

# CIRCLE DANCE

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EXT. SUBDIVISION STREET -- MORNING

STEVE CANNON (21) running, pushes himself, chewing up the last of a hill on a subdivision street. As he breaks his imaginary finish line, he yanks off his headphones, sucks in air and walks it out, heading for his HOUSE, a large home in this exclusive community. His dad's Porsche is still in the driveway, with a BMW, an SUV and a late model pickup.

STEVE

Shit...

Steve puts the headphones back on, cranks the volume and jogs past the driveway and down the street.

INT. FAMILY ROOM -- MORNING

A FAMILY ROOM. Tastefully decorated but lived-in, pastels and custom fabrics in a quiet truce with the world of sports. Bookcases hold books, family and sports photos - baseball, basketball, football - a visual chronicle of Steve Cannon and his dad, "Sonny" Cannon. Steve from Pee Wee football to Notre Dame. Sonny, from Michigan to the New York Giants. Among the photos: a very pretty girl in a Georgia cheerleader outfit: the future Mary Cannon. The TELEPHONE rings as ARTHUR "SONNY" CANNON (54) enters with a GOLF CLUB and COFFEE MUG.

SONNY

Telephone. Mary, can you get that.

Mary, can you get the phone.

(no response, yells)

Emma. Emma, telephone.

(still no response)

Jeezus...

Sonny grabs the phone.

SONNY (CONT'D)

FBI, what do you want? Wait, hold on, who is this? Oh, hi Dan. This is Sonny Cannon. Well, thanks, I appreciate that. How are things in Green Bay, has the snow melted yet? Yeah, I'll bet it seems like it. Look, Dan, I'm walking out, can we talk later, maybe tomorrow? You work on Saturday? Okay, why don't you call me about 4 my time. Okay? Yeah, you have my cell? Good. By the way, you guys don't need a quarterback do you, or did Miller break a leg? Okay,

(MORE)

SONNY (CONT'D)  
right, sure. Give me a call. Four  
o'clock, yep. Good. Thanks. Talk  
then. Gotta run.

MARY CANNON (48) has entered from the hallway.

MARY  
I'm sorry, I was in the bathroom.

SONNY  
I guess that's alright, but don't  
make a habit of it.

MARY  
Who was that?

SONNY  
Green Bay.

MARY  
What do they want?

SONNY  
I don't know yet. We'll talk tomorrow.

EMMA CANNON (19) enters from outside, in yoga pants and top.  
She throws the door shut behind her.

MARY  
Could you take it easy on the door,  
please? It's the only one we've got.

Emma heads for the kitchen.

MARY (CONT'D)  
Do you want some breakfast? There's  
some batter left, you want me to  
make you a waffle?

EMMA  
No, thanks.

Emma disappears into the kitchen.

MARY  
Don't you want some cereal or a piece  
of toast or something?

EMMA  
(from the kitchen)  
No, thank you.

SONNY

Yeah, who needs food.

MARY

Do you want another cup to go, there's a little bit left in the pot.

Emma returns from the kitchen with an apple.

SONNY

No, thanks. I'm floating already. Where's Steve?

MARY

I don't know. He left. Emma?

Emma heads for the hallway, still with no perceptible change in speed or level of interest.

EMMA

His truck's here. He's probably gone running or jumping or throwing something or catching something.

MARY

Do you want to wait? He's been gone a while; he'll be back soon.

SONNY

No, I've got to go. I'm late.

MARY

Should I tell him Green Bay called? Should I tell him to call you? Should I tell him anything about anything?

SONNY

What?

MARY

I would think you could take two minutes to find out what they wanted. Your golf can't be that important.

SONNY

I know what they want.

MARY

What?

SONNY

Basically nothing.

EMMA

Then why did they call?

SONNY

Green Bay can't take him, and they've got Miller, so he doesn't want to go there anyway. They're just sniffing. They want to know what he's going to do so they can chart the draft. That's their problem. So, can I go play my unimportant game of golf now or do you want to go over the rest of the teams in the NFL?

MARY

Okay, Mr. Expert, go play golf. Green Bay's too cold anyway. When will you be home?

SONNY

I don't know, why?

MARY

I got a roast to cook for dinner. I thought I'd bake some potatoes and make a nice salad.

SONNY

And tree bark and berries for Emma?

MARY

She still eats salad, I think. So, you'll be home for dinner?

SONNY

Sure, I imagine, it's only...

(checking)

10:00 o'clock, holy shit.

(heading for the door)

You see what you did to me. I gotta go. See you later.

MARY

Okay. Have a good game.

EXT. SUBDIVISION STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Sonny pulls out of the driveway in his Porsche, spots Steve behind him in his mirror. He throws it in reverse and accelerates, too fast for most people but not for Sonny.

EXT. SUBDIVISION STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Busted, Steve watches the car whine backwards. Sonny stops and lowers his window.

SONNY

How'd it go?

STEVE

Fine.

SONNY

Sprints or distance?

STEVE

I went 5. I did intervals yesterday.

SONNY

Oh, right, intervals. I forgot, you don't do sprints any more. What'd you do the five in?

STEVE

I don't know. Probably 35, 36.

SONNY

You didn't time it?

STEVE

It's for distance. It's not for time.

SONNY

Tell that to the guy who wants your job. How's your wind?

STEVE

OK. It's hard working out solo.

SONNY

Sure it is, you have to push yourself.

STEVE

I know that. I'm the one out here running, remember?

SONNY

Don't be smart, buddy. That won't get you anywhere. I'm just saying...

STEVE

I know what to do, dad, okay?

SONNY

Really. Who told you? The trainers at Notre Dame? I tell you what. You take whatever they tell you, and double it. Then double it again.

STEVE

I'm working pretty hard, okay?

SONNY

I know, and it's not enough.

STEVE

How do you know?

SONNY

Because it never is.

STEVE

Great. So, I can't win.

SONNY

Sure you can. Somebody has to. I gotta go. I'll see you later.

A car comes by, blows the horn. Sonny beeps back.

SONNY (CONT'D)

By the way, I'm not messing in your business, but have you decided what you're going to do yet?

STEVE

No.

SONNY

Are you getting any closer at least?

STEVE

Yeah. Now, I've only got two days to decide. That's closer.

SONNY

Okay, smart ass. I guess you'll let me know.

STEVE

Yes, sir. I'll let you know. I'll have my people call your people.

A look, then Sonny floors it and squeals away in the Porsche.

INT. CANNON FAMILY ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Steve enters from the side door. Mary enters from the kitchen.

MARY

Was Sonny driving backwards down the street? He could have run over somebody. Did you two talk?

STEVE

Yeah, we had a nice chat.

MARY

What did he say?

STEVE

Run 'til you die. Then run some more. Same stuff he always says.

MARY

That's what he did. You don't have to. Did he tell you Green Bay called?

STEVE

Why? They not drafting me.

MARY

That's what Sonny said.

STEVE

So, what did they want?

MARY

I don't know. He's supposed to talk to them tomorrow.

STEVE

They're just figuring out the draft, the Giants are 2 spots up, so if the Giants take me, then maybe Dontel, the DT from USC will still be on the board. No big.

Steve heads for the hallway.

MARY

The DT from USC, OK, 10-4. Steve...

STEVE

Yo.



MARY

Yo. I'm making a roast for dinner, do you want a baked potato, or is that not something you can eat?

STEVE

Nah, that's cool. Carbs are good.

MARY

I thought we'd have a nice meal with everybody together for a change.

STEVE

Okay, I gotta run. Did Kelli call?

MARY

Is she up already? It's not even noon yet.

STEVE

Ho, ho. Very amusing. Is Emma up?

MARY

Ms. Yoga at dawn? Of course.

STEVE

Okay, thanks.  
(down the hallway)  
Emma!! Report!!

Mary is close to snapping. This is important and nobody seems the least bit concerned. A BUZZER sounds from the kitchen.

INT. KELLI'S KITCHEN -- MORNING

A stunning KELLI MARKS (21) enters the kitchen of her mother's house, on her cell, barefoot, in boy briefs, silk sleep top, and no bra. She goes to the refrigerator, finds some yogurt and, while TALKING to Steve, locates a bowl and spoon.

KELLI

I'm trying to adjust to the time zone and the culture shock, what are you doing, making muscles?

(spooning out yogurt)

No, no, go do your stuff. I've got a lot to do and my mom wants to go shopping and show me off. I'll see you tonight. Maybe we can go see a shallow American movie and grab dinner, "d'acord"? Oh, I mean, OK, cowboy? Why not after the movie? At home we go out all night. That is my

(MORE)

KELLI (CONT'D)  
home, plebeian, Paris. So, how are  
your folks? Yeah? How's your dad? Oh  
stop. Tell Mr. "C" hi for me. Yah,  
just call me, text me. Bye.

Kelli hangs up, exhales through pursed lips. Kelli's mother,  
CYNTHIA (48) enters the kitchen, dressed to go out.

CYNTHIA  
My lord, girl, put some clothes on.

KELLI  
These are clothes. Where are you off  
to, looking so nice?

CYNTHIA  
Ha, flattery, I like, keep it up.  
I'm going to lunch to work on the  
women's shelter project.

KELLI  
Cool. That's such a good thing.

CYNTHIA  
It's one of Mary Cannon's babies,  
that woman stays so busy I don't  
know when she sleeps. Was that Steve?

KELLI  
Mais oui. Putain! He is so stressed  
out. I guess he's going to show his  
dad, one way or the other.

CYNTHIA  
Show him what? And do I want to know  
what Putain means?

KELLI  
No, but good question about his dad.  
Maybe I'll ask him tonight. Along  
with the rest. Might as well.

CYNTHIA  
Look, honey. Why don't you just go  
out and have a good time, can't you  
wait for the big talk?

Kelli puts the yogurt container back in the fridge.

KELLI  
May I speak openly?

CYNTHIA  
Do you ever not?

KELLI  
The only way I'd be able to put it off tonight would be to fuck him and that wouldn't be fair.

CYNTHIA  
Well that's open. Remind me to say no next time.

KELLI  
Okay, he's making frisky boy noises which makes me think he has big plans for my delicate love blossom...

CYNTHIA  
Never mind. I got it. I have to go, what are you doing today?

KELLI  
Nothing. I'm jet lagged to death.

Kelli gives her mom a hug and a two-cheek kiss, French style.

KELLI (CONT'D)  
Have a good lunch.

CYNTHIA  
Un bon déjeuner. I'm learning.

KELLI  
Oui! Très bonne!

Cynthia heads out. Kelli.

INT. COUNTRY CLUB BAR -- AFTERNOON

Sonny and friend KYLE (52) in the country club bar after golf. Kyle signals the BARTENDER.

KYLE  
Kind sir, if you please...

SONNY  
Not me. I want to go by Eddie's and set up the service on Emma's car.

KYLE  
OK, I'll meet you at McNeeley's.

SONNY  
I'm supposed to go home for dinner.

KYLE

So, come by, have a drink and go home. Dinner with the fam, cool.

SONNY

Mary thinks if she makes a roast, Steve'll talk about the NFL thing.

KYLE

What do you mean, he's going, right?

SONNY

I think he's scared. All that bullshit about getting his degree is just bullshit. He's got 6 hours to graduate. He could do that anytime.

KYLE

What's he telling you?

SONNY

He doesn't talk to me.

KYLE

They why'd he come home for the weekend? Monday's the deadline.

SONNY

He wants to be fussed over, I guess, and nobody does that like Mary. I guess he's pissed that I don't buy into it. They get so much smoke blown up their ass, jeezus. They're college fucking superheroes. Who wants to give that up to go where every player on every team's better than anybody you ever played against?

KYLE

It didn't stop you.

SONNY

Hey, watch it.

KYLE

He should talk to you, for sure.

SONNY

And Kelli's home from Paris, first time in a while, so his head's who knows where, well I do know where, but it's not on football.

KYLE

Kelli Marks? They still dating?

SONNY

Who knows. She's back to see him this weekend, and to see her mother.

KYLE

Then, I can't blame him for where his head is. Have you seen her lately?

SONNY

I don't read Vogue, Kyle. I gotta go. I'll see you at McNeeley's.

Sonny downs his drink, fast, is up and heading out.

KYLE

I'll get the drinks... You're welcome.

INT. CANNON KITCHEN -- AFTERNOON

Mary is rinsing baking potatoes in the sink. Faint sound of Emma singing in her room. Nice voice. The PHONE RINGS.

MARY

Hello. Yes, it is. No, he's not. No, I'm afraid he's not either. May I take a message? I'm not sure. Can I take your number? I'm sure he'll...

a SCREAM and a THUNDEROUS CRASH come from Emma's room.

MARY (CONT'D)

Excuse me, excuse me just a minute...

Mary puts her hand over the phone.

MARY (CONT'D)

Emma. What happened? Emma!  
(into the phone)  
Excuse me, I'll be right back...

Mary puts the phone down and runs to Emma's room.

INT. EMMA'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Emma, a little shaken, stands in her room, her bookshelf in pieces and books everywhere. In fact, everything is everywhere. Emma's been going through her closet, her desk, dresser, everything. The room's a shambles. Mary runs in.

MARY

What was that? Oh, my lord...

EMMA  
My bookcase fell over.

MARY  
I thought the roof had fallen in.  
Are you all right?

EMMA  
I'm fine. It missed me by at least  
two inches.

MARY  
Oh, goodness, look at all those books.  
What is going on in here? What are  
you doing with all those boxes...

EMMA  
I'll clean it up. I'm organizing.

MARY  
Really. Why'd the bookcase fall over?

EMMA  
I don't know. It didn't seem mad.

MARY  
Because you stacked 5,000 books on  
the poor thing, that's probably why.

EMMA  
Ah, hyperbole rears it's familiar  
head.

MARY  
Well, I'm on the phone, so I can't  
help you clean it up right now.

EMMA  
I didn't want any help.

Mary hurries out.

EMMA (CONT'D)  
I was just explaining the big boom  
in my room.

Nobody there, to get the joke, or to care, she pulls out her  
cell phone, presses a number.

INT. CANNON KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Mary back on the phone in the kitchen.

MARY

I'm so sorry. No, it's all fine.  
I'll let Sonny know you called, Mr.  
Avery, and I can suggest a couple of  
restaurants, are you out in our  
direction or down in the city...

INT. EMMA'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Emma on her cell phone.

EMMA

Hey, pervert, what are you doing? I  
found your H.L. Melkin. It was filed  
away under self-indulgent and  
pretentious, you should come get it.  
Really, it would be a great idea if  
you were to come get it relatively  
soon, like now. This is a 9-1-1 call  
and you're it. Yah, just blow the  
horn, I'll come out. Nothing, just  
too much perfect perky perfection,  
it's bad for my cynicism. Thank you,  
Homo. You're a real Sapien. Bye.

EXT. AUTO REPAIR SHOP -- AFTERNOON

Sonny's standing outside an import repair shop, with EDDIE,  
the owner. Parked to the side is Emma's car, the BMW from  
the driveway. It has a FOR SALE sign on it.

SONNY

I thought we were talking checkup.  
What the hell is wrong with her?

EDDIE

It's fine, Sonny, I'll give the guy  
a call and tell him to forget it. He  
really liked it, which I don't blame  
him. It's in great shape.

SONNY

She never drove it. Ever. Wouldn't  
even take it to school. She barely  
even sat in the thing.

EDDIE

That's what she said.

SONNY

I can't take it now. I'll come get  
it Monday. Just take the sign off.

EDDIE

No problem. So, what's Steve gonna do? Follow his old man?

SONNY

How should I know. I'm only his old man. Maybe he'll tell you.

EDDIE

He'll do the right thing. He's a good kid.

SONNY

Yeah, he's alright. Just a hard headed son of a bitch sometimes.

No response.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I notice you didn't say anything.

EDDIE

(laughing)

No idea what you're talking about. I gotta get some cars outta here. Come pick Emma's up whenever. No problem.

SONNY

Thanks, Eddie, sorry for the trouble.

EDDIE

No trouble at all.

Eddie back to the shop. Sonny pulls out his cell phone.

INT. EMMA'S ROOM -- AFTERNOON

Emma's writing in a notebook, totally engrossed. Her phone rings. She checks the screen. Trouble. Answers.

EMMA

Emma's not here right now, she's getting the torture rack out of the garage and oiling the gears... I know I didn't, I specifically recall not telling you. Actually, I intended to tell you. I even wrote a note somewhere. But, intervening events conspired to turn awry my enterprise, despite its great pith and moment.

EXT. SONNY'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Sonny at Eddie's, on his cell phone.



SONNY

You forgot to tell me you told Eddie to sell your car?

INT. EMMA'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

EMMA

I was going to tell you today, but it never visited my mind, really. I was writing all day and I didn't notice the time until my bookcase tried to kill me... my bookcase crashed, yeah. No, it's terminal. But, I'm still alive so now you can kill me when you get home. I don't use that car, Dad. I don't need it.

SONNY (V.O.)

You're unbelievable.

EMMA

No, I'm totally believable, I really exist, trust me. I checked.

SONNY (V.O.)

You stayed in your room all day long?

EMMA

No. I went lots of places.

SONNY (V.O.)

Really. Any I've ever heard of?

EMMA

Probably not. They don't have ESPN.

SONNY (V.O.)

Hey, watch it, smart stuff. I know when I've been insulted.

EMMA

Darn, thought I had you.

SONNY (V.O.)

That was good, ESPN. Okay, you and I will have a talk later about this car business.

EMMA

I know, you talk, I listen, got it.

SONNY (V.O.)

No, I talk, you don't listen. I'm gonna grab a drink with Kyle. Tell your mother, will you. I'll be home in a little while.

EMMA

Time is only a construct, so a little while can mean almost anything.

SONNY (V.O.)

Just tell her, please.

EMMA

Okay. And thanks for not killing me, that really means a lot to me.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - EVENING

Steve blows in. He's wearing casual athletic gear and a ball cap with the Notre Dame "ND" on the front.

STEVE

Hey, Lucy, I'm home.  
(crossing the room)  
Hey, people... Where is everybody!

From the Kitchen, Mary yells.

MARY (O.S.)

In here, Senõr Ricky.

INT. CANNON KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

In the kitchen, Mary's drying her hands when Steve sweeps in, goes to the fridge, gets milk, goes to a cabinet, gets a glass and pours a big glass, during the following.

MARY

What's all the commotion? Do you have an announcement to make?

STEVE

No, I don't have an announcement to make. Can't I walk in the door without calling a press conference?

MARY

Of course you can. So, you're just happy to be home.

STEVE

That's right, just happy to be home. Did I get any calls?

MARY

I finally turned the phone off. It was ringing every five minutes.

INT. EMMA'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Emma on her cell phone.

EMMA

It's okay, I just hadn't talked to him. No, it's fine, it's in my name. We're just having parent child issues. Dad thinks he's still the parent. I won't, not until you clear it with him, okay? We'll settle everything up on Monday. Cool. Thanks, Eddie. You da man. Bye.

INT. CANNON KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Steve and Mary in the kitchen.

STEVE

Did Kelli call?

MARY

I thought you were with her.

STEVE

No, she had to go out with her mom. We're going out tonight, why?

MARY

Nothing. Where's your cell phone?

STEVE

It's missing. In the truck, I think.

MARY

Check the voice messages. She might have called but there are a lot of them. Maybe you can get a new car or something out of this.

STEVE

Don't even kid about that stuff. I might still go back to school, you know. I don't want the NCAA in my underwear if I do. That's why Dad's dealing with the agents.

MARY

Speaking of being in your underwear, which I assume she is by now, do you want to ask Kelli over for dinner?

STEVE

Oh, that's cute. Way to slip that in there. Thanks, but we're going out, we'll grab a bite later.

MARY

I thought you were eating here.

STEVE

Oh, shit, did I say that?

MARY

Excuse me...

STEVE

It slipped out. I'm sorry, I forgot. I've only got this weekend and she flew all the way home. We were planning to go out, I want to talk to her about this - darned thing - you know, why do I have to talk like I'm in a Disney movie around here?

MARY

You don't. You can talk however you like. You're an adult. Just so I know I taught you better. I can't follow you around for the rest of your life.

STEVE

You sure?

Emma sails through the kitchen with a book, grabs a bottled water from the fridge, continues on.

EMMA

Hey, Heisman.

STEVE

Will you stop calling me that. I didn't win the Heisman.

EMMA

You got two votes. That's more than I got.

MARY

Where are you going?

EMMA

Out to street, to meet my friend  
who's coming by in about eighty-five  
seconds to pick up this book.

MARY

Does this friend have a name?

EMMA

Yes.

STEVE

Does this friend have a green jeep?

EMMA

That is not relevant.

STEVE

Are you going out with that guy?

EMMA

I'm going out to the mailbox, does  
that count?

STEVE

Answer the question, or feel my fury.

EMMA

Oh, please.

MARY

All right, leave her alone.

EMMA

He's a friend. Can't I have a friend?

STEVE

If he's good looking, smart, rich  
and sterile, sure.

MARY

Steve...

EMMA

He's smart enough to have me meet  
him at the street.

STEVE

And...

EMMA

And nothing. I gotta go. I was going  
to jump in as he drove by. He's going  
to be pissed if he has to stop.

MARY

Why? Is he afraid you'll introduce him?

EMMA

No, he isn't. Do not take this as an indicia of his position on the family. He's an actuarially aggressive person.  
(as usual, no idea)  
He attacks the calendar with vigor, chews the day with relish. Okay, let's see. He's a busy guy. He's in a hurry.

STEVE

Hey, I got that - busy guy. Yeah, I know what that is. So, have you got the hots for this busy guy, when he slows down. I mean, you could meet him at the gas station. He must stop for gas.

EMMA

I am going now. I am late and you are inane.

MARY

Are you going out there like that?

EMMA

You mean slightly irritated?

MARY

In a T-shirt and flip-flops.

EMMA

I'm only going up the driveway.

MARY

Do you really think your feet are attractive in those things?

EMMA

Is there anything else wrong with me at the moment? I don't care if my feet are attractive. I met a man who had no feet, so I'm not complaining, even if mine are ugly by Cannon standards, so they will love me and take me wherever I want to go, which right now, is out to the street, to meet Pete, in the Jeep, so come on feet, let's beat it.

MARY

All right, comedian, go ahead. You're not going anywhere, right? You'll be here for dinner.

EMMA

Steve's going out and Dad's not here.

MARY

He'll be back.

EMMA

He's having drinks with Kyle, mom.

MARY

We were going to have dinner, a nice dinner with the whole family. You're only here for the weekend, couldn't we just have dinner?

EMMA

Well, the sorry truth is, you didn't ask me, and my presence is not that important to the matter at hand, which is, of course, Heisman's future.

STEVE

Don't test my lordly patience, infant.

EMMA

And, I don't know all that much about the MLF or whatever it is, except they pay you a lot to run into each other, which he does now for free, so that's my 2 cents worth. Can I go now? I hear a horn about to blow.

MARY

You haven't eaten anything all day. Don't you want some roast?

EMMA

I had two bowls of cereal, an apple, a sandwich and some banana pudding.

MARY

A tomato sandwich. That's not food.

STEVE

Whoa, you're not pregnant, are you?

EMMA

(middle finger salute)  
Yes, have you met the father?

MARY

Emma...

EMMA

Oops... uh oh...

(Steve's dying)

Embarrassing silence. I didn't mean to suggest that... I mean I would never... I read this article, in Cosmo, but personally...

MARY

Never mind. Just go, go on. What's the difference.

A horn blows, outside.

EMMA

That would be Pete, going tweet.

Emma's off and gone.

STEVE

Where did you get her?

MARY

The same store you came from.

Family room door slams.

STEVE

So, they went out of business after they sold her, huh. Can't blame 'em.

MARY

You could say that.

STEVE

What?

MARY

What? Nothing. So, okay, what's going on with you and the big decision?

STEVE

I'm working on it.

MARY

When did you plan to decide?

STEVE

Oh, I don't know, eventually.



MARY

You don't have to do everything at the last minute, you know.

STEVE

I'm working on it, all right?

MARY

This is a very important decision.

STEVE

No, I didn't know that. I didn't think it was important at all.

MARY

Okay, you don't have to snap at me.

STEVE

I don't mean to snap at you. I'm working on it. It's not easy.

EXT. STREET IN FRONT OF HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

PETE MOORE (20) is idling his green jeep at the end of the driveway. Emma hops into the passenger seat.

PETE

Finally, what's up?

EMMA

Raising parents is not easy.

PETE

What now?

EMMA

Would you do me a huge favor?

PETE

Probably. What?

EMMA

Please, would you take me somewhere and fuck my brains out?

PETE

Well... I... are you kidding?

EMMA

No. I know we're friends, but we're cool, right? Would you mind?

PETE

No. I... no... I mean... sure.

EMMA

I don't know. Maybe we should just get a coffee. Do we have any decent coffee here that isn't Star-Sucks?

PETE

Not really...

Pete returns cautiously to the previous subject.

PETE (CONT'D)

I've got some coffee at my place. I can make Turkish coffee, in the little copper pot. That's pretty good.

EMMA

Oh, yeah? It's pretty good, huh?

PETE

We don't have to. We can go to the Coffee Shack, it's not bad...

EMMA

No, your place. Let's go.

Emma leans over, reaches for his zipper, and starts unzipping.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I would love a strong, thick something or other, and a Turkish coffee.

PETE

Jeezus, Emma, we're in front of your house. And it's daylight.

EMMA

That's not my house. I don't even know those people.

Pete slams the jeep into gear and pulls away, carefully.

INT. FAMILY ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Still tense.

MARY

I'm sure it's not easy.

STEVE

Kelli and I are going to talk about it tonight.

MARY

So, you and Kelli are going to decide?

STEVE

What does that mean?

MARY

It doesn't mean anything. I'm just asking if she's helping you.

STEVE

She said she'd help me, yeah.

MARY

What does she think?

STEVE

She thinks I should write the advantages and disadvantages on a piece of paper and add them up.

MARY

That sounds smart, for a model.

STEVE

Mom, you really need to stop that. What's wrong with being a model? She makes a lot of money, lives in Paris, what's wrong with that?

MARY

There's nothing wrong with it. I shouldn't judge, really, I'm sorry, sweetie. It's just... she's back here one day and you're deciding your future with her but you can't talk to your own mother. Sonny's off playing golf, and you won't talk to him and he won't ask. I'm just... tired, sweetie. So, is Kelli moving back here? She could model in New York, if you went there.

STEVE

Don't even start with all that. We have a lot to talk about. I haven't seen her in a while, you know.

MARY

Well, you'll work all that out. She'd be lucky to have you. If that's what you end up doing. And she's a very pretty girl, absolutely gorgeous.

STEVE

And smart.

MARY

Yes, and smart, I know. She's wonderful. You have my approval, and my blessing, totally. And you know Sonny's always adored her...

STEVE

Whoa, whoa, slow down, jeez. I got a few other things to take care of first. And, I'm sorry I didn't talk to you. I know what you think.

MARY

Is that right? What do I think?

STEVE

You think I'm not really good enough to play in the NFL and you think I'll get the shit kicked out of me - pardon my language - by all those big bad linemen and linebackers and you think if I do sign and get all that money, I'll run out and buy a truck that'll go 200 miles an hour, and I'll start drinking, because it runs in the family, and I'll smack into a tree one night. And you think I'll never get my degree so I won't have anything to fall back on when I don't make it or when I hit the tree, and you think I'm only doing it because dad did it and I feel like I have to prove something, and you think that's a stupid, male kind of thing - something like that.

MARY

Something like that?

STEVE

More or less. So? Am I close?

Very close, but Mary slips behind a smile and lets the moment pass. Makes a joke. That's what the Cannon's do.

MARY

Well, I don't guess they make a truck that will go 200 miles an hour, so I suppose you'll be all right. So, where are you and Kelli going? Don't you want to eat first? I made a roast just for you because you said you would be here for dinner.

STEVE

We're going to a movie, so we'll just grab some popcorn for now. It starts in a half-hour. I gotta run.

Steve gets up, gives his mother a kiss on the cheek.

MARY

You're going to have this big talk in a movie?

STEVE

There's before the movie and after the movie. We're going to have a late dinner and hang out. We'll talk about it then.

MARY

Well, you sound like you've got it all under control. Do you need any money? Do you have enough for the movie and a nice dinner?

STEVE

Yes, mother, I have plenty. But, thank you.

MARY

You're welcome.

STEVE

I gotta roll. I'll see you later.

MARY

Okay, you roll. Have fun.

Steve's out and gone. The door slams, again.

INT. LOCAL RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

Steve and Kelli at an upscale restaurant, finished with what turned into a tense dinner.

KELLI

We should have eaten with them, that's all I'm saying. We could have gone to a later movie.

STEVE

How were we going to talk if we ate with them? And they bug me with all the questions. It sucks.

KELLI

She cooked a special dinner. We should have gone.

Kelli's cell phone rings, she looks at the number, is not happy, but answers it. She speaks in decent FRENCH.

KELLI (CONT'D)

Oui, quoi?

(listening)

Je dois dîner... Quelle heure est-il là-bas... Tu es saoul!

She hangs up.

STEVE

Who was that?

KELLI

Nobody.

STEVE

Right. Nobody.

KELLI

It's not important. I used to think it was impossible to be an ass hole with a French accent. I was wrong.

STEVE

Was that your French boyfriend?

KELLI

I don't label boyfriends by nationality. He's a former human. Don't change the subject. You need to talk to your dad, I don't know why you won't talk to him, he knows a lot about all this, and...

STEVE

You're right. You don't know, so will you please get off my fucking back about him? Please? Jeezus...

KELLI

Sure. No problem. Subject dropped. Are we finished? I need to go.

STEVE

Go? Where?

KELLI

Home. It's 4:00 a.m. my time, I'm really tired.

STEVE

I thought you stayed out all night. You don't want to get a room?

KELLI

Get a room?

STEVE

Yeah, I thought...

KELLI

No, I don't want to get a room. I haven't seen you in almost two years and you think... did you consider asking first if you could fuck me... no, I don't want to get a room, but thanks for dinner, should I pay half so you don't feel cheated?

STEVE

That's great.. wonderful... I have dinner with you instead of my parents and I'm the bad guy, this is totally ridiculous, you fly all the way back here, then you spend every day with your mother, we go to a movie and come to [Restaurant name] like we're still in high school...

KELLI

Which we're not. Which is the point. I've been trying to tell you that, so you'll stop writing me those letters and saying those things...

STEVE

You flew back here to... to break up with me, are you serious?

KELLI

I'm not breaking up with you, Steve. I'm not with you to break up with you, that's the point. Yes, I flew back here, to see my mother, and to see you, to get you to wake up about us, because I care about you.

STEVE

Bullshit.

KELLI

Okay, you're right, bullshit. Fine.

TOM AVERY, agent, several sheets to the wind, appears.

TOM

Excuse me. Sorry to bother you folks while you're arguing over desert.

(not funny)

I just wanted to say hi. Hi, Steve. I'm Tom Avery, with CGA/LA, the most powerful sports agency in the country. Perhaps you've heard of us.

STEVE

Uh, yeah, of course... What are you doing here?

TOM

Your mom suggested it.

STEVE

No, I mean here... in town. My mom?

TOM

I flew in to see your dad, about you, the last minute pitch, if you will. But, he wasn't home so I talked to your lovely mother, Mary, and she suggested this place for my delicious, solitary dinner. Quite tasty.

STEVE

Yeah, well I can't talk to you.

TOM

Oh, I know. Don't worry, I know the rules. I just wanted to say hi.

KELLI

I'm his friend. From high school.

TOM

(shakes her hand)

Kelli. Nice to meet you. Tom Avery.

STEVE

Sorry, yeah, this is  
Kelli.

KELLI

You know me?

TOM

It's in the secret file. How's the modeling career?



KELLI  
Very well, thank you.

TOM  
You're in Paris, right? I love that city, it's gorgeous... of course, compared to LA, so is Cleveland.

Tom is drunk, and clearly enjoying looking Kelli over.

STEVE  
Like I said, I can't talk to you.

TOM  
Oh, sure, of course. I suppose there's not much point, anyway.

STEVE  
(not seeing it coming)  
What does that mean?

KELLI  
Steve...

TOM  
Well, it's not exactly a secret I don't guess.

STEVE  
What?

TOM  
That you're going with AVN.

STEVE  
I am?

KELLI  
Don't, you know your dad is...

STEVE  
Who says I'm signing with anybody?

TOM  
Well, I just figured, considering...

STEVE  
Considering what?

KELLI  
(grabbing her bag)  
Let's go, Steve.

TOM

Considering how long they've been doing each other up the ass, who else would he put you with, that's all I mean.

STEVE

(rising from the booth)  
Hey, dude, you want to get your ass kicked, is that it?

KELLI

Steve, stop it. Will you sit down...  
Steve!! Stop it!!

TOM

She's right, why don't you sit down...

STEVE

(moving toward Tom)  
And why don't you shut the fuck up.

TOM

(backing away, talking)  
Okay. Fine. You're right. I'm full of shit. Your dad's a great guy who only wants what's best for you. What do I know. Bye, now. Ciao, Kelli.

Steve's fuming, not just about Avery. He finally settles.

KELLI

Can we get the check now?

STEVE

You get it. I've got to take a leak.

Steve storms off. Kelli stops a passing server.

KELLI

Excuse me... could we get the check, please?

SERVER

Of course.

KELLI

And give it to my companion, he's in the rest room. Steve Cannon. And, can someone call me a cab?

SERVER

They're right out front. Just stop at the host stand and they'll flip the light. They'll pull right up.

KELLI

Thank you. Where do people dance around here, do you know?

SERVER

Now, try Club Earl, sounds dumb but it's cool. Late night, that would be Squeeze, it's in midtown. Cab drivers all know it. It's hot.

KELLI

Thanks. You have a good night.

SERVER

You, too.

KELLI

I might, finally.

Kelli strides off. The Server enjoys the view.

INT. CANNON KITCHEN -- NIGHT

Mary sits alone in the kitchen, mixing sour cream and butter in an almost-finished baked potato, a glass of red wine half-empty in front of her, the almost-empty bottle nearby.

INT. RESTAURANT -- NIGHT

As Steve enters the restaurant hallway where the restrooms are located, he sees Avery on his phone. He starts for the men's room. Avery sees him and quickly disconnects.

TOM

Hey, Steve, wait a minute...

STEVE

You're kidding...

TOM

Don't hit me, really, I don't like it. Look, I'm an ass hole, all right, agreed, no problem, especially when I'm a little drunk and feeling fucked with. But I know what I know. You want to hear it or not?

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Emma and Pete, post-sex, hanging out, Emma in Pete's underwear, nosing through his bookcase and CD collection.

EMMA

You really are aberrant, you know.

PETE

Not to me.

EMMA

Your taste is... eclectic would be a compliment. What do you do, kill random people and bring their most bizzare possessions home? Do I report you to the cops or the OSETI project?

PETE

I know, I am strange. I like you.

EMMA

Ha, nice try. You do know what that was before, by the way, yes?

PETE

Yes.

EMMA

A blow for liberty.

They both get the terrible pun, unintended.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Oooh, that was bad, was that bad?

PETE

That was bad, but it was good.

EMMA

You know what I mean. Maybe I'm tryin to get back at my mother... not my real mother, but her Betty Crocker alter ego, by having dirty sex as many times as possible.

PETE

No, you don't... do you?

EMMA

No. But it would fit, psychologically, if I did. It's on my bucket list. The point is, we're not dating now . We're still just friends.

PETE

Oh, I know. Besides, you're leaving. Why should I involve myself emotionally? Totally illogical. So, do you want to go again? My turn.

EMMA

Can I be on top, female dominant?

PETE

You're female dominant whether you're on top or not, but sure, as soon as I pay you back for the jeep ride. Then you can punish your mother. And you should be really mad at her.

Emma comes back to bed. Jumps on Pete.

EMMA

This is total avoidance. I have to go home. I have to deal with this.

PETE

You haven't told them?

EMMA

I don't think so, I would have remembered. But, I have to tell them tonight. And finish packing.

PETE

So, shut up and get busy.

EMMA

You shut me up, alien.

Pete pulls her down and kisses her.

EXT. DRIVE-THROUGH PACKAGE STORE WINDOW -- NIGHT

MUSIC thumps from Steve's truck as he sits at the drive-through window of a package store. The ATTENDANT hands Steve 2 six-packs of beer through the window.

ATTENDANT

There you go, dude, you got a hot Friday night working?

STEVE

Yeah, gotta get down, dude.

ATTENDANT

Say, I know this is stupid, but would you mind? Could I have your autograph? I mean is that stupid or what?

STEVE

No, hell. No problem. You got something to write on?

He hands Steve a paper bag and a pen.

ATTENDANT

Yeah, here you go.

Steve signs the bag and hands it back.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Thanks, Steve, cool. I might make a couple of bucks on e-bay with this thing one day, who knows.

Steve holds out a \$20.

ATTENDANT (CONT'D)

Nah, man, it's on the house.

STEVE

I can't do that, it's... ah, fuck it. Thanks, man.

ATTENDANT

You're welcome. So, give me scoop, you back next year? I won't tell.

STEVE

Hell, man. You got any idea how much ass I'll get at school? How you gonna pass that up?

ATTENDANT

All right! Go Irish!

STEVE

Go fuckin' Irish.

Steve roars off, yanking a beer loose. The others are on the passenger seat, next to roses he gave Kelli.

INT. CANNON FAMILY ROOM -- LATER

Mary sits on the sofa with the TV on but not really watching, when she hears Sonny's key in the door to the family room. She turns off the TV as Sonny opens the door, enters, and sees Mary, waiting up for him. She hasn't done this in years.

MARY

Hello.

SONNY

I know, I'm late. I'm sorry. I was having drinks with Kyle and he wanted to talk about some things. He and Tricia aren't doing so well. I don't know what's going to happen to them.

MARY

I'm sure he appreciates it.

SONNY

Anyway, I'm sorry.

MARY

Is there a reason you couldn't call?

SONNY

No, I should have, I know. I just got involved in all of his shit, and I didn't notice until it was late and, well, by then I didn't want to call and have you yell at me, so I figured I'd just come home. Now you can yell at me.

MARY

I'm not going to yell at you. Yelling at you isn't going to make any difference. Do you want some dinner?

SONNY

Steve didn't eat it all?

MARY

He and Emma went out. I ate it. It's pretty good.

SONNY

Oh, God, I'm sorry. I should have come home. I thought they were going to eat that roast?

MARY

So were you. I would think you could come home and talk to Steve. He has no idea what he's going to do.

SONNY

I imagine he's got an idea.

MARY

Did he tell you he did?

SONNY

Since when does he tell me anything?

MARY

So, you're not going to sit down with him and discuss this thing? We're talking about skipping his senior year of college and going off to play professional football.

SONNY

We? I'm not going, I already did that. And you're a girl, you can't play.

MARY

I'm trying to be serious.

SONNY

Sounds like you're worried about your little boy to me.

MARY

That's what I do these days. I gave up on worrying about you.

SONNY

I can understand that. But, he's not so little any more, Mere.

MARY

Just because he lifts weights doesn't mean he's ready for all the other things he'll have to deal with.

SONNY

Without his mommy?

MARY

I haven't been to college with him for the past three years. That's not what I'm talking about.

That hits home.

SONNY

I know what you're talking about. At least he doesn't drink, that helps.

MARY

Will the Giants take him?



SONNY

Probably. It's a good pick. And it would sell some tickets, assuming some people remember his old man.

MARY

Oh, please, Mr. Modesty, your jersey is hanging on the stadium wall. So, what are you going to tell him?

SONNY

I'm not going to tell him anything.

MARY

He's waiting for you to tell him what you think.

SONNY

He doesn't give a damn what I think.

MARY

Are you kidding? He hangs on your every word.

SONNY

Excuse, me, is this the same person we're talking about? Steve "Mr. Know it All" Cannon?

MARY

Mr. Know it All, Junior. Yes, it's the same person.

SONNY

He never does anything I tell him to do. He never has.

MARY

Well, he'd never let you think he does, not the way you tell him. Like he has to kiss the ring and thank you for pointing out how stupid he was to not already know whatever it is. He's too stubborn, just like you are. But everything he does, he does to please you.

SONNY

Look. If you want to go to see the bearded midget to get in touch with yourself, that's fine. I think that's great if you think you need it, but would you please leave that crap in his office and not bring it home.

MARY

All right, you know about all these things. So, I'll quit. But tell me, for my own curiosity, what do you think he should do?

SONNY

I don't know. It's a tough choice.

MARY

Of course it is, so what do you think? You know what I think.

SONNY

Yeah, you think he should go outside and play while you fix his lunch.

MARY

No, I don't. I know he's growing up.

SONNY

No, he's already grown up. He and Kelli are probably somewhere humping their brains out right now.

MARY

Excuse me.

SONNY

I'm just making a point.

MARY

I can't believe you said that.

SONNY

It's not an evil thing. Grownups do it. That's the point.

MARY

Having sex, or humping as you put it, is not a maturity test.

SONNY

He's an adult. He can make up his own mind about things, that's all I'm saying. He's going to anyway.

MARY

You don't worry about him at all?

SONNY

Well, I don't make a career out of it. He is my son too, you know. So,  
(MORE)

SONNY (CONT'D)

I worry about him like I'm supposed to. I even worry about Emma. Actually, I worry a lot about Emma since I don't understand a damned word she says but that's another story. All right, here's how I see it. Steve stays in school and he's a hero, and the alumni and the Pope are happy. Or, he goes to New York, in the first round of the draft as best I can tell, gets a few million dollars a year to play football, but has to miss 8 a.m. Biology, the jock dorm, and working construction in the summer for gas money. Now, which of those is supposed to worry me the most?

MARY

I don't suppose he could get hurt.

SONNY

He can get hurt now. They play tackle in college, you know. If you're gonna play in the big leagues, you bring the best you've got and you hope it's good enough. You can get your head taken off. And if they smell fear, they'll chew you up and spit you out. Why do you think I ran all those crossing patterns my first year, huh? To show 'em I would, that's why. They're not taking the middle of the field away from me, no way! It can be hell sometimes, but if you love the game, it can be the greatest feeling in the world. You just do it, as they say in the commercials. I did it and he's tougher than I was. He can handle it. He can get hurt crossing the street.

MARY

You really think he's tougher than you were?

SONNY

You're damned right I do.  
 (from Mary's reaction)  
 Now, what's that all about?

MARY

I'm just sad that you don't know your son. He's a wonderful, sensitive boy. He's not just a football player.

SONNY

I know who my son is. You know, I really don't want to yell at you, Mary, I really don't. And, I know it's not your fault, but will you please keep that psychology bull shit out of this house. I did not sign up to be shrunk, you did.

MARY

Maybe you should.

SONNY

You know, did you ever think of something? If something's wrong with your car, you take it to the shop, they figure out what's wrong with it, they fix it, and you pay 'em. Makes a lot of sense. But in that business - in that business, if they ever actually fix you, they stop getting paid. Isn't that interesting. Hum, I wonder if that has anything to do with why I know people who've been in therapy all their lives who, when you talk to them, are just as fucked up as they ever were, but they're okay with that. They're feeling much better about the fact that they're all fucked up. What is that all about? You know, they used to bring those guys in to talk to teams - they still do I guess, they call it sports psychology, which - maybe I'm stupid - I thought the psychology of sports was "win the fucking game". Anyway, you think any of those guys ever came in and said, "well, they're all a little crazy but no crazier than anybody else, they'll be all right." Imagine what they would have gotten paid for that.

MARY

I'm sure you're right. You're right about everything, of course.

SONNY

I didn't say that.

MARY

I don't know what you said. Okay,  
I'm wrong about that, too.

SONNY

What the hell is wrong with you?

MARY

Nothing. I'm a little crazy, but no  
crazier than anybody else. I'll be  
all right.

SONNY

Okay, just forget it.

MARY

Well, that worked out great. We get  
to just forget it, just like we always  
do. Perfect.

EXT. KELLI'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Steve, not sober, at Kelli's front door, with her mother.

STEVE

I'm so sorry, I... we had a little...  
fight... she's really not home?

CYNTHIA

She's really not home. I don't have  
any reason to lie to you, Steve.

STEVE

Oh, no, no, I didn't mean... it's  
just that she was... where would she  
go, that's all...

CYNTHIA

She's out. She called. She's fine. I  
think you need to go home.

STEVE

I don't want to cause any trouble,  
I'm just... there's some things I  
really wanted to talk to her... other  
things... not about... her and me or  
whatever... that's all, really.

CYNTHIA

I don't expect her any time soon.

STEVE

No, yes, that's okay. I don't know  
what happened, it was stupid.

CYNTHIA

Well, that's something you're going to need to talk with her about. Are you alright to drive?

STEVE

I'm fine. I'm good, really. Sorry to bother you. Goodnight. Take care.

Steve turns and strides down the walk.

CYNTHIA

Be careful, Steve. I'll tell Kelli.

STEVE

That's alright. No need, no need at all, really, I got it under control.

Steve keeps walking, picking up speed, focused on something.

INT. FAMILY ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Mary's walking out, still upset.

SONNY

Okay, hold on, wait a minute. Okay, look. I know you're worried about him. You can't help that. It's okay. It's normal. So, if he decides to go, which I think he might... and I think he should, all right? I do. He's ready. And you gotta grab it when it's out there. That's my opinion. So, if he decides to go, I know people who'll keep an eye on him. I've already talked to them. And, I guess he'll marry Kelli and take her with him, and he'll be fine.

MARY

Following in the footsteps.

SONNY

Maybe, what's wrong with that?

MARY

Nothing. It's what he's wanted all his life. He's lucky to have his dreams come true. That doesn't happen very often. I'm going to bed.

SONNY

You okay?

MARY

I'm fine. You staying up?

SONNY

Maybe for a few minutes.

MARY

A few minutes.

SONNY

Yeah, is that all right?

MARY

Absolutely. Good night.

SONNY

Maybe I'll wait up and talk to Steve.

MARY

Tonight?

SONNY

Yeah, tonight, why?

MARY

Sonny...

SONNY

I thought you wanted me to talk to him.

MARY

Not when you've been out drinking.

SONNY

I have not been "out drinking". I had a couple of drinks with a friend after a golf game. All right? That's not going out drinking. I think you know the difference.

MARY

I'm sorry. It's just hard to keep all the definitions straight.

SONNY

Okay, enough, all right? All right? I know you're pissed. I know I was late, and I'm sorry, okay?

MARY

I don't know, I guess you are. I'm sorry, too. I'm going to bed. Are you going to wait for Steve?

SONNY  
If it's not too late.

MARY  
Okay, goodnight.

SONNY  
Goodnight.

MARY  
(at the hall entrance)  
He is your son, too, Sonny.

SONNY  
I know. I saw the test, remember?  
That's why his name's not Mathison.

MARY  
God damn you! That is not what I was  
talking about. How can you...

SONNY  
I'm sorry! I'm sorry, okay! I don't  
know why I said that. It just hit me  
the wrong way. I just... I don't  
know... I'm sorry I said it.

MARY  
Me too. I'm going to bed. Goodnight.

SONNY  
Goodnight.

MARY  
(on the way out)  
There's ice in the bucket.

SONNY  
Thank you.

Mary's out. Sonny goes to a sideboard where the liquor lives. He fills a glass with ice from the bucket and pours some scotch, then, after a pause, pours the glass half full.

INT. CANON BACKYARD -- LATE NIGHT

It's 2:00 AM. Sonny's in the back yard, a scotch on the arm of a wooden lawn chair, listening to a sports podcast on his phone. The sliding door from the den opens and Steve exits, moving deliberately, trying to mask the fact that he's wasted.



SONNY

Hey, boogaloo, you're home, damn, you and Kelli are going to kiss yourselves to death. You can suffocate doing that, you know. People don't know that. Come sit. They're talking about the Cooper trade, what dimwits.

STEVE

Turn it off.

SONNY

What? Hey, what's wrong, buddy. You guys have a fight or...

STEVE

Just turn the damn thing off.

SONNY

OK... I'll turn it off. There, it's off. What's going on... oh, jeezus, you haven't been drinking have you?

STEVE

Yes, sir. I sure have. I've been celebrating.

SONNY

Celebrating? Well, why didn't you say so. Have we got an official decision here?

STEVE

It's been one helluva night.

SONNY

Well, it's tough. You've had a lot to deal with. So, come on, what's the story? I'm dying here.

STEVE

No such luck. Where's mom?

SONNY

She's in bed. Now, what's that supposed to mean? What's...

STEVE

You remember Phil Bradley, the agent?

SONNY

Remember him? I know him. So do you.

Steve whispers like the FBI's in the bushes.

STEVE

Oh, no, I don't. I never heard of him. I've never had any official contact with him, officially.

SONNY

Right. I get it. So, what about him?

STEVE

Well, I hear Phil has a boat, down in Florida. And I hear that you and Phil went fishing on his boat.

SONNY

Where did you hear that?

STEVE

So, it's not true?

SONNY

Not true? What's not to be true? I went to a fishing tournament. Yeah, so Phil was there. He's a major player, my boy, handles some of the...

STEVE

I know all that...

SONNY

Then, I guess I don't get it. You're mad because I talk to agents? That's what I'm supposed to do, isn't it? I played golf down there with Carter, what's his damn name... Newell and Avery the weasel. And, they lost, they're lousy golfers - and I took their money. That's the way it works. They make their pitch, and I listen, to make the best deal I can - for you, buddy, not for me - they talk to me and I talk to you, that's how it works. You know all this, so...

STEVE

Maybe you should have let Mr. Avery win at golf.

SONNY

I'm not real good at that.

STEVE

Or, maybe you shouldn't have stood him up. Since he flew all the way here to see you about me - your buddy.

SONNY

How did you... I didn't stand him up, I didn't even know he was coming. Did you run into that ass hole?

STEVE

I guess Mom sent him to the wrong restaurant.

SONNY

Did he talk to you... well, obviously. That little shit. Do you know this could jeopardize your eligibility?

STEVE

Yeah, I know, I know, but I couldn't shut him up. I guess he thinks you don't like him. And, he definitely doesn't like your fishing buddy.

SONNY

None of those guys like each other. They're sharks, speaking of fishing. And even worse, they're both lawyers.

STEVE

I'm not speaking of fishing.

SONNY

Then I don't get it. I'll take Phil off the list. I don't care. We don't have a shortage of agents.

STEVE

When you go fishing, don't you usually take, like, fishing equipment and bait and stuff?

SONNY

What's going on, Steve? Come on, that's enough with the snide remarks, what's the story here, son?

STEVE

You win, Dad. You win.

SONNY

I win... You know, you're not...

STEVE

Let me finish. Can I finish?

SONNY

Sure. Go ahead. Finish

STEVE

You win. Who needs a senior year, who needs a diploma. English Literature? I mean, give me a break. Let Emma be the writer, right? Me, I'm going to the mother fuckin' NFL, if you'll pardon my fucking French. Prime Time. The Show. Hey, now there's that old Sonny Cannon smile.

(cutting him off)

No, now, let me talk. You know what mom told me yesterday, we were talking about you and she said, "you know, Steve, your dad loves you so much, he sees so much of himself in you." Really? I don't think so. I don't think you see yourself in me. I don't think you see me at all. I don't think you ever have. I think you see yourself out there.

(Sonny to speak again)

Uh-uh, no, hold it. You see, I don't think the whistle ever blew for you, Dad. But I've always known that, it's okay. You know how many times I've looked at your old films. You know my favorite, the last Redskins game. Monday Night Football, 50 yard double move, out and up, laid flat out, fingertip catch, in the end zone. The clock goes all zeroes. Game over. The fans swarming the field, the guy by the tunnel, fixing his earpiece, waiting to talk to you - my dad - the whole world, waiting to talk to my dad. And there you are. You're walking across the field, helmet in the air, sweat on your face, blood on your jersey, and I've never seen you happier. And, you're hugging your teammates, with that look in your eye. You know all I've ever wanted, ever, in my whole life, just once, is to have you look at me the way you looked at those guys. So, fuck Notre Dame. I've been busting my ass my whole life just to make Sonny Cannon's team. So did I make it, dad? You want me to be you? I can do that, if that's what it takes. Let me see. First, I've gotta learn to drink. Now, I started tonight. I'm doing okay but I can do better,

(MORE)

STEVE (CONT'D)

you can help me with that. I've got to ignore Emma. Now, she's my sister, and my best friend, but I can try, maybe I can do that, too. You treat mom like a fucking servant, and now I find out you've been running around on her for years. So, I've gotta treat mom like dirt and I've gotta start cheating on Kelli, or whoever, definitely not Kelli. That's gonna be hard, dad. But, I'll do my best. You know I always do my best.

SONNY

Steve, buddy, listen to me...

STEVE

No, don't do that...

SONNY

Do what...

STEVE

That's that tone I hear right before I do exactly what you want me to.

SONNY

I haven't said anything.

STEVE

So, what else is new.

SONNY

All right, that's enough of that crap. You're pissed off and you...

STEVE

I'm pissed off?! Didn't you hear a single word I...

SONNY

You're drunk and upset. I'm not talking to you when you're like this.

STEVE

You never talk to me when I'm like anything else, so what's the difference? What do I have to be like for you to talk to me. Tell me, I'll give it a shot.

SONNY

Go to bed, Steve.

STEVE

That's it? Go to bed, Steve. Nice game, Steve, watch that release point, Steve, good read on that last blitz, Steve, pass the gravy, Steve, go to bed, Steve, fuck off, Steve.

Sonny gets up.

SONNY

Okay, then, I'll go to bed.

Steve blocks his path.

STEVE

No, you're not.

SONNY

Alright, that's enough out of you. I'm going to cut you some slack because you're fucked up, but you are way out of line.

STEVE

You're damn right I am, I'm way out of line and I'm gonna stay way out of line. I like it out of line. I'm tired of standing in line to talk to my own father. So, tell me about the babes on the boat, dad, did they help you bait your hook?

SONNY

You don't know what the fuck you're talking about.

STEVE

Then why don't you tell me. Go ahead. And while you're at it, tell me about the bitch in St. Louis...

Sonny moves fast, into Steve's face, shoves him, hard.

SONNY

You shut up! Just shut the fuck up! You say you care about your mother, then, shut your god damned mouth!

STEVE

Don't talk about my mother, ass hole!

EXT. DRIVEWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Emma and Pete in the driveway in Pete's jeep. Listening.

PETE

You want to go around the block?

Emma squeezes his hand.

EMMA

No. I'm good. Thanks.

PETE

Text me, let me know you're okay.

EMMA

Stop nurturing, creature. It's too normalish weird. This is all fine. Strangely enough, I find comfort in it. Whoever those people are out there, they sound vaguely human.

EXT. CANNON'S BACK YARD -- CONTINUOUS

Steve and Sonny are faced off in the back yard.

SONNY

You want to kick my ass, is that it?  
Well, come on, Mr. Quarterback...  
you college pussy...

Steve charges, lowers his head to tackle Sonny. Sonny sidesteps him but not completely and the momentum takes them both to the ground. The two of them lock up in a violent, grappling struggle, rolling and punching at each other, too tangled up to have much effect. Mary RUNS OUT.

MARY

Stop it! Stop it! Both of you, stop!!

She wades in, tugging at them, but loses her grip, stumbles back and falls. The fight is over. Steve gets to Mary first.

STEVE

Mom... are you...

SONNY

Mary, jeezus, are you all right?

MARY

It's all right. I slipped.

STEVE

Here...

Steve tries to help Mary up. She waves him off.

MARY

I'm all right. Stop it.

Mary gets up on her own.

STEVE

Did you hear any of...

MARY

The whole neighborhood heard you.  
Sally Cohen called to see if she  
should call the police. Are you drunk?

STEVE

No, I'm... okay, I'm fine...

SONNY

He's trashed. It's my fault, I should  
have walked away, I shouldn't have...

STEVE

Drunk has nothing to do with it. I'm  
sorry, Mom. I couldn't help it. Now,  
I'm a fucking jerk. I didn't want  
you to hear all that, I'm sorry.

MARY

Watch your language.

STEVE

Watch my language, Mom, come on...

SONNY

She's right.

STEVE

Will you shut up.

MARY

Stop it. My god, just stop it,  
please... can we go inside...

Emma has slipped around to the back of the house and stands  
quiet in the shadows. Sonny sees her.

SONNY

Emma...

EMMA

Seldom is a name a statement but, in  
this case, I agree completely.

STEVE

Em, do you have to pull your smart  
ass shit right now?



EMMA

Yes, I probably do.

MARY

Did you hear all that?

EMMA

I heard. It used to be the things I didn't hear that bothered me. I guess that's changed.

All silent. An unexpected lull in the battle.

SONNY

Well, now what?

EMMA

Would this be a good time to tell you that I'm not going back to school?

MARY

What? What are you talking about?

EMMA

School. Remember? I'm the daughter home from Columbia, the school to which I will not be returning, as I have just announced, in my own circuitous fashion.

SONNY

What do you mean, you're not going back to school? Who says?

MARY

Can we take a breath here... just let me.... God, what is happening?

STEVE

Em, is this really the time for this?

EMMA

I wasn't sure I'd have another chance with all present. The big dinner was for you, not me. I doubt we're going to have two in two days.

MARY

We didn't have one. Nobody came home.

EMMA

Shocker.

SONNY

Look, Emma, Steve...

(Steve starts to speak)

just... just wait... just give me two seconds, here. Emma, if it's about what you heard...

EMMA

It's not, really, it's not. It might help me close my suitcase, but it's not the reason.

MARY

But you love school.

STEVE

She hates school.

EMMA

No, I don't hate school. I hate the idea of school. I hate being graded on what I know instead of who I am. Wow, that's about as honest as I get.

SONNY

But, you make straight A's.

EMMA

I can't make anything else! I'm barely hanging onto the edge of this family as it is. If I made a B, I might fall off completely. Who's Emma Cannon? She's the daughter who makes straight A's. If she made a B, she wouldn't be Emma anymore. If she drank Ouzo, screwed her Lit professor, and made B's, she'd be somebody else.

MARY

Do you want to do all that?

EMMA

What? God, I don't know. Probably not, maybe so. By the way, we should not overlook the historic significance of this moment. That is one of the few serious, personal questions I have ever been asked by a parent. I must make a note.

MARY

Emma...

EMMA

Mom, please don't. I'm way out here.  
The sarcasm helps, but it's not  
foolproof.

SONNY

Emma, look, this isn't a good time  
to be deciding something like that,  
we can talk about it later, when...

EMMA

We're not too good at that, Dad,  
that talking thing. It's not about  
your screwing around, all right.  
Just call that an exclamation point,  
a little nod to myself on the inside.  
I didn't just decide. I already  
dropped out.

MARY

You didn't... how can you do that?

EMMA

It's easy. You go to the office and  
say "I quit." You don't have anything  
to worry about, okay. I came when I  
was called. I cleaned my room, sooner  
or later. I was house-trained. You  
did great. Nobody will blame you.

STEVE

Why are you jumping on her, didn't  
you hear anything I said?

EMMA

I heard. Look, you're my favorite  
big brother, ever. I wish I could be  
as surprised and hurt as you are.  
Maybe you should be the writer. You're  
the sensitive one in the family.

STEVE

Right, and you're the tough bitch.  
Come on, I know better.

SONNY

Okay, everybody, listen up. No...  
now wait a minute, just wait a minute.  
Okay, things are a little screwed up  
here and whatever you say, Emma,  
some of it's about me, and...

STEVE

Oh, please...

SONNY

Just give me a shot here, all right?

MARY

Sonny, it isn't...

SONNY

Yes, it is, okay? Steve, I don't know where you got all this...

STEVE

You're telling me it's not true?

SONNY

I didn't say that... I'm not going to bullshit you...

MARY

Sonny, stop it. Just stop. I know. That's right. Everybody isn't a fan of yours. People love to talk. Always have. And, since they've been after Steve, it's gotten even uglier. But, I've known anyway, always have.

STEVE

You knew?

MARY

Yes.

STEVE

And you didn't say anything?

MARY

It's not that simple.

STEVE

What's not simple about it? He's married to you and he's screwing other people. I thought that was wrong, or am I crazy?

MARY

It's complicated.

STEVE

Man, I don't get this. How can you...

EMMA

Okay. What's the complicated part?

SONNY

Mary... don't

MARY

The truth is, the only kind of... physical relations... sex... that your father and I have had, for the past 15 years, is the kind you make yourself have so neither of you has to admit you don't want to.

SONNY

Oh, for Christ's sake...

MARY

Since about a year after Emma was born, so I guess that's more like 18 years. How time flies.

SONNY

Look, there's no need for all of this. We don't need to dredge up the history of the world here, you know. Steve, somebody told you some things - it pissed you off - I understand that - I don't blame you and I'm not going to tell you it's not true. It was stupid. I was stupid. But, we can deal with it, we can work it out. I never meant to hurt anybody - it just happened.

MARY

Did Chris Martin just happen, too?

SONNY

Who?

MARY

Chris Martin, Sonny. I still have a hard time with her name and I've never even met her.

EMMA

Uh, maybe you two need to be alone.  
(to Steve)  
Come on, I'll drive you to Kelli's.

STEVE

I'm not going to that bitch's house.

MARY

Steve!! Watch your mouth.

STEVE

Sorry. I'm not going to my ex's house. Anyway, it's the middle of the night.

EMMA

It's no darker out there than it's gotten here. Let's go.

The gate in the fence opens and a MALE NEIGHBOR peeks in.

NEIGHBOR

Hey guys, everything OK over here?

SONNY

Everything's fine, Dave, just fine, thanks, you can go back to bed.

NEIGHBOR

Well, I just heard all the...

SONNY

Do I need to come explain it to you, Dave? Nobody needs any help so go the fuck home, thank you.

The neighbor knows better, ducks back through the gate.

MARY

Wonderful. Just wonderful, Sonny. Can we go inside, please?

SONNY

No, it's our god damned yard.

Mary heads inside, the others finally follow.

INT. CANNON FAMILY ROOM -- NIGHT

Inside, Steve and Emma share a look.

STEVE

Sorry, mom, we probably need to go.

SONNY

Does this whole family have to fall apart, just like that, in the space of 5 minutes?

STEVE

No, it didn't. Thanks a lot.

EMMA

It didn't fall apart, dad. It was never together in the first place. But, don't worry. A family is only a random genetic accident. There is no cosmic obligation that it stay

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

together for the good of mankind. You don't have to save the family, unless you want to do another Chevy commercial.

SONNY

That's pretty damn cold. So, you just don't give a shit, is that it?

EMMA

Don't even say that to me! You think I wanted this? You think I want to be a tough bitch? This is all a fucking act, you shit head! You think I didn't want to climb up in my daddy's lap and hug his neck and hear him say "I love you pumpkin" or something stupid like that? Well, it didn't happen. That's the way it goes. A family? We're more like 4 strangers on a train in a foreign country, assigned by fate to the same car, each of us speaking a different language. A temporary, accidental association whose outstanding feature is getting along, tolerance, fractured conversations, comfortable indifference.

MARY

You are amazing. I'd ask you to write that down if it wasn't about us.

EMMA

It's not supposed to be funny.

MARY

It isn't funny. And it hasn't been all that comfortable, for me at least. Not for your father, either.

STEVE

Don't do that. Do not make excuses for him. You are not going to take the blame for this. You should come with us and leave him here.

SONNY

Hey, I'm right here. You got something to say, you can say it to me.

EMMA

Are you two going to fight again?  
Jeezus. I hear you, mom, but it's  
too much right now.

MARY

Where are you going?

EMMA

Tonight, I'll go to Pete's. You can  
come, too, Heisman. Monday, I'm going  
to New York to live with Margaret,  
get a job in a diner wearing a paper  
hat, and meet a serious, sensitive  
man who will make love to me on Sunday  
mornings. That's as far as I've  
gotten. And write, of course. I have  
a hell of an imagination.

STEVE

Maybe the Giants draft me and I'll  
be there, too. Want to come, Mom?

SONNY

I am fucking here, people! I'm sorry.  
Look, can't we talk about this?

STEVE

Okay. Who's Chris Martin?

SONNY

There's a lot you think you know,  
but there's a lot you don't.

STEVE

I've got a minute. Hold up, baby  
sister. What don't we know?

SONNY

Life can have a way of getting away  
from you sometimes, Steve.

STEVE

No shit, tell me about it.

SONNY

I'm trying to. Sometimes things  
happen. It's not like you decide  
these things. I mean, sometimes you  
do decide something, but not that,  
you decide something else, you plan  
something else, but things don't  
happen that way, not the way you

(MORE)



SONNY (CONT'D)  
 thought, something else happens  
 instead, something you didn't plan.  
 And one day you look up and there  
 you are.

STEVE  
 That's it?

SONNY  
 I'm not any good at speeches, you  
 know that.

STEVE  
 Is that what this is, a speech?  
 Look, thanks for opening up here.  
 This moment has meant a lot to me. I  
 can leave feeling a lot better now.  
 Come on, Emma.

MARY  
 Sonny, they're leaving.

MARY (CONT'D)  
 Wait, Steve, Emma,  
 wait.

SONNY  
 What am I supposed to do?

STEVE  
 Gotta be going, mom. It's getting  
 darker, like the poet said.

MARY  
 Wait, wait! God damnit, STOP!

Her explosion stops them cold. A Mary they've never seen.

MARY (CONT'D)  
 I have something to say. I want to  
 talk to you, both of you. Just for a  
 minute. Then you can go. I'm not  
 trying to stop you. I'm not.

EMMA  
 Okay.

STEVE  
 Okay. But no excuses for him. I don't  
 want to hear it.

MARY  
 I don't care what you want to hear.  
 I'm going to say what I need to say  
 and you can do whatever you damn  
 well please.

Steve and Emma share a look, sit together on the sofa.

MARY (CONT'D)

Your father and I, when we got married and I moved to New York, I wouldn't even ride the subway. But I didn't have to, I had a driver, a car, to drive me around. Do you have any idea how... well, you know what a player your father was. He was famous before he ever walked on the field in Giants Stadium...

STEVE

I've got the scrapbooks, mom.

MARY

Just shut up, Steve. This isn't about football. Your father was very popular - that's an understatement - they adored him. He was gone a lot. He was out a lot. He drank a lot. He had a lot of friends, all kinds. But he always played his heart out, and he always came home. Then Chris Martin happened. She was something else.

SONNY

Mary, I don't know why you're doing this. That was a long time ago. It didn't mean anything. You knew that.

Sonny is in the room, but barely.

MARY

I said I did. I lied.

SONNY

This is crazy, digging up all this stuff. That was 20 years ago.

MARY

Your father had an affair with this person, short but very intense. He stopped it and he told me about it, drunk and crying in my lap. I said I forgave him, that I was proud of him for telling me. I lied. People have flings, even people who aren't on magazine covers, it happens, for lots of reasons... But this was something else. There was something about the way he said her name, and

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

he only said it that one time. I will never forget it, the sound of her name, said that way, not like the name of a fling, like something else. I couldn't forget it. I couldn't keep that woman out of my head. My head, my God, I couldn't keep her out of my car, my kitchen - she was everywhere I went - because I took her with me. She was even in my bed, right there between us. I kept expecting him to call me by her name, in the heat of passion, like you see in the movies, but he never did. It didn't matter. She was there.

SONNY

Mary...

MARY

Don't interrupt me, Sonny! We tried, but it was never the same. I had a little fling myself, with a friend of your father's. I was not very good at it, but I gave it a shot. He was a nice man.

SONNY

He was my friend, by the way.

MARY

No, he wasn't. He was your lawyer so he kissed your ass. But he was a good friend to me, for a little while. Then I was pregnant with Steve. That's always a good excuse to take a break from sex if you need one. A couple of years later here's Emma and that was it. Not your fault, no, not your fault, either of you. It's not your fault that it was so easy to love you, to get lost in you. Football, baseball, basketball, piano, dance. I joined, I volunteered. I had teas and coffees. I had fascinating friends. I baked bread. I made my own jelly and canned fruit. I gave perfect dinner parties. I was very happy. Who needed a marriage.

SONNY

Don't you think that's enough, Mary?

MARY

I don't know what I'm doing, Sonny.  
I'm just doing it, so I don't know  
how much is enough.

EMMA

I'm sorry, Mom. I know that's not  
much, but it's all I can think of.

STEVE

Why didn't you leave?

MARY

If I had taken you away from him, it  
would have killed him, whether you  
believe that or not, and that would  
have killed me. And I still loved  
him, always have, couldn't help it.

EMMA

What about you dad? Why didn't you  
run off with Buffy or whomever?

SONNY

I didn't want to.

STEVE

You just decided to live like that?  
That's nuts. How could you do that?

SONNY

We didn't decide. It just happened.

STEVE

Things don't just happen. People  
make things happen, remember. Or,  
was that just a dumb slogan for a  
dumb kid?

SONNY

It's a good slogan.

EMMA

(getting up)  
Steve, I'd like to go now.

STEVE

(rising with her)  
This is insane.

EMMA

Whatever that is. Please, let's go.

STEVE

Damnit, I... I find out that my father has been cheating on my mother, not just lately, but for years, I guess, and then my mother tells me it's not really his fault, or it is, sort of. I don't get this shit at all.

Steve follows Emma to the door.

MARY

It was his fault.

SONNY

I never... my God, that was so long ago. I was young, I was stupid, all right, but it didn't mean anything. This is all in your head. It was nothing like that...

MARY

Sonny, I know where you keep her picture.

Everybody stops. Time stops. Finally, Sonny speaks.

SONNY

I... uh... I don't know what to say here, I... there's no way I can tell you what that means, what it doesn't mean. It's just something I... kept.

A defening silence.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Things have pretty much gone to shit here, huh.

Steve hands Emma his keys.

STEVE

You better drive. I'm still drunk.

EMMA

Good-bye, mom. I love you.

MARY

Me, too.

STEVE

I love you too, mom.

MARY

I know.

EMMA  
 (to her father)  
 You, I don't know about, sorry.

SONNY  
 What can I say?

EMMA  
 I don't know, but I would try to  
 think of something.

SONNY  
 I love you, Emma.

EMMA  
 Do you? Steve too?

SONNY  
 Of course I do, you know that.

STEVE  
 Sorry, bullshit alarm. Gotta be going.  
 See you in the sports pages. Bye,  
 mom. I'll call you tomorrow.

Steve exits past Emma. Emma give Sonny a long look, then follows Steve, pulling the door closed behind her.

SONNY  
 Jeezus fucking Christ, what the hell  
 did you do? Are you crazy? Your shrink  
 has turned you into a lunatic.

Mary turns and speed-walks out and down the hallway.

SONNY (CONT'D)  
 Mary...

Sonny makes his way to "his" chair and drops into it. Mary reappears with her purse. She stops and looks at Sonny. This takes more courage than she might possess, but she says it.

MARY  
 I'll call you about making  
 arrangements.

Sonny stands.

SONNY  
 Arrangements... Are you kidding? Is  
 that what you want?

MARY

No, that is not what I want. I just wanted to have dinner. That's all I wanted. To eat a stupid roast.

SONNY

Listen. I'm sorry. I'm sorry for everything, everything I did, have done, to you, and to them.

MARY

We never talked about... any of it.

SONNY

No.

MARY

I was afraid.

SONNY

Of what?

MARY

That one day you would come home and say those magic words, "I want a divorce." How about you? What's your excuse?

SONNY

I'm not into sharing my innermost feelings, okay? I've never been good at that. That's just the way I am.

MARY

You don't have to share your innermost feelings, Sonny. But, you do have to have them.

SONNY

I'm asking you to forgive me, Mary, if you can do that.

Mary heads for the door.

SONNY (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

MARY

I don't think it would work.

SONNY

We can try. It's been a long time.

MARY

It's been a whole lifetime.

SONNY

Hey, it's not over yet.

Mary has made it to the door, on will alone.

MARY

Don't.

SONNY

Don't what?

MARY

Make up something to get me to stay. I might believe you. I spent years making up things you never said and believing them. Can you imagine what I would do with the real thing, even if it was a lie? I don't trust you, and I don't trust myself.

SONNY

Well, that's great. If I say something, you won't believe it and if I don't say something, you won't believe that either. What the fuck did I just say. Come on, Mary, give me a chance here.

MARY

I think you might love me, Sonny. Maybe you do. And I know you love Steve and Emma, totally, but... so, it didn't work out. It's not the end of the world.

SONNY

Well, fuck me, then. I... I don't know what to say. Well, there's a surprise, huh.

MARY

I'm going to a hotel. I'll be back to get some things.

SONNY

Hey, at least you could give me a 2 minute warning. I might want to take a shot, you know - throw one in the end zone - the old "Hail Mary", right? - hope for a miracle. Anything's possible, Mary.



MARY

Yes, anything's possible. And then some of those things happen. It's called life, Sonny. Good-bye.

Mary walks out, slamming the door.

EXT. LOCAL EATERY -- DAY

Kyle with Steve in a mostly empty, post-lunch restaurant/bar. Kyle's finishing a burger. Cute WAITRESS comes over.

KYLE

You want a burger? They're great.

STEVE

Just a beer, thanks.

WAITRESS

What kind?

STEVE

Cold, I don't care.

WAITRESS

One cold beer. Are you 21?

STEVE

Sure, are you?

WAITRESS

Almost, why?

STEVE

Why not?

She leaves. Steve sits, clenched jaw.

KYLE

Okay. You don't want to hear this so let's make a deal. Just sit and drink your beer until I'm done, and then you can take off. How's that?

The waitress puts a beer and glass in front of Steve.

STEVE

I don't need a glass, thanks.

WAITRESS

Sure you do.

She leaves.

KYLE

Unusual glass.

Steve picks the glass up. Written on the side in grease pencil is a phone number and a smiley face. He puts it down.

KYLE (CONT'D)

It's about your dad.

STEVE

What a surprise.

KYLE

Just drink your beer, big shot and shut up a minute. Give me a little respect here, can you do that? I got nothing to gain out of this.

STEVE

Okay, go. Chris Martin.

KYLE

He never talked about her. Off limits. But, if he was ever going to take off, it would have been with her. But he didn't. Sometimes that's all you got and it might not seem like much but, when things get crazy, it can be all you end up with. You go or you stay. And, that's not nothing.

STEVE

Why didn't he say any of that?

KYLE

What would you have said, exactly? It's complicated.

STEVE

Oh, shit. Man, if I hear that again.

KYLE

You won't from me. I'm done.

STEVE

So my dad doesn't chase ass, is that what you're telling me?

KYLE

Well, not as much as me.

(pause)

No, I'm not telling you that. I'm telling you what I told you. Nobody's perfect. Maybe you are, but I'm not.

Kyle takes the glass with the waitress' number and drawing on it, slides a \$20 under it, stands and heads out. The waitress comes over.

WAITRESS

Can I get you anything else, sir?

INT. CANNON FAMILY ROOM -- DAY

Sonny enters, throws the door shut behind him and moves through the family room to the kitchen, where he tosses his keys on the counter, grabs a beer from the fridge, and checks the answering machine. He pushes PLAY.

EMMA (V.O.)

Hello, it's me. I wanted to let you know I'm leaving tomorrow. I'll call you when I get to New York and give you the number and the address and all that... I hope you're okay... I love you, I guess... Bye.

Next is Kelli.

KELLI (V.O.)

Mr. "C"... are you there? It's Kelli. Sorry to call the house but you don't answer your cell, caveman. And who still has an answering machine at home, are you a hundred? Call me back. Don't make me come over there and smack you. I gave you my cell. Call me, text me, and don't be a jerk because of Steve. Bye.

Then, Mary.

MARY (V.O.)

Sonny, hello. I know Larry said not to call you but I wanted to tell you where I'll be so you won't worry. I'm going to visit my mother. You have the number, except you're not supposed to call me, but if there's an emergency or anything, that's where I'll be. I guess that's it. Make sure you eat, I know you won't eat unless somebody makes you. Well, I'm sure you can take care of yourself. All right, bye.

Then, Kyle.

KYLE (V.O.)

Hey, fart head, are you there? Why do you have a cell phone? Okay, here's the deal. I've got to eat here. So, I'll meet you around eight thirty. I'm buying, with your money. You really can't put, dude. It's sad.

Next message starts.

MESSAGE

Hi, Cannons, this is Todd Bain with...

Sonny stops the machine. Goes back to Emma's message and plays it again.

EMMA (V.O.)

Hello, it's me....

INT. EARNIE'S NIGHTCLUB. SAME NIGHT - LATE

Sonny's in a booth at a high-end bar filled with a well-lubed, well-dressed crowd with well-stocked wallets. The men are dressed to impress and the women are frisky and tasty. Not a kid's bar. Kyle is across the booth between two lovelies, ANNA and MARCY (20's/30's). Sonny's drinking scotch, Kyle vodka. The ladies each have some flavor of martini. They're all having a good laugh, at Sonny's expense.

SONNY

You can all bite me.

ANNA

We're just teasing, mister sensitive.

MARCY

Your friend is being a grump. Make him stop it.

KYLE

I can't. He three-putted the eighteenth hole from 6 feet, how can a man live with that. I swear I thought he'd made the last one. I don't know how it stayed out. It went around and around and around...

SONNY

So I missed a fucking putt.

KYLE

Right, no big deal, what's a little three hundred dollar putt?

Kyle speaks to a passing SERVER

KYLE (CONT'D)  
Gorgeous person, another round,  
please, on Mr. Grumpy's tab.

MARCY  
Three hundred dollars? On one hole?

KYLE  
The back nine, the eighteen, and  
four carry-overs - that's fifty times  
six - three hundred dollars. Trust  
me, he's still way ahead of me.

SONNY  
Could we drop it?

KYLE  
His wife and kids left him, too.  
But, a three-putt, now that's serious.

MARCY  
Oh, no, that's awful.

SONNY  
Could we talk about something else?

ANNA  
(to Kyle)  
Come on, let's dance.

KYLE  
There's no dance floor.

She stands, drags Kyle out of the booth.

ANNA  
So, what? Nobody cares.

KYLE  
Alright, alright...  
(to Sonny)  
You coming champ?

SONNY  
I gotta go pretty soon.

KYLE  
Wait for me, I'll be right back after  
I break something.

Kyle and Anna dance off into the crowd.

MARCY  
Do you ever smile?  
(no response)  
Are you ticklish?

SONNY  
Not right now. Maybe later.

MARCY  
Oh, my favorite. I love later.

Kelli approaches through the crowd. She's breathtaking, and dressed to full effect, short skirt, long legs, slinky top, enticing cleavage, lace demi-bra. She stops.

KELLI  
Hey.

SONNY  
Hey.

KELLI  
We're at the back bar. Your crazy friend said you were up here.

SONNY  
He was right.  
(awkward pause)  
This is...

MARCY  
(knowing he forgot)  
Marcy...

SONNY  
Marcy, right. Marcy, this is Kelli.

MARCY  
Uh yeah, I know, Kelli Marks.

KELLI  
That would be me.

MARCY  
You look so gorgeous, girl. That is such a hot outfit.

KELLI  
Thanks. I get this stuff for free.

SONNY  
Where's Steve?

KELLI

I called you today. Three times.

SONNY

I know.

KELLI

You didn't call me back.

SONNY

I know.

MARCY

Do you two want to be alone?

SONNY

No. We don't.

KELLI

Would you mind, really? We need to talk. I don't mean to be rude.

MARCY

No, no problem at all. For Kelli Marks, I will move my suddenly fat ass. I'll go dance with those fools. Maybe I'll see you later, Mister Grumpy. If you're not busy.

Marcy slides out of the booth.

SONNY

She's my son's girlfriend.

KELLI

No, I'm not.

MARCY

That's fine, whatever, none of my business, really. Bye, Kelli, it was so nice to meet you.

KELLI

Yeah, you too, thanks.

Kelli sits down across from Sonny.

SONNY

Where's Steve?

KELLI

You asked me already. I have no idea.

SONNY

Do you want a drink or do you want  
to get right to your speech?

KELLI

I ordered. I don't have a speech.

A server delivers Kelli's drink, double vodka on the rocks.

SONNY

(to the waitress)  
Put that on my tab.

KELLI

I did already.

Kelli's phone rings. She grabs it from her bag, looks at the  
number, turns the phone off, throws it back in her bag.

SONNY

You can talk to him if you want, it  
doesn't matter to me.

KELLI

It's not him. Not your him.

SONNY

You cheating on him?

KELLI

So, did you really do bad things  
with the girls on your fishing trip?

SONNY

Did you want to talk about my fishing  
trip or Steve? Why did you call me?

KELLI

You keep talking about Steve, I don't.  
I called to see how you were doing.

SONNY

Why?

KELLI

Okay, let's talk about Steve.

SONNY

Ah, there we go.

KELLI

Hey, Mr. C, look. You know we've  
never been like that so don't start  
now. Okay? Just talk to me, okay?



SONNY

I'll see. Go ahead.

KELLI

I do like Steve. He's a good guy.

SONNY

Yep. He is.

KELLI

And I hope everything turns out for him like he wants it to. I don't think that's going to happen, but I hope it does.

SONNY

That doesn't sound like a fiancé talking.

KELLI

Oh, God, where in the world did you get that idea?

SONNY

Mary. She said...

KELLI

Of course. No, Sonny. I don't want to marry Steve, I think she does.

SONNY

All right now...

KELLI

Sonny, listen to me.

SONNY

What happened to Mr. C?

KELLI

Sonny, Steve's a great guy but he's a kid. He's a lost boy who's tied at the waist to his mother, which I don't think she minds at all.

SONNY

So... you're... I don't get it...

KELLI

Sonny, I'm not a cheerleader any more. Some people can stay cheerleaders all their lives, no offense to your wife, but I can't.

(MORE)

KELLI (CONT'D)

Steve's spent the past three years in South Bend, Indiana, which he thinks is the center of the universe, and I've spent the last three years in Paris, France. What do you think?

SONNY

I think I need another drink.

Sonny has become increasingly aware of Kelli's body. She is one fine beauty. She doesn't flaunt it. She just doesn't care. Sonny signals to the waitress with two fingers.

KELLI

So, maybe you screwed up, I don't know, but he's going to use whatever you do as his excuse for doing whatever he's going to do. Even when he's going against you, he's doing it because of you.

SONNY

You studying psychology over there? I thought you were a model.

KELLI

It's ridiculous, but he doesn't see it. He has no idea who he is, so he's going to be you, without even knowing he's doing it. But, you already are you, so where does that leave him? You did it already, Sonny. You're in the fucking Hall of Fame. If he plays football and doesn't get hurt and is as good as anybody who's ever played, one day he might make it, too. That would be amazing. That would be an amazing thing. And it's still a tie. That's the best he can do - ever - is a tie. And somewhere in him he knows that and it's killing him because he can't think of anything else to do. So, that's it. I guess I did have a speech.

SONNY

That's okay. It's better than some I've heard lately.

KELLI

I came home to see my mother and because I figured it would be a nice  
(MORE)

KELLI (CONT'D)

way to end our little childhood romance. But he's such a child. He's having a tantrum because you won't pat him on the head, which you could, but you won't, you're not the type. Which I actually like. But Steve, he doesn't even want to play football, not for a living, but he'll never admit that. I guess I should just forget about it but it's such a waste. Let him go to "the show" he calls it. I don't know if he'll make it, personally. But, what do I know.

SONNY

Maybe he won't go. Who knows.

KELLI

He didn't call you?

SONNY

No. Why? What?

KELLI

The little shit. I told him to call you. He signed with an agent.

SONNY

Damn, well, that's that.

KELLI

I can't believe him.

SONNY

It's all right.

KELLI

No, it isn't. Fuck that. He's being a baby about it. Who knows if this guy's even any good. He's the drunk ass hole from the restaurant.

SONNY

Avery. The last guy I would have put him with. Figures. But, he knows what he's doing. I don't like him but, what the hell, he's not my agent.

KELLI

All right, fine, fuck it. Why should I worry about him, you don't. Fine.

Kelli takes a long drink from her drink and puts it down.

SONNY

You've gotten pretty spunky over there in Paris, all by yourself.

KELLI

It's called growing up.

Sonny reaches for his drink and takes a deep swallow.

SONNY

I noticed.

KELLI

I know. I noticed you noticing.

Kelli holds Sonny's eyes until he breaks it. He was thinking exactly what she knows he was thinking. He looks up again. Her gaze is still on him, not backing down a bit.

SONNY

It's getting late. I should get the hell out of here.

KELLI

What about your friend, Marcy.

SONNY

That's all right.

KELLI

She wants to fuck you, you know.

SONNY

She tell you that?

KELLI

More or less.

SONNY

That's okay.

KELLI

Funny, I'm here with Colin.

SONNY

Steve's friend Colin?

KELLI

Drunk, trying to get in his best friend's ex-girlfriend's pants Colin.

SONNY

Tell him hello for me.

KELLI

No thanks, can I bum a ride?

Sonny's no neophyte. It's in the air and they both know it.

SONNY

Sure, I guess, you ready?

Kelli downs the rest of her drink in one gulp.

KELLI

Mais oui. My motor, she is running.

Sonny signals for the check. Very aware of the message. Kyle moves through the crowd and sails up to the booth.

KYLE

Yo, Kelli, what's up? Where's the Quarterback?

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT -- NIGHT

Mary and Emma on the sofa in Pete's apartment. Emma pours the last of a bottle of wine into their two glasses.

MARY

It's late, I should get going.

EMMA

Are you okay to drive?

MARY

Oh, sure, it only took us two hours to drink that. I'm fine.

EMMA

Well, thanks for coming over.

MARY

(laughs)

Oh, me. I don't know why that sounded so funny. Well, thank Pete for going wherever he went. This was fun.

EMMA

And, thank you for the money, it will help a lot. I wasn't going to take it but that would be symbolic and silly, with poverty fast approaching, so thank you.

MARY

What money?

EMMA

The money you put in my account.

MARY

I didn't put any money in your account. I didn't think of it.

EMMA

Oh, I... thought....

MARY

It must have been Sonny.

EXT. SONNY'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Inside Sonny's car, Kelli sinks into the soft leather, bare leg and skin everywhere. Her skirt rides up but she makes no effort to pull it down.

KELLI

God, what a joint. I'd forgotten how low and slow this town could go.

SONNY

So, where do you live again?

KELLI

13 rue Daupin, in Bon Marché.

SONNY

Not there, here.

INT. PETE'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Emma puts hers and Mary's empty glasses in the sink.

EMMA

Why did he do that, I wonder? It was a lot of money.

MARY

He is your father and I know he's got his faults, but he's not a bad person underneath it all. Not really.

EMMA

Well, he's done a pretty good imitation, for a long time.

MARY

Yes, that's true. But, maybe he'll do better. You never know.

Emma looks at her mother, trying to admire her latest burst of rosy optimism.

INT. SONNY'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Sonny starts the engine on the Porsche and it roars to life.

KELLI

You're kidding. You forgot? It's like two miles from your house. Horse country? Stables?

SONNY

I know basically, but I don't remember which road it's on.

KELLI

Well, I think I might. Drive, mister. Let's see what this go-cart can do.

Sonny accelerates, very fast, as usual.

INT. SPORTS BAR -- NIGHT

Steve is having drinks with Tom Avery.

TOM

You like the room?

STEVE

Sure. What's not to like. You sure you're paying?

TOM

The firm. It's an advance. You're a pro now, that's how it works.

STEVE

Works like that in college sometimes, too, but don't tell anybody.

TOM

Oh, I hadn't heard that. Look, you made the right move, Steve, I'm not the sweetest guy around, but I'm as good as they come.

STEVE

Like I said, I did my homework. And, shit man, it took guts to do what you did in the damn restaurant, I respect that.

TOM

I was drunk as a moose on a Tuesday.

STEVE

That sounds pretty drunk, dude.

TOM

That's way drunk, dude.

STEVE

Well I know you're gonna bust your ass. Since you can't stand my dad, the only way you can stick his nose in it is if I make it big, am I right?

TOM

Hey whoa, dude, I will do very well by you because that's what I do. But, I got no problem with your dad. He's one of the greatest players to every play the game. I have the greatest respect for him.

Steve goes dark.

INT. SONNY'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

Sonny's car idles at a "T" intersection on a narrow road out in horse country. Hot jazz oozes from the stereo. Nothing out here but gated tracts and sleeping horses. Kelli is turned slightly toward Sonny, silent, but very much awake.

SONNY

Right or left?

KELLI

Either one. You decide.

It's way past pretend at this point.

SONNY

Which way is your house?

KELLI

My house is left.

He looks. Her eyes and smile say it all. He turns the wheel to the right and accelerates, roaring into the darkness.

INT. RESTAURANT/BAR -- CONTINUOUS

Steve's ready to blow. Avery doesn't see it coming.



TOM

This is just business man, that's all it is, we'll invite your dad to a game and make all this right when the time comes. You want him on your side. He's got a lot of clout.

STEVE

Let's get something straight, right now. My dad is an ass hole. You do what you do and leave my personal life to me, I'm your fucking client here, and that's who you need to worry about, not my god damned father.

TOM

Okay, okay, cool it. He's an ass hole, I got it, not a problem. That's your business and I completely respect that. I never lived with him, what do I know. No flag, no foul, first and ten, do it again.

Avery raises his glass, they toast.

INT. SONNY'S CAR -- CONTINUOUS

In an open field, bathed by jazz and moonlight, Kelli braces herself against the hood of Sonny's Porsche, her skirt shoved up and her top undone, while Sonny thrusts into her from the rear, fast and hard.

EXT. CANNON HOUSE -- MORNING

Mary pulls into the driveway and stops. It's quiet. Sonny's car is in the drive but there is no sign of life. Mary turns off the car and sits, gathering herself. She gets out, closes the door and stands for a moment, taking it all in.

She spots a basketball in the grass. She picks it up, bounces it a few times and throws up a one-handed push shot. It clangs against the rim and bounces away.

INT. CANNON KITCHEN -- CONTINUOUS

Sonny is in the kitchen with a cup of just-poured coffee when he hears the basketball bouncing outside. Then the clang against the rim, the ball bouncing away. What the hell? As he goes to investigate, the door opens and Mary enters.

MARY

I used to make that shot.

SONNY

What are you doing?

MARY

I was shooting a basket.

SONNY

I mean, what are you doing here?

MARY

You look tired. Are you hung over?

SONNY

You're the one who said... Larry said we shouldn't have any contact.

MARY

I have to get my passport. My mother's taking me to Spain for 'recovery.' Would you rather I had Larry come get it?

SONNY

No, of course not. I'll get it.

MARY

That's okay. I know where it is.

From the kitchen, Kelli's voice rings out.

KELLI (O.S.)

Sonny, where'd you go, do you have any "Truvia", Sonny...

Sonny's struck mute. Mary knows that voice. She yells out:

MARY

We don't use Turvia, we use Splenda. It's in the cabinet next to the stove.

SONNY

Mary...

MARY

Where's Steve. I didn't see his...

Kelli enters, in a pair of Sonny's gym shorts and a T-shirt.

SONNY

Mary... listen, why don't you...

MARY

Good morning, Kelli. Did you find the Splenda?

KELLI

Mrs. "C"...

MARY

Please don't call me that. Oh, my God, Sonny...

SONNY

Mary, it's not what you think.

KELLI

This is, wow, this is...

MARY

Bad? Would that be the word you were looking for?

SONNY

Mary, wait a minute...

MARY

Kelli, can I ask you something?

SONNY

(trying to defuse it)

Mary, come outside, please, let me talk to you, outside, Mary...

MARY

I know what sex looks like, Sonny. I might not be up to your expert level, but I know what it looks like.

KELLI

Look, there's no need...

MARY

Just answer the question...

KELLI

What question?

MARY

Which one's the best? Truvia or Splenda? I like Splenda, but it's a personal thing, I guess, so what do you think? Have you tried both?

No answer.

MARY (CONT'D)

Which one, the father or the son?  
Which one's better?

SONNY

Mary, you're upset and you're...

MARY

I'm not stupid. I cooked and I smiled and I let you do whatever the hell you wanted but I'm not stupid.

SONNY

I didn't say you were stupid.

MARY

If I had a gun I would blow your God damned brains out... so, what, Kelli, no opinion?

KELLI

No, I have an opinion.

MARY

Well, share it, come on, I'm dying to know.

KELLI

I'm sure you are, but it's not Sonny you want to know about...

SONNY

Stop it, Kelli, that's not...

MARY

You little bitch...

KELLI

Me? I'm a bitch? Tell me you haven't wanted to make it with your little boy, I know he wants his mommie, so maybe you could work something out...

SONNY

Shut up... shut the fuck up, both of you...

MARY

I'll be damned if I'll listen to that filth from you, you little...

SONNY

Shut up! God damn it, shut up!!

Sonny's fury stops everything.

SONNY (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, I... I didn't mean to... I just want us to calm down here...

MARY

I don't know any more, Sonny. I don't know anything any more.

Mary heads for the door.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm going to drive around the block. My passport's in the top drawer of my dresser. Put it in the mailbox. I'll drive back around and get it.

SONNY

Look, Mary...

MARY

Don't even say it. Don't. Just put it in the box. Thank you.

Mary opens the door.

KELLI

The father. No, contest.

SONNY

Kelli, hey, hey, hey, that's...

MARY

What else is new?

Mary exits.

SONNY

You didn't have to do that.

KELLI

I'm sorry, I just can't tolerate women like that.

SONNY

Like what?

KELLI

Victims. Poor me, I've given up my life for my men types. She's got Steve so screwed up... Pardon my French, Sonny, but men don't fuck very well in an apron. And I doubt if they play football very well either. And you know what I'm talking about. You and Emma are the only ones with any balls in this family.

(MORE)

KELLI (CONT'D)

(no response)

Sonny...

(still nothing)

Okay, fine. You want me to go?

SONNY

Maybe that would be best.

KELLI

You don't have to feel guilty. You know I seduced you.

SONNY

Did you? Where was I?

KELLI

I've wanted to sleep with you since I was 16, Sonny, like you didn't know that. Tell me you didn't think about it, more than once.

SONNY

So you took advantage of me, huh? Maybe I'll sue you as soon as my wife is finished with my lawyer.

KELLI

Well, it's true... I started it.

SONNY

No, I knew exactly what I was doing. I have been around, you know, and around again. Maybe I fucked you because I can't kick my son's ass any more. I don't know. The truth is, I am one messed up son of a bitch.

KELLI

Really.

SONNY

Really.

(heading for the hall)

I have to get Mary's passport.

Kelli is pissed, and more than a little hurt.

KELLI

Hold on, mister. Stop. Let me tell you something.

SONNY

Please don't...

KELLI

You're a winner, Mr. C. You can't fly down here with the pigeons and you know it. You've been checking me out for years. So what? Why make a big deal out of it? American's are so hung up about sex, it's stupid. So, we finally did it, and you liked it. I liked it too, a lot. You're an eagle, Sonny. Don't let her fill you with pot roast until you can't get off the ground and you're stuck here like some fat old turkey. It's such a waste... That's it. I'm done.

SONNY

I'll get her passport. Then I'll drive you home.

Sonny heads down the hallway.

EXT. SUBDIVISION STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Mary pulls up to the brick mailbox and opens it. Empty. She looks at the house, checks her watch. She pulls away again. Then she suddenly whips the car around and heads back toward the house, straight for the mailbox. She crashes into it, backs up, and smashes it again, as the front door flies open and Sonny runs outside. Kelli follows, still in Sonny's shorts and t-shirt, and stops just outside the doorway. Mary climbs out of her car as Sonny runs up.

SONNY

What the hell are you doing?!

MARY

I want that bitch out of my house!

SONNY

I'm taking her home, I was just getting your passport...

He has it in his hand.

MARY

You, too, I want you out of my house.

SONNY

Me, okay, you want me to leave, I'll leave, you're the one who left.

MARY

Now. Right now.

Neighbors have come outside and are observing from their yards, not about to get involved but getting a great show. Kelli goes back inside, leaving the door open.

SONNY

Okay, I'll leave, just calm down.  
Look what you did to your car, what  
the hell is wrong with you?

MARY

Not a damned thing.

Mary takes off, heading for the house. Sonny follows.

SONNY

Where are you going?

MARY

Home to my house. Come get your keys  
and take her home. I'm sure her mother  
must wonder where she is by now.

As Mary approaches the house, Kelli exits through the family room door at the side, still in Sonny's shorts and T-shirt, carrying her outfit from last night, shoes and bag, Sonny's key remote in one hand. She unlocks the Porsche's doors.

KELLI

(to Sonny)

I've got the keys, come on.

SONNY

I have to get some things.

Kelli climbs in and slams the door. Mary yells to him.

MARY

No, you don't. Take her home and  
come back. I want to talk to you.

SONNY

I thought you wanted me to go...

MARY

Just do it, okay? I'll call the auto  
club to come get my car. Go on.

Sonny goes to the car and jumps in. He starts it and whines backwards down the driveway, the neighbors getting a full view of Kelli in the passenger seat.

EXT. SONNY'S CAR -- DAY

Sonny's driving. Kelli is quiet. Sonny pulls over and stops.



SONNY  
You better change.

KELLI  
I'm fine.

SONNY  
I can't drop you off in...

KELLI  
Do you want to change me yourself?  
Because that's the only way that's  
going to happen. And then you know  
what will happen, for the second  
time this morning. I'm fine.

SONNY  
What's your mother going to...

KELLI  
Did you see who was standing on their  
front lawn back there? Susan McAdams,  
my mother's best friend.

SONNY  
Oh. Shit. Sorry.

KELLI  
It's okay. My mother knows I'm crazy  
but she loves me anyway. This could  
be a bit much, but she'll recover.

SONNY  
I'm sorry it got all screwed up. I  
should never have...

KELLI  
Shut up. Do not do that.

SONNY  
What?

KELLI  
That, "I should never have..." blah  
blah bullshit. Just drive.

Sonny pulls out again.

KELLI (CONT'D)  
Sonny...

SONNY  
Yeah.

KELLI

You do what you need to do. But find a way for us to stay friends. We were always so cool, you and me, it would be stupid to lose that.

SONNY

Yeah, you're right.

KELLI

And I just want you to know. That was crazy good. So, if you ever get pissed again, give me a call and I'll send you a damn plane ticket.

Sonny can't help but smile. He hits the accelerator.

INT. CANNON HOUSE -- DAY

In the kitchen, Mary's splashed water on her face. She hears Sonny's car whining up the drive, dries her face, heads into the family room as he comes through the door. He stops, waits.

MARY

I do want you to leave.

SONNY

I know. You said that.

MARY

But, just for a while.

SONNY

A while?

MARY

What you said the other night, about giving you another chance, how we'd never really tried to fix this...

SONNY

Yeah. What about it?

MARY

Well, I... I can't believe I'm saying this, but I don't want to throw out all these years on a note like this.

SONNY

So, what do you want to do?

MARY

We'll make the effort. We'll get some counseling. Not with Karl, but with someone you pick if you want, I don't care. But there are some rules. You have to talk to me. About everything. That's a start. And, I'll do my part too, which starts with trying to forgive you for having sex with your son's girlfriend. That could take some work but I'll try. I have to talk to Larry and see what...

SONNY

Whoa, Mary, hold on a minute.

MARY

You're not going to suggest I let you keep her, are you?

SONNY

No, not... jeezus, no, that's not it. This won't work, Mary.

MARY

What do you mean, it won't work, you were the one...

SONNY

I know I did, I know. But, I can't let you do this. It's not right.

MARY

What's not right about it?

SONNY

I'd rather not say.

MARY

You want her? Is that it? Are you insane? What are you going to do, move to Paris and wear a beret?

SONNY

No, no, that's not it. Just... let me ask you something.

MARY

What.

SONNY

Right now, with all that's going on, who do you want to call and talk to  
(MORE)

SONNY (CONT'D)  
about it, if you could call anybody  
in the world?

MARY  
What do you mean?

SONNY  
Anybody, from now or in the past,  
anybody at all, who would you call?

MARY  
I don't know.

SONNY  
I do. And it wouldn't be me.

MARY  
And who would you call?

No response.

MARY (CONT'D)  
I see. Chris Martin? You still talk  
to her, don't you.

SONNY  
Not very often, and only when wasted.

MARY  
You could have told me this a decade  
or so ago, before I was too old for  
anybody to want me.

SONNY  
That's not close to true, Mary. I've  
got a couple of names for you, if  
you'd have any of my friends.

MARY  
Who?

SONNY  
I'm not telling you. But, the point  
is, we have to do what's right. We've  
done what's wrong for too long, don't  
you think? And, I did it to you, no  
way around that. I'm one of the great  
ass holes of all time. If there was  
a Hall of Fame for assholes, I'd be  
in that one, too.

MARY  
You'd be right up there.

SONNY

I know.

MARY

We've been through so much.

SONNY

Yes, we have.

MARY

You need to leave now.

SONNY

Yeah. I'll call Ted and tell him you're coming by to pick up a new car, or he could have something brought over here, if you'd rather...

MARY

I'll take care of it myself.

SONNY

Okay. If you want.

MARY

I'll take care of it myself.

SONNY

Okay. Well, I'll talk to you later.

MARY

Sure.

Sonny leaves, closing the door softly.

INT. NEW YORK CITY NIGHTCLUB, FOLLOWING FALL -- NIGHT

On the stage of a small, crowded, New York City club, MARTIN (31) hits the final note of a song and, as the applause finally dies down, he speaks to the crowd. Emma is at a table down front, near the stage, with Martin's friends.

MARTIN

Thank you, thank you, friends and weirdo's, thank you. Now, we have a little surprise for you... I have a friend here from Georgia, a cute little peach named Emma... no you don't, Em... Sharon, tie her to the table. Okay. Now, Emma ran away from home a few months ago... let's hear it for freedom...

(MORE)

MARTIN (CONT'D)

(applause)  
that's right, let freedom ring...  
anyway, she made the leap of blind  
faith and now she's here and she's  
going to come up and sing a song  
with me... Oh, yes, you are girl,  
don't you even think about running...  
Come on up here, Ms. Emma...

The people at her table push Emma up and she slowly moves up toward the small stage, carried by encouraging applause.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Here she comes.  
(at the stage)  
Hi, Emma, how you doing?

EMMA

Fucker.

MARTIN

Hey, watch your language, there are  
English majors and minors present,  
you ready, songbird? On three?

Martin taps out a three count and begins to play the song they've rehearsed, but Emma doesn't start.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

Come on, girl, spread those wings...

Emma gathers herself. Martin stops playing.

EMMA

I want to sing something else.

MARTIN

Sure, hell, whatever you want. Does  
it have more than three chords?

EMMA

By myself.

MARTIN

Whoa, I've been fired, damn, girl,  
you learn fast...

He offers her the guitar but she waves it off.

MARTIN (CONT'D)

All right, she don't need me, don't  
need no guitar. Emma Cannon, ladies  
and gentlemen, the voice of an angel.

Martin sets his guitar on its stand and steps down from the stage. Emma stands alone at the microphone, frozen, not by nerves, but by the importance of what she is about to do. Then, without really deciding to begin, her mouth opens and the sound comes out, from some place deep inside.

[From Circle Dance, by Bonnie Raitt, Copyright© 1993 Open Secret Music (ASCAP). All Rights Reserved.]

EMMA

I don't know why, it should be so  
hard, giving up this circle dance.  
Worn out steps from long ago, don't  
give love a chance.

It's a bitter heirloom handed down,  
these twisted parts we play. I'm not  
her and you're not him, it just comes  
out that way. Can't go back to make  
things right, I wish I'd understood.  
Time has made things clearer now,  
you did the best you could.

I'll be home soon, that's what you'd  
say, and a little kid believes. After  
a while, I learned that love, must  
be a thing that leaves. Tried so  
hard to keep you near, was as good  
as I could be. But, even when I had  
you near, you stayed so far from me.

Can't go back to make things right,  
I wish I'd understood. Time has made  
things clearer now, you did the best  
you could...

Time has made things clearer now,  
you did the best you could.

Emma has a pure, clear voice. Slowly the applause starts, breaking the stillness. Martin stands, clapping like crazy, applauding her talent and her courage, he knows what this is about. Emma stands, proud but sad, sad that the song wasn't heard by him - by her dad.

INT. HOTEL ROOM, NEW YORK CITY -- NIGHT

Mary is in bed in her hotel room, reading. The phone rings and she snatches it up on the first ring.

MARY

Hello. No, I'm just reading. So, how  
was practice? Well, that's fine,  
(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

they don't want to bring you along too fast. Just be patient. Well, just be more patient, then. Now listen, tomorrow, don't keep your helmet on all the time, so I can see you. We'll meet up with Emma and Martin after the game and have dinner. Okay, okay, you go, go talk to your friends, read your playbook. Steve... no, now wait. I'm just asking, have you heard from Sonny? Now, Steve, that's not helpful, I just think... Okay, I'll drop it. It's dropped. Did you hear it? I dropped it.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Steve on the street, on his cell phone with Mary.

STEVE

Oh yeah, I heard it, that's hilarious, mom, really. All right, well, you keep kidding yourself, but Giggles the Clown, you're not. Talk to you tomorrow. Love you, too.

INT. MARTIN'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Emma lies naked in bed, her head on Martin's chest. Their eyes are open, sleep not coming to either of them.

MARTIN

That was very brave tonight.

EMMA

I'm a thousand miles away, real brave.

MARTIN

Saying it is brave, no matter where you say it. It's a start. Some people never get that far.

EMMA

I know some of those people.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Sonny's in the living area of a bare apartment with a video camera set on a tripod and connected to the television as a monitor. He pushes "play" on the camera and goes back to the sofa. He sees his image on the screen. He begins.



SONNY

Hey, Emma... I'm making a tape, well, I guess that's obvious. Not a tape, a recording, whatever it is. I... I've tried to tell you this on the phone a couple of times but I always chicken out. So, I'll try this and, if it works. I don't know how to talk to you, Emma. I never have. I'd hear the things that came out of your mouth and I thought you must be from another planet. I never knew what to say to you... You know what I got when I was born, Emma? I got these wings on my feet, so I could run like the wind. I must have gotten in line with the birds by accident. Anyway, I got these wings. But, they left something out. They left out whatever it is that connects your heart to your tongue, that connects the feelings to the words so you can say the things you're supposed to say to the people you care about. Whatever that is, I didn't get one. Emma, all I've ever been able to do, in my whole life, is run fast and catch a stupid ball. That's all I've ever known how to do...

INT. GIANTS LOCKER ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

It's halftime in a tense, quiet New York Giants locker room. Something is hanging in the air. The HEAD COACH works his way over to Steve's locker, stops in front of him. Steve looks up. The players next to them pretend not to listen.

COACH

VJ's out, ankle's dislocated.

STEVE

Shit.

COACH

You can handle it, we'll go with the Condo package, you'll be fine...

STEVE

No, I know, I meant VJ, that sucks.

COACH

Yeah, I know. So, it's you, baby. I never thought we'd go three deep in one half, but you can handle it.

STEVE

Don't worry, coach. I'll just hand it to Mo and get out of the way.

COACH

No way. First play, we're running "Fly X 32" -- just air it out to Jermaine, if you overthrow it, that's fine. If not, he'll catch it.

STEVE

Okay. Sure. Fly X 32, got it.

COACH

We're not backing down. I want 'em to see the gun you've got, let 'em know we're coming right at 'em. So, let it go - first play, got it?

STEVE

Got it.

COACH

You da' man, Rookie. Go Irish.

STEVE

Go Big Blue. Fuck the Irish.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Sonny continues making his tape for Emma, unaware of what's going on in New York, at Giants Stadium.

SONNY

And, the faster I ran, the more friends I had, the more money they threw at me and the prettier the women got. Sometimes, I ran in the wrong direction. When you and Steve were born, I thought my heart would explode. But, I ran away from you. Your mom, too. Then one day I saw where I was and I tried to run back, but I never made it. I got back and the house was all lit up and I looked in the window and saw these three happy people, doing just fine without me. So, I slipped in the back door and tried not to make too much noise or get in the way. Maybe I should have left so your mother could have found somebody more... right for her. I don't know. I know there's

(MORE)

SONNY (CONT'D)

something wrong with me, and I know it's not a missing part... But, what do you do? You come home drunk and cry like a baby and you swear you're going to change. And, it works for a while. But, then one day you wake up and it's back, and you're exactly the same and nothing's changed. And you're alone, and you pick up the phone and you dial the number, to talk to somebody who won't ask you to love them. And, you let it ride and everything's fine, more or less. And, then one night, your son walks in the door hating your guts and your daughter looks at you like you've just disappeared, forever and ever. I'm very, very sorry, Emma... And, I... I love you very, very much...

The PHONE RINGS. Sonny stops, waits for it to stop. It does, but then it rings again immediately. He stops and grabs it.

SONNY (CONT'D)

What! Nothing, I'm fine, I'm busy. No, I don't watch 'em, I can't, not yet, why? What? They did what? How can they do that, it's his second fucking game, he's not ready...

Sonny jumps up, grabs the TV remote.

SONNY (CONT'D)

What the hell happened, Kyle, don't fuck with me...

INT. EMMA'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Emma and Martin hang out in Emma's tiny apartment. Martin is reading. Emma is writing, but has stopped, intently focused on the play-by-play of the Giants game on the radio. Emma does not have a television.

ANNOUNCER ONE

Oh, boy, that doesn't look good.

Emma puts down her pen, turns, ears piqued to the radio.

ANNOUNCER TWO

Ozulari came totally clean on that blitz, my goodness, and hit Cannon full tilt, and then the pile on, I don't know if that was necessary.

ANNOUNCER ONE

And he's obviously in a lot of pain, the medical staff is sprinting out to him. This does not look good. We've got it on the monitor here, and here it is from another angle...

ANNOUNCER TWO

You can see he planted that back leg so the whole leg bent back and, oh...

ANNOUNCER ONE

Trust me, folks, knees don't like to bend in that direction...

ANNOUNCER TWO

Truth is, if he's lucky, the leg broke. It's a lot easier to fix.

ANNOUNCER ONE

Okay, well, we'll get a report on Steve Cannon's condition as soon as possible. Meanwhile, the Giants might have to go into the crowd for another quarterback, four in one game, that's not in anybody's game plan...

Emma bolts from her seat, grabbing her her jacket, her bag.

EMMA

I have to go there.

MARTIN

How will you get in? You don't have a ticket.

EMMA

I don't know. I'll bite through the fucking fence, I don't care.

MARTIN

Do you know how to get there?

EMMA

To a football stadium? Sure. Okay, no, where is it?

MARTIN

(grabbing his coat)  
I'm coming with you.

EMMA

But, I'm being irrational and hysterical.

MARTIN

Some, but it's Steve.

EMMA

And he's my brother and I love him stupidly much.

MARTIN

Correct.

EMMA

Okay, let's go.

Ready, ripping the door open.

EMMA (CONT'D)

Do not let me find the son of a bitch who didn't block that Oh-ze-whatever guy. God Damn it, it was a blitz, somebody's gotta pick that up, right? Where was the running back? Damn it!

Martin just looks, Emma talking football, follows her out.

INT. LOCKER ROOM, STADIUM -- CONTINUOUS

Steve lays on an examination table, Mary next to him, while the team doctor puts a temporary, soft cast on his knee. Mary would hold his hand but she doesn't want to embarrass him. Steve reaches out and takes her hand.

STEVE

It's just a scrape. You should see the other guy.

MARY

The other guy's still doing his stupid dance on the field. I've been here before, remember.

INT. SONNY'S APARTMENT -- CONTINUOUS

Sonny on the phone.

SONNY

I know it's Sunday, Sally, so what, I need a flight... well, stop and get me a god damn airplane, it's important... it's Steve, he's... yes, Steve... he's hurt... in the game. Okay, forget it, I'll do it myself. Have a nice fucking barbecue.

INT. LOCKER ROOM, STADIUM -- CONTINUOUS

The doctor jabs a needle into Steve's arm, painkiller.

STEVE

It happens, it's part of the job.

MARY

Part of the job. Right.

STEVE

It's football, mom, not tiddly-winks.

MARY

Now, where have I heard that before.

STEVE

There's nothing that these guys can't put back together, right doc?

DOCTOR

(a glance to Mary)

A little super glue, a few nuts and bolts, you'll look just like the other robots.

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Sonny is in his car, flying, holding the wheel and a glass of scotch in one hand, cell phone in the other.

SONNY

I don't care what airline, what the hell do I care what airline? I'm sorry, you're right, I apologize, I'm in a hurry... it's my son, he's been hurt, can you just get me on an airplane that flies to New York? Thank you, I really appreciate that, thank you... oh, a football game, he plays quarterback for the Giants. New York Giants, yes. Steve Cannon, he's... oh, wonderful, what's the flight number? You are a life saver, thank you. Absolutely, I'll get you an autograph, not a problem. Mine? Oh, I thought you wanted his. Sure. I tell you what, I'll get you one of each. Okay, thanks again.

Sonny hangs up and floors it.

INT. TREATMENT ROOM, STADIUM -- CONTINUOUS

Steve's on the examination table, getting dopey. The door opens and an ASSISTANT COACH comes in. He nods to Mary.

ASSISTANT COACH  
How you feeling, champ?

STEVE  
Terrific. Wonderful. How's it going?

ASSISTANT COACH  
Not bad. Still tied, but Spaz just threw it to the other guys, so that could change pretty soon.

STEVE  
Oh, shit...

MARY  
Steve...

STEVE  
Mom...

MARY  
Don't be like that. Maybe Spaz or whoever will pull it out. Who knows.

STEVE  
He's the freaking punter! You're right. You're right. Sorry.

ASSISTANT COACH  
Your dad called.

STEVE  
My dad? What for?

ASSISTANT COACH  
He's on his way.

STEVE  
On his way... here?

ASSISTANT COACH  
That's what they told me.

STEVE  
What's he doing that for?

MARY  
What do you think?

ASSISTANT COACH

I think he wants to punch coach out, for playing you, and probably TJ for missing that block.

STEVE

Oh, great. Shit. Just what I need.

MARY

He's worried. He's your father. I might punch coach out myself.

STEVE

I'm not dead.

MARY

I have his cell. I can call him and tell him to forget it.

ASSISTANT COACH

He called from the plane I think.

MARY

He's worried about you.

STEVE

It's a little late for that. I don't want to see him.

ASSISTANT COACH

I tell you what, then. You might want to go on over to the hospital. We're going to get an MRI on you anyway and that way you won't be around when he gets here.

STEVE

Well, yeah, if you think.

ASSISTANT COACH

Might be a good idea. Because Sonny Cannon will always be welcome in this god damn locker room. And, that's never going to change.

Coach turns and walks off. Slams the door on the way out.

STEVE

What the hell'd he do that for?

MARY

If you don't know, you better figure it out. You're the one who got the

(MORE)



MARY (CONT'D)

Giants to draft you. You're living in his house again, this one, and you asked for it. So, deal with it.

Mary leaves, but she doesn't slam the door.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM -- EVENING

Sonny's in the hospital waiting room when Mary, Emma and Martin enter. He stands.

MARY

He's staying here tonight. They have to operate tomorrow.

SONNY

How many ligaments?

MARY

It's the "devil's triangle" or whatever you guys call it.

SONNY

Jeezus, all three, strained or...

MARY

Torn.

SONNY

That's the season. Minimum.

MARY

Yes. That's what the doctor said.

EMMA

But they said he'll be okay, it will just take a while.

SONNY

It will. But, at least he's got his signing bonus and a guaranteed contract. At least Avery the ass hole is good for something. Steve's a millionaire and only took one snap.

MARTIN

Maybe he can go back and get his degree, while he's rehabing?

MARY

Now, that's a good idea.

SONNY

He'll decide. Whatever he wants to do. They might want him here.

MARY

Well, that's enough for tonight. Why don't we all go get some dinner?

SONNY

You guys go. I'm gonna hang.

MARY

Sonny. He's not...

SONNY

I know. I don't have to see him. I'll just hang out for a while. Maybe I'll grab a doctor and give 'em a little hell. You go ahead.

MARTIN

It was nice to meet you Mr. Cannon.

SONNY

You, too, Martin. And you look after Emma. She hasn't been on our planet that long, she gets confused sometimes.

MARTIN

I'll do that.

Emma runs to Sonny and wraps her arms around him, squeezing him as tight as she can. The tears come too.

EMMA

I love you, dad.

SONNY

I love you, too, pumpkin.

After breaking, Sonny retrieves a thumb drive from a pocket, hands it to Emma.

SONNY (CONT'D)

That's for later.

EMMA

Okay. Thanks. I'll check it out.

MARY

Thank you for coming.

SONNY  
Of course.

MARY  
We'll talk later.

SONNY  
Okay, you take care.

MARY  
I will. You, too. Good night.

SONNY  
Good night.

Emma, Martin and Mary leave. Emma gives a wave at the door, which Sonny returns. After they're gone, Sonny sits back down, picks up a sports magazine from a stack, and begins idly leafing through it. Alone, he waits.

MUSIC rises, CIRCLE DANCE, sung by Emma Cannon.

- THE END -