

Agreed Upon Fictions
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Prologue. KATIE emerges from her front door, purse over shoulder, ready to go somewhere. HAROLD approaches, holding something behind his back. Birds chirping.

HAROLD
Knock, knock.

KATIE
Hello, Harold!

HAROLD
No, no, no! Knock, knock!

KATIE
Who's there?

HAROLD
Two.

KATIE
Two who?

HAROLD
Tulips! (*pulling a handful of tulips, wrapped in foil, from behind his back*)

KATIE
Beautiful! Beautiful! Did they just come up?

HAROLD
A day or two ago they bloomed. Didn't you notice?

KATIE
I haven't been out back in a few days.

HAROLD
Haven't been patrolling the perimeter?

KATIE

No, no. But they are lovely. I can't believe it's this time of year already.

HAROLD

Like clockwork, seasons change. Last year I brought you your tulips right after your mother passed.

KATIE

That's right.

HAROLD

Are you still sad?

KATIE

I'm sorry?

HAROLD

Are you still sad that your mother passed?

KATIE

Yes.

HAROLD

That feeling won't go away. But you'll get used to feeling it. You lost something—it doesn't mean you lost everything. So, chin up! It's springtime.

KATIE

It's been beautiful so far.

HAROLD

Biscuit's been enjoying it.

KATIE

I bet.

HAROLD

That little dog hates being cooped up. The dog Mother and I had before you moved in, Tybalt was his name. Mother was an English teacher. Tybalt liked staying in. Biscuit always wants out.

KATIE

Well, today will be a beautiful day to be outside.

She starts to go.

HAROLD

Mrs. Baker!

(*turning*) I'm Mrs. Angelo, Harold.

KATIE

Oh. What did I call you?

HAROLD

Mrs. Baker.

KATIE

Who's that?

HAROLD

She lived here, before I did, years ago.

KATIE

Are you very good at identifying birdsong?

HAROLD

No. I never learned them.

KATIE

Mother knew them all. I only know cardinal and mourning dove—the easy ones!

HAROLD

You've got time to learn.

KATIE

Maybe, maybe not, but I've got today, my dog, and my flowers.

HAROLD

You've got the whole neighborhood! What would people do if they didn't see you walking your dog?

KATIE

Nine, two-thirty and six. Every day. Rain or shine.

HAROLD

That's how I know when it's time to pick Daniel up. When I see you heading back into your house in the afternoon, I know it's time to jump in the car and go.

KATIE

I'm glad I could be of assistance.

HAROLD

Me too. I better be off now. I've got some errands to run.

KATIE

HAROLD

Yes, and I've only got twenty minutes before our first walk!

KATIE

Thank you for the flowers. They are really beautiful.

HAROLD remains in place as KATIE exits.

Scene 1. Katie and Brian's kitchen table. KATIE and DAWN are drinking wine and eating chips and salsa.

Were you sweating? KATIE

Yes. DAWN

Tell me you were not sweating. KATIE

I had to change my shirt. DAWN

I should watch more daytime tv and then I wouldn't have to work out. KATIE

(stands and dances in a poor imitation of a pop star) He was like *(a move)*, and then he was like *(a move)*. DAWN

(making fun of her) That's exactly how he looked. I'm sweating now. KATIE

Haters gonna hate. DAWN

Brian should've been home 5 minutes after that thing ended. KATIE

Ha! Nooner! DAWN

The moves! It's the moves. And the body. And the voice is good. And also the body. KATIE

And he's what? 5 years older than Daniel? DAWN

(screams) Don't say that! He's of age. I read about his birthday party in Us Weekly. KATIE

A great source for facts. DAWN

KATIE

He's legal. And I'm not pursuing him, I'm watching him on tv. Just like millions of other women.

DAWN

And we're all sweating.

KATIE

You bet. Even the—(*notices movement outside*) Oh, dear. Hold on.

DAWN

(*looking*) What?

KATIE

My little neighbor guy.

DAWN

The dog-walker?

KATIE

(*She gets up, walks to window, peers out into darkness.*) He's moving my lawn furniture.

DAWN

Tell him to knock it off.

KATIE

He thinks he's helping. (*opening window*) Harold? Harold! I'm so sorry Daniel left those like that! Let me have him fix it tomorrow! I don't want you to get hurt. (*listening for a response*) Please don't worry about it. It's too dark. Let Daniel take care of that in the morning.

DAWN

Is he stopping?

KATIE

No. (*pause*) Okay! That's fine. Good night.

DAWN

Why was he in your yard?

KATIE

Daniel and his buddy were out there and they must have left chairs over the property line. That little bit of grass right off his house belongs to him.

DAWN

What does he do with a skinny strip of grass?

KATIE

He mows it.

DAWN

He does not!

KATIE

It's cute. He mows down one strip of grass and shuts the mower off and pulls it back out! There's not enough room to turn it around without going on my grass, which he won't do.

DAWN

Bat. Shit. Crazy.

KATIE

He's okay. He's not entirely well-adjusted, but he follows his own little set of rules and he's okay.

DAWN

Why couldn't he just leave the chairs there? Who cares if they were there for days?

KATIE

You know, Brian tried mowing that grass—told Harold that he didn't have to worry about it.

DAWN

What did he say?

KATIE

He said "Nope! My property, Sir! My property!" The mower is one thing, but my lawn furniture is really heavy.

DAWN

What if he has a heart attack in your yard? Eh, he'd probably manage to die on his side.

KATIE

(almost choking) Says the woman who works at the church.

DAWN

Keep my black heart a secret please, or I'll lose my job.

KATIE

(a car pulls up outside, KATIE yells like a kid) Your ride's here!

DAWN

Throw me my jacket.

(as Dawn puts on her jacket, MAL enters. He is one of those cops that looks like a street thug, but has a huge, warm personality)

MAL

Hey, Sister Kate! *(kiss on cheek)* What's going on here?

KATIE

Nothing, Officer McGeary. Does Dawn have to leave now?

MAL

I can sit for one. Dawn, you wanna sit for one more?

DAWN

Absolutely.

MAL sits, KATIE gets him a beer.

KATIE

Where are my nieces?

MAL

I picked them up and put them at Mrs. Swick's for a bit. I'm sure she's filling them up with hot chocolate and cookies, against direct orders. I told her we'd grab them in 20 minutes. *(opens beer, raises it)* Slainte. (SLAN-shuh)

KATIE

Cheers, baby brother. *(clinking glass to bottle)* Where'd you pick the girls up from?

MAL and DAWN

(she enthusiastically, he with a roll of the eyes) Irish dance.

DAWN

(to MAL) What?

MAL

I said Irish dance.

KATIE

You do roll your eyes about it.

MAL

If I wanted to get wrapped up in all the too-ra-loo-ra shit, I would've married an Irish girl.

KATIE

Hey!

DAWN

God blessed me with two red-headed babies with fast feet. Stop complaining!

MAL

I can't help it. Who pays \$1200 for a dress for a 7 year-old girl to dance in once?

DAWN

It's her solo dress! Katie you have to see it. And Malachy, it's used. For a solo dress, that is a steal!

MAL

You should quit working at church and learn to make those things.

DAWN

Maybe you quit being a cop and make them with me. (*MAL laughs*) She's dancing at a different feis (*FESH*) four of the next six weekends and she'll wear it at every one.

MAL

That's 300 bucks each time.

DAWN

He doesn't get it.

KATIE

Stop. They love it, right?

MAL

Yes.

DAWN

It's what they do.

MAL

All for the kids.

KATIE

You got that right. Daniel needed new goalie pads for hockey this year. We won't be going on vacation. For real.

MAL

But what would we spend it on if we didn't spend it on the kids?

KATIE

Something stupid, probably.

Or a boat.

MAL

That's something stupid.

DAWN

So what else, Katie?

MAL

Not much.

KATIE

Your sister's neighbor is still crazy.

DAWN

The guy with the little dog?

MAL

Harold—his social skills are It might be Alzheimer's.

KATIE

How old is he?

MAL

70-something.

KATIE

If he dies you can buy his house and knock it down. It'd be cheap. It looks like shit.

MAL

The inside is bad too. When the cable guy was here, he said he had been in Harold's house and it's bad.

KATIE

Really?

DAWN

Like newspapers stacked to high heaven. He can't throw anything away.

KATIE

Crazy people don't know they're crazy unless they have someone to tell them.

DAWN

(*indicating DAWN*) Exhibit A.

MAL

DAWN

Oh, shut up!

MAL

You know, if you knocked his house down, you and Brian could have a tennis court.

KATIE

Yes, but then I'd have to play tennis.

MAL

Then make it a huge yard, for parties. And freeze it in the winter, so Daniel can skate.

DAWN

Then it wouldn't matter where you put your lawn furniture. Mal, he was out there tonight moving her lawn furniture because it crossed the property line.

MAL

He's a nut.

DAWN

We gotta go. The girls have to go to bed.

KATIE

Thanks for sitting.

Over the next few lines, MAL and DAWN ready themselves to leave.

MAL

What do you guys have tomorrow?

KATIE

Hockey tournament in Flossmor. Starts at 8:30 a.m., if anyone wants to join us. How about you guys?

MAL

(significantly not rolling his eyes) Irish dance!

KATIE

(a thought occurs) Are you going to mass for Mom on Sunday?

MAL

Noon?

KATIE

Ten-thirty. For the anniversary?

DAWN

Wow. It doesn't seem like a whole year.

KATIE

It seems longer to me.

MAL

I gotta work, but Dawn will go.

DAWN

I will try to be there! See you later.

KATIE

Good night.

MAL and DAWN exit. KATIE cleans up glasses, beer bottle, whatever else is on the table.

Scene 2. A week later. KATIE enters the house on her cell. BRIAN is standing there, anxious. Looking out the windows.

KATIE

I'm home now. I have to go. Seriously. I'll call you when I know. *(ends call)* Hi. *(kisses BRIAN)* Is Harold hurt?

BRIAN

There's no ambulance.

KATIE

Is he dead?

BRIAN

There would still be an ambulance.

KATIE

Have you called my brother?

BRIAN

Yeah. Twice no answer. But it's not local, Katie. Look at their jackets.

KATIE

(Looking out window) Holy shit. Homeland Security?

BRIAN

Do you think he's a terrorist? *(a burst of laughter from KATIE, as if to say, "That's impossible!")* It's feds, Katie. Maybe the retarded thing is like an act.

KATIE

We don't say retarded in this house.

KATIE'S phone rings. She looks at the screen, is annoyed, silences it.

BRIAN

Who's calling you?

KATIE

Everybody.

BRIAN

He's gotta be pretty shaken up. *(noting action out the window)* Hup! Locals!

KATIE

Do you see Mal?

DANIEL

(entering from other part of house) What's going on next door? Is Harold okay?

KATIE

I'm sure he's fine. Did you eat?

DANIEL

Dad and I got Señor Sub.

KATIE

Why are you eating out when there's food in the fridge?

BRIAN

We don't know how to make it.

KATIE

Now who's retarded?

DANIEL

We don't say retarded in this house.

BRIAN

(seeing something outside) There's your brother.

KATIE

Daniel, go shower and get ready to get back on the ice.

DANIEL

Why should I shower now, if I'm going to play hockey?

KATIE

Because you smell now.

DANIEL

Fine. Can Joey come over after the game?

KATIE

(joking) If you win! Now go.

DANIEL exits. KATIE and BRIAN spend a moment looking out the window, making an effort not to be seen—they don't want to appear to be nosy neighbors. DAWN comes through the front door without a knock.

DAWN

What the hell is going on? *(KATIE jumps, startled)* Sorry. Sandy called me at work and said your block was filled with cop cars. Is Mal there?

BRIAN

Yeah. So are the feds.

DAWN

Whoa! (*they all look*) Sister Nancy was in so I asked her to watch the phones while I ran to the bank. (*KATIE and BRIAN give her a look*) Your house is on the way to the bank. (*another look*) Not the most direct way, but it is on a way to the bank.

BRIAN

All right. We're like a bunch of goddam grannies. We might as well get a police scanner and listen in to the radio calls.

KATIE

Ha! My grandma did that!

DAWN

He's not dead, right?

BRIAN and KATIE

There's no ambulance.

BRIAN

(*Looking out window*) Holy shit! He's in cuffs!

KATIE

They shouldn't do that to him. He's old.

BRIAN

And apparently a criminal.

KATIE

What's gonna happen to Biscuit?

DAWN

Who?

KATIE

His dog. He loves that dog.

BRIAN

Oh yeah.

A knock at the door, MAL enters without waiting.

KATIE

Mal! Why haven't you answered your phone?

MAL

Hey guys. You been watching this? (*noticing his wife*) Where did you come from?

DAWN

Me? I'm at the bank.

MAL

Jesus.

BRIAN

So what's going on?

MAL

It's really gross.

KATIE

Can you tell us?

MAL

I have to, actually. We have to talk to all the nearby families.

DAWN

Okay. (*pause*) Oh. What? Am I not allowed to hear because we live four blocks away?

MAL

No, I don't care. It's just. (*pause*) Well, first, his whole house was packed with shit. Like you said, Kate— newspapers and unopened mail and stuff for the dog, and empty cans and bottles. There's got to be mice going crazy in there, if not rats.

KATIE

Oh no.

MAL

He isn't going to be allowed back inside. They're condemning the house.

KATIE

Seriously?

DAWN

Where's he going? Katie wants to make him a casserole and walk his dog.

MAL

Stop.

DAWN

God. Sorry.

MAL

We found some porn in there.

BRIAN

What? No way! The guy's closing in on 80.

KATIE

He's not even 75.

DAWN

(in a porn-girl voice) Gee, old-timer! Nothing turns me on more than moldy newspapers from the Reagan era!

MAL

Guys! It was kids. Like kiddie porn.

A moment of deep silence.

KATIE

No.

MAL

We're letting all the families around you guys know.

KATIE

Hold on. You can kick him out of his house for that?

MAL

No. We can condemn the house because it's not suitable for living. It's kind of twisted, because we can make him leave for his own safety.

BRIAN

Jeez. Whatever works.

MAL

We just want him out of here. We need to figure out if any kids in the neighborhood had any extensive interaction with him.

BRIAN

Daniel never said more than "Hi" to him as the guy walked past with his dog. Just like normal politeness.

MAL

Okay. So you have absolutely no concerns that—

KATIE

He pulled weeds for him last summer.

BRIAN

What?!?

KATIE

Harold asked if Dan could help him pull back the overgrowth in his back yard, and I sent him over there. I stayed in our yard the whole time. Dan made me. He didn't want to do it and I said it was just being a good neighbor.

BRIAN

Are you kidding me? You sent him over into that guy's yard?

KATIE

I didn't know! I saw him the whole time. Dan worked, and Harold just puttered around.

MAL

Are you sure?

KATIE

Yes.

MAL

I don't want to freak you guys out, but it was bad, what I saw in there. And it was teenage boy stuff, like altar boys and stuff.

BRIAN

Who caught him?

MAL

He was getting it through the mail. One of his packages got damaged in a post office machine and they could tell what it was. Postal workers reported it.

KATIE

He doesn't have a computer.

DAWN

No, he doesn't.

BRIAN

How the hell do you know? Are you three in the same fucking bunco club?

KATIE

He was on the parish picnic committee and I had to print him paper copies of the minutes. Everyone else got them emailed.

DAWN

He reads at church. I had to send the schedule through the mail.

BRIAN

Nice to see he's so involved. Is he head of boy scouts too?

DAWN

No.

BRIAN

But they took him away? He's gone? Where to?

MAL

Not sure. Some kind of VA facility maybe? Is he a vet? (*a general shrug, nobody knows*) He's allowed to come back, but only supervised by a cop, and not every day. It's actually lucky for us that his house is so packed with shit, it gives us an easy way to get him out of here.

DAWN

Can he come back if he cleans it up?

MAL

It's beyond cleaning. If he's here—he's here with a cop—(*sarcastically*) for his own safety. I'll get you the details when I have more. But if you see him there by himself, you should call me.

KATIE

Oh, Lord.

DAWN

It kind of adds up, really.

KATIE

What? How do you mean?

DANIEL

(*entering, dressed in jeans, hockey team sweatshirt*) Ready? Oh, hey Aunt Dawn, hey Uncle Mal.

MAL

Hey, Danny Boy.

DAWN

Hey, kid.

DANIEL

Do you know what's going on over there?

MAL

Listen, buddy. When you were in your neighbor's yard last year?

DANIEL

Yeah?

MAL

You stayed in the yard? You never went in the house?

KATIE looks at MAL—he did not have her permission to do this.

DANIEL

No. He asked me if I wanted to come inside for a drink, but I said no.

MAL

Okay. So you've never been alone with the guy?

DANIEL

(this is an absurd thought) Alone? With Harold? No.

MAL

Great.

DANIEL

What's up with all the cops? There's like a million—

KATIE

(quickly) It looks like Harold hasn't paid his taxes for the last decade!

DANIEL

Wow. Wild.

KATIE

They're trying to find anyone who's been in the house to see if they noticed any kind of mail from the IRS. He's claiming he was never notified.

DANIEL

I've never seen anybody go through that door, except him and his—

BRIAN

Load up the car.

DANIEL

(confused by tone) Okay.

KATIE

And I have to think about Joey coming over. Tonight's probably not good.

DANIEL

But you said—

BRIAN

Just load up the car, Dan.

DANIEL exits.

Scene 3. Late that night, home from hockey. KATIE, DANIEL and BRIAN all enter. DANIEL carries medium sized trophy.

BRIAN

We seemed like we were sleeping on our skates, that's the last thing I'll say.

KATIE

Please let that be true.

DANIEL

This is the cheapest trophy ever. It doesn't even say "Second Place." It says "Tournament Participant." That's like hanging a poster on your wall that says, "I kind of suck."

KATIE

Don't say suck.

DANIEL

Sorry.

KATIE

House or garage?

DANIEL

Trash.

BRIAN

I'm just going to say that if we'd had more than 7 shots on goal—

KATIE

Brian, seriously—can it. Daniel—shower.

DANIEL

I'm going to move my bed into the shower. I'll live in there.

KATIE

I'm sorry. You're 13 and you play hockey. I love you and you smell.

DANIEL

Oh, Mom. That's the nicest thing you've ever said to me. *(He hugs her and rubs his sweaty head on her shoulder)*

KATIE

Oh! Quit! You're gross. Get! Away! Shower!

DANIEL

I'm going. *(exits laughing)*

KATIE

Don't just rinse!

BRIAN

Katie? When are we gonna tell him about Harold?

KATIE

Day after never.

BRIAN

He's gonna hear it from somebody.

KATIE

People aren't going to tell their kids about this. People have some sense, Bri.

BRIAN

I think you'll be surprised.

KATIE

There's not a mother in this neighborhood—What is that?

KATIE and BRIAN look out window toward Harold's house.

BRIAN

Don't even tell me he's back already.

KATIE

We're not calling the cops on him.

BRIAN

That's exactly what we're doing. *(picking up his phone)*

KATIE

Brian, stop. There's more than one person. Oh, shit. Are you kidding me? *(opens window and yells in a seriously threatening voice)* Hey! Did somebody invite you into this yard? Well, it's mine and I'm telling you to get your asses out of here.

She shuts window.

BRIAN

(staring at her) Angry teacher voice. Kinda hot.

KATIE

I can bust it out when I have to.

BRIAN

Who was it?

KATIE

Cody and Brendan. The hoodlum twins. Peering in his windows, looking for God knows what.

BRIAN

So people told their kids.

KATIE

Completely irresponsible parenting. I'm calling their mom.

BRIAN

Forget it.

KATIE

I think it's important that these people know that their kids are assholes.

BRIAN

They probably already know. And if they don't, they're not going to believe you.

KATIE

I'm not going to have them peeking in his basement.

BRIAN

What do you care?

KATIE

They're standing on his tulips. The guy cares about two things—his flowers and his dog.

BRIAN

Three things.

A look from KATIE that says, "Gross."

When I was little, there was a lady that lived on the corner, and she looked like a witch. We called her "The Witch." And me and my brothers used to dare each other to go knock on her door, to look in her window, whatever. It was stupid, but that's what kids do. He's kind of a neighborhood witch. Just . . . worse.

KATIE

I don't think he did anything, like touched anybody.

BRIAN

Do you count as a pedophile if you don't do the touching part? What if you just do the looking?

KATIE

(after a thoughtful pause) Not to pick a fight, but I think it was wrong of you to treat that lady that way, when you were a kid.

BRIAN

Oh God, Katie. What did we know? Three boys, home alone, under the age of ten! We almost burned the house down—twice! And she didn't even notice us. She was clinically crazy. Just like Harold.

KATIE

I can't imagine how he's going to navigate through this.

BRIAN

Nothing to do but watch it play out, I guess.

KATIE

Did you listen to what Mal said? The altar boy thing?

BRIAN

God, stop!

KATIE

So doesn't it make sense that something happened to him when he was little? That's what I keep thinking.

BRIAN

Probably.

KATIE

I just think that, if he started out normal, then somewhere along the line, something happened to him that made him go off track.

BRIAN

He's a grown man. More than grown. He's old. He can decide to buy that stuff or not buy it.

KATIE

But can you see that maybe he's the victim?

BRIAN

I can see that he might be a victim. But just because someone gets robbed doesn't give that person free reign to go rob somebody else. It's not eye for an eye. The code of Hannibal, or whatever.

KATIE

Hammurabi.

BRIAN

I said whatever.

KATIE

This isn't like robbing a person. This is like warping a kid when he's small and expecting him to self correct, expecting him to be a functioning, normal member of the same society that messed him up.

BRIAN

Turn off the teacher for a second. My dad's a racist. I'm not. My grandpa drinks too much. My dad doesn't. We can make choices. He's chosen to be this and if you try to fix him, Katie, you'll end up disappointed.

KATIE

A person's not either an innocent baby or a monster. There's a lot in between.

DANIEL

(entering, shirtless, heading to door) I'll be right back.

KATIE

Where are you going?

DANIEL

I forgot my math book. I'm gonna go get Steven's. What?

KATIE

Put a shirt on.

DANIEL

No. I'm hot.

BRIAN

Just do what your mother says.

DANIEL

Why? I need to cool off.

KATIE

Dan.

DANIEL

(putting a few things together) What's really going on with Harold?

KATIE

I told you. It was tax evasion or something.

DANIEL

Yeah. I googled that. You normally don't get put in handcuffs for that, unless you're a mobster. *(silence)* Is Harold a mobster? Please tell me Harold's a mobster! That would be so awesome!

BRIAN

Dan, sit.

DANIEL

Is he a Nazi?

BRIAN

What?

DANIEL

A Nazi war criminal.

KATIE

No. He's . . .

DANIEL

He's some kind of creep.

BRIAN

Yeah.

DANIEL

He likes kids?

BRIAN

Oh, Jeez.

KATIE

Yeah.

DANIEL

Did he do anything, like to any kids?

No. KATIE

We don't think so. BRIAN

Then what? DANIEL

Uh . . . he got stuff in the mail, Mal said, magazines . . . I don't know. BRIAN

Holy . . . DANIEL

Yeah. BRIAN

Where'd he go? DANIEL

Not sure. KATIE

Is he coming back? DANIEL

Mal says no. BRIAN

We always thought he was kind of weird. DANIEL

Yeah. BRIAN

We did? KATIE

I did. BRIAN

Me too. (*standing*) I'm gonna go. DANIEL

Shirt. KATIE

Mom. DANIEL

Yeah, you're fine. Go. BRIAN

DANIEL exits.

Brian. KATIE

Katie, he's not even there. It's fine. BRIAN

Scene 4. Two days later, KATIE alone in house, on phone. Posterboard letters and shapes spread out on the table—half-made hockey party decorations.

KATIE

So can we do 7:30, instead? Great. *(knock on door)* I know. Did you hear about it? It was crazy. But he's gone now. They took him somewhere. I don't know if he actually got arrested or what. *(knock)* Not sure. I know. Okay, someone's at my door. See you tonight.

KATIE hangs up phone, moves to door and opens it. She is startled to find HAROLD standing there.

HAROLD

Hello, Mrs. Angelo.

KATIE

Harold. *(pause)* What's up?

HAROLD

Just out patrolling the perimeter! *(waits for a response, but is not unsettled when it doesn't come)* It's quite a sunny day. *(pause)* Did you receive your newspaper today?

KATIE

Yep.

HAROLD

Can I step inside? The sun is hitting me right in the back.

KATIE

Now is not really a good time.

HAROLD

I'm very warm.

KATIE

Do you need something?

HAROLD

I need to talk to you about . . . the goings on. I'm a little off-kilter.

KATIE

(an extremely brief pause) I bet.

HAROLD steps inside, only just inside the door.

HAROLD

I've got someone coming to help me through my house, but he hasn't arrived yet. (*no response from KATIE*) So you did get your newspaper?

KATIE

My husband brought it in.

HAROLD

I was wondering because I called subscriber services yesterday to put a hold on my subscription and it didn't come today but then I was thinking that maybe the newspapers didn't come at all today.

KATIE

Why wouldn't they come?

HAROLD

Perhaps the delivery person slept in.

KATIE

We got ours.

HAROLD

See, now I didn't know if the hold would go into effect so quickly. I wanted to make sure there wasn't a mistake.

KATIE

Looks like it worked.

HAROLD

I see you have an art project going there on your table.

KATIE

They're decorations.

HAROLD

For what?

KATIE

For a hockey party.

HAROLD

Your son plays hockey?

KATIE

Yes.

HAROLD

I didn't think it was you that played hockey.

KATIE

No. So that's . . . (*trailing off*)

HAROLD

Aren't you a teacher?

KATIE

I used to be.

HAROLD

Mother was a teacher.

KATIE

I know.

HAROLD

Did she teach you? Were you in Mother's classroom?

KATIE

No, Harold. You've told me before.

HAROLD

I thought she might have taught you.

KATIE

Nope.

HAROLD

Your mother passed, if I remember correctly.

KATIE

That's right.

HAROLD

Just about a year ago? (*KATIE nods*) The first year is very hard. The first of everything without her.

KATIE

So what did you want to tell me?

HAROLD

Here's some news. You won't be hearing Biscuit barking for a while.

KATIE

No?

HAROLD

I had to put him with my friend Lorena. She's a breeder. He was born right on her farm!

KATIE

Is that right?

HAROLD

I'm going to have to go away for a time, they said. *(pause)* Those people at my house a few days ago? The uninvited guests? *(he laughs)*

KATIE

Right.

HAROLD

They need me to get the house fixed up. It's not safe for me, they said. They gave me some people to call.

KATIE

You'll be allowed back?

HAROLD

Allowed? It's my house!

KATIE

Yes, but what they found—

HAROLD

That was very embarrassing. The clutter, the trash, the smell. I should've done better. I never learned to keep house.

KATIE

I heard it was quite a mess.

HAROLD

My niece is trying to help me, but she lives in Tennessee.

KATIE

That's far.

HAROLD

There'll be a green dumpster in the driveway for a while. At least, I think it will be green. I've seen red ones. I'd prefer green.

KATIE

Whatever color, it doesn't matter.

HAROLD

Will you please keep an eye out that the kids don't play around it? I wouldn't want the kids getting hurt.

(the sound of a car pulling up on the street, and a door slam)

Sounds like my escort is here. They don't want me in the house unsupervised. Something might fall and hit me in the head. They're very worried about me!

HAROLD exits.

Scene 5. Late that night, it is raining pretty hard. KATIE is listening to music or radio, gluing numbers on posterboard hockey jerseys. BRIAN enters from unseen back door and comes into living room. He has been playing basketball.

KATIE

What a workout! (*knowing the answer is no*) Basketball til 11:30?

BRIAN

Basketball til 10, beer til 11:30. I can't believe you're still up.

KATIE

Sue and Sharon were supposed to come over at 7:30 to help but they both bailed.

BRIAN

Nice. You do too much.

KATIE

Did you have a lot of guys?

BRIAN

Yeah. 15.

KATIE

That's good.

BRIAN

Jerry Stuart turned his ankle pretty good.

KATIE

Really? Hospital?

BRIAN

No, Kate. It was just a turned ankle.

KATIE

I don't know.

BRIAN

He made a big scene though, rolling around and writhing. He'll be on crutches til Easter, I bet.

KATIE

Huh.

BRIAN

I thought they were taking the dumpster away today.

KATIE

They did, and they replaced it with a new one.

BRIAN

No way.

KATIE

Yep. Apparently Harold had more than a full dumpster's worth of crap packed into that house.

BRIAN

Wow. Poor Jorge.

KATIE

Who?

BRIAN

He's like the head of the crew over there. He's my guy.

KATIE

Jesus.

BRIAN

It'll be resolved soon. He's out, the house will go up for sale, we'll have new neighbors we can tell the story to.

KATIE

I guess.

BRIAN

I'm gonna shower real quick. If there's anything you want loaded into the car, get it ready for me, okay?

KATIE

Thank you.

BRIAN exits. KATIE continues cutting, gluing, whatever crafty activities make sense. There is a sound under the music and rain that draws her attention. It subsides and she continues working, singing or humming along. The sound again. KATIE looks up, gets up, shuts off music. Nothing. She returns to her work with only the sound of the rain. She makes a mistake.

Shit.

She begins correcting the mistake. The sound again. She puts down her tools and stands.

Seriously?

The noise again. It is clearly from outside. She goes to the window, shuts off the light in the living room and returns to the window, peering through the rain. The noise rises and falls, rises and falls.

Shit.

She grabs a coat or hoodie and throws it on, with the intention of going outside. She looks up when BRIAN enters.

Hey.

BRIAN

Did you get shampoo?

KATIE

It's under the sink.

BRIAN

Oh. You cold?

KATIE

Yeah, a little.

BRIAN

What's the matter?

KATIE

I made a huge mistake, but I am fixing it.

BRIAN

You know why you messed up?

KATIE

No.

BRIAN

Because you're sitting in the dark. *(he turns on a lamp)*

KATIE

Oh. I screwed up before I—

BRIAN

Katie, you're overtired. Do it in the morning.

KATIE

I just wanted to go to bed with it all done.

BRIAN

(wrapping her up in his arms) I love you. These are 12 and 13 year old hockey players. They aren't going to look twice at the decorations.

KATIE

I know. Make me stop caring.

BRIAN

I can't. Then you wouldn't be Katie.

The noise.

What the hell is that?

KATIE

Harold.

BRIAN

What the hell's he doing here? He knows he's not allowed—

KATIE

Spinning his tires. He's stuck in the mud.

BRIAN

On his lawn? Christ! *(a second to put things together)* Wait. Were you gonna go out there?

KATIE

He probably couldn't pull in the driveway because of the dumpster.

BRIAN

He's not even supposed to be here unescorted, Katie. We're calling.

KATIE

Don't. Maybe he just needs to pick something up.

BRIAN

What's your brother gonna say when he finds out we didn't call this in?

KATIE

I don't care. Just don't call. I'll go over there.

BRIAN

And do what?

KATIE

I don't know. Maybe you should go help him.

BRIAN

It's raining.

KATIE

He's stuck.

BRIAN

I'm not going to be able to push his car out of the grass in the pouring rain, Kate.

KATIE

Fine. (*zips/buttons coat*) He needs help.

BRIAN

I'm not going out there. I wanna shower.

KATIE

He's our neighbor.

BRIAN

Mal's my neighbor. Dave and Gus and even pussy Jerry Stuart with his ankle. I'd go out there if I cared, Katie, but I don't and I'm going to bed.

KATIE

Well, I'm going.

BRIAN

He's never done anything for me, or you.

KATIE

It's not about payback, Brian.

BRIAN

If you don't wanna call the cops on him, fine. I'll call for a tow, but this is the last thing we're doing for the guy.

BRIAN grabs his phone and begins looking for a towing company. After a moment, he makes a call.

KATIE

Fine.

KATIE moves to door, opens it and calls out.

Harold! We're calling a tow truck! Sit tight!

Scene 6. KATIE and MAL in the house, at least a week later.

KATIE

It's fine.

MAL

It's not. I told you he wasn't going to be able to come back. I'm so sorry.

KATIE

It's okay. It's not your fault.

MAL

But he's unsupervised. Just living there!

KATIE

We can deal with it.

MAL

You're going to have to watch him. Keep an even closer eye on him.

KATIE

Mal, he's not going to do anything.

MAL

He already has!

KATIE

If that's true, why is he back?

MAL

It's not up to local law anymore. The feds want to use him to find the paper trail to the distributors, so it's out of our hands. They think he's just a little fish. A fucking scum-sucking, bottom-feeding little fish.

KATIE

Take it easy. I'm fine. Everyone in this house is fine.

MAL

If you had seen that stuff, Katie, I think you'd care a lot more than you do.

KATIE

I do care. But I have it worked out, for me.

MAL

In that house the very first day . . . I got so sick to my stomach . . . that this guy had the nerve to lay eyes on my sister and my nephew.

KATIE

Stop! Don't tell me about it, because I won't—

DANIEL enters.

DANIEL

What's up, mom? Hi Uncle Mal. When are we eating?

KATIE

Six thirty.

DANIEL

But I have camp at 7.

KATIE

Then five thirty.

MAL

What camp?

DANIEL

Hockey camp.

MAL

I thought hockey just ended. Dawn said you had to do some decorations or something.

DANIEL

But this is *camp*.

KATIE

God forbid there's an empty square on the calendar.

MAL

Dan, you should consider taking up Irish dance.

A general laugh.

KATIE

Daniel, Mal came over to tell me Harold is moving back in.

DANIEL

I thought you said he was going, like for good.

MAL

I thought he was, buddy. I'm really sorry.

DANIEL

Is he even in trouble?

MAL

He might be, eventually. But not yet. And now that he is back—

DANIEL

Is he going to be allowed to walk his dog?

KATIE

He'll be allowed to go anywhere. He hasn't been charged with any crime.

DANIEL

But it was, like, obvious that he committed a crime, right?

MAL

Yeah. But now it's up to the federal government to act on this.

DANIEL

Why?

MAL

The stuff he had in his house, the stuff he was getting, was coming from places all over the world. That takes it out of our hands. But if you see anything that you think is weird, or anything that makes you uncomfortable, seriously, you call the cops.

DANIEL

What do we do if he comes over here again?

MAL

What do you mean?

DANIEL

When he comes over here, do we just shut the door in his face?

MAL

When has he been over here?

KATIE

It was no big deal.

MAL

When was it?

KATIE

He was at the house and he needed to wait for his escort person, or whatever. And once when he needed help opening a jar.

MAL

Listen to me. You don't help him.

KATIE

It wasn't a big deal at all.

MAL

You're not hearing me. You don't help him.

KATIE

(awkward, nervous chuckle) Okay. I'm sure he's not going to knock me down and attack me. He can barely put one foot—

MAL

(to DANIEL) If he knocks on your door, call my station. You say your Mal McGear's nephew—

DANIEL

For real?

KATIE

No. That's stupid. Mal, you insist on seeing the worst in people and—

MAL

(overriding her) Yes for real. Katie, listen to me. I don't care if he's bouncing down his driveway on his head. You don't help him.

Scene 7. The kitchen. DAWN sits at table, KATIE cuts up fruit at counter.

KATIE

I wish we didn't have to have a party to end everything.

DAWN

Seriously.

KATIE

We just had that huge thing for the last hockey game. Decorations, pizza, cake. It's spring hockey, for the love of God. It's not even the real season.

DAWN

I know. Three of the girls from dance just got back from the worlds in Ireland. Only one of them placed, and we still have to have a big thing.

KATIE

Everything's a thing.

DAWN

(a glance out the window) Dumpster's gone.

KATIE

And Harold's back.

DAWN

Yep.

KATIE

There were two dumpsters, actually. They filled two.

DAWN

Jeez. With what?

KATIE

Lots of stuff. Moldy carpet?

DAWN

Hope they didn't throw the dog away.

KATIE

Oh, Biscuit! He hasn't been back—the dog.

DAWN

Mal said Daniel said Harold's been over here. Like, at your house? He said Daniel seemed kind of freaked out.

KATIE

How nice of you guys to talk about us.

DAWN

We were talking about the whole situation.

KATIE

Daniel is fine. Mal's blowing it way out of proportion. Harold was over here once, when he was waiting for his escort. He hasn't been here since he moved back in. He was confused and out of sorts, talking about newspapers, and the dumpster. It was sad.

DAWN

You're way more sympathetic than I would be.

KATIE

He's lived in that same house for over sixty years. It's got to be disconcerting to be uprooted like that. And he's not hurting anyone.

DAWN

But he's been around Dan?

KATIE

Dawn, he lives in the house next door to us. He's going to cross paths with Dan at some point or another.

DAWN

I couldn't deal with that.

KATIE

I'm fine. I look at him as a lonely, addled old man, not as a predator.

DAWN

He's both.

KATIE

Not to me.

DAWN

You can just ignore half of reality?

KATIE

Who says it's reality, Dawn? Has he ever approached a child that we know? Has he ever accosted Daniel? No!

DAWN

But—

KATIE

Is he often confused? Does he repeat things? Is he forgetful? Yes. I can say for certain that that is reality.

DAWN

Mal, and the other cops, think he's putting them on. That the slow, confused thing is an act.

KATIE

He's not smart enough to do that.

DAWN

He's got you fooled, according to Mal.

KATIE

Yes, Harold is an evil mastermind. He'll have all the neighborhood children in his basement before we know it.

DAWN

Katie—

KATIE

And his first step is to fool us all. Well, he's got me!

DAWN

He has some sense of what—

KATIE

I don't think he does. Honestly, I'm not even sure he knew he had that stuff in his house, any more than he knew if he had his first pay stub or his mother's high school ring!

DAWN

(deciding to tell) He came to see Father Ryan the day after the big raid.

KATIE

Harold?

DAWN

He was all worked up, and he asked to see Father.

KATIE

About what?

DAWN

Katie.

KATIE

I don't know!

DAWN

Father Ryan took him in the meeting room. They were in there a long time.

KATIE

What did Harold say?

DAWN

What do you think?

KATIE

I don't know! (*pause*) Father Ryan didn't say anything?

DAWN

Katie! It's the church, we're pretty good at secrets.

KATIE

Poor Harold.

DAWN

What?!?

KATIE

If he had all that stuff—

DAWN

What? You think Mal's lying? Your brother?

KATIE

No. Overreacting, maybe. If he had it, why didn't he go straight to jail?

DAWN

The system isn't so much interested in the guy buying the stuff as they are in the guy making it.

KATIE

The people making it are worse. I mean, they're like, bottom of—

DAWN

Whatever. The people making it are scum and the people buying it are dirt.

KATIE

I'm worried about him, Dawn.

DAWN

You need to refocus.

KATIE

No, listen. He was telling me how stressful it was, coming home to things being out of place. He said they moved his mother's things and didn't put them back. He said Mother wouldn't want her things out of order.

DAWN

That's some Bates Motel shit right there.

KATIE

No. He's got absolutely nobody. And he's still grieving.

DAWN

After how long?

KATIE

10 years.

DAWN

Ha!

KATIE

There's no time limit.

DAWN

Sorry, I know. (*a moment*) You said you'd only talked to him the one time, before he moved back.

KATIE

Yeah.

DAWN

But then you said he was telling you how the people moved the furniture.

KATIE

Oh, God, Dawn.

DAWN

Are you at least telling Brian the truth? Katie, how many times have you talked to him?

KATIE

Why should I be keeping track? He's my neighbor! I talk to him when I see him! I say hello to him. I'm not afraid of him.

DAWN

That's what the rest of us don't get. How can you not be afraid of him? He's a threat to your son.

KATIE

What's he gonna do? Drag Dan into his house?

DAWN

He might think about him! And according to Mal, the kind of thoughts this guy has—

KATIE

Again! According to Mal! He's suddenly the authority on Harold's entire life! He's got it all figured out and he's gonna tell everybody what to do! Gonna go door to door, spreading the gossip—

DAWN

Hey! Mal is trying to keep you safe. And Daniel.

KATIE

I truly don't think Harold hurt any kids.

DAWN

You haven't kept track of his every move. It doesn't take more than a few minutes to damage a kid.

KATIE

What's that supposed to mean?

DAWN

I just mean, you can't be sure. Shit happens to a lot of kids, Katie.

KATIE

I know that.

DAWN

Do you? Think of a handful of people you know really well. Can you say for sure that none of them got . . . messed with when they were small? I promise you you can't.

KATIE

I can choose to believe there's more good in Harold than there is bad.

DAWN

Yeah. You can choose that.

Scene 8. KATIE and HAROLD in KATIE's house. He is sitting, she is active with some kind of house care—dishes, wiping, folding towels, etc.

HAROLD

So now I'm afraid to go in my own house!

KATIE

I understand.

HAROLD

I just thought this was a good neighborhood! I've lived here almost all my life. It was never like this when Mother was alive. She was a teacher, you know.

KATIE

Yes.

HAROLD

Did she teach you?

KATIE

No. You've told me before. You said you called the police?

HAROLD

I thought they'd be here by now. Hmph. A lot of good my taxes do me!

KATIE

What did you tell the police?

HAROLD

My home was vandalized. Someone broke my window.

KATIE

Did you hear the glass break?

HAROLD

No. It must have been during the night.

KATIE

You just woke up to it?

HAROLD

I nearly cut my foot open. It's a good thing I wear house slippers. You can see it right from your window, I bet!

KATIE looks out window towards HAROLD'S house. DANIEL enters through the front door, with hockey stick.

DANIEL
Hey, mom. Hey . . .

HAROLD
Hello, son!

DANIEL
Mom, Uncle Mal said—

KATIE
Dan, Harold is waiting for the police to arrive—

DANIEL
What?!?

KATIE
Someone vandalized his house.

HAROLD
Yessir. My window is broken. There's shattered glass all over my floor.

DANIEL
Yeah, I . . . saw that.

KATIE
Why are you home already?

DANIEL
Rat hockey was cancelled. They melted the rink.

KATIE
And why is your stick in the house?

DANIEL
Because I need to tape it.

HAROLD
You play hockey?

DANIEL
Uh . . .

KATIE
Yes. He does. Dan, why don't you go rollerblade?

Okay. DANIEL

Are you in high school? HAROLD

Um . . . DANIEL

No. Not til next year. KATIE

Will you keep playing hockey then? HAROLD

KATIE
(assertively) Dan, go ahead and put your stick upstairs, and get ready to go outside. Harold, maybe we should call the police again.

They'll be here soon. HAROLD

DANIEL exits to rest of house.
He's a good boy.

A knock. MAL enters, in uniform, without waiting for a response.

Mal! Oh, good! KATIE

What's going on here, Katie? MAL

Oh! You're here! HAROLD

Yeah, here I am. Kate, what are you doing? MAL

KATIE
Harold, this is my brother, Officer McGeary. Mal, Harold's house was vandalized. He called it in.

I didn't hear it. MAL

Well, can you take care of it?

KATIE

Yeah. What happened?

MAL

(with some hesitancy) Something . . .

HAROLD

His upstairs window was broken. Someone threw something.

KATIE

He can tell it. When?

MAL

I'm not sure.

HAROLD

Fantastic. What did they throw?

MAL

I don't know.

HAROLD

We're really getting somewhere now. Was there something on the floor with the glass?

MAL

What?

HAROLD

Jesus. Was there an object mixed in with the glass—whatever it was they threw?

MAL

I don't know what they threw.

HAROLD

Christ. I'm going to head over to your house and check it out. Katie, where's Dan?

MAL

He's going to go out rollerblading.

KATIE

He is a very nice young man.
(a pause)

HAROLD

MAL

You listen to me, buddy. That kid up there is my nephew and there's not a thing I wouldn't do for him. If you even think one thought—

KATIE

Mal, shut up.

MAL

(beginning to leave) I'll be back.

DANIEL

(entering) Mom, where's my . . .

MAL

Danny, do me a favor and stay upstairs for a few minutes.

DANIEL

Seriously?

MAL

Yep.

KATIE

Oh my God, Mal, it's fine.

MAL

Upstairs, D-boy.

DANIEL

(retreating) Okay.

MAL

Give me your house key.

HAROLD

I go in through the garage.

MAL

What's the code?

HAROLD stabs at the air with his finger—he knows the pattern of the code but not the number. Katie checks paper on fridge.

KATIE

Try 5174. That's what it was when he went on vacation.

MAL

Back in a minute.

MAL exits. A pause. Having heard the sound of the door, DANIEL enters.

DANIEL

Is he gone? Oh.

KATIE

Mal went over to Harold's to check things out.

DANIEL

Can I go now?

KATIE

Yeah, get out of here. Have fun.

DANIEL

Okay, see you later.

Flustered, DANIEL exits.

HAROLD

Will this take up the whole afternoon?

KATIE

I doubt it. Why?

HAROLD

I was hoping to get over to the library. I have some things to do on the computer.

KATIE

Maybe you'd be better off staying home.

HAROLD

Do you know I fell in my yard the other day, trying to get my gate unstuck?

KATIE

That's too bad.

HAROLD

No one saw me for 45 minutes. Finally the UPS man came and helped me up.

KATIE

Lucky for you that he came along.

HAROLD

Maybe your son could come over and help me once in a while.

KATIE

Listen, we're going to make a deal, you and me.

HAROLD

Oh, I like the sound of that!

KATIE

Now that you're here to stay, I have to set some rules, and as long as you agree to keep them, you and I can still be friends.

HAROLD

You're the only friend I've got.

KATIE

In order for us to keep being friends, I need you to make a promise to me, and to take it very, very seriously.

HAROLD

If it's a promise, it's got to be taken seriously.

KATIE

Exactly. And if you can't make this promise, then we'll have to stop visiting, and being friendly.

HAROLD

That would upset me.

KATIE

I want you to promise me that you will no longer speak to Daniel.

HAROLD

Your son?

KATIE

That's right. You won't ask for his help, you won't address him when he is here—you'll just have nothing to say to him, ever.

HAROLD

You've been such a good neighbor to me. You know the Bergquists won't talk to me anymore. Neither will the O'Connors. Ever since the day the police came to make me clean up my mess. And then Father Ryan telling me I couldn't distribute communion anymore. Well, that's life in the big city.

KATIE

I know you're having a hard time. Can you make the promise?

HAROLD

But what if I really need help?

KATIE

You get it somewhere else.

HAROLD

Okay. I promise to do like you asked.

MAL enters.

MAL

There was nothing in there. It must have been the wind.

HAROLD

The wind, you say?

MAL

There was a storm last night, late.

HAROLD

Really?

MAL

It hardly rained, but there was lightning and lots of wind. It could've picked up a branch and thrown it against that window.

HAROLD

I didn't hear a thing.

MAL

It was pretty quick. Let's get you home. I swept everything up. You can call a glass place.

HAROLD

Okay.

HAROLD rises. He is unsteady.

KATIE

Are your knees okay?

MAL

He's fine.

HAROLD

I'll be in trouble if I if I overdo it!

KATIE

Mal, give him a hand.

MAL

He's got it.

HAROLD's knees buckle and he falters.

KATIE

Help him up!

MAL moves to HAROLD and attempts to straighten him up.

MAL

Jesus! Straighten up! *(To Katie)* He's okay.

KATIE

Harold? Can you make it to your house?

HAROLD

Slow and steady!

HAROLD exits.

MAL

(shutting the door) Katie, he never called the cops.

KATIE

How do you know?

MAL

When I was over there, I picked up his phone to see who he's called.

KATIE

And?

MAL

He hasn't made a call in two days.

KATIE

He probably meant to and forgot. He gets confused.

MAL

I was at his house, Katie, before I first came over here.

KATIE

Why? Are you stalking him now?

MAL

Jesus! Someone called it in, said he was outside, acting weird.

KATIE

That's ridiculous.

MAL

I want you to understand that everyone else in the neighborhood is taking this seriously.

KATIE

Well, I am too! It is serious to me that an elderly man is alone and confused and being ostracized by people he used to rely on!

MAL

It sure as hell isn't your job to take care of him!

KATIE

Then whose is it?

MAL

His! Nobody's! What the hell do I care?

KATIE

It didn't storm last night.

MAL

Stop letting him in your house.

KATIE

It wasn't even windy.

MAL

I lied.

KATIE

Why?

MAL

Because of this.

He hands a black hockey puck to Katie.

KATIE

This is what went through the window? Just because it's a hockey puck doesn't mean Daniel threw it.

MAL

Yeah. I think I got all the glass off.

Scene 9. Evening. Katie sits at table rolling puck back and forth between her hands. Stretching her neck. BRIAN enters, from a bike ride.

BRIAN

(noticing puck) You thinking of taking up the game?

KATIE

What? No. *(the slightest pause)* Dan left this in my car. I think it fell out of his bag.

BRIAN

Wanna watch a movie?

KATIE

Dawn's coming over.

BRIAN

Oh. Is Mal coming?

KATIE

I don't know. He's mad at me.

BRIAN

For . . . ?

KATIE

Because I don't hate Harold enough, I think.

BRIAN

He's coming at it from a different perspective. You have to respect that.

KATIE

He has to respect me! This is my house, our house. Harold's **our** neighbor! I can decide how to treat him.

BRIAN

Mal's in the business of protecting people. What? He saw you talking to the old guy?

KATIE

No. Harold was here today.

BRIAN

Here? In the house?

KATIE

His window got broken and he was upset.

BRIAN

You let him in here? Was Daniel home?

KATIE

No . . . what?

BRIAN

God, Katie. Once was too many times. He is not welcome here.

KATIE

Right. I'll shut the door in the face of a traumatized old man.

BRIAN

Kate, I'm not saying you have to throw rocks at the guy, but you don't invite him in!
You see crazy coming, you wave and keep walking, you don't invite crazy in for lunch!

KATIE

Someone vandalized his house!

BRIAN

I don't give a shit! He's a grown man! Someone vandalizes our house, I'm not running
over there for consolation!

KATIE

He just sat here for a few minutes til the police, til Mal, came.

BRIAN

At least Dan wasn't here.

KATIE

(hesitating) He came home while Harold was here.

BRIAN

I swear I'm not trying to be a jerk right now, Katie, but did it ever occur to you that he
came here to see Dan?

KATIE

That's perverted.

BRIAN

He's a pervert.

KATIE

He's not that calculating.

BRIAN

How do you know?

KATIE

Because I've had conversations with him, Brian.

BRIAN

So have I. Just because he's slow doesn't mean he's nice.

KATIE

He's not after Daniel.

BRIAN

Let me just say this: The stuff he used to get, the magazines or whatever, I don't know. That pipeline has been cut off, Kate. He can't get anymore. What's the next best thing?—the kid next door, whose mother just happens to have a welcoming smile and a glass of water for an upset old man.

KATIE

You're making me sick.

BRIAN

Me? I'm making you sick?!? Please wake up.

KATIE

Stop it.

DAWN knocks and enters, carrying pizza box.

BRIAN

I gotta put my bike away.

DAWN

Pizza's here!

BRIAN exits to outside, DAWN looks to KATIE.

DAWN

What's with him?

KATIE

I'm pissing everybody off today. Mal's not coming?

DAWN

He's right behind me.

KATIE

Great. Bang-up evening, straight ahead.

DAWN

Mal told me about the puck.

KATIE

I really don't think Danny threw it. I really don't.

DAWN

What window got broken?

KATIE

You can see it from here.

DAWN

(rising, looking outside) The one that faces your yard?

KATIE

Yeah, but, Dawn . . . you know how many times I've found pucks, or baseballs, or whatever, lying around the backyard.

DAWN

Oh, honey. *(pause)* Tell me what you think happened.

BRIAN and MAL enter, the latter with beer—at least 12.

BRIAN

Katie, why didn't you tell me?

KATIE

About?

BRIAN

The puck Dan threw at Harold's window.

KATIE

Who said Dan threw it?

MAL

C'mon, Kate.

KATIE

Did he admit it? Did you talk to him?

BRIAN

It's a hockey puck, Katie, thrown from our yard. Who else threw it?

KATIE

Some neighbor kid. I've seen them cutting through our yard before, on their way to the park, or the field.

MAL

Listen, Dan threw it, and I don't think that's the worst thing.

KATIE

Vandalizing private property. That's okay with you, officer Uncle Mal?

DAWN

I don't think you want to encourage it, but . . .

MAL

But I don't think it's so bad that Danny's standing up for his neighborhood. That he feels compelled to protect it.

KATIE

I think you're endowing a thirteen year old with an awful lot of nobility.

BRIAN

Maybe it was noble.

DAWN

Really listen, Katie. Nobody wants this guy around.

KATIE

So we're supposed to throw shit at his house until he leaves?

DAWN

No. That's stupid.

MAL

Sure. If that's what it takes.

BRIAN laughs.

KATIE

Yeah, this is hilarious.

MAL

There's something to be said for that Old West idea of running somebody out of town.

KATIE

This isn't the goddam OK Corral, Malachy.

MAL

Believe me, I wish it was. I think I could take that asshole in a dual.

DAWN

Now that I'd like to see.

MAL

Quickdraw McGeary. That was my nickname at the academy.

BRIAN

I thought it was Lumpy.

MAL

Well, after I lost the weight, they changed it to Quickdraw.

DANIEL enters, from outside.

DANIEL

Ooh, pizza!

KATIE

Dan.

DANIEL

Sorry. Hi Uncle Mal, hi Aunt Dawn. Can I have some pizza?

DAWN

(to MAL) This feels like an ambush.

MAL

(to DAWN) I'm gonna high five the kid.

BRIAN

Dan, Mom needs to ask you something.

KATIE

Me?

BRIAN

You're the one that thinks he didn't do it.

DANIEL

Do what?

MAL

Danny, when I was in Harold's house today I found something.

What?
DANIEL

Dan, did you break that window?
KATIE

Why would you think I did that?
DANIEL

Because I found a hockey puck inside the house.
MAL

Cody O'Connor threw that.
DANIEL

See? I told you.
KATIE

When?
MAL

Last night. Whenever Harold said it happened.
DANIEL

Were you there?
MAL

No, I saw it from my room.
DANIEL

See? There you have it.
KATIE

Why didn't you tell mom or me when it happened?
BRIAN

Cody's my friend. I'm not gonna rat him out.
DANIEL

But he vandalized someone's property. That's serious, Dan.
KATIE

It's not like he's going to go to jail. It's only a broken window.
DAWN

Danny, tell the truth. MAL

Mal, quit. He told us what happened. KATIE

Danny, please tell the truth. MAL

I did. DANIEL

You're killing me, kiddo. MAL

Mal, knock it off. KATIE

The O'Connors are in the Dells. MAL

Shit. DANIEL

Seriously?!? Daniel? Are you lying?!? KATIE

I'm going upstairs. DANIEL

Absolutely not. KATIE

Did you throw that puck? BRIAN

Obviously. DANIEL

Oh my God. Why? KATIE

Are you kidding, Katie? MAL

Why would you do that, Dan?
KATIE

I just did.
DANIEL

Dan, go to your room.
BRIAN

No. Absolutely not. Stay right here.
KATIE

Katie, let him go.
DAWN

No. I want to hear an explanation.
KATIE

I don't have one.
DANIEL

You just did that for fun? You just damage someone's property to have a good time?
KATIE

No.
DANIEL

Who was with you?
BRIAN

Nobody.
DANIEL

You were alone in our yard and you decided to break some glass? On someone else's home? This is bullshit, Daniel.
KATIE

Katie, take it easy. It's a lot to ask a kid—
DAWN

Dan, I don't like the guy either. I see where you're coming from.
MAL

You do?
DANIEL

MAL

I think so, yeah.

DANIEL

Do your friends make fun of you for living next to him?

MAL

Oh, kid.

DANIEL

Do your friends say he wants to have sex with you because he saw you shooting pucks in your driveway?

BRIAN

It's okay, Dan.

DANIEL

Do your friends say he probably takes pictures of you through your window when you're sleeping?

KATIE

Who said that, Danny? I will—

DANIEL

What, Mom? Call their parents? Who gives a shit? (*runs off*)

BRIAN

Dan, don't talk like that to—

KATIE

Let him go.

DANIEL exits.

DAWN

That went awesome.

Scene 10. BRIAN enters from outside.

Lawn's done! BRIAN

Great. KATIE

What smells good? Did you bake? BRIAN

Cookies. KATIE

Where are they? BRIAN

They're gone. KATIE

You ate them all? BRIAN

I brought them to Harold. KATIE

You brought him my cookies? BRIAN

They weren't yours. KATIE

But I mowed the lawn. BRIAN

KATIE
And I did the laundry. There aren't prizes. *(pause)* There were some things I needed to go over with Harold. I brought him cookies and took care of it.

Over the next half-page or so, BRIAN rummages through the cabinets, finally settling on something that is the opposite of cookies—saltine crackers, say—and giving KATIE a look, ie “This is what I get?”

BRIAN
What did you need to go over?

KATIE

Well, for starters, our child broke his window.

BRIAN

He doesn't know that.

KATIE

But I do.

BRIAN

Did you tell him?

KATIE

No.

BRIAN

So cookies evens the score?

KATIE

Sure.

BRIAN

I really don't get it.

KATIE

You don't need to. Harold and I have an arrangement.

BRIAN

He's pretending he's an okay person and you're pretending to believe him?

KATIE

Stay out of it. You guys have all been on me for weeks about how I should be to him. You've had no interest in him, or his well-being.

BRIAN

And I still don't.

KATIE

Then leave me to worry about it. We disagree, clearly, and I don't see us coming to any kind of understanding, so I'll just do what I need to do, for me.

BRIAN

And I'll do what I need to do for me, and for our son.

KATIE

Be serious.

BRIAN

Your time, Katie, your mental energy—do you see that it's all being taken up by him. How can you help him? Who's being unfair to him? Does he miss his dog?

KATIE

How does having compassion make me a bad mother or a bad wife?

BRIAN

You don't even see it, but me and Dan, we're pretty much getting by without you these days.

KATIE

Will you please! What? You had to make your own damn sandwich for lunch!?! I'm sorry, but there—

BRIAN

It's not sandwiches, Katie! We're not your priority. And I'm sorry, but you got us used to that. We like to be cared about.

KATIE

Has it occurred to you that there might be someone in the world that needs more care than you two?

BRIAN

He's not a bird with a broken wing. You can't put him in a shoebox and fix him right up!

KATIE

I'm not trying to.

BRIAN

You're choosing him over us. Over me and Dan.

KATIE

I absolutely am not. But I refuse to allow Harold to be seen as a monster, a vill—

BRIAN

If you are telling Dan to see that man as any thing other than a threat, you are putting our son at risk.

KATIE

I would not put Daniel in harm's way for anything.

BRIAN

You're befriending someone who victimizes children.

KATIE

That's quite an exaggeration, Brian.

BRIAN

Everyone who loves you sees this differently than you see it. We're all on the same page.

KATIE

But I'm on the right one.

BRIAN

You think we're bad people?

KATIE

Of course not, but I can't do what you're doing.

BRIAN

Which is what?

KATIE

Shut him out. Good people don't just help good people, Brian. We help difficult ones.

BRIAN

Okay, Mrs. Jesus.

KATIE

I'm never going to apologize for not joining the angry mob.

BRIAN

Who's a mob? No one's running to his house with torches.

KATIE

You're making him an outcast.

BRIAN

You're making him a project. It's "classic Katie," but this time your—

KATIE

What does that mean, "classic Katie?"

BRIAN

You want to scoop up every hurt thing, every broken flower—they don't all deserve your time, Katie! They don't all deserve to be saved!

KATIE

I know I can't save him. I think I can offer him . . . comfort.

BRIAN

Comfort? Truly, I'm worried about you. I'm going to take Daniel for ice cream before camp. You bake a cake for the creep next door.

BRIAN exits.

Scene 11. Outside. HAROLD carries multiple bags/containers of newspapers. Struggling, he moves toward the unseen curb. His knees are horrible. Suddenly, papers are everywhere. There is no possibility that HAROLD can pick them up. DANIEL walks in, in swim trunks, shirtless. He is about to go home.

HAROLD

Son! (*DANIEL pretends not to hear*) I need help!

DANIEL stops but keeps his distance.

It's trash day!

DANIEL

Um, my mom said . . .

HAROLD

Can you give me a hand? My newspapers are everywhere!

DANIEL

Sure.

HAROLD

That would be nice.

DANIEL moves to start collecting the newspapers..

Were you swimming?

DANIEL

Yeah. It was hot today.

HAROLD

It's cooler now. Do you have the shivers?

DANIEL

I'm fine.

HAROLD

My house is clean now, and I'm trying to keep up with the paper recycling, but I get three papers every day!

DANIEL

Why don't you just keep the big recycling can with the wheels by your back door? Just open your door and throw them in

HAROLD

Mother wouldn't like that. And Biscuit needs to get in and out.

DANIEL

You got your dog back?

Not yet.

HAROLD

Are you going to?

DANIEL

Well, I wouldn't abandon him! What kind of person do you think I am?

HAROLD

(*having finished the job*) It's all good.

DANIEL

People around here don't seem to appreciate what a good neighbor I am.

HAROLD

Are you talking about me?

DANIEL

Why you? You just helped me with my trash!

HAROLD

But, the other night.

DANIEL

I was just looking outside.

HAROLD

But . . . you saw me.

DANIEL

I wasn't looking at you.

HAROLD

You told the police—

DANIEL

That something broke my window. It's fixed now.

HAROLD

I know. I mean, I'm . . .

DANIEL

I wasn't staring out the window. I just passed by.

HAROLD

DANIEL

I saw you.

HAROLD

Why were you staring at me? I was just trying to go to bed.

DANIEL

I wasn't staring.

HAROLD

Something broke my window when I was sleeping. Your uncle said it was the wind.

DANIEL

Yeah, but he knows.

HAROLD

It's good to have people who will protect you.

DANIEL

I guess.

HAROLD

So we all know the truth.

DANIEL

Yep.

HAROLD

But we're pretending we don't know.

DANIEL

Yep. That's what we do around here.

KATIE

(from door of house) Daniel! Come inside, please. *(with a sense of grief)* Harold, we had an agreement!

DANIEL

I have to go. Thanks. For being cool about it.

HAROLD

Thank you. For helping with the trash.

KATIE

Daniel, in the house!

DANIEL

Jeez, Katie, he's not gonna knock me down. I'm a goalie.

DANIEL passes by KATIE into the house.

KATIE

Harold! You broke the agreement! You know that? You ruined it.

Scene 12. KATIE alone in house. A few days later. She is doing paperwork, balancing checkbook, etc. The sound of a light rain outside. A knock at the door. KATIE rises and looks to see who is there. A sense of frustration and anger. She opens the door slightly.

KATIE

Harold, you can't come in right now. I'm in the middle of some things.

HAROLD

I've locked myself out of the house!

KATIE

Did you forget your garage code?

HAROLD

My power's gone out. I must have blown a fuse.

KATIE

You can't keep coming over here. We had an agreement and you broke it.

HAROLD

(entering to just inside the door) Where else can I go? I've left my keys in the house. I keep them in my pocket, but this morning, I dropped them on the floor. I couldn't bend down to get them, so I left them there.

KATIE

Don't you hide a spare key under a rock or something?

HAROLD

Oh, thieves know that people do that. You might as well leave your house unlocked!

KATIE

Just a phone call.

KATIE gets her phone. HAROLD moves inside and closes the door behind him.

A locksmith?

HAROLD

Yes. Don't call the first one listed. They get too much business.

KATIE

Okay. *(typing, swiping, tapping)* Hello, my name is Katie Angelo and my elderly neighbor has locked himself out of his house. *(to Harold)* Do you have a photo id?

HAROLD

I leave my license in my car.

KATIE

It's in his car. *(a pause, then reluctantly)* I can vouch for him. 9712 S. Cambridge Court. *(pause)* Thank you. *(to HAROLD)* 10 minutes.

HAROLD

Good enough. I need to get over to the library to do some computer research, and then the post office. *(no response)* I've got a thing or two to send to Agent Sampson. He's on my case.

KATIE

A federal agent?

HAROLD

That's right. I'm a big wig. That's life in the big city.

KATIE

How often do you contact him?

HAROLD

A few times a month, I collect mail that comes to my house and send it on to him—advertisements, or surveys, about inappropriate things. Agent Sampson wants me to send all that to him, so he can find the people sending it to me. Those people get in trouble.

KATIE

Isn't that why the police came to your house in the first place? The "inappropriate" things?

HAROLD

Well, mostly because it was so messy. Mother would be so upset that I couldn't keep up with the house.

KATIE

But you had that stuff, those magazines.

HAROLD

You know I didn't hurt anybody.

KATIE

Harold.

HAROLD

I didn't.

KATIE

You paid money for those pictures.

HAROLD

Looking at pictures doesn't hurt anybody.

KATIE

Harold, I'd like you to go wait on your porch for the locksmith.

HAROLD

I can't do that. It's raining.

KATIE

Harold, I'd like you to go to your own house right now.

HAROLD

I just don't have many people anymore that will help me.

KATIE

No.

HAROLD

You're one of the good ones! So is your son! He scooped my papers right up with those young arms. He's a helpful boy, and handsome. We need to talk about the good in the world when there's so much bad going around.

KATIE

So much bad going around? Oh my God! It's you that people are afraid of.

HAROLD

I don't think that's true at all.

KATIE

This whole neighborhood, Harold, ever since the raid on your house. Every single person on this block is afraid of you. Parents told their kids, Harold. Everyone knows.

HAROLD

Father Ryan knows. He won't let me participate in mass anymore. I can attend, but I can't distribute communion.

KATIE

Because people are scared of you. People don't want you walking past their houses. They don't want you looking at their kids.

HAROLD

It doesn't hurt someone if you look at them.

KATIE

It hurts the whole goddam neighborhood, Harold!

HAROLD

You're a lady. Don't curse like that. You listen to me. I never hurt anybody. Looking at people doesn't hurt them. I can look at anybody I want to. That's not against the law.

KATIE

The way you do it, it is!

HAROLD

What's the way I do it?

KATIE

People know what the police found in your house. More than a mess, Harold. Those pictures. Those terrible pictures. They went around and told everybody what you are and to watch out for you.

HAROLD

They did not.

KATIE

Right after they drove you away.

HAROLD

They told everybody? They told the Cunninghams?

KATIE

Everyone.

HAROLD

That's my business. They shouldn't have done that.

KATIE

They wanted to know if you had ever touched a kid in this neighborhood.

HAROLD

I would never—

KATIE

How do any of us know that?

HAROLD

Because I've lived here all my life! I'm a valued member of the community! I'm good. When my brain started telling me to do more than look, I'd just stay in my house and lock my door and tell Biscuit we couldn't go outside. Even when I wanted to, I didn't. I'm good. That was a hard battle, but I fought, and I won.

KATIE

So I'm supposed to congratulate you?

HAROLD

I could've done bad things. I could've hurt your son. You should thank me that I didn't.

KATIE

You say you're trying to stay away from kids, but you come in this house and ask Daniel questions, you call him over to help you with your trash, you had him pulling weeds for you last summer You promise me to stop and you don't! You promised. You're very sick. And his father, his uncle, they're ready to beat the daylights out of you!

HAROLD

What about you?

KATIE

Me?

HAROLD

You.

KATIE

I'm trying not to hate you.

HAROLD

And is that very hard?

KATIE

Today it is.

HAROLD

That hurts me.

KATIE

I know.

HAROLD

I'm a good neighbor and I'm a good person.

KATIE

Get out of this house.

HAROLD

I know how it made me feel when I was a boy and I don't want to make anyone feel like that. Not ever.

KATIE

Oh, God. Go home, please.

HAROLD

I don't want you to be mad at me. *(no answer)* I just think, you're the only person that still talks to me and I don't want you to be mad at me.

A horn honking from HAROLD's driveway.

KATIE

There's your locksmith.

HAROLD turns to leave.

Scene 13. DANIEL taping up hockey stick in the house. BRIAN nearby, quietly engaged in his own thing (phone, lacing skates?). A phone rings, not in the same room. DAWN and MAL enter without knocking.

Your phone? BRIAN

Mom's. DANIEL

Phone stops ringing

She must've got it. Hey guys! BRIAN

Hey! You're really gonna come to this thing? DANIEL

Absolutely. The girls are dancing til 8, and I would hate to miss a chance to see you school your old man. MAL

Wait, what? DANIEL

You think I need to bring a helmet? BRIAN

No, dad! Are you seriously gonna skate? DANIEL

It's parents versus players! BRIAN

You're gonna get hurt. DANIEL

You never saw me in my prime. I was very, very good. So if anyone's getting hurt— BRIAN

Just . . . just wear a helmet. DANIEL

KATIE enters, distracted.

Got your skates and helmet Katie? DAWN

Are you gonna cheer for me or dad?

DANIEL

I can't—right now. I have to—

KATIE

What?

BRIAN

We're all going.

MAL

It's parents versus players.

BRIAN

This is the rink with the bar, right?

DAWN

I'll be there, later. I mean, I'll have to meet you guys. I need to . . .

KATIE

What?

BRIAN

There's just something . . .

KATIE

What is it, Katie? Say it.

MAL

God, knock it off.

KATIE

Harold?

BRIAN

You gotta be kidding me.

MAL

That was him on the phone.

KATIE

And?

BRIAN

KATIE

He wasn't right. He asked for help, and he didn't sound right.

MAL

Because he isn't.

KATIE

I am going to handle this, and then I will meet you guys.

BRIAN

We're going somewhere. Together. And we need to leave. Now.

DAWN

Katie, you can deal with him later.

MAL

Or not. This is a family thing.

KATIE

Because I miss so many of those. There are a hundred and fifty hockey things every year and the goddam rink might collapse if I miss one. *(a moment, a look from the others that says, "Yes, that might happen.")* I'll be ten minutes behind you guys. Twenty at the most.

BRIAN

Really?

DANIEL

Don't even worry about it.

KATIE

I will be there.

DANIEL

It's fine.

MAL

No, it's not.

DAWN

Mal, you're not gonna change her.

BRIAN

We gotta get moving. I'm not missing the puck drop.

The group exits, leaving KATIE behind.

Scene 14. Harold's home. He sits alone on a couch that is decades old. One lamp is on. He may appear to be napping. He is fully dressed, in day clothes, not pajamas. The sound of his garage door opening. KATIE enters, tentatively. Perhaps she turns on a light.

KATIE

Harold? *(he does not respond)* Harold?

HAROLD

Oh! Hello.

KATIE

You may not call me anymore—

HAROLD

It's nice to see you.

KATIE

Are you sleeping?

HAROLD

The only question you can never say yes to!

KATIE

I can't stay. Why did you call me?

HAROLD

I felt bad about our fight. And I—need help.

KATIE

With what?

HAROLD

I've been missing Mother lately. But it wasn't always just the two of us. I had a sister. And a father. He didn't much like me.

KATIE

I'm sure that's not true.

HAROLD

That shows what you know. When my father left us, he took my sister with him. We lost track of her for a long time. Then once we found her, we only had a year or two before her accident.

KATIE

She died? I'm sorry.

HAROLD

She rented a little place over someone's garage. One night she parked in the garage and forgot to turn off her car. She went upstairs and went to bed and she never woke up.

KATIE

Oh.

HAROLD

Lucky for us, her daughter was spending the night at our house, with Grandma and good old Uncle Harold. It really hurt Mother, that she would be so careless. Mother always wanted us to do everything by the book! Just do everything exactly right, and you'll be fine by her.

KATIE

Sometimes it's hard to do everything exactly right.

HAROLD

Of course it is! But that doesn't mean you don't try! That's what Mother always said. Mother was a schoolteacher.

KATIE

I know. And I wasn't in her classroom, Harold. You've told me before. Many times. Do you really need help with something? I have somewhere to be.

HAROLD

I know I can't come over anymore . . .

KATIE

Right.

HAROLD

And I don't have Biscuit anymore.

KATIE

No?

HAROLD

Biscuit passed.

KATIE

I'm so sorry.

HAROLD

I wish I hadn't put Biscuit out by Lorena. I thought I'd get up there to visit him, but I never did. Sometimes when a dog dies, the parents tell the child it went to live on a big farm with other dogs.

KATIE

Right.

HAROLD

But Biscuit really was on a farm with other dogs. And then he died.

KATIE

I bet he was happy at the end—dogs to be with, lots of land.

HAROLD

I feel just about ready to go to that farm.

KATIE

Lorena's?

HAROLD

Can you help me with something in my checkbook?

KATIE

No. Tomorrow. My family—

HAROLD

(removing a paper scrap from checkbook and handing it to Katie) Read me these numbers.

KATIE

Xanax 30, MXR 20. What is this? What is MXR?

HAROLD

That's Morphine XR. XR for Extended Release. It says 20? 20 MXR?

KATIE

That's what it says.

HAROLD

I didn't have my glasses on. I thought it was a 10. I thought the 2 was a 1. I only took 10. I thought I made a mistake and I did. What should I do now?

KATIE

Harold, what is this?

HAROLD

It's my library computer research! Now what should I do?

KATIE

This is your research? It's written on a grocery receipt.

HAROLD

I wasn't about to carry around a notebook with this inside! It's sensitive information!

KATIE

I'm calling an ambulance.

HAROLD

Don't.

KATIE

Harold, c'mon.

HAROLD

Don't.

KATIE

Why would you do this?

HAROLD

You have a life where people want to be with you. You have a husband and a son who smile at you, and friends who come over to your house to see you and hear what you have to say.

KATIE

I'm sure your niece would miss you if you were gone.

HAROLD

No she won't. But that's okay. That's life in the big city. *(He picks up a nearby pill bottle and shakes pills into his hand.)* My sister will be there for me, and Mother, of course. You know what she'll say? She'll say, "What took you so long?" She knew I wasn't happy here.

KATIE

And what about your dad?

HAROLD

Oh, he won't recognize me. He hasn't seen me since I was 7. *(holding out palm, full of pills)* Is this ten?

KATIE

(counts them) Yes. But c'mon.

HAROLD

You think about it. Then you just try to tell me it's not a good idea.

KATIE

Why does it matter what I think?

HAROLD

You're my only friend.

KATIE

Harold . . .

HAROLD

This is going a lot easier now that you're here. But I still need one more thing from you.

KATIE

What's that?

HAROLD

I'm sorry I broke my promise to you. I'd like you to forgive me. For talking to your son.

KATIE

I don't want to discuss this, Harold.

HAROLD

I'll feel so much better if you forgive me. I was wrong, and I did it on purpose, but I am sorry.

KATIE

I forgive you.

HAROLD

(with relief) Oh thank you. *(picks up water glass)*

HAROLD swallows pills over the course of the next several lines, until they are gone. KATIE rests her hand on phone.

HAROLD

Don't touch that.

KATIE

Don't you want me to call anyone?

HAROLD

No ambulance.

KATIE

But your niece. When should I call your niece?

HAROLD

Oh, tomorrow maybe. You can pretend to find me, would that be okay?

KATIE

Ummm . . .

HAROLD

Maybe you can say that you and I usually have coffee on Thursday mornings. Is tomorrow Thursday?

KATIE

Tomorrow is Wednesday.

HAROLD

Then say you and I usually have coffee on Wednesday mornings and when I didn't come for coffee you got worried about me. Yes, you got worried about me.

KATIE

Okay.

HAROLD

And then how about you called me on the phone and I didn't answer?

KATIE

Sure.

HAROLD

And so you sent your son over to knock on my door . . .

KATIE

Harold, don't.

HAROLD

No, no. Because you know I'm not a bad person. You know I don't hurt people. You sent him over, but I didn't answer. So you came over and got in, because you're my neighbor and I trust you and you know my garage code, right? You know my code, so you could get yourself right in. And then you found me. And you were very sad. Will you do that?

KATIE

Harold.

HAROLD

Say you'll do that. Tell people what I just said.

KATIE

I—

HAROLD

Promise me that you'll do it like I said.

KATIE

I will. I'll tell people about the coffee . . .

HAROLD

And the garage code.

KATIE

Sure.

HAROLD

And also the sadness.

KATIE

Yes.

She moves to the couch with him and takes his hand.

HAROLD

Good. And after that you can call my niece. Her phone number . . . refrigerator. And you can call . . .

KATIE

Harold? What's wrong? Do you want me to call the ambulance now?

HAROLD

No. It's . . . nobody's ever held my hand.

KATIE

Well, I'm sorry for that.

They sit in silence. KATIE does not leave. Lights fade.

END OF PLAY