

IRENE. You don't remember her the way I do.

TEDDY. Listen, nobody remembers anything the way other people do. That's part of the problem with being in the human race.

IRENE. She worked really hard, Teddy. She wasn't crazy, she was just overwhelmed. She was so alone.

TEDDY. How could she be alone if you were there and I was there? You can't be "alone" if you have two children, Irene. I'm sorry to have to point that out to you.

IRENE. You know what I'm saying. She was lonely for male companionship after Dad left. And she was so young and beautiful, oh my god when they used to get dressed up? Both of them, they looked like movie stars. The old-fashioned kind, who always had the light falling on them in just the right way. She had this gorgeous pearl necklace. Real pearls! That was a big thing back then. And Dad, he always wore a hat. Men don't do that so much anymore and I think that's a shame. He was so dashing. And he adored her.

TEDDY. Until he left.

IRENE. Well exactly. You don't remember what that was like, you were too little. But she was devastated. We both were of course. And she never understood it, why he would just...disappear like that. Well. My point is, she could have remarried. Men loved her, she could have remarried a dozen times but nobody wanted to take on someone else's kids.

TEDDY. She tell you that? That was nice of her.

IRENE. I don't blame her. She wasn't the kind of person who knew how to make do. Some days I would come home from school and just find her crying in the kitchen, it was terrible, she would be just sitting there rocking and saying, how much is one person supposed to take? How long am I supposed to live in this cage? Her hands shaking. She was very fragile.

TEDDY. A plate is fragile, especially when you throw it at the wall. Or at me.

IRENE. Well that's true she should not have done that.

Start *(Starting to laugh.)*

TEDDY. What?

IRENE. Remember that time -

*(She is really laughing now. TEDDY starts to laugh with her, without knowing why.)*

TEDDY. What?

IRENE. She made that meatloaf -

TEDDY. *(Remembering.)* Wait a minute.

IRENE. And then she forgot to turn the oven on -

TEDDY. Oh yeah.

IRENE. So when she took it out it was just - raw meat! And she got so angry she -

*(She is laughing really hard now and so is he. They laugh and laugh.)*

TEDDY. Do you remember when, that night when we -

IRENE. You were terrible!

TEDDY. I was lively!

*(Then.)*

Do you remember, do you remember when Dad was still around...

*(He thinks, stops.)*

IRENE. What?

TEDDY. Nothing. He's harder to remember.

IRENE. I remember him. You were so little, but I was older when he left. God, I adored him. Well, of course I did. You've seen pictures of him. Well, you don't need to see pictures of him, you can just look in the mirror, you look just like him.

TEDDY. Yes but how would I know that, Mom took all the pictures off the wall and smashed them with a hammer.

*(They laugh.)*

IRENE. She did not!

TEDDY. I think she did, I think I saw her do that once. No, it wasn't a hammer, it was a truck.

IRENE. A truck.

TEDDY. Yes, she took this truck, it was my truck, a little, it was a yellow - metal truck. Tonka.

(IRENE laughs.)

IRENE. Oh my god. I remember that truck.

TEDDY. Yeah I remember, Mom was looking at something and then she put it down on the coffee table and she walked away from it and the next thing I knew she had my truck in her hands and she, you know, she -

(He looks around, finds a wrench on the shelf, and smashes it on the counter. They stop laughing.)

IRENE. That doesn't mean she was crazy. You just have to have a little compassion. When you look at things with compassion, they don't seem so terrible, really.

TEDDY. Compassion does that?

(Off her nod.)

Hmm. I think a complete psychotic break will do that too.

(He goes to get himself more food.)

IRENE. I remember being happy. When they brought you back from the hospital? Oh my god. I was beside myself, the idea of having a brother. And then of course you were just so small and perfect that I was only allowed to hold you when someone was around to make sure I didn't drop you.

TEDDY. Maybe you did drop me. On my head. Maybe that's what went wrong.

IRENE. And then when you were a little bigger you were, you were -

TEDDY. I'm well aware.

IRENE. And my friends would come over and we would dress you up.

TEDDY. Yes I actually remember this part.

IRENE. Oh my god the outfits! The little shoes. The hats.

TEDDY. The dresses.

IRENE. You were like -

TEDDY. I was like a toy, Irene, you and your friends, I was this kind of doll. Or a pet, we could say I was a pet. A pet you fed hot dogs to. Which I'm not complaining about that part. Although I will say, your cooking has significantly improved.

IRENE. I miss - it's funny, because that was so long ago, it's hard to say "I miss that." You don't really miss being twelve years old do you? It was another life. There's that funny thing they say, that all your cells die every seven years.

TEDDY. That's funny?

IRENE. (Ignoring him.) You're a new person, every seven years. So since then, since we were kids, we've been new people how many times? Just totally different people, totally different cells. But we're the same people too. They never explain that part. Anyway you're obviously not that person anymore, it's all just memory and who knows what that is? It's nothing. It's gone. The whole world is gone. How can you pretend that you want something that doesn't exist. I mean I know people do that. Maybe I do that. I don't know. Maybe more I just think, I think about that other person I was, when I was twelve or thirteen, and I don't wish I was still that person. But I do want to go tell her things.

TEDDY. Like what?

IRENE. I don't know. Just. I remember waking up in the morning and hearing you run down the hall to my room. I would just lie there and wait for the sound of your feet. Thump thump thump thump. It was the first sound I would hear every day. Thump thump thump thump. You were so little, and you'd run to my room, at like six in the morning, and crawl into bed with me. And then you would just talk and talk and talk.

TEDDY. And that made you happy? To have some little kid wake you up at six o'clock in the morning every day?

IRENE. It did. You were so, so...