

Leo/Emma'ss

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.

LEO. *(Let not having 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 —

LEO. *(Reading. imitating his father.)* "Gentleman, that is the same

question, and I have already answered it."
 EMMA. What was your answer?
 LEO. "I decline to answer!" (They laugh.) That's terrible, your dad does a great / Joe Joseph.
 EMMA. No, it's good, it's good. I don't remember that well, he was so sick by the time I was ... I should stop you there. In a few pages it gets really disappointing.
 LEO. Why?

EMMA. He perjures himself. He flat out denies committing espionage, multiple times, they don't even ask the direct question, he just volunteers ... (He slips forward a few pages, finds it.)
 LEO. Hm.
 EMMA. So.
 LEO. Has Benny seen this?
 EMMA. I don't know. It turns out there's a lot Benny never shared with me. (Leo looks at the front page again.)

LEO. May 26th, 1953.
 EMMA. So you were ... five? Dad was three. Janie would've been ... I guess your mom was pregnant?
 LEO. Well, that's true. But what I was thinking was. The Rosenbergs were executed three weeks later. (This had not occurred to Emma. They are silent. He hands the testimony back to her.) Make me a copy? (She nods absent-mindedly. He kisses the top of her head, then starts to exit. He stops.)

LEO. When I was in kindergarten we made kites. As a project, arts and crafts. The teacher said we had to bring in, I don't know, fifty cents each, to pay for our materials, the kite sticks. I said, no need for that, I'll provide all the kite sticks for everyone; you see, my dad owns a lumberyard.
 EMMA. What?

LEO. We lived near a lumberyard, I don't know, I got confused, or I was ... building my dad up, bragging, you know, kid stuff. So I went home and told him we needed to get all those kite sticks. And his face. Just. Fell. He had been out of work for years. All those kite sticks, we didn't have any money.

EMMA. What did he do?
 LEO. What could he do? He wasn't gonna hang me out to dry like that. He bought the kite sticks. My mom must have been furious. That must have been a fight. Shit, that must have been a big fight. I keep thinking about that. Answer: damn well. (Leo looks at the page.)

Scene 10

Emma's apartment. Emma and Miguel, late at night.

EMMA. And I hated my Grandma Tessie, I didn't even go see her when she was dying, because the myth I grew up with was she left Joe at the height of the blacklist for some rich guy. I mean that wasn't a myth, it was true, but I realize now she must have known he spied, she must have thought he brought this on himself, and her, and three young kids, who she was supporting while he couldn't work, and she didn't see it as noble, she saw it as stupid, and irresponsible, and just think, as everything was starting to come out about what was happening under Stalin, and she must have thought — for this? We are destitute? My children are destitute? She was seven months pregnant and he was standing up there, denying — (The phone rings.) Don't answer that. (They wait it out. It stops. VO. You've reached Emma Jos — Dial tone. Emma plunges on.) And the legend about Vera, how she met him when he was penniless and suicidally depressed because he had no job, no marriage, he had lost hope in the beautiful dream that was the revolution, and she accepted him; she was proud to be with a man who stood before the committee and took the Fifth. But now that I've read the testimony I know he didn't always take the Fifth; he also lied. And I think it's very likely that Vera knew that too. So their marriage, it was like this tiny fortress against, against, against what had emerged to be a terrible mistake. Which they never acknowledged.

MIGUEL. May I say something?
 EMMA. Yeah.

MIGUEL. Joe worked for the OSS during the war, that's when he was passing information.

EMMA. Uh-huh.

MIGUEL. What did he do there? I mean, what was he privy to that mattered to the Soviets?

EMMA. Well, by 1945 he was deputy chief of the Far Eastern division, and he also, apparently, befriended some people in the