

Morty / Emma

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MIGUEL. We can talk about it, but I know that's what I want.
 EMMA. Well, I completely disagree.
 MIGUEL. I'm sorry to hear that, but in this kind of situation, the person who wants to take a break wins. That's just how it works.
 EMMA. What do you mean by "a break"?
 MIGUEL. You could make this a little easier for me, Em.
 EMMA. Are you breaking up with me?
 MIGUEL. I don't know.
 EMMA. What do you mean you don't know?
 MIGUEL. You're letting me down, okay? You're not acting like I ever thought you would act. And I need to think about whether I want us to make it through this. *(Pause.)*
 EMMA. Well, if it makes a difference I do want us to make it through this. I don't need to think about that because I know.
 MIGUEL. It does make a difference. But I still need to think. *(He picks up the petition.)*
 MIGUEL. Will you read this?
 EMMA. Honestly? Probably not. *(Sadly, he takes the petition with him. He exits.)*

Scene 2

Emma and Morty at Gene's restaurant. They have finished eating and the check is on the table.

A long pause. Morty's face a mask of pained kindness.

MORTY. Well. *(Pause.)*
 EMMA. This morning I received my first nasty email about it from a, um, right-wing ... someone with an advance copy. But it comes out on Friday, so. More people are going to notice.
 MORTY. Yes. They will. *(Pause.)*
 EMMA. I hardly think I need to say that you're released from any pledge you may have made to the fund.
 MORTY. Oh, / Emma.
 EMMA. The last time we sat here you asked me not to make a

fuss. I'm asking you not to, now. Let's just forget that whole thing.
 MORTY. Emma.
 EMMA. And please apologize to your accountant for me; I'm sorry I wasted his time.
 MORTY. Listen —
 EMMA. That's all. That's all. Okay? *(Emma takes the check from the edge of the table and opens it.)*
 MORTY. What are you doing?
 EMMA. I'm buying you lunch.
 MORTY. I won't hear of that.
 EMMA. It's the least I can do.
 MORTY. Give that to me. *(Emma puts her credit card in the check.)*
 EMMA. It's done.
 MORTY. Emma Joseph, you take that card back and you give that to me. *(Cowed, she does.)* I don't understand this attitude. I don't understand it at all. Am I to believe that this ... detail about your grandfather's biography. Leaves you totally uninterested in continuing your work?
 EMMA. It's not a question of being interested, Morty, I just can't continue.
 MORTY. So you're putting an end to the fund. Is that what you're telling me?
 EMMA. I don't see another choice.
 MORTY. I am simply amazed.
 EMMA. And I'm surprised, too, to hear you refer to what I just told you as a "detail." Considering the — well, the faith you put in my grandfather's legacy. I would think this would be pretty devastating to you, too, actually.
 MORTY. And when did you hear me say that your grandfather never spied for the Soviets? When did I say that? *(Brief pause.)*
 EMMA. You — ?
 MORTY. No, I didn't know. But sure, I knew. We're talking the 1940s: Take a walk in the East Village, throw a stone you hit a spy. I mean you didn't say that. You say that you sound a lot like a certain Senator from Wisconsin who you do not want to sound like. But ... *(A gesture to say "it was true.")* Mostly we're talking about nothing, we're talking about, I don't know, a good recipe for soap. You have a good recipe for soap, you mention it to somebody else in the Party, next thing you know you're meeting a guy named Nikolai on a bench, handing over your soap recipe so some Russian

kids can have a nice bath. This is the kind of thing that would later be called "spying," and for these people life would become hell. Now your grandfather was in government, so that's different. It did not help the Left in the long run what he and his colleagues, what they did.

EMMA. No.

MORTY. No. So, that's a lesson. And we move on. Right? *(Brief pause.)*

EMMA. The story I was raised with was that it was the government that lied, and cheated, and conspired.

MORTY. Still true.

EMMA. Still true, yes, but Joe met Soviet agents under highway overpasses and handed over unmarked envelopes; he had a *code name*; that was not what I heard on my father's knee.

MORTY. You're disappointed, I understand. You're disappointed in your family. It's terrible, I know, but Emma, this is not an uncommon predicament. And you ask me, it's not a reason to let down Mumia, to let down all the people you have promised to help. But I see your heart is no longer in it, and I will speak to my accountant and my lawyer later today, if that's what you want.

(Brief pause.)

EMMA. I'm trying really hard to figure out what the right thing to do is, Morty.

MORTY. It can be hard, can't it? Even for very bright, well-meaning people. In a tough situation, to know what's right? *EM*

Scene 3

Emma late at night. Her phone rings. It could be Miguel. She answers.

EMMA. Hello? *(Lights up on Mel.)*

MEL. Hi honey. *(Brief pause.)*

EMMA. Mel?

MEL. Don't hang up, okay? *(Brief pause.)* Your dad's asleep, it's just me calling. How are you?

EMMA. Fine.

MEL. Good. I'm fine too. Your sister is doing really well, I don't know if you've talked to her recently, she's... I know better than to feel sure of anything, but it's just incredible, how far she's come. The dogs are fine.

EMMA. Good.

MEL. I just, I'm calling because I want to tell you about the time I did some civil disobedience, the *one* time, I don't think I've ever told you about it because it's a pretty painful memory / actually.

EMMA. Mel —

MEL. Honey, just let me tell this story, okay? It was the Eighties, and it was for — never mind what it was for, who remembers, and I got put in jail, for, I don't know, a day, two days. You have to keep in mind, Emma, I'm a nice girl from the Midwest, this is *way* — being in jail, I'm terrified, I'm uncomfortable, I'm having panic attacks. Long story short your dad picks me up directly from jail once I'm released, we've been together maybe a year but it's before I moved in with you guys. And he takes me to Joe and Veras. And I'm thinking, this is gonna be *great*, because whereas my own Republican parents don't understand what the fuck I'm doing with my life, Ben's parents get it. And they'll be *proud*. And this is my new *family*. You know?

EMMA. Uh-huh.

MEL. So we get there. We get there, and Emma, they never fucking mentioned it. They went on and on about Leo, and especially Ben, and their political involvement and how they were so proud of their sons. And they didn't say one word to me about what I had done. What I had just been through.

EMMA. Why not?

MEL. Well, when we left, I said, Benji, I was so hurt, I said, "Why didn't they say anything?" And he said, "The Communist Party didn't approve of the cause you went to jail for." *(Pause.)* You know it hurt your dad too, the way they treated me, and I didn't blame him at the time. But looking back, I think why didn't *he* say anything? Why didn't he stand up to his dad and say he was proud of me? Kiddo, I want to say to you that I'm proud of you. I know what you're doing right now is hard and I'm proud of you.

EMMA. *(In tears.)* Thank you.

MEL. But I also have to say that what you're putting your dad through is cruel. Yell at him, curse, whatever, but you have to talk to him.