

3 to 4 Months
By Eric Eidson

ELLEN, LEAH's older sister, scheduled a video call to talk about important family matters

The call begins.

Ellen
Finally.

Leah
What the fuck is that supposed to mean?

Ellen
It means, finally you answer my call.

Leah
You called seven minutes earlier than we discussed.

Ellen
I'm sorry, did I interrupt your arts & crafts time?

Leah
Those arts & crafts are what I do for a living.

Ellen
Some kind of living if you can't even pay rent.

Leah
Who the hell told you I can't afford to pay rent?

Ellen
Who do you think?

Leah
Fucking Russell. (Yells to the other room) Russell! Stop talking to my sister about our personal life.

Ellen
Looks like you two are doing well.

Leah
Mind your own business.

Ellen
It's hard to mind my own business when your husband is asking me for money.

Leah
I'm going to fucking kill him. What did he tell you?

Ellen
He told me you're broke. He told me he hasn't found a job yet and your hobby isn't making any money.

Leah
You know I hate it when you call it a hobby but you keep doing it. Quilting, knitting, and embroidering are my job.

Ellen
Last I heard, jobs make money. How much money are you making?

Leah
I'm not discussing my finances with you, and I don't want your money.

Ellen
I never said I was going to give it to you. I would lend you money, but in your current state, it would be more like throwing it away.

Leah
Can you go a day in your life without criticizing me? Is that too much to ask, Ellen?

Ellen
You just give me so much to work with.

Leah
I'm three seconds away from hanging up.

Ellen
Don't hang up. We need to talk about Mom.

Leah
What about her?

Ellen
Her cancer spread, Leah.

A moment.

Leah
Spread where?

Ellen

They found it in her lymph nodes and her lungs.

Leah

Shit.

Ellen

Doctors gave her three months, maybe four.

Leah

Holy shit. I can't believe this.

Ellen

Are you going to cry right now?

Leah

I don't know, Ellen. Maybe! Can I have a fucking moment to myself.

Ellen

Fine, but don't take too long, we need to discuss hospice care and funeral arrangements.

Leah

Right now?

Ellen

Yes, this stuff takes planning which takes time. That's called responsibility.

Leah

You just told me Mom was dying and you want to give me a lecture on responsibility?

Ellen

I'm not lecturing you. But if I don't force you to do something, it won't happen.

Leah

I'm not thinking clearly right now, so I'm not in any state of mind to make these kinds of decisions.

Ellen

Should I call back at a different time?

Leah

Jesus Christ, Ellen. You're impossible. I don't want to schedule another call with you. Just give me a fucking minute. Wait... is this why you wanted to set this up?

Ellen

Yes. I know this is big news, and since I can't tell you in person, I wanted to tell you like this.

Leah

You asked to set up this call last Wednesday. Have you known about this since last Wednesday?

Ellen

I've known about this since I went to the hospital with her. I was there when they told her the cancer had metastasized.

Leah

How long ago was that?

Ellen

If you were here, you would've known.

Leah

How long ago, Ellen?

Ellen

If you would call us once in a while you might know what's going on.

Leah

Ellen, can you fucking tell me how long you've known?

Ellen

We found out on the fifteenth.

Leah

The fifteenth? Of March? You found out about this a month ago?

Ellen

Yes.

Leah

The doctors told her she has three to four months left to live and you waited a month before telling me?

Ellen

I tried to set up this call for last week.

Leah

What's the difference?

Ellen

You could've called us. I refuse to let you guilt trip me.

Leah

I didn't know any of this was happening. The doctor's appointment, the cancer, how was I supposed to know?

Ellen

We didn't want to worry you.

Leah

No, instead you wanted to take my mom from me a month earlier than you had to.

Ellen

What's the difference? Whether I told you now or last month, nothing changes.

Leah

Of course things change. She's dying, Ellen. I want to spend as much time with her as possible.

Ellen

You can't afford to pay rent, how are you going to come live in Denver for three months?

Leah

I'll figure it out, okay?

Ellen

You can stay in my spare bedroom, but I'm going to charge you rent if you're here more than a week.

Leah

Our mom is dying and you're talking about charging me rent to visit her. I would never stay with you anyway. I'll stay with Mom.

Ellen

Mom lives with me now.

Leah

No she doesn't. She would never sell the house.

Ellen

She didn't sell the house, but she's living with me. The house is empty.

Leah

Fine I'll stay there then.

Ellen

You'll have to pay for utilities.

Leah
I can pay for the fucking utilities.

Ellen
When are you coming?

Leah
I don't know. I need to talk to Russell and figure out the specifics.

A moment.

Ellen
Do you need some money?

Leah
No.

Ellen
I'm going to transfer you \$1000.

Leah
I won't be able to pay you back for a long time.

Ellen
I know. Let me know when you have a plane ticket. I'll pick you up at the airport.

Leah
I will.

Ellen
Bye.

Leah
Bye.

The call ends.

End of Scene.