michael Chabon. And the Indigo Girls. And...

DYLAN
Waffles.

BRUCE
Right.

DYLAN
Like me.

Dung.
 BRUCE

DYLAN
 ...dick dead, dick head, dick
 head, dick head-
 BRUCE
 Crap, doody, loaf, deuce,
 tootsie roll...

DYLAN stops.

DYLAN
 Tootsie roll, Dad?

DYLAN starts laughing.

BRUCE
 I brought out a new one.

DYLAN can't stop laughing. This makes
 BRUCE laugh.

DYLAN
 Is Tootsie roll really another word for you-know-what?

BRUCE
 It is.

DYLAN
 Tell me another new one.

BRUCE
 No, I have to save the new ones.

DYLAN
 One more! Come on! One more!

BRUCE
 Fine. (beat) Chocolate log.

DYLAN explodes with laughter.

DYLAN
 Chocolate log?!

BRUCE laughs, too. It slowly dies.

BRUCE
 They have to widen I-40...I mean, we're not even moving.
 (beat). Give me your feet.

DYLAN turns and drops both of his feet
 onto BRUCE'S lap. BRUCE ties both of
 his shoes as:

BRUCE

Yes, you can. Just think about pizza or the planetarium.

DYLAN starts crying, softly.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Dylan...come on, man. Think about baseball. And the Durham Bulls. And all the games we've gone to. Summertime. Hot dogs. Home runs.

DYLAN

Are we going to be together forever, Dad?

BRUCE

Yes, Dylan. You and me. Together. For all time.

DYLAN

Why did you say we weren't going to be together forever?

BRUCE

That's not what I said, Dylan.

BRUCE suddenly jerks the wheel.

BRUCE (cont'd)

(out the "window")

Dick head!

(to Dylan)

You see that guy in the truck? He could have hit us!

(out the "window")

The shoulder is not a lane!

(to Dylan)

People are just unbelievable.

DYLAN

Dick head.

BRUCE

Don't say that, Dylan.

DYLAN

Dick head.

BRUCE

Dylan.

DYLAN

Dick head.

BRUCE

Poop.

DYLAN

Dick head.

Act One

Scene One

Lights up. Late December, after Christmas. BRUCE, 50, and his son DYLAN, 19, are in a car. BRUCE is driving, irritated by the traffic. DYLAN sits awkwardly next to him. DYLAN wears a red Santa hat and hugs a baseball glove. On the car radio, a Christmas tune plays.

BRUCE

I hate traffic. I really, really do. It's two o'clock on a Thursday afternoon. Hello, people?! Where is everyone going?! This is not D.C. This is not L.A. This is Morrisville, North Carolina! No one lives in Morrisville, North Carolina!

The car huffs and puffs like it's going to quit.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Oh, no. No, no, no, no, no, no, no. Not now. Not now!

It doesn't.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Thank you. We have to get another car. The Datsun is dying. I want you to learn how to take the bus, by the way.

DYLAN rubs his head. He gets emotional. BRUCE notices, turning off the radio.

BRUCE (cont'd)

Dylan?

DYLAN

I got that bad thing in my head.

BRUCE

Hey, pal, why are you thinking about that?

DYLAN

I can't get it out of my head.

BRUCE

Think nice things.

DYLAN

I can't get that bad thing out of my head, Dad.

A Beautiful Day

By Mark Cornell

Characters:

BRUCE, father, 50, black

DYLAN, son, 19, mixed, autistic

FOREE, Bruce's father, early 30s, black

MAGGIE, Bruce's sister-in-law and
Dylan's aunt, 40s, white

MR. JENSEN, the neighbor, 70s, white

EMMA, Bruce's wife, and Dylan's mother,
35, white

Setting:

Durham, North Carolina.

A Beautiful Day

By Mark Cornell

3/15/25

Mark Cornell
310-738-0796
markcornell53@yahoo.com
Chapel Hill, NC