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Dark Water

By Rafael Yglesias

Dahlia, let's go inside now.

She will come soon,

but let's go inside now.

What are we going to do,

Dahlia?

What are we going to do

about your mother always being so late?

- Hi.

- Hi.

Did you ring?

It's not 11.

You didn't ring.

Good. You're early.

You can come right in.

- You have been subletting?

- Right.

When my construction company moved
to New York, the rents were out of sight,
so we only took
a one-year lease.

And when my wife
asked me to leave,

I got a small one-bedroom
in Jersey City that's cheap.

- How much?

- 800.

Where will Cecilia sleep then?

There's a pullout couch in the living room,
so when she comes to stay with me,
I will sleep there.

I can't afford two bedrooms.

How about you, Dahlia? We need to know
what your situation is going to be.

Any luck in finding a suitable place
for you and Cecilia?

- I am looking at apartments today.

- Where?

- Where?

- I told you, I am moving to Jersey City.

There's a school there, it's great. And
there's plenty of cheap places to rent, so...

You got an apartment near me, it would
make the shared custody easier.

Why do you want her, Kyle?

- What do you mean, "Why do I want her?"
- You were never interested in her before.
- What?
- You know, he forgot her fifth birthday.
- No. No, I didn't.
- No?

No, I didn't. The plane was stuck on the tarmac, and we didn't have a gate. I told you a million times, the phones didn't work.

No one believes you, because everyone knows what you were doing.

- "Everyone"? No, you. Only you.
- OK.

You see? She's crazy.

You live in a world of your own.

I make one mistake, and I don't care about Ceci?

- You don't like playing with her.
- You're insane. You're insane.

Be honest with yourself. You can't raise Ceci alone. You can't handle it. Just be honest with yourself.

Isn't it funny how small the cars look?

- Yeah.
- If you look at them from up here. Fit them between your fingers, if you squint.

Yeah.

Oh, look.

There's a tram.

And that's where we're going, Roosevelt Island.

Mommy, that's not the city.

Sure it is.

Just a different part of the city.

No, that's the city over there.

That's not the city.

- She's right.
- Mm-hm.

Here we are.

It is chilly, though, isn't it?

Are you cold?

Yeah, a little bit.
Yeah? Hey, look,
that's where you'd go to school.
I don't want
to go to school here.
Why not?
It's too small.
Oh, I see.
Mm-hm.
- You know, I got your snack for you.
- You do?
Yeah. Are you hungry now?
Do you want it now?
- Maybe I will wait.
- OK.
Let's just check.
Let's see.
Just...
That way.
OK.
It's nice here.
It's like a small town.
I like the big city better.
Why didn't we rent that last place?
That was really nice.
It was. It was too expensive for us, honey.
We need something that's a better price.
But I don't want
to live here, Mommy.
Why not, Ceci?
It's all the same.
And it's small. Too small.
"It's too small"?
I think you're too small.
- No, I am not. I am big.
- Small.
- I am big.
- OK, good.
Then are you going to be a big girl,
and give this one a chance?
Yeah?
Because otherwise you know what happens?
What?
My itsy-bitsy muffin. I cover you all up

with jam like this, and then...

And then eat you up.

OK. That's us.

We are a little bit early.

We need...

Oh, golly. Five...

- Hi.

- Hi.

- Are you Mrs. Bernstein?

- No, I am Ms. Williams.

Ah, Ms. Williams. Oh, you're early.

Mr. Murray. We spoke on the phone.

Listen, since the Bernsteins aren't here,

I can show you the apartment now.

You're lucky to get

a jump on them, actually.

OK, that'd be great.

- So we will just go up, and...

- Thanks.

- Hello.

- Hi.

These tend to go pretty quick.

You know, Manhattan is so expensive,
and this is practically in Manhattan.

- I mean, it's five minutes away.

- Yucky. This is yucky.

It is yucky down here, which is why we are
repainting all these lobbies this summer.

And I think they're replacing all the doors, if
I am not mistaken. It will make it a lot brighter.

This is Mr. Veeck.

He is the super for building C.

Hello.

Mr. Veeck,

can you say hello?

- Hello.

- This is... What's your name?

- Dahlia. This is Ceci.

- I am sorry. Dahlia and Ceci.

Uh... Mr. Veeck lives in 1A.

He's been here for 20 years.

He will fix anything

that goes wrong.

- Oh, that's good.

- Which is a big savings,
because he does it for free.
There's also a doorman on duty
from four to midnight here,
so you don't have to worry about
coming in late. And that is the lobby.
Mr. Veeck, if the Bernsteins show up,
just send them right up to 9F.

- OK.

- 9F.

OK.

OK, so,

we will just head up here.

- Did you take the Tram?

- Yeah.

- Oh, you did. Did you like that?

- Yeah.

You get to do that every day
when you live in this building.

Oh, yeah. There's the camera.

Say hi. Mr. Veeck is watching us.

I am going to take you up to nine. Almost our
top floor. I call it the lower penthouse level.

Um...

You get some city views up there.

A little cut off, but you can still
see the city lights, at night.

Oh, you know,

we're two blocks from the school,
which is one of the best
in the city.

Yeah, I was just reading that.

- Isn't that great?

- No.

I don't like it here, Mommy. I want to...

Ceci, please.

- Sorry, Mommy.

- That's OK.

It's OK.

You're going to love it up here.

And they just opened a pizza place on the
island. Do you like pizza? I bet you do.

I like pizza, too.

I like it a little bit too much.

Wait, sweetie.

Don't run. Don't run.

What the...

Get stuck in here, huh?

- Mommy, what happened?

- Sorry. It's all right.

Damn it.

Another puddle.

Sorry about that. I keep telling Mr. Veeck he's got to mop in there every morning.

You know,

with all this rain we're having,

you can't stop some of it

coming down that elevator shaft.

There's just no way to stop it.

Anyway, here's 9F down here.

The building was built in 1976

by Stern-Jackson and associates,

in the brutalist style.

Um... Now, what they were trying to create, as you can see, was kind of a little village,

kind of a Utopia, actually,

is what they had in mind.

And some of those ideas

have come together.

Some of their original plans for the place were a little crazy, if you ask me, actually.

Hello.

Yeah, I just do that

just in case. It's vacant.

- Come on in.

- Shall I close this?

Yeah. Let me just apologize in advance.

The place is in a little bit of a mess.

Our last tenant

was a little messy,

but we're going to put a fresh new

coat of paint on this whole place.

It's going to brighten it up quite a bit.

Let's take a look at your bedroom, sweetie.

This could be your room

if Mommy wants it to be.

- What do you think? Isn't that great?

- There's no air in here.

Of course there's air in here. If there wasn't air, we wouldn't be able to breathe. Uh... That window does not open, but it lets a lot of natural light in in the afternoons.

- It's really great.

- Strange.

I kind of like it. In the afternoon, it brightens the place up quite a bit.

Anyway, here's the closet.

You could put your dollies in there, or, you know, Mom could use it for storage.

- Let me show you the bathroom. OK?

- OK.

Come on, honey.

Is this another closet here?

Yeah, that's the foyer closet.

The bathroom's pretty self-explanatory.

It's in decent shape. Once we clean it up.

You got the toilet, of course, the sink, bathtub.

This glass is safety glass.

I mean, you could hit that as hard as you want, it will not break.

And that is great for your peace of mind, you know, when Ceci's taking a bath.

Hey, Ceci.

Come look in here.

Ah, you're right. That's much better.

You can smell the river. Can you smell it?

- Yeah.

- Let me show you the other bedroom here.

You know, it's tough to get two bedrooms in Manhattan, any of the boroughs, for under a thousand dollars.

OK, that's a closet.

Scratch that. That's a closet.

Um... Kitchen.

Got the refrigerator, sink, stove, and this is kind of a country eat-in dining room.

You see this.

It's just really smart how they did this.

See that little thing?
Boom dining room.
You can put your stools around it,
and when you're done.....
....out of the way, no clutter.
The dishwasher, if you're entertaining,
very convenient to have.
Kitchen. OK.
And then here
is the other bedroom.
So, where's the living room?
Well, it's kind of
a living room slash bedroom.
It's called a dual-use room. You can see
it's the size of two rooms. It's huge.
Anyway, did you see the view?
Did you see that?
Look at that. That is a million-dollar
view for \$900 a month.
I mean,
I don't even have that where I live.
You're not going to do better than that,
I guarantee it.
Listen, I am just going to
cut to the chase here.
We could have this painted this weekend.
You could move in on Monday,
and, you know,
we could just fill out the forms right now.
I understand you want some time
to walk around, think about it.
- Let me just check on Ceci.
- Sure, sure. Yeah.
Ceci.
She's just making herself at home.
That's OK, Mom.
Ceci.
You know how they are.
She's just exploring.
- Mr. Veeck. Mr. Veeck.
- Did my daughter come down here?
- What?
- My daughter.
The little girl I came in with.

The little girl. Did she get on the elevator?

No. I see no one.

Just him.

Yeah, there was a little girl
in the stairwell.

Ceci.

Ceci.

Ceci.

Ceci.

Are you in there?

- Hello.

- Yeah?

- What are you doing down here?

- I saw someone go in.

Did you check the stairs
all the way to the roof?

Ceci.

Look, Mommy.

Hello Kitty. I got a Hello Kitty bag.

Ceci. Don't you ever do that again.

Do you understand?

Don't you ever run away from me,
and you never come up on the roof.

- Sorry.

- Do you understand me?

It's not safe for you up here.

You could have fallen.

- Sorry, Mommy.

- OK?

How can you leave this unlocked? There's no
railing here. It's totally irresponsible.

- It's supposed to be locked.

- Well, it wasn't.

Yeah. Sorry.

- Are you OK, honey?

- Yeah.

You're so lucky you found that.

My niece loves Hello Kitty.

Did you look inside it?

- No. Mommy, can I look?

- It's not yours, sweetie.

Oh, I am sure she can keep it. There's no
other children in the building. Someone...

No children?

Why? It's so close to the school.
They all grew up.
You know, they're all teenagers now.
You know, hardly anybody
ever moves out because of rent control.
Oh, there are other children on the island.
You know, in the other buildings.
You would have
many, many friends.
So cute.
Mr. Veeck, why was the door
to the roof open?
- What?
- The roof.
My daughter
found this on the roof.
- The roof? Where?
- Just lying there.
Mr. Veeck. Why didn't you
lock the door to the roof?
- I did.
- No.
She opened it and walked right out.
Now, what if she'd gotten hurt?
That's negligence, Mr. Veeck,
and I will call the union myself.
You get fired for cause,
and you can kiss that pension goodbye.
What do you talk about?
I check it. Hour ago, it was locked.
- Someone else open it.
- Well, whose bag is this?
- What do I know?
- Well, look inside it, please.
I am so sorry about this.
As you can see, we're having a little bit of
a communication problem. We will work it out.
I was wondering
if you have a card, so...
Oh, absolutely.
Absolutely.
- Just don't wait too long.
- Hey. Hey.
Ceci.

That's not yours. OK?

You can't keep that. Look, it's brand-new.

Someone's going to come back for it.

Can you give it back,
please?

- Doll.

- Ceci.

- Aw. Poor thing.

- Good girl. Thank you.

I will tell you what. Mr. Veeck will hold
onto it for a week, and if no one comes,
then you can come by
and get it. OK?

- In one week.

- No one comes, it's yours.

You see? You will see,
no one will come.

Thank you, Mr. Veeck.

Please check on that lock again.

Thank you.

We're going to live here,
right, Mommy?

- What?

- We're going to move here, right?

I want to.

I really want to move here.

See?

From the mouths of babes.

- Excuse me just one moment.

- OK.

Talk about it, I guess.

Now, we don't have to move here
for you to get a Hello Kitty backpack.

- I know that.

- You know that?

I really like this place, Mommy.

I want to live here.

You said it was
the right kind of price for us.

I did say that.

It's a little bit smaller than I hoped.

Please, Mommy.

Can we live here?

I am over here.

Over here.

Over here.

- We will take it.

- Oh, I have the Bernsteins...

I will give you a deposit right now.

- You're sure?

- Yeah. I am sure.

- OK.

- OK.

Yeah. I have the forms here, if you want.

We can go in... Let's go back in the office.

OK. Ceci,

you want to come?

I will be right back. I can explain to them.

That's all right. They have a lot of choices.

Come on, honey.

Because it's insanely inconvenient,
that's why.

I got to drive through the tunnel, get uptown
to cross the 59th Street Bridge to Queens,
so I can cross another goddamn bridge
to get to the island.

- You could take the subway.

- The subway?

You want me to take the PATH to the F?

Are you kidding me? It will take an hour.

I am suing.

What?

You move there, I will sue for full custody.

Mr. Williams.

Threats are not appropriate.

- Ms. Williams has a right to rent...

- Are you moving to Roosevelt Island?

- Look at this.

- I want an answer.

Look at this. The elementary school there
is one of the best in the city,
and it's practically next door, so all Ceci
would have to do is walk two blocks.

Just look at it.

If this is really about Ceci, maybe
you could move to Roosevelt Island,
because there are
lots of places for rent there.

- That's ridiculous.
- Is it? Why?
- I already signed a lease.
- You're lying.
- I am not listening to this.
- She's there.
She's in Jersey City,
and that's what this is really about.
I am done talking.
Better get yourself a lawyer.
A good one.
I am sorry to say
that's good advice.
- Nobody came, right?
- What?
The Hello Kitty bag.
Nobody came, right?
It's only been four days, kid.
Don't get your hopes up.
Hey.
- Hello.
- Hello.
- After you, my love.
- Thank you.
Let's try...
- In here?
- No.
I am ready for something to drink.
How about you?
Or maybe something to eat.
Ooh, let's put you in the box.
Can you
hold your breath underwater?
- Yeah.
- You can?
How long do you think
you can hold it for?
- Seven.
- Really?
Uh-huh.
Look, Mommy.
Look how high I can jump.
Are you trying to break your new bed
on the first night?

- No.
- Don't break your bed.
OK. Look, Mommy.
I am going to reach the ceiling.
What is that?
Looks like a leak.
How?
I will have to tell them about that
in the morning.
Horrible.
Anyway, what shall we read?
Wow.
The sound really carries.
Yeah.
- Mommy.
- Hm?
- Can you fix my hair?
- I'd love to fix your hair.
What do you want?
Do you want a ponytail? Or a braid?
- A braid.
- OK.
You want to practice for today?
OK.
Boys and girls,
today I want you to meet
your new classmate.
Her name is Cecilia Williams.
Everyone say hello to Cecilia.
- Hi, Cecilia.
- Hi.
I think
you can do better than that.
Do you want to try again?
OK.
- Hi, Cecilia.
- Hi, everybody.
That's my girl.
That's my smart,
beautiful, beautiful girl.
How's that?
It's perfect.
You do it perfect.
You get your shoes on,

which are right there.

Keys, which are...

I know where they are.

Shit. Shit.

- Mommy.

- What?

- You cursed.

- Put your shoes on, OK?

OK.

- Do you need help with those?

- Yeah.

Pick up your finger paints

from the back of the room.

Remember to mix the colors.

Red and yellow make...

- Orange.

- Great.

Good morning. Hi.

Hi, Cecilia. You know what?

We are going to have so much fun today.

We're finger-painting, so we're going to

get all messy. Look. See?

- The messier the better.

- That's fine.

Are you ready to come

meet all your new friends?

Great. Why don't you come with me,
sweetheart?

- Bye, sweetheart.

- Want to say goodbye to your mama?

Bye, darling girl.

- I will be here at 3:30 to pick you up.

- Love you, Mommy.

Oh, I love you so much.

Go have fun.

Come on, sweetheart.

OK, everybody.

Listen up, now.

I want you to give a big, warm, huge
welcome to our new friend Cecilia.

- Hi, Cecilia.

- Hi, everybody. I am Cecilia.

Hi, Cecilia.

Wow, that was great.

You want the elevator? Uh...
Actually, I was looking for you. Um...
There's a leak
in my bedroom ceiling.
Breaking news, huh?
Pipes is 30 years old.
Leaks all over the building.
So does that mean
you won't fix it?
Fix a leak? Look,
all I can do is patch up the ceiling.
If you want to fix the leak,
you got to get Murray to call a plumber.
- Mr. Murray.
- Mr. Murray.
OK. I will call him.
Do.
OK.
So, you worked
as a copy editor?
Yeah. Back in Seattle,
I did copy editing and some fact checking.
Why do you want this job? Pay's not that
good, sure as hell ain't interesting.
Oh, I'd try something different, you know?
I have always been interested in medicine.
Medicine?
Oh, honey, this ain't medicine.
See, what you do is you Xerox
their insurance card, hand them a form,
and give them
a pitcher of bug-juice to drink.
Are you sure
you want to do this?
Come on, you can tell me.
I am not exactly a model citizen.
I am separated from my husband.
My daughter and I
just moved to Roosevelt Island.
You're a five-minute subway ride,
the hours are perfect,
and you have a medical plan.
Well, you're hired, honey.
But you got to promise me one thing.

What?

In six months' time,
when you find a better job,
please take me with you.

OK. Thank you.

- Hello.

- Hi. Mr. Murray?

- Yeah.

- Hi. It's Dahlia Williams.

- Dahlia Williams.

- From 9F.

- 9F.

- Yeah.

Hey,

how was that paint job?

- Yeah...

- Great work, right?

Thank you, but, um... Actually,
I have a leak in my bedroom ceiling.

- A leak?

- Yeah.

Did you tell Mr. Veeck?

I did, I told him.

He said that he could patch the ceiling,
but that to repair the leak,
you would need to call a plumber.

I don't know

what he's talking about.

If he needs to open the ceiling
and fix the pipe, he can do it.

He doesn't need a plumber.

Listen up.

Just tell him I said... Just tell him
Mr. Murray said that he should fix the leak.

OK. I will... I will try.

Listen, say hello
to little Cathy for me, too, OK?

Ceci.

Ceci. I am sorry.

OK.

OK. Bye-bye.

Yes.

- Hi.

- It's lunch hour.

Just quickly.

I spoke to Mr. Murray,
and he said that you should
fix that leak that I told you about.

Look, I am not a plumber.

I keep telling him.

I am not responsible
for building's plumbing.

My job is make sure

boiler's working,

mop floors, put out the garbage,

but I am not a plumber.

No, I understand. It's just Murray said
that you could fix it.

Well, I can't.

- Hello.

- Wouldn't stop, right? Took you up to ten?

Yeah, it does that sometimes. It just
goes up to ten, no one's even called for it.

I think when it rains a lot, it messes with
the contacts or something. Which floor?

- Nine, please.

- OK, we will take you back up,
and then I will go down.

OK. Thank you.

Shit. Come on.

Who did this?

This building is falling apart.

- Bye.

- See you later.

I have talked to Veeck

twice now,

and he says he's not a plumber

and he can't fix it,

so I am wondering, is there a super from
one of the other buildings who could do it?

I can't do that.

See, C is Veeck, and Veeck is C.

If I do that, then I have the union
screaming at me about violating work rules.

It's really coming down now, and I can

hear there's running water upstairs, so...

You know, it might not even be a leak.

It might be flooded or something.

- Did you say "upstairs"?

- Right above me.

- In 10F?

- Upstairs.

You know, maybe it's their tub that's overflowed or something, I don't know.

No, that can't be right.

Listen, I will tell you what I am going to do.

I am going to call Mr. Veeck personally, OK?

I am going to take care of this right away.

So don't worry about it.

I am going to get right on it.

I am sorry, I am with a client right now. I will call you later, as soon as I take care of it, OK?

- Thank you.

- OK. No problem. Bye-bye.

Mommy, wake up.

Ceci?

Hello.

Hello.

Hello.

Oh, God.

Oh, God.

What are you doing here?

Take it easy.

It's flooded.

The fucking brats.

I am going to kill them.

- You see them coming out of here?

- Who?

Asshole Steve. 3F.

And his buddy, dumb Billy, 7E.

- You don't know them?

- No.

Look.

Here's the story.

Father's left the country.

Where the mother is,

God knows.

They have been away for months.

Probably not coming back.

Those punks have stolen a key and get in here.

- Why?

- What do I know?

Drugs.

Wacky baccy, you know.

Look, I clean up this place, and then...

Then I come down to your place, huh?

Murray called me.

I tell him I take care of it.

Yeah. I patch it up tomorrow,
when it's dry.

- No extra charge, you know?

- Thank you.

The itsy-bitsy spider

- Went up the waterspout

- Then what?

Down came the rain

- And it washed the spider out

- OK.

- It's OK.

- Sorry.

You can be 10,

even 15 minutes late.

We have this after-school program

that runs until 5:30, so...

- Many of the kids stay for it.

- Uh... Is there a charge for that?

It's \$30 a week.

- Which is actually quite reasonable.

- No, that's good. That's good.

I think I will have to do that,

because I will be working till five every day.

- OK. Well, we can set that up.

- OK.

Surprise, surprise, there's another form
you have to fill out, but we can do that now.

This will be good for Cecilia.

It will help her fit in faster, and she
could use some real friends, don't you think?

What do you mean?

Well, it's not unusual

to have imaginary friends at this age.

Nowadays we know

not to bug them about it,

but it isn't so great that

she's playing with an imaginary friend

when there are real children
for her to play with here.
Are you saying
that Ceci has an imaginary friend?
And washed the spider out
Out came the sun
and dried up all the rain
And the itsy-bitsy spider
Went up the spout again
I made you a snack for after school.
I had it all wrapped up and ready to go,
and then I was rushing,
and I forgot it.

- It's OK.
- Sorry.
- What did you think of your teacher?
- She was very nice.
- Did you make any friends today?
- Uh-huh.

Who?

- Nobody.
- Nobody?

Very funny name
for a friend, "Nobody."

- Mommy.
- Nobody. "My name is Nobody."
- Did anyone come?
- What?

For Hello Kitty.

Did anyone come?

No. Not yet.

Thanks for taking care of the ceiling
tomorrow. I appreciate it.

It looks really ugly now.

Good.

Are you going to stay
in my bed tonight?

Close your eyes.

I am very proud of you
for today.

Sweet dreams, honey.

The itsy-bitsy spider.....

Went up the waterspout

Down came the rain

And washed the spider out
Out came the sun
And dried up all the rain
- The itsy-bitsy spider
- Itsy-bitsy spider...

Went up the spout again
.....the spout again.

Well, I still don't really know anyone
here, so I am not really sure who to ask.
Except Bill and Stacy, but he's Kyle's
friend from work, so I can't ask him.
I think it'd be a lot easier for her
back there in Seattle, you know?

Well, what about the mediators?
Maybe they can recommend somebody.

Yeah, I asked them,
but they're supposed to be impartial
- so they can't recommend anyone.

- Oh.

I don't know. I guess maybe I will try
and find someone out of the Yellow Pages.

Dahlia, you can't pick some
random lawyer out of a phone book.

I can't believe it.

Those kids are up there again.

What?

Mary, I am going to have
to call you back later, OK?

I have to go downstairs
and deal with this.

All right. I will talk to you later. Bye.
Bye.

Stop it. She will catch you.

No, I am not allowed to go to the roof.
Because it's dangerous,
and by the ways, it's spooky at night.

- Who are you talking to?

- Nobody.

Is it your friend Nobody again?

Do you have an invisible friend
only you can see?

Is it a boy or a girl?

Girl.

- How old is she?

- My age. Almost exactly.

She was born a month before me.

So she's older.

Wow. What's her name?

- Natasha.

- Natasha?

That's a really interesting name.

Where'd you get that name from?

It's just her name.

Night, Mom.

I can't go up to 10F now. If I leave my post and Mr. Murray finds out, I am dead.

OK, but if they leave the water running then my bedroom ceiling could collapse.

- Understand?

- Yeah, I understand.

But what you got to understand is if I leave now

I might as well go straight to

Unemployment. That's not going to happen.

Look, I am sorry. I don't know if you want me to call the cops or something.

- Just give me a second. Hang on.

- It's all right, never mind.

I will deal with it.

And thanks for your help.

All right.

Mommy, come.

Are you OK?

Can I help you?

I told you.

I told you to leave me alone.

Mom?

- Get away from me, you little bitch.

- Mommy?

- I hate you.

- Let me help you.

I hate you.

- Do you hear me? I hate you.

- No.

Just go. Go.

Mommy.

Wh...

- What?

- You're scaring me.
- What's wrong?
- You were having a bad dream again.
Again?
You always make that sound
when you sleep.
I do?
Ever since Daddy left.
- Stop doing that, OK?
- OK.
- It scares me.
- I am sorry. I am sorry.
It's OK.
There's nothing to be scared of.
- Have a good day. See you later.
- OK. Bye, Mommy.
Yeah, he was a frat brother
of Joe's at Wash U.
Joe says he's as smart as a whip.
If he was at college with Joe
I guess he's been practicing for a while.
Well, actually, he got a late start
on being a lawyer.
- He lost a decade to partying.
- A decade?
No, seriously, Joe says he's really good
and he won't charge you
an arm and a leg.
- His name is Platzter.
- OK.
- P-L-A....
- Right.
...T-Z-E-R.
Come on, Platz.
This mess was sloppy, unprofessional.
I mean, I know I get caught,
but my work? My craft?
My craft ain't sloppy.
That much is true.
- Thank you.
- Hello?
Mr. Platzter, hi.
My name is Dahlia Williams.
Hi, Mrs. Williams.

John told me you'd be calling.
I can't meet till next week, so you give
me opposing counsel's name and number
and I will give him a call
and get up to speed on their issues.
Sure. My husband's lawyer's name
is Carrie Simmons.
That's OK, I know Carrie's number.
This is not going to be so easy.
We should meet Monday. Where do you
work? I will come by in your lunch hour.
It's Sutton Place Radiology.
You're being very nice,
but I am sorry, I just have to ask.
- How much is that going to cost me?
- We will figure the money out.
I will call Carrie, get up to speed,
then we will go over everything Monday,
- including my fee, OK?
- OK. Thanks so much.
- OK. Bye.
- Bye-bye.
Figure the money out? That's some
sweet thing you're figuring money for.
- You going to figure my money too?
- You're lucky I don't charge you double.
OK, so everyone looking at me.
And do you all have a piece of tape?
Show me, show me.
Put it somewhere silly.
Somewhere silly. Your forehead,
your nose. Make a beard. OK.
Now put it on the back of your picture
and then you're going to follow me into the
hallway because we're going to put them up.
Ten, nine, eight, a-seven, a-six,
five, four, three, two, one.
Beautiful.
- Anyone else need tape?
- I do.
If it's not sticking...
- Mom, you're early.
- I know.
The subway was so much faster

than the Tram.

I was at work ten minutes ago.

Isn't that amazing?

I think we picked the perfect place to live.

Daddy doesn't like it here.

He wants me to move with him

to that other city.

Oh.

- When did Daddy say that?

- Today.

He came to see

what my new school was like.

Hm.

- I got to go.

- OK. I will be waiting for you.

OK.

Yeah, he came by to give us his cell

phone number in case of an emergency.

He was with Cecilia for a few minutes.

He said hi, he looked at the room.

Is there some problem?

Is he not allowed to?

Is there some restraining order
against him?

- No.....

- No.

I was just... wondering if Ceci was...

Still imagining things?

Actually, I am glad you brought that up.

Her imaginary friend hasn't gone away.

In fact, she threw somewhat of a tantrum
during circle time

when we wouldn't let her "friend"
sing along.

I had to have her take a time-out.

I am sorry. I will certainly
talk to Ceci about that.

You know, the PTA provides
a psychologist, Katie Shoettle.

She's very nice. She comes every
Wednesday. It's absolutely no charge.

I will talk to Ceci about it. It will stop.

I am really sorry about that.

You will see.

Couple of days, blend right in.

You won't see the difference.

I am sure you're right. Thank you.

You know, those kids were up there again last night, running around, and I could hear them running water.

So...

You know what I am going to do?

I am going to speak with Murray about changing the lock on 10F.

You know what he told me?

Rimsky paid no rent this month.

- He's probably not coming back anyway.

- OK.

Well, that would be great if you could change the lock.

Starting to have nightmares about what's going on up there.

- Really? You got to relax, huh?

- Can I get you something before you go?

Yeah. Get me a reward for all this hard work I have been doing.

Yeah? I think I have beer.

- You want a beer?

- I don't drink beer.

Coffee? I could make a pot of coffee if you want.

Oh, forget it. I have been working hard today. I am tired. I am going.

OK. Well, thank you.

What about Hello Kitty?

Can I have it now?

Oh, so sorry, kid.

Somebody came by for it today.

They were visiting town, left it there by accident.

Oh, that little girl, she was so happy to have it back.

- You're lying.

- Ceci.

He's lying, Mommy. Nobody came.

You want to teach that goddamn brat some manners, lady.

Sorry.

What is the matter with you?

Mm.

Mac and cheese. My favorite.

I love you, Mommy.

I love you too, sweetheart.

I love you very much.

But, you know, it was very wrong of you to call Mr. Veeck a liar.

- You know that, don't you?

- He is a liar.

Ceci. You don't know that he's a liar.

- Yes, I do.

- How? How do you know that?

Natasha told me he still had the Hello Kitty backpack in his desk.

I want to talk to you about your imaginary friend, OK?

- She's not imaginary.

- She's not?

She's lost. Her mommy forgot about her and now she's lost.

Like you.

- What are you talking about?

- Your mommy forgot about you, right?

Did someone tell you that?

- You did.

- No.

I didn't tell you that, Ceci.

Who told you that?

Are you going to answer me?

I am asking you a question.

- Who told you?

- Natasha told me.

Stop it. You stop lying to me.

Who told you?

Who told you?

Who told you?

- Hello?

- Hi, I am just calling to arrange...

What are you trying to do? Sneaking into her school, telling her it isn't any good?

Talking to her about my mother?

How dare you talk to her about my mother.

Look, I don't know who or what pressed

your wacko button today, and I don't care,
I am calling to tell you I am picking
up Ceci Saturday at nine.
I will bring her back Sunday at six.
Don't play any games.
Have her there, 9 a.m. sharp.
- I tell you punks. No skating in here.
- Yeah, yeah.
She's cute.
Daddy's here.
Hey.
Look at you.
You shouldn't be smoking, Daddy.
I am going to quit real soon, honey.
I promise.
- Thank you, Daddy.
- Satisfied?
As far as I am concerned,
you can smoke as much as you like, Kyle.
Honey.
- I will bring her back tomorrow at six.
- OK.
- Bye, Mommy.
- Bye, honey.
Hey, pretty lady. What's happening?
Laundry. Excuse me.
I got some dirty things
I'd like you to clean.
Sorry.
I forgot my smokes.
Help.
Smart-ass kids.
Steve and Billy. They did this.
You will see. Monday, the plumbers come.
They will find something stuck in there.
They gum them up. Brats.
- Who's Natasha?
- What?
Who's Natasha Rimsky?
Little girl. 10F.
Where is she now?
How do I know? With her mother, I guess.
Couldn't stand living
with that crazy Russian husband of hers.

Took the little girl with her.
That Russki, he was a piece of work.
Always "blyad".
Look, there's a Laundromat
down the block.
I will get you some garbage bags
so you don't get wet carrying them there.
The itsy-bitsy spider
climbed up the water spout
Hi, Mommy.
Glad you like spaghetti and meatballs.
- It's my favorite.
- Your favorite?
I love them, Mommy.
I am glad.
Mm.
I love you, Mommy.
You haven't said anything
about what your dad's new place is like.
- I don't like it.
- Really?
Yeah.
Well, maybe it's just new
and you need to get used to it.
But I don't want to get used to it.
I don't want to stay with Daddy.
I only want to stay with you.
Well, your dad loves you. He will be
happy that you spent this time with him.
Itsy-bitsy spider
climbed up the water spout
Down came the rain
- Honey, can you stop singing that?
- Why? It happened.
I want to go to bed now, Mommy.
I am tired.
- Mommy?
- Mm?
I am scared, Mommy.
I want to sleep with you.
Yeah.
I love you, Mommy.
Thank you for taking care of me.
Ceci?

- Hello?
- Mommy, where were you?
- I was napping.
- No, not now. Last night.
Where were you last night? I called
two times for you to say goodnight to me.
- Where were you?
- Last night?
OK, Daddy. Daddy says he's bringing
me home a half an hour early.

OK, Daddy. 5:

He says to be there in the lobby at 5:30.
- Don't fall asleep again, Mommy.
- OK.
I got to go. I am getting chocolate cake.
- Bye.
- Bye.
Dahlia, where have you been?
I left two messages.
I lost a day, Mary.
I took a pill, just one pill,
and it knocked me out for 24 hours.
That's never happened before.
And I am tired, really tired.
It's like I haven't slept at all.
Dahlia, are you OK? Are you really OK?
My headache's gone. But the leak is back.
It's back?
I thought they were going to fix that thing.
- Dahlia?
- Yeah?
- Are you OK?
- Yeah, I am fine.
You have five new messages.
First new message.
Long nap, huh? Call me.
Message erased.
Next message.
Hi, Jeff Platzer here. I got the
preliminaries from your husband's lawyer
and I need to touch base with you about
his accusations as soon as possible.
Believe it or not I am actually available

on Sunday afternoon until five.

If you are, would you call my cell?

OK. Bye.

- Mrs. Williams?

- Yeah.

Hi. I am your lawyer.

- Hi.

- Hi.

- I am sorry it's such a mess.

- No, it's OK.

I just moved into a new office
and they have painted it.

I can't stand the smell
so I am improvising.

OK.

- Hi. Uhhh.

- Hi.

- So...

- OK.

Your husband's claiming
you're mentally unstable
because your father
was physically abusive
and your mother was an alcoholic
who abandoned you.

That's...

unbelievable.

What do my parents have to do with this?

That's my question exactly.

What's more relevant is that your husband
says you suffer from crippling migraines
and paranoid delusions.

He says he will submit school reports
that show your daughter
is beginning to share your fantasy life.

"Cecilia is now having trouble
distinguishing between
what is real and what is not."

It's a lie. It's a lie.

In child custody briefs, it's standard
to make these kinds of accusations.

Don't take it too seriously.

But I do need to know what, if anything,
in your husband's narrative

has some semblance, some shred of fact
that he might produce in court.

Well, I get migraines.

Yeah. That's true.

But they have never interfered
with my ability to do anything.

You can talk to my doctor about that. He will
tell you they have certainly never crippled me.

Um...

As for Ceci, I think

she's a little bit lonely right now.

Her father's abandoned her and she was
forced to move from her neighborhood.

So...

she's developed an imaginary friend.

But that's normal.

That's fine. But for future reference, when
you're talking to, for example, a judge,

I would stay away from phrases like,
"her father's abandoned her".

It's important, when the other side
is being so melodramatic,

- to sound like we're the sane ones.

- Right.

- That's all I am saying.

- OK.

- I'd like to notch that.

- Oh, yeah, man.

Hey, sweetheart.

- Mommy?

- Yeah.

- Look what Daddy gave me.

- Wow.

- That's great, You're so lucky.

- Listen, next Saturday's a problem.

Can we do Sunday and I will bring her
first thing in the morning

for school on Monday?

Yeah. Yeah, that's fine.

- Come on, honey. Say bye to Daddy.

- Bye, Daddy. Thanks for the Barbie.

- Did you do that ponytail by yourself?

- Yeah.

- It's a good one.

- Thanks.

- I like the collar.

- Thanks.

Honey, you know what,

I forgot to do something.

I am going to be right back.

Will you wait right here for me?

- Don't go anywhere, OK?

- OK.

Be right back.

Two..... one.

Ceci?

Ceci? Stay in the elevator.

I am bringing you down.

Ceci, can you hear me?

Bake me a cake as fast as you can.

Roll it, pat it and mark it with a B.

- No more pretending to play with Natasha.

- She won't let me.

Well, then you stop talking to her.

You tell her I said so.

You tell her your mommy said

you can't play with her any more.

OK, Mommy.

- Hello?

- Hi, Mr. Platzner.

I am sorry to call you late,

but I think my husband...

Mrs. Williams, it's Sunday night.

I can't talk.

Yeah, I know. I am sorry. I just need

to tell you this as soon as possible.

I think my husband

is trying to drive me crazy.

Either that or he's hoping

that I am going to act crazy.

- Hang on. Let me call you right back.

- OK.

You say neither of the Rimskys

are living there?

No, no one's there.

So Kyle's paying these kids.

I mean, he must be paying these kids

to mess around with the water

and the backpack. And the elevator.
I went into the elevator the other day
and the buttons were burned off.
Mrs. Williams, it's Sunday night
and I am at the movies with my family.
If I don't want to be handling
my own divorce, I got to get back. So...
I will call you tomorrow
and we will sort this out. All right?
Yeah. Absolutely.
Get down.
This time make sure
you put it in the garbage truck.
- Where did you...
- Those kids have been playing games,
moving it around the building.
And they were upstairs again so now
there's water all over my bedroom floor.
- They're running the water again?
- Mm-hm.
I thought you were going to
change the lock on 10F.
Murray didn't authorize it.
He has to send me a 112B form.
- Look, is the plumber here yet?
- No, no. It's only 8:15.
OK, look. I left a message for Mr. Murray.
I told him I need my problem fixed first.
So when the plumber gets here,
send him up to my apartment
or you and Murray
can both talk to my lawyer. OK?
Do you remember
what we talked about last night?
- Yes, Mommy.
- OK.
See you later, OK?
- Hello.
- Hi. Jeff Platzner here.
- Hi, Mr. Platzner.
- Listen, I did a little homework on Rimsky
and I think I turned up the missing mother
in a hospital in San Diego.
Why are you looking for her?

I figured the Rimskys might want to know
their apartment's being used by strangers.
Mrs. Williams, we're never going to prove
your husband's behind this harassment.
And trying to do that is just playing
his game. He wants you to look paranoid.
We got to deal with this straight,
as if it's all on the level.
So that's what we will do,
we will play it straight.

I am due in court, I will call you
when I get ahold of Mrs. Rimsky.
In the meantime, just sit tight.

- I will. Thanks so much.

- OK.

- Bye.

- Bye.

- Abigail's making a storm, sweetheart.

- Done.

Done? You remember you have
to sign your name so you know whose it is.
You don't want me to take that home
and say I did it, do you?

I like that. Pirates?

Stop it.

Stop it, I told you, leave me alone.

- We have got rainbows...

- Stop it.

Stop it.

Stop it.

Stop it.

You're going to get cleaned up
and when you're done
you're going to come back and sit with me
and we will read a story together.
Then maybe we will talk about your friend.
Go on.

Ceci.

Go away.

- Where is she?

- She passed out in the bathroom.

We don't know what happened.

There was water all over the place.

- We took her to the hospital.

- Hospital?

We just wanted to check her out.

It's school policy. We couldn't reach you.

I had an emergency at work,

I didn't get my messages for two hours.

We called her father

and he's going to meet her at the hospital.

- OK. Which hospital?

- It's the one right here on the island.

Kyle took her.

They released her and he took her.

- Did they say what was wrong?

- They said, you know, it's nothing serious.

She fainted but...

I am trying to find him. I called his home

number, I called his cell phone number,

I called his office number,

and he's avoiding me

so I need to know what to do.

Can I go to his apartment?

Mrs. Williams, I need you to calm down.

I need it, your daughter needs it.

Just calm down, OK?

I am sorry. I know you don't know me,

but you have to believe me.

I am not crazy, I am really not.

- I believe you, Mrs. Williams.

- I am really not.

Just go home. Your husband and your
daughter are probably waiting for you.

Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Ceci.

Ceci.

- No new messages.

- Oh, God.

- Hello?

- Hello? It's Jeff. Are they there?

- No.

- They're not there? No.

There is no message.

There's water everywhere.

Mrs. Williams, Mrs. Williams, calm down.

Calm down.

- She can't be here.

- What do you want me to do?

Oh, God.

I can't be her mother,

I don't know how to be myself.

Ceci.

I hate you.

Get away from me, you little bitch.

I hate you.

Fuck.

I hate you. I hate you.

Bitch.

Sorry about this. I really had no idea.

I would have come down myself

a long time ago.

Better open it.

Hello?

Hello?

Jesus.

Look at this. This is appalling.

This is appalling.

The plumber's on his way. I am paying him
double overtime so he can get here tonight.

Hello?

- I will get some of these lights on.

- Mrs. Williams?

- You OK?

- I am awake.

The plumber will be here in 15 minutes.

- Mr. Murray?

- This is just a big misunderstanding. OK?

Mr. Veeck did not keep me informed.

This will be fixed tonight.

- Or she's staying at the Plaza, right?

- It will definitely be fixed tonight.

- And I want to talk to Veeck.

- I will get him.

You OK?

- Migraine, huh?

- Yeah.

- I will keep my voice low.

- Thanks.

I spoke with your husband's lawyer
and Ceci's fine.

Kyle will bring her to school in the morning.

OK.

Now, this part is going to piss you off.

They want Ceci to see a psychologist to be evaluated.

There's nothing we can do about that but say yes. So we're saying yes.

OK.

- Here we are.

- Mr. Veeck.

I had an interesting conversation with Mrs. Rimsky today.

She was very surprised to hear her daughter isn't living upstairs.

- In 10F?

- Mm-hm.

- You said they left together.

- That's what the Russian said.

No, she left without her daughter.

She didn't think she could take care of her.

Mrs. Rimsky's an alcoholic.

She claimed she was going for treatment, and had to leave the girl behind with the father.

You knew that, didn't you?

Only Mr. Rimsky didn't take Natasha with him.

I spoke with Grandma Rimsky in Moscow today and she said her son is living with her alone.

- So he lied to me. What do I know?

- You had to know.

Well, we will find out tomorrow. I have a phone appointment with Mr. Rimsky.

- Why did you lie about the little girl?

- I didn't want to get involved, that's all.

Did you see Natasha after her mother left?

It's a simple question, Veeck.

Yeah. I see her. I see her that afternoon.

I see her playing on the stairs.

Then the next day the father tells me she leave with the mother. I ask no questions.

- Well, if he killed her, it's not my business.

- "Killed her"?

"If he killed her"?

Plumber.

You got a lot more than a leak to fix,

Mr. Murray.

Mr. Veeck.

- If you could just...

- Come on in, just right inside.

Thank you.

Some kind of pipe or something.

Yeah, well, see, that is a brand-new pipe.

So, this will all be patched tomorrow.

- By professionals.

- By professionals. Good as new.

It better be. I am calling NYPD

to report a child is missing.

OK. I mean, I am sure there's

a simple explanation for that, but...

So, goodnight.

And, again, I am so sorry about all this.

- Goodnight.

- Goodnight.

- You going to be OK?

- Yeah. I will be fine.

- You sure?

- Yeah, I am feeling much better, actually.

- I got to go. Family.

- OK. Mm.

I will keep my cell on all night

and if you need me just call.

- Any hour.

- Thanks.

- Thanks again. Bye.

- OK. Bye.

She left you behind.

They both left you behind.

Help me.

Wait.

I told Murray,

I told him a million times.

It's not my job.

I am not a goddamn plumber.

How you feeling? You OK?

- You warmed up?

- I am OK.

Cops think Veeck probably left the tank open and somehow she fell in. They even think he might have discovered she'd fallen in weeks ago. That's why he hadn't cleaned it in so long. They might have enough to charge him with criminal negligence. They'd arrest the parents, but they're out of state and there are no witnesses, so... The truth is, they will probably never know what happened. Her mother left her. The father assumed that she was with her mom, and the mother assumed she was with her father. Guess everyone just assumed. No one really cared what happened to her. That's what it looks like. I will tell Mary you have been a prince. You just accomplished the impossible, Mrs. Williams. You actually made me glad I went to law school.

- Thank you.

- It's OK.

I can probably get you a year's free rent out of Murray.

Oh. No, it's OK.

I am moving.

- Call me in the morning, OK?

- Yeah.

- Come on, princess.

- Bye, Daddy.

Bye.

- How are you feeling?

- Good.

Yeah?

OK. I will be here after school to pick you up. See you after school.

- Hey.

- Hi.

Thank you for taking care of Ceci yesterday.

It's OK. I am really worried about her mental state.

- I am too.

- You are?

Yeah.

So, I have been thinking...

I don't want her

to have to choose between us.

What do you mean?

I want to look for a place in Jersey City

so that shared custody

will be easier for both of us.

And we can do, you know,

one week with me, and one week with you.

Or maybe split the week.

We can see what works best.

- You serious?

- Yeah. Yeah.

Hey, you know, you were right about the school here. I checked it out. It's good.

- Maybe I could get a place...

- No, it's fine.

After this, we will get a...

a place in Jersey City.

I will see you later.

- When are we moving?

- Not until next week, sweetheart.

This is winter stuff though

so we can pack it up now.

You OK? Are you feeling OK?

What are you thinking about?

Why did her mommy forget about her?

Do you know how much I love you?

- You sure?

- Mm-hm.

Do you know I would do anything for you?

Yes.

That's a promise.

- Honey, do you want bubbles tonight?

- Uh-huh.

There you are.

That's so great, Dahlia.

Well, I think it's going to be for the best.

And moving out of here,

that is definitely for the best.
What do you want to do? Be a chef? OK.
Let's see if we can make you a chef hat.
There.
Now, what are you going to cook?
Mac and cheese?
Look, I should go get Ceci out of the tub
before she turns into a prune.
- She's so cute.
- So... Oh.
Here she is now.
Yeah. So I will talk to you tomorrow.
- OK. Take care. Bye.
- OK. You too.
Goodnight.
- Mommy, can you read me a story?
- Of course I can, honey.
Let's see which one you picked.
We haven't read this one
in a long time, have we?
"There were once a man and a woman
who had long in vain wished for a child."
We need more snow, don't you think?
Then let's get some more snow.
...beautiful Rapunzel.
Don't leave me.
I want you to be my mommy.
- Don't leave me.
- Ceci.
You can't leave me.
Ceci.
Ceci.
Ceci.
Ceci.
Ceci.
Ceci.
No.
Ceci.
Ceci.
Ceci.
Oh, God.
Let her go. You let her go.
No.
No. Please.
Natasha. Let her go. Please.

We will stay.
We will stay here with you.
What do you want?
I will be your mother.
- Please.
- Forever?
Forever.
Forever. Yes.
I will be your mother forever.
Take me. Please, take me.
Yeah, OK. So we got an 11-46,
Caucasian female, aged 30,
no apparent cause of death,
and a six-year-old girl with shock.
Trying to locate the father.
Ceci.
Let's go home, honey.
Would you get the door?
We did this project. We did a whole bunch
of them. A whole neighborhood.
What was this one about?
Do you remember?
That was me and then that was you.
- That was a tree.
- A tree.
- And then that's a little angel.
- Beautiful gold wings on the angel.
Come on.
OK, honey, let's walk.
What's wrong with you?
Come on.
Ceci.
Ceci?
Ceci?
Open the door.
Push the button, Ceci.
Open it. Open the door. Ceci.
My beautiful girl.
Whenever you need me, I am here.
OK, Daddy. Let's go.