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TO EACH THEIR OWN

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Cast of Characters

<u>LIZ:</u>	Mid 40's, career oriented, interior designer.
<u>JOHN:</u>	Late 40's, conservative banker type, Liz's husband.
<u>JENN:</u>	Late 30's, Liz's younger divorced sister.
<u>NATE:</u>	Early 40's, Liz's best friend and business partner.
<u>HELEN:</u>	70's, John's mother, divorced socialite.

Place

Park Avenue, New York City

Time

2005

Scene 1

Setting: Well appointed Park Avenue apartment of Liz and John. Mid summer.

At Rise: Liz, John, and Helen are in living room talking. Liz is serving coffee.

HELEN

It's just a quick trip.

LIZ

So when is he going to make an honest woman out of you Helen?

HELEN

Who?

JOHN

That's what I'm talking about.

HELEN

What?

JOHN

Always skirting around the issue...

LIZ

I get not wanting to marry again, but couldn't you at least live on the same coast?

JOHN

That would be too easy - she'd have to introduce us to the poor guy...

HELEN

No one is meeting anyone.

LIZ

It's been how many years Helen - 15? It's odd, to say the least, that we've never met him.

JOHN

I'm beginning to think this Emerson guy may not exist at all...

(Blows nose)

HELEN

End of discussion. Thank you.

(PAUSE)

(Turning to LIZ)

What's going on with you Liz? Anything that I should know? Any updates?

LIZ

Nothing new.

HELEN

It must be so frustrating for you. Back in my day all a man had to do was look at you and you were pregnant.

JOHN

I guess many men weren't looking...

LIZ

John!

HELEN

Always speaking such rubbish!

JOHN

It was a joke!

HELEN

At my expense. Anyway, I'm getting old - I'd like to be a grandmother before I leave this world.

JOHN

Seriously? *Grandmother?* It would be in name only - you'd never have time to see your grandchild with all of your comings and goings.

LIZ

John!

JOHN

I'm sorry, I guess my mother, I mean my nanny didn't teach me better manners.

HELEN

I didn't come here to fight.

HELEN (Cont.)

(Getting up to leave)

I better get going. We'll have dinner when I'm back.

LIZ

That would be nice.

(LIZ and JOHN walk HELEN to the door)

(kissing goodbye)

Have a safe trip.

HELEN

I'll talk to you soon.

(Kisses JOHN)

You shouldn't harbor such anger, Johnny.

JOHN

Goodbye Mother.

HELEN

Goodbye Dear.

(HELEN exits)

LIZ

It wouldn't kill you to be nicer to your Mother.

JOHN

I know, I know. It wasn't intentional. It's just when she brought up the baby stuff - I guess it just hit a nerve.

LIZ

She meant no harm.

JOHN

(Shrugs)

LIZ

Sit down. I have something to show you.

(LIZ leaves room and returns again with a bottle of Champagne.
LIZ slips a glass in JOHN's hand and opens the bottle.)

JOHN
Champagne?

LIZ
To us.

JOHN
To us. (Pause...looks toward LIZ's work bag in the corner) Oh, I get it; you and Nate have a new client. That's great (clinking glass), congratulations! Another Upper East Side wife with nothing to do but spend money and redecorate?

LIZ
Like your mother?

JOHN
Please tell me she hasn't hired you to redo her apartment. I can't go through that again.

LIZ
God no! I'd be committed and Nate would quit! He's had his fill of her and all those parties he takes her to.

JOHN
Imagine being raised by that...

LIZ
(Hands up, jokingly)
Stop please, you're frightening me.

JOHN
(Laughs and then sneezes)

LIZ
Bless you!...Why do you always make her sound like a monster? Helen's not *that* horrible!

JOHN
I was raised by a revolving door of nannies while she socialized and jetted off (sneezes) to visit her "secret" boyfriend each month.

LIZ
(Puts hand on JOHN'S forehead)
Honey, you getting sick?

JOHN

It's nothing. *I'm fine, really!* (Pause) I don't know why Nate puts up with her; I have too, she's my mother...

LIZ

He thinks he'll meet someone.

JOHN

Sounds like your sister.

LIZ (Laughs)

Between the three of them I can't keep up - so much drama.

(Pause)

Close your eyes.

JOHN (Blowing nose)

Why?

LIZ

Because I said so. *No peeking, I mean it.*

LIZ (CONT.)

(JOHN closes his eyes. LIZ holds up a pregnancy test stick in her hand)

Ok, open.

JOHN

Really?

LIZ

(Smiling and shaking head yes.)

JOHN

Are you sure?

LIZ

(Pointing at pregnancy stick)

Positive! (Pause) I actually took the test twice to make sure that I did the first one right!

JOHN

(Jumps up, picks up LIZ and twirls her in joy and excitement)

I can't believe it! After all this time...all the fertility treatments...(Pause) Are you really sure?

LIZ (Laughing)

Yes! You're going to be a father!

JOHN

And you are going to be the best, most beautiful mother in the world!

LIZ

I can't believe it's actually happening.

JOHN

Who knew it would it would be so difficult?

LIZ

Not me! My mother put the fear of God in me. "It only takes once."

JOHN

(Laughs)

LIZ

Isn't it ironic? We spent so many years trying *not* to get pregnant that when we actually tried to we couldn't.

JOHN

Things happen for a reason. And besides, you, or I should say *we*, made a choice - one that our mothers didn't have - career first, family later.

LIZ

It's amazing after all these years the hold our mothers still have on us.

JOHN

That's an understatement! Things my mother did, and *said*, affect me to this day... (Sneezes) Like this fucking cold...

LIZ

Cold?

JOHN (Blows nose)

Forget it.

LIZ

It wasn't until her reaction to Jenn's "situation" that I understood where my mother was coming from. She didn't want us to make the same mistake that she did.

JOHN

You're hardly a mistake Liz. If not for her "indiscretion" you wouldn't be here today.

A choice she didn't have...
LIZ

Thank God for that.
JOHN

(Quiet)
LIZ
Maybe I should have prioritized differently.

JOHN
You did what was right for you - for us. And now look at you - you have an amazing business *and* a baby on the way.
(Rubs LIZ stomach)
See, it all works out in the end.
(Kisses her)

LIZ
You're probably right.

JOHN
Of course I am. Cheer up (raises champagne glass)! We have something to celebrate.

LIZ
(Takes a sip and giggles)
I'll miss drinking.

JOHN
I'll make a deal with you. You eat for two (re-filling his glass) and I'll drink for two.

LIZ (clinking glasses)
Deal, but one last hurrah!
(Takes a long sip)

JOHN
To the loves of my life! (Takes sip) Anyone else know?

LIZ
Just you. We'll have to tell your mother.

JOHN
Grandmommy Dearest?

I left Jenn a message to call me.

JOHN
Who's she these days?

LIZ
“*Golf Jenny.*”

JOHN
You cant be serious?

LIZ
Scary, right? I haven't seen her yet, but she never disappoints.

JOHN
Too bad she just can't be herself.

LIZ
I know, her insecurities always get in her way.

JOHN
She's definitely not Golf Jenny! What about Nate?

LIZ
Nate? He's hardly the golfing type.

JOHN (laughing)
Now *that's* a sight! But I meant does he know we're pregnant?

LIZ (laughing)
Oh my God, I think I just had my first placenta brain moment.

JOHN
First of many I'm sure.

LIZ
I'll tell him when he gets here in the morning.

JOHN
(JOHN puts his hand on LIZ's stomach)
So what do you think? Is it a "Madison" or a "Jackson?"

LIZ
It doesn't matter - I just want a healthy baby.

JOHN
Amen to that!

(Pause)

JOHN (Cont.)

Now what?

LIZ

I get fat! (Giggle) Then we go to the OB on Thursday.

JOHN

Great! (Pause) Oh *shoot* - I have an out-of-town meeting on Thursday.

(Look of disappointment on LIZ's face)

JOHN

But I'll reschedule.

LIZ

No, don't do that, I'll be fine on my own.

JOHN

(Placing hand on LIZ' belly)

Not a chance - I've been waiting a long time for this; we both have.

LIZ

I know, but we have eight months and who knows how many appointments left for you to go to. You wont miss much...

JOHN

I want to be a part of this every step of the way.

LIZ

I know you do honey (Kisses JOHN), but it really is just routine stuff like weight, blood pressure, the dos and don'ts - like not drinking...

JOHN (Takes glass from LIZ)

That's enough for you...

LIZ

My risk for miscarriage, and discuss prenatal testing.

JOHN

Which we've already decided we won't do.

LIZ

I don't know John. I, I think I've had a change of heart.

JOHN

You're just nervous honey.

LIZ
I'm old for having my first baby.

JOHN
Women your age have babies all of the time.

LIZ
But they don't have the same family history that we do...

JOHN
If anyone's aware of our risks it's me, but genetic testing - It's just... it's not natural.

LIZ
I hear so many horrible stories about older women and pregnancy that...

JOHN
And I'm sure they're all exaggerated just like everything else is.

LIZ
Even so I'd rather err on the side of caution.

JOHN
Don't be silly. (Rubbing LIZ' stomach) Our baby is perfect!

LIZ
I'm serious about this.

JOHN
Liz, we've been over this.

LIZ
Not since we started IVF - It's been four years John!

JOHN
I didn't think this was an issue for us.

LIZ
I'm older and now it's real - I'm pregnant!

JOHN
We wouldn't do anything anyway... We go with the punches, right? That's what we've always done; you taught me that.

LIZ
I think we can make an exception this time.

JOHN

It's not up to us to play God.

LIZ

It's not playing God, it's called modern medicine. John, we did IVF; that's hardly "natural" and you had no issues with that.

JOHN

And we saw how well that worked - it didn't!

LIZ

This is different, I'm pregnant...

JOHN

We're pregnant...

(Sneezes)

LIZ

Seriously? Let me know how you make out with morning sickness and hemorrhoids!

JOHN

That's not fair.

LIZ

I've been waiting my whole life for this baby and I'm late in the game, John. There are risks - for me and for the baby.

JOHN

You're making too much out of this.

LIZ

No, I'm not! We have options and I want to use them! Think of our mothers and how different things would have been for them.

JOHN

Fortunately, we're not our mothers.

(Taking LIZ in arms and kisses her)

LIGHTS

Scene 2

Setting: The next day. Liz and John's apartment.

At Rise: Liz is sitting on sofa with her sister Jenn. Jenn is wearing exaggerated (and too tight) golf attire.

LIZ

I still can't believe it, Jenn. Never in a million years did I think it would happen.

JENN

Neither did I, I'm beyond excited.

LIZ

Really? I'm surprised.

JENN

Are you kidding me, this is exactly what I need - a bit of oomph, some new life...

LIZ

I can't tell you how happy that makes me since Mom and Dad aren't around.

JENN

I think they'd be proud.

(Standing and looking at herself in mirror)

We still have a long road ahead of us, though. I hope it comes out by Mother's Day.

LIZ

That's almost a year away - we only have eight months.

JENN

I sure hope you're right Lizzy, but I'm told that it could take longer.

LIZ

Okay, so I'm pretty sure we're not talking about the same thing Jenn.

JENN

Of course we are. We're talking about me and how my Mommy blog is becoming a new book - "Yummy Mummy."

LIZ

Actually, I was talking about me and how I'm going to be a..."Yummy Mummy."

JENN

Sorry, I've done it again - me, me, me...

LIZ
Trust me, I'm used to it.

JENN
It's weird isn't it?

LIZ
Not really.

JENN
No, I mean it's weird how quickly you forget how horrible something was once you actually get what you were waiting for.

NATE
(Walking into living room carrying a tray with coffee and danish)
Like renovating a kitchen - it's such a nuisance not having it, but as soon as the project is finished you forget about all the inconveniences.

JENN
Or, like giving birth; it hurts like hell, but as soon as that baby's out you forget about the excruciating pain you went through.

LIZ
As if I'm not freaked out enough.

NATE
I heard its like shitting a football.

JENN
Or, in my case - cut out.

NATE
(Spitting out food)
Not exactly the visual I was hoping for this morning. Come to think of it neither are your clothes.

JENN
And shitting a football is?

LIZ
Seriously guys?

JENN
Sorry Lizzy, but no one else is going to tell you the truth. You spend nine months losing your figure and as if that's not punishment enough, you endure eighteen hours of excruciating fucking labor only to have it cut out of you.

LIZ

Wow, I know mother-hood's not your thing, but I had no idea you had such anger.

JENN

Neither did I - I must be displacing it...

LIZ

Displace it somewhere else *please*.

NATE

Like on that sleazy ex-husband of yours. What's he up to these days...

JENN

(Shrugs shoulders)

NATE

Still plucking young girls from monkey bars no doubt.

LIZ

Old habits never die.

JENN

At least I left him.

NATE

Technically, he left you. You aged out...

JENN

But... (Stands up and shows body) *Who's sorry now?*

NATE

Such a MILF!

LIZ

Honestly you two, I don't know who's worse.

JENN/NATE

(Both point a finger at the other and speak in unison)

He is. She is.

(ALL laugh)

LIZ

Well, at least I won't have to endure those awful fertility shots again. After all that and we ended up getting pregnant without them...

JENN

I rather enjoyed shooting you up.

NATE

That was during your “Nurse Jenny” phase. Dr. Loovve, wasn’t it? He was a good looking one...

JENN

Therein lies the problem; he liked you too.

NATE

They usually do.

JENN

You need to go on some real dates Nate - enough walking old ladies already.

NATE

Mind your business.

JENN (Dismisses NATE)

All things considered I thought I handled the shots well.

LIZ

For a drunk nurse...

JENN

Tipsy and you could have said no. (Laughing)

LIZ

You were supposed to be giving me shots, not drinking them!

(All 3 laugh)

NATE (Stands up)

More coffee girls?

JENN

Love some!

(Looks at watch)

It’s after 4:00; spice it up.

(Nate leaves the room)

So when’s your CVS?

LIZ

I haven’t scheduled it yet. (Pause) I’m...I’m not sure I’m having one.

JENN
But Liz...

LIZ
This is it (holds stomach), my only chance. What if something goes wrong?

JENN
Then you'll deal with it.

LIZ
It's not that easy.

JENN
Jesus Liz, you're not Mom.

LIZ
(Quiet)

JENN
Look, chances are everything will be fine.

LIZ
Exactly - lots of women don't have genetic testing and things turn out fine.

JENN
And they're all probably ten plus years younger than you. (Pause) This doesn't sound like you Lizzy.

LIZ
Suppose I do want the test - what do I do about John?

JENN
I knew there was more to this.

LIZ
He thinks you take what you're given. That no one should play God but God himself.

JENN
It's the twenty-first century for *God's sake*. With John's family history and your age - you're crazy not to have testing.

LIZ (bitter)
You mean my *Advanced Maternal Age*?

JENN
No worse than my being a divorced trophy wife. Jesus - I'm an oxymoron...

(Laughs from BOTH)

JENN

Seriously though, don't you want peace of mind?

LIZ

If it were up to me I'd have a CVS, but it's not.

JENN

Of course its up to you.

LIZ

Its John's baby too. And, he's very sensitive because of Emma.

JENN

Even more of a reason to have the test! I don't mean to sound unsympathetic, but Emma died a long time ago.

LIZ

She's still very much alive in his memory.

JENN

Maybe he just needs more time. You only just found out that you're pregnant.

LIZ

Maybe.

JENN

Even my most Catholic friends have genetic testing; hypocrites or not they know the statistics.

LIZ

Don't blame it on Catholicism - John rarely ever goes to church. He's just a guy with old-fashioned beliefs. Its part of his charm.

JENN

Since when was stupidity charming?

NATE

(Re-entering with coffee)

The dumber the better...

JENN

At the end of the day Liz, it's your body and you're ultimately the one who will be responsible for raising this child.

LIZ

And I should take advice from a women who never changed her daughter's diaper let alone gave her a bath.

NATE

Should I come back?

JENN

No, *stay!* Maybe you can talk some sense into her.

NATE

(Hands coffee to JENN)

Try this.

JENN (smells coffee)

Mmm...Irish?

LIZ

Great, nothing like mixing a stimulant and depressant to get you through the day!

JENN

Stop being such a mother hen. Anyway, it's no big deal - they cancel each other out.

NATE

Says Nurse Jenny. We called that a speedball in college.

JENN (sipping coffee)

Wrong, that's heroin and cocaine...

LIZ

Jesus Jenn, how do you know these things?

JENN

(Jokingly shrugs shoulders)

Nursing school?

NATE

(Laughs then seriously responds)

Sorry Liz. What are you guys fighting about anyway?

JENN

We're not fighting.

LIZ

Just a pleasant sisterly chat...

JENN
Liz isn't having a CVS.

NATE
Isn't that a pharmacy?

LIZ
Very funny!

NATE
(Shrugs shoulders)

LIZ
It's a type of prenatal testing. A sample of the placenta is taken; it's complicated...

NATE
(Makes distasteful face)
Thats fine...

JENN
Who would have ever imagined that I'd return home with a newborn baby in my arms and staples in my fucking belly, to find divorce papers waiting for me on my pillow. Can you imagine how difficult it would have been if Charlotte had been sick?

LIZ
But she wasn't, and you didn't have genetic testing.

JENN
I was twenty-one!

NATE
She has a point.

LIZ
John and I have a completely different relationship. We love and respect each other. Dan was a jerk.

NATE
I don't know why you ever married that fool.

JENN
Ah, because I was young and pregnant.

LIZ
Just what Mom taught us *not* to do; have a shotgun wedding.

JENN

I thought those archaic notions died along with Mom. (Pause) Look, all I'm saying Liz is that with or without a man, the woman always bears the burden - from the moment of conception. If I were you, I'd think long and hard about this one.

LIZ

John would have to know.

NATE

Of Course he would. You can't do something like that without him knowing.

JENN

John doesn't have to know a thing.

LIGHTS

Scene 3

Setting: Several weeks later in Liz and John's apartment.

At Rise: Liz and Jenn enter apartment. Nate is there working but Liz and Jenn don't know he's there. Jenn is wearing a too short and too tight tennis outfit.

JENN

Lie down.

(Covers LIZ with a blanket and sits at end of sofa)

Should I make some calls for you?

LIZ

Nate will cover for me.

(Uncomfortable Pause)

I knew there were risks, but I honestly never thought they would happen.

(Quiet)

John's going to be so upset.

JENN

What will you tell him?

LIZ

I miscarried.

(long silence)

All our hopes and dreams shattered by one phone call.

JENN

You'll bounce back.

LIZ

Like you did?

JENN

That was a cheap shot.

LIZ

I'm sorry. I'm just tired...and frustrated...

JENN

(Quiet)

LIZ

The whole city is out there buzzing Junior around in their fancy Maclaren and Bugaboos. But not me the modern career women. - the envy of my younger clients.

Liz... JENN

And you... LIZ

Please don't. JENN

I'm sorry... (Crying) LIZ

You don't need to apologize. JENN

Thanks for being here Jenn. LIZ

We go with the punches, right? I don't know what I would have done without you when I was pregnant with Charlotte. You never once suggested not to keep the baby. JENN

It wasn't my choice. LIZ

It wasn't Mom's either, but she made it clear how she felt. She was actually happy when Dan left me. JENN

More like relieved. We all knew he was the wrong guy. LIZ

So why didn't you say so? JENN

We did, you just weren't listening. LIZ

Admitting you were right would mean that I was wrong. I didn't want to be wrong in Mom's eyes, or anyone else's... JENN

I don't think she thought of it as being right or wrong. LIZ

JENN

Of course she did. I had a baby when I was practically one myself. (Pause) I knew all about his cheating. He paid the bills... and basically me too. Anything I wanted, I got. As long as I kept quiet. And Mom...her lack of support only perpetuated it.

LIZ

She was worried that one of us, or worse both of us, would follow in her footsteps. In her eyes you did.

JENN

I thought I was in love.

LIZ

So did she, but she always resented that her parents forced her to marry Dad.

JENN

She could have said no.

LIZ

It wasn't that easy, Jenn. Can you imagine being a single mother in those days? She had to give up so much to have me. She didn't want that to ever happen to one of her girls.

JENN

She could've used a condom.

LIZ

So could've you...

JENN

We couldn't have done it any different could we? I had a shotgun wedding and you were determined to have a career first. No wonder she favored you.

LIZ

Me? I'm the one that screwed up her life. If anything she favored you - the planned baby. (Pause) She adored us both.

JENN

I miss her...

LIZ

Me too.

(long contemplated pause from both JENN and LIZ)

JENN

How fucked up is that?

(BOTH laugh)

JENN

I'm sorry, I've been so selfish. I can't imagine how you're feeling right now.

LIZ

I don't mind the distraction.

(Long contemplative silence)

I need to tell Nate.

JENN

Do you want me to tell him?

NATE

(NATE coming in from the kitchen - off stage)

Tell me what?

LIZ

I, I thought you were at a client meeting?

NATE

She canceled. (Looks at JENN)

NATE

Oh my, look-y what have we here -

(Makes serving motion)

It's "Tennis Jenny."

JENN

Not now Nate.

NATE

Why so sensitive -

(Making an obscene gesture with his hand)

didn't he like your forehand?

JENN

Does everything have to be a joke with you?

NATE

Ouch...sorry. (pause) God, you look awful Liz. Morning sickness?

(Looking down at watch)

Or should I say afternoon sickness?

Miscarriage. (Quiet voice) LIZ

Oh my God, I didn't mean to... NATE

You didn't know. LIZ

I don't know what to say. NATE

There's nothing to say. LIZ

Can I do anything? NATE

Having you guys here helps a lot. LIZ

How's John? NATE

He doesn't know. LIZ

Should I call him? NATE

No! (Pause) Thank you, I'll call him. LIZ
(Pause)

This was it; my only chance and it's gone.

Don't say that Liz, everything will be fine. NATE

I'm done. LIZ

You can't just give up. JENN

LIZ

Its time John and I face reality.

JENN

Now you're feeling sorry for yourself.

LIZ

Its John I feel sorry for. I can't give him what he wants and deserves.

NATE

John's going to be fine.

LIZ

I'm not so sure about that.

JENN (Hugging LIZ)

Of course he will.

LIZ

Our dream of being a family was coming true. We saw the pink line...

JENN

And you'll see it again.

NATE

He'll be sad; we all are Liz. But you'll get through this. (Pause) And, there's still adoption.

JENN

Exactly! You should give the agency a call.

NATE

They left a message last week.

JENN

And?

LIZ

I didn't call back. I didn't think I needed to.

JENN

Keep your options open, Liz. You want a family; it doesn't matter how you get them.

LIZ

He'll *never* forgive me.

NATE

John wants a baby as much as you do; biological or not!

LIZ

Not that...

NATE

But there's nothing to forgive Lizzy, It's not like you chose to miscarry.

LIZ

(Cell phone rings, LIZ and JENN exchange glances)

John...

LIGHTS

Scene 4

Setting: Later that evening at the apartment.

At Rise: Nate is still there, and John is home sitting with Liz.

NATE

She's hasn't eaten a thing all day. Maybe she'll listen to you.

JOHN

I've already taken care of it. The food should be here anytime now.

LIZ

Guys I'm fine, really. I'll eat when I'm hungry.

JOHN

I'm so sorry I wasn't with you today.

LIZ

You didn't know.

JOHN

But I *should* have. Why didn't you call me Liz?

LIZ

I wasn't sure what was happening and I didn't want to worry you.

JOHN

You don't need to protect me; that's my job, to protect both of us. Promise me you won't keep anything from me again.

LIZ

I'm sorry I disappointed you John.

JOHN

Don't say that Liz. This was completely out of your control. (hugging LIZ)
(Cheerfully) Hey, as soon as the doctor gives us the go-ahead we'll try again.

LIZ

John, I -

JOHN (Jumps up)

I know just what you need.

NATE (Speaking to LIZ)

Thank God, I thought he'd never ask...

LIZ

I know, I'm dying for a drink.

JOHN

I was thinking Green tea, but if you prefer....

NATE

I prefer...

LIZ

And, a drink will help ease my cramps.

JOHN

(At the bar cart and the doorbell rings)

Nate, you mind getting the door?

NATE

Nope, I'm ravenous! (Opens door) Helen!

HELEN

Nate dear how nice to see you.

NATE

Look what the cat dragged in...

JOHN (Laughing)

HELEN

Well, at least he's made you laugh.

(Speaking to NATE)

Thank you dear.

NATE

The pleasure is all mine.

(gives HELEN an affected air-kiss)

Don't worry, I won't get too close - we wouldn't want you to catch my ho-mo-sex-u-ality.

JOHN (Laughs)

Ha! Now that's a sight, my mother a lipstick lesbian.

HELEN

For your information dear, women “check me out” all the time. I’m considered quite the catch, not to mention well preserved, for a woman of my age and stature.

NATE

Oh my, I think Helen's just come out!

JOHN

So that’s it! That’s why you’ve been so mysterious all these years; Mother’s a lesbian.

NATE (Laughing)

Welcome to the club!

HELEN

You know boys, studies show that it takes more energy to be an angry person than it does to be a happy one.

NATE

Then you must be exhausted!

HELEN

And I know that you gays don’t like being called homosexual - my therapist explained it all to me.

NATE

(Taunts her with lisp voice and drooped hands)

Well that’s a relief.

LIZ

It’s not appropriate to refer to gay people as “you gays” Helen.

HELEN

Honestly, I just can’t keep up. (To JOHN) And look at you - tisk, tisk. Drinking your sorrows away? I guess the apple *really* doesn’t fall far from the tree. (Walks over to LIZ) Oh Lizzy dear, I’m so sorry. You must be devastated.

LIZ

I’m fine.

HELEN

Of course you are! These things happen for a reason. I can tell you from my own experience...

JOHN

Mother, please...

LIZ
It's okay John, she's just trying to help.

JOHN
It's not working.

LIZ
How was California, Helen?

HELEN
Uneventful. As usual...

LIZ
You were gone longer than usual. What do you do when you're there?

HELEN
You know, dinner, movie - that sort of thing

NATE
When is Emerson going to visit us?

HELEN
It's complicated.

NATE
What relationship isn't?

JOHN
Exactly. Look at our relationship Mother - it doesn't get much more complicated than that.

NATE
Or ours...
(walks over to LIZ and gives her a hug)
I'll see you in the morning. Chin up; everything is going to work out.

LIZ
What about dinner?

NATE
I'm not hungry.

LIZ
But you just say you were starving.

NATE

I'll give you privacy.

HELEN

(Ignoring NATE and patting LIZ on the knee)

Consider yourself lucky Liz, nature took care of it for you. I had no such luck.

JOHN

Here she goes again...

NATE

You should see her work a party...

HELEN

I thought you were leaving? (Shooing him away with her hand)

NATE

And miss this...

LIZ

Good-bye Nate!

NATE

Bye Lizzy, I'll call you later. (blows air kiss)

JOHN

Later Nate!

HELEN

As I was trying to say, the baby obviously wasn't healthy and last thing that I'd wish on anyone is a child with special... a sick child.

JOHN

Mother, please don't.

LIZ

It's okay John, she's trying to make a point.

HELEN

Thank you.

LIZ

Which is well taken. Things happen for a reason, John. We're fortunate it happened now and not later.

JOHN

There's nothing fortunate about...

LIZ

I can't imagine the pain you went through after losing Emma, Helen.

JOHN

Nothing like the pain Emma felt. She was the one in pain not you mother.

HELEN

You have no idea what pain is, it's not just physical. It's agonizing to watch your child suffer.

JOHN

I remember more than you think.

HELEN

Then you understand what I'm saying. It would crush me to see you and Liz go through what your father and I did.

JOHN

We'd handle it.

HELEN

Yes, I suppose you would. But at a price...

JOHN

There's always a price to be paid with you Mother...

HELEN

It tore us apart in more ways than one.

JOHN

Poor, poor Mummy...

HELEN

John, I know you're upset and I'm truly sorry for your and Liz's loss, but don't take it out on me. (Long pause) We had no warning. We were completely blindsided...and heartbroken.

JOHN

Of course you were. There was no place for imperfection in your tidy fake world.

LIZ

John, this isn't the time. (To HELEN) I'm sorry Helen, go on...

HELEN

We needed someone to blame so we blamed each other for what we couldn't control.

LIZ

But why each other?

HELEN

There was no one else to blame. Jonathan drowned his sorrow in alcohol, and I...I live with guilt every single day.

LIZ

But you did everything that you could for her.

HELEN

I did the best I could at the time, it just wasn't enough.

LIZ

I don't see how you could have done more.

JOHN

(Utters chortle)

Pffft...

HELEN

I made some difficult decisions that, at the time, I thought were right. Eventually, they tore Jonathan and me a part. I loved him very much. And I love Emma with all my heart. I miss them...

(Quiet)

It really is good it happened now - a stubbed toe compared to what could have been.

JOHN

For God's sake Mother, you don't need to be so melodramatic; women miscarry all the time. There are many reasons why Liz miscarried. Her age for one...

HELEN

Or it could be genetic, and there's nothing melodramatic about that - it's completely out of our control.

JOHN

I've had enough of your soap opera Mother.

HELEN

What are you running from Johnny? You have to face the possibility - especially for your future children.

JOHN

You're the one who ran. I heard you and father...

LIZ

There won't be any future children.

JOHN

Damn it Mother! Now look what you've done.

HELEN

I've done nothing but speak the truth.

JOHN

Maybe you should start thinking before you speak.

(Taking LIZ's hand)

Honey, you can't give up - not after all we've been through. You need time, that's all.

LIZ

Times up John. My clock stopped ticking.

JOHN

We got pregnant once and we will again. Everything will work out just as planned, you'll see.

LIZ

The plan's not working John and it's taken too much out of me, out of us. I can't go through it again.

HELEN

Of course you should have another child - just be better prepared. There are tests you know. You won't have to go through what Jonathon and I did.

JOHN

Damn it Mother! Stay out of this.

(Door bell rings)

LIZ

It's the food.

LIGHTS

Scene 5

Setting: A work day several months later. Apartment is decorated for Christmas.

At Rise: Helen and Liz are having afternoon coffee.

HELEN

I hope you don't mind my dropping in like this?

LIZ

Not one bit, your timing couldn't be better - (look of fatigue) I need a break.

HELEN (Looking around)

Nate's not here?

LIZ

He's shopping with a client.

HELEN

Good, I never know when he'll bite my head off.

LIZ

(Hands HELEN a cup of coffee)

Don't let him fool you - Nate's all bark and no bite

HELEN

He certainly can be pugnacious.

LIZ

He just likes to get your goat.

HELEN

I don't know why he's holding such a grudge. I thought we moved on.

LIZ

I think he has.

HELEN

He has an odd way of showing it. I never meant to offend him - I haven't been exposed to many of his kind.

LIZ

And what kind would that be?

HELEN

You know, homo...um, gay people...just my hairdresser and a few decorators. Honestly, I had no idea that it wasn't "PC," as you all put it, to introduce someone as a homosexual.

LIZ

How would you like to be label in an introduction? "Meet my Mother-in-law, she's a heterosexual divorcee..."

HELEN

It sounds like a disease. Point well taken.

LIZ

How can you live in New York City and not be "*exposed*" to the gay community?

HELEN

There just hasn't been an opportunity.

LIZ

Of course there has, you just haven't paid attention. There's more to the Upper East Side than the waspy stiffs you hang with.

HELEN

Dear, need I remind you that you married one of them?

LIZ

Please don't!

(Laughs)

What happened between you and Nate anyway? There has to be more than your introducing him as homosexual - Nate's sense of humor would never let that bother him.

HELEN

(With a wave of the hand)

You know those gays - they can be so sensitive.

LIZ

Helen!

HELEN

Let's just drop it.

LIZ

(Yawning)

HELEN

I've missed you - it's been a while.

LIZ

I've missed you too, it's nice to have a surrogate mother.

HELEN

There aren't many people I feel comfortable talking to - and John, well he can be so short tempered with me. (Looking around apartment) Your Christmas decorations are beautiful this year!

LIZ

Nate helped me.

HELEN

Of course he did...

LIZ

Helen!

HELEN

Emma loved Christmas. (Pause) Today's her 45th birthday.

LIZ

Oh my God, I'm so sorry...John didn't say anything.

HELEN

(Quiet)

LIZ

Emma was very special to him. I wish I'd met her.

HELEN

She'd love you.

(Soft laugh)

Do you know that we actually talked about moving out of the city once? I had dreams of a backyard with rose bushes and a swing set for the children. Can you imagine? Me in the suburbs running around a sweatsuit and sensible shoes?

LIZ

I don't think they're quite *that* dowdy, Helen. I hear the women are high on their children's Ritalin working out incessantly to keep hubby from straying, all the while driving recklessly in their SUV's only to break for lunchtime libations on the country club terrace.

HELEN

Sounds wonderful!

LIZ

Not much different from us...

HELEN

I suppose not. Only we're being driven in our SUV'S and our country club is Barney's with cocktails at Fred's.

LIZ

To each their own.

HELEN

Yes, well here we are. We can't dwell on the past and what could have been.

LIZ

No, but it hasn't been easy for me.

HELEN

I didn't mean to imply that you were dwelling. (Pause) You haven't talked much about your miscarriage. I can't imagine losing a child.

LIZ

But, you did?

HELEN

It's, that was...different. It was so long ago. (Pause) The last few months must have been very difficult for you.

LIZ

What's there to say? I'm grieving for something intangible.

HELEN

You're grieving for the lost dreams you and John shared.

LIZ

I still can't walk by a baby on the street without choking up. (Pause) John's having a tough time too. He puts up a good front but I know he's hurting inside.

HELEN

It's only natural that he would be.

LIZ

I've failed him.

HELEN

You didn't fail him. He needs time to grieve too.

LIZ

Could I ask you something?

HELEN

Of course, dear.

LIZ

Did you ever regret having Emma?

HELEN

Not for a minute!

LIZ

I don't think I'd have the courage that you did.

HELEN

You would do *whatever* you had to do to protect your family.

LIZ

I feel selfish that I'm grieving a miscarriage when you lost a four-year-old.

HELEN

(Quiet)

LIZ

I'm lucky to have you and the others to lean on. I hope you had friends too.

HELEN

We use to go to Mommy and Me classes; of course they weren't called that then, at the church. Emma loved the music ... But, there were no playdates, no comparing notes, nothing – it was as if we were contagious. As she grew older it only grew worse. (Pause) That's when I lost my faith.

LIZ

I had no idea!

HELEN

I was angry, I couldn't understand why God would bring an innocent child into this world to suffer - I still don't. You and your baby were spared.

LIZ

I know we were. The baby's quality of life would have been so, so limited. (Pause) Why raise John with faith if you didn't have it?

HELEN

My faith was being tested and I wasn't sure what I was feeling. Jonathan had so much faith in the church and to be respectful of him I kept it to myself. Week after week I sat quietly in the pew with Emma on my lap, Johnny by my side and bible in hand, but I wasn't really present.

LIZ

John doesn't know any of this...

HELEN

We've never talked about it. It took me years to understand what I was feeling. It wasn't until Emma was gone that I realized that I didn't actually lose my faith in God - I never had faith in him to lose. (Pause) I lost my innocence.

(Quiet)

That's when I grew up. It was as if a strong pair of hands had been pushing down on me for so long and then suddenly let go.

LIZ

Maybe it was God's hands.

HELEN

No, it wasn't God, but I had an epiphany. It was then that I understood that life doesn't always go as planned and that you have to accept what it brings and do the best you can. No matter what you have to choose.

(Door opens NATE is holding shopping bags from the D&D Building, JENN is behind him.)

NATE

Look what I... (Pause, acknowledges HELEN with a nod)

HELEN (with forced smirk)

Nate...

NATE

Look who I found street walking – the one and only *Yummy Mummy*.

JENN

(in tight workout clothes)

Oh please – look who's talking. Mr. Walker himself... Isn't that right Helen?

HELEN

(Rolls eyes with a dismissive hand wave)

JENN

Maybe if you spent more time checking out the merchandise as I do and less time escorting old ladies to gala's (Pause) sorry Helen, you'd have a boyfriend by now.

NATE (Looking at Liz)

She's always so hard at work.

JENN

24/7 - one never knows when or where you might meet Mr. Right.

(With a wink to NATE)

If only you weren't a friend of Dorothy's, life would be much easier for me.

NATE (Singing)

We could have been so good together...

JENN(Finishing line)

We could have lived this dance forever...

NATE/JENN

Ohhh.....

LIZ/JENN/NATE (Laughing)

HELEN

Who is Dorothy?

LIZ

Ignore them, they're just being silly. There's coffee in the kitchen, help yourself.

NATE

Love some.

JENN

Me too.

NATE

I'll get it I have to put these samples in the office.

LIZ

And could you bring the leftover croissant from this morning - I'm starving.

NATE

Won't this be your third today?

LIZ

I didn't know anyone was counting.

It's your bottom. NATE

Very funny. LIZ

Oink! (Off Stage) NATE

JENN
(Gives HELEN hug and kiss)
I haven't seen you in ages - how are you?

HELEN
Fine dear, I've been traveling a bit.

JENN
Oh how I admire your life, it's so mysterious. You should take me with you
sometime...we'd have *fuunnnn*...

HELEN
It's not as exciting as it appears.

LIZ
More exciting than me...

JENN
You look tired Liz.

LIZ
I'm working a lot.

HELEN
Speaking of work, how's your book coming along Jennifer?

JENN
Wonderful!

HELEN
Have you considered changing the title?

JENN
Never! That's the appeal

HELEN
And, what exactly is this "Yummy Mummy" about?

JENN

It's a How-to book.

HELEN

Isn't the market saturated with mommy how-to books?

JENN

Yummy Mummy is different. It focuses on how to take care of *you*; like having a Mommy Makeover - while juggling your child's needs.

LIZ

And you would be the authority? Sending your child off to boarding school before she could walk and talk is hardly what I call an authority on juggling motherhood.

JENN

Of course it is. And, for the record - she could walk and talk.

LIZ

That's not the point...

JENN

Sending Charlotte off to school was responsible parenting. She gets the attention she needs and I get "mommy time."

HELEN

Don't be so quick to judge, Liz. Sometimes a child is better off in an institution where she can get the proper care she needs.

JENN

You make it sound so tragic. I didn't have her committed for God's sake - It was boarding school and now college.

HELEN

I...I didn't mean that. Just me and my poor choice of words again.

JENN

Well, it's nice to have someone on my side for a change.

HELEN

Children aren't always better off with their mother. (pause) What do you do all day anyway?

LIZ

Jennifer calls working-out with a personal trainer and looking fabulous a "job."

HELEN

There can't be much money in that.

JENN
Millions, actually...

HELEN
Really?

JENN
With a body like this it's only a matter of time that I score a wealthy old man.

HELEN
I know *plenty* of old geezers that would be quite pleased to have you on their arm. You should come to one of my galas with me.

JENN
Ohh, I'd love to. But what about your usual escort Nate?

HELEN
Ever since the Natural History Gala he's been...well, we've parted ways.

JENN
Pray tell?

LIZ
Jennifer!

JENN
So why not bring that boyfriend of yours?

HELEN
He doesn't like parties.

JENN
He sounds very mysterious - when will we I ever meet him?

HELEN (firm tone)
He doesn't like to travel.

JENN
Doesn't like parties, doesn't travel? What do you see in this guy?

LIZ
Jennnn!

JENN
Okay, okay, sorry.
(awkward pause)
What's going on with you Liz - any update?

HELEN

Update on what?

LIZ

What's taking Nate so long? *Nate?*

HELEN

Why am I the only person that never seems to know what's going on?

LIZ

Nothing is going on.

HELEN (Excitedly)

You're pregnant!

JENN

You are?

LIZ

Would you two stop - there is nothing going on. Jenn is pressuring me to start a new IVF cycle.

HELEN

She's right. I think it's about time.

JENN

I'm not pressuring, I just don't think you should give up.

LIZ

I haven't. We're in touch with the adoption agency.

JENN

And that's wonderful, but I mean conceiving. Don't give up trying.

HELEN

Of course she shouldn't - but adoption? It's bad enough that you have our family history - God only knows what awful genes you could get from a complete stranger...

JENN

Ouch!

LIZ

Helen, adoption may be our only option and we have no issue or concerns.

HELEN

I'd be careful Liz, genes can be very tricky. Look what happened to me.

JENN

(speaking in an "I told you so" voice)

That's why you should have prenatal testing...

HELEN

With the tests you girls have today there's no reason for surprises. I don't know why you didn't do genetic testing to begin with.

LIZ

John didn't want it.

HELEN

That's irresponsible, and at your age! I was a different women 45 years ago - But, if I were having children today and had the choices that you girls have I wouldn't think twice. I'd absolutely have the tests - *All* of them! And, I wouldn't let a *man* dictate my future and neither should you!

(HELEN'S cell phone rings. She leaves to answer phone.)

Hello.

JENN

Wow! That's a side of her I've never seen.

LIZ

No kidding...and that adoption comment...?

JENN

Why didn't you tell her?

LIZ

And say what?

JENN

The truth.

LIZ

I lied to her son. I don't think she'd be okay with that.

JENN

I wouldn't be so sure about that. Helen's far more calculating than we give her credit for.

LIZ

I know what you mean. I can't put my finger on it, but there's something going on. I have a feeling the Nate knows more than he's letting on.

HELEN

(HELEN re-enters appearing upset)

LIZ

Helen! What's wrong?

HELEN

I, I ...a, just found out that um...a friend is ill so I'll be going away for a few days.

LIZ

Emerson? But you just got back.

JENN

Isn't there someone else that can help?

HELEN

I'm all they have. I need to hurry...

(HELEN places her cell phone on the table while gathering her things and leaves cell behind.)

NATE

(Enters room holding something behind his back)

What was that all about?

JENN

No clue.

NATE

Uh, Lizzy, darling may I see you in private?

LIZ

(Hand unconsciously on belly)

Darling? Private? This can't be good. What is it Nate, *darling*? You can say anything in front of Jenn.

NATE

(Holding up pregnancy box)

Did you forget to tell us something?

JENN (Squeals with joy!)

LIGHTS

Scene 6

Setting: The evening.

At Rise: Liz and John are entering the apartment.

LIZ

I never get tired of looking at the tree - it's so beautiful this year.

JOHN

Can you imagine stringing 30,000 light bulbs around that thing?

LIZ

It was hard enough putting the lights on our little tree.
(Turning on Christmas tree lights)

Looks cute though.

(sits on sofa)

All that walking made me hungry.

JOHN

I still hasn't sunk in.

LIZ

I know (Cradling stomach).

JOHN

We weren't even trying...

LIZ

Not technically - but we weren't using protection either.

JOHN

Didn't think we had to.

LIZ

Me either... (excitedly) Your mother's going to be so happy! You know she guessed that I was pregnant.

JOHN

Yeah, happy to have an opportunity to make it all about her. ..

LIZ

We had an interesting conversation this afternoon.

JOHN

I'm sure you did.

LIZ

She basically warned me about adoption. She said you never know what you're gonna get. It was pretty awful.

JOHN

Jesus, I'm sorry Liz. You know not to listen to her nonsense.

LIZ

I know, but you never know John - adoption may still be in our future. And if it is I hope she'll love our baby as her grandchild.

JOHN

I don't care what she thinks. Let's not create a scenario that hasn't happened.

LIZ

Yet...

JOHN

Where'd you say she was going?

LIZ

Back to California to see Emerson - something about him being sick. She left in such a hurry that she left her cell phone.

JOHN

She didn't come back for it?

LIZ

Nope!

JOHN

She's done this my entire life - jetting off here and there. But to leave her phone behind? Whatever it is must be important.

(pointing a TV remote)

You wanta watch a movie?

LIZ

Sure. (pause) There's something weird about the way your mother speaks when she talks about Emma. It's kind of creepy...

JOHN

(quietly flicking through channels)

LIZ

Maybe it's her way of dealing with her loss.

LIZ (CONT.)

(Long pause)

Sorta like how you don't like to talk about it...

JOHN

(Staring blankly at TV)

LIZ

John? JOHN?

JOHN

I have a lot of bad memories from those years Liz.

LIZ

Talking about them would help.

JOHN

Maybe, but not tonight, please.

(long uncomfortable pause)

The doctor seemed surprised, too.

LIZ

She was, but as she said she's seen it before. (Pause) I agree with her.

JOHN

(Flicking through channels)

About what?

LIZ

Prenatal testing. I should do it, John.

JOHN

We've been through this Lizzy.

LIZ

I know but it's different this time.

JOHN

You said that the last time too.

LIZ

At my age every minute counts. Don't you want peace of mind?

JOHN

We're having a baby Liz. People have been giving birth since the being of time and didn't have all these fancy tests.

LIZ
 (Quietly under her breath)
 Women.

JOHN
 What did you say?

LIZ
 You mean women - *women* have been giving birth since the beginning of time.

JOHN
 Obviously.

LIZ
 John, it's the 21st century and we have options. I'm the one having this baby and ultimately I'll be the one raising it.

JOHN
 We're doing this together (puts arm around LIZ); it's *our* baby.

LIZ
 I want the test!

JOHN
 We've been given another chance Liz. I know it's been a rough few years but things are going to be fine. Relax, don't be such a fatalist.

LIZ
 Relax? How can you have such a cavalier attitude toward something so important?

JOHN
 You're making a bigger deal out of this than you need to.

LIZ
 I want the test.

JOHN
 And I don't!

LIZ
 I don't want an Emma!

JOHN
 Jesus! How can you say that?

LIZ
 I don't want us to turn into your parents, and more importantly I don't want to bring a child into this world that has no hope. It's inhumane.

JOHN

It's only inhumane not to help them.

LIZ

That's just it - I couldn't live with the guilt of knowing that I could have done something like a test, to protect my child from needless suffering.

JOHN

It's immoral.

LIZ

That's *your* opinion! Don't moralize this, were talking about potentially bring a child, our child, into this world with no chance - none! There would be nothing we could do to help them.

JOHN

But Emma had doc...

LIZ

This isn't about Emma. Science has come along way John. If Emma were born today she wouldn't have suffered and neither would've you. (Pause) It's not immoral; it's an obligation that I - that we have as parents. Don't you want to protect our baby?

JOHN

Aborting our child isn't protecting them.

LIZ (Snaps at him.)

When *you* can have a baby, *you* can have an opinion.

JOHN

Not having a uterus doesn't mean I don't get to have a say.

LIZ

I respect your feelings John, I really do, but you have to understand where I'm coming from. Look at you - Emma's illness had a profound effect on you, but John it's been 41 years - move on. (Pause) I don't want to fight. We've been given another chance. All I'm asking is that you think about it. Think about Emma and the short painful life she had - always sick in and out of the hospital...

JOHN

I should have known; this is Mother talking.

(HELEN'S cell phone rings)

LIZ

She has nothing to do with it. It would be unconscionable to bring a baby into this world destined to a short life of suffering.

JOHN

You're missing the point Liz, we won't know if we don't do the test.

LIZ

You're missing the point! We do *know* that we have a very high risk. This isn't about us or our beliefs - it's about being a parent and protecting our child as best we can even if that means not having them.

(cell phone rings again)

(Rubbing stomach)

I want this baby so much that it hurts, but I will *not* bring a child into this world that has no future.

JOHN

God wouldn't do this to us twice.

LIZ

Don't bring God into this. If there was a God, he wouldn't let children suffer.

(Phone rings third time)

JOHN

What's happening to you? You sound like an atheist.

LIZ

I'm not an atheist, I'm a realist.

JOHN (Snaps)

Answer the fucking phone!

LIZ (Snaps back)

It's *your* mother's phone, you answer it!

JOHN

(storms out)

(Door bell rings)

LIZ

(Answers door)

Helen!

HELEN

(With travel bag)
(Rattled)

I've lost my phone.

LIZ

It's here. Someone's been trying to reach you.

(LIZ hands phone to HELEN and phone begins to ring again)

HELEN

(Looks to see who is calling. Looks at LIZ)

LIZ

Answer it.

HELEN

Yes. This is she. (Pause) I don't understand. How could this have happened? (Pause) I'm on the next flight (hangs up phone looking shocked).

LIGHTS

Scene 7

Setting: Several days later in the apartment (or possibly Liz and Nat's office).

At rise: Nat is nervously pacing back and forth. Helen is there.

NATE

You shouldn't be here. They'll be home soon.

HELEN

(Clutching a frame in her lap)

I have no one else.

NATE

Who's fault is that?

HELEN

(Quiet)

NATE

I knew you were up to something - how couldn't I with all your mysterious phone calls. But, this? Not in my wildest dreams...Why Helen?

HELEN

To save my family.

NATE

You can't be serious; you destroyed the little family you had left. What were you thinking? (nervously) You should go.

HELEN

Please Nate you have to explain to John why I did it...

NATE

They're my best friends - my family.

HELEN

He'll listen to you Nate. Please I need your help.

NATE

This isn't my mess to clean-up. *You* should've told him!

HELEN

I did, or at least I tried to after Jonathan's funeral. Everyone had gone and it was just the two of us. He took his father's death hard and rather than letting me comfort him he blamed it on me. That if I hadn't left Jonathan he wouldn't have died alone. I tried

HELEN (Cont.)

to explain why things happened the way they did but he wouldn't let me - he said horrible things - that he and Emma were a burden to me.

NATE

There must have been other opportunities to tell him Helen.

HELEN

I lost my courage. I was in too deep. "Why tell now" I thought? I'm the only one left who knows the truth.

NATE

(Hears noise at door or in other room if they're in other office)

They're here...

(JOHN and LIZ enter)

I told her to leave...

JOHN

Get out!

(Pause)

NOW!

LIZ

John!

HELEN

I can explain. Please, Johnny I have no one...

JOHN

Call your boyfriend.

HELEN

There isn't one.

NATE

My God!

JOHN

Of course there isn't. Your whole life is one big fucking lie.

HELEN

How else was I going to explain my coming and going?

JOHN

Ever hear of the truth?

LIZ

Helen, I think it would be better if you left.

HELEN

(Staring blankly and rambling)

She loved her artwork... but not as much as her music. Oh, how she lovved her music. And Christmas, she loved the lights and the caroling. One year at the Christmas pageant she had the bell solo. Once she got going she wouldn't stop. She just kept ringing and ringing and ring...

JOHN

SHUT UP! Would you just shut the fuck up!

HELEN

(Quiet)

JOHN

Why are you even here?

HELEN

I...

JOHN

You have no right coming into *my* home with your pity-seeking behavior. Did you really think I'd feel sorry for you?

HELEN

I don't want your pity. You're the only family I have - the only connection I have to Emma. She was my special little girl.

JOHN

You mean grown woman, don't you mother.

HELEN

I know I've hurt you Johnny, but it's been hard on me too. You have no idea how difficult it was for me to hold onto such a secret...

JOHN

Secret? It was a fucking LIE!
(pours a drink from bar cart)

HELEN

It's been Hell on earth keeping it from you.

JOHN

Oh please, Mother. Dressing in ball gowns and going to galas with Nate is hardly suffering.

NATE

Whoa, leave me out of this.

JOHN

You've been living the good life of a shallow socialite while your daughter was holed up in an institution.

(pause)

You took *her* from me. And worse, you took *me* from her. The only person - the only family that truly loved her unconditionally.

HELEN

We loved her more than words can say.

JOHN

Falsifying ones death out of convenience isn't love Mother- It's fucking cruel. It's sick. You're the one who needs to be locked up.

HELEN

I did what any mother would do under the circumstances.

JOHN

Give me a break!

LIZ

John...

JOHN

No Liz, Mommy dearest has some explaining to do.

(LIZ motions to NATE to leave room.)

HELEN

I know how it seems but she deserved more than we could give her.

JOHN

I pretended my whole childhood that my mother was like all the others.

HELEN

I was like the others.

JOHN

You can't really believe that? Mothers don't wish their children dead and then fake it.

HELEN

(Quiet)

JOHN

Surprise! Little Johnny boy was listening. I could hear you and father arguing at night. Can you imagine - an eight-year-old hearing his mother say that she wished your sister would "just die."

HELEN

You misunderstood.

JOHN

Did I? I was terrified for years of getting a simple fucking cold for fear that I would be a burden and you would wish me dead too. (Pause) And all along you were pretending that Emma had died. What kind of demented mother does that?

HELEN

The two of you were my world. I didn't want Emma to die - I wanted her suffering to end.

JOHN

Her suffering or yours mother?

HELEN

All of ours. We couldn't give her what she needed.

JOHN

You couldn't give her love?

HELEN

It wasn't that simple John. There were medical issues.

JOHN

Christ Mother, it's not like you couldn't afford it. Was "killing" her off easier than admitting you were weak? What did you tell people? Did you hold a fake service? My God, how do you even look in the mirror?

HELEN

I had no choice...at least I didn't think I did.

JOHN

We could have moved. We could have started over and I could have had my sister.

HELEN

I'm...I'm so sorry.

JOHN

You're only sorry you got caught! You didn't have the right to take her away to suit your own needs. God forgive Helen has a special needs child...

HELEN

It wasn't like that...

JOHN

How did you get father to go along with your filthy deceit? Did you two give her a secret lobotomy too?

HELEN

I don't expect you to understand but it really was the best thing for her. She was very well taken care of, I made sure of it.

JOHN

By donating an arts and craft wing? That's what you call taking care of things - so she could finger paint all day. You can't buy your way out of this one mother.

HELEN

(Quietly) Performing Arts Center. (Louder) It was a Performing Arts Center! Emma loved her music....

JOHN

Does it really matter?

HELEN

Yes, it does. It gave her a lot of happiness and it made me feel better knowing that she was a little bit happier.

JOHN

Aren't you the saint.

HELEN

Johnny, she had friends. Do you think she had friends here? She was a leper to all the other mothers. She was in an environment where she was loved every single day. She even went to dances - she was happy, very happy. It was the right choice for her.

JOHN

If it was such a good thing then why all the lies?

HELEN

We thought that it would be easier for her to "disappear." To start fresh - no more pity, no more whispers behind our back. (Pause) Your father loathed being an underdog. Pity was poison to him. He said it made him look weak, not up to par with the other executives.

JOHN

She embarrassed him? She was his daughter.

HELEN

We were protecting you!

JOHN

Don't you dare use me as an excuse.

HELEN

The neighbor's children were ruthless. The taunting and the despicable things they said...

JOHN

Did you ever hear me complain? (pause) Answer me Mother, did you?

HELEN

No, Johnny, I never did.

JOHN

You took her from me... I never got over her loss Mother and now to learn that she's been alive all these years only to die all over again...

(long pause)

Did she even know who I was?

HELEN

There were pictures.

LIZ

(entering and sitting next to HELEN)

JOHN

She must have thought I abandoned her. You should have told me.

HELEN

I tried to tell you John.

JOHN

No you didn't. That's not something I would forget.

HELEN

It was after your father's funeral.

JOHN

That was an opportune time!

(Speaking in HELEN'S voice)

"Darling don't be upset. Your father's dead but your dead sister is alive." Did you really expect me to hear you?

JOHN (cont.)

(long silence)

Did she at least have Father?

HELEN (bitter smirk)

It was too difficult for him.

JOHN

Of course it was. Way to go Dad! The two of you...you deserved each other.

LIZ

(Clearing throat)

Helen, could I arrange to have Emma's things shipped back to New York?

(To HELEN)

Are you alright?

JOHN

Of course she is. The charade is over and her guilt has been absolved. Her precious Emma died from congenital heart failure, again, forty-one years later. (Pause) For the last time, get out!

(Long silent pause)

LIZ

You should give her a chance to explain.

JOHN

My entire childhood - my entire life has been a lie. There's nothing for her to explain.

LIZ

I'm trying to make sense out of all this too John, but we need to try and understand why - why she did such a horrible thing. (Pause) I wish I had known Emma's had down syndrome - now I understand why you're so against genetic testing.

JOHN

I didn't know. I knew that she was different but I thought it was because of her heart defect. That's all they told me.

How can I forgive that?

LIGHTS

Scene 8

Setting: Several months later. Liz and John's Apartment.

At Rise: Liz is noticeably pregnant looking through nursery fabric samples, John is by her side.

JOHN

Nate should be here any minute.

LIZ

Good! We only have eight weeks and I want everything to be just right. I'm thinking yellow for the walls.

(Holding up wall paper border)

And I thought a jungle theme would be cute since we don't know if we're having a boy or a girl.

JOHN

Anything you want honey.

LIZ

Ooh, with this fabric, no wait this one...

(Long Pause as LIZ looks through samples)

I saw your mother yesterday.

JOHN

Why do you do this?

LIZ

She misses you.

JOHN

(Quiet)

LIZ

She's lonely John.

JOHN

Who's fault's that?

(Door opens NATE walks in carrying a to-go tray with coffee cups and the mail)

NATE

Okay, one venti double pump vanilla decaf caramel latte, and a *no fat* coffee cake - which by the way makes absolutely no sense, but whatever Mrs. Prego wants. And for Dad, I have a grande skim latte *and...*

NATE (Cont.)

(Reaches into his coat pocket)
a bottle of vodka for Uncle Nate to take the edge off.

JOHN

What edge do you have?

NATE

We're expecting a baby - I'm a nervous wreck!

JOHN

Is there something the two of you need to tell me?

NATE

If I were straight Liz would be the one and only girl for me!
(Handing LIZ her cup of coffee)
And boy would she be lucky!

JOHN

In your dreams...

NATE

She has been.

LIZ

Eww...

NATE

(laughs while handing LIZ the mail)

I got the mail.

LIZ

Thanks.

NATE

You feeling okay?

LIZ

Just tired and a little cramping.

JOHN

Braxton hicks?

LIZ

Probably.

NATE

Who's that?

LIZ (Laughs)

Not a who - a what! It's a type of cramping you get around this time. (Pause) Hey (Holding up wall paper sample), how do you like this combo?

NATE

I like! But I'd add some more pink into the theme.

LIZ

But we don't know the sex.

NATE

It's a girl.

JOHN

How would you know?

NATE

(Hand on LIZ stomach)

Father's intuition.

(Slaps JOHN on the back)

Sleep well!

JOHN (laughs)

Let's get to work!

(Kisses LIZ)

Yell if you need anything honey.

LIZ

(calling after them)

Don't drink too much...

NATE

(JOHN and NATE walk into office/nursery)

How's it going so far?

JOHN

Not bad, but you and Liz need to get a better filing system. There are years of files in here.

NATE

I wouldn't even know where to begin.

JOHN

(Pointing to some stacked files against the wall)

How 'bout those boxes in the corner.

NATE (Looking through box)

God, these are ancient...

(Calling out to LIZ)

Lizzy, didn't Mrs. Smith die?

LIZ

(Lying on sofa going through the mail)

A couple of years ago - why?

NATE

What should I do with her files?

LIZ

Dump 'em.

NATE

(Throws them in garbage)

We're so efficient!

JOHN

There must be at least 10 years' worth of files stored in here. There're invoices from 1996.

NATE

Liz throws nothing away. She always says "you never know when we might need it."

JOHN

(Holding old wall paper samples)

What do you want me to do with these?

NATE

Eww...they're so 1996 - Dump 'em!

JOHN

I won't tell if you don't...

NATE

How ya doing these days John? (Passes bottle of Absolute vodka to JOHN)

JOHN

(Takes big swig, passes bottle back to NATE. This continues.)

Better now.

NATE

Still not talking to Helen, huh?

JOHN

(Shakes head)

NATE

Can't say I blame you.

JOHN

You'd think I would've figured it out - all her comings and goings, secret friends...

NATE

I always thought it was peculiar. And that "boyfriend" of hers, It's fucked up...

JOHN

I guess I was just use to it. In the beginning they said she needed to get away, have time to herself. And then when my parents divorced I thought she had a secret boyfriend.

NATE

She said she tried to tell you.

JOHN

So she says.

NATE

I can't figure her out.

JOHN

There's nothing to figure out - she's selfish. It's all about her. Always has been and always will be.

NATE

(Takes sip of vodka and pauses)

I knew something was going on - she'd get these calls at the strangest times. We'd be at an event and the hairdresser or her personal shopper would call. At first I just thought, 'now that's what I call good service' but then last spring we were at the Natural History Gala and she got up to make a call but left her phone.

JOHN

Seems to be a pattern of hers lately.

NATE

I didn't know she left it until the phone rang. I figured that it must be an important call since she actually left the table, so I answer it.

JOHN

And?

NATE

It was some doctor in California. She came back to the table looking for her phone and when I gave her the message she froze, for like a minute she just stood there. I asked if she was okay and she said just mumbled something about a sick friend.

JOHN

The “boyfriend?”

NATE

I assumed so, but that night when I put her in a cab to go home she said “You won’t tell John, will you?” That’s the last event I took her to.

JOHN

Why didn’t you tell me?

NATE

Tell you what? That she had a sick friend? (Pause) What else you got there?

JOHN

Looks like a bunch of old receipts (passes them to NATE) Ya wanta know what’s really fucked up?

NATE (Takes sip of vodka)

Ab-so-fuckin-lutely.

JOHN

One morning I woke up and Emma was gone. Just obliterated from our lives.

NATE

Where did your parents say she went?

JOHN

Dead. (Pause) That she went to the hospital in the middle of the night and wouldn’t be coming home. That was it. Life went on.

LIZ

John! JOHN!

JOHN

Be right back. Save me some of that will ya. *Coming Lizzy...*
(walks to other room)

You okay honey?

LIZ

We got a letter from the adoption agency. We’re getting a baby boy!

JOHN
(Jaw drops pointing to LIZ'S stomach)

LIZ
I know. It's crazy were going to have *two* babies.

(NATE walks in)

NATE
You look as if you just saw a ghost, John.

JOHN
We're having a baby boy.

NATE
I thought you didn't know the sex.

LIZ
We don't. We got a letter from the adoption agency. Were having a baby boy.

NATE
(Jaw drops pointing at LIZ's stomach)

LIZ
I know!

NATE
That's fucked up.

JOHN (Looking shocked)
I know!

NATE
Now what?

JOHN
No fuckin' idea! (Pause) Liz, honey what's wrong?

LIZ (clutching stomach)
I don't know, maybe I'm in shock. (lies back down)

JOHN
I know I am too, talk about making up for lost time.

NATE
I'll say!

JOHN (Kissing LIZ)

You do look tired honey. I think you should rest - we can celebrate later.
(JOHN and NATE go back to the office/nursery)

NATE

Think you can fit two cribs in here?

JOHN

We're going to need two of everything!

NATE

One thing's for sure, we have no time to waste. (hands JOHN a file)

JOHN

(Sorting through receipts)

Chinese take-out, Graces Market, more Chinese take-out, manicures, massages, Barney's. As far as I can tell all you two did in 2001 was eat, shop and play.

NATE

Eat, shop and play...Sounds like a bestseller to me.

JOHN

(Laughs and moves onto a new file box)

And when I sell the movie rights you can be the whiny leading lady.

NATE

Ha, that's perfect. I've certainly done my fair share of character studies working for all of these

(Pointing to file boxes)

ladies. Ooh...I'll make her whiny *and* divorced.

JOHN

Now that's a novel idea.

NATE (Laughs)

(Continues sorting through files)

Wow, look at these pictures. You guys were so young looking.

JOHN

(Not listening. Head down reading something)

NATE

John?

JOHN
(Looks up with blank expression)

What's wrong?
NATE

JOHN
(Hands papers to NATE)

What is it?
NATE

Isn't it obvious?
JOHN
(Sudden change of tone)

No.
NATE

It's a lab report from last summer.
JOHN

And...?
NATE

JOHN
(Hands pamphlet to NATE)

What's this?
NATE

Read it!
JOHN

NATE
(Reading out loud)
In-clinic abor... you're wrong John; Liz would never do that...

JOHN
Jesus Christ, I've married my mother! She lied to me - Liz had genetic tests, and then she got rid of it.

NATE
There's got to be an explanation. She wouldn't do that John.

JOHN
Well, apparently she did!

NATE

You're wrong. We talked about it.

JOHN

You talked to her about this? How could you do this Nate - what else are you keeping from me?

NATE

Nothing, I told Liz she had to talk to you first.

JOHN

You should have told me.

NATE

There was nothing to tell. It was a conversation, that's it. I didn't think that she would actually do it. Not with something as important as your baby.

JOHN

(Turns away to walk out of room)

NATE

(Grabs JOHN's arm)

John don't - not now. Don't upset her, it's all going so well.

JOHN

(Pushes NATE's hand away and storms into the living room NATE follows.)

What's this?

LIZ

(Worried look on face)

My water broke!

NATE

Oh my God, it's too soon!

JOHN

(Rushing to LIZ)

LIGHTS

Scene 9

Setting: Possible split stage. Simple hospital room at stage right. Waiting room at stage left.

At Rise: Liz is lying in a hospital bed. John is staring out the window.

LIZ

She'll be fine John, she has to be...

JOHN

He's punishing us.

LIZ

What are you talking about? No one's punishing us.

JOHN

The moment you found out our baby wasn't perfect you took care of it. "Take it away, this won't do. We'll just get another one." Just like one of your fucking fabric samples.

LIZ

What is going on with you?

JOHN

With *me*? Shall I refresh your memory? *You* killed our baby. The first one...

LIZ

I did no such thing!

JOHN

I saw the records.

LIZ

John please, the stress is getting to you. Come
(Holding out hand)
sit with me.

JOHN

Don't patronize me. You know what records. The ones you so discretely filed.

LIZ

(lowers head, quietly speaks)

I...I can explain...

JOHN

The files speak for themselves...

LIZ

We both knew there were risks. My age and Emma's heart condition and ...

JOHN

So now it is my dead sister's fault?

LIZ

I didn't say that.

JOHN

That's what you meant.

LIZ

No it's not! You were sitting right next to me when the doctor told us to have the tests.

JOHN

It was her job Liz - to give us our options.

LIZ

It wasn't just the doctors. Even your mother thought we should have the test.

JOHN

Christ!

LIZ

John, does it really matter now?

JOHN

Liz, you lied to me.

LIZ

No John, I just didn't tell you the whole truth. It may have been wrong, I know. But I also know taking that test was the right thing to do.

JOHN

For you...

LIZ

It was the right choice.

JOHN

You can't have an abortion without asking me how I felt - it was my baby too.

LIZ

Is *that* what you think? My God, no. (Pause) I was upset and so confused when the labs came back. I wanted to tell you John, I swear I did. We thought...

JOHN

My mother is the last person you should listen to.

LIZ

No, it was Jenn...

JOHN

Jenn? *That's* who you found solace in? A narcissist who only remembers that she has a child when it's convenient.

LIZ

I knew that you'd be angry at me and I didn't want you to blame yourself for our baby being sick. (Pause) John, I didn't have an abortion. I miscarried before I could make a decision.

JOHN

But *you* would have ab...

LIZ

I don't know. (Pause) I'm grateful the choice was made for me.

HELEN

(Off Stage but can be heard)

I'm the grandmother.

JOHN

Great. The morally corrupt band together...

(HELEN enters room)

HELEN

I came the second Nate told me.

JOHN

You have no right to be here.

HELEN

I have every right - I'm the grandmother.

JOHN

You relinquished all rights when you killed off my sister...

Stop it!

LIZ

JOHN
(Storms out)

I shouldn't have come.
(Pause looking around the room.)
The baby, where's the baby?

LIZ (crying)
In the NICU.

HELEN
What's wrong?

LIZ
She's premature.

HELEN (Excitedly)
She?

(JENN and NATE enter)

JENN
(Rushing to LIZ' side)
Lizzy...

LIZ
I can't lose her Jenn.

JENN
We're not going to lose her.

HELEN
Lose her, oh my God...

LIZ (to JENN)
John knows about the tests.

JENN
Nate told me. Where is he?

LIZ

He left when Helen got here.

NATE

Liz, I'm sorry I thought Helen should know.

HELEN

Maybe I *should* go?

LIZ

No Helen.

HELEN

I'll be back.

(HELEN leaves and quietly enters hospital waiting room stage left where JOHN is sitting)

(Lights change to waiting room)

HELEN

The nurse said I might find you in here.

JOHN

(Stands up and begins leaving)

HELEN

Johnny, don't! Don't shut me out. What happened between you and Liz?

JOHN

Your stench is all over this.

HELEN

Now what have I done?

JOHN

The *lab report* Mother. Our bad genes; the same toxic genes that killed Emma, and now *my* children.

HELEN

My God, what has gotten into you? What report John?

JOHN

You really don't know?

HELEN

No, I don't.

JOHN

When Liz was pregnant - the first time - she had genetic testing.

HELEN

No, she told me she didn't because of you.

JOHN

Well, she lied. I found the lab reports.

HELEN

With Emma's history it's exactly what she should have done.

JOHN

And exactly what I would expect from you. Take the easy way out...

HELEN

That's not fair.

JOHN

Isn't it Mother. You're the one that sent your genetically challenged child away to be raised by strangers.

HELEN

It wasn't like that. I didn't have a choice.

JOHN

Of course you did, and so did Liz. You're both cowards.

HELEN

A coward would never have had the courage to do what Liz did. She was devastated after losing that baby. And distressed for failing you.

JOHN

(Staring forward)

HELEN

She's hurting John.

JOHN

How could I agree to those tests? All I could see was Emma's sweet little face. (Pause) And now...now my own baby girl so little and so helpless...I will do everything in my power to help her.

HELEN

She's going to make it John.

JOHN

How could you not help *your* little girl Mother? Were we really that much of a burden? Ironic, isn't it? We were *both* raised by strangers while our mother travel coast to coast covering her ass.

HELEN

I will never make amends for what I did Johnny. If I could have changed things I would have, but it was just...it was too late.

JOHN

Why Mother? Why?

HELEN

I had my reason; we all do.

JOHN

Then what was yours? You owe me the truth - it's the least you can do.

HELEN

Your father and I were going through a rough time.

JOHN

That's a copout - what couple doesn't?

HELEN

Please, hear me out...Your father's career was suffering, his drinking was getting out of hand. Emma's needs were taking a toll on him - on us and he began to blame her situation for his failures. He became resentful. (Pause) John, he gave me an ultimatum.

JOHN

And you chose him over your children?

HELEN

(Slowly nods head)

JOHN

You're beyond pathetic!

HELEN

I regret it every second of every day. I thought that by sending Emma away I could have all of you - you, your father, and Emma. At first, he was tolerant - he said I needed time to transition.

JOHN

His poor fragile Helen...

HELEN

Then he became resentful and angry of all my traveling. But I couldn't stop - I couldn't leave her Johnny. She is (Starts to cry), was so wonderful, so loving. You would have been proud of her.

JOHN

(Listening)

HELEN

He said I couldn't have it both ways. I was such a damn fool, I was protecting him - I didn't want you to know the truth about your father. He was the coward Johnny - and I was the fool who went along with his plan. (Bitter smile) He left me anyway...

(NATE enters)

NATE

John, the doctor is looking for you.

JOHN

(Get ups looks at HELEN stares and begins to leave)

HELEN

John, I don't expect forgiveness, but you've got to forgive Liz. It doesn't mean you will forget, but it will set you free. You and Liz can be free. I never will be...

LIGHTS

Scene 10

Setting: Hospital room (has been moved down stage).

At Rise: Jennifer is at Liz's side.

LIZ

Why are they taking so long?

JENN

The doctor is probably running late. Please, don't worry Liz.

LIZ (Crying)

My arms are aching to hold her, Jenn.

JENN

You'll be holding her soon - I promise.

LIZ

How can you be so sure?

JENN

Mother's intuition...

LIZ

It's all I ever wanted Jenn, a baby of my own. I use to watch mom change your diapers and dress you - you were a living baby doll. I actually asked her if I could have one too. You know what she said? "It's not all it's cracked up to be." I didn't care though, I still wanted my own baby. And as I got older she warned me, well you remember.."it only takes once." Huh...look at me now - a spent old hen clinging to false hope. And you, one slip up and you're pregnant. It's not fair.

JENN

Life's not fair. Lord knows, we should both know that by now.

(Pause, taking LIZ'S hand)

You've taught me a lot this past year.

LIZ

Me?

JENN

You may not realize it, but you became a mother last summer - *before* you miscarried.

LIZ

What are you, "Republican Jenny" now?

JENN

Very funny, I'm serious Lizzy. Your love for your baby exuded the moment you knew you were pregnant. And then watching you go through this pregnancy - it's been beautiful.

LIZ

I don't know what I could possibly have taught you.

JENN

What I've been missing; I should never have sent Charlotte away. (pause) I guess it was just easier than being reminded everyday day of my inadequacies. If I wasn't good enough to be Dan's wife how could I be a good mother to Charlotte?

LIZ

You just married the wrong guy. If you'd just give yourself, and Charlotte, a chance you'd see what a great mother you are.

JENN

And a fantastic aunt! She's going to be fine Liz and she'll be in your arms soon, you'll see.

LIZ

I can feel it too. Mother's intuition is a beautiful thing.

JENN

Yes, it is. You rest - I'll be back.

(LIZ closes her eyes. Lights suggest time passing. JOHN enters hospital room and sits quietly in a chair watching LIZ sleep.)

LIZ

John!...you startled me.

JOHN

I was watching you sleep.

LIZ (sitting up)

The baby! What did the doctor say, is she okay?

JOHN

She's not out of the woods yet, but they're very hopeful.

LIZ

When can I see her?

JOHN

They'll bring her soon. (pause) The nurse asked me her name...

LIZ (Long silence)

We've always said Madison for a girl - Jackson for a boy.

JOHN

And now we have one of each!

LIZ

(Reaching for JOHN'S hand)

John, I don't expect you to understand what I've done, but I hope in time you will forgive me. I was protecting us from what I thought was a senseless disease with no chance to thrive. If our child were...is like Emma I will never turn away from her. Never!

JOHN

I know you wont, Liz. I was that scared little boy in bed so many years ago afraid of what I was going to hear. And I truly thought that by not having those test that I was protecting us. If we didn't know that maybe it would just go away, disappear...

LIZ

We wanted the same thing, didn't we?

JOHN

We did. Neither way was right - just different.

LIZ (Crying)

I love you.

JOHN

And, I love you. The mother of my child (laughs), children, and the love of my life...

(HELEN, JENN and NATE enter pushing hospital bassinet into room.)

JENN

The nurse said we could bring the baby to you...

LIZ (arms out)

Please, bring her to me...

(JENN lifts her and walks her to LIZ)

NATE

Maybe I should be the one to carry her?

LIZ
Jennifer knows what she's doing...

JENN
Nate told us about the adoption letter. I'm so happy for you.
(hands baby to LIZ)
She's beautiful!

JOHN
Just like her mother...

NATE
Now look who's a yummy mummy...
(ALL laugh)

LIZ
Helen, would you like to meet your granddaughter?

HELEN
(Gestures to come near)
May I?

LIZ
Of course.

HELEN
I can't believe it. I'm a grandmother...of *two*!
(picking up baby)
She's a little baby doll. Does she have a name yet?

LIZ
(Pause, speaking to JOHN)
Emma?

JOHN
(Nodding and smiling)
Emma.

(HELEN reaches for JOHN's hand, JOHN doesn't move at first. Then looking at LIZ he clasps HELEN'S hand as lights slowly fade.)

THE END