

FERRET RAN AWAY

by

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CHARACTERS

DON, twenty-one

CELIA, eighteen, his sister

JESSIE, eighteen, CELIA's best friend

VINCENT, twenty-five, DON's ex

MOTHER, DON and CELIA's mother, played by the same actress as JESSIE

FATHER, DON and CELIA's father, played by the same actor as VINCENT

TIME AND PLACE

The action of the play takes place over the course of one week in a recent March.

The location is a small American suburb, not very far from a major city.

A NOTE ON THE DIALOGUE

A line break in the dialogue represents a change in thought.

A slash (/) indicates when the following speaker should overlap with the current one.

A double slash (//) means the lines are spoken at the same time.

A dash (–) indicates a quick interruption.

An ellipsis (...) means a character trails off, or fails to say something they want to say.

A NOTE ON THE PERFORMANCE

There is no intermission.

The playing space should resemble a suburban living room with a kitchen to the side. However, the entirety of the play will not take place in said living room/kitchen.

SCENE ONE

CELIA, eighteen, enters with a suitcase. She takes it off the stage into a bedroom. She is followed by DON. DON is twenty-one. He enters with a suitcase and goes to take it off the stage into a bedroom.
CELIA re-enters, almost bumping into DON.

CELIA
Woop... sorry!

DON
You're OK. This is the last one.

CELIA
Oh OK.

DON goes offstage with the suitcase.
CELIA waits for him in the living room. She sits on the couch. Puts her face in her palms and heaves a heavy sigh. She counts to ten.
DON then comes out.

DON
My room hasn't changed.

CELIA
Mom and dad basically used it as a storage closet while you were gone.

DON
Where'd they go this time?

CELIA
Somewhere in the Mediterranean I think.
Or Alaska.
I actually don't know.

DON
Do you know how long they're gonna be gone for?

CELIA
Like, a week or so? They didn't say.

DON
OK.

CELIA
So your first week back home, we have the whole house to ourselves.

DON
Oh joy...

CELIA
Jerk...

They chuckle.

CELIA
It's good to have you home. You look really good.

DON
...think so?

CELIA
Well I think you do.

DON
Thanks...
You do too.
Looks like you put on a little uh...

Makes a motion around his stomach.

CELIA
Uh...

DON
It's not a bad thing!
Last I saw you, you looked like a twig, and now you look like...

CELIA
We last saw each other at Christmas.

DON
Yeah.

CELIA
It's March.

DON
...yeah.

CELIA
So you're saying I got fat since Christmas.

DON
No no no no no. Not fat. Just... healthy.

CELIA
Well thanks...

Long, long pause. Awkward silence.

CELIA
You haven't put on any weight.

DON
Nope.

CELIA
If anything you've lost some.

DON
Really?

CELIA
Yeah. At Christmas you looked healthy, now you look like a twig.

DON
(Not maliciously)
Fuck you.

CELIA
I'm just saying. Since you so delicately commented on *my* weight...

DON
I wasn't trying to insult you or anything, I was just...

CELIA
I know, Don.
I'm just busting your balls.

DON
Oh. OK.

CELIA and DON look at one another. Awkward silence.

DON
So uh... Any news on college apps?

CELIA

Still waiting on Brown. Got in everywhere else.

DON

Dang. What did I do to end up with such a smart sister?

CELIA

Be born first? I don't know...

How's college life?

DON

Oh, it's... college life.

I'm glad for spring break.

CELIA

I can't *wait* for college.

Like, I love my friends and teachers in high school, but I'm ready to move on to the next chapter in my life, you know?

DON

I remember how that is.

You'll be out of there soon enough.

CELIA

Yeah...

DON

And I'll be out of college soon enough. No longer a slave to the Political Science Department of Ransfield University.

Don't major in Political Science, Celia. That is the one bit of college advice I can give to you.

CELIA chuckles.

CELIA

You don't have to worry about me with that. I already made the potentially terrible mistake of taking on a Psychology Major.

DON

As long as you can admit it's a terrible mistake...

CELIA

You want something to eat? Mom went *all out* with the shopping before she left. We could have, like, a frickin' banquet.

DON

What did Mom get?

CELIA

Literally everything. That's *not* an exaggeration.

DON

(*Joking*)

OK. I'll have the rabbit, then...

CELIA

That might take a while, since I don't know how to cook it exactly, but...

DON

I was joking.

CELIA

Oh. I thought you were...

DON

No, I was... What, did mom actually buy rabbit for us?

CELIA

Yes.

DON

Seriously???

CELIA

I know! I was helping her unpack the groceries, and I saw it, and I was like, "Mom, did you *really* buy rabbit?"

And she was like,

"I figured it would be a nice change from the basic stuff."

I was like, "I don't even know how to *make* rabbit."

And she was like,

"Look up some recipes online, and have a field day."

As if I'm Gordon Ramsay or something...

DON

Wow. Typical parents would buy their kids a week's supply of Lean Pockets.

Or Ramen.

CELIA

I don't know if I should be flattered by how independent mom thinks we are, or intimidated by her expectations.

DON

It's not like we're *actually* going to make the rabbit...

CELIA

Oh totally.

And it's not like we don't have other stuff in the fridge and pantry.

DON

Well whatever we have I'm sure is fine.

CELIA

What about popcorn? We have *tons* of that.

DON

Ummmmmmm

Sure! Let's have some popcorn.

CELIA

OK.

CELIA goes into the kitchen. She takes a bag of popcorn out and puts it in the microwave and sets a timer for two minutes.

DON sits on a chair and buries his face in his hands.

He breathes. Counts to ten.

CELIA talks from the kitchen.

CELIA

Can I just say, it's hilarious how we went from rabbit to popcorn?

DON

Yeah...

CELIA

Like, just zip-lined through the culinary caste system.

DON

What, like rabbits are fancier than popcorn?

CELIA

I mean, say you and Vincent go to a fancy restaurant, and you wanted to impress each other, what are you more likely to—

DON

Vincent and I broke up. Actually.

Long silence. CELIA comes into the living room.

CELIA

What?

DON

Mom and Dad didn't tell you?

That's why I'm moving back home.

CELIA

They said it was because of money.

I asked them if something happened between you and Vincent, and they said you two had a fight, but not that you broke up.

DON

Shocker...

I *told* them Vincent and I broke up.

I don't know why I'm surprised. When I told them, they were like, "We'll be on vacation next week, but we'll see you when we get back, byeeeeeee!"

Like they didn't even want to talk about it.

CELIA

I'm really sorry to hear about all this.

DON

There was another reason that Vincent and I broke up. I didn't tell Mom and Dad, because I didn't wanna... It's enough for them that I'm moving back in with them, so I didn't want to put anything more on them, and it's even harder for me to...

CELIA

You don't have to talk about it, if you...

DON

No I...

I think I should. Just to tell *someone* in this family.

Just...

Vincent and I actually broke up because I just found out I'm...

HIV positive.

So uh...

...

Yeah.

Figured you should know that.

DON and CELIA look at each other. Neither move.

CELIA

I uh...

DON

I didn't get it from Vincent. We both got tested. Vincent was negative.

DON looks at CELIA.

They are silent.

In the kitchen, the microwave beeps. The popcorn is finished.

CELIA gets up and retrieves the bag of popcorn from the microwave.

She sits next to her brother, opens up the bag, and offers him the first handful.

He takes it.

SCENE TWO

A table in the food court at the local mall.

CELIA sits with her best friend, JESSIE.

JESSIE

I mean, it's not like Ryan's gotten *worse*—

CELIA

Of course.

JESSIE

But at the same time, it's not like he's really improved.

Which is weird, because if he's trying to get back with me, he should really make more of an effort.

CELIA

Yeah, definitely.

JESSIE

So we're probably just gonna hook up a few more times before college. I mean, we're still attracted to each other, so why not?

CELIA

I mean, just see where things go, and if it turns out you don't want to break up before college—

JESSIE

Oh, I *know* we're not gonna make it to college.

I mean, I'm going to NYU, so I'm gonna meet other guys who are smarter than Ryan, and probably much better in bed.

CELIA

You *know* you are?

JESSIE

Come on. You know Ryan's not the smartest guy in the room.

CELIA

I mean, yeah...

JESSIE

So it's like, good for high school, not really beyond.

CELIA

I see. Well, you do you, be safe, wear a condom, all that stuff, so...

Pause.

JESSIE

Have you heard back from Brown yet?

CELIA

Still waiting on it. I'm already in everywhere else.

JESSIE

God, can't you just not wait to roam around the campus, doing whatever you want? *Whoever* you want? Without your parents lecturing you about "respect to the house" and all that crap?

CELIA laughs.

JESSIE

It's like, I'm careful. It's not like I'll sleep with just anyone. Besides Ryan.

And I always take my birth control.

And if a guy refuses to wear a condom, I just go, NOPE!

CELIA

Good. Good...

Pause.

JESSIE

So is Don home yet?

CELIA

Yep.

Just came back home on Monday.

JESSIE

I saw that he was single on Facebook.

CELIA

Yeah. He and Vincent broke up.

JESSIE

That's gotta suck.

CELIA

Yeah.

JESSIE

Do you know what happened, exactly?

CELIA

No. Didn't ask. Not really any of my business, so...

JESSIE

Uh huh...

CELIA

What? Do you still like him?

JESSIE

What!? No! I don't still like him.

He's just really really hot.

CELIA

Ew stop!

JESSIE

What?

CELIA

He's my *brother*...

JESSIE

Oh please, if he wasn't your brother, you'd totally do him too.

CELIA

OK I don't want to think about that!

JESSIE

Aha! You didn't say no.

CELIA

I didn't say—

I just said I didn't want to think about it.

He's my brother. That's, like, illegal.

At least in New Jersey.

JESSIE

Well, *I* think he's hot.

CELIA

And even if he was into girls, you wouldn't want to get with him now.

JESSIE

What, does he have like AIDS or something?

CELIA looks at her friend.

JESSIE understands.

JESSIE

...oh my god. He does.

CELIA

No he doesn't.

JESSIE

Oh thank God.

CELIA

But he is HIV positive.

JESSIE

There's a difference?

CELIA

Yeah. I was doing some research on it last night.

Basically, HIV is when your immune system weakens.

AIDS is when it completely shuts down.

JESSIE

Oh...

There isn't like a cure for it, right?

CELIA

Not that I know of.

JESSIE

God...

Did Vincent give it to him?

CELIA

No. They got tested, and Vincent didn't have it.

JESSIE

So who did he get it from?

CELIA

I don't know. I didn't ask.

JESSIE

He probably cheated on Vincent, then.

CELIA

If he did, that's his business.

JESSIE

That would suck for Vincent. If he did.
I mean, it totally sucks for Don too, but...

CELIA

If he wants to keep that to himself, it's whatever.

JESSIE

But like, don't you want to know who gave this to your brother?

CELIA

...no.

JESSIE

You mean, you don't want to march up to the guy who gave your brother AIDS—

CELIA

HIV—

JESSIE

And just break his nose open so the earth can be soaked with his diseased blood?

CELIA

...OK then...

JESSIE

I mean, don't you?

CELIA

I don't like where this conversation is going, and you're kinda being an ass, so can you stop it!?

Silence.

JESSIE

I'm sorry.
I was just joking.

CELIA
It wasn't funny.
My brother's sick, and you make some kind of joke out of it.
That's not cool, Jessie.

JESSIE
...sorry.

Long pause.
Suddenly, CELIA holds her stomach.

CELIA
Shit...

JESSIE
You OK, C?

CELIA dry heaves, as if she's about to throw up...
But it passes.

CELIA
I'm OK. Thanks.

JESSIE nods...

SCENE THREE

DON alone in the darkness.

DON
I should tell her about...
But that's probably gonna freak her out.
...
...
I mean, she's eighteen. She can handle it. But still...
...
...
OK, what if I just tell her about him.
Him.
Mr. Him.
Him whose name I know not.
Who looked so passionate, so furiously passionate.

As he went at it with the pink-haired guy.
 How much I wanted to be the pink-haired guy.
 How when I saw they had finished, I put myself where the pink-haired guy had been and told him,

No,

Demanded

That he put himself inside of me.
 How drunk we were with both alcohol and the occasion
 And how the house music was a muted, fuzzy blur when we were together.
 How much he hurt before he felt so, *so, soooooo*...
 How I turned around and was about to ask his name
 But he was already onto the next one.
 Yes...

It's that ecstasy I want to share. With a lover.

I want to tell people how it feels.

I want Celia to know how good being with another person can feel.

The maximum of absolute pleasure.

So she doesn't...

So she understands.

So she doesn't judge me.

...

...

I'll just tell her about him.

And only him.

Suddenly, we see a form lighted from behind.

This is FATHER.

FATHER

Don.

DON

Daddy.

FATHER

Son, I need to tell you something.

DON

What is it? Am I in trouble?

FATHER

No. But it's not easy for me to say...

DON

What? What is it?

FATHER
...it's Ferret.
He ran away.

DON
...
...
What?

FATHER
Ferret ran away.

DON
...
Why?

FATHER
I don't know. I let him out of his cage, took him outside since it was such a nice day, and he just...
Ran.

DON
...
Why did you let him run?

FATHER
I thought he would just stay in the backyard. But I let him go, and he bolted away.

DON
I thought ferrets were only pets.

FATHER
Well, Ferret apparently has a taste for the wild.

DON
...will we get another ferret?

FATHER
We'll see.

DON
I want another ferret. And I want to name them Ferret 2.0.

FATHER
We'll see.

DON
Daddy, please get me another ferret!

FATHER
We'll see, Don!

DON
Daddy!!!

Suddenly, the lights on FATHER go out, leaving DON alone.

SCENE FOUR

A Park.
VINCENT sits on a bench.
DON approaches him and sits next to him on the bench.

DON
Hey...

VINCENT
Please don't sit next to me.

DON
OK...

DON stands up and moves a foot or so away from the bench.

DON
This far away enough?

VINCENT
Perfect.

DON
Good.
...
So uh.
Thanks for / seeing me.

VINCENT
I have to get back to my office soon.
My lunch break ends in five.

DON.

I drove forty-five minutes to see you.

VINCENT
Congrats? You want a medal?

DON
No, just...

DON stops, then regroup.

OK.
First, I want to say I'm sorry.

VINCENT
Of course you are.

DON
I am.
For being an asshole.

VINCENT
Admittedly I get a lot of gratification out of hearing you call yourself that.

DON
Well...
You deserve that gratification.

VINCENT
Thank you.

DON
Yeah.

VINCENT
So go more in depth then. How, exactly, were you an asshole?

DON
Because I was reckless. And... put myself, and you, in really, really, big danger.

VINCENT
...OK.

DON
I wish there was some way I could make it up to you. But...

VINCENT

...

Is that everything?

DON

Other than I'm sorry... yeah.

Long pause as VINCENT nods, taking it all in.

VINCENT

...if that's all you have to say, then why couldn't you text me? What was the point of us meeting?

DON

I dunno.

To talk about this in person.

In another context.

One where our relationship isn't about to implode.

VINCENT

And why would it make any difference now?

DON

I don't know... I just figured it would be good. For us. To get some kind of closure.

VINCENT

For me or for you?

DON

...for both of us.

VINCENT

Why do you think *I* need closure?

DON

I mean, wouldn't it be nice if you had it?

VINCENT

It would be nicer if I wasn't being forced to have closure I've already had.

DON

...what do you mean?

VINCENT

What do you think?

DON

...

How?

VINCENT

I don't have to explain every little thing to you.

DON

Well I want to know. How did you get closure? Because it might not have been enough.

VINCENT

What, because *you* weren't around?

DON

...

I know you're hurt. But—

VINCENT

OUCH! NO! UGH! / THE PAIN, IT HURTS SO BAD! I'M IN SO MUCH PAIN BECAUSE I'M HURT! PLEASE SOMEONE GIVE ME SOMETHING FOR THE PAIN!

DON

Don't scream! Vincent. Stop. Stop it. You're being embarrassing.

VINCENT

What, *I* don't have a right to be embarrassing? After my boyfriend does something incredibly life threatening—

DON

It was stupid—

VINCENT

No, Don. It was *life threatening*. You could've easily infected me, or anyone else, and not have even known it. I'm still astonished that I tested negative.

DON

And I'm glad you did.

VINCENT

And I'm astonished that we were able to see other people and not break up—

DON

It was amazing, yeah.

VINCENT

And I'm *very* astonished that you decided to go to some random sex party with a bunch of people neither of us knew, and wound up picking the *one person* with HIV to sleep with.

But I'm most astonished that you did all of this behind my back.
When you told me you were going to the movies with friends
And you told me you had such a *great* time.
I knew something was up, but I didn't say anything because I didn't want to admit it.
And things were fine in the apartment.
Then we got our test results.

DON

...I'm sorry.

VINCENT

Me too.

I'm sorry that I was uncomfortable with you sleeping with strangers.
Because in the past, either you knew the other person, or I knew the other person, we *both* knew the other person.
But a bunch of others neither of us knew...
I said no.
And you said, "OK."
And I thought you respected that.
I thought you respected *me*.
But apparently, respecting me wasn't as easy as hiding things from me.
So you put yourself, myself, and everyone we could possibly sleep with in danger.
Right now, I'm negative.
But what if one of our condoms had broken?
Or we just decided to do bareback?
I mean, it's neither here nor there at this point, but still.

Pause.

VINCENT

Just out of curiosity.
Why *did* you want to see other people?

DON

...

VINCENT

Did you think I was boring or terrible in bed?
Or...

DON

No. It actually has nothing to do with your bedroom skills. Which are fine, by the way.

VINCENT

I'll add that to my resume. "Fine in bed."

DON

I just... needed some variety. You know.

...

Why did you agree to it?

VINCENT

Because I thought I'd get you back.

Long pause between them.

DON

Get me back...?

VINCENT

...I have to get back to work.

DON

Vinnie—

VINCENT

Don't call me that.

DON

Please explain.

VINCENT

I should've been back two minutes ago.

DON

You can be a few more minutes late.

What do you mean, "get me back"?

Long pause.

VINCENT

Ever since...

A few months before we started seeing others.

I felt you were already looking.

So when you proposed seeing others, it wasn't a surprise.

If anything, it was a relief.

That you were being honest.

Although if anything, you've always been *too* honest.

DON

How was I being too honest?

VINCENT

Like whenever we would have sex, after you'd say, "Good, but not your best."
Or when I'd cook, you'd say, "I kind of wish we could've gotten takeout instead."
Shit like that. Just... you don't say that because you want to be honest. You say that stuff if
you're being an asshole.
A certified asshole.

DON

Shouldn't you trust me for that?

VINCENT

Had you been honest when it mattered, I would've trusted you more.

Long pause.

So if you don't mind, I'm gonna...

DON

Just one more thing.
I'm gonna tell my sister about what happened. And my parents.

VINCENT

Oh are you, now.

DON

They should know. Why not?

VINCENT

Why do they *need* to know?

DON

Because. They're my family. And they know I've been with you for three years.
Hell, I moved from their house into your apartment.
And I moved back to their house from your apartment.
So... I think they have a right to know.
And I think I have the right to be honest with them. So...

VINCENT

Mhm.
Well good luck with that. I have to work.

VINCENT gets up and walks away. DON looks after him.

SCENE FIVE

DON on his computer.
CELIA enters the living room.

CELIA
You home for dinner tonight?

DON
Yeah.

CELIA
OK. I was gonna try and cook that rabbit.

DON laughs.

DON
I thought you were intimidated by it.

CELIA
I found this dish for rabbit stew that seems easy enough.

DON
Sounds good.

CELIA
It's gonna take like three and a half hours to make, so...

DON
Want me to keep you company?

CELIA
If you want.

DON
I can help out with... whatever.

CELIA
OK.

CELIA and DON go into the kitchen, where a formidable piece of rabbit meat is on the counter.
CELIA opens a laptop and goes to a page that features a rabbit recipe.

CELIA
I found this online last night. Thank God for the internet. Some of my favorite dishes I never even knew existed until I came across them online.
I never would've learned how to make chicken mole.

DON
Mole...

CELIA
Yeah. Mo-lay.
Alright, so the first thing we need to do is gather *all* the ingredients!

DON
Alright. What do we need?

CELIA
Well first the rabbit. But also
Butter, a red onion, chicken stock, paprika, caraway seed, white pepper, black pepper, cayenne
pepper, sour cream, bay leaf, aaaannnnnd salt!

DON has not moved.

DON
...you expect me to just get all that?

CELIA turns on the oven.

CELIA
Well I'm not gonna get it myself! The cupboards are way too high for short little me...

DON
You're not *that* short.
Grab a chair.

CELIA
Last I checked, I asked *you* to get the ingredients, so if you could just—

DON
OK. OK.
What were they again?

CELIA
Ugh.
Butter, a red onion, chicken stock, paprika, caraway seed, white pepper, black pepper, cayenne
pepper, sour cream, bay leaf, and salt!

*DON goes through the kitchen looking for the ingredients. He only comes up with the sour
cream, a tub of butter, and red onion.*

DON
...what? They were in the fridge.

CELIA rolls her eyes.

CELIA
Spice cabinet.

*DON goes to the spice cabinet.
He gets the spices and hands them down to CELIA one by one, listing them as he goes.*

DON
Paprika, Caraway seed, white pepper, black pepper, cayenne pepper, and salt.

CELIA goes to the pantry and pulls out the chicken stock.

CELIA
And here's the chicken stock. OK. All the ingredients are here.
And the oven is on.
Which means we can do the first thing on the recipe, which is...

CELIA consults her laptop.

CELIA
Melt four tablespoons of butter in a Dutch oven.

DON
...what kind of oven is our oven?

CELIA gives him a look, then pulls out a Dutch oven from another cabinet.

CELIA
So we melt four tablespoons of butter...
You didn't get the stick butter.

DON
Oh. Was I...

CELIA
...when have you ever seen me use tub butter while cooking?

DON
I..

CELIA
I'll get it.

CELIA puts the tub butter back in the fridge and pulls out the stick butter.

CELIA

Alright. So four tablespoons...

CELIA measures and cuts the butter. She puts it in the pan. DON watches her.

DON

You want me to do something, or...

CELIA

Yeah, could you chop the onions? You know how to do that?

DON

Yeah.

DON chops the onions.

DON

So I've been thinking, and I want your opinion on something.

CELIA

Yeah.

DON

How to tell mom and dad.

CELIA

About your HIV?

DON

Yeah.

CELIA

Oh...

DON

Like, I don't want to bombard them as soon as they get home from vacation, but at the same time I don't want to wait too long, then have them wonder why I didn't tell / them sooner.

CELIA

Oh, you're chopping the onions really slowly. Here let me.

*CELIA takes over chopping the onion.
She wipes tears from her eyes.*

DON

You OK?

CELIA

Yeah. Onion tears.

You know.

DON

Yeah...

CELIA finishes chopping the onion and puts the slices into the Dutch oven.

CELIA

Now I just gotta sautee the onions and the butter together...

Pause.

Wait for the onions to...

CELIA's face pales. She begins to look nauseous.

DON

Celia—

CELIA

I'm OK.

Just gotta...

The nausea passes.

Wilt.

Gotta wait for the onions to...

That's a funny word. "Wilt."

Should take about two minutes.

Could you pass me the chicken stock?

And the bay leaf?

DON does. CELIA adds it to the onions in the Dutch oven.

CELIA

Alright. Now we just gotta wait half an hour.

DON

What was that?

CELIA

What.

DON

A few seconds ago. Your face went like all white.

CELIA

Oh uh... nothing.

Just kinda been feeling off the last few days...

DON

Define "off".

CELIA

Just a little nauseas here and there.

DON

You should really see a doctor about that.

CELIA

I'm fine, I don't need a doctor.

Not now, at least.

DON

Not now...?

CELIA

Let's see, what else can we prep?

What else can we...

Aha! Spices!

Paprika, caraway seed, and the peppers...

CELIA gathers the spices.

Get me a bowl, OK?

DON gets a bowl from a cabinet.

DON

Here.

CELIA

Uh... you wanna put them together for me?

Just mix them in the bowl, and... yeah.

DON

Sure...

Any particular order, or—

CELIA
No. Just...

*DON combines the spices in the small bowl.
He looks at CELIA, who sits in a chair.*

DON
You *sure* you're alright, C?

CELIA
Yeah...
How're the spices looking?

DON
Kinda powdery and...

CELIA
Uh huh...
I can smell them all the way from over here.

DON
Really? Never thought your sense of smell was so strong...

CELIA
Ha ha.

DON continues mixing the spices for a few minutes.

DON
OK. So these are looking pretty well-mixed.

CELIA gets up to examine DON's work.

CELIA
They look fine.
Now I just gotta melt some butter in a skillet...

*CELIA gets a skillet and turns the stove on.
She then takes some butter and places it in the skillet to melt.*

DON
How long's it gonna take to melt?

CELIA
Shouldn't take too long.

DON

...

I want to tell you something.
And I don't want you to freak out.
Because I'm gonna tell mom and dad this too.

...

It's about how I got HIV.
I—

CELIA

You don't have to tell me.

DON

But I want to.

CELIA

But why do you have to?

DON

Because it's something I think you'd want to know.

CELIA

But I don't. I don't want to know how you got HIV. That's strictly *your* business, isn't it?

DON

I mean, yeah, but you're my—

CELIA

And I'm probably never gonna meet the person who gave it to you, since it wasn't Vincent.

DON

OK, but—

CELIA

I already know everything I need to know about the situation.
I don't need you to tell me anymore.

DON

But—

CELIA

I don't need to know every detail of your sex life, just like you don't need to know mine.

DON

But why shouldn't we talk about it?

CELIA

Because I don't want to hear about it.

Especially when I'm trying to make a really difficult dish for us to enjoy.

Which requires concentration. *Serious* concentration.

So if you could just back off, or change the subject, as I've been trying to do this whole time, then that would be incredibly helpful.

DON

I just... thought you'd like to know.

CELIA

Well I don't. And I'm sorry if that's rude.

DON

It is.

It's bitchy.

CELIA

...seriously?

DON

I want to tell you about something that's affecting me, and could very well affect you—

CELIA

How could it affect me? HIV isn't contagious.

DON

But I could get AIDS and die.

CELIA

Don't be morbid. You're going on medication for it, right?

DON

I'm planning on it, but—

CELIA

Then everything's fine. No need to discuss it further.

And if you *really* need to discuss it further, talk to a friend. Or even Vincent, if you're comfortable doing that. Have you talked to him about it?

DON

I tried. I saw him today.

CELIA

Well good! You got some closure with him. That's good.

DON
But you're my sister.

CELIA
So?

DON
I want to think I can tell *my sister* these things.

CELIA
Well you can't. Because I don't want to hear them.
Because they're not appropriate. Especially in this context.

DON
What context?

CELIA
As in, us, we, us, we...

*CELIA tries to hold it in.
But she can't.
She throws up all over the rabbit.
DON and CELIA look at the rabbit for a moment.
Then another.
Then another.*

DON
Uh...

*DON picks up the rabbit. It drips with vomit.
DON takes the rabbit to the garbage and throws it out.
DON and CELIA look at each other.*

CELIA
...I could make pasta. That would probably be easier.

DON
Yeah. It would.

...
You need my help, or...?

CELIA
I've done pasta a billion times before. I can do it by myself.

DON

You're not gonna barf all over it, are you?

CELIA glares at him.

CELIA

If you think that's what I'm gonna do, then you can make your own damn pasta, Don.

CELIA storms out of the kitchen, leaving DON alone.

SCENE SIX

CELIA and JESSIE in the living room.

CELIA

I'm so sorry to impose all of this on you.

JESSIE

Oh my God. Not at all.

CELIA

It's so embarrassing...

JESSIE

No it isn't.

Now it makes sense, what you said about not feeling well a few days ago at the mall.

I'm glad you're telling me.

CELIA

I needed to tell someone. I don't want to tell Don. Not yet. And I definitely don't want to tell my parents.

I'm not telling them until I know what I'm gonna do with it.

And even then, I...

I don't know.

JESSIE

Why don't you want to tell Don?

CELIA

He's just been really weird lately.

Last night, when we were making dinner, he kept trying to tell me about how he got HIV.

And it's like, I don't care. I don't want to know. Why would I want to know?

He's my brother. I don't want to imagine him doing things like that.

I knew he was gay. That was OK.

I knew he had a boyfriend. That was fine. I liked Vincent.

But it's like, there's a line. And Don just wants to cross it with me, and I don't think I'm, no, I

know I'm not comfortable with it.

JESSIE

Why do you think he's doing this?

CELIA

I don't know.

It's weird. And it makes home a very uncomfortable place to be, which isn't what I need right now.

JESSIE

Right. Right...

...

I mean, he's your brother. You decide what you want to tell him, so...

CELIA

What do you mean by that?

JESSIE

Nothing, just...

CELIA

...?

What?

JESSIE

Just like...

I get that you wouldn't want to tell your parents. Because you're living in their house, they'd have every right to throw you out if they wanted to.

CELIA

I don't think my parents would throw me out. But they always told me not to do anything stupid.

JESSIE

But you don't think at least one person in your *family* should be told about this?

CELIA

...why should it matter? I've already told you. I'm comfortable telling you. Why does my family need to know?

JESSIE

I didn't mean your entire family. I just meant Don.

I get that he's making you uncomfortable, but it sounds like he just wants to be honest with you. Don't you think you owe him the same?

CELIA

Why? Because he's family?
If families were honest, we'd all be alone.
You think my parents are even honest with each other?
I see them lying to each other all the time.
Not big lies, just little things.
Like when my mom asks my dad if her makeup looks good, he takes a quick nanosecond look at it and says "Sure."
Or if my dad cooks, and he asks her if she liked the meal, she'd go, "Sure," even though she tried to eat as little of it as possible.
If they said what they'd really thought, there would be a fight, which would lead to other fights, which would lead to a divorce.
All because they'd decide to be "honest" with one another.

JESSIE

So you're saying we should all just lie to each other.

CELIA

It's not lying. It's being considerate.

JESSIE

But are you being considerate in not telling Don that you're pregnant?

Pause.

JESSIE

What are you scared of, Celia?

CELIA

Scared of?

JESSIE

That Don could react the way you fear your parents would?

CELIA

...

JESSIE

Does Randall even know, or...?

CELIA

I haven't even told *him* yet.

Like I said. I want to keep this under wraps until I know what I'm gonna do with it.

JESSIE

Welp, that's your prerogative.

But if you decide to tell him, and need someone for moral support, I'm here.

CELIA
Thanks, Jessie.

*The two of them hug.
CELIA and JESSIE let go of each other.*

JESSIE
I'm gonna head out now. You gonna be OK?

*CELIA nods.
JESSIE stands up and goes to exit when DON enters the room. He is back from a run.
JESSIE stops.*

DON
Back from my run.
Oh! Hey, Jessie.

JESSIE
Hey Don.

The briefest of moments between them.

JESSIE
How was your run?

DON
It was good! It's a nice night out.

JESSIE
I know. First sign that spring's coming.

DON
Indeed, indeed.
So what's going on? I heard you're going to NYU.

JESSIE
Yep! Out of the suburbs, into the city.

DON
That's the way to do it!

JESSIE
Yeah... I can't *wait* to get out of here. I'm just so done with high school.

DON

I felt the same way my senior year. Pretty soon, you'll be so done with college too.

JESSIE

That's ominous.

DON

Nah, college isn't that bad. If you're a commuter, like I am, sometimes it can be a pain, but...

JESSIE

Yeah...

What about you? I heard you're back home for good.

DON

For the time being.

JESSIE

Celia told me you and...

DON

Yeah.

JESSIE

I'm sorry to hear about that. Are you on good terms at least?

DON

Well... Stuff happened, and we weren't able to work things out, so... It happens.

JESSIE

I see...

Well, if you need anything, you can always message me on Facebook.

DON

Yeah, if you ever need any college advice, reach out.

JESSIE

I will. Thanks.

DON

No problem.

Another brief moment between them.

JESSIE

Well, I'm gonna get going, but it was really nice to see you again, Don.
You look good.

DON
Thanks, Jessie.

JESSIE
I mean it. You look really... good.

Long, somewhat awkward pause.
JESSIE goes to hug DON.

DON
I wouldn't touch me. I'm sweaty and gross.

JESSIE
I don't mind.

DON
Trust me. You will.
Here, I'll give you an air hug.

JESSIE
OK. Air hug.

They do an air hug.

JESSIE
Alright. Now, I'll leave you and Celia to talk about whatever you talk about when I'm not around...

CELIA
Good night, Jessie.

JESSIE
Bye, Celia.
Have a good night, Don.

DON
Bye, Jessie.

JESSIE leaves them.
Moment of silence between DON and CELIA.

DON
How are you feeling?

CELIA
Fine.

Pause.

DON

You sure?

CELIA

Yeah.

DON

You sure it wasn't like the stomach bug or anything?

(An attempt at a joke.)

Because I don't think my immune system could handle that right now.

CELIA

If it was the stomach bug, I wouldn't have had Jessie over, would I?

DON

No. You wouldn't have.

Pause.

CELIA

I'm gonna go to my room, so...

DON

I'm sorry. About the other night. About... making you uncomfortable.

CELIA

Thanks.

DON

No prob.

Pause.

DON

But like...

If there's anything you want to tell me.

Or not want to tell me. Whichever.

It's totally fine.

CELIA

...OK.

DON

But I'm just saying, if you're feeling nauseas, then it's gotta be / something.

CELIA

Don.

DON

And I'd like to know what it is.

CELIA

Please—

DON

You don't have to give me the whole backstory on it, if you don't want to.

But at least tell me what it is.

Then maybe I can help you.

With whatever it is.

Long pause.

DON

Are you bulimic?

...

Something you ate that didn't agree with you?

...

Or are you pregnant?

DON has gotten it right, and CELIA knows.

She turns her face away from him.

DON

C.

Is that it?

...

CELIA nods.

DON

...

What are you gonna do?

CELIA

I don't know. Still figuring that out.

DON

OK...

...

Who's the father?

CELIA

No one you know.

DON

I might know their sibling, or—

CELIA

His siblings are all younger than him.

DON

Come on, you never know. I might know him.

CELIA

I'd rather not say who he is.

DON

Why not?

CELIA

And I'd like you to respect that.

Long pause.

DON

Did you at least use protection?

CELIA

Yeah.

DON

Then how did...

Did the condom break?

CELIA

Maybe. I don't know.

DON

...

Was he good in bed at least?

CELIA

Ewww! Why would I tell you that?

DON

I'm trying to get you to say *something*. / You sound so ambivalent.

CELIA

That's fucked up.

You don't just ask your pregnant sister if the guy who knocked her up is good in bed.
/ It's *extremely* inappropriate.

DON

OK. I think I get it. You don't want to tell me...

CELIA

No, I *definitely* don't now.

DON

OK. Then are you gonna tell—

CELIA

Could you stop? Just, shut up, and stop asking me all these questions?
I keep telling you I don't want to answer them, but you keep on asking them. How stupid and insensitive are you!?

DON

Celia—

CELIA

If you're gonna live here, you have to respect my privacy.
And this is something private that I want to take care of myself.
Keyword: *Myself*.

DON

But... I'm your brother.

CELIA

Exactly. Which is why I want to spare you some of the gory details.
It's not something normal siblings talk about.

DON

Who says we're normal?

CELIA

Or at least, siblings who are *trying* to be normal.

DON

Isn't it normal to want to know about the circumstances that got my sister pregnant?

CELIA

Actually, it's kind of twisted and perverted.

DON
How is it—

CELIA
Like, you want to know about the time I had sex that wound up with me getting pregnant? What kind of brother wants to know about that?

DON
A brother who cares.

CELIA
Well... stop caring!

DON
No!
I told you I had HIV, and how I got it.
Or at least I tried to, but you were so close-minded that you—

CELIA
Close minded!?! Is it *really* close-minded to not want to know about how you got HIV?

DON
I'm just trying to get us to be honest with one another. Because I'm sure you know, this family isn't exactly known for its honesty.

CELIA
There's a difference between honesty and TMI, though.

DON
And what, exactly, is that fine line?

CELIA
Honest is when you tell the truth unabashedly. TMI is when you tell it recklessly.

DON
Well you're pretty well-acquainted with recklessness.
...
Shit.
I'm sorry Celia.
I shouldn't have...
'Cause I'm not exactly reckfull myself... Is that even a word?

CELIA
No.

DON

At least you can get rid of your mistake. I can't.
So we might as well be there for each other the best we can.

CELIA

Did you just call my baby a mistake!?

DON

That's the first time I've heard you refer to it as "your baby".

CELIA

Because it is!

DON

So one second you don't know what you're gonna do with your baby, the next you're like "it's my baby."

CELIA

Why is that such a big deal?

DON

You decided you're gonna keep it?

CELIA

Maybe I will. I don't know yet.

DON

Then *talk to me!* Maybe we can figure something out and you can have a concrete statement you're gonna give to mom and dad.

CELIA

Right now talking to you is the last thing I want to do.
Because you're being an asshole.
A certified asshole.

DON begins to laugh. He knows it's out of place.

CELIA

You think that's funny?

DON

No, just...
When I saw Vincent, he called me that too.

...

I guess it wasn't that funny.

CELIA can't help but smirk.

CELIA

Oh...

If we're really being honest here?

Like, if you *really* want me to be honest?

After what you told me?

Vincent is a better guy than you deserved.

He was nice, sweet, funny, cute...

And you fucked it up because that wasn't enough for you.

DON

...wow.

CELIA

But I'm just being honest!

DON

Honesty doesn't mean we insult each other.

CELIA

But it's a fact you cheated on him.

DON

That isn't what happened.

We had an open relationship. We could see other people. As long as we told each other about who we were seeing, it wasn't cheating.

CELIA

...I don't understand how that even computes.

DON

I slept with other people. Vincent slept with other people. We allowed each other to.

I just took it too far. And I'm trying to own up to it.

CELIA

Why didn't you use protection?

Were you just being stupid?

DON

I don't think I want to have this conversation anymore.

CELIA

You're the one who started it!

DON

I wouldn't have if I knew you were gonna be such a bitch about it.

CELIA

I'm not being a bitch! I just don't need this in my life right now!

I don't need *you* in my life right now!

DON

Well I don't need this, or *you*, in my life right now either!

You wanna keep that baby? Get rid of it? Not sure how to tell Mom and Dad?

Go ahead and disappoint them already.

You wanna whine about it?

Don't talk to me, because I DON'T GIVE A SHIT!!!

DON goes to the door.

He SLAMS it shut.

CELIA looks after him.

We hear a car starting outside, then driving off.

She breathes in and out. In and out. In and out.

Suddenly, she feels a pain from underneath.

She looks down at her pants.

She unbuttons her pants and inserts her finger in it.

She brings up her finger, which is soaked with blood.

Her pants begin to stain with blood as well.

The color drains from her face.

She runs as fast as she can to the door.

She opens it.

CELIA

DON!?

But no answer.

She closes the door.

She goes into the kitchen and tries to stop the blood with a paper napkin.

But it just keeps coming and coming.

CELIA

SHIT!

CELIA returns to the living room and sees her cell phone. She picks it up and taps it. She puts it to her ear.

CELIA

Jessie...?

Jessie, please get over here...

JUST GET OVER HERE!!!

PLEASE!!!
 I'm... I'm bleeding!
 ...OK...
 ...OK...
 OK. I'll do that.
 ...thank you.

*CELIA hangs up the phone and exits.
 We hear her crying.
 Then her puking.
 Then more weeping.*

SCENE SEVEN

DON alone on stage.

DON
 You drive away from the cluster of suburban houses onto the highway that all roads in town lead to.
 At first, you don't know where you're going.
 North or South. Pick a direction.
 You choose north. Towards Ransfield.
 A forty five minute commute. As opposed to the ten minute commute you used to have while living with Vincent...
 You find yourself on a street lined with bars, clubs, restaurants.
 You find a parking space on the street and parallel park better than you ever have before.
 After getting over the initial surprise, you step out of your car into the unusually balmy March night.
 Cigarette smoke from the smoker's mouths scent the air.
 I ask a Goth girl if I can bum a cigarette.
 She gives me one.

DON pulls out a cigarette and begins to smoke it.

I haven't smoked a cigarette since getting together with Vincent.
 But as the smoke infiltrates my lungs, it's like I'm greeting an old friend.
 "Hey."
 I look around for a bar to go into, wondering if there are any cruising opportunities there.
 Knowing that, in all likelihood, I wouldn't be able to actually go to bed with any of them.
 I want to be finer with that than I actually am.
 I'm walking by the club that used to host Gay Nights every Thursday.
 Spring of my senior year of high school I would sneak out and go to them. Meeting guys, kissing them, blowing them in the bathroom.
 I wouldn't get home until three, sometimes four in the morning.
 Then I'd go to school to be the Valedictorian.
 "Hey, Greyston High School. I was your Valedictorian, and I have HIV! Listen to me tell you

how to live your lives after high school!”
 I go to the entrance of the club.
 There isn't a cover charge before eleven, and it's ten forty five, so I walk in.
 Looking around, I hope to recognize someone from high school.
 Wondering if anyone has come out since we graduated.
 As I scan the faces, none click in my mind.
 So I go to the bar and order a beer.
 Make myself feel as normal as possible.
 I pay for my beer, and go downstairs to the dance floor.

Club lights and music fill the stage.

Hair flips in the strobe lights.
 Couples grind and sweat on each other.
 I see someone else in a plain white t-shirt and tight blue jeans leaning against the wall with his iPhone.
 He's lonely, that much is obvious. He's gay, that much I can infer.
 He looks up from his phone and sees me and smiles.
 I wave to him, because I don't not want to.
 He comes over to me, surprising me with his confidence, and says “Hey” to me.
 I say Hey to him, and he asks my name.
 Don.
 He says his name, but it's garbled and chewed out beyond comprehension by the aggressively loud music.
 I do hear when he asks if I want to dance.
 What harm can dancing do?
 So I say YES.
 And we dance, and dance, and dance, and dance, and dance, and dance, and dance...
 His hands on my waste.
 His erection against me.
 My erection against him.
 Suddenly, virility surges through my veins.
 I think I could take this person to bed
 I could suck his dick
 Rim his ass
 Let him fuck me
 The possibilities are endless, like the dancing we're doing.
 He asks if I want to get out of here.
 I say yes, and we go back upstairs.
 There, I see Vincent.

A door opens.
We see VINCENT.
DON stops.

We see each other.

I see him.
 And he reminds me...
 There goes my libido.
 I turn to the guy with the garbled name, and come up with some bullshit excuse not to go home with him.
 He asks me why, with pleading puppy dog eyes.
 I ask him if he wants me to be honest.
 He says yes.
 And I tell him about my status.
 "Oh..."
 He thanks me for telling him, and it's great how honest I am, and how responsible I am for my and his sexual health.
 I still want to fuck him.
 But we say our goodbyes, and he disappears into the throng of dancers.
 I hoped he finds someone less broken to dance with.

DON looks at VINCENT in the doorway.
He walks towards VINCENT, but the door closes on him.
DON stops.
He begins to walk away, but the door reopens.
DON turns around, but sees the silhouette of FATHER in the frame.

FATHER
 I let him out of his cage, took him outside since it was such a nice day, and he just...
 Ran.
 Ran.
 Ran...

Frightened, DON runs away.

SCENE EIGHT

CELIA alone.
CELIA
 I should tell him about...
 But that's probably gonna freak him out.
 ...
 ...
 ...
 OK. What if I just tell him about...
 Him.
 Randall.
 Randy, we usually call him, but I prefer calling him Randall.
 Mr. Randall, I like to tease him.
 And Ms. Celia, he likes to tease me back.

We act all formal and classy around each other
(Speaks in a British accent)
 Speaking in British accents together, acting classier than we'll ever actually be...
(She drops the accent.)
 How at that party...
 Two months ago, but only feels like last night...
 I had wanted to tell him how I really felt for so long.
 And that night, I was going to tell him.
 And I did.
 I just pulled him aside, told him how much I liked him...
 How I loved his hair curl
 His shimmering blue eyes
 His unusually smooth chin strap
 His adorable gap tooth
 Which stands out when he laughs,
 His laugh that seems to capture all the pleasure and joy of Planet Earth.
 When I told him all this, he tried laughing that laugh
 Maybe to laugh it off,
 Maybe to shy away from it...
 But instead he took my face—
 Just took my face—
 And kissed me.
 And the beer on his breath
 And his cold, slimy tongue
 And the scent of his armpits, like dry sweat, straining for my nostrils...
 Just added to my elation.
 He told me he knew where the guest room was
 The parents weren't home
 And we just went upstairs, closed the door,
 The light from the orange streetlamp outside floating into the room,
 Shaping his suddenly naked outline,
 Then him taking me on the bed,
 Letting me on top of him,
 Kissing furiously.
 How all that
 Him eating me out
 Me sucking his dick
 Both with a hunger that could only crave more,
 More,
 MORE!!!
 ...
 He pulled out a tiny plastic square
 Opens it, pulls out the cylindrical rubber,
 Puts it on...
 And we reached more.
 Slowly, at first.

Then we rode each other
 Into the light of the orange streetlamp outside.
 And in one of those magical, splendid, cosmic moments,
 We came together,
 Unleashing everything we had into each other,
 Onto each other,
With each other...

...

A final kiss, confirming he left a part of himself in me,
 Although he didn't know it...
 And then returning to the bass and beer of downstairs.
 Going into the kitchen for a drink.
 Seeing Jessie, she asks where I've been,
 We go outside for a cigarette
 And I tell her everything...
 She asks if we used protection.
 I say we did.
 Confident that...

...

Confident...

*Suddenly, we see in lighted silhouette a FEMALE FIGURE.
 This is MOTHER.*

MOTHER
 Celia, can I talk to you?

CELIA
 Am I in trouble?

MOTHER
 No, dear. I just want to talk to you.

CELIA
 OK...

MOTHER
 It's about Ferret.

CELIA
 What happened, Mommy?

MOTHER
 Well, Daddy took him out of his cage and took him outside for some fresh air.
 But then he managed to escape and run away.

CELIA

So... ferret ran away?

MOTHER

Yes. Ferret ran away.

CELIA

When is he coming back, mommy?

MOTHER

I don't know, Celia.

CELIA

Can't we try looking for him?

MOTHER

Daddy and I already tried looking for him, but we couldn't find him.

CELIA

Maybe he'll come back!

MOTHER

We'll see...

CELIA

Maybe he'll come back with a Ferret Wife and Ferret Babies!

MOTHER

We'll see, Celia.

CELIA

Wouldn't Ferret Babies be cute, Mommy!?

MOTHER

...

CELIA

Mommy?

MOTHER

I know this will sound mean, but it must be said.

Ferret did a very stupid thing, running away. There's no way a ferret can survive out in the wild like that.

CELIA

Don't call Ferret stupid!

MOTHER

Don't do anything stupid, Celia.

CELIA

Daddy was stupid to let Ferret run away!

MOTHER

Don't be stupid!

Long pause.

CELIA

Sorry.

MOTHER's light fades out.

CELIA looks up to the ceiling, searching for some kind of answer.

A knock on the door. We hear JESSIE.

JESSIE

Celia? How're you doing?

Silence. CELIA doesn't answer.

JESSIE enters the room.

JESSIE

How're you feeling?

CELIA

...

JESSIE

You need anything?

CELIA

Where's Don?

JESSIE

I tried calling him, but he isn't picking up.

CELIA

...

JESSIE

Maybe he called your phone?

CELIA

Can you check for me?

JESSIE goes to check CELIA's phone.

JESSIE

Nothing. Sorry.

CELIA

...

JESSIE

You want me to sit by you, or...

CELIA

Can you?

JESSIE

Of course.

JESSIE sits next to CELIA.

JESSIE

He'll come home.

Eventually.

And you can tell him everything then.

CELIA

Can't you tell him?

JESSIE

...

CELIA

...

JESSIE

Don't you think you should tell him?

CELIA

I don't want it to come from me. Not now.

Not when I'm like this...

Please. Promise me, Jessie.

JESSIE

...

CELIA

...

JESSIE

Just get some rest. He'll come home soon.
I'll let you know when he's back.

CELIA

...

SCENE TEN

We hear knocking in the darkness.

Then a door opens.

DON stands outside of VINCENT's door.

VINCENT stands in the doorway, looking at him.

Silence.

DON

Hey...

I was just in the neighborhood...

VINCENT

I know. I saw you.

DON

Yeah...

VINCENT

He was cute.

DON

He was. We didn't do anything, though. I told him, so...

VINCENT

Good.

DON

Just figured I'd be honest.

VINCENT

Yeah.

DON

...

VINCENT

...

DON

I tried telling my sister.
It didn't... It didn't exactly go well.
We got into a fight, and—

VINCENT

Why are you telling me this?

DON

...because we talked about it earlier. And I figured you might care—

VINCENT

But I don't, Don. I don't care.

DON

...

Sorry.

I'm just like...

I still care. About you.

I care that I hurt you, I hate that I did that.

I care that you're alright, and didn't get infected.

I care that I don't want to infect anyone else.

I care that you're still around, and hurt.

I care that you don't care.

I care so much that if I crucified myself it wouldn't be enough to make up for it!

DON's cell phone rings. He doesn't look at it.

VINCENT

You gonna get that?

DON

No.

VINCENT

Not even gonna look at it?

DON

No.

VINCENT

Might be important.

DON

It's not important right now. *This* is important right now.

...

I'm a fuck-up.

And I know I'm a fuck-up.

I took things too far, and ended up with this disease that, right now, it might not even be *possible* to recover from.

Like, people say there are cures being discovered,

Vaccines that kill the bad cells,

But what if they're like, totally illegitimate?

Or they don't work?

Or they turn out to have some sort of negative side effect, like some other major disease we don't even know about yet?

It's like... The not knowing just sucks, you know?

VINCENT

Yes. It does.

DON

...

Oh God. I'm so sorry.

I'm not realizing what an asshole I'm being.

VINCENT

Once again.

DON

I just... I needed to talk to someone. Someone who already knew about...

Just...

I've never felt so alone in my life.

VINCENT

...

...

Go home.

VINCENT closes the door.

DON looks at the closed door.

He turns away and goes to exit.

He turns around, hoping that maybe the door will reopen.

It doesn't.

SCENE TEN

JESSIE sits in the living room.

We hear a car pulling into the driveway, then shutting off.

A moment.

DON enters.

JESSIE stands up.

DON

Jessie.

JESSIE

Don.

Long silence.

JESSIE

I tried calling you.

DON

Yeah. I saw.

JESSIE

Where were you?

DON

Just... out and about.

Where's Celia?

JESSIE

In her room. Resting.

DON

...she OK?

JESSIE

...

DON

...what happened?

JESSIE

...

DON

Jessie?

JESSIE

She had a miscarriage.

DON

...

Shit...

JESSIE

She asked me to tell you.

DON

Do you know when it happened, or...

JESSIE

She called me around ten.

DON

Oh...

JESSIE

She lost a lot of blood. I tried to get her to let me call an ambulance, and get her to the hospital, but she didn't want to go.

Miraculously, we were able to stop the bleeding, and she's conscious. But she's gonna need a lot of rest.

Pause.

DON

I don't...

I don't even know what to say to that.

JESSIE

You knew she was pregnant, right?

DON

Yeah.

JESSIE

OK. Good. For a second I thought you...

DON

No, I knew. I knew...

...

Thanks for staying with her.

JESSIE

No problem.

DON

I feel like an asshole for...

Let me give you some money—

JESSIE

No. Please don't worry about it.

DON

No, seriously. It must've been a lot.

JESSIE

I didn't mind.

DON

Jessie—

JESSIE

Don. I said no.

Another long pause.

DON

OK.

Pause.

DON

I guess I can take it from here. Unless you wanna stay.

Pause.

JESSIE

How are you, Don? Really. How are you?

DON

...

I don't know how to answer that.

JESSIE

C told me about... you.

DON

C...?

JESSIE
...Celia.

DON
Oh. Wow. I didn't even...

JESSIE
She told me that you have HIV.

DON
...
Huh.

JESSIE
What, is it not true, or...

DON
No, yeah, it's true, just...
I never said she could tell anyone. But I never told her she couldn't tell anyone...
Sorry, my mind is just...
I don't know what I'm gonna do about it.

JESSIE
I wouldn't know either.
I can't even imagine...
...how did you get it, if you don't mind my asking?

DON
You don't wanna know.

JESSIE
Yes I do. Why else would I ask?

DON
'Cause I just...
I was being stupid, and I did something I shouldn't have done. Went somewhere I shouldn't have gone. *Did* someone I shouldn't have...
I don't wanna freak you out.

JESSIE
You think you can freak *me* out?

DON
...
I mean, I guess it's pretty hard for me to do that for you...

JESSIE

Well yeah, but—

DON

I just don't want you to... feel awkward.

JESSIE

I won't.

DON

...

Basically, Vincent- my boyfriend- *ex* boyfriend now- and I had been together for a while, and things were starting to get stale.

So we decided to start seeing other people.

JESSIE

Like an open relationship.

DON

Exactly. Right. So...

Someone I work with told me about this party going on.

And I knew Vincent wouldn't be into it.

He wouldn't even be into me going.

Because we agreed that if we were to see other people, we both had to know them.

But it's like, I had never been to one of these before.

JESSIE

One of what, a sex party?

DON

Yeah. Basically.

So, I went. Didn't tell Vincent where I was going. And there was this *really* hot guy there, just going at it with someone else who had pink hair.

And I wanted to be in that person's place, so...

Eventually I got there.

And...

I didn't think about it at the time. It just felt so amazing to have someone else inside of me.

Especially him.

There were people around us just going at it, and yet I felt there was only me and him in the room together.

One of those feelings...

You know?

JESSIE

Yeah. I do.

Long pause.

DON

I mean it's like...

You're first told about sex, and it just seems like this paradise that is reserved for the older people.

Then you grow up, and it becomes a joke

And then you actually *do it*, and it becomes something serious.

...

I just didn't think having sex would be so much work. Did you?

JESSIE

Not at all.

DON

Like, did you think that so much responsibility would be involved when we...?

JESSIE

I just wanted to make you feel good.

DON

Yeah...

Long, long pause. DON and JESSIE avoid each other's eyes. Then:

DON

You know, what's funny. I can tell *you* all this, and not my own sister. What kind of familial relationship is that?

JESSIE

A normal one.

DON

But why does it have to be that way?

JESSIE

Well for one thing, I doubt you and Celia slept together.

DON

Did you ever tell her?

JESSIE

No. You?

DON

No. Didn't think she'd need to know.

JESSIE

I mean, her brother, and her best friend fumbling and fucking on her living room couch...
Actually, if my sister told me she had done that with someone, I'd be kinda freaked out too.
Surprised, but freaked out.

...

I think C's just scared you'll judge her.

DON

...why would I judge anyone?
I'm the last person who could do that.

JESSIE

Doesn't matter. Sometimes, when it's your own family, it tends to be worse. Like when my family freaked out when they walked in on Ryan and me...

DON

Were you doing it on your couch too?

JESSIE

Yes, actually.

DON

You like couches that much?

JESSIE

One couch more than others...

JESSIE taps the couch she and DON are sitting on.

Pause.

JESSIE

You know it's always been you.

DON

What?

JESSIE

Like, every time I sleep with a guy, I always compare them to you.

DON

Didn't think I was *that* good.

JESSIE

You were my first, and I was happy that you were my first.
Am happy you were my first.

DON

...even after I came out?

JESSIE

...

I mean, I knew. At the time. A part of me knew. Just didn't want to admit it.
I thought I could change you.

DON

I thought you could change me too.

JESSIE

So... did you like me at all?

Like, *actually* like me.

DON

...

JESSIE

...

I wish you were the one that told me.

Not Celia.

When she told me you came out to her...

Not gonna lie, I cried.

Because all the guys who liked me, I didn't like any of them.

And of course the one I actually wanted...

The *one* guy...

I wanted to tell Celia about us. To prove to her that you weren't gay.

But then I remembered you told me not to tell her, and...

She once told me that if you weren't gay, she would've set us up.

If we wanted to date, she told me, she would've told us to do it.

But...

DON

...maybe we should tell her now.

JESSIE

Why?

DON

...

Good point.

JESSIE

...do you regret me being your first?

DON

...I mean no, but...

If my first could have been a guy, though...

Sorry.

JESSIE

I know.

DON

Do you... still like me?

Long pause. JESSIE looks at DON.

Just... be honest.

Another long pause. JESSIE tears.

JESSIE

So pathetic...

DON

No. It isn't.

JESSIE

No, I'm pathetic.

You'd think I'd have gotten over you by now, but...

Even with this disease you have, I...

DON takes JESSIE's hand.

They look at each other.

An elongated, tense, moment of longing.

JESSIE leans in closer and closer and closer to DON...

JESSIE kisses DON.

She keeps her lips on his for ten seconds.

DON doesn't react at all.

JESSIE pulls away.

Suddenly:

JESSIE

Wait a...

You have HIV, so...

DON

You can't get it from kissing.

JESSIE
...you sure?

DON
Yeah.

JESSIE
Good...

Long pause.

DON
Well...
You're going to NYU.
So you'll live in the city, where you'll meet all sorts of crazy, interesting people.
Then you'll graduate, and you'll get a job.
Then you'll live your life.
And somewhere in there,
You'll meet the guy who's gonna kiss you back.

JESSIE
Oh God, I hope not...

DON
Why not?

JESSIE
Because I don't want to forget us.

DON
...you don't have to.
But eventually, it'll just... fall to the back of your mind, with other forgotten memories.

JESSIE
Is that what we became to you?

Long pause. DON sighs and nods. JESSIE understands. She stands up.

JESSIE
Just... talk to Celia.
Give her another chance.

DON
...
I want her to come to me.

JESSIE

Understandable.

JESSIE goes to the door, then:

JESSIE

It's never gonna just fall to the back of my mind just like that.

DON

...OK.

JESSIE smiles sadly, and leaves the house.

DON sits on the couch.

SCENE ELEVEN

The living room in near complete darkness.

It's that time in the morning when the sun is about to rise, but not quite yet.

The dark before the dawn, if you will.

Throughout this scene, the sun gradually rises in the sky outside.

DON sits in the near-complete darkness for a long moment.

CELIA slowly walks into the room.

She looks at her brother.

She then joins him on the couch.

They sit together for a silent moment.

Then:

DON

Couldn't sleep.

CELIA

Yeah.

DON

I meant, I couldn't sleep.

CELIA

Oh... sorry.

I couldn't sleep either.

Pause.

DON

Supposed to be a gorgeous sunrise this morning.

CELIA

I've never gotten up early to watch one.

DON

Vincent and I did it once.

We went out camping for a weekend one summer.

Neither of us could sleep, the tent was so uncomfortable...

It was around five in the morning.

Vincent suggested we go out and watch the sunrise.

So we just left our tent, walked about ten minutes to this valley that had a perfect view of the sky.

And we held hands and kissed and... watched it together.

As it were.

CELIA

Did you two have sex has you watched the sunrise?

DON

...in a way.

...

Yeah.

We did.

CELIA

...sounds romantic.

DON

It was.

And hot, and sexy, and erotic, and relieving, and uplifting, and...

I would seriously run out of adjectives to describe it.

That's probably what I'm gonna miss the most.

Having sex.

Not because I can't. If I use protection, I should be fine.

But... because I won't.

I can't bring anyone else into this.

I refuse to.

And if that means not being with anyone again...

CELIA

Sounds kinda lonely.

DON

Yeah. It really is.

Long pause.

DON

Remember when Ferret ran away?
At least, when Mom and Dad told us he did?

CELIA

Yeah.

DON

At first I didn't believe Dad when he told me.
But then I saw he wasn't in his cage, and...
I mean, can ferrets even run away?
Would they even want to run away?
Isn't a ferret basically a domesticated weasel?
So like, it's hard for me to believe that Ferret just runs away.
Then a few weeks later, I was digging in the backyard for some stupid reason, and felt my shovel
push against something soft.
I dig some more, and pull out Ferret.
Or, the body that used to be Ferret.
And I grabbed him,
Marched straight to Dad's room,
And said, "What happened to Ferret?"
...and he told me that Ferret had passed.
Not even died. Just... passed.
He told me not to tell you, but...

Long pause.

CELIA

I remember that.
Mom told me he had run away too.

DON

Why did they do that to us?
Why didn't they just tell us Ferret died?
How hard could that have been?

CELIA

I don't know.

...

Mom just told me not to do anything stupid, like running away.

DON

You didn't do anything stupid, Celia.

Long pause.

CELIA

It was Randall.

DON

...who?

CELIA

Told you it wasn't anyone you knew.

DON

...

CELIA

...

And yes, it was incredible.

He was incredible.

DON

Did you ever tell him, or...

CELIA

I was going to, but...

DON

You don't think he has the right to know?

CELIA

Why? He's not gonna have to pay child support or anything now.

DON

I mean, he should know he was going to be a father.

CELIA

How would you feel knowing you had potentially fathered something that just died?

And you had no control over it?

DON

...

CELIA

Maybe Randall would have cared. Maybe he wouldn't have.

But now that the baby's gone, what would be the point of Randall knowing?

Why do I need to send him on that guilt trip when it isn't needed?

DON

He should've supported you. But you never gave him the chance to.

CELIA

Maybe because I didn't want to.

DON

But he created a potential life.

CELIA

Why are you on his side? He's not the one who got knocked up. He's not the one who had to bleed. He's not the one who had a miscarriage.

Long silence.

Blackbirds and robins begin to tweet outside.

DON

I guess... I would want to know. If I was Randall.

CELIA

Well... he doesn't even know this happened.

So there's nothing he would want to know.

If *you* didn't even know you got me pregnant, would it matter?

...

OK please tell me you found that as weird as I did.

DON

No, I did.

CELIA

OK, good.

The two siblings look at each other, then laugh.

DON

But like, what if I did get you pregnant? And we were one of those weird incestuous couples—

CELIA

Ewwww!!! I don't even want to think of you even having sex, much less with me.

DON

You don't have to think about me having sex.

CELIA

But what you wanted to tell me involves you having it, so—

DON

Why does it have to just be sex? Can't it just be, a transcendent, beautiful, *human* experience?

CELIA

Because I don't think of sex like that.

DON

How do you think of it?

CELIA

I think of it like...

...

Like um...

...

I don't know. Truth be told, I don't think about it that much.

DON

But you said like five minutes ago that Randall was awesome.

CELIA

...I did.

DON

And that wasn't a transcendent, beautiful, human experience?

CELIA

Had the condom not broken, it would have been.

DON

...

CELIA

...

DON

So... are you gonna tell mom and dad?

CELIA

...

Are you?

DON

...I'll tell them I have HIV.

I'll tell them the whole story if they ask.

CELIA

Yeah...

They smile at each other.

CELIA

I think... I'm gonna tell them too.
Just that I got pregnant.

DON

Good.

Pause.

CELIA

You know Randall wasn't my first time.

DON

No?

CELIA

No. My first time was with Alex Trillers.

DON

Really!?

CELIA

Yep.

DON

He was in the grade above me!

CELIA

He liked 'em younger.

DON

That's like...

And he was like. Hideous!

CELIA

No he wasn't!

At least, I didn't think so.

DON

I mean, I knew you guys were talking, but I didn't think...

CELIA

It wasn't anything special.

It was at a football game.

We were on the soccer fields talking while the football game was going on
He asked if I wanted to go somewhere.
I said yes.

Then we went to the back of the high school,
And we just...

...

I was thirteen.

DON

...you know that's statutory rape, right?

CELIA

Well now I do.

But like, he didn't *hurt* me or anything.

He didn't quite have the, um... amount it required.

DON can't suppress a giggle.

DON

I never knew that about you.

CELIA

Well...

One more thing you know about me.

Pause.

DON

You know Jessie and I slept together.

CELIA

...what?

DON

She needed a ride home, I offered her one, then she suggested we come over here before dropping her off at home. Mom and Dad were at work, you had French club, so...

We did it on this couch.

It was both our first times.

...

We used a towel.

And we Febrezed and sanitized the shit out of it.

Obviously.

CELIA

...

DON

It was like...

Good.

But it was also like...

I *knew* I would've preferred a man. Somewhere in me, I knew that. But didn't wanna admit it. So...

CELIA

...

I've sat on this couch *how* many times?

DON

...I ruined it for you. I know.

CELIA

I don't even know what to think about that.

Why did you think I needed to know that?

DON

Because... It's like... Well...

Guess you didn't need to know.

CELIA

Nope. I don't think I did.

DON

You're mad. Aren't you.

CELIA

If I had the energy to be mad, I would be.

But right now I'm just...

I might like to have known that you and Jessie hooked up. My best friend, and my brother... You could've left out the part about the couch.

DON

Fair enough.

Pause.

DON

I feel like I've learned more about you in the last ten minutes than our whole lives, Celia.

Isn't that weird?

How learning one thing about someone just...

CELIA

It's like, who is this person?

DON
Your brother.

CELIA
Your sister.

*The siblings smile and look at each other.
The sun has finally risen.
The room sparkles with early morning light.*

DON
Good morning.

CELIA
Good morning.

SCENE TWELVE

*CELIA in the kitchen. Stirring a bowl of pasta.
DON enters, bringing in the mail.
There is a large envelope from Brown sticking out from it.*

DON
Here's the mail.
Looks like there's something for you.

*CELIA sees the Brown envelope and opens it.
She reads the letter inside it, her smile growing and growing.*

DON
...well?

CELIA jumps up and down.

CELIA
I got in! I got in!

DON
AAAHHHH!!! CONGRATULATIONS!!!

*The siblings hug each other.
They do a happy dance!*

DON

You sit down. I'll stir pasta for the newly-accepted Brown grad!

CELIA sits at the table. DON stirs the pasta, stops, then leans against the counter.

DON

So.

CELIA

So.

DON

How does it feel to have gotten into your dream school?

CELIA

Oh my God, it doesn't even feel real!

DON

Oh, it will soon enough, when those student loans start coming in.

CELIA

Mom and Dad will be *thrilled*...

DON

I think they will be! Their daughter got into Brown. How many parents can say that?

CELIA

And how many parents can say their child had a miscarriage?

DON

...

Well, think of it like

You have good news *and* bad news!

Balance each other out, you know?

CELIA

Yeah...

DON

At least you *have* good news to tell them.

CELIA

Hm...

Pause. DON stirs the pasta again.

CELIA

Do you have any suggestions, or...

DON
Suggestions?

CELIA
On like, how exactly I should word it?

DON
“Mom, Dad, while you were away I got into Brown, I also had a miscarriage” would be a start.

CELIA
...seriously? I don't want to freak them out.

DON
I think this news is gonna freak them out no matter what.

CELIA
I know, but I'm trying to freak them out as little as possible.

DON
I'm just gonna tell them I have HIV. Just those three words. I mean, there's no pussyfooting around something like that.

CELIA
I guess...
God. I never thought we'd even talk about having this discussion with our parents.

DON
Yeah, well...
It had to happen eventually.

Pause.

CELIA
I think we can stir the pasta some more.

DON
You want me to stir, or...

CELIA
No, I'll stir.

CELIA stirs the pot of pasta as DON watches.

SCENE THIRTEEN

CELIA and DON clean the living room in preparation for their parents return—CELIA dusts, DON windexes the glass surfaces in the room. They do this for about a minute or so. Then, they put their cleaning tools down.

DON
OK. One more go?

CELIA
Sure.

DON
Alright.

CELIA
Mom... Dad... I have good news and bad news.
Good news: I got into Brown.
Bad news... I got pregnant. However, I then wound up having a miscarriage.

DON
If they ask who got you pregnant.

CELIA
A friend of mine.

DON
And does he know.

CELIA
No, and I don't want to tell him just now.

DON
If they tell you that he should know.

CELIA
I'll tell him when the time is right. Just not now.

DON
How're you feeling?

CELIA
I mean, good that I got into Brown, but—

DON
No, I mean, actually.

How are you feeling?

CELIA

Oh.

Nervous.

But better.

DON

Good.

Pause.

CELIA

Alright. Your turn.

DON

Mom... Dad... I have HIV.

CELIA

And if they ask about Vincent?

DON

Vincent is negative, but that's the real reason we broke up.

CELIA

And if they ask why?

DON

Which they won't:

"It's a long story, but I did something really bad that wound up hurting Vincent and myself."

CELIA

What did you do?

DON

I... cheated on him.

Technically, I didn't, but technically, I...

Pause. DON looks around the room.

DON

What do you think?

CELIA

I'm thinking we'll be fine.

DON

I was actually asking about the living room. Do you think it's clean enough?

CELIA

Oh! Yeah. Definitely. I'd say we cleaned the shit out of it. Just like you did with the couch.

DON

Ha ha. Very funny.

Suddenly, we hear a car pull into the driveway offstage.

DON and CELIA brace themselves.

DON

Still nervous?

CELIA

Oh yeah.

DON

Me too. It's OK.

DON and CELIA embrace each other for a good thirty seconds.

Offstage, we hear voices.

MOTHER (O.S.)

Don! Celia!

FATHER (O.S.)

We're home!

The silhouettes of MOTHER and FATHER are revealed.

DON and CELIA look at one another, then hold hands, ready to face their parents.

DON and CELIA walk forward, as if approaching a confessional.

As they reach the apron of the stage...

BLACKOUT.

END OF PLAY