

SCENE TWO

(About a week later. Nat is helping Becca clean out Danny's room. Becca is taking Danny's books out of a bookcase and placing them into a milk crate. Nat is taking toys, stuffed animals, kids' puzzles, etc. out of the closet and either placing them into a garbage bag, or into a box labeled "KEEP.")

BEGIN

NAT

(holds up toy)

Keep or toss?

BECCA

Toss.

NAT

(another)

This too?

BECCA

Yeah.

(Nat puts both toys into the garbage bag. Becca finds "Runaway Bunny." She flips through it.)

BECCA

Remember this one?

(holds up the book)

NAT

That was *your* book.

BECCA

I know.

(Becca puts it in the KEEP box. Nat pulls a Curious George toy out of the toy box.)

NAT

(holds it up)

Monkey?

BECCA

Um, keep, I guess.

NAT

(she does)
Howie doesn't mind this?

BECCA

It was *his* idea. After that Open House. Seems his grief goes out the window when it comes to maximizing profits.

(beat)

Sorry. I don't even know why I said that. Just being mean.

(They go back to work.)

Besides, it's not like we're getting rid of *everything*.

(Something stops Nat. She's holding one of Danny's sneakers. They're smaller than she remembers. Becca glances over at her and realizes what's happening.)

BECCA

(simply)

Don't do that.

(takes the sneakers)

Quick and clean, like a band-aid.

(places the sneakers in a garbage bag)

Otherwise we'll never get through it.

(Becca grabs a Kleenex from the bureau and passes it to Nat without missing a beat. She carries on as if the moment never happened.)

BECCA

Did Izzy tell you I was taking a Continuing Ed. class? We're reading *Bleak House*. Isn't that hilarious? He handed out the syllabus and I just laughed. *Bleak House*. Of course no one knew what I was laughing at, which was *great*.

(Nat looks up at her.)

It's in Bronxville so no one knows me. I'm normal there. That's what I like best about it. I don't get "the face" every time someone looks at me.

NAT

What face?

BECCA

You know.

(demonstrates – solemn pity)

"Oh, hi. How ya doin? Hangin' in there?"

(Nat laughs a little)

I hate it.

(strips the robot sheets off the bed)

BECCA

And you know what's nice? These ladies, don't even *talk* about their kids or their husbands, or any of it. I think they're just so happy to be away from all that. It's probably the *last* thing they wanna talk about. Because I'm sure most of them are bored housewives, right?

NAT

I don't know. I've never met these people.

BECCA

Well that's who takes Weschester Continuing Ed. classes, isn't it?

NAT

I guess.

BECCA

Sure, and they're just so happy to be talking about Dickens instead of what's for dinner. "Yay, we're reading literature." It's like they're in college again. Who'd *wanna* talk about their families? I know I don't.

(beat)

Anyway, I like it. I like that I'm just a lady taking a class. And next week we start *Madame Bovary*. That oughta get the ol' girls goin', huh? Toss.

NAT

I don't know that book.

BECCA

No, I know.

(Nat accidentally flips the switch to a ridiculously annoying toy.)

NAT

What the hell?

(trying to turn it off)

How do I—? That's annoying!

BECCA

(over the noise)

Try listening to it or hours on end!

(switches it off)

Izzy gave him that. Only people without children give those kinds of gifts. Or people who want to punish parents.

(then...)

You know what? Debbie's kids might like that. We should save it for them. That'd show her.

(Nat pops the toy into the keep box.)

NAT

Still haven't heard from her?

BECCA

Nope. Howie plays squash with Rick but... And I hear the kids are good. Toss. Do you remember Emily?

NAT

Of course.

BECCA

She's getting big now.

NAT

(beat)

I thought you haven't seen them?

BECCA

No, but...

(beat)

I passed by Danny's daycare last week, and the kids were all in the yard.

(off her look)

What? I was just walking by. That's how I get to the post office.

NAT

Yeah, anyway, that's too bad about Debbie. But that can happen. Friends disappear. I remember when Arthur died—

(stops herself)

Sorry.

(pause - holds up a toy)

What about this?

BECCA

No, it's busted.

(Nat throws it in the garbage.)

NAT

You know, the thing about Debbie....

BECCA

Yeah?

NAT

It's just as bad the other way sometimes. Do you remember Maureen Bailey?

BECCA

Sure.

NAT

Well I couldn't get rid of her after your brother passed away.

BECCA

I remember.

NAT

Always at the house. *Always* checking in on me. Eatin' up the cinnamon buns Uncle Jimmy brought me. I never had a moment to myself. And of course it was nice, I guess, but it didn't feel like it was about me. It just felt like she had nothing else to do. Like consoling me became her *hobby*. Something to fill up her day. And finally in the middle of coffee one afternoon, I said "Maureen, why are you here all the time?"

BECCA

What'd she say?

NAT

She said "I want to be there for you, Nat, I want to share in your grief." And so I said "Well it's not working. I seem to have it all to myself still. You plant your fat ass in that chair every frickin' day—"

BECCA

You did not say that.

NAT

I did. "and suck up all my coffee, and I don't see you leaving with any of this grief you're allegedly *sharing* with me. In fact the only thing you *do* take outta here are my cinnamon buns."

(beat)

So I never saw *her* again obviously.

(beat)

Which was too bad actually, because she was the only one who was willing to talk about Arth...

(trails off)

BECCA

You can say his name.

NAT

Can I? I don't know your rules, Becca. I don't wanna get scolded.

END