

PENNY

No.

DAN

What did you say to-

PENNY

No. Shut up! We're stopping this. I don't want to do this anymore. Em was right. This sucks. This isn't who I am. This isn't what I want this to be. Dismissed.

*Penny leaves*

DAN

Sweet. Fuck it.

(to Mom)

Hey good-lookin', you wanna get a drink with me?

*Mom exits.*

DAN

Figures. If you can't get laid in the imagination of your transgender step-daughter while she's working out issues relating to your abusive third marriage, where can ya, huh?

*Em enters.*

EM

What are you still doing here? Leave!

DAN

Fine. Dan has left the building.

*Dan exits grandly.*

*The TV static turns on. It's the only light on the stage. It's loud and the light washes over the stage in a glow.*

Scene 2

**START**-----

*Em approaches the TV, turns it off.*

*Lights shift. Em addresses audience.*

EM

Dan. He was none of our finest hour. I understand why Mom wants us to forget. I understand why Penny can't.

Penny was always the good kid. Good grades. Didn't get into alcohol or drugs. Not like me. I was cool.

(MORE)

EM (cont'd)

I mean, not like super cool. Like just, smoking a cig during lunch period, having a joint and a beer at a party. Just like, regular cool.

Well, when Mom caught wind of how cool I was being, she ransacked my room. She found everything. My cigarettes and my pot. And she found every note that I'd ever kept between me and girls at school. And boys. She read EVERY. SINGLE. ONE. She found out I was having sex. She had proof of every bad thing I'd ever done.

I was so angry. Not that I'd been caught, but that she thought that she had the right to do that. I had no private place, nothing I could truly call my own.

So, I stood up for myself. Mom dared me to leave, so I did. She never in a million years thought I would really do it. But I did.

I'd been gone about a week before I needed to withdraw money from my account. I knew I had like \$500 saved up from my summer job at McDonald's, enough to get by for a bit.

So, I went to make a withdrawal and my balance was zero. I threw a fit! "You guys stole my money! What the fuck!" They calmed me down, showed me the records. Mom had opened that account for me, so she still had rights to it. She took every penny I had. Just transferred it right into her own account. I thought I'd never forgive her. We didn't talk for a long while.

But then, time passed. I had two kids. I have a full-time job and one shitty car that only runs half the time. I can't do this on my own. I need help.

And sometimes, you gotta eat shit with family, ya know? You just do. And I'm a Mom now too. It's complicated.

When I look back on it, all I can think is: she just cannot stand the idea of someone leaving her, in any sense. She's simply not capable of handling it.

And sure, maybe her love is selfish and self-serving, but isn't everyone's? At the end of the day, it's still love. Sometimes that has to be good enough, because sometimes that's all you have.

*Penny rushes on.*