

BECCA

Sounds like a plan.

HOWIE

Making progress I see.

BECCA

Yup.

HOWIE

Good. Looks good.

(pause)

I'm gonna take Taz for a walk. You need anything while I'm out?

BECCA

I don't think so.

HOWIE

Okay.

(to Nat)

Thanks for helping out, Nat.

NAT

Sure.

(He goes.)

BECCA

(whispers)

I hate that bedspread. I'm gonna put the blue one on. It's neutral enough.

BEGIN

(They work in silence for several beats. Nat suddenly smiles. She remembers something.)

NAT

Hey, you know what I was thinking of this morning?

BECCA

What?

NAT

(chuckling a little already)

Remember that gourmet basket you and Howie got me for Mother's Day last year, with the biscotti and the fancy biscuits? And I put the chocolates out when you came over for dinner, and Danny ate the entire bowl of chocolates when no one was looking?

BECCA

(she's heard this story many times)

Yup.

NAT

And then Howie was like "Where'd all the chocolates go?" And I said "Danny ate them. Leave him alone, kids like candy." And then Howie said "But those were chocolate covered espresso beans!" Remember?

BECCA

I do.

NAT

But Danny had eaten the whole bowl, so he was, you know, really really wired. And running in circles and climbing up the walls, and putting things on his head, and he was up until like three AM. Remember that?

BECCA

Only too well.

NAT

I didn't know what the damn things were. I just thought they were candy. You get me these fancy baskets with all this crazy stuff in 'em - espresso beans. I tell that story to everyone. People get a kick out of it.

BECCA

Mom?

(Nat looks up at her.)

Does it go away?

NAT

What.

BECCA

This feeling. Does it ever go away?

NAT

(beat)

No. I don't think it does. Not for me it hasn't. And that's goin' on eleven years.

(beat)

It changes though.

BECCA

How?

NAT

I don't know. The weight of it, I guess. At some point it becomes bearable. It turns into something you can crawl out from under and carry around. Like a brick in your pocket. And you forget it every once in awhile, but then you reach in for whatever reason and there it is. "Oh right. *That.*" Which can be awful. But not all the time. Sometimes it's kinda... Not that you *like* it exactly, but it's what you have instead of your son, so you don't wanna let go of it either. So you carry it around. And it doesn't go away, which is...

BECCA

What.

NAT

Fine...actually.

END

(They're silent for a couple beats. Becca takes the bag of toys and exits. The lights fade.)