

Jess/Emma

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## Scene 8

*Emma and Jess in Jess's small apartment.*

Start

JESS. And he's cool about working for you?  
EMMA. What do you mean?  
JESS. A lot of guys couldn't handle that.  
EMMA. He's a feminist.  
JESS. Yeah, he's dating you, it goes without saying he's a feminist, but ...  
EMMA. What?  
JESS. No, if it's working, it's working. I mean, I would not want to be your employee, I give him a lot of credit.  
EMMA. What about you? New man in your life?  
JESS. No, my year's not quite up yet.  
EMMA. Your — ?  
JESS. Oh. You're not supposed to date anyone until you've been out for at least a year.  
EMMA. Oh. Oh.  
JESS. No need to be embarrassed.  
EMMA. I'm not.  
JESS. You are, but it's cool. *(Brief pause.)* Mel said your speech was incredible.  
EMMA. You talked to Mel?  
JESS. We talk on Sundays. Sometimes Dad gets on the phone, if he's not feeling too emotionally fragile. Which he was this week.  
EMMA. Are you serious? He won't get on the phone with you?  
JESS. Not out of malice, he just — you know him, he gets upset.  
EMMA. I just think that's incredibly fucked up.  
JESS. Whoa, negative words about our father?  
EMMA. I'm shocked.  
JESS. Well. It's not like you're calling me every Sunday, sis.  
EMMA. I'm sorry.  
JESS. Yeah, let's not do that, I'm just making the point that it can be a challenge to have an addict in the family, I'm done throwing the blame around.

EMMA. *(The sarcasm slips out.)* That's clear. *(Brief pause.)*  
JESS. What? *(Emma shakes her head.)*  
EMMA. So I actually need to tell you something.  
JESS. Yeah, I thought it was a long trip just for a visit.  
EMMA. This is going to be really hard. But I was very hurt that no one told me, and I made it a priority to come tell you in person.  
JESS. Okay. I'm listening.  
EMMA. Grandpa Joe spied for the Russians during World War II. *(Pause. No discernible reaction from Jess.)*  
JESS. I'm just thinking about how to respond to this.  
EMMA. I know. I know.  
JESS. No, um. I don't think you do. Actually. Sweetie, I already knew that. Should I not have told you that?  
EMMA. *(Forced calm.)* How did you know?  
JESS. Dad told me. *(Brief pause.)*  
EMMA. When?  
JESS. When? Um. Three? No four. Four? Years ago?  
EMMA. Four years ago?  
JESS. It was right after the first time I got out of rehab, so that was ... ninety-five. Yeah, about four years ago.  
EMMA. How did it ... / come up?  
JESS. Funny story, actually. It was when he took me on that trip to London, that "you got out of rehab" reward, penitent-father-fucked-up-daughter-bonding-type-thing. And while we were there he took me to Marx's grave. Not first on my list of tourist attractions but also not up for debate. And he started crying. Which I found to be over the top. I asked him what was wrong, and that's when he told me.  
EMMA. He said Grandpa was a spy.  
JESS. That was the gist of it. And I was kind of like, I appreciate you sharing this huge thing with me, but we both know the real reason you're crying is that I'm such a colossal disappointment so let's not dress it up, you know?  
EMMA. 1995 was the year I started the Joe Joseph Fund.  
JESS. Okay.  
EMMA. It just seems like it might have come up.  
JESS. I was back in rehab three weeks later, so it wasn't, strictly speaking, my tip-top priority.  
EMMA. Well, I guess that's the end of the conversation.  
JESS. What does that mean?

Leo/Emma's

EMMA. That's how you avoid every tough subject, that's how you refuse yourself from being part of our family, I'm not sure if you're aware of that.

JESS. He specifically asked me not to tell you. That's why I didn't say anything. I'm sorry you put me in a position where I had to tell you that. *(Brief pause.)* You know in group I talk about you a lot. About how I feel bad that you didn't really get to have a childhood, fucked up as I was.

EMMA. I'm sorry, but I'm not sure what the right response is to that. Is it thank you? *(Pause. Jess takes this with some grace.)*

JESS. Are you staying with Dad and Mel, while you're up here?

EMMA. No. With Uncle Leo.

JESS. Can I give you one tiny piece of advice? Punishing Dad isn't as fun or satisfying as you think it's going to be.

EMMA. I'm not punishing him.

JESS. Okay.

EMMA. I'm trying to surround the situation.

JESS. Well, go easy on him.

EMMA. Are you serious?

JESS. The irony is not lost on me. Just some hard-won wisdom, or whatever. *(Brief pause.)* You gonna be okay?

EMMA. Am I gonna be okay?

JESS. Um. Yeah. *(They look at each other.)*

Scene 9

Emma at Leo's house in the middle of the night. She sits at a table, drinking tea, poring over a document.

Leo enters in his pajamas.

LEO. Sammy get home? *(She startles.)* Sorry.

EMMA. Yeah, a while ago. He made curfew.

LEO. Good. Sober?

EMMA. *(Lying.)* What? I think so.

I.F.O. *(He's not buying it.)* Good cousin *(She snorts his name.)*

EMMA. Katie's so grown up.

LEO. She's somethin', huh?

EMMA. She — while you and Beth were cooking she asked what I was doing in Boston and I started to tell her —

LEO. Oh.

EMMA. But I realized you — so I didn't say anything.

LEO. Thanks.

EMMA. But you should tell her.

LEO. Keep meaning to. Somehow it ...

EMMA. Yeah. You should really tell them, though, all three of them, so they don't find out from the book.

LEO. I don't think my three jock kids will be perusing the nonfiction section anytime / soon.

EMMA. But you should still tell them.

LEO. I know. I will.

EMMA. Thanks for, uh ... it's been really nice to be here. *(A warm pause.)*

LEO. You wanna try to get some sleep?

EMMA. Soon. *(He begins to exit. Emma reads from a document.)*

Senators, in all dignity, in all self-respect, in all loyalty to the Constitution and to this country, I could not participate in the purposes of this committee.

LEO. What's that?

EMMA. It's your dad. *(She holds out the testimony to him.)* His testimony before the subcommittee. *(He doesn't come toward her.)*

LEO. Where did you get it?

EMMA. Federal repository on Madison Avenue. Any of us could have gotten it anytime. I just said Joe Joseph and they came back five minutes later with ... but I couldn't bring myself to read it, the whole bus ride up here, I just ... *(He takes it hesitantly.)*

LEO. Oh, man. "In all dignity, in all self-respect ..."

EMMA. He says some really wonderful things. Really brave.

LEO. God, I can hear his, his —

EMMA. Yeah, I know.

LEO. You remember / his —?

EMMA. A little. I remember being scared of him and thinking he was the smartest person in the world. *(She sees that he is immersed in the document.)* It's amazing, how they keep hounding him, they ask the same question about two hundred / different —

I.F.O. *(Reading. imitating his father.)* "Gentleman, that is the same