

MAN. I got lucky. Heads up! Left!

(A big explosion meaning the game is over.)

JAMIE. Wow! That was, that was . . . strange.

MAN. What's strange?

JAMIE. Mostly . . . video games are a young—er uh . . . thing. No offense.

MAN. No, I get it. It's fine. How much for the drink?

JAMIE. Oh, uhm, a buck twenty-five.

(MAN takes out his wallet.)

MAN. Buck twenty-five!

JAMIE. Yeah . . . that's pretty standard.

MAN. No, it's great, it's great. Here, keep it.

(MAN hands him a five.)

JAMIE. Thanks!

MAN. Busy tonight?

JAMIE. No, nobody's drinking. Everybody's hunkered down. Reagan's got to fix this recession.

MAN. Reagan, right. But, you know, recessions come and go.

JAMIE. I hope so. I need to make some money soon.

MAN. What's up?

JAMIE. Oh, nothing . . .

MAN. No, tell me.

JAMIE. I can't. Bartenders do the listening. It's not just a good idea, it's the law.

MAN. It's OK, I used to be one. I'm still licensed . . . come on.

JAMIE. *(Beat.)* OK, you know who Miles Davis is?

MAN. Oh course, jazz trumpeter, one of the greats, everyone knows him.

JAMIE. He's like a "Shaolin monk" for the trumpet. He said an interesting thing, he said "Sometimes you have to play a long time to—"

BOTH. "—be able to play like yourself."

JAMIE. You know that one?

MAN. I've heard it. So?

JAMIE. Well, that's what I'm saving for. I play piano. Graduated from music school a few years ago. Got my MA. But I think I still suck.

MAN. Where'd you go to school?

JAMIE. University of Rochester. Maybe the best music school in the country. Know it?

MAN. No, but if it's so good, how come you suck?

JAMIE. It takes a long time—

BOTH. "—to be able to play like yourself."

JAMIE. Yeah! I mean, really, my left hand is pretty good, but my right is kind of an idiot.

(He holds up his right hand as he speaks.)

I'm talking about you! I'm sorry, this is so boring. Hey, let's talk about something else . . . *Rocky III* is out, you see it?

MAN. Wait, wait, show me.

JAMIE. What?

MAN. You ever play that old Steinway you got here?

(He points to the piano.)

JAMIE. Sometimes. I think that's why I got this job. Basically, I just need to know "Auld Lang Syne" and "Danny Boy."

MAN. OK, your right hand, show me what's going on.

JAMIE. What?

MAN. I used to teach a little. Come on . . . Whattayagottolose?

(They go to the piano. JAMIE sits and plays something, a few random notes.)

JAMIE. Well, look, it's these quick runs that mess me up sometimes. Like . . .

(He plays something fast like a boogie woogie piano blues piece. He gets into it but it's a little rough here and there.)

JAMIE. Dammit!

(He stops. MAN sits in.)

MAN. Can I suggest something?

JAMIE. OK . . .

JAMIE. It is, it is.

(JAMIE walks over by MAN at the jukebox.)

I got him to put a few classics on there. At the bottom, on the right . . .

MAN. Oh yeah. Some great choices. Nice. Here, I'll play this . . .

JAMIE. Careful, that thing is temperamental, steals quarters.

(MAN puts a quarter in the jukebox. Nothing plays. He pounds it a little bit.)

JAMIE. Well, I guess you don't have the touch, after all. Sorry.

MAN. Oh well . . .

JAMIE. I'm going in back for a minute. We going to be OK out here?

MAN. What? *(Beat. Looks around and then looks at ABBY, getting it.)* Oh sure, sure. But I'm deducting it from your time! Kidding! *(He laughs.)* Go ahead, no funny business. I swear to God!

(JAMIE exits. MAN comes over by ABBY. They both sip their drinks.)

MAN. You love Rice Krispie treats, huh?

ABBY. I'm trying to quit. I've got a marshmallow on my back!

MAN. *(They laugh a bit.)* Hey, I'm sorry if this seems odd. I hope I'm not making you uncomfortable.

ABBY. Well, yeah but, don't worry about it. Next to a lot of my customers, you don't even move the needle. Besides, it can take me months to save a thousand bucks. And I didn't even have to dance on a pole! "Bow, chicka, bow, bow . . .!"

(She takes out the money again and fans it out, trails it down her front, funny/suggestively.)

MAN. My eyes, my eyes! We said no "funny business!"

(They laugh a bit and she puts the money away and nonchalantly gets up and moves a bit away. She's not actually all that comfortable with things.)

ABBY. OK, so what did you want to talk about?

MAN. Oh, you know, everything, nothing. How long have you known Jamie?

ABBY. A while.

(Pause.)

MAN. I don't mean to pry.

(Pause.)

MAN. You know, I've been married thirty-five years.

ABBY. Uh huh.

(Pause.)

MAN. You're with someone that long, it feels . . . sort of like it's an accomplishment. You never want to break that winning streak, you know?

(Pause.)

ABBY. Jamie and I have been seeing each other about two years, right around.

MAN. How'd you meet?

ABBY. He used to stop off to eat before going home.

MAN. At the IHOP.

ABBY. Yeah. We'd talk, like that. Every time we'd talk a little more. Nothing special but he seemed different than the late-shift crowd.

MAN. How different?

ABBY. Well . . . sober.

MAN. A plus.

ABBY. Two in the morning at the IHOP, that's like waiting on Jimmy Hoffa. Oh, and on our first date, he took me out dancing.

MAN. Yeah? Disco?

ABBY. Oh no, far from it.

MAN. What's far from disco?

ABBY. He showed up in a nice suit. I thought we were going for pizza! But I ran back in and changed into this red dress I had, and we were off! He took me to this club where they play older music with a live band. They even had a mirror ball! It's so corny but I loved it, it was like going back in time, like those old movies with "supper clubs"? We danced!

MAN. What did you dance to?

ABBY. Oh, some, I don't know, big-band stuff, forties music. What was that one song . . . ? Something about having a crush or something? It was . . . great, magical.

MAN. I bet.

ABBY. . . . I totally fell for it.

ABBY. I do.

MAN. So you'll do everything to . . . you'll help him. Might mean taking a back seat?

ABBY. I want him to succeed, I really do. It's just— I've always heard that a lot of really successful people are . . . I just don't know that he's selfish enough to be great.

MAN. I see . . .

ABBY. Oh, I know, another thing I love? A lot of times, when he closes the bar, we turn down the lights, have a drink, and we'll sit here for a while. And he plays, just for me. Just us. We sit here and it all goes away . . . the drunks at IHOP, the garbage on the street, the smell of kitchen grease in my hair. And pretty soon . . . it all fades and it's just . . . us. I love it . . . those late-night private concerts, how many people get those?

MAN. *(Beat.)* You love him.

ABBY. *(Beat.)* I do.

(Pause.)

MAN. Quick story . . . I knew a guy once.

(JAMIE reenters.)

JAMIE. What are we talking about?

MAN. I was about to regale Abby with a story!

JAMIE. Is this a private regale?

MAN. Not at all! Group regale! Get a drink . . . OK, here goes . . . I knew this guy.

(JAMIE goes behind the bar and gets a drink. MAN stands and sort of acts out the story.)

MAN. A baseball pitcher. I mean, he was the goods, a pitcher, lights out. This guy was going places. Drafted, first round. They started him out in the minors, like everybody . . . but he was a lock. I mean, a lock.

ABBY. And?

MAN. And he got married. Bam, pregnant! The minors don't pay much and even with his signing bonus . . . he was moving up fast but in the off-season, he got a job, loading trucks, midnight shifts for Canada Dry. Responsible, right? Good guy, right? One night, maybe he was tired, whatever, he caught his throwing hand under

a full palette, sixty cases. Smashed it. Baseball? *(Gestures like a bubble bursting.)* Poof . . .

ABBY. That's terrible.

MAN. Yeah. He got a job at a sporting goods store. And he coaches a high school team. He's even had a couple of his players go to the pros. But not him. Never him now.

(Pause.)

ABBY. But he's got a child. That's important, too.

MAN. It is. No question.

ABBY. We can't always have . . . I mean it's sad but it's not the end of the world—

MAN. No, it's not the end of the world. Not at all. No one is saying that.

(Pause. A special may fade up for the next sequence.)

But sometimes . . . at night . . . he dreams he's pitching. The stands are full, the grass is fresh cut and he's punchin' everybody out, "Stee-rike three!"

Then the catcher throws and it hits his mitt, slap, and the stands are empty. The park is deserted. He wakes up. The alarm reads 3:14 and he's got tears in his eyes . . .

He never tells his wife. Never. But it eats at him. And it always, always will. For his life, for his whole life. It'll never go away. That's all I'm saying . . .

JAMIE. That's not a real happy story . . .

MAN. Whoops, sorry, brought the room down. Hey, got to hit the john.

(MAN exits upstage right.)

JAMIE. It's right over . . .

(MAN doesn't hear him but exits easily to the bathroom.)

JAMIE. *(To ABBY:)* Is this all right?

ABBY. Fine . . .

JAMIE. You don't seem . . . want me to shut this down?

ABBY. I'm not giving back the money so we're holding up our end!

JAMIE. OK . . .

ABBY. OK.

JAMIE. Is he getting . . . I mean, is it . . . That story, what was that about?

ABBY. Before you came in we were talking a lot about you.

JAMIE. Me?

ABBY. Yeah, he talked about your playing piano, he said how you went to Eastman school, how you want to take time off to get better.

JAMIE. Really?

(Pause.)

ABBY. I need you to promise me something.

JAMIE. Sure, what?

ABBY. You know I believe in you, right?

JAMIE. I know that. You love me.

ABBY. I really do. But I believe in you. That's a separate thing. You know that, right?

JAMIE. I do know that.

ABBY. OK. So, look at me. No matter what, no matter what happens. Promise me.

JAMIE. What?!

ABBY. *(Pause.)* Never work for Canada Dry.

JAMIE. *(Beat.)* But, I love ginger ale.

ABBY. Never!

JAMIE. All right! *(Pause.)* Pepsi, OK?

ABBY. *(She laughs a bit.)* Pepsi's fine.

JAMIE. Dr. Pepper?

ABBY. *(Laughing some more:)* What is Dr. Pepper?

JAMIE. No one knows . . . !

ABBY. But no Canada Dry . . . !

JAMIE. Absolutely not! I refuse! Those sneaky . . . Canadians . . . ! How do they stay so dry?!

ABBY. I don't know!

(They might laugh. MAN reenters.)

MAN. Ah, lovebirds!

JAMIE. Sorry, too much PDA here!

MAN. PDA! That's right . . . no, you go ahead!

JAMIE. So, how are we doing? Earning our money?

MAN. You're doing great, just great. You know, it's so nice to be in this place again after all these years. Not that different than I remember it.

JAMIE. What do you do?

MAN. I'm pretty much retired now. Rattle around the house, annoy my wife, you know, standard "geezer" stuff.

ABBY. What did you do?

MAN. *(Pause.)* Oh, for many years I was a teacher. High school music, band, jazz band, like that.

JAMIE. That's how you know about Miles Davis!

MAN. Yeah, I even got to say hello to Davis once, after a concert.

JAMIE. Wow, what's he like?

MAN. No idea. I said hello to him. He didn't say hello to me.

JAMIE. Sorry.

MAN. Yeah, but really, who was I to him? This nobody old music teacher, fawning all over him . . . Not like I . . . you know . . .

ABBY. So, you're retired? Have any kids?

MAN. Boy and a girl. My daughter, Annie, married, lives in Seattle. Got twins! I'm a grandpa now! Cute kids! Call me Pop-pop.

JAMIE. To Pop-pop! Congrats!

ABBY. Congratulations!

(Everybody toasts and sips.)

So, that's your daughter. What about your—? *(son)*

MAN. *(Riding over her, to JAMIE:)* You ever think about teaching?

JAMIE. Me? No! I think I'd be a terrible teacher.

MAN. Ha!

ABBY. You'd be a great teacher!

JAMIE. I don't know. I mean, what level of hell is it to be teaching some kid to play "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" all day? I think I'd kill myself or drink too much or something.

MAN. It's not that bad.

JAMIE. I'm sorry, look, teaching is . . . it's so important, the most important job there is. I just think you have to be the right person for it and I am not that guy.

ABBY. I think you'd be great. You care so much about music and you really like people. You'd be great.

MAN. I think she's right. You'd be a great teacher. Maybe some of your students would become professionals. Wouldn't that be good?

JAMIE. I . . . I can't see it.

MAN. *(Beat.)* Can I get another one of these?

JAMIE. Sure.

(JAMIE gets up and then pounds on the bar.)

Wait! Let's do some shots! You in, hon?

ABBY. Sure! I'm off tomorrow!

JAMIE. Kamikazes!

MAN. Kamikazes?! Sure, why not? Let's do ka-mi-kazes!

(JAMIE jumps back behind the bar and quickly mixes up a shaker of kamikazes.)

JAMIE. People love my kamikazes! My kamikazes can heal a troubled world!

MAN. Why it's like drinking from the spring at Lourdes!

JAMIE. Exactly!

MAN. What's your kamikaze secret?

JAMIE. I-can't-tell-you-no-I-can't-all-right-you-forced-me-I'll-tell-you. I use Cointreau instead of Triple Sec and real lime juice, which we're out of now. But most importantly, I make them with love. Love, do you hear?! *(As he's over-pouring the vodka part:)* Lots and lotsssss of love! Everybody ready?

ABBY. Bring it on!

MAN. Look out, kamikazes!

(JAMIE grabs shot glasses and brings everything over to the table. He pours and they hold up their shots.)

ABBY. What are we drinking to?

MAN. To dreams coming true!

JAMIE. Cliché alert! Warning, warning! Danger, Will Robinson!

MAN. OK, you pick, what are we drinking to?

JAMIE. I say, we'll drink to you! To the guy who's paying for all this, paying for me to practice till my fingers bleed! To . . . Ohmigod, what is your name, anyway?

MAN. Jim. Jimmy.

ABBY. Hey, another one! To Jamie and Jimmy!

(She starts to sip her shot.)

JAMIE. No sipping! "Shot" is a noun and a verb!

MAN. To us!

(Everyone does the shot. MAN has a big reaction, then settles.)

MAN. You know, I taste the love . . .

(JAMIE re-pours from the shaker.)

JAMIE. Got some more here!

MAN. OK, then! To Abby and all the women in our lives! 'Cause even if we come home drunk and disgusting, the women are always there! . . . to tell us we're drunk and disgusting.

MAN and JAMIE. To women!

(They all drink again.)

JAMIE. Got a little bit more!

(He pours the last of it again.)

ABBY. No! I can't!

JAMIE. We're Irish, we must!

MAN. We must! *(Phony Irish accent:)* Ya don't want to be bringin' a shame to this good house, do ya?! DO YA!?

JAMIE. Shame! SHAME!!!

ABBY. *(Laughing a bit:)* OK, OK! What's this one to?

JAMIE. We must drink to something . . .

(Pause while they consider.)

MAN. Cirrhosis of the liver!

ALL. Cirrhosis of the liver!

(They laugh and shoot again.)

JAMIE. Ah, oh boy, we've got to slow down now!

(Beat as they recover a bit.)

ABBY. So, we've been talking about us. What about you?

MAN. What about me?

ABBY. You said you haven't been here in thirty years. Where've you been?

MAN. Where've I been? Where've I . . . Not that far away really. I kind of, moved on . . . teaching, like I said. I tell you though, sometimes you wake up in the morning and wonder, "How did I get here," you know?

ABBY. Yeah . . .

MAN. I'm telling you guys . . . it all looks like blue skies and green lights to you right now. But at this end . . . *(Awkward, he laughs. Beat.)* Listen to me, sounding like the old sage here . . .

JAMIE. Oh, we know life is tough.

MAN. Of course, of course. I don't mean anything. It's the booze talking I tell you!

(A little light laughter.)

So, I know I'm wearing you guys out here, but I'm having a great time.

ABBY. No, we're fine. I mean, you're buying! How's your time?

(MAN checks his watch.)

MAN. I'm good, I'm good.

JAMIE. Cool. *(Beat.)* So, what do you say, we seem to be drinking. Let's play a drinking game!

MAN. Oh boy, this is trouble.

ABBY. What game?

JAMIE. How about Truth or Dare? Someone asks a question and if you don't want to answer, you do a dare, or a shot? Nothing that involves taking off clothing!

MAN. Oh, thank God!

JAMIE. That good?

ABBY. Sure, but I'm smaller than you guys. You have to do two shots.

MAN. Deal.

JAMIE. Deal. OK, who starts? Ask me anything!

ABBY. OK! Truth or dare?

JAMIE. Truth!

ABBY. If you were stranded on a desert island and could have one person with you, and it couldn't be me, who would you want?

JAMIE and MAN. Oooo!!!

MAN. Walked right into that one! BAM!

JAMIE. I did not see that coming! You are fiendish!

ABBY. I am!

JAMIE. OK, well, sorry, but it's not going to be a guy. So, who would I want . . . who would I want . . . ? *(Pause.)* Bo Derek!

ABBY. Bo Derek!? She's a model! How would she help you survive on a desert island?!

JAMIE. *(He thinks a beat.)* By running up and down the beach in slow motion.

MAN and JAMIE. Oh!

MAN. You are in so much trouble.

ABBY. Yes, you are! I could do that!

(ABBY gets up and runs across the downstage in excessively sultry slow motion.)

ABBY. Oh Jamie, Jamie, I'm going to go get some coconuts for lunch . . . Oooo, oooo . . . !

(JAMIE and MAN laugh. ABBY stops the running and sits.)

How was that?

JAMIE. You run much better than Bo Derek.

ABBY. Good answer!

JAMIE. OK, we need to move on. *(Pause. He shifts in tone.)* OK, who's next? You! Jimmy, truth or dare?

MAN. I'll take . . . truth!

JAMIE. OK, who are you?

MAN. I'm Jimmy.

JAMIE. No . . . who are you?

MAN. What do you mean?

JAMIE. I mean, how did you play "Asteroids" better than me? That game just came out!

MAN. Well—

JAMIE. Hang on: How did you know Abby's name? You said I should get Abby and me a drink but we didn't introduce you by name. And I told you that I went to University of Rochester but you told her, it was the Eastman school. I just said the Rochester part. The piano is covered up but you knew it was a Steinway. You knew a lot of stuff without asking! How? How did you know all that?

(Long pause. MAN looks at both of them.)

MAN. Can I take the dare?

JAMIE. Nope.

MAN. Can I phone a friend?

JAMIE. What?

MAN. Nothing.

JAMIE. Answer the question. Truth.

(Pause. MAN stands up, moves around the bar as he speaks.)

MAN. OK. OK. Multi-part question, multi-part answer: First of all, you won't believe me.

JAMIE. Try me.

MAN. OK. OK . . . let's say you lived your life, like a lot of people do; busy, right? Gettin' stuff done, right? But there's always been this thing, this . . . hum, this cheap electric clock humming in the background. Hummmm . . . And the days and the weeks get by and you? You are gettin' stuff done! That sabbatical thing you want to do? Well, you're definitely going to get around to it! "I'll definitely do that. Plenty of time." And hummmm . . . Then years go by and you're raising kids, getting the oil changed, homeowner's insurance . . . "Hey look, do you believe it's 1990, already? 1995 already? I can't believe it's 2005 already . . .!"

And hummmmm . . .

And then one day, you realize that you're older than the President. And that everyone is dying! Friends, celebrities. People your own age are dying and no one thinks it's weird or sad because, "They lived a good life." So, that hum in the background? Now it's like a wasp in your ear . . . That news thing you talked about? The "Memoriam" feature? It ain't gonna be you . . . 'cause, come on, why would it? Who are you?

JAMIE. I don't get how this answers the question.

MAN. I'm getting to that!

JAMIE. Well, thank God!

MAN. So, one day you realize that you let things slip away. But, BUT, what would you do if you got the chance to change it? A friend, an old buddy, let's say Tom, Tom gave you a thing that lets you come back to talk to your younger self?

(He takes off the watch and puts in on the table in front of him for them to see.)

MAN. Would you take it? Would you go back?

(Pause.)

JAMIE. So you're saying . . . ?

MAN. What am I saying?

JAMIE. What are you saying?

MAN. I'm answering your question.

JAMIE. How?

MAN. I'm telling you.

JAMIE. What are you telling me?

MAN. You know what I'm telling you.

(Pause.)

JAMIE. You're saying you're like me?

MAN. No. *(Beat.)* I'm not like you.

JAMIE. Then what?

MAN. *(Pause.)* I play "Asteroids" better than you because I played it longer. I knew it was Eastman school because I went there. And I knew Abby when she walked in because . . .

ABBY. What? Because what?

MAN. *(Pause.)* We got married, had kids. I taught high school. Just retired this year. They gave me a real nice certificate. Students all took selfies with me.

ABBY. Took what?

MAN. You'll find out. *(Back to JAMIE:)* So, that's how I knew all that stuff.

JAMIE. *(Sarcastic:)* Oh please, come on, this is crazy. This is sad.

MAN. Yeah? It's sad? You know what the second saddest thing in the world is?

JAMIE. What?

MAN. Living your whole life and never finding out why you're here.

ABBY. What's the first?

MAN. Finding out and not doing it.

(Pause.)

JAMIE. OK . . . this is over!

(JAMIE stands up and starts putting things away.)

MAN. What? No!

JAMIE. Yeah, pal. You seemed OK and I needed the money but I knew I shouldn't do this and I was right. I'll call you a cab.

MAN. Wait a minute, wait a minute, we had a deal!

(JAMIE takes out the money and puts it on the table.)

Hold on!

JAMIE. Abby.

(She puts her money on the table but she doesn't care for being ordered to do it. JAMIE goes to the front door and unlocks it to let MAN out. It remains unlocked.)

MAN. Just a second!

JAMIE. Take your money. Sorry, this didn't work out. You've gotta go!

MAN. OK, OK. I'll leave! I will! And I'll still pay you what I said. You can keep that money, every dime. I'll walk out and it'll all be yours.

JAMIE. *(Hustling him out.)* Pal . . .

MAN. I'll leave! Let's just—

(He thinks a moment.)

Let's just finish! We were playing a game. You and I took a turn. Abby takes a turn and I'll go. Isn't that fair?

JAMIE. No, look—

MAN. Don't you want the money? To help you "play like yourself"? Don't you want it bad enough?!

JAMIE. Yes, no . . . this is—

MAN. Fine! Then I take my turn. I get to ask Abby something or give her a dare.

JAMIE. Abby isn't going to—

ABBY. *(Cutting JAMIE off.)* Fine, let's do it.

JAMIE. Wait a second!

ABBY. Jamie, yes! I'm doing it. But no "truth" things. We've had enough of that for one night! Dare. What's my dare?

MAN. OK with you?

JAMIE. *(Beat.)* I'm not the boss of her.

MAN. Get used to that. *(To ABBY.)* So, great, you said a dare, right?

ABBY. Right.

MAN. OK, OK, "dare." On your first date, you said Jamie took you dancing.

ABBY. Right . . .

MAN. I just want one dance. I'll put on some music, we'll dance a short one, and if you both want me to leave after that, I'm gone. Nothing funny. *(To JAMIE.)* You're the chaperone. That work?

JAMIE. No.

ABBY. Yes! Put it on!

(MAN goes to the jukebox, takes out a quarter, and scans it to make a selection.)

JAMIE. Abby, no!

ABBY. I thought you weren't the boss of me!

JAMIE. I'm not. It's just . . . If he tries anything . . .

ABBY. Look, I'm not worried. You're right here. I think "young" you can take "old" you.

JAMIE. Look, he's not—!

ABBY. Watch out though, "old you" might have some tricks.

JAMIE. Abby . . .

ABBY. Maybe he studied Kung Fu all these years to come back and kick his own ass!

JAMIE. You're not funny!

ABBY. I'm pretty funny.

(MAN pounds on the jukebox. Nothing plays.)

JAMIE. No luck, huh? I guess we can't do it. So—

MAN. Never mind. We don't need it. Come on.

(MAN extends his hand to ABBY. She takes it and they dance. He sings this song or something like it.)

ACT TWO

(A repeat of the exact moment before intermission.)

WOMAN. Asshole!

(JAMIE and ABBY are agog at her presence.)

Tom gives you the thing and the first chance you get, what do you do?! Go see the Beatles? No. Catch the Gettysburg Address? No. STRANGLE BABY HITLER?! No! You come here to see us! I do not believe you!

JAMIE. That's what I said!

WOMAN. *(She talks to JAMIE without looking.)* Wait your turn!

(WOMAN now looks at JAMIE and is taken aback for a moment.)

Oh my . . . Those were the days . . .

(She moves over closer to JAMIE and sizes him up a bit, finally checking out his butt.)

WOMAN. You were so young!

MAN. Yeah.

WOMAN. So much hair.

MAN. OK . . .

WOMAN. Your skin is—

MAN. OK! Oh, great, you're wearing that coat. Why do you have to wear that coat?

WOMAN. I like it!

MAN. Yeah . . .

WOMAN. It's my coat . . . do not . . . Don't try to distract me!

MAN. How did you find me?

WOMAN. These things leave a trail. Tom had another one.

(She holds up her watch. It's a copy of his.)

MAN. OK, look, I'm really out of time, look at this.

(He shows her his watch.)

WOMAN. Let me see that!

(She takes the watch from him and starts manipulating it.)

Oh my goodness . . .

MAN. What?

WOMAN. You set it wrong.

MAN. No I didn't!

WOMAN. Yes you did!

MAN. No I didn't!

WOMAN. Look! What time does it say it is now?

(She points to a "clock" on the fourth wall. He checks it out, looks back at his watch, and then quiets.)

MAN. Oh . . .

WOMAN. Oh. You know, some day, some bright, beautiful sunny day, the birds are going to wake you with song, you are going spring out of bed, take a deep breath, and read the damn directions!

(She finishes manipulating the watch.)

OK, there, you have another half-hour or so—

MAN. But . . .

WOMAN. —to sit there and shut up!

(MAN sits. WOMAN looks around a moment.)

Hi folks!

(ABBY gets up and comes over by WOMAN.)

ABBY. Wait, are you . . . ?

WOMAN. I am. *(Beat.)* Sorry.

ABBY. For what?

(WOMAN gestures to herself.)

You look great.

WOMAN. I was always so nice. What happened to that?

ABBY. I'm serious. You look great . . . I can't wait to be you.

WOMAN. You're REALLY nice. I miss that about myself. But you know what I really miss?

ABBY. What?

(WOMAN looks at and/or gestures to ABBY's chest.)

WOMAN. When these *(pointing to herself)* were up there *(pointing to ABBY.)* Good times.

(ABBY moves away a bit or something, embarrassed.)

Sometimes people get a little coarser as they age . . .

ABBY. No, it's fine.

JAMIE. Can I get you a drink?

WOMAN. I do think I need one. Gin and tonic?

ABBY and WOMAN. Tanqueray!

JAMIE. Coming up!

(He goes behind the bar to make it.)

WOMAN. *(Addressing JAMIE.)* Thank you. OK, so, I'm sure the "long suffering artist" here has come back to try to get you to play more piano or something, am I right?

JAMIE. You're right.

WOMAN. And that if you do that, you'll magically be happier?

JAMIE. Yes.

WOMAN. And you just believed him?

ABBY. He gave us two thousand dollars . . .

(She puts the money on the bar for WOMAN to see.)

WOMAN. Two thousand? *(Back to MAN.)* Where did you . . . ? Wait, this is the old money. Where did you get it?

JAMIE. Old?

WOMAN. They changed it. Where did you get this?

MAN. Collectors. I knew I'd need it.

JAMIE. But, uhm . . .

WOMAN. But, what?

JAMIE. Well, there's more.

WOMAN. What "more"?

JAMIE. Here you go. *(JAMIE hands her the drink.)* He said he chose this particular night, tonight I was going to . . . he came to get me to not do something.

WOMAN. Not do something? What does he want you to not . . . ?

(She looks down at the table and sees the ring box. She picks it up and opens it.)

WOMAN. Ohmigod . . . you chose tonight?

(She looks at it a moment, fondly, and sets it down. Pause.)

You're here to keep us from getting married?

(MAN is a bit ashamed but trying to play it off.)

MAN. That was only part of it . . .

WOMAN. What's the other part?! Are you supposed to kill me, too?!

MAN. Abby—

WOMAN. What?

MAN. I'm just trying to say—

WOMAN. No. No. You don't get to say anything! You don't get to speak! You had time to speak before I got here and now your time is up; I get to speak!

MAN. I'm trying to tell you—

WOMAN. Your. Time. Is. UP! Yeah . . .

(He shuts up. Pause.)

You came back and what advice did you have for yourself? Take up yoga? Observe the speed limit? Eat some kale?!

JAMIE. We talked about the Cubs—

WOMAN. Look, you're very nice but I am mad enough for both of you right now!

JAMIE. Right . . .

(Pause.)

WOMAN. You came here to erase me.

MAN. No . . .

WOMAN. Erase us. Just like that. How could you . . . ? I know we've had some . . . we haven't had everything we want, but . . . you'd just make all that go away?

MAN. You don't understand . . .

WOMAN. What? What don't I understand? I need to know that. What? You? I pretty much understand you! I understand thirty-five years of listening to you breathe next to me in bed. Thirty-five years you wrap up in the blankets like you're freezing while I kick them off. I understand that! Your prostate cancer, menopause, that stupid brown Pinto we bought . . . I understand Annie's first date and Greg's . . . (Pause. She can barely say his name.) Greg.

(Angry, hurting, she moves away from MAN like she can't stand to look at him now and is over by the bar. Pause.)

WOMAN. It. Was. Not. Easy. But we did it. Not always with a Pepsodent smile and bouncy hair but we did it. Life is hard and you don't get a "do-over"! No one does! AAAAHHH!

(She pounds on the bar and then subsides.)

And when I think . . . when I think that you'd just . . . just throw it out, all of it. I just . . . I . . . I just . . . I just . . . (Beat.) Are those Rice Krispie treats?

ABBY. Do you want one?

WOMAN. I WANT SIX!

ABBY. Please.

(WOMAN reaches in to take some but they're stuck together and she extracts a large piece that is nearly the whole pan. She eats from this.)

MAN. Abby—

(Her mouth is full.)

WOMAN. Nah-eh!

MAN. Abby . . .

WOMAN. NAH-EH!!!

(WOMAN puts the large piece back in the pan. End of bit.)

JAMIE. Well, I know I'm him, but can I say something?

WOMAN. (She chews, considers, looks back and forth between him and MAN and then makes assenting noises:) Uh huh . . .

JAMIE. Look, both of you . . . uhm, thanks for coming? I'm going to take this as a, a wake up-call! I hear you, I have to work hard at life, go into it with my eyes open, not float along like . . . hearing that hum like you said, right? I won't. OK? Cool? Great! Thanks! And I promise I'll eat more kale! (Beat.) What's kale?

MAN. You can't do that. That's not enough.

JAMIE. Why? Who says?

WOMAN. I really hate to say this, but he's right.

JAMIE. Why? You just told him he was an idiot.

WOMAN. Oh, he definitely is. Absolutely!

MAN. Here's the deal. To change a thing this big, you need what's called, an "Irrevocable Change." It's in the directions.

WOMAN. Oh, really? You read that part?

WOMAN. What's going on?

MAN. Is everything—?

ABBY. Just wait! Something's not right, something isn't adding up! I need to talk to you!

JAMIE. Sure, sure. What do you—?

ABBY. Not you!

JAMIE. Then who?

MAN. Yeah, who?

ABBY. Me! Her! You know, me!

WOMAN. Me?

ABBY. You!

WOMAN. And you?

ABBY. Me, myself, and I!

WOMAN. OK!

JAMIE. Can I help in any—

ABBY. Sure! Go sit down and be quiet.

JAMIE. Sit down and be—?

ABBY. Yes. Over there.

(She points stage right to the farthest sitting spot from center. JAMIE walks over and sits a little closer than she indicated.)

JAMIE. Here?

ABBY. Nope. There. That one.

(JAMIE sits at the second to last barstool.)

At the end.

(He shifts to the last barstool.)

A little further.

(He shifts to the nearside of the piano bench.)

All the way. Scoot.

(He resignedly shifts to the farthest end of the bench.)

MAN. (To JAMIE:) I got this. (Back to the women:) So what are we talking about?

WOMAN. We aren't talking about a thing. You sit over there!

(WOMAN indicates the farthest seat stage left.)

MAN. What? Me?!

WOMAN. Yes, you. This is a private conversation!

(MAN reluctantly, maybe like a bratty child, walks left.)

MAN. But . . .

WOMAN. Over there.

(He sits to the side but looks intently at them.)

And you don't need to listen. Wait . . .

(She grabs an old newspaper that's nearby and roughly hands it to him.)

Here.

MAN. Why are you giving me this?!

WOMAN. Because we don't have a coloring book!

(MAN reluctantly takes it. WOMAN turns back to ABBY.)

So. What?

ABBY. OK, something about this . . . it just doesn't add up.

WOMAN. What do you mean?

ABBY. The whole time he was talking . . .

WOMAN. He who?

ABBY. Him.

(Points to MAN.)

WOMAN. Got it.

ABBY. The whole time he was talking, it reminded me of when he (referring to JAMIE) tried to throw me a surprise party.

WOMAN. I don't remember that.

ABBY. It was last year.

WOMAN. That's like thirty-six years ago . . .

ABBY. Right, right . . . Anyway, he tried to throw me a surprise party but he kept acting strange. I'd ask him and he'd squint his eyes and say, (imitating him:) "I haven't got the faintest idea what you're talking about." Worst poker face in America.

WOMAN. You're right! He does that!

MAN. No, I don't!

WOMAN. (*Quickly without even looking:*) Shut up.

JAMIE. I don't think I—

ABBY. (*Also without looking:*) Quiet! So, he . . . your edition . . . has been making that same face tonight.

WOMAN. One time, he bet a thousand dollars on the Super Bowl and lost.

ABBY. I don't remember that.

WOMAN. Hasn't happened yet.

ABBY. Right.

JAMIE. What year? Who won?

WOMAN. The team with helmets . . . ! BUT he kept squinting and saying "I haven't the faintest idea . . ." until I caught it. Never bet again.

ABBY. So, what are we looking at here?

WOMAN. We've got a guy who's lying to us.

ABBY. But why go back in time to lie?

JAMIE. If I—can I say something?

ABBY. No!

MAN. (*Standing up:*) Can I say something?

WOMAN. No!

JAMIE. (*Standing up:*) I just want to—

ABBY. Nope!

MAN. What he wants to say—

WOMAN. Stop!

JAMIE. Can't I just—?

MAN. I'm just saying—

ABBY. Just be quiet!

MAN. Why?

JAMIE. Yeah, why?!

ABBY and WOMAN. I'M TALKING TO MYSELF!

(*The men back down and sit.*)

WOMAN. Where were we?

ABBY. So, there are a few things I know in this world: I know that every drunk at IHOP thinks the waitress wants him. I know that Oswald didn't act alone (pretty sure about that one) and I know that he's not telling us everything.

WOMAN. How do you mean?

ABBY. If he breaks us up, he says it's to make him a great musician, right?

WOMAN. Riii . . . ght . . .

ABBY. Well, the Jamie I know doesn't have it in him. He's not selfish enough. If he's come all the way back here tonight, it sure as hell wasn't for that. I mean, has he changed that much?

WOMAN. (*It's dawning on her too:*) No . . .

ABBY. But, I'm saying, you've had a lot more time with him.

WOMAN. Oh yeah . . .

ABBY. So talk to me. Who's he helping here? Jimmy?

(*Pause. MAN doesn't answer but abruptly gets up and goes behind the bar to make himself a drink.*)

MAN. Oh come on! I need a drink . . . Oh gosh, look!

(*He points to his watch.*)

We've only got a few more minutes.

(*ABBY turns to MAN.*)

ABBY. Jimmy!? Truth or dare.

WOMAN. What?

ABBY. We were playing before you came. Truth or dare, Jimmy. And it's going to be truth.

MAN. Oh please . . .

ABBY. Truth or dare!

MAN. Why should I?

(*JAMIE crosses in.*)

JAMIE. Because if you don't, I promise you, I PROMISE YOU I will not look at a piano and we'll all be back here in thirty-five years playing Truth or Dare.

MAN. But—

JAMIE. Look at me, look me in the eyes and tell me I'm lyin'.

ABBY. . . . I'm going to keep you the way you are now, as my Jamie. And I will never get over that guy.

(She exits. JAMIE is gut-shot. After a beat, He goes to the door and calls after her. It's not a yell, more plaintive.)

JAMIE. Abby.

(She doesn't come back. He comes back inside, shaken, gut-shot. He looks around and then, after a moment he dutifully starts to fully close the bar. He gathers up glasses and whatnot from around the bar. He grabs the pan of Rice Krispie squares, looks at them and then tosses them out. He turns out the remaining lights from a panel and finally turns off the jukebox. There are only dim work lights or "Exit" signs illuminating things now. He sees the two piles of money on the bar and picks them up, looking at them. He starts to put them in his pocket but feels something in there. It's the ring box. He pulls it out, opens it and looks at it for a moment. He then takes it over and places it back on the high shelf behind the Drambuie. [Or wherever.] As he's about to exit, he grabs a bottle of Scotch, removes the speed pour, and exits to the backroom. Lights dim and the stage changes to the present day, not a big change. Some of the beer signs have flipped and are now contemporary beers like "Stella Artois" and "Blue Moon." A banner appears that says "Cubs—World Series Champs—2016!" [If they repeat in the future, add that!] After a beat, MAN enters pushing the rolling bucket and mop. He might wear a hoodie and jeans, somewhat downscale but not poor, just casual.)

MAN. OK . . .

(WOMAN appears at the door. It's locked so she knocks. MAN yells at the door without looking to see whom it is.)

We're closed!

(WOMAN continues knocking.)

WOMAN. *(From off:)* Jamie? Jamie?!

(MAN opens the door. WOMAN is there, dressed in a nice coat, carrying a small grocery bag and a briefcase.)

MAN. I'm sorry, ma'am, we're closed, it's kinda late. There's an all-night place just over—

WOMAN. Jimmy! It's me!

MAN. What? I'm sorry . . . ?

(WOMAN enters.)

WOMAN. Jimmy. It's me. It's Abby!

MAN. Abby? Abby? ABBY—ABBY?! Oh my gosh, is it you? Abby!

(They have an awkward, "Should I hug or what?" moment but don't.)

MAN. *(Excited:)* ABBY what . . . ! Oh my gosh, how long's it been?! How are you? What are you doing here? It's so good to see you.

WOMAN. It's good to see you.

MAN. You look wonderful! You haven't changed a—

WOMAN. OK, stop.

MAN. Uhm, can I get you . . . a drink?

(WOMAN enters and slowly crosses to the middle of the bar.)

WOMAN. No, no thanks. *(Beat.)* This place hasn't changed a bit.

MAN. Well, the customers seem to like it, so if it ain't broke, why fix it, right?

WOMAN. *(She gives him a long look.)* That's funny coming from you.

MAN. OK . . . Here, let me take your coat.

(She takes off her coat and is wearing a casual but nice, smart, professional looking outfit underneath.)

MAN. . . . So . . . I . . . uhm . . . what brings you—?

WOMAN. *(Cutting him off:)* Do you know what tonight is?

MAN. Wednesday?

WOMAN. Jimmy. This is the night, the night we went back and saw ourselves, all those years ago.

MAN. It's tonight? Really? You kept track?

WOMAN. I told you I was going to write it down. *(Beat.)* That doesn't make me weird!

MAN. No one said that. Hey, please sit down.

(He grabs her bag and briefcase and motions her to the table, center. She sits.)

Groceries, huh?

WOMAN. A few things. I'm in town, staying at one of those suites places. It's got a little kitchen.

MAN. Right. Come on, let me get you a drink . . .

WOMAN. I don't really feel like—

MAN. Please! I'm the owner, it's what we do!

WOMAN. You actually bought this place? When?

MAN. Years ago, long time. Wait, I remember, gin and tonic? Tanqueray!

WOMAN. Fine.

MAN. Coming right up!

(He goes behind the bar to fix her drink.)

Nice briefcase.

WOMAN. Thanks.

MAN. Looks expensive.

WOMAN. A retirement present. The other faculty pitched in. Nice, huh?

MAN. You're a teacher?

WOMAN. *(Stalling a little till she gathers herself.)* Was. An English professor. There's that old video game . . . And the jukebox . . . how old is that?

MAN. Oh yeah, people love that stuff. It's "retro."

WOMAN. I remember . . . still temperamental?

MAN. Me or the jukebox? Kidding. Ha! *(No laughter from WOMAN.)* Yeah. It's still more like a slot machine. Never could fix it. Put in your quarter and you take your chances. Here you go!

(He hands her the drink.)

WOMAN. Thanks.

MAN. This is my favorite part of the night. All the drunks have gone home. All but one! HA!

(He comes over near her. Pause.)

So . . . yeah, we're stalling.

WOMAN. We sure are.

MAN. Thirty-five years ago.

WOMAN. Tonight.

MAN. Right. That was something . . .

WOMAN. We thought, I mean, we got a message from the future, right?!

MAN. Yeah, yeah . . . dodged a bullet.

WOMAN. Do you remember, back then? You took me dancing at that club. The mirror ball. It's funny how some memories stick.

MAN. It is . . . so, what brings you here?

(Pause.)

WOMAN. . . . I want you to tell me your life is good; that you're happy.

MAN. What?

WOMAN. We broke up. To make our lives better.

MAN. Abby . . .

WOMAN. I mean, all these years . . . I've wondered. Did we do the right thing?

MAN. I guess? . . . I mean, you go right, this happens, you go left, that happens. Who knows?

WOMAN. I know.

(Long pause as he sips.)

MAN. So, is this what you wanted to talk—

(She gets up and crosses to the old piano.)

WOMAN. *(Cutting him off.)* I see you still have that old piano.

MAN. Yeah, yeah . . . I have it tuned every decade or so . . . I can still play "Auld Lang Syne" and "Danny Boy."

WOMAN. You were going to practice, get as good as you could be. Did you?

MAN. I did, I did. Worked pretty hard at it.

WOMAN. And . . . ?

MAN. And . . . I finally got my right hand working! *(He holds up his right hand.)* It happened faster than I thought, I guess, no distract—

(Pause.)

Anyway, one night I got a call to fill in for a guy . . . and I sat in with Miles Davis!

WOMAN. Wow! What was that like?!

MAN. *(Beat.)* Amazing. Just amazing! I was so nervous, just tried to keep up. But at the end of the night he said, he told me I had "chops." Said I should come back.

WOMAN. That's great! Miles Davis!