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# Life During Wartime

By Todd Solondz

Joy?  
Yeah?  
You okay?  
Uh-huh.  
You sure?  
Ever since we got here,  
you seem a little... upset.  
Oh, no, no.  
Just a little... dj vu.  
They have a lot of vegetarian options here,  
you know.  
Oh, I know.  
And, uh, I'm happy.  
Really. Promise.  
Okay.  
Well, I, um -  
I bought you a little present.  
Joy? Joy, what's wrong?  
[ Sniffles ]  
I -  
- What? Is - Is it your period?  
- No.  
I'm so sorry, Allen.  
It's okay.  
[ Sobs ]  
I'm okay.  
[ Gasping ]  
[ Sniffles ]  
Here, let me open it now.  
It's an original Gainsford reproduction.  
Late 1 880s.  
Oh. Where -Where did you find this?  
eBay.  
- Oh, Allen. You did this?  
- Look at the side.  
Isn't that amazing?  
I found it just like that.  
- [ Crying ]  
- Antique.  
What, you don't like it?  
[ Sniffling, Crying ]  
I'm sorry, Allen.  
I didn't mean to.  
[ Deep Breath ]

It's nothing.

You sure?

Mm-hmm. Thank you.

You're welcome.

[ Crying ]

Happy-

Happy-

Happy anniversary.

Allen. Allen, I really do like it.

I'm sorry. It's just -

You know how you always said

a person should forgive?

Forgive and forget. Yes.

Well, so I thought that

I should try to be more open.

Uh-huh.

- 'Cause I've been really trying, Joy.

- Mm-hmm.

- No more cocaine.

- Uh-uh.

- No more crack.

- Uh-uh.

- No more crack cocaine.

- Uh-uh.

No more hanging around

doing nothing without a job.

Mm-hmm.

No more sarcastic remarks

or physical attacks aimed at my boss.

Uh-huh.

No more helping old gang members

with burglaries and armed robberies.

Uh-huh.

No more getting into fights with strangers,

waking up in the gutter.

Uh-huh.

Oh, Joy. It's been

like a never-ending struggle.

And I keep fighting it,

but it's just this one thing I can't stop.

- I'm trying awful hard -

- Hello.

- Are you ready to ord -

- [ Allen Sniffles ]

Oh, sorry. Do you need some more time?

No, no. We're ready.

- Yeah.

- Um...

I was wondering if you could  
please tell us if you have any specials.  
Miss?

Say again?

I - I was wondering if you could please  
tell us if there's any specials, I mean.  
What did you say?

I - I, uh -

I was wondering if-

I know who you are.

I'm-I'm sorry. Do I know -

- [ Spits ]

- [Joy Gasps ]

- Fuckin' pervert!

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

What are you wearin' underneath,  
motherfuckin' scum?

Miss, he's changed.

He doesn't do that anymore.

We even threw out the phone book.

Really. He's a different person.

His voice is the same. Motherfucker.

Allen?

You don't still -

[ Voice Quavering ]

Just -Just a little.

On Sundays.

[ Allen Sniffles ]

[ Man, Laughing ]

'What the heck are you doing?'

[ Man, Woman Laughing ]

[ Woman ]

Oh!

[ Laughing Continues ]

You know -

You know what I like about you?

What? What?

You're so... normal.

[ Sputters ]

Me?

It feels so good to be with someone who isn't... weird.

- Or screwed up.

- [ Laughing ]

Or sicko-pervy.

- [ Sighs ]

- Oh. So, uh -

- Are your kids off at college?

- I wish.

Mine are all out of the house.

Hell, I'm out of the house.

Kicked out, that is.

Oh. Feeling lonely?

Well -

Divorce isn't easy after 3 5 years together.

Hell.

I haven't even been with a woman outside of Marj.

I'm not sure I would, uh - would know what to do.

Harvey. It's okay.

It's okay.

What you're feeling is normal.

I can't - I can't talk about my sex life.

- I can't talk about mine either.

- There's so much I don't understand.

Sometimes it's better not to understand.

My son, Mark- he's a great kid.

You know, he's a little troubled - just feels a little paranoid.

But he's - he's really a very sweet kid.

I know. Good heart.

Anyway, so he moved down here.

I wanted to be near him, you know...

help him adjust,

make sure that he doesn't get...

misinterpreted.

So I moved here also.

Oh.

That is so... beautiful.

Ah, he's a beautiful son.

You're a beautiful father.

- And you're -

- Don't say it.

Say it.

Say what?

Nothing.

You look like a tulip.

Trish.

I can't afford to fail, not again.

I hate failure.

[ Waiter ]

More water?

And for you?

You know, I first met Marj  
on a blind date.

Bill and I met on a blind date too.

- Harvey.

- Yes?

Have you ever been to Israel?

No. No.

But it's where I want to be buried.

Oh, my God.

Me too. Me too.

[ Alarm Chirps ]

Well - [ Chuckles ]

- Um -

- Hey.

Oh, my God.

You're so not my type...

but I - I don't know

what's coming over me.

Love, Trish.

Love.

-?? [ Male Chorus Singing In Hebrew..Sacred ]

-[ Boy ] ''What Does It Mean to Become a Man?

-?? [ Continues ]

-A Bar Mitzvah Speech. ''by Timmy Maplewood.

''According to my brother. Billy.

who's in college...

becoming a man means you're ready  
to take on certain responsibilities.

For example. learning to stand up  
for yourself and what you believe in...

even if it means everyone will make fun of you  
or say what you're doing is wrong...

or just plain hate you...

and put things up on the Internet about you

that are totally untrue.  
Even if it means getting beaten up.  
your face smashed in...  
wedgied raw and hard  
or just plain tortured.  
Even if it means being kicked out of school  
or arrested and put in jail.  
My father always believed  
in freedom and democracy.  
- And if he were alive today-  
- [ Garage Door Opening ]  
- [ Door Opens, Closes ]  
- Hi, Mom.  
[ Sighs ]  
Hi, hon.  
- Chloe in bed?  
- Yeah.  
But how come you're back so late?  
It's after midnight.  
Oh, Timmy. Timmy.  
What?  
I'm in love.  
Really? But you just met him.  
I know, but -  
What's he like?  
Is he like Dad was?  
Oh, no. He's totally different.  
Harvey's, um -  
Harvey's a real man.  
But Dad was a real man also.  
Yes, but -  
I don't know how to put this,  
but it's like -  
[ Laughs ]  
He has this power.  
What do you mean?  
I mean like -  
[ Deep Inhale ]  
He just touched me...  
touched my elbow right here  
just like this, and -  
- And -  
- And what?  
I got... wet all over.

Just by touching your elbow?  
I know. It sounds so strange,  
and it's so hard to explain.  
But it's like...  
I felt things I never knew  
I could feel.  
Like what?  
[ Sighs ]  
Like -  
Like a tulip just opening her petals.  
You felt like a tulip?  
Oh, my God. What is wrong with me?  
How can I be  
talking about this with you?  
What? Hello!  
But, Mom, why?  
- Why can't you explain?  
- Because.  
You're still a child.  
But I'm almost -  
- I'm almost a man.  
- [ Sighs ]  
A man.  
[ Sighs ]  
Are you still wet?  
Oh, no. I...  
dried myself with a paper towel.  
Now come. Let's go to bed.  
?? [ Woman Singing Aria In German ]  
- [ Door Buzzes ]  
-?? [ Stops ]  
- [ Cell Door Opens ]  
- [ Inmates Chattering In Distance ]  
[ Crows Cawing ]  
[ Seagulls Crying ]  
[ Birds Chirping ]  
?? [ Woman Singing Aria ]  
[ Vehicles Passing ]  
- [ Faucet Runs ]  
- [ Washing Hands ]  
[ Exhales ]  
[ Dial Tone ]  
[ Beeping ]  
[ Line Ringing ]



[ Phone Rings ]

Hello. Who is this, please?

Hello?

[ Timmy ]

Hello?

[Jet Engine Roaring ]

[ Woman ]

Oh, Joy!

[ Woman Crying ]

The schmuck! All men are schmucks.

Really, he's not.

We just need a little time apart  
to, um, reevaluate.

Wake up and smell the coffee.

He's a perv through and through.

Born a perv. He'll die a perv.

[ Sobs ]

Mom, are you okay?

I'm sorry.

It's just that I know

it's sadness that's brought you here.

And I probably shouldn't say this, but...

I'm so happy you're here.

I've missed you so much.

And you never visit.

And I know -who am I?

But I've been so lonely...

since that prick, your father, left me.

Oh, Mom.

But what about Trish? Doesn't she -

Trish has a life.

She has three kids, a real job.

And your other sister, Helen - I'm sorry.

Now, come, you're gonna have  
a whole new outlook on things.

And you're never gonna want  
to go back to New Jersey... ever again.

?? [ Alt Rock..Ballad ]

[ Man ]

? I heard somebody say ?

? That the war ended today ?

? But everybody knows

it's goin'still ?

? Our mother lands and mother seas

Here's what we believe ?  
? It's simple  
We don't wanna kill ?  
?? [ Chorus Vocalizing ]  
?? [ Ends ]  
Good evening. Can I help you?  
Yes. I'd like to sit down.  
And how many are you?  
One.  
Do you have a reservation?  
No.  
Let me see what's available then.  
Great. Come right this way.  
Here now.  
A waiter will take care of you  
in just a moment.  
Would you like  
something to drink in the meantime?  
No, thank you.  
Great.  
Um, hi.  
[ Gasps ]  
Andy.  
Can I join you?  
Oh, please.  
Please sit down.  
I've missed you.  
Oh, God. Andy.  
I've missed you too.  
I felt so bad for what I did.  
It was my fault.  
No.  
No, it wasn't. It was mine.  
I shouldn't have -  
It must have taken... a lot of courage.  
I don't know.  
I was just so sad.  
I don't remember much.  
It was so long ago, but I think  
I must have done it the right way...  
because I wasn't really conscious  
of anything happening.  
That's good.  
The plastic bag was probably key.

Without it -  
Oh. That would have been horrible.  
Too horrible.  
- You could've ended up -  
- A vegetable. I know.  
I always felt so guilty.  
No. No, you shouldn't have.  
I -  
I guess I just overreacted.  
I should have married you.  
Really?  
You think you would have been  
happy with me?  
It was a beautiful ashtray  
that you gave me.  
My name engraved.  
Oh, I should have -  
I shouldn't have spoken  
the way I did.  
I should've let you  
just keep the ashtray.  
That's okay.  
Things worked out all right in the end.  
I - I mean -  
Do you miss life?  
I don't know.  
I miss -  
I miss my room...  
my laser disc collection.  
I spent so many years -  
I'm sorry I said you were shit  
and I was champagne.  
- That's okay. That's okay.  
- [ Sniffles ]  
Sometimes the truth -  
I think it's made me a better person.  
Do you think we could have  
another go at it?  
Like on a trial basis.  
But, Andy, I'm married.  
That's okay.  
No one has to know.  
It would be our secret.  
Just you and me, together.

I have so many problems, Andy.  
My husband and I -  
I don't know what to do. He's -  
[ Deep Breath ]  
Oh, and I feel so betrayed.  
Sometimes, cheating can help a marriage.  
No. No, don't say that.  
Cheating is wrong.  
Unfair. It's hurtful.  
One man for the rest of your life?  
It's unnatural.  
Oh, but I'm trying to improve things.  
Tell me, Joy, please...  
after all that's passed,  
knowing all you know now...  
do you wish you could've  
been with me before?  
No.  
Eat shit, you fucking cunt.  
You think you're improving  
other people's lives...  
saving them or freeing them -  
from what?  
The fuck do you know  
about other people?  
What? Idiot!  
Why did I kill myself?  
I should've killed you!  
?? [ Man Singing In Hebrew..Sacred ]  
[ Crying ]  
- Mom!  
- Yes, Timmy?  
Is Dad really dead?  
Why are you asking me this now?  
Avi Fleischer told me  
he found him on the Internet...  
and that he was sent to jail  
for raping young boys.  
And now everyone at school  
is saying that my dad's alive...  
and that he's a pedophile.  
- Oh, Timmy. Shh, shh. It's okay.  
- Then he said he was a faggot.  
- Oh, Timmy.

- And then he said that I was a faggot.

- So I -

- Timmy, what did you do?

I didn't do anything.

I just ran away-

[ Crying ]

like a faggot.

Oh, Timmy, listen to me.

You are not a faggot, and your father-

He's alive?

[ Sobs ]

And he's a -

- Why didn't you tell me?

- I don't know.

I thought it would be better

for you to think that -

to think that maybe he was in heaven.

- But I could've helped him.

- No, honey.

No one could help him.

He-He was beyond help.

- Where is he now?

- Locked up, up north.

It doesn't matter.

- Does Billy know?

- Billy's older.

Billy's in college.

- I hate you.

- Timmy, please.

Please forgive me.

You-You have to understand

that I just wanted to protect you.

I just - I wanted you to grow up

free and happy, as if he were dead.

Fuck you, bitch.

- [ Door Slams ]

- [ Gasps ]

- [ Crying ]

- Mommy.

Yes, honey. Are you ready for me

to take you to karaoke class?

I ran out of my Klonopin.

Do you have any I can have first?

Of course, honey.

Just go into my medicine cabinet.

Okay.

Okay.

- Oh, God.

- I can't find it!

Just take half a Wellbutrin.

They're on the bottom right,  
next to the Percocet.

[ Girl ]

Okay!

You know what?

Just bring over the whole bottle.

[ Sobs ]

?? [ Chorus Singing In Hebrew ]

[ Knocking ]

Sweetheart.

Timmy.

I know how you must feel -  
like I felt when I found out -  
like you were lied to.

And, yes, I did lie.

But I lied to you because I love you...

because I didn't want any harm  
to come to you.

But what if I become one though?

I don't wanna be a faggot.

There's this kid in my language arts class,  
and he's so gay.

You won't. You won't.

I promise.

I'm sorry I called you ''bitch.''

Oh.

[ Sniffles ]

It's okay, honey.

[ Kiss ]

Sweet dreams.

[ Pills Clattering ]

- [ Door Opens ]

- [ Timmy ] Mom.

- Are you okay, honey?

- Yes.

But I need to talk to you.

Uh-huh? Go on.

Well...

what exactly does a man do to a boy  
when he's... raping him?  
I mean, I know of course exactly  
what you would do with a girl and all...  
but with a boy, where do things go?  
Oh, Timmy. Oh, Timmy, Timmy.  
Please tell me.  
Really. I need to know.  
- I'm almost a man.  
- All right.  
Well, you know how things  
are different between boys and girls?  
Yeah.  
Well, uh...  
they're the same between boys and boys.  
Uh-huh.  
So, well, it's like -  
When Harvey touched me  
for the first time on the elbow -  
That's all it takes is a touch.  
Just a touch can be enough.  
You mean, if a man just touches me -  
No man should ever touch you.  
But what if he does? Or by accident.  
You scream.  
Avi Fleischer said  
that pedophiles are terrorists...  
and that they stick their penises  
into your... tushy.  
Avi Fleischer doesn't know  
what he's talking about.  
There are other things.  
Your father may have been a pedophile,  
but he was also a man and a father...  
- and some things -  
- Oh, Mom.  
I don't want anything ever  
to go inside of me, not ever.  
Oh, Timmy. Timmy, don't worry.  
Don't worry. Nothing -  
Nothing will ever get inside you!  
Not so long as I'm around.  
[ S.U.V. Departing ]  
[ Lawn Mower Whirring In Distance ]

[ Insect Buzzing ]  
[ Door Clattering ]  
[ Lock Snaps ]  
[ Clock Ticking ]  
[ Clock Chiming ]  
?? [ Woman Singing Aria ]  
[ Children Shouting. Laughing Outdoors ]  
[ Birds Chirping ]  
?? [ Piano..Lounge]  
- ?? [ Continues ]  
- [ People Chattering ]  
Mind if I join you?  
Please.  
Forgive me. Please tell me you're straight.  
- I am.  
- Oh, thank God.  
So what are you doing here all alone?  
Work.  
- You like your work?  
- It pays.  
Good. Then we don't have  
to talk about it.  
- Are you alone?  
- Married.  
Alone. The same thing.  
No. Alone is alone.  
I'm good at reading people, you know.  
What do you read now?  
Well, I see a man...  
and he's alone, and he's straight.  
That's good enough for me.  
You are good.  
My husband was a fag.  
Must have been hard.  
Only man I ever loved.  
What happened to him?  
Stuff.  
- Any kids?  
- Not anymore.  
Just a pack of wolves,  
and they're out for blood.  
How so?  
They've decided I'm the villain.  
- I'm a monster.



- Why do they think that?  
'Cause I am a monster.  
People can't help it...  
if they're monsters.  
They can't be forgiven either.  
Have you asked for forgiveness?  
[ Scoffs ]  
I'm not a fool.  
If I were them,  
I wouldn't forgive me either.  
In my family,  
there are only winners and losers.  
And only losers ask for forgiveness.  
Only losers expect to get it.  
The world out there...  
it can be harsh.  
What the hell do you know  
about the world out there...  
that I don't already know... twice over?  
The enemy's within.  
Your room have a view?  
No.  
Same here.  
Who the fuck needs one anyway?  
Why do you feel that way?  
What are you, a shrink?  
I need more than a caress.  
[ Grunting, Gasping ]  
How much do you need?  
- What?  
- It's okay.  
I understand.  
It was hard work.  
I'm old.  
There's a stash in the Chanel -  
the zippered pocket. Take it all.  
What are you looking at?  
Don't start pretending like you care...  
like I'm not a monster...  
like I still have a heart that -  
Forgive me.  
Fuck off, prick.  
[ Trish ] What do you want, honey?  
Let me just make it simple for her.

She's got some food issues.  
Let's just get a mesclun salad, no pepper.  
Just very simple.  
And I'll have the Salade Nioise  
with the dressing on the side.  
- [ Waiter] Perfect. It'll be right out.  
- Thank you.  
Joy, I am so happy to see you.  
- I'm so happy to see you too.  
- And you know something?  
- What?  
- You look good.  
- Really?  
- I mean it.  
You put some meat on your bones.  
You used to look so peaked all the time.  
I thought, 'Maybe she's got  
some rare blood disease.  
But, Trish,' I said, 'Leave her alone.  
She's old enough.  
If she wants to be vegetarian  
to prove some point, then, you know' -  
But, golly. So you're back  
to eating red meat?  
No.  
Wow, even so. God knows how,  
but that tofu is workin', girl.  
- Thanks.  
- [ Laughing ]  
You look good too.  
- You know what my secret is?  
- What?  
[ Whispering ]  
I met someone.  
Really? Oh, that's great.  
- And...  
- And?  
we're getting married.  
- No!  
- Yes!  
Oh!  
[ Squeals ]  
The kids haven't met him yet,  
so provided they like him -

Oh, Trish.  
Billy I'm not worried about,  
but Timmy and Chloe...  
they're - they're still children.  
Oh, I know.  
It's a secret. No one knows -  
not Helen, not even Mom.  
I promise. I won't tell a soul.  
[ Sighs ]  
But don't you think you're maybe...  
rushing things a bit?  
I mean, men are -  
I don't know. And after Bill.  
- Bill was totally different.  
- Still.  
No. No. The past is the past.  
Dead. Gone. Wipe my hands.  
Forgotten.  
It's got nothing to do  
with me and the kids.  
- We live in Florida now.  
- I'm sorry. Just - Just -  
Now, Harvey, on the other hand,  
well, he's not very attractive.  
He's older.  
He's not even that well off.  
He's divorced.  
Poor thing had a horrible, horrible wife.  
But he's Jewish. He's pro-Israel.  
He did work for Bush and McCain,  
but only because of Israel.  
He knows these people are complete idiots  
otherwise, so don't worry.  
Basically, he's just a plain,  
totally family-oriented kind of guy.  
- He's a real mensch.  
- Oh.  
Joy, I need this to work.  
Have-Have you -  
And was it -  
So normal!  
- Oh, Trish, I'm so happy for you.  
- Me too. Me too.  
But you -What about you?

You haven't told me a thing.  
Oh. I'm fine. I'm -  
- How's Allen?  
- Oh, fine. Fine.  
[ Deep Breath ]  
Just don't listen to Mom. Really.  
Everything's the same - fine.  
I just needed to get away for a bit.  
A little me time.  
What about your work with the ex-cons?  
How's that going?  
Oh, fine, fine. I miss them already.  
But, my God.  
Working with those criminals  
and-and... rapists. I -  
I don't know, Joy. Don't you ever  
think about working with -  
with the victims - good people?  
Not all criminals and rapists  
are bad, Trish.  
I don't know what your dictionary says,  
but it's pretty clear in mine.  
But I'm sorry. I don't mean to criticize.  
It's your profession,  
and I totally respect that.  
It's just - I could never do it.  
You're a saint. Really.  
Really, it's just a job.  
All right now. Salade Nioise.  
Oh, I'm sorry. I asked  
for the dressing on the side.  
Oh, I'm sorry.  
We'll take care of that right away.  
I'm sorry.  
[ Sighs ] You know, Joy,  
there's something I never told you.  
I guess being the older sister,  
sibling rivalry and all -  
But now that we're  
so much more bonded -  
[ Sighs ]  
I always believed deep down -  
and so did Mom and Dad and Helen...  
'cause we discussed it all

so many times, but -  
When you married Allen...  
w-we thought you were so...  
brave.  
But... why?  
I may as well confess.  
I know everything. We all have.  
Allen's... problem, his -  
And how you tried so hard  
to cure him...  
so he could be normal.  
And how you eventually thought  
he was cured - as if.  
Joy, there are no secrets in the family.  
You of all people, you must know that by now.  
You've always been an open book.  
But you seemed so desperately happy...  
and we all so desperately  
wanted you to be happy.  
And it seemed like if it wasn't Allen, then -  
I'm sorry.  
I'm so sorry, but it's important  
that we be open with each other.  
Joy, you're a beautiful woman,  
even if you're past your-  
And I really think,  
from the bottom of my heart...  
that you should just drop him.  
Drop your job, drop everything  
and move to Florida.  
Down here, it's easy to forget everything...  
start over, fresh - like me -  
as if you were still young.  
I mean, what are you really gonna miss?  
What matters more than family?  
Friends come and go.  
A job is just a job.  
Shopping, food, HBO -  
everything here, same as anywhere else.  
Joy, don't take this the wrong way.  
I just -  
I love you so much.  
I love you.  
-?? [ Alt Rock..Ambient ]

-?? [ Man Singing. Indistinct ]

- [ Woman ] Joy!

- [ Exclaims ]

-?? [ Ends ]

-[ Lighter Flicks ]

God.

I can't tell you how happy I am to see you,  
how happy I am you found me.

- Oh, me too.

- I've been feeling so guilty.

Oh, but really, Helen,  
you didn't do anything wrong.

I know, but still.

- Everyone understands.

- I know.

And I forgive them...

but even so -

Cutting ties with Mom, Dad,  
Trish especially-  
it must have been hard.

It was.

Really, I can't tell you.

I missed you, but -

It's all right. I understand.

And I forgive you.

I just felt bad -

I mean, when I couldn't reach you...

'cause you were unlisted.

I had no choice.

I can't tell you, Joy, how many times  
I thought about calling you.

Really?

I was too guilt-ridden.

Oh, Helen. All this time, we all thought  
you were just ashamed of us -  
of being related to us, like it would  
ruin your career or something.

Ashamed?

How could you -

I'm sorry. I should have had more faith.

We all should have been more understanding.

I was going through a very intense time.

I'd given up on poetry.

It had become too -

too easy.  
And I was feeling crushed  
by the enormity of my success.  
And I was afraid.  
But you know something?  
It turns out writing a good screenplay  
is a much harder...  
and purer process.  
Still, it must at least be neat  
going out with Keanu.  
[ Sighs ]  
There's nothing neat about it.  
I'm sorry.  
That was a stupid thing to say.  
- It's fucking idiotic.  
- You're right.  
I mean, like, we're still a country at war!  
- ?? [ Cell Phone Ringtone ]  
- Oh, God.  
[ Scoffs ]  
Salman again.  
He wants to know  
what he should wear to the Emmys.  
Kwaku?  
So, how long do you plan  
on staying out here?  
Oh, I don't know.  
I thought maybe if I could stay with you  
just till I got my life together.  
- How much time are we talking?  
- I don't know.  
I'm sure I could find a job within  
a couple of months - or weeks.  
Days if I really set my mind to it.  
And what are you gonna do out here?  
Try working with ex-cons again.  
I've had a lot of success  
with penitentiaries back east.  
And California, well -  
There are so many prisons here,  
so I thought that I could maybe -  
- And if that doesn't work out?  
- Oh, anything. Really, anything's fine.  
[ Helen ]

Anything?

Yeah, anything.

Say, do you know Joni Mitchell?

I heard she lives out here...

and she's someone I've always thought

I'd really connect with...

like she'd really get me, you know?

Maybe she could give me some advice.

Can I give you some advice?

Oh, please.

No. Actually, I have no advice for you.

[ Sighs ]

[Joy ]

Did I say something wrong?

No. Why?

Then why do you still

have to make fun of me?

Make fun?

Yes.

I'm not -

[ Clicks Tongue ]

Oh, God. Please, Joy.

I try. I really do.

But you and Keanu and everyone...

thinks I mock them...

that I'm cruel and condescending,

that I have no heart.

And it's really hard.

It's hard on me,

because I really do love you.

I do.

And I know how you didn't come  
all this way and hunt me down for nothing.

You really just want my advice  
on men and marriage and Allen...

and why nothing works out...

and you feel like a total loser-  
the self-disgust, self-loathing.

Life has no point, it's over,  
you're basically dead...

blah, blah, blah, blah, blah,

and you think maybe I have the answer.

But, Joy, I'm only human.

I'm sorry.



It's my fault. I shouldn't have.

No. It's okay.

[ Sniffles ]

I'm used to that. I can take it.

But thanks.

- [Joy ] ? I try to forgive ?

- ?? [ Acoustic Guitar]

? I try to forget ?

? Try not to relive ?

? What makes me upset ?

? We all make mistakes ?

? So why not admit them? ?

? I made a mistake ?

? It's just like Vietnam ?

? Life during wartime ?

? Life during wartime ?

? Time-to-reflect time ?

? Time-to-rethink time ?

? Life during -??

[ Gasps ]

Oh, Andy.

I'm sorry about before.

It's just I'm off my medication and -

Really, I didn't mean what I said.

What are you doing here?

I don't know.

I saw you all alone, and I thought -

What?

Was your song about me?

No.

[ Helen Moaning ]

[ Helen, Man Moaning ]

You know...

just listening to Helen and Keanu, I -

I can't help but thinking -

What?

What about you and I spend the night

together, just like old times?

But we never spent the night

together before.

Old times?

We never did anything.

I wouldn't let anything happen.

[ Moaning Continues ]

Wouldn't you like to change things?  
Change the past?  
Fix everything like it could have been?  
Done the right thing?  
Oh, Andy.  
Sometimes -  
Sometimes it's better to just...  
- [ Moaning Intensifies ]  
- let go.  
[ Moaning Continues ]  
[ Helen Sighing ]  
Do you think Helen's happy?  
Yes.  
I think she's faking it.  
Sometimes just pretending  
can be better than the real thing.  
[ Sighs ]  
Oh, but I hate pretending.  
Everyone pretending.  
I'm not pretending.  
Imagine a world where no one pretended.  
Please forgive me.  
I tried, but I just can't fake it.  
Come on, Joy.  
- Come on, Joy!  
- No. No.  
- Come on, Joy. Joy. Joy.  
- No. No.  
[ Shouts ]  
Back off, motherfucker!  
[ Gasps ]  
[ Sobbing ]  
[ Line Rings ]  
[ Phone Rings ]  
[ Ringing Continues ]  
- Hi. this is Joy.  
-And this is Allen.  
[ Both ] Please leave a message  
at the sound of the-  
[ Machine Beeps ]  
[Joy ]  
Allen?  
I just wanted to tell you  
that I'm coming home.

I-I miss you.  
I'm sorry.  
but relationships are so complicated.  
Sometimes I ask myself.  
what am I doing?  
Why are we fighting?  
Why does anyone fight?  
What good does it do?  
Your problem - well. it just seems  
so unimportant now.  
It's probably psychological or genetic.  
I really don't care.  
I forgive you.  
if forgiveness even mattered.  
Really. all I want is just to be with you  
and my ex-cons and security guard friends...  
maybe have a heart-to-heart  
with that poor waitress.  
Oh. Allen. I just hope you haven't been  
too depressed or anything.  
But don't worry. I'm on my way.  
And I love you.  
- [ Grunting ]  
- [ Moaning ]  
[ Grunting Continues ]  
- Oh! Yeah!  
- [ Rhythmic Panting ]  
Fuck family.  
Fuck motherhood.  
Fuck the kids.  
I just don't care anymore.  
What I said before -  
about the kids and family-  
I didn't really mean it.  
I know.  
[ Sighs ]  
Love really can change a person.  
[ Both Sigh ]  
Don't ever leave me.  
I won't survive it.  
Promise me.  
- Mommy?  
- Yes, Honey?  
Do you think baby carrots feel pain?

- [ Background.. Video Game Playing ]  
- [ Doorbell Rings ]  
Timmy, could you get the door?  
Sure, Mom.  
Hi. Hi. Harvey Wiener.  
Nice to meet you.  
You must be Timmy.  
- Nice to meet you.  
- Yeah. That's my son, Mark.  
Hi! Oh! Look at those tulips.  
Those are beautiful.  
Red for love.  
What about the white?  
- Uh -  
- [ Both Laugh ]  
- Timmy!  
- Uh, for forgiveness.  
- I'm sorry if we're a little early.  
- Oh, please. Come on in.  
- Mark, hi. I'm Trish. It's nice to meet you.  
- Oh, my God, who's that?  
Timmy, get the door, sweetheart.  
This is Chloe. Say hi.  
- Oh, hi, Chloe.  
- Come on, sweetheart. Say hi.  
Hi. How are you?  
Mmm!  
[ Smacking Lips ]  
Mmm! This chicken - out of this world.  
Really? It's not too dry?  
Oh, like butter. Mmm!  
Oh, and the sauce.  
- It's Israeli style.  
- Ah.  
Mommy, the baby carrots -  
they're looking so sad.  
Aw. Shoot 'em on over.  
I'll cheer 'em up.  
- Thank you.  
- Chloe is studying karaoke after school.  
- Her teacher thinks she has a lot of potential.  
- Oh, I'll bet.  
Would you like to sing  
for Harvey after dinner, Chloe?

Sorry. It's the Klonopin.  
She's on a new dosage.  
Mm-hmm. I see. Yeah. Oh, yeah.  
So, Mark, what do you do?  
Systems analysis.  
That sounds interesting.  
It is to me - moderately.  
Like intermediate-level Sudoku.  
But I have no illusions that what I do  
is of any interest to anyone else...  
even amongst specialists.  
I'm something of a functionary,  
but without ambition...  
or even hope of ambition.  
I plateaued in grad school,  
then lost interest...  
except in maintaining a base salary adequate  
to financing a low-overhead subsistence.  
Are you seeing anyone?  
No, I'm more focused on China.  
Everything else is history.  
It's just a question of time.  
Talk to him.  
So, Timmy...  
your mom tells me you're gonna  
be bar mitzvahed soon.  
- Yeah.  
- Hmm.  
I remember my bar mitzvah.  
You remember yours, Mark?  
Timmy's preparing a special speech -  
a D'var Torah. Isn't that right?  
- Oh.  
- Yeah.  
Mmm. What's the topic?  
It's on becoming a man.  
Oh. Interesting.  
Actually, it's mainly about the story  
of Joseph and forgiveness.  
Like when you're supposed to forgive  
someone, even if you don't want to...  
and how that makes you a man -  
things like that.  
Like 'forgive and forget'?

Well, like for example...

say I...

punched you in the face.

If I said I was sorry,

would you forgive me?

Well, of course he would,

but why would you do such a thing?

- That's not the point, Mom.

- No. I understand.

Yes, I would forgive you.

[ Chuckles ]

I think, uh, I would ask for an explanation.

So that you believe I'm really sorry?

Well -

Look, um, like I told you,

I'm sure I would forgive you, but...

well, I'm not sure that I would forget.

[ Laughing ]

But let's say, for example, a terrorist

blows up your office building.

- Do you still forgive?

- God forbid.

But what if that terrorist

had a good reason?

Terrorists, by definition,

do not have good reasons.

But what if your family

were killed and tortured?

Wouldn't you want to do something

about it, to protect others?

Timmy, these terrorists are evil.

And cowards.

They're not like you and me.

They don't believe

in freedom and democracy.

Your mother's right.

Timmy, are you saying

you would forgive the 9/11 terrorists?

Well, of course you can't

forgive those terrorists.

They're dead.

[ Sighs ]

If it's possible to forgive and forget...

or to forgive and not forget...

when would you forget

but not forgive?

[ Dog Barking In Distance ]

I think it's possible

someone does something...

really terrible to you -

like, really horrible -

something that hurts you so bad,

and it's so painful.

Maybe then it's better to forget...

and live without all that pain...

instead of forgiving and remembering.

[ Birds Chirping ]

Gumdrops?

See, like, my dad

had this drinking problem...

which is, like, totally genetic.

His father died at, like, 43 or something

from alcohol poisoning.

So, anyway, anytime something

would go wrong at work...

he'd go out, get plastered,

come home, punch out my mom...

like it was all her fault.

- [ Woman ] Are they still married?

- Mmm.

Yeah. Still in love.

- Oh, my God.

- [ Man ] Even though he -

Yes.

[ Chuckling ]

Whoa. That's, like, totally fucked.

- [ Man #2 ] Yeah.

- [ Woman #1 ] I know.

Man.

[ Woman #1 ]

Okay, Billy. It's your turn.

- Oh, I don't know.

- Come on.

Yeah, everyone else has.

[ Woman #2 ]

Who comes from the most fucked-up family?

[ Man #1 ]

Whose parents are the most fucked up?

[ Billy ]

Really, I can't compete.

[ Woman #1 ] Billy, you're so weird. Don't tell me you don't come from a fucked-up family.

Really.

My father died. That's about it.

[ Man #2 ]

Was it suicide?

No.

[ Woman #2 ]

Then how did he die?

I forget.

- [ Woman #2 ] Right.

- [ Man #1 ] So lame.

[ Woman #1 ]

All right then. Looks like I win.

[ Man #1 ]

Yeah. Best vaginalogue.

[ Man #2 ] No, but really, her family is the most fucked up.

[ Woman #2 ] Yeah, but it's only because she was a foster child.

- Otherwise, I'd so win.

- [ Woman #1 ] Uh, I don't think so.

[ Woman #2 ]

Uh, you weren't molested by your step-dad.

[ Woman #1 ] Oh, boo-hoo. Sorry, Sarah, but child molestation has been, like, so done. And he only used his fingers anyway.

Get over it.

[ Others Laughing ]

- Billy, where you going?

- [ Man #2 ] Yeah, don't leave.

- [ Man #1 ] Hey, come on, Billy.

- Please stay.

- Come on, we're just kidding around. Billy!

- Come on!

[ Door Closes ]

[ Sighs ]

[ Knocking ]

[ Knocking ]

Billy.

Co - Come inside.

[ Door Closes ]



[ Inhales ]

I needed to see you.

How'd you find me?

Stopped by your mom's.

She was out.

The house was empty.

[ Exhales ]

Do you want some water?

Thanks.

[ Cap Twists ]

[ Exhales Sharply ]

One more?

Yeah.

[ Cap Twists ]

[ Exhales Sharply ]

Thanks. I needed that.

So how's school?

Okay.

What's your major?

Anthropology.

You planning on grad school?

Probably.

- Get into research?

- Yeah.

Maybe.

I'm doing a paper on homosexuality

in the animal kingdom.

I've done a lot of reading

on the bonobo monkey.

They share, like, 98%?

of the human genetic profile.

But they substitute sex for aggression...

and regularly engage in incest -

father/daughter, father/son...

mother/son.

It's a very peaceable lifestyle.

Are you gay?

No.

Sure?

Yeah.

So you like women?

Yeah.

I mean, really like women?

Yes.

Do you fantasize stripping them,  
fucking them...  
raping them?  
Well, not -  
Not rape. Not really.  
No rape fantasies?  
No.  
No, I - I don't think so.  
[ Inhales ]  
Got any more gumdrops?  
Uh -  
Why didn't you ever write?  
We didn't think it would be a good idea.  
- Your mother and I -  
- She told everybody you were dead.  
Well, she was right.  
I went along.  
Good.  
That's good.  
It's good you didn't write.  
It's good you were dead.  
I tried to forget.  
And then I tried to remember.  
And I couldn't.  
Me too.  
Forgive me.  
[ Scoffs ]  
There's nothing to forgive.  
I mean, it -  
It's all unforgivable.  
I have no sympathy for you.  
They did a lot of work on me.  
'Work'?'  
Rehabilitation.  
And?  
I take medication.  
And-And that works?  
Nothing works.  
It just goes on... forever.  
I just had to come and see  
that you wouldn't...  
become me.  
[ Breathing Quavers ]  
Cases - people like me.

Genetically speaking, I'm lucky.  
I mean, we're lucky.  
It's a recessive thing.  
I tried to stay the course.  
Three kids.  
You should have cut and run.  
But, you know, when you were born...  
and I held you -  
So tiny.  
The future seemed so... possible.  
[ Bottle Clatters On Table ]  
No, please don't go.  
Just keep pretending...  
like before.  
If you pretend enough -  
[ Voice Breaking ]  
Thanks for the gumdrops.  
- [ Door Opens, Closes ]  
- [ Breathing Quavers ]  
?? [ Orchestra..Hymn ]  
? He shall feed his flock ?  
? Like a shepherd ?  
? And he shall gather ?  
? The lambs with his arm ?  
? With his arm ?  
? And carry them ?  
? In his bosom ?  
? And gently lead those ?  
? That are with young ?  
?? [ Distorted ]  
- The computer died.  
- Tech support.  
Oh, and that was so beautiful.  
[ Harvey Clapping ]  
Although next time maybe you could learn  
something a little more -  
Jewish?  
Don't you listen to him.  
Mr. Sarcastic.  
Mom, could I please have  
a moment alone with Harvey...  
while Mark is fixing the computer?  
Well, yeah, sure.  
Please follow me.

Please sit down.

Make yourself comfortable.

Thank you, Timmy.

Hmm. Nice place.

My mom says

you're planning to marry her.

Well, one step at a time.

We'll see how things go.

You mean my mom is wrong?

You're not planning to marry her?

Timmy...

I love your mother very much.

- So are you getting married?

- I hope so.

We both hope so.

A lot of that depends on you.

You know, while my brother is away at college,

I've been the man of the house.

Oh, I know that. Your mother's told me.

She's very proud of you.

If something doesn't meet my approval,

it's up to me to decide what to do.

Ooh.

That's a lot of responsibility.

You know, I'm almost 13.

You don't have to talk to me

like I'm still a child.

I'm sorry.

I have some questions for you.

If you lie, I'll find out...

and I won't let you

go through with the marriage.

I won't lie to you, Timmy.

I'm an open and honest person.

Have you ever had sex with a man or boy?

No.

- Not a single time?

- No.

Not even in your dreams?

No.

Okay.

Do you think a pedophile

is a terrorist?

What -What?

Um, well, I mean -  
If you ever met a pedophile,  
what would you do?  
Timmy, I would never-  
Y-You're touching me.  
- Timmy...  
- [ Gasping ]  
I know where you're coming from.  
And I want you to know -  
Oh, my God.  
Oh, you poor kid. Come here.  
[ Screaming ]  
[ Footsteps Running ]  
[ Timmy Crying ]  
?? [ Timmy Chanting In Hebrew ]  
?? [ Continues ]  
?? [ Continues ]  
Joy.  
Joy, it's been so long.  
- Andy, no. No.  
- Please don't forget me again, Joy.  
- I have no one else.  
- No!  
?? [ Timmy Continues ]  
[ Sniffling, Crying ]  
[ Toilet Flushes ]  
[ Crying Continues ]  
You're the only one  
who hasn't forgotten me.  
Allen.  
Oh.  
But you cut and ran.  
Oh, I know I should never have left you.  
Never.  
- Please forgive me.  
- Too late.  
Oh, but, sweetheart,  
isn't there anything that I can do?  
Anything.  
Anything to - to -  
- Two things.  
- [ Gasps ]  
What?  
What? Tell me.

Delete everything off my computer.  
All the Web sites and subscriptions.  
Oh. Okay.  
What else?  
Do what I did -  
put a bullet through your temple.  
Gun in mouth is also okay.  
And then write a note saying...  
'I am a terrible person.  
I tried to improve the world, but failed.  
War is evil, but what I did was worse.'  
I will never rest until I see that you know  
what it is to suffer like I did.  
Oh, Allen, I -  
I don't know, Allen.  
I really think I'd prefer taking pills.  
Then remember to mix them  
with alcohol.  
And to tie a plastic bag  
around your head afterwards.  
What -What if I end up a vegetable?  
- You won't.  
- But I don't want to die.  
You die for me...  
and I will know you loved me.  
[ Crying ]  
Shh.  
Allen...  
did you meet any angels?  
[ Sniffles ]  
Yeah.  
I mean, sure.  
Lots of really nice, friendly people.  
Do they think this is  
the right thing to do?  
An eye for an eye?  
Then comes forgiveness.  
?? [ Techno.. ''Hava Nagila'' ]  
-?? [ Continues ]  
- [ Cheering ]  
?? [ Continues. Muffled ]  
Where is Timmy?  
?? [ Man Singing In Hebrew ]  
?? [ Continues ]

I'll be back in five.

Hi.

Hey.

Congratulations on becoming a man.

Thanks.

I heard your dad was leaving.

Yep.

Your mom tell you?

Yeah.

Where is he moving to?

Israel.

But why?

Isn't it dangerous there?

What makes you think there won't be  
a terrorist attack here?

I mean, if I were Al-Qaeda,  
this part of Florida is a gold mine.

Anyway, I don't think he's too focused  
on survival these days.

I'm sorry I made a mistake.

I mean,

even if your dad is a pedophile...

he should be allowed to get married.

He's not a pedophile.

- Yeah, but even if he is.

- He's not.

I know.

I'm sorry.

Forget about it. It's over.

What if I -

My father visited my brother  
up at college a few weeks ago.

They hung out for a little while,  
and then... he left.

Disappeared.

Nobody knows where.

My mom thinks he's probably  
lying somewhere dead in a gutter.

And for real this time.

But...

he wasn't a pedophile either.

-?? [ Chorus Singing In Hebrew ]

- He wasn't.

He wasn't.

[ Crying ]

I'm sorry I freaked out before.

It was before my bar mitzvah.

I was still just -

I was -

Please.

?? [ Ends ]

Sure.

Forgive and forget.

But it's like freedom and democracy.

In the end, China will take over,

and none of this will matter.

I don't care

about freedom and democracy.

I just want my father.

?? [ Alt Rock..Ballad ]

[ Man ]

? I try to forgive ?

? I try to forget ?

? Try not to relive ?

? What makes me upset ?

? We all make mistakes ?

? So why not admit them? ?

? I made a mistake ?

? It's just like the end now ?

? Life during wartime ?

? Life during wartime ?

? Time-to-reflect time ?

? Time-to-rethink time ?

? Life during wartime ?

? I try to forgive ?

? Try not to forget ?

? The things you don't get ?

? You always regret ?

? When times are so rough ?

? And people are dyin'?

? I say that's enough ?

? There's no use in lyin'?

? Life during wartime ?

? Life during wartime ?

? Time-to-recoup time ?

? Time-to-be-good time ?

? Life during wartime ?

? I thought I could change



the way that you think ?  
? Instead. it's so strange ?  
? I've turned you to drink ?  
? Why did I roam?  
Why did I roam around on my own? ?  
? I should've stayed home  
Should've stayed home ?  
? And thrown out your iPhone ?  
? Thrown out your iPhone ?  
? I thought I forgave ?  
? I thought I forgot ?  
? I tried to be brave ?  
? But found I could not ?  
? I made a mistake ?  
? And now it's all too late ?  
? My heart's full of ache ?  
? Is this what is called fate? ?  
? Life during wartime ?  
? Life during wartime ?  
? Time-to-breathe-deep time ?  
? Time-to-be-strong time ?  
? Life during wartime ?  
? You cannot forgive ?  
? What can't be forgot ?  
? The life that you live ?  
? Is that all that you've got? ?  
? Life during wartime ?  
? Life during wartime ?  
? Life during wartime ?  
? Time-to-breathe-deep time ?  
? Time-to-be-strong time ?  
? Life during wartime ?  
? You cannot forgive ?  
? What can't be forgot ?  
? The life that you live ?  
? Is that all that you've got? ?  
? Life during wartime ?