

## **The Last Day of the Alex's, a new play**

### **CHARACTERS**

NOAH, twenty-something, male-identifying, works for a marketing firm, ALEX's roommate and friend from college

JAMES, twenty-something, male-identifying, unemployed, ALEX's roommate, grew up with ALEX

SARAH, twenty-something, female-identifying, in school, ALEX's girlfriend of several years, went to college with ALEX and NOAH, has recently moved into ALEX's room

DEBORAH, sixties, female-identifying, ALEX's mother

**SETTING:** A New York City apartment, three bedrooms.

### **SCENE BREAKDOWN**

Scene One: Day one, the Day the Alex's Disappeared

Scene Two: Exactly one week later

Scene Three: Four months after that

SCENE FOUR: Two months after that

Scene Five: Three months after that

Scene Six: Roughly three months after that, one year since the Day the Alex's Disappeared

**TIME:** current

*(Lights up. The three-bedroom apartment that is rented by ALEX, NOAH, and JAMES. Ikea furniture and some hand-me-downs. It appears as if no one is home. JAMES' room door is cracked open. After a moment, NOAH enters in a rush. He holds a jacket and a messenger bag. He looks frazzled. He's shouting.)*

NOAH

Alex?! Alex- are you here?

*(He goes to check ALEX's room. He continues shouting. Finally, he comes out of ALEX's room, checking his phone. He picks up a remote and turns on the TV. We hear a newscast in progress.)*

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

-there's so much unknown at this time but we can report a over 10,000% increase in missing-person reports overnight. At this time, we can report that President Alexander Levitt is declared missing from both the White House and his home in Vermont. We do not at this time have any updates, but the state department is telling us that there are no current threats to the United States, and there is no evidence to suggest foul play-

*(JAMES comes out of his room in the middle of the newscast. He's wearing an oversized t-shirt and boxer briefs.)*

JAMES (*seeing NOAH*)

Oh. Hey. I didn't think /anyone was home.

NOAH  
/Hold on-/

JAMES  
Aren't you supposed to be at work?

NOAH  
They sent us home.

JAMES  
Hey, something weird just happened-

NOAH  
Have you seen Alex this morning?

JAMES  
Uhh, no I don't think so.

NOAH  
Something's going on-

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O)

-And we have several other accounts as this time of other disturbing reports. We are hearing of-  
it's fragmented, I'm listening in- yes, we have at this time several accounts of people, multiple  
people, disappearing. Going into rooms and never coming out-

JAMES  
What did they say?

NOAH  
Shh.

JAMES  
Wait, this is so weird, because I was just watching one of my friends' streams.

NOAH  
They're not your friends.

JAMES  
They know me.

NOAH  
They're girls on OnlyFans, Jimmy, you pay them.

JAMES

Whatever, so I was watching one, and she-

NOAH

Wait, you were just watching one?

JAMES

Yeah, just now-

NOAH

You were watching an OnlyFans girl's livestream? You were masturbating just now?

JAMES

Well I hadn't started yet-

NOAH

Eww!

JAMES

What?

NOAH

You're fucking door's open, Jimmy!

JAMES

Only a crack! Well I didn't think anyone was coming home!

NOAH

Answer me honestly, how often are you masturbating in the middle of the morning with your door open?

JAMES (*hesitating*)

That's not the point! Listen to me-

NOAH

I would very much like to make that the point.

JAMES

Listen to me! I was just watching her and the screen went blank for a second, like totally black, and then when it came back on she wasn't there.

NOAH

So?

JAMES

So, it was weird.

NOAH

Jimmy, I'm trying to listen to this-

JAMES

No, listen to me, because that's not even the weird part. She was using, like a, ya know, like one of those-

NOAH

Jimmy, just say vibrator, christ.

JAMES

Right, so she was using it in the live and when the screen went black, and when it came back up the vibrator was still you, where she was using, where she was doing it, and it was \*still going off\*.

NOAH

She didn't turn the vibrator off?

JAMES

No, you're not listening, she wasn't \*there\*. When the screen came back on. She was gone.

NOAH

Gone.

JAMES

Like, disappeared. Like they're saying on there!

NOAH

I don't think it's the same-

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

We are getting additional reports of damages- Flight 107 out of Boston went down over the coast of Long Island, and we can report that there were no survivors. We can tell you at this time that there appears to be a global event occurring, starting roughly at 2AM last night and continuing through this morning. We still do not know the whereabouts of President Levitt at this time. It does appear that the disappearances and global turmoil are connected at this time, although we do not yet know the connection-

JAMES

Fuck.

NOAH (*taking out his phone*)

We gotta call Alex.

JAMES  
You haven't heard from him?

NOAH  
He missed his meeting this morning. His supervisor called me.

JAMES  
Have you heard from Sarah?

NOAH  
She has class.

JAMES  
I'll text her.

*(NOAH calls. JAMES texts.)*

NOAH *(hanging up)*  
The service is spotty.

JAMES  
Is the call going through?

NOAH  
Hang on.

*(He tries again.)*

NOAH  
It's ringing. *(A beat. He listens. No one answers.)* Voicemail.

JAMES  
Does Sarah have an android?

NOAH  
No, why?

JAMES  
The texts are going out green. See?

NOAH *(looking over, dialing again)*  
Bad service probably.

JAMES

Should I try calling her?

NOAH

Hold on. *(A beat. He listens to the receiver as it rings.)* Come on, Alex.

*(JAMES hears something from ALEX's room. He goes into the room. NOAH looks after him, listening to the phone call. Finally, JAMES returns, holding ALEX's cellphone. NOAH hangs up his end.)*

JAMES

It was still on his charger.

NOAH

He didn't take it with him.

JAMES

That's weird, right?

NOAH

Yeah, he never leaves home without it.

JAMES

Should we be worried.

NOAH

I don't know. Maybe.

JAMES *(looking at ALEX's phone)*

Fuck.

NOAH

What?

JAMES

He has like, a million missed calls and texts.

NOAH

What do they say?

JAMES

His display isn't on.

NOAH

Unlock the phone.

JAMES  
It's face-activated.

NOAH  
Use his passcode.

JAMES  
I don't know his passcode. Do you?

NOAH  
7-7-9-3.

JAMES (*unlocking the phone*)  
Most of them are from his parents. "Where are you" "Answer us" "Alex, please." Then a bunch of people I don't know. Terrence?

NOAH  
His buddy from work.

JAMES  
"Dude. I just heard. Please let me know that you're still here."

NOAH  
"Still here"? What does he mean "Still here"?

JAMES (*showing him the screen*)  
Look.

NOAH (*reading another text*)  
From Shelby: "please tell me you didn't go with them."

JAMES  
Who's "them"?

NOAH  
This is so fucking weird man.

JAMES (*checking his phone*)  
Sarah's writing back.

NOAH  
What did she say?

JAMES

Still typing. Those three little dots. Wait. Okay. She stopped.

NOAH

I'm gonna call his parents.

JAMES

Wait. I don't think you should.

NOAH

Why?

JAMES

I think we should just, you know.

NOAH

Jimmy, they need to know we can't find him.

JAMES

They already know something is going on. We aren't going to be able to tell them anything. We should wait until there's some more information.

NOAH

They need to know!

JAMES

What do \*we\* know that could help \*them\*?

*(A beat.)*

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

We are getting mixed reports of more flight and rail accidents at this time. The FAA and Department of Transportation have suspended all travel for the foreseeable future. Citizens- it seems, globally- are being given shelter-in-place orders until more information is available. Vice President Ramona Birch will address the nation at-

NOAH

I'm gonna call my mom.

*(NOAH steps into the kitchen on his phone. We don't hear the conversation. JAMES continues to watch TV. After a moment, he begins scrolling on his phone, on Twitter. He shakes his head.)*

JAMES *(shouting to NOAH)*

Dude, Twitter is lighting up right now. They're saying some weird shit. *(NOAH does not respond)*. This is fucking wild. *(JAMES types a message to someone, bites his nails. He shouts out to NOAH again.)* This is one of those moments, ya know, where you're gonna remember where you were and what you were doing. Like 9/11. Or the JFK assassination.



NOAH (*visibly annoyed*)  
Hang on Mom- (*He places the receiver on his chest, to JAMES*) What are you saying?

JAMES  
The JFK assassination. Was all I was saying.

NOAH (*holding the phone back up to his ear*)  
I'm fine, Mom. I know, I know. I'm gonna stay right here. It's all going to be okay. Tell Dad I love him. (*A pause.*) Right. I will. Don't worry. Okay. Bye. Love you.

(*NOAH hangs up the phone. And goes back to JAMES and the TV.*)

JAMES  
Do they know anything?

NOAH  
No. Sounds like it's global. Whatever this is.

JAMES  
Twitter is calling it like what happened in "The Leftovers".

NOAH  
I didn't see that.

JAMES  
Oh. It was pretty good. Only one season though. Maybe two?

NOAH (*indicating the TV*)  
What time is the president speaking?

JAMES  
Vice president. I didn't hear when.

NOAH  
Is this terrorism?

JAMES  
They don't know.

NOAH  
It's gotta be terrorism. Or like, a massive covert, like, spy or anarchy type thing. Trying to disrupt the whole, like, global-macro-economy and structure.

JAMES  
I don't like to theorize.

NOAH  
You're on Twitter right now.

JAMES (*indicating his feed*)  
This isn't theories.

NOAH  
Right.

JAMES  
Dude. Elon has really straightened this site out, you'd be surprised.

NOAH  
Okay, stop.

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O.)  
We are getting word at this time, it appears, that, several members of congress and several cabinet members have also been declared missing at this time, including one Supreme Court Judge. We do not yet know if these disappearances are connected to the disappearance of President Levitt at this time.

JAMES  
They're calling it "Alex-ture".

NOAH  
Why would they call it that? (*realizing*) What was her name?

JAMES  
Who?

NOAH  
The streamer, the OnlyFans girl.

JAMES  
My friend?

NOAH  
Jimmy-

JAMES  
I don't know her actual name.

NOAH (*a little relieved*)

Okay.

JAMES

But her username is @AlexaKittyGirl

NOAH

Alexa? Her name is Alexa?

JAMES

I mean it's what she goes by.

NOAH

Show me Twitter.

JAMES

Go to the hashtags.

*(NOAH takes JAMES' phone, he immediately recoils.)*

NOAH

Dude half your feed is porn.

JAMES

Don't look at that, look at the trends.

NOAH

Okay so. "Alex-ture". What does that even mean.

JAMES

Like Rapture. Like from the Bible.

NOAH

I'm agnostic.

JAMES

I don't know what that means.

NOAH

And I don't know what "rapture" means.

JAMES

It's when everyone goes like, flying up to heaven. Before the apocalypse.

NOAH

Flying up to heaven?

JAMES

Like transported. And everyone who is going to hell stays on Earth as the, like, four horsemen come through.

NOAH

How do you know this?

JAMES

I went to Sunday School.

NOAH

So you think that's what happened? People got, what, raptured?

JAMES

Not just any people. People named Alex. Alexa, too, I guess.

NOAH

That's fucking ridiculous.

JAMES

It's just what's online.

NOAH

This is a global emergency, of course the internet is gonna go nuts.

JAMES

I'm not theorizing, like I said.

NOAH

Shouldn't you call your parents?

JAMES

I texted them that I was all right.

NOAH

You texted them?

JAMES

Yeah. See?

NOAH (*taking his phone*)

"All good here. Lemme know what's up."

JAMES

I have a cousin named Alex. Hope my man's okay.

NOAH

“Lemme know what’s up”?!?

JAMES

Well, in case they get more info before me. They’re living in DC now, so.

NOAH

You’re attitude right now is really, just, like. Wow.

JAMES

What?

NOAH

How can you be so fucking casual about this? Our roommate is fucking missing!

JAMES

I’m not being casual. I compared it to 9/11 before. And JFK getting shot.

NOAH

Neither of us were alive for JFK getting shot.

JAMES

Well. Sure. But our parents talk about it.

NOAH

I’m calling his parents-

JAMES

/Dude, don’t./

NOAH

/No I’m fucking gonna. This is ridiculous, he can’t have just disappeared./

JAMES

/We should just fucking wait! It’s not like they called you!

NOAH

Fine! You’re right. But. Fuck.

*(They turn back to the news. A shocking image appears on the screen.)*

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

We are showing you- I’m sorry this is, I’ve never seen- these are images from cities across America right now. That’s Philadelphia, you can see the fires- and there’s Chicago, it appears, where that skyscraper has, it seems- *(the NEWSCASTER chokes back tears)* And this is New

York City, where our office is located now, and you can see the streams of smoke and what appears to be a /multiple vehicle pileup on the Brooklyn Bridge-

JAMES (*awed*)  
/Is that?

NOAH (*terrified*)  
Yeah. Yeah that's. Us.

JAMES  
Holy shit.

*(Without looking down, JAMES dials a number on his phone. He listens to it ring. Finally someone picks up on the other end.)*

JAMES  
Mom. Yeah. Hi. (*A pause.*) I know, I'm here. It's okay. I'm okay. You guys just. You just stay put okay. Don't. Don't go anywhere. Yes. Yes I promise. I'll come to you as soon as I can. (*A long pause, he appears to get teary-eyed*) I love you too. It's all going to be okay. (*A pause, the connection begins to fray*). Mom. Mama, you're breaking up. The connection is. Mom. Mom?

*(The line goes dead. He turns away from NOAH while hanging up the phone. Without looking at him, NOAH places a hand on his back.)*

NOAH  
It's okay.

JAMES (*defensive*)  
I know. I'm fine.

NOAH  
Okay.

JAMES  
So. What do you think we do now?

NOAH  
No word from Sarah?

*(At that exact moment, the front door slams and SARAH enters. She panicked, her backpack unzipped. NOAH and JAMES stand and brace for her.)*

SARAH  
Where is he!?!?

NOAH

Sarah-

SARAH

He's not answering my fucking calls-

NOAH

We don't know where-

SARAH

Fucking tell me where that asshole is, Noah!

*(A beat.)*

NOAH

Sarah. What're you talking about?

SARAH

Don't fucking cover for him.

JAMES

This is. Weirder than I expected your reaction to be.

SARAH

Weirder? What did you expect I would do when she told me??

JAMES

Who?

SARAH

Her!

NOAH

Who's "her"?

SARAH

This bitch. This Shelby. This fucking, I don't even know where he knows her from, how they met or whatever, but there's no fucking way that he has gotten away with this without help from both of you.

NOAH

Help with what?

SARAH

Covering it up! Covering for him while he was out sleeping with her!

*(A beat.)*

JAMES

So you're not talking about the. You know the-

SARAH

The what? Christ you're so fucking stupid.

JAMES

Hey!/  
/

NOAH

/Sarah-/  
/

JAMES

/You are being super mean right now. You come in hot and fucking raging and we have no clue what you're talking about.

NOAH

Sarah do you not know what's going on right now?

SARAH

I know that my boyfriend of 2 years has been cheating on me for the past six months. And I know that he's a coward because his fucking, I don't even know what to call her, mistress or skank or what-the-fuck-ever, is the one who told me.

NOAH

Told you today?

SARAH

Yes! She sent me a DM on instagram, and honey, she's got \*receipts\*. I mean read some of these messages: "I can't wait to be inside you later." "We can spend all day fucking and sleeping" "You're all I ever want." He's a fucking poet.

JAMES

Damn. He \*did\* work late, like, a lot.

NOAH

Sarah, I'm not talking about Alex. I mean, I'm not talking about \*Alex cheating\*-

SARAH

So you did know? Where is he right now?

NOAH

We don't know.



JAMES  
That's the truth.

NOAH  
But you have to know what's going on.

SARAH  
What're you talking about?

NOAH  
Something's...happened, I guess.

SARAH  
What're you- (*she sees the TV*) What movie is this?

JAMES  
That's not a movie. Although. You're right it does kind of look like "The Dark Knight Rises".  
With all of the smoke and the bridges and everything.

SARAH  
Noah?

NOAH  
There's a global. I don't even know what to call it. Event. I guess. Something has happened and there's a lot of disappearances and some accidents and we don't know what's going on.

JAMES  
Didn't they tell you at school?

SARAH  
I just got an email saying they cancelled classes but they're summer classes anyways so it doesn't even really matter and- wait. It was because of this?

JAMES  
The girl's name was Shelby?

SARAH  
Huh?

JAMES  
The girl who DM'ed you. Her name is Shelby?

SARAH

Yeah.

JAMES

When did she send the message?

SARAH (*looking at the message*)  
11:24am.

JAMES (*to NOAH*)

When did he get the text from her?

SARAH (*seeing ALEX's phone in his hand*)  
Why do you have that?

NOAH (*to JAMES, checking the text history*)  
Eleven.

JAMES

So she must've had it confirmed after her text to him.

SARAH

Wait-/

JAMES

What did the message say?

SARAH

What message?

JAMES

Her DM. How did she put it?

SARAH

She said. I don't. I don't think I can read it I'm so fucking mad at him right now.

JAMES (*taking her phone*)

Give it to me. (*he reads*) Well. Yeah.

NOAH

What did she say?

JAMES (*reading*)

“Given what’s happening, you should know that Alex and I were sleeping together for the past six months. Since he won’t get to tell you, I will.”

SARAH (*mocking*)

“Won’t get to tell you”. Coward.

NOAH

So this is happening. This is *\*really\** happening.

JAMES

We don’t know that she knew anything.

NOAH

But if she knew others- if she knew others that disappeared and she heard about them after she texted Alex this morning-

JAMES

That doesn’t confirm anything.

NOAH

24 minutes, James. That’s enough time to have it confirmed that something has happened. (*A beat.*) You should call your cousin.

JAMES (*heading toward the kitchen*)

Right.

NOAH

*/Sarah, you should sit down./*

SARAH

*/I’m so confused right now./*

NOAH

*/It’s going to be fine./*

SARAH

*/Noah-/*

NOAH

*/I don’t want you to worry-/*

SARAH

*/NOAH.*

*(A beat.)*

SARAH

Where’s Alex?

*(Scene shifts. Approximately one week later. The apartment is in slightly more disarray than the previous scene. SARAH sits on the couch wrapped in a blanket, catatonic. She watches a news broadcast. It's morning. ALEX's phone sits on the table in front of her. She watches the TV. The phone buzzes. She picks it up, looks at the notification. She places it back down. JAMES' door is closed. NOAH enters, sleepy. He sees her. His mood adjusts.)*

NOAH

Hey. *(She does not respond or register his presence.)* You get any sleep? *(No response)*. Me neither. Really. I mean, a few hours but nothing major. Doom-scrolling, you know? You want coffee? I think we have some left. And the rations should be coming some time today, I think. The eighteenth. Is today the eighteenth? *(checks the calendar)* Yes! Great. I heard back from the hotline. Turns out I was calling the wrong hotline- I had the number to report someone missing and not the one for maintenance or emergency requests. It seems like the governments answer to disasters is to set a tip-line. Anyways. They are processing the request again for water assistance. I really think it's those people on the third floor, they had that leak when we first moved in and I bet they have loads more time to take baths. I talked to Mrs. Davidson on the fifth floor, she sends her love. I didn't realize she had a daughter named Alexandria, and obviously she's pretty upset about. Yeah. *(Still no response. He continues.)* Were you able to get through to the bank at all? Get access to his accounts? Might be worthwhile to try again today- I'm sure they're swamped but, you know, worth a shot. Just say you were his fiancée. They'll be sympathetic to that, I think. *(She doesn't respond, but NOAH seems regretful for what he just said.)* Fuck. I'm sorry, Sarah. I didn't mean, I know this is hard- I just. You know. He'd want to help us get, you know, more rations and I know you relied on him a little, and hey! When you're able to fly to California again, you can go see your folks. I know you really want to. But. I'm sorry. *(A beat. He stares at her. ALEX's phone buzzes on the table.)* Hey, I heard they might lift the lockdown today or tomorrow. Kind of surprised, but then we can go outside. Get some fresh air.

*(He brings her over a cup of coffee and sits next to her.)*

SARAH

I don't want any fucking fresh air.

NOAH

Did you sleep out here again?

SARAH

I'm not staying in that room.

NOAH

I opened windows last night, it won't be as musty.

SARAH

That wasn't the problem.

NOAH

I know. I know it wasn't.

*(A beat. They sip their coffees. ALEX's phone buzzes.)*

NOAH *(indicating the TV)*  
Any news this morning?

SARAH  
They let those people off the cruise ships. In the harbor.

NOAH  
To send them home?

SARAH  
I guess.

NOAH  
They wouldn't do that if it wasn't safe to be on land. So that's a good sign.

SARAH  
Whatever.

NOAH  
You talk to his mom at all?

SARAH  
Texting. A little. No news.

NOAH  
You want breakfast?

SARAH  
Sure.

*(A beat. He performs.)*

NOAH  
"Thank you, Noah" Oh no problem Sarah!

SARAH  
Hey.

NOAH  
I'm just trying to make you laugh.

SARAH

Why?

NOAH

Because you haven't moved from the couch in three days.

SARAH

Everyone's just moving on.

NOAH

They aren't.

SARAH

They just swore in the new congress.

NOAH

They have to. To address the-

SARAH

Europe is gonna start letting flights go again.

NOAH

Really? That's fast.

SARAH

So they don't care.

NOAH

They do. They just have to. You know. Calibrate their response.

SARAH (*bitter*)

Ha. "Calibrate".

NOAH

Sarah, like I said, I put in the request through the tipline.

SARAH

You think that does fucking anything? Just filling out some form or filing some complaint?

NOAH

What else can we do?

*(A beat. ALEX's phone buzzes on the table.)*

SARAH

I need tampons.

NOAH

Yeah? I'm not sure if I can amend the rations at this point.

SARAH

Well I fucking need them.

NOAH

I get it, I just don't know if I can add them. I think there's a (*he checks his phone*) yeah. There's a way to add an item to be delivered later, but it won't be here, like, today. With the rest of the stuff I mean.

SARAH

Another fucking form?

NOAH

I can check with one of the neighbors, see if they can-

SARAH

Let's just hope the person who's job it is to go through the \*millions\* of requests for fucking CLEAN WATER and TAMPONS wasn't named Alexander.

NOAH

If you have another suggestion, I'm happy to hear it.

SARAH

We could be out looking for him.

NOAH

We can't leave. They won't let us go.

SARAH

How do we know this isn't some government cover-up? Some fucking coup that they want all to be inside for?

NOAH

You and Jimmy have to stop watching that shit-

SARAH

What shit?

NOAH

I was happy when you both started getting into it, because it beat you laying on floor and crying but now you're starting to sound just fucking like him.

SARAH

What's that supposed to mean?

NOAH

It means you have to figure out a way to move through this.

SARAH

Stop trying to get me to move on.

NOAH

I'm not.

SARAH

I'm allowed to be fucking sad. Okay? This is fucking terrifying and scary and sad. Okay?

NOAH

How much time would you like?

*(A beat. ALEX's phone buzzes on the table.)*

SARAH *(shocked, shouting)*

Wow. Fuck you.

NOAH

Not like that. I'm honestly asking. How much time do you need before you go get fresh air and stop punishing yourself?

SARAH *(shouting even louder)*

I'm not punishing myself.

NOAH *(matching her volume)*

Then move through it.

*(JAMES comes out of his bedroom, annoyed.)*

JAMES

Guys, seriously, it's early and I was sleeping.

NOAH

Sorry, Jimmy.

SARAH *(angry)*

Fuck you. Fuck you both. *(She goes to exit into ALEX's bedroom, but stops herself)* I don't want to fucking go in there, so I'm going to take a fucking shower with our fucking dirty water. *(She begins to storm out towards the bathroom, stops herself)* Thank \*you\* for the coffee, \*Noah\*. I would like my eggs scrambled.



NOAH

Sure thing. They'll be ready when you get out of the shower.

*(SARAH exits into the bathroom. NOAH and JAMES exchange a glance. ALEX's phone buzzes on the table.)*

JAMES

Did she sleep out here again?

NOAH

Yeah. But that's the first time she's showered in a week, so let's just call it a win.

JAMES

We still on for a Mario Kart rematch today?

NOAH

Flower Cup. Let's do it.

JAMES

Any news?

NOAH

Europe is starting flights again.

JAMES

That's good, right? Maybe we are almost out of lockdown?

NOAH

I saw maybe today or tomorrow. Listen-

JAMES

I know what you're going to say, and I'm trying.

NOAH

We gotta try again, man. We are behind already.

JAMES

He says he can't give us a break. Unless you can borrow from your parents?

NOAH

I really, *\*really\** don't want to.

JAMES

What about the bank account? Did she call?

NOAH

I asked this morning, but if it didn't work for either of us, they aren't just going to let her get into there.

JAMES

Did you tell her about saying she was his fiancée? That could work!

NOAH

James, she's going through it.

*(ALEX's phone buzzes on the table.)*

JAMES

I know that.

NOAH

And I don't want to push her more than-

JAMES

We're all going through it.

NOAH

She had been with him for years.

JAMES

I lost a cousin. Okay Noah? A fucking family member. She's been living with us for, I don't even know, and we don't really know her-

NOAH

I know her.

JAMES

I'm just saying, she's gotta. You know. She has to pull her weight here.

NOAH

I'll ask again. If that doesn't work, then, you know I'll go to my parents. But if you could ask Herb one more time.

JAMES

His wife's name was Lexi. She was an anesthesiologist.

NOAH

Our landlord was married to an anesthesiologist?

JAMES  
And she's gone.

NOAH  
I get it. I'll ask again.

JAMES  
Thanks. Is there coffee?

NOAH  
Yeah. Rations should come today as well.

JAMES  
It's the eighteenth already?

NOAH  
Yeah.

*(JAMES gets coffee. NOAH begins making breakfast. The TV plays quietly in the background.)*

NOAH  
I talked to my mom and dad last night. They were going through their family trees again.

JAMES  
To see if anyone was named Alex?

NOAH  
They've done it twice, but I think they just wanted to, you know, check again.

JAMES  
Everyone's running out of shit to do. TikTok has a new trend where people just scream into pillows.

NOAH  
It's only been a week. If people aren't allowed to go outside soon.

JAMES  
Yeah.

NOAH  
What do you miss the most?

JAMES  
What do I \*miss\* the most?

NOAH  
Yeah, about outside.

JAMES  
Seriously?

NOAH  
Yeah, why not?

JAMES  
This feels like a Sarah-question.

NOAH  
What do you mean?

JAMES  
Something you and her would talk about.

*(A beat. ALEX's phone buzzes on the table. They both look in that direction.)*

NOAH  
We don't know each other too well, do we?

JAMES  
What? We know each other?

NOAH  
Yeah, but, like, not super well huh?

JAMES  
I mean. I don't know your parent's names. But I know you like peanut butter on toast in the morning. So whatever degree that puts us at.

NOAH  
I think. Sorry. I think it just occurred to me that Alex was our only link.

*(A beat. ALEX's phone buzzes on the table.)*

JAMES  
Well. That sucks to say.

NOAH  
I just think it's a little true.

JAMES  
I've known you for like a decade.

NOAH

I've never seen the town you grew up in though.

JAMES

I stayed in your bed in college.

NOAH

We were drunk.

JAMES

One could argue that makes us closer.

*(NOAH exits into the kitchen to make breakfast.)*

NOAH

I don't know if you have siblings.

JAMES

I don't.

NOAH

And I haven't asked how you're handling this.

JAMES

I'm. You know. I'm fine.

NOAH

This sucks. And it's okay to say so.

JAMES

Don't do that.

NOAH

Do what?

JAMES

Try to like, therapize me.

NOAH

I'm pretty sure "therapize" isn't a word.

JAMES

I'm sure it is. And I don't want it.

NOAH

We should, like, talk about it.

JAMES

Kind of hard to do when his ex-girlfriend or current girlfriend or whatever she is, is still living here.

NOAH

You want her to move out?

JAMES

I think she must feel weird about living with two guys. One of which she doesn't really know.

NOAH

You grew up with him.

JAMES

So?

NOAH

So you knew him longer. That's gotta be weird. He was your childhood best friend.

JAMES

I think college friends are closer. Just like, a more formative time.

NOAH

More formative than adolescence and middle school and high school?

JAMES

I dropped out. We lost touch for awhile.

NOAH

See- I didn't know that.

JAMES

It's not a big deal.

NOAH

Okay. Well. I guess I'll just say if you want to talk about it. I'm here.

JAMES

Okay?

*(A beat. NOAH finishes making eggs. JAMES sips his coffee.)*

JAMES

Grass.

NOAH  
Huh?

JAMES

I miss the smell of fresh cut grass. I know it's rare in the city, but every once in awhile, you walk by a patch, or if you're in that super-residential part of Brooklyn, and you can smell it. For like a second. I miss that.

*(A beat. ALEX's phone buzzes on the table.)*

NOAH  
Maybe you'll smell it again soon.

JAMES  
Maybe.

*(SARAH re-enters from the shower, a towel around her and one in her hair. She stands there awkwardly.)*

NOAH  
How was the shower?

SARAH  
I need someone to help me.

NOAH  
Yeah?

SARAH  
I need clothes, and I can't-

*(She sort of gestures towards ALEX's room.)*

NOAH  
Oh. Right. Okay, hold on-

JAMES *(putting down his coffee)*  
I got it.

NOAH  
Yeah?

JAMES  
Yeah. What do you need?

SARAH

I need. Well. Okay. I need a bra and underwear and jeans and a t-shirt.

JAMES

Okay. Where am I looking?

SARAH

The- the underwear and stuff is in the dresser. The rest is in the closet.

JAMES (*exiting into ALEX's room*)

Okay.

*(He exits into ALEX's room, we hear his voice from inside.)*

JAMES (*offstage*)

Okay, so I've got jeans- what size are you?- wait, sorry, don't answer that. (*A pause.*) I'm going through the, uhh, the dresser and I'm finding the ummm.

*(JAMES pokes his head back into the living room.)*

JAMES

How, uhh, dressy are you looking to be here?

SARAH

Dressy?

JAMES

You've got....options. For under-garments.

SARAH

Are you asking if I would like to wear a thong?

JAMES

That's- yes.

SARAH

Why don't we just say nothing with lace.

JAMES

Can do. (*he turns to exit*) Does that also apply to the, uhh, you know the tops?

NOAH

Jimmy, just get the clothes!



JAMES  
I'm just asking!

SARAH  
I really don't care I just don't want to be naked right now.

JAMES  
Got it. Hang on.

*(JAMES disappears back into ALEX's bedroom. ALEX's phone buzzes on the table.)*

JAMES *(offstage)*  
Okay. I picked the blandest stuff I could find.

SARAH  
Okay come back please.

JAMES *(re-entering, handing her a pile of clothes)*  
Here ya go.

SARAH  
Thank you.

*(She turns to exit back into the bathroom. She turns back to them, holding up the oversized t-shirt he grabbed. The t-shirt is for a brewery, non-descript.)*

SARAH  
Wait-

JAMES  
You don't have a lot of stuff without lace!

SARAH *(holding up the oversized t-shirt)*  
No it's- this isn't mine.

JAMES  
It was on the floor-

SARAH  
This is Alex's.

*(A beat.)*

NOAH

It's okay.

JAMES

Fuck I'm sorry /I just saw it on the side of the bed and I thought it looked like something you'd maybe worn before-/

SARAH

/It's okay-/

JAMES

I don't know which side of the bed you usually sleep, I mean, slept on-

SARAH

Jimmy. Seriously. It's fine.

*(She exits into the bathroom to change. JAMES and NOAH look to each other.)*

JAMES

I feel bad.

NOAH

I'm sure she's fine, don't worry about it.

JAMES

Can I have some eggs?

NOAH

Sure.

*(SARAH re-enters, having changed for the day. She wears the oversized t-shirt along with the clothes JAMES grabbed for her.)*

NOAH *(handing her a plate of food)*

Here you go.

SARAH

Thank you.

JAMES

You look nice.

SARAH

A shower can do wonders. Any news?

JAMES

I haven't checked yet.

SARAH

Thank you for getting me clothes.

JAMES

Anytime. I mean not like anytime, I'm not like 100% into grabbing underwear and a bra for you.

SARAH

Sure.

*(A beat. ALEX's phone buzzes on the table.)*

JAMES

Is it a thing to own multiple colors of underwear?

SARAH

What do you mean?

JAMES

You have like, all the colors of the rainbow in underwear. And the types: thongs, regular, etc.

SARAH

Etc.?

NOAH

Jimmy, why don't we just let her eat her eggs.

JAMES

Sure.

*(A beat.)*

JAMES

I'm just saying that like, all of my underwear is black.

SARAH *(pointing to what he's currently wearing)*

I can see that.

JAMES

I don't think I've clocked until this \*exact moment\* that we live with a girl.

SARAH

I haven't been around that long. I only lived here for like, two months. Three months, now, I guess.

JAMES

Well you're the first girl Alex ever lived with.

NOAH

Well.

JAMES

"Well" what?

NOAH

There was a girl he dated our junior year, when we were off-campus, who kinda moved in after a few months.

SARAH

Gemma?

NOAH

Yes. Gemma.

SARAH

That was when we were broken up. And wasn't she a drug-addict?

JAMES

Alex dated a drug-addict?

NOAH

She wasn't a drug-addict, she just smoked a lot of pot.

JAMES

Oh. That doesn't count.

SARAH

I don't think she like, officially lived there.

NOAH

She had a toothbrush in our bathroom.

SARAH

I think it was because she dropped out and the university kicked her out of the dorm.

NOAH

Sorry. I didn't mean to suggest-

SARAH

He asked me to move in.

NOAH  
I know he did.

SARAH  
It wasn't the same thing. It's *\*not\** the same thing.

NOAH  
No. Of course not.

*(A beat.)*

JAMES  
I mean. I've never lived with a girl. So. I hope I'm doing okay. As a roommate.

SARAH  
You've kept the door shut when you've needed to keep the door shut.

NOAH  
Sarah, I don't mean to say you're not important. Or like, that you're not important to him.

SARAH  
He cheated on me, so apparently I wasn't.

NOAH  
You are, though. He loves you. Loved you. I don't know.

SARAH  
Let's just let it go.

NOAH  
Fine. Yes.

JAMES  
Sounds good.

*(A beat.)*

JAMES  
Good eggs.

*(A beat. They all eat in silence. Several moments pass.)*

NOAH  
He bought that the day you guys met, you know.

SARAH  
Sorry?

NOAH  
That t-shirt. He bought that the day you guys met.

SARAH  
What're you talking about?

NOAH  
We were at the brewery that day, that specific brewery, we had never had it before and he wanted us to try it and we had just turned 21 so we walked there. Which didn't make sense, given how cold it was. But we start walking and we are like shivering and so when we get there we get \*so accidentally drunk\*. And we hadn't eaten anything. I actually don't think it's scientific at all that when it's colder out you get drunker. But anyways, we are at the brewery and we get a flight, a taster, and then a big beer, and then another one and then another one, and then finally we are like "okay let's go home" and get going and we are stumbling outside and it had started snowing. And we didn't know. And I look over, and I don't know how I didn't notice this, but Alex doesn't have his jacket. And so I'm like "dude where's your coat" and he's so drunk I don't think he really even knew what I said and he says "I'm fine I'm fine let's get walking". And he turns and we see this group walking towards, getting out of a car, and you were there. You and a bunch of other people we didn't know, and Alex stops in his tracks, and he walked right up to you. And I don't know what he said to you, if he was even coherent, but you stood there talking for like five minutes. Him in a t-shirt. You wrapped up in all of your coats and that scarf you always wore, and your friend group went inside and I sat under the awning waiting for him to come back. And I'm watching you guys, and I call out to Alex to say I wanna go, and he's standing there freezing! But he's also meeting you so I don't know if he even notices. And he follows you inside, walked right by me, and steps back into the brewery and I was \*positive\* he was going to buy you a drink, and I don't want to interrupt because I've never seen him walk up to a person like that before, he's never put himself out there like that. *(A beat.)* But then he comes back out in like two minutes and he's got that t-shirt, like a size too big for him, and he just kind of goes "okay let's get going". He didn't acknowledge any of it at all. And he pulled the shirt over his other shirt and we walk back to campus. And that was that.

*(A beat. SARAH smells the shirt on her. ALEX's phone buzzes on the table. She turns to NOAH.)*

SARAH  
He was drunk when he came up to me?

NOAH  
Very.

*(A beat. ALEX's phone buzzes on the table. She begins to sob. NOAH places his hand on her. She continues to cry. JAMES turns up the volume on the TV. A newscast is heard, some form of press conference.)*

TV NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

I want to thank you all for coming today. The United States is happy to say that we have completed the census that began on Day One of this event, and we have confirmed at this time all missing persons. With this, we will move into Phase Two of our lockdown, lifting restrictions on residents who remain in their residences. We are, however, issuing a curfew at this time, as there are several dangerous emergencies that exist as threats the greater public-

*(Scene shifts. Several months later. Around 5pm, in the fall. The apartment has been cleaned up a bit, as if more attention has been paid to the upkeep. After a moment, NOAH enters from the front door. He carries grocery bags. He also has several file folders; he appears tired, but there's a pep in his step.)*

NOAH

Jimmy, can you come help me?

JAMES (emerging from his room)

Hey, you're late.

NOAH

I had to stop at the store- can you get the rest? It's in the hallway.

JAMES

Why so many bags?

NOAH

Hurry, there's chicken out there-

*(JAMES exits into the hallway. NOAH puts the file folders down. He goes to the fridge and grabs a beer. He opens it, stares out a window. Finally, he starts taking off his shoes. JAMES returns with three more bags of groceries.)*

JAMES

Special occasion?

NOAH

A little- first day back, I wanted to celebrate a little. Is Sarah back yet?

JAMES

Not that I know of.

NOAH

Have you been in your room all day.

JAMES

Checking the sites, yeah. I've been reading a little-

NOAH (*not really listening*)  
Can you get the pork loin out of there too, put it in the freezer, we're having chicken tonight-

JAMES  
There's a new theory.

NOAH  
There's always a new theory.

JAMES  
No this one is serious.

NOAH  
Jimmy, I think you need to get some air.

JAMES  
I took a walk earlier.

NOAH  
To smoke?

JAMES  
Sure, but I went outside all the same.

NOAH  
It doesn't really count.

SARAH (*entering*)  
Hello?

NOAH  
Hey, welcome home.

JAMES  
Wait, I wanted to tell you-

SARAH (*seeing all the bags*)  
What's with all of the groceries?

NOAH  
I wanted to make a nice dinner. To celebrate the first day back.

SARAH  
That's sweet of you, Noah. (*hugging him*) Hi.



NOAH

How was your first day back?

SARAH

Weird. Classes are good, but this truncated semester is gonna be tough.

NOAH

You can do it.

SARAH

How was the office?

NOAH

Well, there's news there.

SARAH (*just noticing JAMES*)

Oh, hey Jimmy. I didn't see you there.

JAMES

Hey. You should hear this too-

SARAH (*turning back to NOAH*)

What's your news?

JAMES

/Wait-/

NOAH

So, my former supervisor tendered his resignation today. He was, you know, his husband was an Alex, so he needs time and he needs to get out of city for awhile, I think he's moving back out west, but that means he's vacating the position and they, I mean the heads of the company, they asked me to take it over. So I got promoted.

SARAH (*hugging him, kissing him on the cheek*)

No way! That's huge, Noah, congratulations!

JAMES

That's great, man. Congrats.

NOAH

Thank you. And it's got, you know I don't want to brag or like anything, but it's a pay-bump. So we're gonna be okay. Jimmy, you can let the landlord know that we will pay for the last few months that we are behind and I'll take care of the next few months up front just to, you know, make up for it.

JAMES

That's like, a lot of money, though.

NOAH

Yeah, there's you know, like bonuses and stuff and I think the company is just happy to have someone at the helm while the ship gets righted.

SARAH

You can afford that?

NOAH

I can. And I want to do this for us.

SARAH

Well that's very sweet of you. We should toast-

JAMES

Can you grab me a beer?

SARAH

Do we have wine?

NOAH

I grabbed a bottle- Cab Sauv, right?

SARAH

Thanks for remembering. *(She pours herself a glass and hands a beer to JAMES)* To Noah- for taking care of us. And for this next big step. Cheers.

JAMES/NOAH

Cheers.

*(They clink glasses and sip. JAMES goes over to the TV and flips it on. We hear the start of a news report.)*

SARAH

Jimmy, let's not put on the news.

JAMES

I just wanna catch up on the day.

SARAH

We need one night without it. Plus we're celebrating-

JAMES

Five minutes.

SARAH (*peevd*)  
Fine. Noah, can I help?

NOAH  
I wanted to make my mom's chicken. I think I got everything I need.

SARAH  
She does it in the hot sauce with rosemary, right?

NOAH  
Oh, that's right, you've had it before.

SARAH  
Why don't you go sit and relax. You worked all day and the least I can do is help.

NOAH  
You sure?

SARAH  
I want to. For you. To thank you.

NOAH  
Well. It's my pleasure. If you don't mind, I could use a break.

SARAH  
Sure thing. I'll ask if I need anything. Go sit.

*(NOAH and SARAH share a quiet moment. Something sparks between them. JAMES looks up briefly and catches it. He cocks his head, then turns back to the TV. NOAH pulls away first, a little embarrassed. He takes a seat next to JAMES on the couch. SARAH begins preparing dinner.)*

NOAH (*to JAMES*)  
Are they saying anything?

JAMES  
The widows are appealing to Congress for relief.

NOAH  
The pensions?

JAMES  
Yeah, they say the unions are claiming that because they don't \*know\* what happened, they can't be considered deaths.

NOAH

People are so fucking cheap in this country. They'll bail out the banks before they help the families of a global tragedy.

JAMES

Yeah.

NOAH

Wait you were telling us something before.

JAMES (*turning off the news*)

Yeah! I read something on Reddit.

NOAH

Jimmy, before you start in-

JAMES

No you gotta listen. They're going \*deep\* here.

NOAH (*sarcastic*)

I'll say.

JAMES

I know you think it's all nonsense, but remember the coup in Venezuela? They were right about that.

NOAH

Yes, in that one case, the "citizen journalists" got it right.

JAMES

So why discredit them?

NOAH

What did they say this time? What did they find this time?

JAMES

There's a new idea-

NOAH

You mean theory-

JAMES

Fine, to appeal to you, I'll call it a theory. Do you know about the undiscovered islands in the Bay of Bengal? They're called the Andaman Islands.

NOAH

What about them?

JAMES

So the idea is, the “theory” I guess, is that this wasn’t a mass extinction. This wasn’t some “rapture” or some massive disappearance, it was an exodus.

*(A beat.)*

NOAH

I don’t know what that means.

JAMES

They all went there! There’s all this data-

NOAH

Wait who’s “all”?

JAMES

All of the Alex’s.

NOAH

Wait the theory says that all of the Alex’s went to a remote island somewhere off the coast of India to- what?

JAMES

What do you mean?

NOAH

What are they doing there?

JAMES

Starting a new government. To eventually wage war on the rest of us.

NOAH

Jimmy, honestly, you’ve said some crazy shit before but this takes the cake.

JAMES

I’m dead serious.

NOAH

You think that all of them left to-

JAMES

\*I\* don’t think. I didn’t come up with this, but it really checks out.

NOAH

Has it been corroborated with any major news outlet?

JAMES

Buzzfeed picked it up.

NOAH

Buzzfeed isn't a legitimate news source.

JAMES

They were right about the FIFA corruption in 2015, about R. Kelly and the sex trafficking in 2017, about the Ellen DeGeneres shit in 2020!

NOAH

Did you just google "all the times BuzzFeed was right"?

JAMES

That's not the important part. The important part is the island. It's never been explored. Why? India has daily radar and aerial surveillance over the three islands 24/7. Why? Why would they give a shit?

NOAH

This would involve- man, this would be crazy- it would involve massive conspiracy. How would all of them, all of these people who just have a \*name\* in common, how would they pull this off?

JAMES

You're not wrong. This would require crazy communication, the likes of which we have never seen before. It would be insane, and the Reddit post goes into it pretty intensely-

NOAH

How does this explain your OnlyFans friend? She just disappeared while using a vibrator.

JAMES

See that's the thing: misdirection. She created the "illusion" that they just disappeared, but really she was covering for them all to escape.

NOAH

Escape.

JAMES

I bet her name wasn't really Alexa.

NOAH

So the conspiracy involves people who are still here?

JAMES

They couldn't do it alone! So they had help- /

NOAH

/Wait, let's just. Let's just go macro with it for a second. Why?

JAMES

Why what?

NOAH

Why would they do it?

JAMES

Well, that's the interesting part-

NOAH

Oh, \*this\* is the interesting part.

JAMES

I know you think this is all nonsense.

NOAH (*sincere*)

I'm listening to you.

JAMES

You're making fun of me.

NOAH

Jimmy, this is insane.

JAMES

Yeah, but it could be real...

NOAH

And that's all there is to go off of? "Could be"?

JAMES

That's all we had before gravity. Before nuclear physics. Before psychology. "Could be's".

NOAH

So- answer the question.

JAMES

What was the question?

NOAH

Why would they do this?

JAMES

Well. The name Alexander means “defender of man”.

NOAH

So?

JAMES

So they say that all of the Alex’s got together, decided our society was so fucking far-gone, that they needed to go off and start their own nation. To end our’s and to reclaim their mission to mankind.

NOAH

Say that again, slowly.

JAMES

I know, it’s crazy.

NOAH

The citizen journalists believe that the Alex’s are coming for all of us.

JAMES

It’s not so far off./

NOAH

/Yes, it is./

JAMES

/Think about it. The massive divide in this country and the international conflicts. Russia and Ukraine. China and the US. A losing war on drugs. A global rise in crime and a global decrease in mortality. Not to mention how far we’ve strayed from Christian values and the Bible!

NOAH

Suddenly you’re religious?/

JAMES

/That’s not what I’m saying. I’m saying the Alex’s believe this-/

SARAH (*stepping into the living room*)

Hey, Jimmy?

JAMES

Yeah?



SARAH (*pointedly*)  
Shut the fuck up.

(*A beat.*)

JAMES  
Listen, I'm not saying I believe \*every\* aspect of it, but you have to admit-

SARAH  
No, I actually don't have to.

NOAH  
Sarah-

JAMES  
Why're you so pissy?

SARAH  
Pissy? You think I'm being pissy?

JAMES  
You poke your head in and tell me the shut-the-fuck-up?

SARAH  
Why bring it up if you don't believe in it?

JAMES  
Because it's what I was reading today, and it's interesting-

SARAH  
What else did you do today?

(*A beat.*)

JAMES  
Excuse me?

SARAH  
What else did you do with yourself today? Probably just that right? You can't jerk off because your little sluts don't post their "content" anymore.

JAMES  
Hey, sex-work is work.

SARAH  
But that's it, right? That's all you fucking did today?

JAMES

What's your fucking problem, Sarah?

SARAH

You. You're my problem.

NOAH

Why don't we all just take a break from this-

JAMES

What did I do to you?

SARAH

You don't do anything, all fucking day, and then you spout of this intolerant shit.

JAMES

Intolerant?

SARAH

Yes!

JAMES

What's intolerant about it?

SARAH

You're saying Alex is still alive, he just left?

JAMES

Maybe.

SARAH

You're saying he's still alive, and left me here. Alone. The man I loved?

*(A beat.)*

JAMES

That's not what I was saying.

SARAH

You don't think before you speak, Jimmy.

JAMES

I didn't \*mean\* it like that, is what I meant-

SARAH  
He loved me.

JAMES  
Well not if he was cheating on you.

*(A beat.)*

SARAH  
I could kill you.

NOAH  
Guys this is getting a little-

SARAH  
Maybe instead of spreading false bullshit, maybe you should get a fucking job and actually do something to help us keep this apartment. Instead of leeching off of Noah just like you did Alex.

*(A beat.)*

JAMES  
Wow. Fuck you too.

SARAH  
I'm just saying.

JAMES  
And what're you fucking offering up? What do you bring to the table?

SARAH  
How do you mean?

JAMES  
You're a graduate student. You don't make money. I mean you have a scholarship and mommy and daddy help, for sure, but what do you contribute to this place?

SARAH  
Am I making dinner?

JAMES  
With groceries that Noah bought.

NOAH  
I really don't want to be in the middle of this.

JAMES

You don't contribute anything more to me.

SARAH

I've lived here for like, six months. You've lived here for YEARS. And you haven't paid rent ONCE.

JAMES

Call the fucking bank, Sarah.

SARAH

Excuse me?

JAMES

Call the fucking bank and get on Alex's account. Then you can talk about contribution.

SARAH

I won't.

JAMES

Just say you were fucking engaged! They would give you access to his account!

SARAH

He's GONE, Jimmy. I won't steal from him./

JAMES

/It's not stealing./

SARAH

/Yes, it fucking is. He's gone and I have no claim to this money./

JAMES

/Then what the fuck are you still doing here?/

SARAH

/FUCK YOU.

NOAH

Guys!

*(A beat.)*

NOAH

Let's not do this.

JAMES

I'm just saying-

SARAH

You're always "just saying". Fucking own your shit, Jimmy. Be useful here, because right now, you're doing nothing.

JAMES

Well. I'm sorry I'm not Noah.

NOAH

Wait, what does that mean?

JAMES

Adding so much to the apartment, making such a contribution.

NOAH

When did I get dragged into this?

*(A beat. JAMES stands and begins exiting out of the apartment.)*

JAMES

I'm gonna get some air. I'll get my own dinner.

NOAH

Jimmy, no-

JAMES

I hate to be a leech.

*(A beat. He turns back.)*

JAMES

For the record?

SARAH

What?

JAMES

I want him to be alive. So fucking badly.

*(A beat.)*

JAMES

Congrats on the gig, Noah. I am very happy for you.

*(He exits. SARAH goes back to the kitchen. NOAH sits in silence. He speaks, finally.)*

NOAH  
You didn't have to do that.

SARAH (*in kitchen*)  
Do what?

NOAH  
Be so hard on him. It hasn't been easy on him either.

SARAH (*stepping out into the living room*)  
You agree with him?

NOAH  
No! But you could, I dunno, be easier on him.

SARAH  
He's milking you for all you're worth.

NOAH (*jokingly*)  
I can afford to be milked.

SARAH  
You're too nice, Noah.

NOAH  
I just want to take care of people.

SARAH  
I watched him do this to Alex. He will do the exact same thing to you. He will never grow up if you don't challenge him to.

NOAH  
It's only been a few months. We are okay. For now.

SARAH (*sitting next to him*)  
I'm sorry your night got ruined.

NOAH  
It wasn't my night-

SARAH  
Why do you do that?

NOAH  
What?

SARAH

You diminish it. Your accomplishments. You got a promotion today. That's the first good news we have had since it happened.

NOAH

So what do you want me to do?

SARAH

Call it what it is.

NOAH

Okay. Fine. It's my night. But it's really okay. Maybe now that it's all out in the open you two can figure out how to live together.

SARAH

I doubt it.

NOAH

Okay.

SARAH

How was your day? Besides the promotion stuff?

NOAH

Honestly? Weird.

SARAH

Weird how?

NOAH

They had a meeting scheduled, everyone in the company- well, obviously not \*everyone\* and they went through what we would do for our clients and everything and then they. It's so weird. They had a moment of silence.

SARAH

For the Alex's?

NOAH

Yeah. In remembrance.

SARAH

That's nice.

NOAH

It was. I guess. But I don't think I've ever held a moment of silence that I wasn't thinking about something else.

SARAH

Well. This one is a little closer to home.

NOAH

I know.

*(A beat.)*

SARAH

Alex's mom called me.

NOAH

Yeah? That's been a little while.

SARAH

She apologized for that.

NOAH

What was her reason?

SARAH

She said I reminded her of him too much.

NOAH

That's normal, I guess? As normal as it can be.

SARAH

Yeah. She asked about a funeral.

NOAH

For Alex?

SARAH

Yeah. She said it was time. Alex's dad doesn't agree but he's sick and I dunno, maybe it's good.

NOAH

His dad being sick?

SARAH

God, no. I can't imagine going through this and *\*also\** that.

NOAH

So what's good?



SARAH  
Having a funeral. A celebration, more like. For him.

NOAH  
It sounds like she's ready to move on.

SARAH  
Yeah. And honestly? I think I am too.

*(A beat.)*

NOAH  
Wow.

SARAH  
What?

NOAH  
I'm just surprised to hear that.

SARAH  
Sorry?

NOAH  
No. God no! Don't apologize, I'm just saying that. I'm glad. That you found a way to move on.

SARAH  
Not move on. But. Move through it.

NOAH  
I think that's great. Are you still going to the therapist?

SARAH  
Yes. And it's helped. The help has helped.

NOAH *(extending his beer bottle to her)*  
I'm very glad.

SARAH *(taking the bottle and taking a sip)*  
Me too.

*(A beat.)*

NOAH

Class was okay?

SARAH  
We have a new teacher for ethics.

NOAH  
The other is gone?

SARAH  
Yeah.

NOAH  
Do you like the new one?

SARAH  
I guess so. That must be hard. To pick up where someone left off.

NOAH  
In more ways than one.

SARAH  
Yeah.

*(A beat.)*

NOAH  
I really missed him today. The last time I was in the office was the last day I saw him.

SARAH  
Same for me. For school.

NOAH  
It was hard. To walk in there, knowing he wouldn't be on this couch when I got home.

SARAH  
I half expected him to text me midway through class to say he would see me later.

NOAH  
I can imagine.

SARAH  
Maybe we could-

NOAH  
What?

SARAH  
Hold a moment of silence. For him.

NOAH  
Yeah?

SARAH  
Yeah. Just to remember him.

NOAH  
Okay. Sure.

SARAH  
Close your eyes.

*(They both do. SARAH reaches out and take NOAH's hand. They sit like that for a moment. Eventually, SARAH opens her eyes and looks at NOAH. She smiles at him. Finally, he opens his eyes.)*

NOAH  
What?

SARAH  
Nothing. That was nice.

NOAH  
Is the chicken in the oven?

SARAH  
It's marinating.

NOAH  
Okay.

SARAH  
Are you still seeing that girl?

NOAH  
No. She had to go home to Connecticut.

SARAH  
I'm sorry.

NOAH  
Blessing in disguise.

SARAH  
Yeah?

NOAH  
I hate the feeling of having to build a connection to someone. Like, yeah, there's potential. But to have to start from zero. It's overwhelming. Particularly now.

SARAH  
Isn't that the way it'll always be?

NOAH  
I guess.

*(A beat. They look at each other. NOAH gets up in a hurry, goes to the fridge for another beer.)*

SARAH  
What?

NOAH  
What what?

SARAH  
What's wrong?

NOAH *(opening his next beer)*  
Nothing.

SARAH *(holding out her glass)*  
Pour me more wine?

NOAH *(taking the glass)*  
Sure thing.

*(A beat.)*

SARAH  
Did I just make you nervous?

NOAH  
Huh?

SARAH  
Did you think about kissing me?

NOAH

Whoa. No.

SARAH  
Noah.

NOAH  
What?

SARAH  
Can we not do that?

NOAH  
Do what?

SARAH  
Let's just be honest here. Instead of like, skirting around it.

NOAH  
I just-

SARAH  
You were uncomfortable. Because you thought of kissing me.

NOAH  
No!

SARAH  
Noah. You've never lied to me before.

*(A beat.)*

NOAH  
I did. Think about it.

SARAH  
That's okay.

NOAH  
It is?

SARAH  
Of course. It's natural.

NOAH

It would not have been considered “natural” six months ago.

SARAH

No, but obviously things have changed.

NOAH

Do you miss him?

SARAH

Of course I do.

NOAH

Because you were really upset with Jimmy before, so this conversation is a little-

SARAH

I’m capable of missing him and being upset when shit like that gets put into the universe, and also be aware that, you know-

NOAH

No I don’t.

SARAH

That’s something’s here.

*(A beat.)*

NOAH

What’s “something”?

SARAH

I don’t know. We can just be honest with each other.

NOAH *(hard to say)*

I have a problem. With that.

SARAH

With being honest?

NOAH

Yes. With you in particular.

SARAH

Why me in particular?

NOAH

Because you’re you. And you have always meant more to me than I’ve ever been able to say.

*(He stares at her. He hands her the glass of refilled wine. She takes it, drinks it all in one gulp. Finally, she places the glass down on the coffee table, and grabs him. She kisses him, passionately. He kisses her back. They fall into each other. She forces him onto the couch, mounts him. He starts to unbutton her shirt. She reaches for his fly. He lifts her, begins to push her into ALEX's bedroom. She stops him, abruptly.)*

NOAH  
What?

SARAH  
Not in there.

NOAH *(realizing)*  
Right. Okay.

*(She starts to kiss him again, takes off her shirt. He leads her into his bedroom. They fall into the room. The door closes. The apartment is empty again. Scene shifts. Several months later. It's night, around three in the morning. The apartment is very dark. Suddenly, JAMES' face is lit up by the screen of a laptop. He's on the the couch. The TV is on a low volume, on a newscast, although he doesn't really watch it. He drinks from an energy drink on the coffee table. His face is haggard, tired, beat. He's on a Reddit page, scrolling. After a long while he stumbles upon something. His eyes light up in the light of the laptop. He continues to scroll.)*

JAMES  
This is it.

*(He continues to scroll. After a moment, NOAH emerges from his bedroom. He goes the kitchen, pours himself some water, not seeing JAMES. He re-enters the living room and sees JAMES, startled.)*

NOAH  
Jimmy, god, what're you doing-

JAMES  
You gotta see this-

NOAH  
Jimmy, go to bed, you scared me half to death-

JAMES  
Noah. They found a boat.

NOAH  
A boat?

JAMES

Yeah. A cruiseliner. It washed ashore in Australia.

NOAH

So?

JAMES

It was totally empty.

NOAH

How did it get there?

JAMES

They don't know!

NOAH

Shh! You have to- keep your voice down. (*indicating ALEX's closed door*) Sarah is sleeping, she has exams.

(*JAMES looks to the closed door, then smirks, then shakes his head. He dives back in.*)

JAMES (*paranoid, getting increasingly agitated*)

A totally abandoned cruiseliner, came from the Indian Ocean. It could fit almost 7,000. Now, that's not nearly enough *\*not nearly\** enough to fit all of them, but it could be the start of a fleet. It could be what they used to ferry everyone across to the islands. It could be what they used to get supplies and materials and goods to start their economy. They could've been using it as housing before they got their society up and running. India hasn't resumed flight paths over the islands, yet, but when they do, we're gonna get keyhole photographs and evidence that this is where they are. Ships don't just float away. And even if this one did, even if this one was unmanned, what happened to everyone on it? Where did they go? It wasn't just a cruise for Alex's. And I know what you're going to say: all of the lifeboats were on board. So let's just say, hypothetically, that the same percentage of Alex's in the world were on the cruiseliner when it happened- 7%, so that 490 Alex's out of the 7,000 on the boat assuming they were sold out which they probably were and assuming it was an equal distribution of population amongst it's passengers, which is probably wasn't, but whatever! Let's say 490, and they just (*he snaps*)- did all of the others just, like, jump overboard? How come we haven't seen a single survivor, a single corpse washing up on shore? Where did the rest of them fucking go??? But! It gets even weirder- there's no record of the boat. No record of the cruiseliner. We have folks tracing the numbers- I guess they have like, the equivalent of tailnumbers on private jets for cruise ships, and no company can find a record. Virgin, Disney, Carnival. I mean, I guess the Norwegian cruises hasn't answered definitively yet, but according to their website, they don't sail *\*anywhere NEAR\** where this boat came from. So we have this random cruiseliner, just fucking coasting in the Indian Ocean, washes ashore on the western coast of Australia, no captain, no crew, no nothing, and there's sign of anyone. So the only LOGICAL explanation is that this boat was *\*used\**. It was *\*used\** on the day of it to shepherd all the lost persons to these islands. It's the only thing that makes sense. (*A beat.*) The fucking only thing that makes sense.



*(A long beat. JAMES looks up at NOAH. Finally NOAH sits opposite JAMES.)*

NOAH  
James?

JAMES  
Yeah?

NOAH  
Have you slept at all? Since it happened?

JAMES  
Every night.

NOAH  
So what's going on here?

JAMES  
What do you mean?

NOAH  
What's all this? What're you doing here?

JAMES  
I just told you-

NOAH  
James, I think you have to see someone. Or like, go home and see your family for a while. I think you need a break.

JAMES  
No, I'm fine.

NOAH  
I'm really worried about you. You're diving in on these-

JAMES  
/Don't call them conspiracies-/

NOAH  
/Conspiracy Theories. And it's becoming- I mean, actually, it has been for awhile, unhealthy.

JAMES  
I feel fine. We just figured out what happened.

NOAH  
He's gone, James.

JAMES  
Stop calling me that-

NOAH  
He's gone James.

JAMES  
No, stop calling me that-

NOAH  
He's gone. Forever.

JAMES  
How many times did you see "Good Will Hunting"?

NOAH  
I think you need to get away from the city. Take some time to process all of this-

JAMES (*blowing up suddenly*)  
THAT'S NOT WHAT I FUCKING NEED, I NEED YOU TO LISTEN TO ME.

NOAH (*abrupt*)  
Jimmy! SHHH.

(*He points to ALEX's door.*)

JAMES  
I know she's not in there.

NOAH (*startled*)  
What?

JAMES  
Come on, man.

NOAH  
Sarah is asleep.

JAMES  
Yeah, but not in there.

(*A beat.*)

JAMES

Listen, I get that I'm high \*most\* of the time, but I'm not like, totally oblivious. I know what's going on. First off, I'm here all day and I see what goes on, and second off, you two aren't sly.

NOAH

I don't know what you're talking about-

JAMES

What's the point in continuing to lie?

NOAH

I'm not!

JAMES

So if I were to open this door, right now, I'd find Sarah in Alex's bed? That's where she'd be?

NOAH

Of course.

JAMES

Really?

NOAH

Yes. Really.

JAMES

Okay then.

*(JAMES slams the laptop shut and stands. He moves to ALEX's bedroom door. Just as he gets to the door knob and begins turning it, NOAH calls out.)*

NOAH

Okay! Okay, fine.

JAMES

Why did you lie?

NOAH

Because. I don't know. You knew him longer and I didn't know how you'd feel.

JAMES

I could care less. But he's gonna be pissed when he comes back and finds you shacked up with his girlfriend.

*(A beat.)*

NOAH  
Don't say that.

JAMES  
Say what?

NOAH  
Don't say he's coming back.

JAMES  
I just told you, they found the cruiseliner-!

NOAH  
He's fucking gone, Jimmy. Gone. He's not coming back.

JAMES  
Why can't you just believe it for a second.

NOAH  
And do me a favor? Don't mention \*any\* of this shit to Sarah. She's been through enough without you walking around, espousing something that is only going to hurt her.

*(A beat. JAMES stares at NOAH.)*

JAMES  
I want you to be honest with me for a second.

NOAH  
Fine.

JAMES  
Do you believe he's really gone? Or do you \*need\* to believe he's gone because you're in love with her and you don't want to feel guilty?

*(A beat. NOAH turns back down the hallway to his bedroom. Before he gets there, he turns back.)*

NOAH  
I'm serious, Jimmy. Don't fucking say anything to Sarah. And straighten your fucking shit out.

*(NOAH exits into his bedroom. It's silent while JAMES stares after him. Finally, he reopens the laptop and starts scrolling again. Scene shifts, a few months later. Morning. JAMES enters from his room, probably the earliest he's ever been up in the last year. He's wearing slacks and dress shoes. He holds a white button down and a suit jacket.)*

JAMES  
Hey, Noah-?

NOAH (*emerging from his own room, not dressed for work*)  
Yeah, what's up.

JAMES  
Do we have an iron?

NOAH (*pointing to the dress shirt*)  
Whoa. How long since you wore that?

JAMES  
My cousin's funeral, but I forgot I threw back in the duffle when I was coming back.

NOAH  
Gimme.

(*NOAH takes an iron out of the cabinet below the sink. He lays the shirt on the coffee table, and plugs in the iron.*)

JAMES  
I'm sweating.

NOAH  
You're gonna be great.

JAMES  
Can I practice with you?

NOAH (*ironing his shirt*)  
You mean what you have to say?

JAMES  
Yeah.

NOAH  
Sure. Go ahead.

JAMES  
Okay. (*He takes a deep breath, starts rehearsing*) Welcome to Marriot Hotel Midtown, how can I help you today?

(*A beat.*)

NOAH (*quietly*)

Was that it?

JAMES

No, you say you're checking in.

NOAH

Oh. Okay. (*in character*) We're checking in.

JAMES

Excellent. Do you have a reservation?

NOAH (*handing him the ironed shirt*)

Yes it's under Smith.

JAMES

I check the computer....excellent I see you right here Mr. Smith, will you be needing any accommodations for the room?

NOAH

No.

JAMES

Then I make the keys...then I hand them the keys. Then I say "Thank you so much for choosing us here at Marriot, we hope you enjoy your stay!"

NOAH

Good!

JAMES

Wait, fuck, shit, I'm supposed to say "Are you Marriot Bonvoy+ members?". Fuck I always forgot that part.

NOAH

It's gonna be fine. Do you need a tie?

JAMES

They give me one.

NOAH

Put on your jacket.

JAMES (*putting on the jacket*)

Thanks for- you know.

NOAH

Turn around, you have some lint on it- do you have a cat at your mom's place?

JAMES  
Yes, an orange fucker.

NOAH  
You wore this to the funeral too?

JAMES  
I have exactly one suit.

NOAH  
Lemme grab a lint roller.

*(NOAH exits into the bathroom. SARAH enters from his bedroom. She is dressed for the day. She's a little shaken.)*

SARAH  
Noah, you leaving with me?

JAMES  
He's not going in today?

SARAH  
Oh, really? *(calling out)* You took the day off?

NOAH *(from the bathroom)*  
Hang on!

SARAH *(turning to JAMES)*  
You look nice. I don't think I've ever seen you wear pants other than jeans.

JAMES  
Thanks.

SARAH  
You're nervous?

JAMES  
Yes. Very.

SARAH  
Well. *(she puts a hand on his arm)* You're going to be great. I don't want this to sound corny.  
But. I'm proud of you, and he would be, too.

*(A beat.)*

JAMES  
Thanks. Thank you.

NOAH (*re-entering*)  
Okay turn around.

*(NOAH begins de-linting JAMES' jacket.)*

SARAH  
You're not going in?

NOAH  
No, I took the day off. I figured I'd go to the store and then move the rest of your stuff into the closet. That okay?

SARAH  
Sure. Thank you for doing that.

NOAH (*sweetly*)  
Of course. *(He finishes the jacket)* Okay, Jimmy, you're all set. You should get going so you can be early. You have everything you need?

JAMES  
Yeah.

NOAH  
Before you go, I made the grocery list, it's on the fridge. If you want to add anything.

JAMES  
Right. Yes.

*(JAMES unclips a list from the fridge. He writes something down on it, handing it to NOAH.)*

NOAH (*looking at the list*)  
Cheerios? Just Cheerios?

JAMES  
Oh. Right. Good catch.

*(JAMES takes the list and adds something.)*

NOAH (*reading again*)  
\*Honey-nut\* Cheerios.

JAMES (*exiting*)



Thanks. Gotta run. (*calling out*) See ya, Sarah.

SARAH  
Have a good first day!

(*He exits. NOAH goes to SARAH, gives her a kiss on the cheek.*)

NOAH (*handing her the list*)  
If there's anything you want to add?

SARAH  
Uh, yeah. Listen-/

NOAH  
/Maybe it's ridiculous, but it's kinda adorable to see him sweating like that. Not that I think he's gonna stick with it, but it's nice to finally see him try, you know?

SARAH (*writing something on the list*)  
/I agree-/

NOAH  
/And if he's gonna finally be able to pull his weight around here, you know, financially, then maybe he'll get off your back about the bank account. We've been arguing about that for \*months\*-/

SARAH  
Noah-/

(*She gives up trying to get his attention, and grabs her bag.*)

NOAH  
So anyhow. I took the day off, yes. I'm gonna get all of your clothes out his room today and I cleared out space in the closet and I'm picking up a new dresser today, so we will have space for both of our stuff, and ooh! I got you a nightstand. I'll pull the bed away from the wall so you don't to like, crawl over me anymore. I mean, you \*could\* just enter the bed first or take a different side, but it's a good thing I love you, because I don't mind. You done with that list?

SARAH  
Here. I should get going.

NOAH  
Sounds good, have a good day.

(*She kisses him and walks towards the front door. He begins to read the list. There's a beat.*)

NOAH

Sarah?

SARAH (*she turns back, expectedly*)

Yeah.

NOAH

Is this a joke?

SARAH

What?

NOAH

You need a pregnancy test from the store?

(*A beat.*)

SARAH

It's been six weeks. I checked this morning. Time's been so- and I haven't been paying attention to the calendar.

NOAH.

Wow. And, is that, like, common?

SARAH

Nope. I'm pretty sure I'm. You know.

(*A beat. He looks to her.*)

NOAH (*not sure how he feels*)

Wow. Really. Wow.

SARAH

I know.

NOAH

I mean, I guess we've been a little loose-cannon-y recently.

SARAH

Apparently the pull-out method really *\*isn't\** effective.

NOAH

So. You think you are. And you...want to keep it?

SARAH

I don't know. I've been thinking about it a lot. And. I'm almost done with grad school. And we're, you know? We're *good*. And I guess with everything that's happened, it feels like-

NOAH  
Yeah.

SARAH  
How do you feel about it?

NOAH  
I really don't know.

SARAH  
We don't have to get married or anything.

NOAH  
No, it's not that, I'm not like, questioning the logistics of it or anything. I just mean. I don't know.

SARAH  
Look, I'm sorry, I shouldn't have sprung this on you like this-

NOAH (*going to her*)  
No! No no no. You. I. (*A beat.*) I love you. So much. And I'm so happy with you. With us. And. This is great. I just haven't had the chance to wrap my head around it yet.

SARAH  
I know. I should've told you sooner.

NOAH  
Let's not worry about that.

SARAH  
I really have to go, I have a meeting with my thesis advisor-

NOAH  
Okay. Look. Let's just...get done what we have to get done today. And tonight, we can sit down and hash it all out. Really talk about it.

SARAH  
You're sure?

NOAH (*kissing her*)  
Positive.

(*She kisses him back. They are happy. Finally she pulls away.*)

SARAH

I want to stay here all day.

NOAH

You gotta go. I'll be here when you get home. Text me later.

SARAH

I will.

*(She kisses him one last time. She exits. He stands there for awhile. He exits into his bedroom. He reenters, not knowing what he's doing. He goes to pour himself coffee, accidentally overflows his mug while lost in thought. He curses himself. He wipes up the mess. Finally, he pulls out his phone. He places a call, it goes to voicemail.)*

NOAH

Hey, mom. It's me. I need to- I wanted to talk to you about something. And I'm not sure how. Listen. Just call me back when you can. Just. Call me back. Thanks, love you.

*(He hangs up. He exits into the bathroom. He comes out seconds later, running his hands through his hair. He stands in the middle of the living room, lost in thought. Finally, a smile grows across his face. It grows and grows. He jumps up and down a little. He's thrilled. He sits on the couch, immediately gets back up again. He goes into his bedroom, we can hear the sound of a closet opening, furniture getting shuffled around. Finally he emerges from his bedroom and opens the door to ALEX's room. He goes inside. We hear him opening drawers to a dresser. He exits with a pile of clothes, takes them into his room, piling them somewhere. He does this a few more times. Finally, he exits ALEX's room with one of the dresser drawers, finding it easier to go through them if he removes them entirely. He looks for a place to set it down, finally lands on the couch. He puts it down and begins going through it. It's obviously a mixture of men's underwear, socks and women's athletic gear. As he is going through the drawer, he stops suddenly, his eyes having landed on something. He pauses, exhales. He removes the item that caught his attention, holds it up. It's a ring box. He stares at it for awhile. He opens the ring box, an engagement ring shines back at him. He sits. He could cry. Suddenly, his phone starts ringing. He checks it, answers.)*

NOAH

Hi, mom. Yeah. No. That's okay. Thanks for calling me back-

*(Lights down. Scene shifts. Several months later, exactly one year from the disappearance of the Alex's. The apartment looks very different. There are a few boxes piled up in the living room. JAMEXS' and ALEX's doors are open. There's movement in the rooms. Finally, a woman enters from ALEX's room. She's DEBORAH, ALEX's mother. She carries a box, albeit slightly struggling. JAMES' emerges, helping her.)*

JAMES

Mrs. H., I told you, no heavy lifting!

DEBORAH  
Jimmy, I'm fine!

JAMES  
You just tell me what to pack and I'll carry it for you. Give me the keys to the truck-

DEBORAH  
If you don't let me help then what can I do?

JAMES (*jokingly, taking the box*)  
Sit down and look pretty. Gimme.

DEBORAH  
Well. Thank you, James.

JAMES  
Hey, you're doing me a favor, letting me tag along to DC. It's not exactly on your way.

DEBORAH (*stopping him*)  
It's my pleasure. You don't need to rent two moving trucks, that would've cost a fortune.

JAMES  
I found something for you, by the way-

DEBORAH  
What is it?

JAMES (*handing ALEX's phone to her*)  
Alex's phone. People wrote him some nice messages, said some nice things. I thought you'd want to see.

*(She stares at the phone.)*

JAMES (*giving her some space, picking up three boxes*)  
I'm gonna take these down the truck. Probably should move it too, to get the big stuff down.

DEBORAH  
Thank you, dear.

*(NOAH enters, seeing JAMES with the boxes.)*

NOAH  
You need help?

JAMES

All good! Don't let her get up from that couch!

NOAH

Mrs. Haswell, can I get you glass of water or anything?

DEBORAH

No, no, dear, I'm fine.

NOAH

You sure?

DEBORAH

Really, I'm fine.

*(He sits in a chair opposite her. There's an uncomfortable silence.)*

NOAH

Was the drive- I mean, did it take you long to get here?

DEBORAH

I took the train.

NOAH

Right. I knew that.

DEBORAH

It's only about four hours.

NOAH

That's shorter than I expected.

DEBORAH

I don't like driving in the city. Plus we needed to get the moving truck, so.

NOAH

Right. That makes sense.

*(Another uncomfortable silence.)*

DEBORAH

How's work?

NOAH

I'm sorry?

DEBORAH

Work. I just wondered how it was going.

NOAH

Oh. It's good. I mean. Fine. Very busy. Not sure if I told you, but I got a promotion.

DEBORAH

Sarah mentioned in a text, a while back. Congratulations.

NOAH

She did? That's- well, that's nice of her. And thank you.

DEBORAH

A pay bump?

NOAH

Yes. So we. I mean I, I can afford to keep the apartment with Jimmy moving out.

DEBORAH

That's good.

*(A beat. She looks around.)*

DEBORAH

I never liked him living here.

NOAH

Jimmy?

DEBORAH

No, no. Alex.

NOAH

Oh. No?

DEBORAH

Not anything to do with you or James or the apartment- the apartment is beautiful of course, I'm glad you get to keep it, but New York. I never understood.

NOAH

He made it a home.

DEBORAH

I know. I just wish that home was closer to my home, of course. As all parents do.

NOAH

My parents feel the exact same way.

DEBORAH

It was the last conversation his father had with him. He regretted it every day.

NOAH

Yeah?

DEBORAH

“Move back with us, it’s too dangerous there”. Fox News had gotten to him.

NOAH

Ah. Sure.

*(A beat.)*

NOAH

I’m sorry. For not making it to the funeral for Mr. Haswell.

DEBORAH

That’s all right. It was mostly family.

NOAH

What did Alex say? To his father’s request?

DEBORAH

What he always said. That New York was where he belonged.

NOAH

I never heard him say that. It’s nice. I guess. That he felt that way. Sometimes I’m not too sure.

DEBORAH

Well. You’ve made quite the life for yourself here. You should be proud. I know your parents are.

NOAH

They say the exact same things to me. About leaving.

DEBORAH

The difference is they don’t mean it.

*(A beat.)*

NOAH

I think I’m going to grab a glass of water. You’re sure I can’t get you one?



DEBORAH  
No, thank you.

*(He exits into the kitchen.)*

DEBORAH  
Oh, Noah?

NOAH  
Yes?

DEBORAH  
You're sure you don't want his bed? I'm just going to end up throwing on the curb.

NOAH  
Neither of his brothers would take it?

DEBORAH  
They feel it's. Well their exact word was "morbid".

NOAH  
I see. Well, I mean-

DEBORAH  
It's absolutely fine, I just wanted to make sure I asked you one last time.

NOAH  
I appreciate it. Tell you what: leave it there and I'll decide later. Worse comes to worse, I can put it on the curb myself.

DEBORAH  
That's kind of you. Thank you.

*(There's another uncomfortable silence. NOAH reenters with a glass of water. He retakes his seat, and reaches into his pocket.)*

NOAH  
Listen, Mrs. Haswell-

DEBORAH  
You can call me Deb, Noah. We've known each other for awhile now.

NOAH  
Right. Of course.

DEBORAH

What is it?

NOAH

I wanted to tell you- about something I found.

DEBORAH

What's that?

NOAH (*pulling the ring box out of his pocket*)

I was. Well I was going through some of Alex's- it doesn't matter but. I came across this. He had it. And I think it was for Sarah.

DEBORAH (*taking the box*)

Oh. My.

NOAH

And I thought maybe it was your's or maybe you'd want it-

DEBORAH

This was Stephen's- Alex's father's mother's. Alex's grandmother's ring. She had wanted Alex to have it, as he was the oldest grandson and Stephen, Mr. Haswell, must've. He must've given it to Alex. (*A beat. She could cry.*) We knew Sarah for awhile, of course. And we loved her. Stephen in particular was so...taken with her. You three spent so much time together, and I think there was the only time we saw her and Alex without you. Alex had come home for, it must've been his last Thanksgiving and he brought her for dinner. And she was experimenting with veganism I believe, at the time, and so I was very, very concerned. And you know Alex: no forewarning. No notice. So there I am, running around like a chicken with my head cut off, trying to find something, anything that I can feed this girl that hasn't been cooked in fat or butter or dairy. And you know our family, dairy is a major staple of the diet! And I'm trying desperately to learn how to cook a vegan mac and cheese dish but I've got nothing to make it with, no oat milk and no dairy-free butter, and Sarah comes into the kitchen, and she must've seen how frazzled I was, and she told me that it was fine. She wasn't very hungry in the first place. And she asked if there was a salad that she could prepare, and I think I just have romaine and maybe carrots? And she whipped up a little salad, just lettuce and carrot slices and she had some bread. And that was her Thanksgiving. I apologized all night and every time she just told me that the wine had been delicious. And Stephen, he couldn't get over that joke. He loved it. She must've said it four times and he died laughing every single time. It was. Lovely. She was lovely. (*A beat.*) That night he must've given Alex the ring. That night he must've told him to marry her.

(*A beat. NOAH looks deeply disturbed. DEBORAH sits there stoically.*)

NOAH

You should have it back. Mr. Haswell would want you to have it.

DEBORAH  
Thank you.

*(The front door opens. We hear JAMES and SARAH speaking to each other. SARAH is about 4 and half months pregnant.)*

JAMES *(entering)*  
I would've gotten there eventually-

SARAH  
I'm not sure- oh. Hi.

DEBORAH  
Sarah. Hello.

*(There's an uncomfortable silence.)*

JAMES  
Sarah thinks I can't parallel park.

SARAH  
He got there eventually.

JAMES  
The spot isn't \*technically\* a legal parking space, so we should move fast. I've only got a few more to take down. Is there much left in Alex's room, Mrs. H.?

DEBORAH  
Umm. One or two.

JAMES  
Great. Noah you wanna give me a hand-?

NOAH  
Yes. Sure. Yes.

*(The exit into the rooms separately. DEBORAH and SARAH are left alone for a moment. SARAH moves into the kitchen, gets a glass of water. JAMES and NOAH re-enter with a few other boxes.)*

JAMES  
Be right back!

*(They exit. DEBORAH sits back down at the couch.)*

DEBORAH

I appreciate you coming. I wanted to see you before I left.

SARAH

Of course. (*A silence.*) Was it- was it a lot of work? Getting all of the stuff out of there?

DEBORAH

No. He was a minimalist.

SARAH

Yes.

DEBORAH

So.

SARAH

/I should've-

DEBORAH

/No, no, it's okay. I honestly don't know how I would've reacted if you told me over the phone.

So. This is better.

SARAH

I'm about five months along.

DEBORAH

Five months. Wow.

SARAH

It wasn't planned. Obviously.

DEBORAH

Do you know the sex?

SARAH

Boy.

DEBORAH

A boy. How about that?

(*A long beat.*)

SARAH

I'm sorry.

DEBORAH

Dear. You have nothing to apologize for. This is good. This is what is supposed to happen.

SARAH

What do you mean?

DEBORAH

Moving on.

SARAH

Right. Yes. (*A beat.*) Were you offered water, or?

DEBORAH

I'm fine. They'll be one more trip and then I'm on my way.

SARAH

Back home?

DEBORAH

Yes. Most of this will go in the storage locker.

SARAH

For his brothers?

DEBORAH

They think I should throw it all out. I won't.

SARAH

It's good. To remember him by.

DEBORAH

It is all right to ask- who the father is?

SARAH

/Oh-/

DEBORAH

/No, no, that was wrong of me-/

SARAH

/No that's okay, I just-/

DEBORAH

/Of course. It's none of my business./

SARAH (*blurted*)  
/I'm not sure.

DEBORAH  
As in?

SARAH  
As in. Well. Like I said. It was a surprise.

DEBORAH  
I'm sorry that I asked. It was. Incredibly rude of me.

SARAH  
No. No. It wasn't. It's fine. (*A beat.*) I loved your son. So much.

DEBORAH (*silently crying*)  
That means a lot. Thank you.

SARAH  
And I'll never forget him.

DEBORAH  
That makes two of us.

*(The two women take hands. There's a peaceful moment of silence. The front door opens.)*

JAMES  
Okay, gotta make this fast, there's a traffic cop coming down the block, and she looks like she doesn't take kindly to people being directly in front of a fire hydrant. (*picking up the last box, to DEBORAH*) You about ready, Mrs. H.?

DEBORAH (*wiping her eyes*)  
Yes James, let's boogie.

JAMES  
You crying?

SARAH  
We were just talking-

DEBORAH  
Yes, but it was nothing- I was saying. I'm happy for Sarah. For moving on.

JAMES  
I think it's great. For both of these kids. Start of something new.

*(JAMES puts his arms around both SARAH and NOAH. It's an awkward moment. DEBORAH looks stricken.)*

NOAH

You guys should get on the road, the traffic-

DEBORAH

Yes-

SARAH

Can we get anything for the road?

DEBORAH

I told James I'd treat him on the way, to thank him. *(A beat. She realizes)* I should give you three some alone time. So let me get my hugs in.

*(NOAH goes in for a hug, DEBORAH snubs him and moves to SARAH.)*

NOAH *(going in)*

Great seeing you Mrs. Haswell-

DEBORAH *(turning to SARAH)*

Sarah, sweetheart, I want you to know that if you need anything, anything at all. Please call me. It can be hard to do this alone- I know you know that. But it's a mother's job to- well. Just keep me in mind, won't you?

SARAH

I will.

DEBORAH *(taking the ring box out of her purse, deciding)*

I want you to have this. Noah found it in Alex's drawer, and I know it was meant for you. He would've wanted you to have it.

*(SARAH doesn't say anything. DEBORAH turns to NOAH.)*

DEBORAH

He thought of you like a brother. You know that?

NOAH *(stricken)*

I-

DEBORAH *(turning away)*

James, I'll try to hold off the traffic cop. A grieving mother is good for something. I love you all.  
Be well.

SARAH  
Mrs. Haswell-

DEBORAH  
Yes?

SARAH  
I picked a name.

DEBORAH  
Oh?

SARAH  
I'm naming the baby Alex. I wanted you to know.

*(A beat. NOAH looks down. JAMES is a little stunned.)*

DEBORAH  
Send me a photo when the baby comes.

SARAH  
I will.

*(DEBORAH exits. They are all left standing there. JAMES turns to them.)*

JAMES  
Well. I guess this is it.

SARAH  
She didn't know.

JAMES  
Huh?

SARAH  
About us being together.

*(A beat.)*

JAMES  
Maybe she didn't know what I meant. I didn't say anything-

NOAH  
She knew.



(A beat.)

JAMES

I'm sorry. If she says anything on the ride I'll let you know.

NOAH

Okay. We should let you get on the road.

JAMES

I'm gonna say goodbye. (*going to hug SARAH*) Good luck, with everything. Let me know when I can come see you guys.

SARAH (*hugging him back*)

Love you.

JAMES

Love you too. (*To NOAH*) And you, don't work too hard.

NOAH

I won't. You too.

JAMES (*grabbing the last box*)

See you around.

NOAH

James-

JAMES

Yeah?

NOAH

Drive safe.

(A beat.)

JAMES

I never got to thank you. For taking care of me.

NOAH

You don't have to-

JAMES

Yeah, but I do. See you.

(*JAMES exits out the front door. SARAH and NOAH are left alone.*)

SARAH  
When did you find it?

NOAH  
A few months ago. I didn't know how to tell you.

SARAH  
You didn't want to give it to me yourself.

NOAH  
I couldn't- I wouldn't have been able to live with myself.

SARAH  
Right.

*(A beat.)*

NOAH  
I like the name. Alex.

SARAH  
It felt right.

*(A beat.)*

SARAH  
I didn't tell her. That you were the father.

NOAH *(ashamed)*  
I figured.

*(A longer beat. NOAH puts his hand on her arm. She turns away from him. He goes to ALEX's room, shuts the door. He leaves the door to JAMES' room open. SARAH open the ring box, takes out the ring and puts it on. He watches her. She plays with it on her finger. After a moment she sits on the couch, turns on the TV. A newsreport plays in the background. SARAH watches.)*

NOAH  
Any news?

SARAH  
Nothing new. *(She pauses)* You never told me.

NOAH  
Told you what?

SARAH

Did you know? That he was cheating on me?

NOAH

What do you mean?

SARAH

With that Shelby girl. The one who DM'd me on the day it happened.

NOAH

Oh. *(A beat. He thinks.)* I met her once. At a bar with Alex. I don't know how he knew her. And I'm not certain of anything. But. There was something between them. But he never told me anything.

SARAH

But you had your suspicions.

NOAH

I guess.

SARAH

You should've told me.

NOAH

Yes. I should've.

*(A beat. NOAH exits into the kitchen. He leans on the fridge. After a moment, he starts crying. Suddenly. Like it's all hitting him for the first time. He heaves with sobs. The news report plays. SARAH places the hand with the ring on it on her stomach. The lights go down)*

SARAH

I don't want this to define me.

*(End of play.)*

