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Stuck in Love

By Josh Boone

I remember that it hurt.
Looking at her hurt.
Your... your... your nose.
Oh, oh, it does that sometimes.
- Hey.
- Hi.
I never enjoy anything.
I'm always waiting
for whatever's next.
I think everyone's like that...
living life in fast forward,
never stopping to
enjoy the moment,
too busy trying to rush
through everything,
so we can get on with what we're really
supposed to be doing with our lives.
I get these flashes of
clarity, brilliant clarity,
where, for a second,
I stop and I think,
"Wait, this is it.
"This is my life. I'd better
slow down and enjoy it,
"because one day, we're all
going to end up in the ground,
"and that will be it.
We'll be gone.
So I think we should fuck.
Um... what?
Let's just fast forward through all
the drunken seduction bullshit...
we have to look forward to.
You don't look like you'd
be very good at it anyway,
and I don't want to sit here and listen
to you bumblefuck your way through it.
We both want the same thing,
to go back to your room, have sex,
and never see each other again.
Are you with me?
Is this a trick?
The offer is about to expire.
No, no, I'm in.

I'm definitely in.
Do you like that book?
No, God, no.
No, it's my idiot brother's
favorite book.
Is it yours?
No, no.
It's my roommate's.
I'm not really much of a reader.
Good.
Now come here.
Yes, ma'am.
As I stood there staring
through the window
into my ex- wife's new life,
I was overcome by the
oddest sensation.
Watching her with this man was
like turning on a familiar sitcom
and realizing they had replaced one
of the lead actors with a stranger.
The show was the same, but the
thespian who played William Borgens
for nearly twenty years was gone.
And in his place was a
younger, dumber model.
What was that, boy?
Oh, shit.
Down! Heel! Fucking dog!
Rusty...
Oh yeah.
There you go.
You got that bowl?
Hey!
Just rock it on there.
Get him on there.
Gentle, gentle.
There you go.
Got it?
Don't push that hard.
All right.
There we go.
Yeah.
Dad, she's here.

Ready?
Hi, I'm back.
Dad...
Smells good.
Well, they said that you
have to go back there?
They just said that I think you
might have to end up paying for it.
No, but they're going to cancel
the whole thing? The appointment?
Yeah, they're canceling it.
It's over, basically...
My book is being published!
Oh, my God.
Congratulations.
Thank you. Thanks, Dad.
Oh, my God.
We're so proud of you.
What house is it?
Scribner.
What?
That's King's publisher.
Yeah, no, they're great.
Great.
We got to have a toast. We have
to have a toast. Scribner?
Yeah, that's exactly what I was
thinking when I submitted the book.
This will really piss
Rusty off.
It's not because they publish books
by Hemingway or Kurt Vonnegut.
David McCullough, Frank McCourt.
F. Scott Fitzgerald,
Bob fucking Dylan.
I didn't know you had
dibs on Scribner.
I never said I had dibs, Samantha.
I just was...
You're just jealous.
Wow.
I'm not jealous.
What an accomplishment.
Your sister is having her first

book published, all right?
This is a cause for celebration.
This is what the holidays
are all about.
Okay, cool.
You might want to congratulate her.
Congratulations.
Thank you.
Geez, I didn't have my first
book published until...
I don't know.
I was 25 or 26.
I would have been happy
to call those guys.
I know them all over there.
I submitted it under a fake name
and didn't tell them whose
daughter I was
until after was accepted.
I wouldn't have minded.
I know. I just... Because you
wanted it to be about your book
and not about being my daughter.
Yeah. Okay, well, this
is a toast... psst.
To you and your first novel.
Just Saying Hi.
Oh, it's not Just Saying Hi.
Did they make you
change the title?
No, they're not publishing
Just Saying Hi.
It's a different book.
What?
I put that aside for now,
and I wrote a new one.
When?
Over the summer.
What happened
to Just Saying Hi?
You were excited about that.
I was excit... I put a lot of
work and effort into that.
I proofed the manuscript

and I...
I know.
I'm sorry. I...
I... I... I thought my opinion
meant something.
It does. Dad.
You know it does.
And yet you turn around and
write an entirely new book
and don't think
to share it with me?
I'm sorry.
Something's burning.
Congratulations.
Why would you let him set
that place at the table?
I set it.
He asked me to.
Yeah, well, she's not coming.
I'm about to head over there.
You should come.
Give Dad a chance to cool off.
I'm not going over there.
Fine.
Suit yourself.
I'll tell her you said hi.
You can tell Mom
to drop dead.
Whoa...
This food is so good.
Glad you like it.
So how did everything
go over at your Dad's?
It was good. Sam's getting
a book published.
What?
That was my reaction, too.
That's great.
I always thought your dad making you
and your sister keep journals was...
a little strange, but...
sounds like it's paying off.
- I can't believe it.
- Why is it's strange?

Rusty, just let that go.
No, why is it strange?
I just want to know why you
think it's so strange.
Well, it just seems like
he was forcing you
to be writers...
instead of allowing
you to choose to be.
We don't have to keep the
journals if we don't want to.
You'd have to get
a job if you stopped.
He pays us to do it so we
can focus on our writing
instead of working some
bullshit job at McDonald's.
Rusty...
What?
What?
Are you stoned?
Are you kidding?
Are you being...
I'm not stoned. Rusty, I'd like
to talk to you in the kitchen.
I think you're stoned.
Great. Good.
I'm going.
What's gotten into you?
I'm not going to let
that Neanderthal...
talk about Dad like that.
He didn't say anything
about your father.
It's not what he says.
It's how he talks about him like he's
some sort of weirdo or something.
And watching football doesn't
make you a Neanderthal.
Owning his own gym does.
Okay, enough.
Enough.
Is Sam's book really getting published?
That's what she said.

Wow.
It's been over a year
since we spoke.
I know.
She said to say hi to you.
I don't believe that
for a second, but...
it's very sweet of you to say.
Aw, Mom.
Please don't ever hate
me the way she hates me.
I don't hate you at all, Mom.
Good, but you are stoned,
though, aren't you.
I thought it would make
it easier to eat again.
Pot and nothing else,
ever, you understand me?
You don't have to worry
about me, Mom.
Yeah, I do.
It's my job.
I cleared the table
and started the dishes.
Sorry I reacted the way I did.
I was just surprised.
I thought you were
happy with the book.
I was.
It just didn't seem like
my book anymore.
It felt like,
someone else's...
My editorial hand a little
heavy for you? Yes, Dad.
I was scared of how you'd react,
and I felt guilty because of all the
work you put into Just Saying Hi.
I'm sorry...
Stop apologizing.
It's my fault for involving myself in
your goddamn book in the first place.
I'm guessing you don't
want to read the new one?

Fuck no.
Never?
No, thank you.
I brought you a hard copy.
Really?
Yeah.
I was going to sign it
for you if you wanted,
or not... but maybe?
Leave it on my desk.
Wait... can I ask you a question
without you getting defensive?
What?
Rusty told me Martin called the
cops on a prowler the other night.
Dad, you've got to stop doing this
to yourself. It's been two years.
She's coming back. You're
completely delusional.
And what's with setting
a place for her at the table?
That's fucking nuts. You
know they're fighting again?
And where did you see that?
Through their window?
Really? People get arrested
for doing things like that.
You're a well
respected novelist.
You've won the PEN
Faulkner Award twice.
You can't behave like that.
She's coming back.
Jesus, at least tell me
you've been writing.
Look at what you've let
her do to you, Dad.
Seriously.
Hey. What are you working on?
It's a poem for English class.
Sorry about earlier.
I was being a dick.
It's okay.
Yeah, you were right.

I was just jealous.
I really am happy for you.
It's awesome.
You're going to have a book
published one day, too, you know.
Sure, I know.
Jason hooked me up
with some weed.
Roof?
Got your eye on any girls this year?
Yeah, there's this girl...
Kate, in my English class.
Every time I see her,
I hear that song,
the Beatles' song, "I've Just Seen a
Face," playing in my head.
God, you are so pathetic.
At least I know I'm pathetic.
Let me give you some advice.
I can't wait to hear your advice.
It's so friggin' awesome.
There are two kinds
of people in this world.
Hopeless romantics and realists.
Right.
A realist just sees that face
and packs it in with every other
pretty girl they've ever seen before.
The hopeless romantic
becomes convinced
that God put them on Earth
to be with that one person.
But there is no God,
and life is only as meaningful as you
fool yourself into thinking it is.
Guys who get laid
a lot are realists.
You should be listening.
Just avoid love at all costs.
That's my motto.
You never been in love?
If love is setting a place at the table
for someone who is never coming home,
I think I'll pass.

That's fucking depressing, Sam.
Making students read their poetry
assignments in front of the class
is a sadistic exercise
in public humiliation.

You could have already been
done with it by now, Rusty.

Okay, okay, okay.

Just' read it.

Um, okay, this is a poem I
wrote over Thanksgiving break.

Uh... It's called School.

It was written under the
influence of cannabis.

Okay, um... In the sea
of... This is so awkward.

Uh...

"In the sea of desks, there's
talk of games and bags

"and long pipes that leak dreams
with the strike of a match.

"And there's a loudness
to the whispers I hear.

"Whispers shouldn't be
that loud, should they?

"There's a girl over there
who everyone knows

"and men without ears who will
stand by the door for a price.

"In long hallways, there are
angry mobs of dwarves and rats

"and one single angel. "

Hey, Rusty. Hi.

Hi. Hi, I, um...

I liked your poem.

Yeah?

Yeah, it was really good.

Thanks.

Sure.

How was your Thanksgiving?

Oh, it was good.

It was a little weird.

My parents are divorced,
sol have two Thanksgivings

in one Thanksgiving.
It's just, like, strange.
How about you?
It was just boring. Whatever.
That's cool.
Yeah.
Kate.
I have to go.
I just wanted to say I
liked your poem, so...
Bye.
All right.
Who the fuck is that?
Just a guy from class.
Fucking asshole.
Hi.
I literally have 20 minutes,
so it will have to be quick.
Come on.
Let's go.
Did you stretch?
Come on.
Just a second.
Oh, yeah.
Oh, make it rain.
Yeah.
Yeah.
To the left.
To the...
yeah.
Yes!
All right, I got to run.
Thursday, be ready.
Yes, Sarah.
Hey!
Hey!
Goddamn it!
What are you doing?
You scared me.
I caught you.
You're reading my journal.
You promised you'd never
read our journals.
Sorry. I trusted you, Dad.

I'm sorry. That pisses
me off so much.

I'm sorry. It's an
invasion of privacy.

Rusty, I... I... I... Sit down for
a second. Let me explain.

No, I'm not going
to sit down.

Okay, okay. I wasn't
reading your journal.

I... I flipped it open to check
the dates like I always do
and something
jumped out at me
and-and-and grabbed me.

I'm sorry, okay?

I'm sorry.

What?

May I?

"I remember that it hurt.
"Looking at her hurt. "

That's it.

If that was the opening line of a book,
you'd have your reader hooked.
They would have to keep reading.
I had to keep reading. Sorry.

Flattery is not going
to get you out of this.

No, no, that's coming
to an end right now.

You know Flannery O'Connor?

I know Flannery O'Connor.

She said nothing needed to happen in
a writer's life after they were 20.

By then, they had experienced
more than enough
to last their creative life. So?

So what's your point?

My point is...

Sit down for a second, please.

Rusty...

I don't think you're
experiencing enough.

I mean, the reason that you're comfortable

leaving your goddamn journal on my desk
is because there's nothing you're
trying to hide from me in your life.
And that really worries me, you know?
Sweet, sensitive guys like you, they
spend their entire high school years
frozen in place while...
everybody is running around
going to parties
and getting laid, doing whatever.
I don't want you to look back
years from now
and think about this girl.
Is it Kate? Yeah.
Tell this girl how you feel.
Put your heart on the line.
It's not that easy.
It is, too. It is, too.
Look at your sister.
You can...
Hey!
You can roll your eyes
all you want.
Your sister is a great writer.
And it's because she's
courageous in her life.
She's promiscuous, Dad.
It's not the same thing.
Rusty, a writer is the sum
of their experiences.
Go get some.
It will be fun.
Come on. This is crazy.
What are we doing here, man?
Everyone hates us.
Not tonight, they don't.
Not tonight.
What?
Uh, we're here for the party.
What party?
Dude, come on man. I'm, like,
in three classes with you.
Fuck off.
Okay, but...

what are going to do
with all this weed?
I was just playing, man.
Come on.
Really? Yeah. Come on in.
Hey! Hey, my boys...
Wait.
What's your name?
Rusty.
This is Jason.
Hey, my boys Rusty and Jason just
brought us a shitload of weed.
Your name is Rodney, right?
Hey, man, Rodney.
What's up?
You make sure with Jason that
everybody gets some, okay?
Where you going?
I'm going to go find
my friend, Kate.
Which chick?
Oh, they still upstairs!
Dude, who are you?
I'm a new and improved
Rusty Borgens.
This is Sam. Leave me a
message after the beep.
Come on, Glen.
Glen, open the door.
I've been waiting for ten minutes.
Come on.
Could I have a fucking
second please?
No, I can't give you a fucking second.
I'm in pain.
Shut the fucking door!
Let's go, Jason.
Let's get out of here.
Dude, I'm not going anywhere.
Let's go.
I'm not going anywhere.
That plan was genius, dude.
It was a joke.
It wasn't a fucking joke.

It's not funny.
Get the fuck off me.
Hey, don't walk away from me.
Stop.
You're crazy.
Quit following me, Glen.
This is my house. I can go
wherever the fuck I want.
All right, big shot. Listen, I'm
leaving, all right, asshole?
Get the fuck out of here.
Hey, asshole.
Are you all right?
I'm fine.
Okay, come on.
Let me grab that.
Run, run!
I'm going to fucking kill you.
Dude, dude, fuck yeah, man!
All right.
Later, man.
See you, buddy.
Later.
Hey, asshole!
Boom!
I can't go home like this.
I'm a wreck. My knees are
all banged up and I'm high.
Yeah, we should probably
get some ice on those.
Can I stay at your house tonight?
Okay.
Hello?
Hi. Hi, it's me.
Hey, you okay?
Um, where are you?
I'm here.
I'm at home.
Oh, I've been ringing the bell.
I fell asleep.
Are you here?
All right, we need to put
our heads together.
Okay.

Bill, I can't sleep.
Okay, I'm driving around in my
pajamas in the middle of the night.
I'm like a crazy person.
I can't live like this anymore.
I can't either.
I've given her space.
I accept her hatred towards me as
some phase she's going through,
but this isn't a phase.
She has this amazing thing
going on with her life now
with this book being published,
and I can't share that with her.
She won't return my calls.
She won't return my emails.
She's-she's having
a book published.
She's busy.
Bullshit.
I can't get her to return my calls.
Bullshit.
She's petty and she's cruel.
Everyone's parents are divorced.
Big fucking deal.
You get over it.
She fights with me, too.
We're not fighting.
That's the thing. I wish
I could fight with her.
Then I'd be an active
participant in her life.
She just abandoned me.
No, I don't think... She's abandoned you?
That seems horrible.
You are in a constant state
of denial about everything.
Bill, she acts like I don't exist.
I haven't spoken to her
in over a year
and you're not helping things.
Me? I haven't said one thing.
I... I... What did I...
You set a place for me

at Thanksgiving. Yeah.
So everytime she comes
home from school,
she sees you miserable
and moping
and she blames me.
I know she blames me.
I know she does.
I don't mope.
Oh, you mope.
You mope.
Say horrible things about me,
but don't try to win
her sympathy this way.
Hey, I made a promise to you
and I intend to keep it.
Oh, Jesus.
Bill...
That was a lifetime ago.
I release you from your promise.
Please... go on with your life.
Go get laid.
I get laid.
Great! You get laid? Mm-hmm.
Well, then, be happy.
I just want you to be happy.
I was happy with you.
You were the one
who wasn't happy.
Well, I'm happy now.
You don't look happy to me.
When? When you're sneaking
around our house at night?
I see you and Martin fighting.
Shut up, Bill.
Oh, hey.
Wait a minute.
Excuse me.
You know I...
I don't mean to be presumptuous,
but I wouldn't do that if I were you.
I mean, he sleeps
with a lot of girls.
You're practically guaranteed

to wake up with a rash.
Thanks for the tip.
I see you you getting
snared in his web.
You look like a nice girl and all, so.
I'm not a nice girl.
Well, in that case, I'm Louis.
Everyone calls me Lou.
Nice to meet you.
No? Okay.
Look, I don't want
to hurt your feelings,
but you're wasting your time.
What, talking is a waste of time?
We're not talking.
You're flirting with me.
And you're also cockblocking
your friend.
Huh?
Bon Jovi over there?
He's not my friend.
He's a dick, actually.
I'm just filling in on bass
for them tonight.
You're cute, Lou.
But you reek of romance
and good intentions.
I'm not looking for a nice guy.
I don't do boyfriends,
and I don't date.
All I heard was don't,
don't, don't, don't.
Well, don't keep people safe.
I'm going to go.
Okay, well, I'll see you in class.
Do we have a class together?
Advanced Fiction Writing.
I don't remember you.
Well, I remember you.
You have a book that's getting published.
Your dad must be thrilled.
You know an awful lot
about me, Lou.
We writers are an envious bunch, so...

What's his name?

His name is Pete.

Have fun.

I will.

Cool. You're awesome.

I didn't know you lived at the beach.

Shh-shh.

Keep your voice down.

I just don't want
to wake my dad up.

I'm going to go get
some ice for that.

There you go.

Thank you.

Sure.

Rusty?

Hey, Dad, what are you doing up?

Who's this?

Uh, Dad, this is Kate.

Kate, this is Dad.

Hi.

Hi.

What happened to your knees?

She fell. This asshole pushed me.

Really?

Somebody pushed you?

Yeah, but it's okay,

because Rusty punched him.

Oh, good. Nobody should ever push
a girl and gel' away with it.

That's a good start, that ice.

We have some peroxide in here.

So, you are Kate.

Rusty's told me a lot about you.

He has? Um...

We hardly know each other.

I just know he thinks
very highly of you.

Dad?

Sorry, sorry.

Are you staying the night?

Uh, yeah, if that's okay.

Okay. Your parents don't mind?

No.

All right. You take the bed
and she takes the couch...
Or the other way. You take the
couch and she takes the bed.
Whichever one.
Nice meeting you, Kate.
You, too.
Goodnight.
Sorry.
Your dad's nice.
Yeah, he's a good guy.
What does he do?
Uh... he's a writer.
Like a real one?
Yeah, he wrote a book
called Suit Monkeys.
Won some awards, had a bunch
of books published. Thanks.
Whoa, uh...
I didn't know you were going
to... I'll turn around.
Well, that's cool.
Is that what you want to do?
Uh, yeah.
I'm a writer, too.
So is my sister.
We write books
and stories and stuff.
Poetry?
Yeah.
Where's your sister?
She's, you know,
away at college.
Yeah, so I...
Wait, can you stay
with me a second?
Please?
Yeah, sure.
You can come closer.
I don't bite.
I have a question.
Yeah.
Was I the angel in the
poem you wrote?

Yeah.

I think you're going
to be very good for me.

Goodnight.

I love Christmas.

You strike me as one
of those people.

I am. I'm definitely
one of those people.

I love everything about it.

I love the lights,
the decorations,

how TBS plays A Christmas
Story 24 hours straight.

Presents under the tree
and the looks on my kids
faces when they open them.

Sitting by the fire with my
husband when they go to bed.

I get all depressed
during the holidays.

Yeah, well, you're divorced, Bill.

It's depressing.

Hey, can I give you
a little bit of advice?
Just from one fuck buddy
to another.

Mm-hmm.

You need to remarry.

Hmm.

Mm-hmm.

You're not getting any younger.

And if I were you, I'd be
on every dating website
signing up and just combing the
newspapers for personal ads.

I haven't been on a
date in 25 years.

Yeah, but what is that?

Listen, you're handsome,
you're successful.

You have a mild amount of celebrity,
which is really all a
writer can ask for.

That's enough to land
one of those
20-something trophy wives.
You've really thought
about this, huh?
Well, I care about you, Bill.
I know you love Erica,
but she married someone else,
and you have to start
thinking about your future
and whether or not you want
that to be a happy one.
Because I don't want
to jog by in five years
and find you waiting on
that lawn chair for me.
It's a very comfortable lawn chair.
Is it?
Just think about it.
Procreation. You give to the
next one down the line.
That's really all we've got.
Society, government,
money, religion,
careers, nuclear families,
monogamy.
These are all just highly creative
socially accepted delusions
that we impose on reality to try and gain
some semblance of control over our lives.
It gives us the illusion of choice.
It makes us feel a little
less like animals.
Animals. What do you mean?
Like evolution?
Yeah, evolution, exactly.
I do not believe
in evolution.
There's 400 billion stars
in the Milky Way alone,
making the amount of stars
in the entire universe
completely mind-boggling.
We are nothing.

If an asteroid hadn't hit Earth
65 million years ago
and wiped out all the dinosaurs,
we wouldn't be here.

Yeah.

I'm going to go.

Good. All you creationists do is
blow chances at getting laid.

Really.

Ooh, that was awkward.

You've really got
to stop stalking me.

I can't even go anywhere without
you showing up to annoy me.

Were you hitting on that guy?

It's none of your business.

I think he's a Mormon.

Well, what the hell
is he doing here?

Trying to find other Mormon girls.

I'm sure you corrupted him,
ruined his relationship with God.

You want to get out of here?

Do you have brain damage?

No. I think I made it pretty clear
that I have absolutely no
interest in going out with you.

No, no, no. You and I
are going to be friends.

But I don't want to be
friends with you.

Oh, you don't want to be.

Well, I'm going
to take your jacket
and you can follow me. We can
get some coffee if you'd like.

I need that...

jacket.

What are some of your
favorite books?

Is that really the angle
you're going to play?

Really? I thought you'd be
more creative than this.

Well, come on, we're writers, right?

Yeah.

Books matter to us. I mean,
come on here, please.

Fine, what are some
of your favorite books?

No, you can't do that.

I asked you.

Because you want to know
something personal about me.

If I tell you what
my favorite books are,
you'll say titles that will convince
me that we're soulmates,
or you'll latch onto one
of my favorites
and try to convince me it's
one of your favorites, too.

God, you're so tough.

It's why you're obsessed with me.

I'm not obsessed with you.

I'm like a unicorn to you.

You'll do or say anything
to possess me.

I'm not like that and
you're not like a unicorn.

Okay, well, then books.

But please, at least
attempt to be interesting.

No *Catcher in the Rye* or
Portnoy's Complaint, okay?

Well, I write mysteries, so...

I love Elmore Leonard,

James Lee Burke,

Ed Brubaker.

Who's Ed Brubaker.

He writes an incredible, hard-boiled
crime comic called *Criminal*.

Telling me that you
read comic books
isn't exactly sweeping
me off my feet.

What's your favorite book?

Just say the first thing

that pops into your head.
Dear Mr. Henshaw by Beverly Cleary.
Been my favorite
since I was a kid.
Read it, like, 100 times.
It's actually what made me
want to be a writer.
Hey, is something wrong?
I have to go.
Well, what... what do you mean?
Did I do something?
I have to go.
Samantha.
Samantha, wait. Come on. What?
What do you want from me?
What do you mean what
do I want from you?
I like you.
I want to get to know you better.
No.
Why do you keep running away?
Because this...
whatever this is between us,
it can't go any further.
I won't let it. We're not
even in the same species.
Is Dear Mr. Henshaw
your favorite book, too?
I don't do this, Lou.
No.
No, of course not.
You just give yourself away
to assholes with infinitely
lower IQs than yours.
Fuck.
Hi.
Hi.
Is your dad here?
Uh, no...
Well, when is he
going to be back?
I don't know. Maybe
a couple of hours.
Why?

I want to give you
your Christmas present.

Um, okay.

Merry Christmas.

Oh... awesome.

Come with me.

Where are we going?

To the closet.

Wait, why the closet?

Why not on the bed?

Can we open it?

Because you've
never had sex,
and I've never had sex
in a closet.

You'll remember me and
you'll remember this moment
and that makes me
very, very happy.

Oh, fuck.

Hi.

How's she feeling?

She's okay.

You should go see her.

How you feeling?

Not too bad.

Don't bullshit me.

I'm like a no bullshit detector here.

I'm fine.

Shut up and read to me.

Okay.

"Dalie Hallie couldn't tell
if she felt huge or small.

"She wondered whether
her head

"were so big as to be able to
contain all this starry universe...

"or if the universe were so
little that it would fit

"within the compass
of her human head. "

Lou?

Do you see that angel by the door
or am I the only one seeing her?

Oh, that... that's definitely
not an angel, Mom.

Hi.

Hi.

Hi. What are you doing here?

Oh, same thing

you're doing, I hope.

Don't be suspicious.

I'm getting a laptop for Samantha.

In fact, I got to pick out a color.

Why don't you come?

I don't know.

Excuse me.

Huh?

What don't you know?

I don't know if it's

a good idea, Bill.

It will take ten minutes.

I'd love to.

Yeah.

Yeah?

Yeah, I love to.

I'm glad I bumped into you.

I'm sure that's

what all stalkers say.

No, really.

I've been thinking a lot
about what you said.

Really?

Mm-hmm.

Somebody else said

the same thing recently.

Someone else asked you to stop
hanging around their house at night?

About moving on with my life.

Who was that?

Tricia Wolcott.

Lives about a mile and
a half down the beach.

Yeah, I remember her.

Yeah.

Yeah.

Yeah.

I always suspected

you had a crush on her.
Yeah, she's very pretty.
She's very married, as I recall.
You're seeing her?
I think I'm a good way
for her to kill an hour
after she drops her
kids off at school.
An hour?
An hour.
So she thinks you need to
stop moping around, too, huh?
Something like that.
Here's a confession.
I'm not a great writer.
I'm a great re-writer.
I think about us.
Our story and...
and all the things that
went wrong with us
and I... I could do it so
much better this time.
I haven't written anything
since you left.
Bill...
you've had two books published.
Well, they were books that I
started when we were married.
I finished them, but I haven't
written anything new.
You are a great writer.
Don't waste all your
imagination on me.
Which way are you...
I'm over here.
I'm the other way.
It was great running into you.
You, too.
Bill...
I have... I have days when I'm not
sure if I made the right decision.
I have bad days, too.
I don't know why I'm saying this.
I guess I just don't want you to

think that I don't think about us,
you know, and...
all those years
we spent together,
because I do...
think about...
everything that I gave up.
I wonder if it was worth it.
Was it?
I got to go.
Merry Christmas.
Merry Christmas.
It was so nice to meet you.
Oh, you, too, Samantha.
I hope you come back
and see me again soon.
I will.
Okay, you two.
I'm going to walk
Sam to her car.
I'll be right back, Mom.
Not so fast.
I made hot chocolate.
It's in the kitchen.
What's wrong with your mom?
She, um...
She has a brain tumor.
Oh, my God.
I'm sorry.
I can't believe how much of
a bitch I've been to you.
Yeah, I know, right?
Okay, yeah.
I don't... I don't want you
to feel sorry for me.
Really, I...
I've enjoyed all of our back
and forth, you know, sparring.
It's really... it's helped me
take my mind off of all this.
Well, I'm glad I could help out.
You going home for Christmas?
Yeah, I'm headed
back there tomorrow.

Well, I'm willing to forget about
this whole stalking incident,
if you will allow me to take you out
on a proper date when you get back.
Okay.

Really?

That easy? Yeah?

I'm not going to say it again.

Okay.

Oh, I actually...

brought you an ARC
of my new book.

Oh, wow. Stalking and a present.

Under the Pink by Samantha Borgens.

Look at that.

Well, I will... I will
read this over break.

Probably aloud.

My mom and I have been tearing
through some books lately.

No, you can't read it to her.

It's filled with sex
and profanity.

Oh, no, she loves sex.

You added too much water.

It's not like you're
Martha Stewart in here.

Says the guy who puts
sprinkles on burn.

Hey, guys.

Hey.

Look at you!

Why are you all dressed up?

I'm going over to Kate's.

Why does it smell
so horrible in here?

No, no, no. These are our cookies.

Smell.

Yeah, we burned the first batch.

Actually, this is the second.

No, no, no, no, no!

Sorry!

Oh, my God, Dad!

What?

This is ridiculous!
We burned them again!
Oh, God. Okay...
Yeah, no laughing, Rusty.
When am I going
to meet this girl?
I don't know. Try not
to burn the house down.
Yeah, drive careful.
I will.
How serious is this thing?
Uh, they're having sex.
What?
How do you know?
Yeah.
Wow, go Rusty!
She has more experience than him.
Yeah, well, who doesn't?
He seems really happy.
At least someone
in this house is.
Do you see a frown on my face?
You do seem unusually
chipper today.
Have you discovered
anti-depressants?
Actually, no. I'm just
moving on with my life.
I'm done with the whole thing
with your mom,
and I'm moving forward.
Seriously?
New Year's resolution.
How about that?
Moving on.
Dad?
Yeah.
That's huge!
That's so...
Oh, flour hug.
No, no, no!
Not on my white shirt.
Ta-da!
I thought you already gave

me my Christmas present.
Shut up and open it.
Come on.
All right, here we go.
This isn't just a CD.
It isn't?
No.
It's a roadmap to my soul.
It's like if you gave
me a favorite book.
Yeah, speaking of that.
Boom.
Oh, my gosh.
Wow, this is the biggest
book I've ever seen.
I know it looks formidable,
but honestly,
it's going to be, like,
one of the most satisfying reading
experiences of your life.
Is it scary?
Yeah, sure, but it's
not just a scary book.
It's like Moby Dick.
It's about everything.
You're going to be
so wrapped up in it,
you're going to be crying at
the end of it. You cried.
Oh, you'll cry, too, okay?
I might have cried.
You're really cute when you
get worked up about books.
Do I have you
worked up about me?
Yeah.
Good.
Because I've got to
have you right now.
What about your parents?
Won't they come in?
They don't come in here.
Are you sure? I'm sure.
Come here.

How was your Christmas?

It was good.

Filled with family. You know, loud.

Yeah.

So you haven't
mentioned my book.

Mm. Yeah, um...

So you didn't like it?

No, no, that's not it.

I liked it a lot.

It's incredibly well written.

The characters are vibrant and alive.

But?

I mean, I knew you were cynical,
but is that really how you
feel about love and marriage?

I don't know.

Sometimes.

Oh, thank you.

How much of that
really happened?

I made most of it up.

I didn't draw that much
from my parents' divorce,
other than the little
girl seeing her mother
having sex with the
man on the beach.

Holy shit, that really happened?

Yeah.

I mean, I wasn't a little girl.

I was in high school.

My parents were having a party,
and I was up on the roof.

It was late, and my mom
came staggering out of the
back of the house with Martin.

And she was all over him.

And I remember Martin saying,
"What about Bill?

What if Bill sees?"

And my mom replying,

"I don't care. "

"I don't care. "

Hey, Lou?
Mm-hmm.
You make me feel less cynical.
My turn?
My turn. Uh...
Favorite TV show.
The Wonder Years. Oh, all right.
that's nice.
I'm still in love
with Winnie Cooper.
Okay, favorite song.
Beatles.
"Polythene Pam. "
Great choice.
Thank you. Yours?
"Between the Bars"
by Elliot Smith.
Play it for me.
I actually do have it here.
You're in luck.
Although this is...
This is really no way to...
to hear a song.
Just play it.
Will you at least
close your eyes,
because you got to block
out all this other stuff.
It's really distracting.
Okay. You're funny.
Drink up baby,
stay up all night
With the things you could do
you won't but you might
The potential you'll be
That you'll never see
The promises
you'll only make
Drink up with me now
And forget all about
the pressure of days
Do what I say
and I'll make you okay
And drive them away

I'm so scared right now.
The images stuck
in your head
I know. I know.
The people
you've been before
That you don't want
around anymore
I don't want to get hurt.
I'm not going to hurt you.
I'll keep them still
Drink up baby,
look at the stars
I'll kiss you again
between the bars
Where I'm seeing you there
with your hands in the air
Waiting to finally be caught
The people you've been before
- # That you don't want
around anymore # - Come on!
That push and shove
and won't bend to your will
I'll keep them still #
And that's the picture that
you want to have up there?
I'm going to trump that
though, real quick,
because you look
like a serial killer.
Let's take another one.
Let me show you
a test picture.
Let me show you
how it's done, okay?
If I were on this website, I'd say,
"Oh, I'd love to go on
a date with you. Yeah?"
Did you actually pay for that?
No?
No.
Can I ask you
a serious question?
Are you color blind?

Fuck, no.
Professional.
You do not... no.
You know what?
You do not look ready to party.
I think...
Let me just take a look.
Are you being serious with this?
We're not in Cancun.
Eh, no.
That's my favorite shirt.
Don't ever do it.
Okay, good.
Right? Ok.
Come get in this right now.
Let's do it.
Oh...
Hubba, hubba.
Have you had this the whole time?
Yeah.
Why on Earth... you are
endlessly frustrating.
Oh, I would definitely
fuck you in this outfit.
How do you feel?
Good.
Oh, right?
Okay, come on.
Hey, Mom!
Hey!
You made it. Hi.
Hi.
I'm Kate.
I'm Erica.
Nice to meet you.
Hey, can I help you
find something?
I was looking for some aspirin.
I have a headache.
Oh, should be in there.
I got it.
Thank you.
William.
Hey.

It's so good to see you again.
How are you?
Great to see
you, too, Leslie.
This is my son, Rusty...
Hi.
And his girlfriend, Kate.
Hello.
Nice to meet you.
This was so nice of you to do
this for Samantha, really.
This is great.
I'd have done the
same thing for you
if you'd published Suit Monkeys
under my watch. Yeah, well...
I would like you to meet your
daughter, Samantha Borgens.
You might think you've
met Samantha before,
but this Samantha just received a
starred review from Publisher's Weekly.
And life will never
be the same again.
Hi, Dad.
Congratulations.
Thank you so much.
And this is my boyfriend, Lou.
Hi.
Nice to meet you. Very nice
to finally meet you, yeah.
Mr. Murphy is a talented
writer as well.
He's my Patricia Highsmith.
I don't know.
Samantha, can I steal
your father for a little bit?
There's so many young
writers around here
who are just dying to meet him.
He's all yours.
Come on.
Come on. Come on.
Hey, Sis. Congratulations.

Thank you so much for coming.
It's so nice to finally meet you.
Sam tells me you're a
huge Stephen King fan.
I'm like the biggest Stephen
King fan in the world.
I love The Sand.
It's my favorite one.
What?
Since when?
What do you mean?
Who doesn't like Stephen King?
She doesn't like Stephen King.
I don't not...
let's leave them.
Let's get... She calls
herself a novelist.
You guys continue this.
We're going to go.
Girls.
Yeah.
Two champagnes, please.
How old is she?
I wouldn't believe you
if you told me she was 18
much less 21.
How old are you?
This is my party.
Stop acting like a pussy.
Nobody's going to tell on you.
And I haven't even told you about
the big tip I'm going to leave you.
As far as I know, you ordered
these drinks for yourself.
I didn't even see her here.
And here's the drinks
you ordered, Miss. Enjoy.
I will...
Thank you.
Samantha!
Oh, sorry...
Don't worry about it. It's your night.
Go have fun.
Ladies and gentlemen, could I

have your kind attention, please.
You may come forward if you wish.
I have been trying to get William Borgens
up here to speak to my class for years.
He's never said no, but he's
never said yes, either.
Tonight, I have him at a
certain disadvantage.
My entire class is here, Bill.
And I insist you come up
here and say a few words.
Ladies and gentlemen,
Mr. Borgens.
Your professor, while a very nice
man, is a sneaky son of a bitch.
The reason Leslie could never get me up
here to talk about the process of writing
is I'm not sure I have much to say
about it that could benefit you.
I still find it all very mysterious,
years after I wrote my first book.
And I'm not sure what it
is that compels a person
to continue to play make believe
even after they're an adult.
My favorite book is a collection
of short stories by Raymond Carver
called What We Talk About
When We Talk About Love.
And in the closing lines of the
title story, Carver says...
"I could hear
my heart beating.
"I could hear everyone's heart.
"I could hear the human
noise we sat there making.
"Not one of us moved.
"Not even when
the room went dark. "
And I think that
that's what writing is.
It's listening for that beating heart,
and when we hear it,
it's our job to decipher it

to the best of our abilities.
I'm here because my daughter
Samantha's book is being published
in case you haven't heard.
This is her success.
I love you, Dad.
I love you, too.
This seat taken?
Louis invited me.
Well, that was a calculated risk.
How long you been here?
Mm, I was waiting in my
car for about an hour
trying to build up
the courage to come in.
So that's what 19 looks like.
She's all grown up now.
No.
She's still just a baby.
You going to talk to her?
I don't know.
I'm scared.
Yeah, she's scary.
She's all I've done with my life,
and she doesn't want me.
Hey...
you want some courage?
Free of charge.
Yes, please.
Your favorite book...
John Cheever's
The World of Apples.
I got you that signed first edition.
Yeah.
That's your favorite book, right?
Um, well, I really liked it.
Oh, Jesus.
I even told you what to read.
Sometimes.
I'm sorry.
Anyway, she swiped it
from my library.
She did?
Yeah.

It could only have been her.
She thought that it
was your favorite book.
That's what I had told her, and...
I think she was hoping to
find some piece of you in it.
Go talk to your daughter.
Yeah.
Hi.
Would you sign this for me?
Uh, what's your name?
Sam, I don't want to cause a scene.
Really? I...
I'm Louis, by the way.
I believe we met over the phone.
Hi. Nice to meet you.
Nice to meet you, too.
Yeah.
Name?
Come on, Sam, don't do this.
It's okay, Louis.
No name, no problem.
Guess we'll go with a signature
and no personalized note. Sam.
I just wanted to tell you that...
I love you.
I love you so much.
I'm so proud of you.
Thank you.
Hope you enjoy it.
Kate? Kate?
No, it's just me.
Mom, I didn't know
you were coming.
You Okay?
You looking for Kate?
Yeah, I've been looking
everywhere for her.
I can't find her.
Are you worried?
Yeah.
I'm going to go
check in the house.
Okay, have you guys seen Kate?

I've been looking for her everywhere.
I can't find her.
I'm freaking out.
Yeah, the last time I saw
her, we were at the bar.
I got her a champagne,
but that was ages ago.
You what?
You got her champagne?
She's underage.
It's no big deal.
No, it is a big deal, okay,
because she has a history
and she has a drug problem,
so she can't drink.
She has a drug problem?
She had a drug problem.
Come with me.
She has a drug problem.
Did you give that girl another one?
What girl?
She said they were for you.
Did you see where she went?
Have you seen her?
I don't know. She
left with some guy.
Jesus.
Calm down.
I don't want to calm down.
She's 16 and she's fucked up.
Take it easy.
We'll find her, okay.
Did you look at the guy's ID?
Do you remember his name?
I look at dates, not names.
She left with Gus.
Who the fuck is Gus?
I'm sorry. I'm sorry, all right?
You had no right.
I didn't think that your Mom
wanted to miss the most
important night in your life.
We are not having this
conversation right now,

and just stop following me.
Would you just shut up?
Just shut up!
I'll call you later.
Just please answer.
Jesus, Dad,
this isn't a family vacation.
Hey, shut' up, get in the car.
You're acting like a child.
Come on, guys.
It's number 608.
There it is right there.
You guys wait here.
No, Dad,
I'm getting out.
Samantha, you restrain him.
Don't let him out of the car.
I'm getting out.
Stay in the car, Rusty.
Get back in the fucking car!
G. Unit G.
Who is it?
Is Kate there?
Who wants to know?
She's a minor, asshole.
She's a minor.
Okay, where is she?
In the bedroom.
Bill...
Help me.
She won't wake up.
Jesus, what did you give her?
She was drunk
Fucking liar!
Oh, fuck! We did a little coke.
That was it.
She'll be fine.
I got her.
You're expelled.
She's just passed out.
You've be lucky if that's all that happens.
You can't do that.
Is she all right?
Is she okay?

Get in the car.
Do you have her parents number?
Yeah, where's my phone?
Okay.
What's going on?
How's Louis?
Who's Louis?
Why don't you see if
your brother is up yet?
You don't need to send me
away to talk to Mrs. Wolcott.
I know you two
are sleeping together.
You don't know shit.
I know you fuck Tricia Wolcott.
Hey... go wake up your brother.
Rusty, wake up.
Rusty?
Oh, my God.
Dear Rusty, I know you probably
never want to see me again.
I did a terrible thing to you.
My Dad told me you
called to see how I was.
As I'm sure he told you,
I'm in rehab.
My biggest mistake
other than hurting you
was thinking you could fix me.
Only I can fix me.
I'd like to become a person who actually
deserves to be with someone like you.
I don't know how long that will take, but
I hope you're around when it happens.
In the meantime, just know I'm truly
sorry for everything I put you through.
Love, Kate.
Oh, P. S. You were
right about that book.
I cried a! the end.
Big time.
I know it's been a
rough couple months...
but you coming home drunk...

or stoned...
every night?
Now you've been in a fight?
It was payback for something that
happened last fall. I don't care.
I know it's your first heartbreak.
I know it hurts.
Nothing hurts like the first one,
but you've got to channel
this into your work.
Make something
positive out of it.
Is that what you did
when Mom left?
What?
Is that what you did when Mom left?
You turned it...
You're grounded.
You kidding me, Dad?
Would you just chill out? You can't
round me. Yeah, I just did, okay?
I just did.
You're the one who told me...
No journal, nothing.
You're the one who told me to
go out and get experiences.
You can't make me write, Dad.
I don't have to! You're a writer.
You'll do it yourself.
When you were little,
you used to run down
to the edge of the water like that
when the tide was pulling out.
And you would turn around
screaming when it came...
I'm letting the ocean
get me, Daddy!
I'm letting the ocean get me!
Your mom used to watch
you like a hawk.
She was terrified that the
ocean was going to grab you
and pull you out to sea.
Why are we talking about her?

What are we doing down here?
Your mom loves you.
She never did anything to you.
It's pointless. I know
what you're going to say.
No, you don't.
Those things she did to me,
the things you've been
holding over her,
I had already done
to her years ago.
What are you talking about?
I fell in love with somebody,
and and got lost, left.
Bullshit. You were just a baby,
and your mother waited for me.
Shut up, Dad.
She waited six months, Samantha.
And when I realized what a selfish
shit I'd been... Shut up, Dad!
She took me back.
It's the truth.
You couldn't tell me, Dad?
Really?
You just made me hate her!
She made me promise that if she
did something as stupid as I had
she hoped I'd have the
decency to wait for her,
so I am.
I should have told you, Samantha.
I'm sorry.
I'm sorry.
She waited six months, Dad.
You've been waiting three years.
I think you made good
on your promise.
It's okay to stop waiting.
Yeah...
She's coming back.
What makes you so sure?
Because she waited.
And your mother is a far better
person than I'll ever be.

Hello?
Sam?
I'm here.
She's dead.
My mom is dead.
I don't know what to do.
Mom's dead.
I'm coming,
I'm coming.
Hello?
Hello? Is Rusty there?
This is Rusty.
Rusty, this is Stephen King.
Hello?
Uh, yes, sir.
I'm here.
Your sister sent me your story,
I've Just Seen a Face.
I read it, and I
think it's damn good.
I've loved it.
My sister sent it to you?
Yep, I took the liberty
of sending it.
to the Magazine of Fantasy
and Science Fiction.
They've published some of
my stories over the years,
and I thought' they might
be a good fit for yours.
Uh, wow, thank you.
Thank you so much.
You're welcome.
I think you've got a bright
future ahead of you.
Hey, tell your dad I said hello.
I'm a big fan of Suit Monkeys.
It's a classic.
Keep up the good work.
Wait!
Mr. King, don't go.
I'm still here.
Okay, I just want to...
I just want to tell you how

much your books mean to me,
but I don't even...
I don't even want to try.
It's kind of like what you said
in the opening of The Body.
The most important things
are the hardest to say.
Right, right.
I can't believe you
actually read my story
and you liked it.
I just...
I didn't say I liked it.
I said I loved it.
Oh, my God Oh, shit.
It was great talking
to you, Rusty.
Okay, yeah. Okay, yeah,
I'll see you, Stephen.
You're going to kill yourself.
Do you know how to do that?
Yeah, Dad, I'm doing it.
Hi.
Hi.
We're here.
Good to see you.
They're laughing at your work.
It's not funny.
It's pretty interesting.
It's really a short story.
No, no, it's great.
It's about a detective
with Alzheimer's.
You're kidding me.
No, I'm not.
I'll get it. I invited Kate.
She might come.
It should be entertaining.
Mom?
Hi... Um.
I kind of pictured your
dad opening the door.
Could you shut it
and go get him?

Hi.
Hi.
What are you doing here?
I got a little lost.
I was just...
I was wondering if there's
still a place for me here.
I completely understand
if there isn't,
because I know that
I really... every...
I really don't deserve it.
It's okay.
I'm so sorry.
We got food in here?
You do?
Yeah. Come on in.
Hi.
Hi.
Rusty, why don't you make
a place for your mom?
No, no, I got it.
Thanks.
I'll move this over.
Yeah.
Move her?
No, here.
Thank you.
Oh, wine glass.
Thanks.
Thanks.
Good, well...
I sold my first story.
Rusty, that's wonderful.
That's great.
Uh, it was actually all Sam.
You wrote it.
I just sent it to the only
person I could think of
who would actually like it.
A toast.
To Rusty.
To Rusty.
And Happy Thanksgiving.

Happy Thanksgiving.

Happy Thanksgiving.

I could hear
my heart beating.

I could hear
everyone's heart.

I could hear the human noise
we sat' there making.

Not one of us moving,
not even when the room
went dark.

sync, fix: