

MARTY. Why don't we start? And Lauren ... you can stop us at any time.

(Lauren nods, then steps back. Silence.)

MARTY. Neil.

(James continues reading his invisible newspaper.)

MARTY. Neil. I need to talk to you about something.

(A pause while James studies his invisible newspaper. Then he looks up.)

JAMES. *(To Marty and Lauren.)*

I'm sorry. I'm having a little — I'm kind of drawing a blank.

MARTY. Can you just go off what Lauren told you?

JAMES. I don't really ... I don't really know who this guy is.

MARTY. ... Can you try?

JAMES. Can I try to *what*?

(Marty sighs. A pause.)

JAMES. Never mind.
Start again.

(He goes back to reading his newspaper.)

MARTY. James. I mean, Neil.
Neil.

I need to talk to you.

JAMES. I'm busy.

MARTY. You're reading the newspaper.

JAMES. The newspaper is important to me.

MARTY. Please pay attention to me, Neil.

(After a second, James puts down his newspaper.)

JAMES. What is it?

MARTY. I'm lonely.

JAMES. Well, fine. I'm lonely, too. We're all lonely.

MARTY. Then why do you ignore us? Why do you insist on ...
why are you always reading at the dinner table? Or watching TV
when you should be talking to Lauren?

(A pause.)

MARTY. Why don't you engage with me anymore?

JAMES. You're too neurotic.

LAUREN. *(From the corner.)*

He wouldn't say that. I mean, he wouldn't think that.

MARTY. What would he think / was —

LAUREN. He would say that she's always nagging him.

JAMES. *(To Marty.)*

You're always nagging me.

MARTY. Maybe I'm nagging you because you're ignoring me!

JAMES. Maybe I'm ignoring you because you're driving me crazy!

(A pause.)

MARTY. Then leave, Neil.