

thoroughbred

by cory finley

Val Day, ICM

vday@icmpartners.com

[7-28-15]

characters:

amanda, 17

lily, 17

mark, 40s

tim, late 20s

The living room of a gleaming new mansion in a leafy Connecticut suburb.

Two teenage girls, LILY and AMANDA, sit at a table looking together over an SAT book.

AMANDA has an oddly flat affect. No peaks and valleys in her voice. She's perfectly sharp, but she doesn't care how she sounds to people.

LILY, on the other hand, is really trying hard to be nice.

AMANDA reads an answer choice:

AMANDA
E. Spectral.

LILY
And what does that mean?

AMANDA
I don't know.

LILY
Any cognates?

AMANDA
Any what?

LILY
What does it sound like?

AMANDA
I don't know.

LILY
Say it out loud.

AMANDA
Spectral.

LILY
Anything?

AMANDA
No.

LILY
Say it a few times. Sound it out.

AMANDA
(just saying it, not sounding it out)
Spectral.
Spectral.

Beat.

AMANDA
Is that enough times?

LILY
It means “ghostly.”

AMANDA
OK.

LILY
Of or related to a specter. Or ghost.

AMANDA
Yep.

LILY
So read it in context.

AMANDA
“Long minimized by historians, Susan B. Anthony’s contributions to American History have now come to be seen as spectral.”

LILY
So does that makes sense?

AMANDA
Is she a ghost?

LILY
Susan B. Anthony?

AMANDA
Yeah.

LILY
Is Susan B. Anthony a ghost?

AMANDA
Yeah.

LILY
Um -- let's talk through your thinking there.

AMANDA
It's just a name they made up for the question. So she could be a made-up ghost. In which case her contributions would very obviously be spectral.

Beat.

LILY
So the answer is B, "significant."

AMANDA
These tests are a waste of time.

LILY
You're doing great.

AMANDA
I'm better at applied skills. I have business savvy.

LILY
I know. Didn't you win market day in third grade?

AMANDA
Yes.

LILY
Well, I guess nobody *won* market day; it wasn't / a contest.

AMANDA
No, I won market day.
I'm gonna be honest: I think my best option at this point would be to skip college and Steve Jobs my way through life.

LILY
That would be bold. Kind of risky, though.

AMANDA
With these scores, I may not have a choice.

LILY
Don't say that! You're improving already.

AMANDA
You know I had a tutor for the first time I took it. Like a very expensive tutor. And he quit. He said I was unteachable.

LILY

I'm sure he didn't say that.

AMANDA

He said exactly that. My dad offered to pay him double and he still refused. Said he didn't want to have "blood on his hands" when the scores came out.

LILY

That seems dramatic.

AMANDA

You're better than he is. How much are you charging?

LILY

Charging?

AMANDA

Yeah.

LILY

What do you mean? I'm not *charging* you.

AMANDA

You should. People would pay big money around here for someone who got perfect scores on her SATs.

LILY

Not perfect.

AMANDA

Close to perfect. And who finished an entire school year at Andover by March.

LILY

It's really not a big deal.

AMANDA

What do you even do now? You just have these three months to dick around at home?

LILY

Oh please, I could never just... *dick around at home*, I'd go nuts.

AMANDA

What do you do all day?

LILY

Well, I'm interning at that law firm up in Darien.

AMANDA

Right, you said.

LILY

I'm lucky to go to a school that believes firmly in the value of learning outside of the classroom. And that appreciates my interest in criminal defense.

AMANDA

Uh huh.

LILY

And then I have a few recruiting visits for field hockey on the schedule and -- whatever, boring!
And other than that, I'm mostly just catching up with all my home friends who I haven't seen in ages.

AMANDA

Like Stephanie and Laura and all them?

LILY

And like you!

AMANDA

I don't talk to those girls any more. Even though we still go to the same school. They've gotten very...

She looks for the word.

Gives up.

LILY

Uh huh.

AMANDA

Stephanie got a nose job.

LILY

I noticed.

AMANDA

You shouldn't do that when you're seventeen. Your face isn't, like, done.

LILY

Well. Different strokes.

AMANDA

I actually ran into her at Whole Foods last week and almost didn't recognize her. Also she said she was gonna invite me to some birthday thing at her place, but then she never / ended up getting back to me

LILY

You know, time is ticking. We should move on to the passage comprehension. You wanna read, or should I?

AMANDA

Let's alternate. You start.

LILY

OK.
(reads)

"From Paul Revere to the Marlboro Man, the image of the man on a horse has maintained a firm hold on the American imagination. As closely tied to notions of liberty as any flag, or eagle, the horse..."

She trails off.

AMANDA

What.

LILY

Maybe we'll skip this one.

AMANDA

Why.

LILY

I'm just realizing it's one of the long ones. A shorter passage would be better for our purposes.

AMANDA

Don't be weird about it.

LILY

I'm not being weird about it.

AMANDA

You're skipping the horse passage.

LILY

Right, well.
Just because it's long.

AMANDA

It's only weird if you make it weird.

LILY

I just figure. You know. You might not want to talk about it.

AMANDA

I'm happy to talk about it.

LILY

OK!

AMANDA

It's just that I'm not supposed to. On the / advice of my legal team.

LILY

Right. That's fine, we'll...
Sorry, your what?

AMANDA

Well there's a potential lawsuit.

LILY

From the stables?

AMANDA

From the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
It's almost definitely gonna get dropped.

LILY

Good.

AMANDA

They talk a lot of noise but my dad looked at their financials and he says there's no way they're ready to lawyer up like we are. They've got bigger fish to fry nationally. But my parents are still making me do daily treatment with this therapist.

LILY

Great.
And is it helping?

AMANDA

Well it's really mostly so she can testify in court if need be.

LILY

But I mean, is it... you know, helping you?

AMANDA

With what.

LILY
With your --
I don't know.
With all the stuff I'm sure you're feeling.

AMANDA
Well that's the thing, though.

LILY
What's the thing.

AMANDA
I'm really not.

LILY
Not what.

AMANDA
Feeling anything.

LILY
...Sure, like you're numb? Like you don't have negative feelings right now?

AMANDA
Like I don't have *any* feelings. Ever.

Beat.

LILY
Sure you do!

AMANDA
I mean sometimes I'm hungry. Or tired. But joy, sadness? Or guilt? Love? I just don't really have any of those. I'm not wired for them.

LILY
I don't understand.

AMANDA
Sure. I mean it was only really this year that I was able to admit it to myself. Because I've gotten so good at watching and imitating other people's emotions that I kind of tricked myself into thinking I have them myself.
But I just...
Don't.

LILY
...Uh huh.

AMANDA

And that's a very liberating thing to realize.

LILY

So that's a...

AMANDA

What.

LILY

Is it a *disorder*, or...

AMANDA

Well the shrink would sure like it to be. First it was borderline personality, then severe depression, now she thinks I'm antisocial with schizoid tendencies. She's basically just flipping to random pages of the DSM and throwing medications at me.

But at the end of the day, I have a perfectly healthy brain. It just doesn't contain feelings. And that doesn't necessarily make me a bad person. It just means I have to work a little harder than everyone else to be good.

Beat.

AMANDA

You should see your face right now.

LILY

No! Sorry. I'm just... thinking. Absorbing.
I don't mean to...

AMANDA

Stare.

LILY

Yeah. Sorry.

AMANDA

It doesn't bother me. But I don't get why everyone gets so touchy. I mean, my cousin Tim went to jail for fucking a 15-year-old when he was twenty-three. *That's* deranged. All I did was put a wounded horse out of its misery.

LILY

Oh -- I didn't realize it was wounded.

AMANDA

Of course it was wounded. Double fracture in its hind right leg. Why would I do it if it wasn't wounded?

LILY

I don't know.

AMANDA

I rode that horse for eight years. I started brushing it weekly when it was a pony. Are people are saying I killed it for *fun*?

LILY

They aren't saying that.

AMANDA

But you just / said

LILY

But why didn't you just take it to a *vet*, Amanda? There are professionals who can do it painlessly.

AMANDA

I tried.

LILY

Yeah?

AMANDA

It's technically not my horse -- it's my parents' horse. And my mom thinks killing an animal is "barbaric."

LILY

Right.

AMANDA

Nevermind that horses are biomechanically unable to lie down.
Nevermind that Honeymooner was just gonna re-break the leg over and over and over again.
Because my mother is just that kind of person. The kind of person who will send an animal into a life of endless, meaningless pain just because she gets weepy when she thinks about it going to sleep and never waking up.
And when a weak moral creature like that runs your household, you have to do things the hard way.

LILY

But why did you have to do it like...
That?

AMANDA

I didn't want to. If the Midazolam Hydrochloride I'd / ordered hadn't

LILY

The what?

AMANDA

Midazolam Hydrochloride. If it hadn't been diluted, then I would have stuck him with a needle and:

She makes a swift, simple gesture of completion.

AMANDA

Unfortunately there's very poor quality control on black-market animal tranquilizers, and whatever rat poison they cut it with was making Hooneymooner go into convulsions. And re-break the leg. And snap one of the three remaining healthy legs. If you or me had been in that kind of pain, we would have wanted the knife too.

Silence.

LILY looks sick.

Her phone alarm goes off: a cheery, repetitive melodic figure.

They both sit there for a second -- LILY too stunned to move, AMANDA just not caring.

Finally LILY snaps out of it and turns it off.

AMANDA

Well. Guess time is up.

LILY

No, it's / OK, we can --

AMANDA

Glad to see you set an alarm to make sure we didn't accidentally hang out longer than planned.

LILY

It's not a strict end-point, I just -- you know. I'm meeting my mom for / this thing.

AMANDA

That's OK. You knew I was always kind of nuts but this is more nuts than you bargained for.

LILY

(with affected earnestness)
Come on, that's not true!

Small beat.

AMANDA

You know it's very obvious that you're lying when you do that.

LILY

When I do what?

AMANDA

When your voice goes into your upper register like that.
(spot-on impression)
"Come on, that's not true!"

LILY

(quiet)
...I sound like that?

AMANDA

You didn't use to. Maybe you picked it up at boarding school.

Beat.

AMANDA

Also I read my mom's text messages with you. I saw how she had to bump up from a hundred to two hundred for you to agree to do this.

LILY

...

AMANDA

It's fine. Just next time don't pretend you're not charging.

AMANDA gets up.

At the door:

AMANDA

By the way: my mom was desperate to set up a playdate. You always have to know your position in a negotiation. You could easily have gotten four, five hundred out of her if you'd stood pat.

She goes.

LILY sits alone, processing.

2.

A few days later.

LILY is reading from the SAT book.

AMANDA is staring at her.

LILY

(reads)

“Mother’s stories had led me to expect a bright, shining America with wide streets, huge buildings made of glass, and salaries so generous that even shoe-shine boys could afford lavish vacations. So when I looked out the window of the cab and saw highways dirtier and more crowded than those in Shanghai and groups of slump-shouldered men rolling dice in narrow alleyways, a sense of betrayal caught into the back of my throat like a piece of sour meat.”

Beat.

LILY

OK. Now you read the first question.

AMANDA

...

LILY

I read the entire passage. I’m not gonna read the questions for you, too.

AMANDA

I’m not taking these tests again.

LILY

Yes you are.

AMANDA

I would literally rather be waterboarded.

LILY

Well I highly doubt that.

AMANDA

The goal of these tests is...

(reading)

“To assess college preparedness levels.”

How do I show how prepared I am for college by identifying whether the speaker’s attitude toward his mother’s jade box is primarily

(reading)

“nostalgic,” “contemptuous,” or “solemn.”

LILY

It’s about comprehension. Linguistic sophistication.

AMANDA

You want to measure practical skills? How about making us apply for a loan? Or fill out a tax return?

LILY

I know it's a frustrating exercise, but I promise if you stick with it, you'll start to see it as a / really fun puzzle.

AMANDA

Listen, I'm not gonna stand in the way of you making your money, so I'll sit here while you read to me. But I draw the line at actively participating.

LILY

I'm not getting paid this time.

AMANDA

Yes you are.

LILY

Your mom doesn't even know we're meeting, unless you told her. I went directly to you.

AMANDA

Then what are you doing this for?

LILY

Because I like hanging out with you.

AMANDA

Why.

LILY

Because you're fun.

AMANDA

No I'm not.

LILY

You are! Maybe you're not fun in your own eyes, but you're fun in my eyes.

AMANDA

I'm not fun.

LILY

You're... very unique. I've always found it cool how much you march to your own drummer. All the way back / to kindergarten --

MARK

(off)

Lily, I'm heading out.

MARK enters, in a suit, tying his tie.

MARK

So I'll see you --

He stops as he sees AMANDA.

MARK

Hi.

LILY

Morning, Mark.

This is Amanda.

Amanda, this is my step-dad, Mark.

AMANDA

Nice to meet you.

MARK

...Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Sure.

Beat.

LILY

Do you need / something?

MARK

(re: AMANDA being there)

So, we're doing this, huh?

LILY

Doing what?

MARK picks his battles, flashes a smile.

MARK

You two have fun!

We'll talk tonight.

LILY

OK! Have a good day at work!

He starts to leave.

LILY

Oh, Mark?

MARK

Yeah?

LILY

I'm gonna go by the Apple Store to replace my laptop later today.

MARK

...Yes?

LILY

...Oh, it's just that Mom said you were gonna give me cash. She didn't have any on her.

MARK

She didn't mention that to me. I don't have cash on me either.

LILY

Maybe I could borrow your credit card?

MARK

How about we go together this weekend.

LILY

Well my screen is completely broken and I actually kind of need it today / to fill out all those forms.

MARK

(looking at watch)

Oh man. Look at that.
Let's talk tonight.

LILY

...OK!

He goes.

Silence.

Once he's out of earshot:

LILY

Sorry about that!

OK. Question nine.

"The author's attitude toward his mother's jade box can best be / described as"

AMANDA

That was very interesting.

LILY
...What?

AMANDA
What your whole body did when he walked in the room.

LILY
What did my whole body do.

AMANDA
You clenched up.

LILY
No I didn't.

AMANDA
Like one big fist.

LILY
No...

AMANDA
You hate him.

LILY
I don't *hate* him; we just don't always get along. I mean we get along fine. I mean --
Remarriage is always a tricky thing to negotiate. It's gonna have its kinks and bumps and...
He's a good guy. He tries.

Beat.

AMANDA
You despise him.

LILY
(laughs)
What are you talking about?

AMANDA
Why are you so reluctant to admit that?

LILY
(smiling, uncomfortable)
Because I don't --
I --
Because I am... working very hard to have a tolerant, pleasant relationship with him.

AMANDA
Why.

LILY
What do you mean why? Because my mother loves him and he makes her happy.

AMANDA
But he doesn't make you happy.

LILY
Well maybe it's not about me, Amanda. OK? Maybe it's about what's best for our family as a whole.

Beat.

LILY
"The author's attitude toward her mother's jade box can best be / described as --"

AMANDA
You mean because he's loaded.

LILY
Sorry?

AMANDA
Look at this place. It's probably what, fifteen mil? Eighteen?

LILY
My mom did not marry him because he's *rich*.

AMANDA
I mean, nothing wrong with that. Unless your daughter hates the rich guy so much that she literally starts to shake when he walks into a room.

LILY
Would you just tell me what the author's attitude toward the fucking jade box is?

AMANDA
Am I right?

LILY
No you're not right! My mom wouldn't do something like that! Why would she need to? We lived in a house almost this big when my dad was alive.

AMANDA

Yeah except your dad was deep in debt.

Beat.

AMANDA

I heard my parents talking about it last year. His creditors came for his full life insurance, and that barely put a dent in it. But obviously you know all that, right?

Beat.

LILY

(quiet)

I don't understand how you think any of that is your business.

AMANDA

I'd probably hate the guy, too. If he was lording it over me. Refusing to give me money to replace a laptop when he has three plasma screen TVs in one room.

LILY

You don't know my situation.

AMANDA

You'd better be honest about how he makes you feel, or you're gonna start getting caught up in weird passive-aggressive mind games. You're gonna do things like invite your crazy friend over to piss him off.

LILY

That's not why you're here.

AMANDA

Of course that's why I'm here. Whether you realize it or not.

LILY

(snapping)

Well if that's how you feel, then go ahead and leave! I mean I'm sure you have *crowds* of friends just *climbing over one another* to hang out with you, you beautiful, charming young woman.

Beat.

LILY

Sorry. I didn't mean that.

Beat.

AMANDA is totally un-bothered. She looks down at the passage.

LILY

I'm really sorry. That / was --

AMANDA

The author's attitude toward the jade box can best be described as D, ambivalent.

LILY

...That's correct.

AMANDA

My friend told me the trick, where every time it says "ambivalent" on the SAT, that's the right answer.

LILY

You're not hurt.

AMANDA

I don't get hurt.

LILY

That is so strange.

AMANDA

I know.

LILY

So you're not upset with me for saying that.

AMANDA

It was the first honest thing you've said to me since maybe second grade.

Beat.

LILY

You're incredibly weird and off-putting and you really creep me out.

AMANDA

There you go.

LILY

In almost a kind of a fascinating way -- like a YouTube video of a giant pimple getting burst or a baby born with no face -- like I kind of can't look away.

AMANDA

I love those videos.

LILY
And you actually *smell* kind of weird.

AMANDA
Really?

LILY
Yeah. Do you shower regularly?

AMANDA
Honestly just every three or four days, lately. I don't really like getting wet and it's a huge time-saver to skip. No one had said anything so I thought I was getting away with it.

LILY
You're not.

AMANDA
Good to know.
(shrugs)
Not sorry I tried.

LILY
Sure.

Beat.

AMANDA
How does that feel?

LILY
Good.
Really good.

AMANDA
Seems like it.

LILY
You're really OK?

AMANDA
Doing great, man.

LILY
It's kind of like you're invincible. Do you feel invincible?

AMANDA
More or less.

LILY
You're so right. I invited you over because Mark explicitly told me not to. He's afraid of you.

AMANDA
Yeah.

LILY
I've never seen him afraid of anyone. It makes my skin tingle, it feels so good. Seeing that look on his face.

AMANDA
You hate him.

LILY
More than anything. He treats us like we're like his two *kept women*. And my mom has convinced herself she needs him, and so she ties herself in knots forcing herself to love him. It's disgusting and I'm humiliated on her behalf.

AMANDA
Have you ever talked to her about it?

LILY
I've let her know how I feel.

AMANDA
But have you ever issued her an ultimatum? "It's either him or me?" Forced her to get a divorce?

LILY
That would be way out of line.

AMANDA
What line? What is there to lose?

LILY
She --
I --
What about the money? The security?

AMANDA
Have you ever heard of a divorce settlement?

LILY
I think they have a pre-nup.

AMANDA
Mm.

LILY

It's a hostage situation of a marriage.

AMANDA

Well tell her to wait four or five years and you'll be making more money than he is.

LILY

Well four or five years is a little / quick --

AMANDA

There are more millionaires under thirty than at any point in human history.

LILY

Yeah, / but --

AMANDA

And if anyone I know deserves to join that group, it's you.

LILY

...You're just being nice.

AMANDA

I don't lie. On policy.
(without tenderness)

I knew you were a genius in first grade. You're too smart not to be living the life you want.

Beat.

LILY smiles.

AMANDA suddenly goes to hug LILY.

LILY jumps.

LILY

Sorry.

AMANDA

No, it's OK.

LILY

That was very sudden. It looked like an attack.

AMANDA

No, it was a....

LILY
Right.

LILY hugs her back.

It's a good hug.

They pull away.

AMANDA
I should probably tell you that to be totally honest, I just hugged you because it seemed like something a good friend would do in this situation.

LILY
OK.

AMANDA
Not that I didn't want to. But it wasn't so much a natural instinct as a calculation. I just think I should tell you that.

LILY
Well you know what, Amanda?
That's good enough for me.

3.

A few nights later.

AMANDA and LILY are sitting on the couch, watching a black-and-white noir movie on an unseen television. They're passing a bowl of frozen blueberries back and forth.

AMANDA
That's a fake tear.

LILY
Maybe.

AMANDA
Definitely.

LILY
That might just be the way he cries.

AMANDA
Nobody cries like that. Completely neutral face with a blob of saline rolling down his cheek.

LILY
Maybe everyone cried that way in 1945.

Silence.

AMANDA
No; because see, *that's* good crying.

LILY
Yeah.
Wow.
She's killing it.

AMANDA
I'm impressed.

LILY
I think it might be real.

AMANDA
No.

LILY
It's a thing. Method acting. They trick themselves into thinking this stuff is really happening to them.

AMANDA
They hadn't invented that. She's just using the technique.

LILY
What's the technique.

AMANDA
You know. The technique.

LILY isn't sure what she's talking about. She turns back to the screen.

LILY
Maybe they're truly real tears. Maybe she fell in love with her co-star, and they were conducting a torrid love affair between takes. Maybe this is the last day of shooting, and she knows she's heading home to her loveless 1940s marriage as soon as --

LILY stops because she turns and sees that AMANDA is full-on weeping, silently: tears streaming, her face a contorted mask of grief.

AMANDA stops on a dime.

AMANDA
The technique.

LILY
Wow.

AMANDA
Yeah.

LILY
You can just do that on cue?

AMANDA
Oh yeah.

LILY
Nice.

AMANDA
Years of practice.

LILY
I guess so.

Beat.

LILY
Could you teach me?

AMANDA
Sure.
Now?

LILY
Yeah.

AMANDA
OK.

She sits up and readies herself.

LILY does the same.

AMANDA
Well it's pretty simple once you get the hang of it, but there's some trial-and-error involved.

LILY
Uh huh.

AMANDA

You just have to learn all the like automatic neurological processes that get triggered. OK?

LILY

OK.

AMANDA

Then you just, like, manually generate each one. It feeds back into your brain, and then the tears come naturally.

LILY

...

AMANDA

You / following?

LILY

Yeah, yeah, I'm --
Sort of.

AMANDA

It's probably easiest to start with the throat. You kinda constrict right here --

She demonstrates.

LILY

Here?

AMANDA

Lower. Like here.

LILY

Got it.

AMANDA

It's like a gentle semi-choking.

LILY

Gross, but OK.

AMANDA

And sort of create vibrations?

LILY

OK...

AMANDA

Then you go like this with your face...

They both practice fake-crying together for a minute.

LILY
Is it working?

AMANDA
I don't know.

LILY
Am I crying?

AMANDA
No.

Beat.

LILY
Now?

AMANDA
You'd be able to feel it.

LILY
I'll work on it.

AMANDA
Yeah. Pass those?

They return to the movie.

Some thought makes LILY smile as she watches.

After a moment:

LILY
Hey.
You know when I first knew you were weird?

AMANDA
When.

LILY
I'm just remembering this. When we read *The Giving Tree* in first grade.

AMANDA
Oh yeah.

LILY
Remember that?

AMANDA

Oh yeah. Ms. Phillips' class.

LILY

And she started crying.

And that kid Steven had to come up and finish it for her.

AMANDA

With the stutter

LILY

And literally everyone in the class started crying too. Even the little boys.

AMANDA

So fucked up.

LILY

It was kind of magical!

AMANDA

Ew.

LILY

It felt like a big therapeutic event. A grown women and all these kids crying together.

AMANDA

Except me.

LILY

Exactly.

AMANDA

I probably should have faked it and joined in.

LILY

You knew how to at that age?

AMANDA

Oh yeah. I would have, but I just hated that book.

LILY

Why?

AMANDA

It's the one where the tree keeps giving the boy pieces of himself, right?

LILY

First his shade to play under, then his apples to sell, then his branches to build a house. Then -- what --

AMANDA

His trunk to build a boat.

LILY

(wistfully devastated by the memory)
Uh!

AMANDA

Like, what a dumbass tree.

LILY

(laughs)
It's not a dumbass tree! You don't get it. It's a deeply generous tree. He gives himself over to a higher purpose.

AMANDA

...To be a boat?

LILY

(remembering)
"And the tree was happy."

AMANDA

Huh?

LILY

That's the last line. He has nothing left to give, he has given everything, and...
"The tree was happy."

AMANDA

No wonder our country is in decline. All these idiot kids growing up thinking the pinnacle of goodness is sacrificing yourself.

LILY

It's a metaphor for parenthood. The joy of giving.

AMANDA

It's a metaphor for colonial oppression. The joys of subjugation. A book like that is how slavery happens.

LILY

Whatever. It's sad that *The Giving Tree* doesn't make you cry. That's like a very basic test for humanity.

AMANDA

...If you say so.

LILY

Yeah. Try reading it again now that you're older.

A key turns in the lock, off.

MARK enters.

As before, he stops suddenly, surprised to see AMANDA.

He's pissed.

LILY

Hi Mark.

AMANDA

Hey Mark.

Beat.

MARK

(to LILY)

Where's your mom?

LILY

At some work party thing.

MARK

What work party thing.

LILY

I don't know, some work party thing.

AMANDA

I didn't know your mom works.

LILY

She's on the board of something. It's a board work party thing.

MARK

Lily, come talk to me upstairs, please.

LILY

Sure, maybe next commercial break?

MARK

How about now.

LILY

I don't want to leave Amanda alone.

MARK

Amanda will be fine alone.

LILY

She doesn't like being alone, though.

AMANDA

I'm quite afraid of the dark.

MARK

(to LILY)

We were gonna talk. Before you invited her over again.

LILY

Oh that's right. Sorry; I forgot.

MARK

How late you gonna be here, Amanda?

AMANDA

My mom's gonna pick me up at midnight.

MARK

That's awful late for us. How about Lily gives you a ride home now?

LILY

I don't think I should be alone in a car with Amanda.

AMANDA

I agree.

LILY

Multiple teens in one car; that's an accident waiting to happen.

AMANDA

It's bad, yeah.

LILY

We're always turning the radio up super loud...

AMANDA

Texting.

LILY

Texting while driving.

AMANDA

So dangerous. I can't believe we do that.

LILY

Super dangerous. We might end up driving just / about *anywhere*....

MARK

Call your mom, Amanda. Ask her to pick you up now.

AMANDA

She's busy right now.

MARK

What's she busy / with.

AMANDA

Chemotherapy.

Beat.

The girls turn back to the TV and watch in silence.

MARK just stares at LILY.

LILY

Do you need something? You're distracting us from the movie.

MARK

I'm gonna speak with your mother about this.

LILY

Awesome. Night Mark!

Beat.

MARK goes upstairs.

When he's gone:

LILY

"Chemotherapy" is good.

AMANDA

Thanks, yeah.
Did you talk to your mom?

LILY

Yes.

AMANDA

What did she say?

LILY

She said she's sorry that I continue to be upset about the situation. But that I'll get used to it.

Beat.

AMANDA

So did you offer the ultimatum? It's him or it's you?

LILY

I'm not gonna do that. That wouldn't mean anything.

AMANDA

It would if you believe it.

LILY

I can't *negotiate* with this woman. She's known me longer than anyone. I'm not a human being to her. I'm like a... miniature version of her.

AMANDA

So leverage that. Help her understand how miserable you / are.

LILY

It's not worth it.

AMANDA

It's not?

LILY

It's not. It's --

She shuts up, as MARK comes downstairs.

They both watch the movie.

He goes wordlessly to the refrigerator, takes out a foul-looking bottle of juice, and walks toward the stairs.

MARK

Just grabbin' my juice.

A long silence.

They watch him go.

AMANDA
His juice?

LILY
He's on a cleanse.

AMANDA
What does that mean?

LILY
For a week he drinks nothing but maple syrup and cayenne peppers or something. He does this once a month, and then spends the rest of the month pounding steaks.

AMANDA
That's good for you?

LILY
I have no idea. It's inhuman the way this man eats.

AMANDA
Doesn't sound good.

LILY
I think you're only supposed to do it once a year or something. He says it gives him energy. But I'm holding out hope that one of these days he'll just juice himself to death and keel over.

AMANDA
Yeah.

LILY
That would improve all our lives so much.

AMANDA
Yeah.
Probably not his, though.

LILY
Honestly it might. He's the unhappiest person I know. Things can't give him joy for more than ten seconds before they, like, crystallize into obligations. He exists only to accumulate wealth, and that wealth buys him is misery. He's a sad, useless man and a net negative in the world.

AMANDA
Yeah.

They watch the movie.

Silence.

AMANDA

So have you ever thought about just killing him?

LILY looks over at her and laughs, once.

Then she double-takes.

AMANDA isn't smiling.

LILY

No.

AMANDA

No?

LILY

Of course not.

AMANDA

But you just said. Everyone would be better off if he died.

LILY

Yeah, but that doesn't mean I'm gonna *kill* him.

AMANDA

You could at least consider it.

LILY

No.

AMANDA

Weigh the pros and cons.

LILY

No!

AMANDA

I mean, one should consider all options.

LILY

Not murder.

AMANDA

Sure it's outside-the-box, but you can only get so far thinking the way everyone else thinks. Look at Steve Jobs.

LILY

What?

AMANDA

I'm just going off what you're giving me. It's a cost-benefit analysis. It sounds like you could generate a lot of benefit for a lot of people.

LILY

Not for me. I'd go to jail.

AMANDA

Not if you were smart about it. Think about it this way: If he were a fat man on a bridge and you could push him onto the tracks to save five people from an oncoming train, would you do it?

LILY

He's not fat. And what bridge? There's no bridge!

AMANDA

You're taking this too literally.

LILY

You're not taking it literally enough. He's an asshole, but he's a human being. I am not going to kill him.

AMANDA

Why not.

LILY

I shouldn't have to explain this.

AMANDA

That's probably what people said to Columbus when he was like, "I think the earth is round, instead of flat and surrounded by dragons." They were like "shut up Columbus, we shouldn't have to explain this." That's probably what people said to Steve Jobs when he was like, "this MP3 player is also / a phone."

LILY

Would you stop talking about Steve Jobs? Steve Jobs didn't commit murder!

AMANDA

He murdered the competition. He murdered deeply held assumptions about the tech market. About culture at large. You know, I think a lot of our moral norms in this country come from weird old Puritan bullshit. A human life isn't some sacred thing. There's nothing holy about a dick and a vaj getting together and spitting out a little dude. If that life causes more bad than good, then it's like a piece of malfunctioning machinery.

LILY

A lame horse.

AMANDA
Right.

LILY
It should be put down.

AMANDA
See, you get it.

LILY
You know what you sound like?

AMANDA
What?

LILY
A Nazi.

AMANDA
Well my history class hasn't gotten to World War II yet, so I can't really debate you on that one. But it seems like that was more about race, with them.

LILY
Can we not?

AMANDA
Why are you getting so riled up?

LILY
Because I can't tell if you're kidding. You are kidding, right?

AMANDA
Sure.

LILY
No I'm not telling, I'm asking.

AMANDA
My tone could primarily be described as "ambivalent."

LILY
You mean ambiguous.

AMANDA
What's the difference?

LILY
Ambiguous means there are multiple interpretations. Ambivalent means you have mixed feelings.

AMANDA

I can have mixed feelings. Just because I don't have feelings doesn't mean I can't have mixed feelings.

She gives LILY a weird, wooden smile.

LILY

Yeah. Let's just forget all this.

They return their attention to the screen.

Silence.

AMANDA

Hey Lily.

LILY

(irritated)
Yes?

AMANDA

Can I ask you a question?

LILY

Yeah?

AMANDA

Why didn't you tell me you were expelled from Andover?

Silence.

LILY refuses to make eye contact, staring at the screen.

AMANDA

I just don't get why you'd say you finished the school year early. That's just not a very good lie.

LILY

Why would you think I was expelled from Andover?

AMANDA

Well so I called that law firm in Darien, asking about their internship program. They said they don't have one. They haven't had an intern there for five years.

LILY

...

AMANDA

And that whole thing was kind of fun, you know, putting on my little detective hat...so I went ahead and called Andover, and said I was from Edible Arrangements, trying to verify a student shipping address. They said you were no longer a student there. And I said, "yeah, but she'll be back next year, maybe you can hold it until then," and they were like, "no ma'am, she won't be back ever."

LILY

Fuck you, Amanda.

AMANDA

What did you do?

LILY

Fuck you.

AMANDA

Drugs or something?

LILY

Plagiarism.

AMANDA

Yeah?

LILY

I cheated on a test.

AMANDA

That's it?

LILY

And several papers.

AMANDA

Oh.

Beat.

AMANDA

You're so smart. Why would you cheat?

LILY

Because I was going to get a B average. For the term.

AMANDA

So?

LILY
I don't think you would understand.

AMANDA
But I want to.

LILY
...

AMANDA
I wish you'd let me in a little more. I'm the only friend you can talk to.

LILY
Why would you think that's true?

AMANDA
Because I texted with Stephanie and Laura. And Brooke. And Harley.
And Eric. None of them have seen you. None of them even know
you're home.
You must be too ashamed to see anyone but me.

LILY has started crying a little bit.

She wipes a tear.

AMANDA
Nice.

LILY
What?

AMANDA
Nice. That's really good, actually. You figured it out.

LILY
I'm not using the technique.

AMANDA
Oh.

Beat.

AMANDA
Do you want me to leave?

LILY
Yes.

AMANDA
OK.

AMANDA starts to go.

LILY
Actually no.

AMANDA
...So you want me to stay?

LILY puts her head in her hands.

AMANDA doesn't know what to do.

Finally she moves over to LILY and puts her arm around her.

AMANDA
Is this good?

LILY nods.

LILY
You smell better.

AMANDA
Thanks. I showered before I came here.

LILY
I can tell.

AMANDA
Do you want me to cry, too?

LILY laughs a little.

LILY
No, but thank you for asking.

AMANDA
No problem.

Silence.

They watch the movie.

LILY
Edible Arrangements?

AMANDA
Yeah, I don't know.

LILY laughs.

Beat.

LILY
Hey Amanda?

AMANDA
Yeah.

LILY
That time when you and your mom drove me home from my dad's funeral?

AMANDA
Yeah?

LILY
And you were holding me like this. And we were both crying.

AMANDA
Yeah?

LILY
Were you using the technique then?

AMANDA thinks.

AMANDA
Oh, yeah. It was pretty good, right?

LILY
...Yeah. It was.

4.

Two days later. Morning.

The room is empty.

Birds sing outside.

...

The doorbell rings.

....

...

It rings again.

...

...

...

Finally, LILY comes down the stairs.

She's wearing a bathrobe, and she's a mess. Her eyes are red, her face is pale, and her hair is everywhere. She half-limps to the door and opens it.

AMANDA

(off)

Hi.

LILY

(off)

What are you doing here?

AMANDA

(off)

Are you OK?

LILY

(off)

Sure.

Beat.

AMANDA

(off)

Can I come in?

Beat.

AMANDA and LILY come on together.

AMANDA holds a paper bag.

AMANDA

I called you and texted you all day yesterday.

LILY

Why.

AMANDA

Well at first just to see if you wanted to get bubble tea. Then because you weren't responding.

LILY
Oh.

AMANDA
You look like ass.

LILY
Thanks.

AMANDA
And you smell like liquor.

LILY
I'm fine. I --

Suddenly she runs off into the bathroom.

AMANDA stands alone, expressionless.

Finally LILY returns, brushing her teeth.

AMANDA
You just vomited.

LILY
Yeah.

AMANDA
You might want to rinse your mouth before you get that toothbrush /
all --

LILY
It's Mark's.

AMANDA
...Nice.

Beat.

AMANDA
What happened?

LILY
I just overdid it a little last night.

AMANDA
Yeah? Who were you out with?

LILY
I was just here.

AMANDA

You had friends over?

LILY

...

AMANDA

Was it Stephanie and Lauren and those / folks?

LILY

I didn't have anyone over.

AMANDA

So you got drunk by yourself.

LILY

Sure did.

She spits in the kitchen sink.

AMANDA

I wish you would have called me.

LILY

Why, so you could have joined me?

AMANDA

Just so you would have had someone to talk to. I wish you would have returned my calls.

LILY

Well, I didn't have a phone. So...

AMANDA

You didn't have a phone?

LILY

Mark confiscated it.

LILY lies down on the couch.

LILY

I have to go back to sleep.

AMANDA

Lily.

LILY

You're not supposed to be here. I think you should go.

AMANDA

Lily, what's going on?

Beat.

LILY

I finally confronted my mom, yesterday.

AMANDA

Yeah?

LILY

Just like you said.

AMANDA

Yeah?

LILY

I said, "it's me or him. I can't live under the same roof with this guy, especially now that I'm not going back to boarding school."

AMANDA

How'd she take it?

LILY

She said she didn't know what she'd done wrong as a mother to raise such a selfish daughter. She started crying. We had the biggest fight we've ever had. I didn't even know my voice could get as loud as I heard it getting.

After about twenty minutes of it she locked herself in her bathroom and wouldn't come out. I said, fuck it, and went for a long run. When I got back, she was sitting with Mark at the kitchen table. She wouldn't make eye contact with me. And Mark said that they both felt that I was out of control and clearly hadn't recovered from the "psychic wounds" of losing my dad and that I needed a kind of help they weren't equipped to give me.

AMANDA

What does that mean?

LILY

You know Brookfield Academy in Stamford?

AMANDA

The place for crazy kids?

LILY

"Teens with authority issues."

AMANDA

It's where my cousin Tim went.

LILY

The pedophile one?

AMANDA

Right. Tim.

LILY

That's where they want to send me.

AMANDA

No they don't.

LILY

Uh huh.

AMANDA

They can't make you go.

LILY

Oh but they can. I'm a minor and they're my legal guardians.

AMANDA

Did you fight him?

LILY

...No.

AMANDA

You didn't? You could have negotiated.

LILY

Negotiated? I couldn't have / *negotiated*.

AMANDA

Then you could have kicked and screamed. You really went down without a fight?

LILY

I --

I knew I wasn't gonna win. I was already exhausted from fighting with my mom...

AMANDA

He tells you he's sending you to a school for the insane and you just lie down? Why would you / do that?

LILY
Because I'm afraid of him.

Beat.

LILY
...OK?

AMANDA
...

Beat.

LILY
I couldn't sleep last night. I wanted to take a walk around the neighborhood but Mark had put the alarm on all the doors and I don't know the code. So I took a bottle of gin from his liquor cabinet and spent the whole night pouring it slowly down my throat while watching a *Million Dollar Listing* marathon in my bedroom.

AMANDA
I'm sorry, Lily.

LILY
No you're not.

AMANDA
What are you talking about?

LILY
"Sorry" is a feeling. You don't understand "sorry." You can't process "sorry."

AMANDA
OK.

Beat.

AMANDA pulls a bottle out of the paper bag and hands it to LILY.

LILY
What is this?

AMANDA
I brought you a kale smoothie.

LILY stares at her.

She sips the smoothie.

LILY
That's not terrible.

AMANDA
That's the great thing: "kale" really lowers your expectations.

LILY
Yeah.
Come here.

LILY pats the seat next to her.

AMANDA sits down.

LILY
Will you do me a favor? A weird thing.

AMANDA
Sure.

LILY
Tell me exactly what it was like. When you killed Honeymooner. Walk me through it.

AMANDA
...Why?

LILY
I just feel like the two of us are...I don't know. We're almost...friends again. Right?

AMANDA
Yeah.

LILY
And friends share things. And I think I'm starting to understand you, but I still don't understand that moment. And I want to. Does that make sense?

AMANDA
Not really. But I'll do it anyway.

LILY
Would you?

AMANDA
Where do you want me to start?

LILY
So you...injected it with something?

AMANDA

Injected *him*.

LILY

Right.

AMANDA

He isn't an *it*. He had a dick and stuff.

LILY

So you'd injected *him*, and it hadn't worked.

AMANDA

Right. He was flailing, he was re-breaking legs, he was screaming. Braying. And I knew they had a rifle in the stables, but they kept it in a locked closet, and I couldn't break the lock. And I'd read online about this method of horse-slaughter in Mexico where they use a *puntilla* knife.

LILY

A what?

AMANDA

Puntilla?
(different pronunciation)

Or *puntilla*? I don't know, I've only seen it written out. But it's this small knife, almost like an ice-pick. And they jam it into the back of the horse's neck, where the spinal cord is closest to the flesh. And that knocks them out really fast, without needing too great an application of force.

And luckily I'd brought along like this really big steak knife -- the biggest one from this set of super-sharp Japanese knives that my mom had just bought my dad -- in case something went wrong. And luckily, he's mostly immobilized in this sling thing that's meant to support his leg. So it's pretty easy for me to get a good angle and jam that thing down in there. And he goes limp right away, and he's hanging in the sling.

But the problem is, with a *puntilla*, apparently the horse isn't dead -- it's actually just paralyzed. Just a quadriplegic. It's not unconscious. And when they do the next part of the slaughter -- where they, you know, hoist it up on a hook and slit its throat -- the horse can feel everything. Obviously that wasn't optimal for Hooneymooner. So my goal, once he's stopped moving, is to finish it fast.

So I climb on top of him, in the sling, and I start sawing toward the spine--
Do you want me to stop?

LILY shakes her head.

AMANDA

I'm sawing toward the spine. And it's not easy, and it takes me at least five minutes. I have to jab hard to get through the skin, and then I have to saw around a bunch of knots and tendons in the muscles. And the blood is getting all over my hands, and the knife blade is getting dull. But I finally manage to cut away chunks of neck-tissue until the spine is exposed. And then I maneuver so that my legs are under me, and I kick downward, and there's a really loud snap. And so I'm standing there, on top of this horse hanging from a sling, covered in its blood, when a stablehand walks in.

Beat.

AMANDA

So yeah.

Silence.

LILY is staring at her, a little sick, and fascinated.

LILY

How did you...*do* something like that?

AMANDA

It was just a task. I just tried to think about it as a task.

Beat.

AMANDA

Once I'd committed to killing him, I had to follow through and do it fast. For his sake.
And it probably sounds dumb but I think it was good that it was me who did it. The person who'd been riding him all these years. I think that somehow he appreciated that.

Beat.

LILY grabs AMANDA's arm.

LILY

Hey.

AMANDA

What.

LILY

The stuff you were talking about the other night. You weren't totally kidding, were you?

AMANDA

Which stuff? About killing your stepdad?

LILY

Yeah. That stuff.

AMANDA

Well, it was more like a thought experiment.

LILY

Yeah. So, in the spirit of experimentation... if that happened, how do you think it would happen?

AMANDA

You mean how would you kill your stepdad?

LILY

Just...in general terms. If he were to...be...killed.
How do you think it would happen?

AMANDA

I mean I don't think it would just *happen*, like, you would definitely have to actually *kill* him.

LILY

So say somebody killed him.

AMANDA

Who?

LILY

That's what I'm asking you. Or it's part of what I'm asking you.
Well OK so first, there's the method -- say it was gonna look like a suicide.

AMANDA

Right.

LILY

How would that happen? Poison?

AMANDA

Well people don't usually kill themselves with *poison*. Maybe with a bottle of pills.

LILY

Uh huh. Yeah. Or --

Suddenly, the sound of the front door opening, off.

They both freeze.

Silence.

LILY carefully walks off into the front hallway.

She comes back a moment later, relaxed.

LILY
Cleaning lady.

AMANDA
Good.
You didn't say hi?

LILY
Why would I say hi? I don't know her.

AMANDA
Oh so she's new?

LILY
No, she's been with us for like five years. She came to our old place.

AMANDA
Oh.

LILY
I mean...I don't even know her name. Is that weird?

They think about it for a second.

AMANDA
I don't know.

LILY
I don't think it is. She's Ukrainian, I think. She doesn't speak any English.

AMANDA
Right.

LILY
What would we even talk about? It's more respectful to just let her do her job than to force friendship on her.

Tiny beat.

LILY

So. Maybe an automotive accident? That seems like it would have a few / advantages.

AMANDA

Why are you thinking about this now?

LILY

I'm just -- it's like you said. Consider all options.

AMANDA

But the other night you didn't even want to think about it. Now you're literally plotting his murder.

LILY

I am not plotting his murder! I'm brainstorming with you -- are you really not willing to / brainstorm --

AMANDA

I'm just wondering what changed your mind.

LILY

Just -- time! I slept on it. What do you mean?

AMANDA

It seems like you want to kill him because you're upset.

LILY

I didn't say I want to kill him. I / said I --

AMANDA

It seems like you want to think about killing him because you're upset.

LILY

Of course I'm upset! Why else would I kill him?

AMANDA

Because it's the right thing to do.

LILY

Exactly! That's what I said.

AMANDA

No, you / said it's --

LILY

Why are we arguing over the semantics of this? This was your idea in the first place!

AMANDA

That doesn't mean I can endorse revenge-killing. Murder as a crime of passion.

LILY

But you can endorse premeditated murder?

AMANDA

If it's premeditated correctly. If it's just. Not because you're upset.

LILY

I'm not just *upset*! It's that I'm finally fully understanding the situation. It's like you were saying before. He's the fat man on the bridge, and me and my mom -- and God knows how many other people whose lives he's ruined or harmed in one way or another -- we're all chained to the train tracks below. Someone has to...you know. Give him a push.

Beat.

AMANDA

You're looking at me.

LILY

Well yeah because you're the only one in the room.

AMANDA

You think I'm the one who should push him.

LILY

I didn't say that.

Beat.

LILY

But I do think you'd be good at it.

AMANDA

Why?

LILY

You did it to Honeymooner. You had no fear. You had a game plan and you executed it. You were amazing. You were *brave*.

Beat.

AMANDA

Thank you.

LILY

Of course. I mean it.

AMANDA

You realize, though. I would be the last person to carry out that murder.

LILY

Why?

AMANDA

Because of what I did to Hooneymooner. I'd be at the top of any suspect list for any killing anywhere near this town. I'd have to be far away, with an airtight alibi.

LILY

I guess so.

AMANDA

Airtight.

LILY

And me too.

AMANDA

Yeah.

Beat.

AMANDA gets an idea.

AMANDA

Hold on...

5.

A week later.

LILY and AMANDA are sitting side by side.

LILY is holding up a small baggy of white powder.

AMANDA

Kind of pretty, isn't it?

LILY

I guess so.

AMANDA

You gonna use it?

LILY look at her like, "obviously not."

AMANDA

I mean, you might as well.

LILY looks off, then leans in and speaks softly.

LILY

I thought he'd be...

AMANDA

What.

LILY

I dunno. Bigger.

AMANDA

He's plenty big.

LILY

You said he got jacked in jail.

AMANDA

He's stringy.

LILY

He's got little T-Rex arms.

AMANDA

It's not about that. He's supple.

LILY

He doesn't seem supple to me.

AMANDA

He doesn't have to win a wrestling match. You're not getting second thoughts, I hope.

LILY

...

AMANDA

You have to own this. Eyes on the prize.

TIM, tatoored and with a vague air of spiritual and physical illness, comes in, smelling his hands.

TIM
That soap, dog.

LILY AND AMANDA
...

TIM
Motherfucker.
I gotta *get* some of that soap.
My hands smell *expensive*.

AMANDA
Gross, Tim.

LILY
It's just lavender.

TIM
(luxuriating in the word)
Lavender.
Motherfucking *lavender*.
You come out of a bathroom like that in the morning, and you feel
like you could go take over a country and be back in time for brunch.

LILY
Ha.

TIM
What does your dad do for a living, Lily?

AMANDA
He's dead.

TIM
Ah. Sorry about that.

LILY
My *stepdad* is in real estate.

TIM
That's his Beemer out front, I'm guessing?

LILY
Yes.

TIM
But he's not home, though...

LILY
He usually drives the Tesla to work.

TIM
Fuck. The Series S?

LILY
I mean: sure. I don't know that that is.

TIM
The Tesla Series S? The plug-in electric five-door luxury liftback with dual-motor all-wheel drive and independent coil spring suspension?

LILY
Uh huh. Sure.

TIM
Yeah, son. That's the car I'm gonna be driving one day. That's exactly the car.

AMANDA
No it's not.

TIM
Fuck off, Amanda.

AMANDA
I'm just trying to help you avoid disappointment.

TIM
Can't you let a man have his dreams?

AMANDA
OK.

TIM
Ya'll children of privilege wouldn't get how it is. A motherfucker's gotta keep an eye on the finer things in life. That's how he keeps his hustle up.

AMANDA
You're from Westchester.

TIM
I'm from Katonah.

AMANDA
That's in Westchester.

TIM
Katonah has a 9.7% poverty rate.

AMANDA

And a Le Pain Quotidien.

TIM

My dad ain't a banker like your dad, bitch.

AMANDA

No, he's an accountant.

TIM

We didn't grow up riding *ponies* where I'm from. Much less cutting their heads off if they're not fancy enough / for us.

LILY

Hey -- hey. Guys. Come / on.

TIM

Whatever. I'm out. You enjoy that stuff, / Lily.

AMANDA

Do you own a gun?

Beat.

TIM

(laughs)

Do I own a *gun*?

AMANDA

Yeah.

TIM

Why do you care?

AMANDA

I don't know, it just seems like if you're this super-tough Katonah drug dealer you might have a gun.

LILY

Probably not, though.

AMANDA

Yeah. I bet he doesn't run into much trouble on his particular turf.

LILY

Selling to high school girls and stuff. He probably just needs like a...

AMANDA

Slingshot.

LILY
A spork.

AMANDA
You packin' a spork?

TIM
Fuck no I'm not packin' a *spork*. The fuck are you talking about?

AMANDA
You got a gun?

TIM
Yes I got a gun.

AMANDA
On you?

TIM
No, man. Not on me.

AMANDA
You have it at your place, then?

TIM
No.

LILY
Why not?

TIM
Because I don't. I just don't want to.

AMANDA
He lives with his dad.

TIM
It's a temporary -- it's only for a while.

LILY
So then you don't have a gun.

TIM
I do, I just...
Listen, I could get access to a gun any time I want. Easy.

AMANDA
Good.

TIM
What do you mean good?

AMANDA
Then Lily has a business proposition for you.

Beat.

TIM
And what's that?

Silence.

AMANDA
Lily?

LILY
Yeah. I, um --
Sorry.
We have been thinking that you might / be interested in--

AMANDA
We want you to kill her stepdad.

Beat.

TIM smiles.

TIM
(as in, "yeah right")
Fuck you, you want me to *kill your stepdad*. You want me to fuckin'
slay a dragon while I'm at it?

AMANDA
We're dead serious. Aren't we, Lily?

LILY
Well, it's a possibility we're / exploring.

AMANDA
We're dead serious.

Beat.

TIM
Why.

AMANDA
Doesn't matter why. The only important thing is how.

Next weekend Lily will be out of town with her mom visiting family and I'll be doing an overnight at a residential psychotherapy program. So we need someone to break in and do it for us while we've got good, solid, shiny alibis. Right?

LILY
...Right.

AMANDA
We needed someone with no direct connection to her stepdad or to this town. And preferably someone a little bit... you know.

LILY
Hard.

AMANDA
Right. Someone who came up rough. Maybe we were wrong to think of you.

Beat.

TIM thinks.

TIM
That's a big ask.

AMANDA
I know.

TIM
He's not like some gangbanger. Rich guy like that is gonna get a lot of attention from the cops.

LILY
So you'd have to be really careful. But we've planned it all for you.

TIM
...Yeah?

LILY
You wear a ski mask. You come in through that window. Break it with something heavy. I know the glass is weak because a tree branch broke through the other one last year.
That should wake him, up, and he'll come down here.

TIM
...And?

AMANDA
Then you'll shoot him.

TIM
Just..shoot him.

AMANDA
Just shoot him.

TIM
What if he's packing?

LILY
He doesn't have a gun.

AMANDA
You shoot him, then you grab some stuff. Electronics, wallet, whatever you can find. It looks like a robbery gone bad.

LILY
As soon as his life insurance pays out, we'll get you a hundred thousand dollars in cash.

TIM
...You're...

He's gonna say "serious."

AMANDA
Yes.

LILY
What do you say?

Beat.

TIM is sweating.

TIM
So I just shoot him?

AMANDA
Yes.

TIM
Like, in the head?

AMANDA
It doesn't matter where. You just have to kill him.

TIM
But if I just shoot him in the *foot* or something, he might not die.

AMANDA

Right, so maybe don't shoot him in the foot.

TIM

I'm on parole, is the thing.

AMANDA

We know.

TIM

If police find me...

AMANDA

If police find you, it won't matter whether you're on parole or not; you'd be going to prison for life. So don't let them find you.

LILY

They won't find you.

TIM

I just shoot him?

AMANDA

Yes.

TIM

That just seems....

LILY

What.

TIM

I mean....
Evil.
Right?

LILY and AMANDA stare at him.

TIM

I mean it's not like *he* killed someone, or....
You just -- what, you just don't like him?

AMANDA

Can you do it or not?

TIM backs away toward the door.

TIM

I'm gonna just assume ya'll are fucking around. I'm / out.

AMANDA
Wait.

LILY
Amanda.

TIM
Nah, nah. This isn't my / scene, man.

AMANDA
Hey Tim. That parole you mentioned?

LILY
(quietly)
Just let / him go.

AMANDA
(ignoring her)
How would your officer feel about you selling cocaine to teens?

TIM
...

AMANDA holds up her smartphone and plays a recording of TIM's voice: "That's seventy for a gram, two twenty for an eightball."

Beat.

TIM
You wouldn't.

AMANDA
I wouldn't?

TIM
There's her voice on there, too. You'd -- you'd get yourselves in trouble if you showed anyone that recording.

AMANDA
Not nearly as much trouble as you.

TIM
So you're gonna *blackmail me* into killing a guy?

LILY
Amanda --

AMANDA
Shut up, Lily.
Yeah, Tim. You've got it.

TIM
Why would you do that?

AMANDA
Because Lily is my friend, and she needs this.

TIM
She's not your friend. Look at her!

LILY looks sick.

LILY
I --
She's --

TIM
(to AMANDA)
You need help, man. Don't drag her into your bullshit. And sure as hell don't drag me. Unlike you, we have lives to live.

AMANDA
You do?

TIM
Of course we do. Well I dunno about her; I do.

AMANDA
What life do you have to live? You're twenty-eight years old and you live with your parents.

LILY
Amanda --

AMANDA
You're a dishwasher at a retirement home. Other than that, you sell drugs to children. What kind of life is that?

TIM
This is a temporary hustle.

AMANDA
Oh yeah?

TIM
I'm only doing this until I get my feet under me. As soon as I have the financial stability to move out and live on my own, I will.

AMANDA
Then what, you'll be a kingpin? You're clearly only selling to minors because you don't want to get involved with real dealers.

TIM

Who says it'll be drugs? Huh? I could be a legit businessman. Give me a decade; I'll be moving my family into a neighborhood just like this. I have the drive. And the mental toughness.

AMANDA

And the permanent spot on New York State's sex offender registry. So I guess the day you move into a neighborhood like this you'll have to drive your Tesla Series S from door to door introducing yourself and trying to convince them that you only had sex with a child because you were too afraid to talk to anyone your own age. I think they'll understand.
Right, Lily?

LILY

...

AMANDA

You'll be doing this or something equally pathetic until you're on Medicare. So explain to me again what life you so urgently have to go live.

Beat.

TIM bum-rushes AMANDA and tries to pry the phone out of her hand.

A scuffle.

LILY

Guys! Stop!
Let go of her --

TIM

Motherfucker...

LILY

Guys!

They continue to fight.

AMANDA is a tough, scrappy fighter, but eventually TIM overpowers her, grabs the phone, tosses it on the ground, and stomps on it, shattering the glass.

TIM

Fuck you both.

He leaves quickly.

AMANDA picks up her shattered phone.

AMANDA

I needed an upgrade anyway.

Silence.

AMANDA

I would have beaten him. He fought dirty. He was going for the eyes.

LILY is listening to something.

AMANDA

We'll figure out a Plan B. He would never have been trustworthy anyway, and --

LILY holds a single finger up.

AMANDA

What?

The sound of a car pulling up outside.

LILY listens.

LILY

You hear that?

AMANDA

That's Tim leaving.

LILY

No, that's a car coming up the driveway, not going out.

They listen.

AMANDA

That couldn't be your stepdad.

LILY

He shouldn't get home until eight. It's way too early.

She goes off to look out the front window.

She comes back immediately.

LILY

It's him, and he's talking to Tim in the driveway.

AMANDA

...

LILY

He said he would kill me if I had you here again. Literally murder me.

AMANDA

I can hide.

LILY

Your car...

AMANDA

No I walked here. I can just wait until the coast is clear and quietly let myself --

She stops.

LILY has taken a knife from the block in the kitchen and is holding it out to AMANDA.

AMANDA

Why are you holding that out?

LILY

...We have to do it now.

AMANDA

Slow down for a / minute.

LILY

It makes sense. It makes so much sense. We have to do it now.

AMANDA

Lily. Come / on.

LILY

What do you think they're talking about right now?

AMANDA

I couldn't / say.

LILY

Your cousin is a fucking idiot. And a coward. Mark is pressing him about who he is and why he's here, and he's giving us up right now. He's telling him the whole thing.

AMANDA

I wouldn't jump to / conclusions.

LILY

That's exactly what's happening and you know it. He'll be furious. He'll come in here. He'll confront me. He'll lose control. And then that means that it will be *self defense*. I know my mother will back us.

AMANDA

I don't think it works that / way.

LILY

There's no way we're gonna find anyone who will do this for us. We have to just rip off the Band-Aid. We have to do it ourselves.

AMANDA

Why am I the one holding the knife?

LILY

Because you'll have a steady hand, and a clear mind. You will execute this task.

The sound of a car pulling away, off.

AMANDA

You're not thinking this through.

LILY

Hide, and when the right moment comes, when his back is turned...

AMANDA

You're not in the right state to be / thinking about

LILY

If you care about me, you will do this.
If you're capable of caring about anyone, you will do this.

A key turns in the lock, off.

MARK

(off)

Lily.

A split second of silence.

Then AMANDA bolts awkwardly offstage to hide.

MARK walks on.

LILY

You're home early.

Beat.

MARK
I just spoke with your pilates instructor.

LILY
Oh yeah?

MARK
Yeah.

Beat.

LILY improvises:

LILY
He's a character, isn't he?

MARK
...

LILY
You like his tattoos?

MARK
No.

Beat.

LILY
What did you two / talk about?

MARK
Little weird, don't you think?

LILY
What is?

MARK
That he'd come here in *person* to return a dumbbell you'd left there.

LILY
...Yeah, well. They're all about, ah, customer / service.

MARK
I didn't even think they used dumbbells for pilates.

LILY
Oh, they sure do. The dumbbell workouts are the / worst.

MARK
He also pronounced it "pie-layts."

LILY
Well, that is, in fact, the correct pronunciation.

MARK
Really.

LILY
Yeah.

MARK
I'd always heard "pilates."

LILY
And would that be the first time Americans have butchered an Indian pronunciation?

MARK
I thought it was European.

LILY
Nope.

MARK
Your mom pronounces it "pilates."

LILY
Mom is wrong.

Beat.

MARK
I took down his license plate number.

LILY
Why would you do that?

MARK
You really shouldn't let just anyone into the house.

LILY
I don't understand what you're / implying.

MARK
You're a teenage girl. A twenty-something *pie-layts* instructor shouldn't be coming inside the house to sit and chat with you alone. A grown man should understand that boundary.

LILY
He didn't sit and chat. He didn't even sit. He just returned the dumbbell and / left.

MARK

Show it to me.

LILY

...Show you the dumbbell.

MARK

Show me the dumbbell.

Beat.

LILY

Go fuck yourself.

MARK

...I'm sorry, I'm having auditory hallucinations. I thought I just heard you tell me to / go --

LILY

Go fuck yourself. Yep. Coming through loud and clear. You're a controlling, hateful piece of shit, and you can go fuck / yourself.

MARK

You know better than to talk to me like that.

LILY

What are you gonna do about it, Mark?

MARK

What am I gonna *do* about it?

LILY

Yeah. What are you gonna do about it?

Beat.

MARK

You don't understand what it's like to have a daughter. There is no fear deeper or more profound than the fear a father must carry in his heart twenty-four hours a day, seven days a / week.

LILY

I don't understand that, no. And neither do you. You don't have a daughter. You stole one off a dead guy.

Beat.

MARK speaks very quietly, and with great control, from here out.

MARK

It's just sad, Lily.

LILY

What is.

MARK

Hearing you talk the way you talk. It's like you just...
Lack perspective.
No, it's worse than that. You lack *empathy*.

LILY

Go crawl into a hole somewhere and die, Mark.

MARK

You couldn't possibly understand someone else's point of view.
Someone else's pain. Not mine, not your friends', not your mother's.

LILY

Just go / die.

MARK

Because in your brain, all these people are just little offshoots of your
consciousness. Just little helpers put there to *give you things* and to
bolster your confidence. We're all your maids, aren't you. Your
cleaning ladies. Your personal trainers.

LILY

...

MARK

You're right that you're not my daughter. I would never have raised
such a dumb, spoiled little rich girl.

LILY

...

MARK

And you know what? I don't give a shit if that guy was your instructor
or your boyfriend or your pimp. Your mom and I need to stop
protecting you. Life needs to knock you around a little.
Do what you want about next year. Forget Brookfield. You can go
wherever you want, as long as you cover tuition yourself.
Because starting tonight, you're off my payroll, princess. Best of luck
to you.

He walks up the stairs.

A long silence. LILY sits alone, shaking with anger.

Then AMANDA emerges.

AMANDA
I told you Tim wouldn't give us up.

Beat.

AMANDA
Lily?

LILY
You didn't do it.

AMANDA
...Of course I didn't do it. He wasn't out of control at all. I heard everything. You were never unsafe.

LILY
You think it's OK for him to say those things to me?

AMANDA
Who cares? He's a cock. Is that new information for us?

LILY
But you heard what he said.

AMANDA
Yeah. And it's not that bad. I think you need thicker skin.

LILY
It's not OK. It shouldn't be OK to you. Did you hear what he / called me?

AMANDA
Honestly he's not even that off-base.

LILY
...

AMANDA
I wouldn't say empathy is your strongest suit. And I assume you know that too.

LILY
What are you talking about?

AMANDA
I mean, that's fine. Everyone has their weaknesses.

LILY

Wait, but -- what are you even talking about?

AMANDA

(plainly, without anger)

You're just not a very considerate person. You're great in other ways.

Tiny beat. Without a hitch:

AMANDA

So I'm gonna go home and brainstorm. I think I know a few other people who would be candidates for this. I'll sleep on it. I'll call you tonight, OK?

LILY stares at her blankly.

AMANDA

Lily.

6.

The next night. Late.

LILY and AMANDA are watching an old movie on television, just as before.

They have glasses of orange juice in front of them.

LILY sips hers. AMANDA doesn't drink hers.

LILY is visibly uncomfortable.

AMANDA

It's funny to think about how everyone in these movies is probably already dead.

Silence.

AMANDA

I guess a couple of them might just be really old.

Silence.

AMANDA

(points)

That guy is probably peeing in a bag now.

Silence.

AMANDA

(points)

She's probably a pain in the ass to her children. They alternate weekends visiting her in her retirement home. She's forgetting them one by one.

Silence.

AMANDA

Every once in a while this movie comes on in the big room where all the old people sit in catatonic states staring at the television. And she sees herself and thinks, "what a pretty young woman. I wonder what her name / is."

LILY

You haven't touched your drink.

AMANDA picks up her drink.

She takes a small sip, makes a face.

LILY

You don't like it?

AMANDA

Orange juice is a weird mixer. Tastes like breakfast.

LILY

I can make you something else.

AMANDA

No, it's fine. I don't really get drunk.

LILY

You don't like it?

AMANDA

No, it just doesn't happen. I tried, last summer at a pool party. I think you were doing your Model UN thing.

LILY

Youth Leaders Summit, but yeah.

AMANDA

Yeah, it was at Emerson Morgan's. I had seven shots of tequila and didn't feel anything except a little queasy. Everyone crowded around me at one point and starting chanting the word "tank!" for some reason. I didn't know what to do so I just did this dance.

LILY
A dance?

AMANDA
Yeah I dunno. Just felt like I should do a dance.

LILY
What did it look like?

AMANDA does a short, weird, joyless dance.

LILY can't help but laugh.

LILY
That's pretty good.

AMANDA
I mean people loved it. Then they lost interest.

LILY
People are weird when they're drunk.

AMANDA
Yeah for sure. The weirdest part was that Emerson's mom was there.

LILY
You're kidding.

AMANDA
Yeah I just remember her walking around the party in heels refilling people's drinks and shouting "git some!"

LILY
"Get some?"

AMANDA
No, like, "GIT some!"

LILY
(laughs)
"GIT some?"

AMANDA
Yeah, I dunno.
Everyone was like, "your mom is so turnt up, Emerson." Later we found out she'd been diagnosed with brain cancer that afternoon.

LILY
That's horrible.

Beat.

LILY is uncomfortable.

AMANDA

You sure you're OK?

LILY

What, I don't seem OK?

AMANDA

A full day of radio silence. Then very urgent texts. Like, "come hang out RIGHT NOW."

LILY

Did you not want to hang out?

AMANDA

Of course I wanted to hang out. But like, what if I'd had other plans?

LILY

Did you have other plans?

AMANDA

...

LILY

I'm just a spur-of-the-moment / person.

AMANDA

I don't think we should give up.

LILY

I told you I really don't want to / talk about this

AMANDA

Your stepdad gets mad at you and abandon our whole scheme?

LILY

It was never a "scheme." What's a / *scheme*?

AMANDA

It was very much a scheme. We got other people involved and everything.

LILY

That was your idea.

AMANDA

I just don't understand why suddenly it's off the --

LILY
He's upstairs.

AMANDA
...Right now?

LILY
Yes. He went to bed early. But I'd rather not risk him hearing you talk about this.

AMANDA
...So do you think there's some / way

LILY
I think we should forget that we ever entertained the idea.

AMANDA
Why.

LILY
Because it's a stupid idea. I'm not gonna risk ruining the rest of my life just to get him out of it one year earlier.

AMANDA
But I thought it wasn't just about you. It was about your mom and / about doing the right --

LILY
Do me a big favor, OK?

AMANDA
What.

LILY
Don't ever bring it up again.

AMANDA
...OK.

They watch the movie for a bit.

AMANDA
Then what are we gonna *do* together?

LILY turns and stares at AMANDA.

She doesn't answer.

Eventually, AMANDA turns back to the screen, and LILY does the same.

After a moment, LILY turns from the screen to AMANDA and watches her for a long, long moment.

...

...

...

LILY
Amanda.

AMANDA
Yeah?

LILY
That stuff you said to Tim the other day. About how his life isn't worth living?

AMANDA
Yeah. What about it.

LILY
Do you ever think about...
Do you ever, ask those questions about...
Yourself?

AMANDA
Like the really deep questions? Like are any of our lives really / worth living?

LILY
No, specifically yours.

AMANDA
...Not really, why?

LILY
Because you said yourself. You can't feel joy. Or gratitude. So I just wonder...if *you* wonder...
Whether that's really a life?

Silence.

AMANDA
Why would you ask me that?

LILY realizes how horrible that sounds.

LILY

Sorry. I shouldn't have.

AMANDA

No, it's fine. I'm just curious why you're thinking about it.

LILY

I don't know. It's stupid. Please forget I said it.

AMANDA

Maybe I should be considering that. Maybe it's a blind / spot for me.

LILY

You shouldn't. Forget it. Seriously.

AMANDA

...If you say so.

AMANDA picks up her drink and starts to drink...

LILY

Wait.
Don't drink that.

Beat.

AMANDA pauses.

AMANDA

Why not?

LILY

Just don't. It's bad. Here, give it to me, I'll go dump / them.

AMANDA

Why shouldn't I drink this?

LILY

(agitated)

Because it's bad. It's a stupid drink. My dad has nice wine, we should be / drinking that.

AMANDA

But I like this, actually.

LILY

No you don't, you're just fucking with my head. Give it to me.

AMANDA

Why? Why should / I --

LILY
Because I drugged it.

AMANDA
You what?

LILY
I put rohypnol in your drink. Roofies.

Long pause.

AMANDA
I don't / understand.

LILY
I was gonna...knock you out. And go upstairs.

Beat.

LILY
Afterward I was gonna put the knife in your hands and then go to sleep and make it look like you woke up in the middle of the night and did it.

AMANDA
...Be/cause...

LILY
Because you're the best cover I can get. Pin it on the one person who's got no chance in court.

Silence.

LILY buries her head in her hands. She can't look at AMANDA.

LILY
(breaking down a little)
I'm so, so sorry, Amanda. I am a terrible person. I don't know what I was --

AMANDA slowly and methodically chugs the rest of the drink.

LILY looks up just as she's finishing.

LILY panics.

LILY
What did you just do.

AMANDA grimaces at the taste.

AMANDA

I drank the drink.

LILY

But -- you -- why did you do that? Amanda! What are / you --

AMANDA

Because that was your plan.

LILY

No! I just told you not to!

AMANDA

Sorry.

LILY

You need to go make yourself throw up.

AMANDA

Yuck, no thanks.

LILY

But you'll -- do you understand what rohypnol / does?

AMANDA

Oh yeah. Sure do. I can feel it already, you must have really dosed this motherfucker up.

LILY

Then what, do you -- you *want* me to do it?

AMANDA

I want you to make up your own mind for once.

LILY

No! Absolutely not -- it's an insane -- there's no way I can actually go through with it!

AMANDA

Let's see.

LILY

But I don't want to see!

AMANDA

(beginning to slur)

I live a...

Meaningless life, don't I?

LILY
You don't! You *do* feel things. I know you do.
What are you --
You're a good friend!

AMANDA
Uh huh.

LILY
You are! You're an amazing friend.

AMANDA
I'm a s...
Skilled imitator.

LILY
No. Some part of you cares. I know it does. Some part of you feels something when we're together -- doesn't it?

AMANDA thinks for a second.

Then she shrugs.

LILY
...Really?

AMANDA
Do you?

Silence.

AMANDA begins to wobble.

LILY
Amanda.
Just put your fingers down your throat --

She slumps.

LILY
Amanda!

LILY runs over and catches her.

LILY
Come on.

But she's out cold.

LILY tries to wake her, tries to pick her up.

Finally, she gives up.

She sits next to the unconscious AMANDA.

Silence, except for the TV, where music swells.

LILY sits in agony.

Then she goes to the kitchen...

Picks up a knife...

Stares at it...

Puts it down.

The sound of a door shutting upstairs.

MARK

(off)

Lily?

LILY stands silent, terrified.

MARK

(off)

Lily, I heard shouting.

LILY

(shouts off)

Go to bed, Mark.

MARK

(off)

What's going on?

LILY looks at AMANDA, sprawled on the couch.

Footsteps on the stairs.

Her fingers tighten on the knife's handle...

7.

Two years later.

LILY is sitting alone on the couch, reading.

She is older now, and quietly a wreck, although she holds it together well.

Music plays in the background.

The doorbell rings.

LILY turns off the music.

She sits in silence.

Then the doorbell rings again.

She puts down the book and walks off toward the door.

The sound of the door opening.

LILY
(off)
I told you to text me when you get here.

TIM
(off)
I know.

LILY
(off)
That means don't ring the doorbell.

TIM
(off)
Why, is somebody else here?

LILY
(off)
No. Just come inside.

LILY and TIM come back on.

He looks exactly the same. But he's more somber this time.

TIM
You haven't really redecorated.

LILY
Why would we redecorate?

TIM
...You wouldn't, I guess.

Beat.

TIM
You're lucky that number you texted still worked.

LILY
Uh huh.

TIM
I should probably be changing it every few months. I did that once, though, and I lost about half my clients. All too dumb to put a new fuckin' number in their phones.

LILY
Sorry to hear that.

Beat.

TIM
What do you want?

LILY
You have percocets?

TIM laughs.

LILY
What.

TIM
You can get that shit from a doctor.

LILY
I don't have any pain.

TIM
Then why do you want it?

LILY
For fun.

TIM
It's not really a party drug.

LILY
Uh huh.

TIM
More of a junkie drug.

LILY
So?

TIM
And you could still get it from a doctor. You're rich. Make some shit up. How do you think I get mine?

LILY
I didn't want to get it from a doctor.

TIM
You just missed my pretty face, huh?

LILY
So you have it?

Beat.

TIM
You're how old now?

She gives him a look.

TIM
What! I'm curious what you're up to right now.

LILY
I'm in college. I'm nineteen.

TIM
Where at?

LILY
Harvard.

TIM
No shit.

LILY
Yeah.

TIM
Good for you.

LILY

Thanks.

TIM

You must have had the material for one hell of a college essay, huh?

He smiles.

She doesn't.

TIM

You home for -- what, winter break?

LILY

I'm taking the semester off.

TIM

Why?

LILY

Twenty questions today, aren't we?

TIM

You OK, though?

LILY

I'm fine. It's just a lot of stress. I'm just taking time to relax and be with my mother.

TIM

And pop some opiates.

LILY

That's the hope.

TIM

I don't know if I can sell this stuff to a Harvard kid. What if I'm destroying one of the great minds of a / generation?

LILY

You have it or not?

He roots around in his backpack for the pills.

TIM

You know you're lucky I'm even still doing this. Come January One, I'm quitting. Going completely clean.

LILY

OK.

TIM
I'm not kidding! I got the date marked on my calendar. I have a whole
business / plan and every--

LILY
OK, Tim. Whatever you say.

Beat.

He's wounded by this.

LILY
Are we gonna / do this?

TIM
Why'd you ever spend time with my cousin, huh?

LILY
...

TIM
That was really stupid. You know that? That's what that was. Stupid.

LILY
...

TIM
You brought it on / yourself.

LILY
OK. / Great.

TIM
I knew when I came here last time that she was dragging you into
something you didn't want to do. Neither of us should be surprised
she went ahead and did it on her own. She ask you first?

LILY
Of course she didn't ask / me first.

TIM
And no one buys that "fugue state" shit her lawyers fed the court. You
don't stab a man in the throat while *sleepwalking*. Or cut half his
fuckin' head off when he's already dead. They just knew that crap
could get her into a deluxe little mental health place instead of the
federal prison she should be in. She did it in / cold blood.

LILY
She needed help. She's where she / should be.

TIM

Nah, fuck all the psychology bullshit. It's not a *disease*. It's not a *condition*. Some people are just born wrong. You can give them the sweetest parents in the world and the nicest, leafiest fuckin' cushy childhood and they'll still turn out cold as fuck for no goddamn / reason.

LILY

(flaring up)

I don't really give a shit about your opinions of her. OK?

Beat.

LILY

If you'd been given the brain she was given, you would have done a lot worse.

TIM

What the fuck are you talking about? If I was *given the brain she --* What else is there but a brain? We're brains with fucking arms and feet. And hers was evil. *She /* was evil.

LILY

She was not evil. She was doing her best with what she had.

TIM

Yeah, / OK.

LILY

She was not.
And I need you to know that.

TIM

That's why you called me up? To tell me that?

LILY

I called you up because I wanted drugs. Do you have them or do / you
—

TIM produces the bottle of pills and puts it on the table.

TIM

You ever get a chance to talk to her after it happened?

LILY

No. Why?

TIM

Just curious if she ever tried to. You know. Explain it to you.

LILY
I saw her in the courtroom, but never in private.
She actually just wrote to me last week, though.

TIM
Yeah?

LILY
Yeah.

TIM
A letter?

LILY
Yeah.

TIM
I didn't know she'd be allowed to write one.

LILY
Well...
Guess so.

TIM
Can I ask what she said?

AMANDA appears, in spotlight.

AMANDA
It's actually not bad here. Food's OK, staff are generally nice people, and nobody cares if you don't shower, or walk around barefoot, or catch and dismember a pigeon.

The therapists have been working with me to fill in my memories of those missing hours. "Reclaiming the event," they call it. And it's kind of a fun exercise. I can tell them fucking anything and they'll just write it down and nod.

In other news, the ol' medication-of-the-week club is back in full swing, and the latest ones are making me sleep fourteen hours a day and dream a *ton*. Which I never used to do.

You're in most of them. In one of the recurring ones, we're in your living room, and I've just drank your drugged screwdriver, and you're screaming, asking me why I did it, asking me why I have a horse's head instead of my face.

AMANDA turns to LILY and addresses this to her, somehow.

LILY listens silently.

And I want to tell you that I don't, and that I did it because I think I loved you. Because I think I still do. And because I knew how happy you could be -- so much happier than I ever could -- but how tied down you were by your own fear and guilt. And that I don't think you ever really wanted my friendship, so I gave the best thing I could. The thing you really wanted to take anyway, I think.

I want to tell you all that, but I turn to you and open my mouth, and all that comes out is:

For a split second, a huge, loud sound of a horse braying -- a chorus of them -- echoes through the air.

It stops abruptly.

And then there's this other recurring dream that doesn't involve you at all.

LILY fades away, and AMANDA speaks directly to us.

And it goes like this: I'm Honeymooner, and I'm dying. And I rise out of my horse-body, and I'm staring down at our whole suburb, and time is speeding up, and I see generations of people coming and going and building bigger and bigger houses with endless extensions sprouting outward like tumors. And then eventually the people start spending more and more of their time staring at their smartphones, and soon enough they're forgetting to clean their houses, or mow their lawns, or go outside, or have children, or eat, and eventually all the giant hyperextended houses begin to rot and collapse, and the people disappear, vanishing completely into the internet.

And then -- and this is the really beautiful part -- the horses take over. And the whole suburb is just gorgeous thoroughbred stallions with no owners and no memory of owners and no way of knowing how expensive they are, just mating joyfully and galloping through the ruins.

AMANDA looks out, seeing this, and for the first time, smiles.

Really, genuinely smiles.

(...Or is it really genuine?)

AMANDA

"And the tree was happy."

Light sharply out on AMANDA, and back up on LILY and TIM.

TIM
Can I ask what she said?

LILY
...I don't know.
I never opened it. I just threw it away.

Blackout.

End of play.