

ABBY. To me?

BENJAMIN. Well to get a call out of the blue like that.

ABBY. Yes, I know those calls, Benjamin. They're scary, aren't they.
(Beat.)

BENJAMIN. She said you wanted to see me.

ABBY. She was lying. (Beat.)

BENJAMIN. Oh. (The bathroom door bangs, and we hear grunts from inside.)

MARILYN. (Inside the bathroom.) Almost there. A little closer.

SCOTTY. (Inside the bathroom.) Oh god ...

MARILYN. (Inside the bathroom.) Right there! That's it!

BENJAMIN. Are people having sex in there?

ABBY. Yes. This is a filthy place where people have sex in the bathrooms. It's a shame you had to find me here. (The bathroom door is thrown open. Marilyn and Scotty stagger out, winded and sweaty.)

MARILYN. God, that was more than I bargained for.

SCOTTY. I was starting to worry I couldn't get you off. (Beat — Marilyn notices Benjamin.)

MARILYN. Oh, hello.

BENJAMIN. Hi.

MARILYN. Wait, are you him? Oh my gosh, you must be him! I'm Marilyn! (To Scotty.) That's Benjamin! Abby's son!

SCOTTY. Oh.

MARILYN. It wasn't easy tracking him down. I had to go through Miss Larusso's files while she was at lunch. Were you surprised, Abby?

BENJAMIN. You said she wanted to see me.

MARILYN. I did. I did say that, yes. And I'm pretty sure she does.

ABBY. No, I don't.

MARILYN. She'll come around though. It just takes her a while to warm up. But you probably already know that.

BENJAMIN. I should go.

MARILYN. No, don't do that. You haven't seen each other in five years. Isn't that what you said on the phone? Five years is too long.

SCOTTY. Marilyn.

MARILYN. I'm sure this is bringing up a lot of emotions for / both of you —

ABBY. Oh, for godsakes.

MARILYN. — which can be really scary, I / know.

ABBY. Nobody's scared. Why would I be scared of my own son?

SCOTTY. We should go.

BENJAMIN AND ABBY

START ↓

BENJAMIN. I didn't realize she was sick.

ABBY. In the head, you mean? Oh, she's not sick. She's diabolical.

BENJAMIN. She seems so sweet.

ABBY. That's what makes her so diabolical. (After a moment, Benjamin looks around.)

BENJAMIN. So this is nice. It's a nice place. I would've come to visit sooner, but I had no idea where you were.

ABBY. Well, I wanted to leave a forwarding address, but you were otherwise engaged. (Beat.)

BENJAMIN. You look good.

ABBY. I *am* good.

BENJAMIN. Me too. Much better than I was. And I'm working. Odd jobs mostly. Drywalling and things like that. Nothing big, but it pays the rent. I think you'd be proud.

ABBY. Where are you living?

BENJAMIN. In Freehold. With Zoe.

ABBY. I don't know who that is.

BENJAMIN. No, I know. She's, uh ... pretty great actually. You'd like her.

ABBY. Well I hope it sticks, because if it doesn't work out in Freehold you can't live here. Too many people in this room as it is.

BENJAMIN. I know, Mom.

ABBY. I wanted a private room but there wasn't enough money for that. Actually I wanted to stay in my own house, but it was hard to make those payments with an empty bank / account.

BENJAMIN. Okay, you don't need / to —

ABBY. Are you clean, Benjamin? (Beat.)

BENJAMIN. Yeah. Almost two years now.

ABBY. Well that's good. If you are in fact / clean.

BENJAMIN. I *am*, Mom.

ABBY. Good. That's good. But you'll forgive me for not patting you on the back. If that's what you came for, then you're out / of luck.

BENJAMIN. That's not what I came for.

ABBY. No? "I think you'd be proud."

BENJAMIN. Are you not?

ABBY. I *was* proud, Benny. The first time you got clean. And the second time and the tenth, and after twenty years of you saying you're clean, it gets a little hard to muster an "Atta boy, kiddo."

BENJAMIN. I bet.

ABBY. But congrats, you're not sticking needles in your arm. Neither am I. Neither is anyone else in this building, except maybe the diabetics. And yet nobody's proud of us. Not for being clean. Because, guess what? You *should* be clean. You *should* be.

BENJAMIN. You're right.

ABBY. I know I am. (*Pause.*) But you're doing better.

BENJAMIN. Yes. Much.

ABBY. So you'll be able to pay me back then? (*No response.*) So not *that* much better. Can I safely assume you didn't meet this Zoe woman on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange then?

BENJAMIN. No, I didn't meet her on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange.

ABBY. But on *some* kind of floor, I bet.

BENJAMIN. (*Chuckles.*) You just let me know when you're finished getting in your punches.

ABBY. Oh it's gonna be a while I think.

BENJAMIN. Then I should probably sit down.

ABBY. What do you want here, Benny?

BENJAMIN. I don't want anything. Your friend / called *me*.

ABBY. She's not my friend.

BENJAMIN. Well, regardless, I'm here. We might as well catch up.

ABBY. Right. I remember how this scene goes now. You come to catch up, and the next day I notice that things are missing.

BENJAMIN. I'm not gonna / take anything.

ABBY. Jewelry, radios, the *change jar*.

BENJAMIN. Jesus. When did you get so mean?

ABBY. Oh it just happened, in dlibs and drabs.

BENJAMIN. Because of me?

ABBY. I didn't say that.

BENJAMIN. It's what you think though. All the bad stuff that / happened —

ABBY. Don't tell me what / I think.

BENJAMIN. Daddy, and the house, and you getting fired. It was all my fault.

ABBY. No, that's not what I think. Maybe that's what *you* think, but it's not what I think. The bad stuff wasn't all your fault. (*Beat.*)

Just *mostly*. (*Beat.*)

BENJAMIN. That's fair. (*Silence. A momentary truce.*)

END ↑

I think you should probably go. (*Beat.*)

BENJAMIN. I don't wanna go.

ABBY. Why not?

BENJAMIN. I just ... wanna spend a little time with you. Is that crazy?

ABBY. No, not crazy at all. We all *want* things. I certainly did. I wanted to stay in my house, I wanted a healthy son —

BENJAMIN. Would you stop?

ABBY. I wanted holidays and neighbors and barbecues and a garden —

BENJAMIN. You had that. Don't pretend you never had that.

ABBY. Well I wanted *more* of it. I wanted it to keep going. It does for most people / after all.

BENJAMIN. I know. I know / it does.

ABBY. I wanted to get old with Daddy, and take trips to Hawaii, and go to your wedding, and *grandchildren* that I could *squeeze*, and *spoil*. I wanted a *lot of things*, Benny. So no, it's not crazy to *want* to spend time with me. I spent years *wishing* you would want that. But you seemed to want other things more. And now it's too late.

BENJAMIN. Don't say that.

ABBY. Why not?

BENJAMIN. Because I'm here.

ABBY. For now. But you'll go away again. You always do.

BENJAMIN. I won't / this time.

ABBY. Which is what you always say. And I know you *mean* it when you say it. But then you slip, you can't help it.

BENJAMIN. Well I'd love to give you a *guarantee* / but I can't.

ABBY. That's my point, you *can't*. And I'm too tired to be disappointed again. It hurts too much when it doesn't work out. And it seems to never work out.