

DECK THE HALLS 3

Ep 3. Emma and Trip

INT. EMMA AND TRIP'S APARTMENT -- DAY

Trip is sitting on the arm of the couch, waiting for Emma so they can go to the movies.

In the foreground WE HEAR: Trip turning pages of a course catalogue.

In the background WE HEAR: light bathroom sounds, the sink running, Emma brushing her teeth.

When Emma "calls" to Trip, it's from a room away (and a little echo-y in the bathroom). When her voice is "closer", she's sticking her head back in the living room or walking past.

TRIP

I'm just saying, people see MBA on a resume, they're like "woah!"

EMMA

(calling)

I'm sick of management. Jackie's more the MBA type.

TRIP

I thought you wanted to start another business.

EMMA

(calling)

Yes. But...

(closer)

I want something a little more specialized than hustle. I want to make things. Design things. BIG things.

WE HEAR: a hair dryer turn on.

WE HEAR: Emma's phone ringing, but under the hair dryer, it's barely audible.

TRIP

Fashion design?

EMMA

(calling)

Yuck!

TRIP
Textiles? Graphic design?
Advertising?

EMMA
(calling)
Maybe Industrial Design?

TRIP
What?

WE HEAR: the hair dryer shut off around the same moment
Emma's phone stops ringing.

Emma pokes her head out of the bathroom.

EMMA
(closer)
Industrial Design. Like, all the
light displays I used to build and
the wedding set-ups. I'd probably
be pretty good at that.

TRIP
You'd make more money as an
Electrical Engineer.

EMMA
Guh, you sound like my dad. He says
design degrees are debt traps.

TRIP
It's not Modern Art.

EMMA
I don't even know who hires
Industrial Designers. Do entry
level jobs exist? Or is it like a
blacksmith-y apprenticeship.

WE HEAR: Trip open the course catalogue and read aloud.

TRIP
Well, that's why people go to
college.
(reading)
Pursuing specialized fields can
open doors to opportunities you
wouldn't even be aware of as an
entry level hire, so just because
you can't "envision" the future
doesn't mean it's not "there".

EMMA

Look it up. See what the pre-reqs
are.

WE HEAR: the bathroom door shut, water running.

WE HEAR: Emma's phone ring again, muffled under a purse and
bunch of papers.

TRIP

Your phone's ringing.

EMMA

(calling)

Spam.

WE HEAR: The phone stops ringing after a moment. Trip flip
the pages of the course catalogue.

TRIP

Wheels up in nine minutes.

EMMA

(calling)

I'm almost done!

TRIP

We don't have to go to the 10am
show.

WE HEAR: the door open, Emma running back to the bedroom.

EMMA

Just gotta grab my shoes and my
jacket and my phone!

TRIP

There's another movie at 11. And
11:45. And Noon!

WE HEAR: Emma's phone ring twice. Trip shifts papers, looking
for it.

EMMA

(calling)

First showing gets free popcorn,
second show gets bupkiss!

TRIP

I'll buy you popcorn *and* a soda if
we can see a movie at night.

EMMA

Ha!

WE HEAR: Emma toss a jacket at Trip and keep walking. She opens a closet.

TRIP
Honestly, who likes the taste of
buttered popcorn with coffee?

EMMA
Me.

TRIP
It's so Soviet.

EMMA
Don't start with me, you Red Vines
heathen.

TRIP
I have to be back at work by two.
All-staff.

EMMA
Mm. Okay.

WE HEAR: Emma zipping into a pair of boots.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I was going to do some GRE practice
tests tonight. Is pizza okay? I was
just going to order.

TRIP
Sure. It's fine.
(beat)
If you're antsy during the days--

EMMA
I'm not.

TRIP
It's going to be crazy until after
the New Year. I don't mind playing
hookey in the morning, but I hate
you being on your own at night.

EMMA
I'm not on my own! We have two TVs.
There's the internet. We have a
doorman. Fridrik *gets* my jokes.

TRIP
You could always go down to Houston
during the week. Work with Jackie
for the last quarter.

EMMA

I'm fine. I'm *busy*. I have applications to think about. And course catalogues. I should really go tour UT. And I was thinking about talking to that realtor again.

TRIP

About getting a license?

EMMA

Or the LSATs. I have lots of options.

WE HEAR: Emma finish tying her shoe and zips up her coat with a flourish.

TRIP

(dead end)

I know. I just don't want you to feel like you have to--

WE HEAR: Emma's phone starts to ring again during Trip's line.

WE HEAR: Trip find the phone and unplug it.

TRIP (CONT'D)

Your phone is blowing up.

EMMA

Probably Samaritan's Purse. Turn it off. Okay. Shoes, jacket. Purse! You got keys?

WE HEAR: Emma grab her purse, fish through it for keys. Trip answer the phone.

TRIP

Hi, we've already contributed this year. Please take this number off your list--

WE HEAR: a voice on the other end.

Note: Even though these lines appear in dialogue, mix Bernie's lines very low and filter through phone. (Full voice is a reveal for later in episode.)

BERNIE

(phone)

Hello? Who is this?

TRIP
Who is this?

BERNIE
Bernie.

TRIP
Bernie... Sanders?

EMMA
What?

BERNIE
Bernadette Bishop. I'm trying to reach my *daughter* Emma Bishop.

TRIP
Oh! Hi, Mrs. Bishop. Hi. I'm--

EMMA
NUH!

WE HEAR: Emma slap the phone out of Trip's hand. It hits the wall and cracks. (Skittering plastic like two dropped legos.)

TRIP
OW!

EMMA
SHH!

WE HEAR: the voice on the other end of the phone.

BERNIE
(phone)
Hello? Hello! Hello. Young man.

There's a beat of silence.

BERNIE (CONT'D)
Hellooooooo!

TRIP
(low)
What are you--

EMMA
Shh!

BERNIE
(phone)
Young man? Emma!

WE HEAR: a hang-up, followed by a beep indicating the call has been disconnected.

EMMA
(deeply relieved)
Whew. Okay. Let's go to the movies.

TRIP
WHAT.

WE HEAR: Emma pick up her phone, turn it off, and fumble to take the case off. She takes out the battery and SIM card, tossing both on the counter.

While dismantling her phone:

EMMA
Is it already ten? Shoot. They always have twenty minutes of previews anyway. Do you care if we miss five minutes? Tell you what, if we're late, we'll get a super early lunch, maybe hit the phone store, and be back in time for the 11 o'clock!

TRIP
What are you doing-- stop taking apart your phone!

EMMA
I've been needing a new one. Do we still have aluminum foil?

WE HEAR: Emma scoop all the bits into a pile and wrap it up in tin foil.

TRIP
Are you seriously wrapping them in tin?

EMMA
It's just so I can keep all the pieces together!

WE HEAR: Trip pull the bundle out of her hands.

TRIP
Give... me... That.
(got it)
That was your mom.

EMMA
That was Bernie, yes.

TRIP
All three times?

EMMA
Yes.

TRIP
Are you crazy? Call her back! It
could be important.

WE HEAR: Trip open the tin foil and start putting Emma's
phone back together.

EMMA
It's not.

TRIP
Three calls in fifteen minutes.

EMMA
Eighteen.

TRIP
Fine. Eighteen minutes. It's not
quicksand, but at 10 in the morning-
-

EMMA
Eighteen calls. Since... like...
lunch yesterday.

TRIP
Eighteen calls.

EMMA
Nineteen. Twenty. I don't know,
maybe more, I haven't checked my
old work numbers.

WE HEAR: Trip put the cell phone down.

EMMA (CONT'D)
I usually keep my phone on silent.

TRIP
The ringer turns back on when you
plug it in to charge.

EMMA
Ah. Good feature.

TRIP
Isn't your mom in Uganda?

EMMA

No.

TRIP

You said she couldn't come to the wedding because she was still doing her evangelical medical mission in Uganda.

EMMA

I said Africa. Uganda was... what year did William and Kate get married?

TRIP

Was that the skyscraper wedding where all the doves got sucked into the ventilation?

EMMA

Prince William.

TRIP

OH. That William.

EMMA

Let's see, that's after I moved to the house on Astrid, but before we opened the physical shop--

TRIP

I know I watched it. We had clotted cream. Which stepmother was that?

EMMA

2011!

TRIP

Your mom's been in Africa since 2011?

EMMA

I think so? There was a long stretch when she was in South America. Once I got a fundraising letter from the Philippines. But the last letter was posted from Uganda, and I got that in early 2015--

TRIP

You haven't heard from your mother in three years?

EMMA
She stays very busy.

TRIP
But you've... written to her...
right?

EMMA
... No.

TRIP
Emma.

EMMA
It's a narrow window! She keeps
changing mission groups. I get a
letter, then if I reply it has to
go through their national office
and after three months of ping-
ponging around, a lot of times by
the time the letter gets there
she's gone on to the next country.

TRIP
You said you called her about the
wedding.

EMMA
I said she couldn't make it.

TRIP
But that she was overjoyed for us.

EMMA
I guessed.

TRIP
You said you sent her pictures from
the ceremony.

EMMA
There was a lot going on that week.

TRIP
But she knows I exist.

EMMA
I was waiting until things were a
little more settled--

TRIP
Oh my GAWD.

EMMA

I wasn't going to write just to tell her I was dating someone, and then we got married so *fast!*

TRIP

That was a year ago!

EMMA

Exactly! We're practically still on our honeymoon! Let's wait until we're a little more settled--

TRIP

Right, our Ruby Wedding would be more traditional.

EMMA

Bernie and I don't have that kind of relationship.

TRIP

Fine.

EMMA

We *don't*. It's... complicated. I have to set very firm boundaries and... she just has a way of getting her leg over... sometimes it's easier to set boundaries if she doesn't know exactly what's on the other side.

TRIP

That's not healthy.

EMMA

Omissions. Polite deference.

TRIP

A wall of secrets.

EMMA

A wall of those wavy glass bricks they use in bathrooms. It's practical. Elegant.

TRIP

So you're just never going to tell her about me?

EMMA

Eventually. Once I figure out how to package it.

TRIP

Package it? I have moisturized cuticles and I'm up to date on every Shonda Rhimes show. I am a catch!

EMMA

Bernie's spent the last twenty years trying to single-handedly inoculate every orphan and widow in the Southern hemisphere. I can't tell her I married a "rich guy".

TRIP

Most mothers would be *thrilled* to have me as a son in law. When I was an escort at the Dallas cotillion, the entire DAR garden club was trying to slip twenties into my dinner jacket to bribe me to dance the champagne waltz with their daught-- oh wait I hear it now.

EMMA

I don't care if she likes you. I don't care if she knows you. She blows through once every couple of years for one huge multi-purpose meal at a budget-conscious restaurant. We get in a fight, she makes a big deal about ordering dessert, she sneaks out to the car while they're fixing it and next thing you know a bunch of Applebee's employees are singing to an empty booth.

TRIP

You skip out on the check?

EMMA

She's got a whole thing about American consumerism and chain restaurants. I just bring cash and hide it under my plate.

TRIP

Oof.

EMMA

See? It's a lot. But all we have to do is lie low for like 96 hours and then boom! She's back on the plane, off to her next charitable mission.

Beat. Trip audibly hems and haws.

TRIP

But.

EMMA

But.

TRIP

It's been seven years since she's seen you.

EMMA

Flew by.

TRIP

What if it's another seven years?

EMMA

What if it's five? Or two?

TRIP

What if it's never? I mean, how long can it take to eat a steak salad at Applebee's?

EMMA

Can't do the 'Bee. They got her picture on the wall after the last time.

TRIP

It's your decision. And this is not advice, but may I offer an observation?

EMMA

Yes, counsel.

TRIP

Right now, our marriage is not a secret. It's an oversight. But if the next time you see your mom you have a secret husband, a secret new job, I dunno, eventually a secret grandchild--

EMMA

I knooooow.

TRIP

And... again, not advice, but an observation.

(MORE)

TRIP (CONT'D)

When you put off making a decision
for long enough... you make the
decision by default.

Beat.

EMMA

Is that from the management course
we sent the branch managers on?

TRIP

Yeah. You like?

EMMA

(beat)
Give me my phone.

TRIP

You sure?

WE HEAR: Trip open the tin foil package.

EMMA

If you promise to follow my lead
and just... let me feel it out.
Okay? Figure out the right moment
to tell her.

TRIP

I'll make a reservation!

EMMA

No! No reservations. We want paper
towels on the table and peanut
shells on the floor. Casual. Put on
an older shirt.

TRIP

What's wrong with this one?

EMMA

It's so... clean. It'll be easier
to get along with my mom if we
downplay the rich boy thing. Think
Salt of the Earth, not Amethyst
Bamboo aged gray salt of the Earth.

TRIP

What?

EMMA

Your dad put it on his Christmas
list. It's like \$62 a jar.

TRIP

One plaid shirt coming up, ma'am.

WE HEAR: Trip bounce away to change his shirt.

WE HEAR: Emma sigh, put the battery and SIM card back in the phone, turn it on. (start-up sound)

While this happens, Emma says:

EMMA

(sotto)

One lunch. It'll be fine.

(aloud)

Leave your wallet at home, 'kay?

Sound transition: PHONE RINGING into FAJITA SIZZLING

INT. CHILES -- LATER

WE HEAR: Fajitas sizzling, waiter walk past.

WE HEAR: a door jingle open, Emma and Trip walk in. They take off their coats.

EMMA

Good, good, it's pretty dark in here. We'll tell her right before the waitress brings the dessert menus and if Bernie freaks we can duck out through the forest of vanity plates.

TRIP

I've got some bear spray in the car.

EMMA

Or should we wait until after Bernie orders dessert? As soon as she gets up to sneak out, I'll tell her.

TRIP

Let's just tell her when we sit down.

EMMA

Ooh, good idea! Then we don't even have to order!

TRIP

We're eating lunch.

EMMA

Fine. Just don't order sweet potato fries.

TRIP

Aw, come on!

EMMA

And no chicken breasts. Too upper middle class. Remember, we're toning down the rich guy shtick.

TRIP

Why don't I chew gum while I eat?

WE HEAR: Emma and Trip approach the Hostess stand.

HOSTESS

Hi, welcome to Roman Onion's Steak Shack! Anywhere you like.

BERNIE

(distant)

EMMANULINE!

EMMA

She's early.

TRIP

That's your mom?

WE HEAR: Bernie laugh getting up from the table.

EMMA

Yup. Big smiles.

TRIP

She's dressed like the Queen of England!

EMMA

Her hat's not *that* big. If you get in trouble pretend to fall asleep.

TRIP

What?

WE HEAR: Bernie descend on Trip and Emma, grab Emma in a bear hug.

BERNIE

Flypaper!

WE HEAR: Bernie gives Emma a big ol' mom kiss.

EMMA

Mama Bernie!

BERNIE

Look at your hair! It's so short!
 You look so grown. If it weren't
 for those skinny flamingo legs I
 wouldn't have been able to pick you
 out of a crowd!

EMMA

Mama Bernie--

BERNIE

Goodness, wasn't it yesterday we
 were graduating college?
 (turn, without pause)
 And look here! Stuart Bunton, you
 get more handsome every year. I
 didn't even see the van outside!
 How's your mother holding up? Give
 me a kiss.

EMMA

Mama Bernie, this is Trip.

WE HEAR: Bernie pull back to look at Trip. (could be a small
 shoe squeak or a necklace jingle, or adjusting her reading
 glasses.)

BERNIE

The male voice on the phone.

TRIP

It's so good to meet you Mama
 Bernie.

Emma coughs. No.

BERNIE

(chuckle)
 Mama, already?

TRIP

(clear throat)
 Ma'am. Good to meet you. Ma'am.

Emma gives a small grunt to indicate "good".

BERNIE

That's better. I like to see the
 whites of their eyes before they
 start calling me mother.
 (MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Come on, shake my hand like you're glad to see me.

TRIP

Mrs. Bishop.

BERNIE

Delighted.

(closer)

Contacts?

TRIP

Lasik.

Emma audibly winces/laughs.

BERNIE

My! Now that's a luxury.

TRIP

I don't know, it's kinda like getting your teeth capped or Botox--

BERNIE

You use Botox?

TRIP

Uh, I, no--

EMMA

Let's sit down. We're blocking the busboys.

BERNIE

(marching ahead)

I got a booth here in the back. And they've got very clean restrooms, I already inspected them.

EMMA

(low)

Botox?

TRIP

(low)

I'm toning down.

BERNIE

I work with a lovely ophthalmologist lasering cataracts off locals in Ethiopia, Lisa Vang-Ebbings, her husband got drummed out of the field for turning his practice into a Jiffy Lube.

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Thousand dollar jobs, zap zap,
anyone off the street, who cares if
your eyes fall out as long as it's
cheap?

WE HEAR: everyone sit down.

EMMA

So the eye doc, he lost his license
for malpractice?

BERNIE

Nooo, he was trading surgery for
sexual favors. Estella's lovely,
though, a real lady. She handles
her knife and fork just the same in
Amhara as if she was at Wimbledon.

EMMA

(pointed)

When did you go to Wimbledon?

TRIP

I love tennis.

BERNIE

Do you know, the best lasagna I
ever had in my life was in
Ethiopia? They don't use so much
cheese and the spices are MUCH more
intense and flavorful. That's
colonialism for you. Look, we need
more chips.

WE HEAR: Bernie stir the chip crumbs in the basket.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

I don't normally make such a pig of
myself, you'll forgive me dear.

EMMA

How long have you been working in
Ethiopia?

BERNIE

Where?

EMMA

It's just the last I heard, you
were in Uganda.

BERNIE

OH. Dear, that feels like a hundred
years ago.

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

I got the worst blister that spread from the webbing on my ring finger all the way around to the pinkie, I nearly fainted when it burst.

EMMA

When you were in Uganda.

BERNIE

Digging wells, it's not woman's work.

TRIP

And now you're on to cataracts?

BERNIE

The recovery room after those surgeries, it's like nothing else I've seen in my life. Men and women, they haven't seen their children, they haven't seen their faces some in ten years or more! When we take away the bandages and they weep! I've probably seen a thousand surgeries by now, still bowls me over.

EMMA

Just you and Estella?

BERNIE

Oh, I only travelled with Estella for six months. She's back at her private practice. Don't wad up your coat like that, sweetheart, you'll ruin it.

EMMA

I'm not--

WE HEAR: Bernie unfurl/smooth Emma's coat.

BERNIE

Good lord, look at this embroidery. Such tiny stitching. Children go blind stitching lining like this.

EMMA

I'll put it over the back of my chair.

BERNIE

It's like you're sitting on their eyeballs.

EMMA

Trip, will you hang this up?

WE HEAR: Trip hang up the coat.

BERNIE

Thank you, sweetie. That's better.

EMMA

How was your trip?

BERNIE

Trying. I took a commercial flight from Johannesburg to Miami, a shuttle over to Tampa, a bus to Baton Rouge, then one of the sisters from St. Joseph's let me borrow the monsignor's station wagon to get across Texas.

EMMA

That was generous.

BERNIE

They needed to sell it. It's an old thing. A Corolla.

TRIP

What year?

BERNIE

I don't know. It smells like a 94! There's a lot in Austin that offered a good price for their trade-in--

EMMA

That's a long way to drive for a trade-in.

BERNIE

A day of driving for me means an extra \$300 for the sisters, now that might mean nothing to you--

EMMA

It's not nothing--

BERNIE

No, no, no, I understand, that's American life. You sell your time to pay for convenience, damn the real cost, but time is my currency.

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

It's the one resource I have to give, so why not give freely?

TRIP

That's a very generous way of looking at it.

BERNIE

I know you mean to flatter me--

EMMA

Not at all.

BERNIE

But really, I can't mark it all to charity. It was my selfish ambition to see my sweet girl who lives so far away. I keep hoping you'll come for a visit.

EMMA

(lie)

I keep meaning to. It's just so expensive.

BERNIE

Of course, you have priorities and obligations. You have a lifestyle to maintain.

EMMA

If by "lifestyle", you mean "job"--

BERNIE

Spend one week trying to keep a flock of UNICEF chickens alive with nothing but a sharp stick and a barking goose, see if you still worry about Business Meetings and "Email".

EMMA

Someone has to work to write the checks to UNICEF.

BERNIE

Giving is meant to be a joy.

TRIP

We've been talking about making a trip for ages.

BERNIE

Is that right?

TRIP

Oh yeah, Emma's always saving.
Scraping. Every nickel Em saves,
goes right in the Africa jar.

EMMA

Yesterday I found a quarter in the
CVS parking lot.

TRIP

It was under a smashed old English
Rose bottle. I said to leave it,
but no, she had to have it for her
travel savings. And when we cleaned
up the glass we found fourteen more
cents.

BERNIE

So industrious!

EMMA

Didn't want anyone to step on the
glass.

TRIP

I think the Lord was shining down
on us that day.

EMMA

Oh my god.

BERNIE

Ah. How... Protestant.

TRIP

I washed out a jar of Miracle Whip
to hold the change. I don't know if
that means anything.

BERNIE

You know, you don't have to wait to
make a trip to make a contribution.

EMMA

Oh!

BERNIE

There's a building team going out
in just a few months with the Saint
Raphael women's outreach. I've got
some of their literature. And look!
These wonderful wax cloth
bookmarks.

EMMA

Handmade?

BERNIE

Of course! The women of that
village-- where are my glasses?

WE HEAR: Bernie riffle through her purse and pull out a few
brochures and a handful of bookmarks.

WE HEAR: Trip handle the bookmarks.

TRIP

These are beautiful.

BERNIE

Pay what you will, every cent goes
to the missionaries--

EMMA

Trip forgot his wallet at home.

TRIP

Em.

WE HEAR: Bernie put the items away.

BERNIE

Maybe later. After we eat. I hope
you don't mind, I went ahead and
ordered for us. I've got to be on
top of my blood sugar. Do you know
they do a very nice brunch menu
here?

EMMA

No, I've never been here before.

BERNIE

Huevos.

(enunciate)

Huevos.

(normal)

My Spanish is rusty. Oh!

(calling)

Madam? We need to make that three
Huevos Rancheros.

(to Emma)

I didn't know you were bringing a
gentleman friend.

(calling)

Could we also have a pan of queso
and refill on chips?

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)
 (to table, low)
 How's your digestion?

TRIP
 I can't do cheese this early.

EMMA
 Ginger ale.

TRIP
 (stealthy, to waitress)
 Margarita.

BERNIE
 Three Huevos Rancheros, thank you
 darling! *With* avocado!
 (to table)
 You only live once, eh, dears?
 (calling)
 And more tomato juice when you get
 a chance!
 (to table)
 Now we'll have a *nice* lunch. Fourth
 of July, Thanksgiving, Easter and
 Christmas. Prost!

WE HEAR: Bernie tap her glass on the table.

TRIP
 Um. Cheers.

EMMA
 Clink.

WE HEAR: Bernie siiiiiiiiiiip, ice clink in her drink.

Emma speaks over the sipping.

EMMA (CONT'D)
 So, um, I know it's been a while
 since our last letter--

WE HEAR: Bernie set down her drink.

BERNIE
 I went by your father's old
 storefront last night. It's a fruit
 salad stand now!

EMMA
 Edible bouquets.

BERNIE

I went in and looked at their selection. \$85 for the smallest basket, not including delivery and they only do overnight delivery. That's an extra \$40!

TRIP

I don't think pre-cut pineapple would survive first class postage.

BERNIE

What's wrong with a card?

EMMA

What were you doing at dad's store?

BERNIE

I was curious. It's been so long since I've seen the old street. You know, February is our 35th anniversary.

TRIP

Aw, that's... nice.

EMMA

What do you give on the 35th year?

TRIP

(very low)

They're still married?

BERNIE

Coral is traditional. Not quite to my taste, the reefs are dying... but it's a much prettier color than jade. That's the modern. Do you get over to Scottsdale much?

EMMA

Sometimes.

TRIP

We went for Thanksgiving.

BERNIE

How far is it to Scottsdale?

TRIP

14 hours.

BERNIE

They run the air conditioning so cold in Arizona. I don't know why you'd live in Arizona if you wanted to wear a sweater all the time.

EMMA

I never saw a sweater.

TRIP

There were a lot of vests.

BERNIE

I've seen the pictures of his little condo. It looks very comfortable. I keep meaning to ring him up, see how the cats are doing.

EMMA

(low)

He has a girlfriend now.

TRIP

(choke)

BERNIE

I'm not a fool, Emma.

(to Trip)

She takes everything so seriously.

Trip laughs uncomfortably.

TRIP

Yeah?

BERNIE

When she was a little girl, she used to get her face so worked up just guessing about things. Her first tooth fell out and she stayed up all night holding on to the rest of them because she was sure they were all coming out.

TRIP

Aw.

EMMA

I was six.

BERNIE

Didn't say a peep, just held them in place with her fingers. Oh!

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

And we used to feed a gray and white tabby. Not an indoor cat, it just came by for kibble. We had a big storm one day and the cat didn't come by for a few days, she cried like a war widow because she was sure it was dead.

EMMA

But it *was* dead.

BERNIE

You didn't know that. See, it's the not knowing that tears the sensitive children to bits. Her father found it stuck up the cottonwood tree.

TRIP

(impaled?)
Stuck *how*?

BERNIE

And as soon as she knew for sure, when we buried that cat, she stopped crying. She resilient as long as she knows the rules.

EMMA

I don't remember burying it.

BERNIE

Oh. That's right. We didn't tell you we buried it. But you did go away to camp the next day, so... you see. Resilience.

EMMA

It was *my* cat.

BERNIE

It was *a* cat.

EMMA

His name was Boots!

TRIP

Boots?

BERNIE

It was a stray we fed on the stoop.

EMMA

He had a collar!

BERNIE

It's been more than twenty years,
that cat would be long dead one way
or another. How many cats have you
had since?

EMMA

None.

BERNIE

You should *have* cats.

EMMA

We kept filling his bowl. Why did
you keep buying cat food?

BERNIE

I thought you were trying to lure
in another stray!

EMMA

Oh god.

WE HEAR: Bernie's straw slurp the bottom of her glass.

BERNIE

We should have kept more animals
when you were young. Maybe you'd be
less precious about them.

EMMA

(to Trip)

He had little black paws and black
ears and a black nose.

BERNIE

During one of our dry seasons in
Kenya, I don't remember if it was
2008 or 2012, but it was an
election year, there's always more
money in an election year. We got a
passel of chickens from one of
those big moneyed missions, Bright
Star or One Nation or something,
they dropped in a hundred and forty
five chickens and in two days they
were all gone. Dead. We couldn't
put fences up fast enough. Wild
dogs, genets, hyenas were snatching
'em up like the Hand of God.
Probably some of the lizards too,
they grow 'em so vicious down
there.

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

All those habitats are shrinking,
everyone's starving for food.
Hyenas can't resist the pull of
starvation any easier than a cat
can fight back flood waters.

EMMA

He *drowned*?

WE HEAR: the waitress bring out the drinks.

HOSTESS

Extra tomato juice. Ginger ale.
Margarita.

(low)

Ma'am, we're closing out on happy
hour.

BERNIE

We'll take a pitcher, then, bloody
mary squeeze an extra lime in
before the vodka, three glasses--

EMMA

Two is fine.

BERNIE

Oh, go on. It's practically a
holiday.

EMMA

Bernie--

BERNIE

Three glasses. Thank you sweetie.

WE HEAR: the waitress sets down three glasses and a pitcher
and departs. Bernie pours out three glasses from the pitcher
and hands them out.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

You can hold a glass, can't you?

(flattering)

Young man. I'm sorry, I can't seem
to put your name back in my head.

TRIP

Patrick.

EMMA

Everyone calls him Trip.

BERNIE
Patrick, that's a good name. He's
got a good face, too. How long have
you known my girl?

EMMA
We met two years ago--

BERNIE
Is that right?

TRIP
Two years, ma'am.

BERNIE
How?

EMMA
At a wedding.

TRIP
At a wedding.

BERNIE (CONT'D)
That's no good.

TRIP
What?

BERNIE
Whose wedding? What time of day?
Who smiled at who? How did the
light hit her hair? I haven't been
to the movies in fifteen years,
child, paint a picture!

EMMA
Thanksgiving. Mayflower-themed
wedding.

BERNIE
One of yours?

TRIP
Family friend. I grew up with the
bride and her brothers, they're
turkey ranchers.

BERNIE
Love at first sight?

TRIP
Yes.

EMMA
(changing midstream)
No-yessss.

BERNIE (CONT'D)
Mmph.

EMMA
I was working.

TRIP
Right.

EMMA
Saturday afternoon wedding. It was
a 300 guest dinner reception with
family-style pass-the-plate
service...

BERNIE
300 guests and they pretend it's
"family style".

TRIP
It's actually kind of genius. You
charge for 300 and plate food for
250.

BERNIE
Emma!

EMMA
It cuts down on waste!

BERNIE
(low, to Trip)
She's a conservationist.

Bernie and Trip chuckle conspiratorially.

EMMA
300 guests. We lost half our wait
staff in the first 30 minutes and
we were still breaking in Stu as a
photographer, so with the last
minute reset on all the tables--

BERNIE
Pfft. Nobody cares about that.

EMMA
I'm just saying, I don't know if
there was much smiling--

TRIP
There was smiling.

EMMA
Real smiling, not business smiling.

BERNIE

You, boyfriend, you tell it.

TRIP

It was gray. Pretty cold for November. I was wearing a Pilgrim hat and Emma's hair was sweaty and matted and she had turkey feathers sticking to her neck.

BERNIE

Better.

EMMA

(searching)

Yup. And your hat buckle was too tight, so you had big red mark right across the center of your forehead.

TRIP

You never told me that.

EMMA

You had bangs.

BERNIE

And did she smile at you?

TRIP

So much I thought my head was going to explode.

BERNIE

There we go!

TRIP

I couldn't eat.

EMMA

(low)

You never told me that.

TRIP

It's the only thing I really remember, apart from the turkeys. You were everywhere, running around, I'd relax for half a second and turn around and WHAM. I thought I was going to pass out.

EMMA

(smiling)

Shut up.

TRIP
Yeah, that's the one.

WE HEAR: Bernie applaud. (Not entirely sarcastically, but a little dry.)

BERNIE
Bravo. Write that down, dear, so you can tell your children someday.

EMMA
Um, I'm not in a position to think about having--

TRIP
We aren't planning to have, I mean, not for a while--

EMMA
Um, well, Mama... part of the reason I brought Trip today, the reason I thought I should introduce him--

BERNIE
Oh god. I'm a grandmother.

	EMMA		TRIP
No.		No!	

BERNIE (CONT'D)
You have lots of time, jellybean, no one needs to have a child in their 20s. I was only 30 when I had you--

EMMA
I'm 31.

BERNIE
(cover mistake)
See? Young. Lots of time. No need to put the cart before the horse. I had a whole life before I had you.

EMMA
And you had a whole life after.

TRIP
Em.

BERNIE
Right! Like a Russian nesting doll of lives and possibilities.
(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

When I was your age I'd never even seen a chicken that wasn't a picnic roaster, now look.

TRIP

You've got as many chickens as stray cats.

EMMA

(sotto)

Dead chickens.

BERNIE

Did you watch the royal wedding?

EMMA

Which one?

BERNIE

Harry's. No one cares about Eugenie.

TRIP

Except her husband, maybe. And her parents.

EMMA

I drove over to Houston to watch it with Jackie--

TRIP

(low)

And Beatrice. And the Queen.

BERNIE

Meghan Markle, now there's a life within a life within a life. Those girls, her and Kate, they're in a much better position because poor Diana went first. She made a sacrifice of her life so her sons could have happiness.

EMMA

She didn't die on purpose.

BERNIE

I don't mean literally. She put herself out on the ledge. Land mines and HIV, she did that. She made the office more than handshakes.

EMMA

The Queen served in World War 2.

BERNIE

Now everything's changed since 9/11. I read somewhere that it cost about \$43 million dollars, all those snipers and drones and flowers and whatnot. Kate Middleton's dress cost \$434,000. But she paid for that herself. Terrible world we live in.

EMMA

Did you watch it?

BERNIE

Oh yes! I went down to Johannesburg, special.

TRIP

I didn't think it would be that interesting, but--

EMMA

You weren't already in Johannesburg?

TRIP

-- I actually got kind of sucked in.

BERNIE

No, but there was a van with a Michigan youth group going down and one boy played the bagpipes--

TRIP

Could you believe the gospel choir?

BERNIE

Oh! I never cared for pop songs, but those words. "Stand By Me".

TRIP

It was like watching Sister Act.

EMMA

And you stayed there until you decided to fly up to Miami?

BERNIE

A divorced American actress, Wallis Simpson must be rolling in her grave. I don't know how I feel about the divorce, but the actress thing will serve her well. Did you see her during the ceremony? Perfect posture, no fidgeting.

EMMA

She *is* an actress.

BERNIE

Tacky tiara.
(to Trip)
What did you think of the dress?

TRIP

(tread water)
It was, uh, simple--

BERNIE

It was a little loose.

TRIP

Loose. I noticed that!

BERNIE

Such a pretty neckline. All it needed was a little tuck at the waist.

TRIP

Very loose.

BERNIE

She has such a pretty figure, then she goes and hides it under a sheet

EMMA

Maybe she wanted a loose fit.

TRIP

I'd want a loose dress.

BERNIE

And all those loose, flowing dresses in the months after. I half expected to hear a "royal announcement" one month after the wedding.

EMMA

That church was probably an oven by the time she walked down the aisle.

BERNIE

Her mother was so brave, sitting there all alone. She must have been so proud of her little girl, bet she never dreamed when her baby was teething and soaking diapers that one day they'd end up together, riding up to Windsor Castle--
(choke up)

EMMA

I'm sure her mother was just as proud at her first wedding.

TRIP

(hurry)

I never really knew what elderflower was. Did you? Lemon and elderflower, it's all the rage now. I think it tastes like tea.

BERNIE

(regroup)

Did you know, they had a girl from California make the cake?

EMMA

She's not just "a girl", she's a chef. A famous pastry chef. She studied with Alice Waters.

BERNIE

You could bake a cake as pretty as that.

EMMA

I'm not a baker. I never made the wedding cakes.

BERNIE

You didn't?

EMMA

No.

BERNIE

You decorated them, though.

EMMA

No, Bernie.

BERNIE
They teach a cake decorating class
at Michaels.

EMMA
Mama.

BERNIE
(to Trip)
They should have hired her for the
wedding. She'd have had the royal
guard running as tight as a snare
drum in a sauna.

TRIP
They did a royal wedding once.

BERNIE
Really?

TRIP
Royal-ish.

EMMA
It was a minor Viscount.

BERNIE
Oh!

TRIP
Second wife.

BERNIE
Oh.

EMMA
She wore a suit.

BERNIE
Well. That shouldn't reflect on
your abilities.

EMMA
Even if they'd wanted to hire me...
I'm not in the wedding business
anymore.

BERNIE
Lord, I hoped it wasn't true.

EMMA
Who told you?

BERNIE

Regal Bride was my first stop when I got to town. It's a Honeybaked Ham store now. What happened?

EMMA

What... happens to every business. Eventually.

BERNIE

Conglomeration.

TRIP

Well, actually--

EMMA

We encountered a competitor. "They" controlled a significant resource.

BERNIE

What resources? The grooms?

Bernie laughs at her own joke.

EMMA

We didn't have the finances to hold out or move, so we closed.

BERNIE

Just like that.

EMMA

Not just like that. It was a hard decision.

BERNIE

You were so good at making weddings.

EMMA

Making weddings!

BERNIE

Yes! Pick on my language. What are you doing now? You're unemployed? Can you afford that?

EMMA

I'm fine. I'm looking at Master's programs.

BERNIE

You never even used your first degree!

EMMA

That's not how college works!

BERNIE

Don't shout in a restaurant.

EMMA

(quoting)

Just because you can't "envision"
the future doesn't mean it's not on
the horizon.

BERNIE

Oh, Emmanuline.

EMMA

It's a good thing. This change. I
can't work 80 hour weeks forever.
And like you said, I'm young--

BERNIE

For childbearing, not changing
professions.

EMMA

YOU MOVED TO FRICKIN AFRICA WHEN
YOU WERE 42!

BERNIE

You don't need to get upset.
Mother's here to help. I'm overdue
for a little sabbatical.

EMMA

What?

BERNIE

We can get the junk out of
granddaddy's old place and fix it
up, start taking appointments. Or I
can talk to your father. He still
owns that apartment above the fruit
salad store and technically we
still own it.

TRIP

You're staying in Texas?

EMMA

What?

BERNIE

You can relax. Mother will take
care of everything.

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

The Bishop Girls! We'll be just like those Sex and New York roommates. You're a Miranda.

TRIP

What about the orphans with cataracts?

EMMA

Yes! The orphans need you.

BERNIE

My daughter needs me.

EMMA

I'm fine. I told you. I am looking at schools. I'm making a plan.

BERNIE

You need the help, sweet pea. There's no shame in admitting you need a helping hand.

TRIP

Well, I can support the household while Emma--

Emma coughs, signalling *shut up*. <Note: could also kick the table.>

BERNIE

The household.

TRIP

I mean... rent, insurance--

BERNIE

You're living together.

TRIP

What? Nooo... I don't think I said that--

EMMA

It's not so much that we're living together... we share certain responsibilities

TRIP

Okay, well, last Christmas, or no, last Thanksgiving I asked Emma to--

EMMA

HUEVOS!

INT. BATHROOM -- CON'T

WE HEAR: Emma turn on the water at the sink, and start scrubbing her hands.

WE HEAR: Trip enter, shut the door and lock it.

EMMA

There's no soap. What was that?

TRIP

What was that? Fruit bouquets?
Charity bookmarks?

EMMA

Bookmarks are normal. Bookmarks are chump change. How does she know dad still owns that apartment?

TRIP

How are your parents still married?

EMMA

How does she know what a "Miranda" is? I'm a Carrie.

TRIP

You're a Charlotte.

EMMA

Shut up.

TRIP

This is getting too weird. We have to go out there and tell her. We're married. We're happy. It's fine if she wants to come live in Texas, fine--

EMMA

She's not!

TRIP

If she needs a place to stay, we'll find her a place to stay. No bigs.

EMMA

She's been in Sub-Saharan Africa since 1997, she's not just going to "live in Texas".

WE HEAR: Emma turn off the water and grab a paper towel.

EMMA (CONT'D)
She wants something.

TRIP
Hey, take it easy, you're going to
break the skin scrubbing like that.

WE HEAR: Trip take the paper towel away.

TRIP (CONT'D)
Maybe she's thinking of retiring.
Like you said, she's been out in
the field since 1997.

EMMA
She wouldn't retire to "America".

TRIP
(careful)
Or she could be legitimately
concerned about you.

EMMA
She doesn't want a house. Too hard
to liquidate a house. Unless she's
after that rental.

TRIP
(very careful)
You've been very stressed out.

EMMA
I bet it's that Craigslist scam.
You know, the one where you find
the sublet that's too good to be
true and then they send you a money
order, but it's for too much and
you're supposed to send them the
difference and then by the time you
find out the money order is fake--

TRIP
Your mom isn't going to commit
fraud.

EMMA
Do people even use money orders any
more?

TRIP
She's basically a nun. Right?

EMMA

The storefront is the only thing that's closed. Our website just moved over to the Winthrop site... ohhh. No. She couldn't know. She could know.

TRIP

She *is* a rescue worker. Right?

EMMA

I think she knows you're a Winthrop.

TRIP

She can't even remember my name.

EMMA

(gather wits)

When I was a sophomore in college, she begged me for three thousand dollars to fly her out of Kenya because she had "malaria" and was "dying". I found out later the plane ticket was only \$628!

TRIP

She got a deal.

EMMA

She gave the rest to a bankrupt Baptist medical charity! Inoculated an entire village against tetanus!

TRIP

Wow, an entire village?

EMMA

I was 19! I sold my car!

TRIP

Oof... I don't know how to feel about that-- would the villagers have died from tetanus?

EMMA

I should have known this was coming. When Harry and Meghan got engaged, I changed all my internet passwords.

TRIP

Because of the tetanus?

EMMA

Because... I don't know every time there's a royal carriage on CNN, it's like East Wind rises to blow the Scammin' Mary Poppins across the friggin ocean. Her first trip was right after Charles and Diana split. She quit her job, emptied our savings, and went on her first trip to Uganda. She dug six wells and got her entire church group to vote in the first Ugandan election. Then Diana died, Bernie came back, slept with my dad, stayed through Christmas, and then stole our neighbor's camper and disappeared.

TRIP

What would she do with a camper?

EMMA

She sold it in Georgia along with *her entire* collection of Royal Doulton commemorative china, wedding AND divorce. Cops said she got more for the plates than the camper.

TRIP

And that's how she got back to Uganda?

EMMA

Kenya. No, she gave the money to an ornithologist.

TRIP

Opthamologist.

EMMA

No, not eyes. Birds! Some old Swedish fish studying migratory patters or... climate change, I don't know.

TRIP

This why you made me leave my wallet at home?

EMMA

She maxed out four credit cards in my name when Prince Edward got hitched, took out a second mortgage when Charles and Camilla were publicly acknowledged by the Queen. Right after *that* wedding, Bernie lured my dad down to Guatemala, got him to sign over \$15,000 in travelers' checks to the Red Cross, and left him at a KFC!

TRIP

They have KFC in Guatemala?

EMMA

Focusing on the wrong thing! Between 2005 and 2010, I've gotten 18,000 pieces of fundraising mail. I moved twice! 2011, two months before Will and Kate got married, Bernie showed up at the first wedding Jackie and I organized on our own. I gave her a check for \$200 to get rid of her and she stole my identity.

TRIP

WHAT?

EMMA

The Beira Central Hospital flooded. She took the routing number and she already knew my social security and first she opened 17 credit lines, got a cash advance, then emptied my checking *and* savings to run emergency power to the surgical ward--

TRIP

Holy hell, Emma!

EMMA

Thank god I was already asset-sunk in Regal Bride and it was right after the financial crisis, so no one was lending much of *anything*, otherwise--

TRIP

Why didn't you tell me?

EMMA
I've been telling you!

TRIP
Before today!

EMMA
I don't know! I didn't think Prince
Harry would every get married!

TRIP
Jesus Christ, sweetie.

Long beat.

EMMA
Say something.

TRIP
I'm trying to remember whether our
joint checking directly linked to
my money market or trusts.

EMMA
Oh, so it's okay for her to dump *my*
money into Christian charities--

TRIP
I'm concerned about your money too!

EMMA
Oh my god.

TRIP
You. I am concerned about you. And
your emotional labor with... with--

EMMA
Shut up. I don't care. We're on the
same page now, right?

TRIP
Tell her we're married and
protected by an expensive team of
trust lawyers?

EMMA
We'll call her bluff. She wants to
live with us. Fine. Let's invite
her to live with us.

TRIP
Please excuse me what?

EMMA

She knows you're rich. There's more than one way to be a rich boy. Remember your friend Pandora that I hate?

TRIP

Pandora Cortland or Pandora Faulkner?

EMMA

The one who wears overalls and no shirt!

TRIP

Ohhh Pandora Vishlap. You hate her?

EMMA

She's handsy.

TRIP

She's not "handsy", she just thinks shirts are counter-spiritual.

EMMA

Yesss. That's the kind of impenetrable nonsense we need. The young Winthrops, they till the soil, weave ropes out of hemp, and commune with the ghosts of dead trees trapped in our coffee tables--

TRIP

The Earth is a flat lake surrounded by ice!

EMMA

A little less.

TRIP

The government is really a computer virus circulated by satellites reading your e-mail.

EMMA

There it is. No satellites, no bank accounts.

TRIP

Can't get our money if the Enlightened Leader got it first.

EMMA

Bingo.

WE HEAR: Emma open the door.

TRIP
Wait, I'm gonna take off my
underwear.

EMMA
(impatient sigh)

WE HEAR: Trip unbuckle his belt and drop his pants.

INT. RESTAURANT -- CON'T

WE HEAR: Emma and Trip sit down.

BERNIE

Your eggs are getting cold. The peppers don't help, they're about as warm as lettuce. You know what we should do, if I can find some njangsa, I'll teach you to make Pepe soup. We can get good Scotch Bonnets down here and with some tamarind we'll get a nice nutty flavor--

EMMA

Bernie, we have something to tell you.

BERNIE

Yes, darling. You look very serious.

TRIP

We would love to have you come live with us.

BERNIE

Oh. *You* would.

EMMA

It would require some adjustment... see, I *am* living with Trip.

BERNIE

I suspected. Dear. I understand modern coupling, but--

WE HEAR: Trip give Emma a little peck.

EMMA

And fourteen other "family members."

BERNIE

Family members.

TRIP

Sixteen. Willow just had twins.

EMMA

That's right!

TRIP

It was a deeply spiritual process.
Digging the birthing hole.

EMMA

Purifying it with ash.

TRIP

And urine.

EMMA

It's very earthy.

BERNIE

This is a commune?

TRIP

Would you call it a commune?

EMMA

It's a social experiment.

TRIP

We sacrificed all of our worldly
possessions to live together in
harmony with nature.

BERNIE

That you pay rent and insurance
into?

TRIP

Society costs. We lease the old
Lady Foot Locker on 15th and
Congress.

EMMA

We're reclaiming it.

TRIP

With our bodies.

EMMA

Making our bodies and natural oils
one with the carpeting and
concrete, we're going to break the
walls down and return the carbon to
the Earth.

TRIP

It's an art project.

BERNIE

This is your profession?

TRIP

It is.

EMMA

It is. I owe it all to this sweet man.

TRIP

Aw.

EMMA

His dedication to eschewing material possession. Earthly wealth and flimsy status symbols.

TRIP

I just... hate GMOs so darn much. And credit cards. And banks. And air conditioning. Look at this disgusting excess. Raspberry hot sauce! Seedless grapes! Whoever heard of seedless grapes?

BERNIE

It's an abomination.

EMMA

It is?

TRIP

It's a sign of the end times.

BERNIE

You know what, it *is*. If the Lord had any mercy he'd crack the San Andreas fault and let the sea swallow us up right ahead of the four horsemen. Half an avocado or 20 pounds of rice!

EMMA

(catching up)

And for what? Big business.

TRIP

(scoff)

What's that? Big business!

BERNIE

An assembly line of trucks and laborers and chemicals running behind it to get you an avocado in the dead of winter.

TRIP

Avocado is a scam on a generation
of people who have forgotten
mayonnaise.

EMMA

Ha ha, Trip--

BERNIE

A whole country wooed on exoticism,
eating foods totally out of sync
with their growing seasons. You
know how much energy it takes to
put a tomato on your plate this
time of year?

TRIP

You don't have to tell me! It takes
every member of the household
working 7 days a week just to keep
us in enough produce to get through
the winter.

BERNIE

Really!

EMMA

We're just starting to get the hang
of composting our own waste.

TRIP

The new sprouts are looking much
hardier.

BERNIE

What are you planting this year?

EMMA

Corn.

TRIP

Corn. And beans.

EMMA

And peppers.

TRIP

Peppers.

BERNIE

For all those people?

EMMA

Squash?

BERNIE

You're going to have a hard time
come March. It's not too late to
plant some spinach and onions.

EMMA

Actually, most of our resources are
devoted to growing "one" crop.

TRIP

Yes. "One" crop.
(guessing)
Mushhhrooo--

EMMA

Marijuana.

TRIP

--Juana. Marijuana. Reefer.

EMMA

Kush.

BERNIE

Emmanuline.

TRIP

A blessed strain of ganja so rosy
and pure that our unfettered
singular consciousness will join
with the Higher One in the Cosmos.

EMMA

(pained)
Mmhmm.

BERNIE

Is that legal?

TRIP

Not even a little bit. So believe
me, when I say we pay for
insurance, we pay for "insurance."
Not every cop likes to get his beak
wet, but let's just say we've got
enough enlightened minds in City
Halls to keep our little lettuce
farm green.

EMMA

(cover with laugh)
Okay Scarface.

BERNIE
I am shocked.

EMMA
It's the life we've chosen--

BERNIE
All this time and Texas hasn't even
legalized medicinal marijuana?

EMMA
(weary)
Right?

TRIP
Right!

BERNIE
Lesotho and Zimbabwe just legalized
medicinal marijuana. South Africa
will be next once they get a look
at the boon it brings to the
Lesotho economy. How can America
could be so far behind the curve?

Right.

EMMA

Right.

TRIP

BERNIE (CONT'D)
It's been invaluable in the field.
Fallow years, when our funding
doesn't come through, or when we're
too far out in the field to depend
on supply shipments, you can always
count on a freshly rolled reefer to
tide your patients over.

TRIP
(groping for next rung)
So true.

EMMA
(also lost)
And accurate.

TRIP
True and accurate.

BERNIE
Of course, when I was starting out
there was an onus on all charitable
workers to maintain the strictest
of Puritanical morality.
(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

The men never abided it, you could always find beer in the hospital coolers along with the vaccines and blood, but believe it or not it was Prince Harry who got the tide turning on that sort of rigid archdeacon-y culture.

As Bernie continues talking, Emma and Trip lean in to whisper together. (Mix Bernie low, put Emma/Trip in foreground.)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

He was still a bit in his wild days, but they make exceptions for royalty. So much like his mother, he didn't care for rank, he'd sit and talk and partake in kush with whomever had to offer it. Silly, but that small gesture was enough to move the needle forward. I'd always hoped to have that kind of influence on public health, to make that shift--

EMMA

We should have said opium.

TRIP

This isn't working. She's too quick.

EMMA

Stop engaging her, she's getting ahead of you!

TRIP

I told you I should have gone flat Earth.

EMMA

You've only seen one video!

TRIP

The hippie truther commune angle's not extreme enough.

EMMA

Change up.

TRIP

I can't, we're in too deep.

EMMA

There's still one Ace left.

TRIP
I don't want to.

EMMA
This will work.

TRIP
I don't want to.

EMMA
Do it.

BERNIE
-- a bold public demonstration of
life, something that can shock the
world like that, could be just the
thing!

WE HEAR: Trip slide over towards Bernie.

TRIP
There's one more thing.

EMMA
In the interest of full disclosure.

TRIP
Our... society can only thrive on
egalitarianism. Food, money,
shelter... Love.

Trip waffles between seduction and nausea.

BERNIE
Oh my.

TRIP
You have very noble features. Can I
sit beside you? Excuse my reach.

EMMA
(low)
Oh god.
(force, sincere)
This is the way of life we've
chosen to embrace.

TRIP
You have such soft skin. Are these
your original breasts? They're very
solid and I am... I have not been
able to... concentrate. On my eggs.

EMMA
Easy buddy.

TRIP
Want me to braid your hair?

BERNIE
That's... that's... that's...

TRIP
I can do a fishtail.

EMMA
Genuine openness. Honesty.
Equality. Nudity.

TRIP
Right! Class and social standing
are artifices based on clothing and
trivial demonstrations of wealth.

BERNIE
I do not think that's funny.

EMMA
Neither do we.

TRIP
(about to puke)
Come on baby, show me some good
loving.

BERNIE
That theory totally discounts the
influence racial bias,
socioeconomic privilege, and
gendered roles in culture.

Damn it!

EMMA

TRIP
Oh COME ON.

BERNIE (CONT'D)
I'm trying to be open to your
interests.

EMMA
I give up.

TRIP
I'm gonna put my underwear back on.

BERNIE
I'm worried about you. Quitting
your job.

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Looking at "grad school" Living
with this, I'm sorry sweetheart,
this "boy" with obviously confused
sexual impulses, who can't even
piece together middle class
buzzwords about socialism without
getting derailed by the demands of
his Don Johnson!

EMMA

Lyndon Johnson.

TRIP

I thought I was doing pretty good!

BERNIE

You're a smart girl. You have the
talents and resources to make a
real difference.

EMMA

Where?

BERNIE

You can't live like this.

EMMA

I am *stable*.

TRIP

The Collective is a loving,
supportive environment--

EMMA

I am happy and you should be happy.
You wouldn't know the difference if
I was growing weed in a Payless--

TRIP

Foot Locker.

EMMA

Or running a farm to table bakery
out of my garage. What's the
difference if I'm planning society
weddings or not? What's the
difference if I keep up with
calligraphy? You wouldn't know one
way or another.

BERNIE

I wouldn't! I don't even know your
home address. Or your boyfriend's
name.

TRIP

I feel like I've said it several times.

BERNIE

I didn't even know what to order you for lunch.

EMMA

So you picked *huevos rancheros*?

BERNIE

It was attractive in the photo.

EMMA

It's eggs and salsa!

BERNIE

If you didn't want them, we could have ordered something else.

EMMA

That's not the point!

BERNIE

That *is* the point. Our old neighbors are gone. Our old church is a barbecue restaurant now. Your father's... your father. You've always been the constant in my life and now you need help and I don't know how.

EMMA

Stop guessing.

TRIP

Em.

BERNIE

I know I have not been an ideal mother. I am trying to correct that error.

WE HEAR: the waitress cough

HOSTESS

Sorry. Um. Are we all finished here?

BERNIE

Oh! My goodness. Yes.

EMMA

Yes. Thank you.

WE HEAR: the waitress approach and gather up the empty dishes.

BERNIE

I hope we weren't being too loud.
I'm a little deaf. In the grocery store, the cashier sometimes has to practically shout in my ear so I know which button to push...

HOSTESS

Oh no, not a problem.

BERNIE

This is my daughter. I'm moving to the area, we were talking about retirement homes.

EMMA

(very low)
Fuggin' kidding me.

TRIP

Hey, this was delicious.

EMMA

Very good.

HOSTESS

Yeah? Brand new salsa recipe.
Owner's cousin sent us a bunch of mangos.

BERNIE

Is *that* what I'm tasting?

EMMA

(to Trip)
Grab my coat.

BERNIE

Were these local eggs?

HOSTESS

I don't know. They put a lot of butter and milk in 'em.

BERNIE

Very similar to guineafowl.
Especially the color.

EMMA
Miss. Can I get a check?

HOSTESS
Are those like guinea pigs?

BERNIE
Guinea pigs!

EMMA
Just a ballpark figure?

BERNIE
They're wild hens.

EMMA
Miss.

BERNIE
They nest all over Sub-Saharan
Africa, they are mean and *loud*.
They wouldn't give up their eggs
without a fight.

EMMA
Didn't she already tell this story?

BERNIE
We kept a guard goose.

TRIP
The guard goose?

BERNIE
Only bird meaner than those hens.
They wouldn't sleep in the coops.
That goose was as good as a truffle
pig about finding those nests.

HOSTESS
They really have geese in Africa?

EMMA
Show her the bookmarks.

WE HEAR: Bernie pulls out her purse.

BERNIE
I have some wonderful wax cloth
bookmarks--

TRIP
We'll take the check.

BERNIE

Oh, we're not done yet, are we?
Lovely family meal, we need a
little something sweet to top it
off.

EMMA

Oh-kay.

BERNIE

(stage whisper)

We have a birthday to celebrate.

HOSTESS

Well! Happy birthday.

WE HEAR: the hostess pass out dessert menus.

HOSTESS (CONT'D)

The flan and the brownie are good
for sharing. We could do either one
with whipped cream or hot fudge.

BERNIE

I haven't had a taste of chocolate
since the royal wedding. And of
course then, everyone wanted to
flavor everything with lemons.

TRIP

Mm.

BERNIE

What do we think, gang? Hot fudge?

TRIP

Sure.

EMMA

Whatever's quickest.

BERNIE

I don't remember when I had a
brownie last. Have you got any ice
cream to go with it?

HOSTESS

We could do that.

BERNIE

What a treat. You don't mind, do
you dears? I can't imagine the
fudge or the ice cream is organic.

HOSTESS
It's just syrup out of a can.

EMMA
We'll eat around it.

WE HEAR: the hostess gather up the menus.

HOSTESS
I'll get that right in.

EMMA
(low)
Take the cash.

BERNIE
(overriding)
Take a bookmark.

WE HEAR: Bernie hand a bookmark to the waitress.

HOSTESS
I couldn't.

BERNIE
Pay what you will, dear, proceeds
to the mission. You know, there *is*
such a thing as African geese, but
they're not really African.

HOSTESS
Really?

BERNIE
I heard somewhere they originally
came from China. We got ours from
UNICEF approximately two minutes
our last chicken was eaten. Too
late, we thought, and we were all
set to cook him for dinner, but
then he went waddling out into the
bush and came barking back fifteen
minutes later, chasing an entire
fleet of guineafowl out of the
grass and into our empty coop!

TRIP
Wow!

HOSTESS
Amazing!

BERNIE
Barked just like a dog.

EMMA

A terrier.

BERNIE

And we named him--

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Jimmy Swaggert.

EMMA

Jimmy Swaggert.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

That's right! Oh dear, did I
already tell this story?

HOSTESS

(departing polite laugh)
I'll be right back with your
dessert.

WE HEAR: the hostess collect the menus and depart.

EMMA

Those wild eggs. How did they
taste?

BERNIE

What does anything taste like? Very
rich.

EMMA

But what did they taste like?

BERNIE

(mildly disconcerted)
Like a... it was very Earthy. Of
course it's their diet that gives
it that flavor... goodness, that
tomato juice is going right through
me. If you'll excuse me--

WE HEAR: Bernie slide her chair back, as if to stand.

EMMA

Trip and I got married last year.

TRIP

Ohh--

EMMA

And we didn't invite you. On
purpose.

BERNIE
 (phony gasp/splutter)
Married? But you just met this Trip-
 -Tristan.

EMMA
 Ahh-HA!

TRIP
 What-ha?

EMMA
 You *knew*. *YOU KNEW*, you know, I
 know you know. Jimmy Swaggert the
 barking goose! Guineafowl! UNICEF!
 There was an article about that
 bird on the back of the page of our
 wedding spread in *Departures!*

TRIP
 (gasp)
 The in-flight magazine!

EMMA
 It's in my *scrapbook*.

TRIP
 (gasp)
 That magazine was only available on
 domestic flights.

Bernie's prim enunciation slips away.

BERNIE
 Oh for God's sake.

EMMA
 When were you on a domestic flight?

TRIP
 (gasp)
 You didn't fly in from
 Johannesburg.

BERNIE
 Lower your voice.

Trip vocalizes as Emma rips into Bernie. (Hype man)

EMMA
 EXCUSE ME NO. BOOM. IN YOUR FACE.
 Better call up those nuns from
 Baton Rouge and tell 'em you need a
 ride back to the airport!
 (MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

Or maybe you can hitch a ride with
some other evangelical bricklayer!
They might buy your bookmarks!
'Cause we're not buying it here--

BERNIE

I've been living in Ohio.

This stops Emma and Trip flat.

TRIP

You've been--

EMMA

Ohio.

BERNIE

Not by choice! You had my credit
cards cancelled and I got stuck.

EMMA

My credit cards.

BERNIE

You weren't liable. And it's me who
gets stuck at the airport counter
trying to get my bag back from the
customs people. Have you ever had
to throw a roller bag over a
highway embankment?

EMMA

That was... that was seven years
ago.

BERNIE

Couldn't even get work in a public
hospital. I check ears at the
Minute Clinic.

EMMA

You've been in Ohio.

BERNIE

It's been seven years and I can't
get back to my real work. That
snafu with the police precludes me
from working with all but the
shammiest prayer-for-healing non-
profits. The only mission list you
don't have to pay up front for was
when they were rounding up aid for
the ebola epidemic.

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)
 Life is too short to end it
 bleeding out of your eyes.

TRIP
 You're a *nurse*.

BERNIE
 I'm a nurse, not a Superman.

EMMA
 No. You're a swindling, credit card
 stealing granny with a Robin Hood
 complex.

BERNIE
 And you're an unemployed party
 planner who married a Conrad Hilton
 knock-off!

TRIP
 Hey!

WE HEAR: Emma getting up, throwing cash/coin on the table.

EMMA
 You know what? Here. One, two,
 three... ninety-six dollars and
 fifty cents. All my lunch money.
 Take it. I don't care what you do
 with it, but that's all you're
 getting. Huevos rancheros my butt,
 I'm going to the bathroom.

WE HEAR: Emma stalk off.

BERNIE
 Emmanuline!

EMMA
 (distant)
 Better hurry, you'll get stuck with
 the check.

WE HEAR: down the hall, Emma push into the bathroom and hit
 the hand dryer.

TRIP
 I am way nicer than Conrad Hilton.

WE HEAR: Trip ease out of his chair and follower her.

WE HEAR: waiters begin singing a happy birthday song. Bernie
 throws down her fork.

INT. BATHROOM -- CON'T

WE HEAR: hand dryer.

Emma splashes water on her face, trying not to cry.

EMMA
Ohio. Ohio.

WE HEAR: Trip knocking gently at the door.

WE HEAR: The hand dryer stop. We hear the little knock again.

TRIP
(from other side of the
door)
Hey. It's me.

WE HEAR: Emma open the door. Trip squeezes in.

TRIP (CONT'D)
Hey.

WE HEAR: Emma smush into Trip's arms and cry a little on his chest.

EMMA
Ohio! With a Target and a Walmart
and she probably saw Sex and the
City on TBS.

TRIP
Hey. Hey.

WE HEAR: Trip murmur and pat her back until she calms down a little.

EMMA
I googled it. From here to Ohio?
It's a 19 hour car ride. It's \$142
for bus fare. \$167 to fly!

TRIP
Okay.

EMMA
(still blubbering)
A stamp is 50 cents. I don't know
how much phone calls are. She calls
collect anyhow.
(whimper)
Why doesn't this bathroom have any
paper towels?

TRIP

Here. Use my sleeve.

WE HEAR: Emma wipe her face and blow her nose.

TRIP (CONT'D)

Oh. Uh. Okay, that's fine.

WE HEAR: Emma blow her nose again. Trip squeezes some water out of his cuff.

TRIP (CONT'D)

I'll just, uh, roll up my sleeves.

EMMA

This is not what I wanted.

TRIP

What's that?

EMMA

I thought I'd feel vindicated. Like I outwitted her. Or like a grown-up. Where are all the grown-ups? Dad still gets mad at me for getting mad at her. "She's your mother." What does that even mean?

TRIP

What did he do after she left?

EMMA

The first time, nothing. We wrote her letters on Sundays and told everyone where she'd gone and what she was doing. She was a crusader. She was brave.

TRIP

Second time?

EMMA

Only talked about her when people asked.

(beat)

I don't how long he kept writing to her. I quit by the first Christmas. What was I supposed to tell her about? Getting my period on the log flume at Six Flags and being stranded for four hours because the youth leader confused me with Cindy Faircox and no one checked the bathroom?

(MORE)

EMMA (CONT'D)

Throwing my favorite beaded vest in the garbage behind the Burger King because a bunch of high school girls threw milkshakes on it?

TRIP

Aw, baby Emma.

EMMA

If I *had* told her about it, she would have told me a story about digging wells and treating malaria. And it's not fair! I am not a bad person.

TRIP

I know.

EMMA

Seven years, she's been \$167 down the road. She could have come here if she'd wanted to. She could have called if she wanted to.

TRIP

You didn't want her to.

EMMA

She didn't know that.

WE HEAR: Emma hug Trip again, speak with her face smushed against his shoulder.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I'm such a chump. The check. The credit cards. The self-righteous letters. There was *no* goose.

Long beat.

TRIP

What do you want to do?

EMMA

I want to go home. I want to watch *Queer Eye*. I want to adopt a new kitten. Why didn't I ever get another cat? I can have cats. I am an adult. I can have a kitten and I can take care of it and it'll have shots and a microchip and a real water dish!

TRIP

Okay. We can do all of those things today. I think...

(checks watch)

Yep, it's only 2 o'clock. We can swing it.

EMMA

I want two kittens.

TRIP

Okay.

EMMA

Tabbies.

Expectant beat. Trip laugh.

EMMA (CONT'D)

What?

TRIP

You are a good person.

EMMA

What.

TRIP

Observing, not advising.

Emma groan.

TRIP (CONT'D)

Look, this time last year I was fantasizing about pushing my dad off an overpass. Circumstances changed, forced us to see eye-to-eye. Now I hate him less.

EMMA

That is a glowing endorsement for your therapist.

TRIP

He didn't change. I didn't change. The way we communicated changed and... so did the relationship. Think about it. She shakes you down for money every few years. You get in a fight, you claim the moral high ground, at everyone goes back to their separate corners. Being right doesn't change anything.

EMMA

It's the only way I can keep my head on straight. She makes me feel like I'm five, begging for candy.

TRIP

There's no law that says you have to have an adult relationship with your mom.

EMMA

I can't even picture it.

TRIP

Is it something you want?

EMMA

I don't know. I don't know. I don't know.

TRIP

No matter what you decide, I'll back you up. But I can't help if I don't know what you want.

EMMA

I want my twenty years back. I want to trade her in for a proper stepmom and a Lisa Frank Trapper Keeper.

TRIP

If you never want to speak to her again, we'll change our phone numbers. We'll move to a new city.

EMMA

We should probably set up some new security parameters on our joint accounts.

TRIP

I started texting our broker while y'all were arguing.

EMMA

She was in Ohio.

Beat.

TRIP

Whatever you want to do, I'm right here.

EMMA

Let's pay the poor waitress first.

WE HEAR: Emma and Trip leave the bathroom.

INT. RESTAURANT -- CON'T

WE HEAR: Emma and Trip walking towards the table. Distant kitchen noise. Emma stops short, Trip bumps into her.

WE HEAR: A sparkler still burning.

BERNIE

Oh!

WE HEAR: Emma walk forward cautiously.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

I didn't want to put the sparkler out. In case you... I know it's not technically your birthday. Belated birthday.

EMMA

I thought you'd be back on the highway with the nuns.

BERNIE

The nuns started driving back this morning. Beat the traffic.

EMMA

Well. It was charitable of them to drop you off at the restaurant.

BERNIE

I did do *some* of the driving down here. We're all old women, driving is a collaborative endeavour. You're not really in a sex cult, are you?

EMMA

No.

BERNIE

Good. You think credit cards are a scam, hah! You've never seen a holy man peddling free love.

WE HEAR: Emma sit down, extinguish the candle.

EMMA

Is that why you hang out with the sisters?

BERNIE

No. Nuns never press you for gas money. Thirty six dollars would have been my share, less the man hours at the wheel. I've never forgotten a penny I owed anywhere. No amount of charitable kindness erases this ledger.

EMMA

How much do you owe me?

BERNIE

A fortune.

WE HEAR: Emma move the plates.

EMMA

Didn't stop you from putting that ninety-six dollars in your purse.

BERNIE

I'm not made of stone. And there's no way your fella's going to take a money order from me now.

EMMA

I *KNEW* you were doing the rental scam!

BERNIE

I hadn't *committed* to the idea. Your boy is very sympathetic. I half thought he'd cut me a check.

EMMA

That will not happen.

BERNIE

I do like him. And you're really married?

EMMA

Almost a year.

BERNIE

Ah. Congratulations.

Beat.

BERNIE (CONT'D)

Did you know your father and I got married the same year as Charles and Diana? I didn't have the train, but I had the sleeves. I was older than her, though. She was so composed. At every turn. Then later you find out what a mess it all was behind closed door, Charles never should have dragged her into it, he wasn't man enough to get the woman he wanted the first time around so he shuffles right off to the altar knowing *full well* he's not going to be faithful, and she must have known. Women always know. But she probably didn't even have a name for it. She didn't know what she knew, just a vague gut feeling. She just thought, "The world would think I was crazy if I didn't go through with it." Why did you marry your boy, there?

EMMA

Trip?

BERNIE

I hate that name. Would he mind if I called him Pat? I saw your pictures and I thought, by god she's hooked a fish, but you didn't marry the money, did you?

EMMA

He's an accountant.

BERNIE

He doesn't look like one. You don't look like one.

TRIP

(slight distance)

Thank you?

BERNIE

Your father is the only man I was ever with. I was brought up to be very proper, and virginity was so important. Starting in junior high, seemed like every Sunday School just went on and on about it. I never really understood why.

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

And then on our wedding night, I didn't know how it was supposed to be. They never tell you outright on Sex in New York--

EMMA

And the City.

BERNIE

Well, they never say outright how it's supposed to feel or what you're supposed to think about it. I never could keep my mind in order. I started thinking, you have one husband, one baby, one set of dishes, if Diana can do it--

EMMA

Princess Diana had two babies.

BERNIE

Look what good it did her. You're not pregnant?

EMMA

No.

BERNIE

I don't want to scare you off it.

EMMA

More than you already did?

BERNIE

I'm trying to tell you, I needed a straight line to hang on to. Your father was a straight line. He read the newspaper and didn't drink all that much. Religion was a straight line. 12 hour shifts at the hospital, it's so much easier to focus when your feet hurt. I thought being a mother would be the absolute clearest of lines, that it would make my purpose clear and direct. But it doesn't do that. It put my every inadequacy under a microscope. I'd wake up and forget where I was for a minute, then I'd remember...
Soiled myself in the grocery store once because I couldn't make up my mind whether to leave my cart in the line.

EMMA

Mom.

BERNIE

I don't think they're all like that. My sisters loved having children. Our next door neighbors had a little girl at the same time as we did. Cheerful sonsabitches, it was like living next door to the Cleavers.

EMMA

Bernie.

BERNIE

I used to call the shop and hang up on the answering machine on Saturday nights.

EMMA

You did?

BERNIE

You sounded so happy on that machine. They changed the message last week. It's one of those English robotic voices now.

EMMA

Wow. Four months overdue.

BERNIE

It's silly. You never changed the outgoing message on the recording either. I could have been calling during the worst stomach flu of your life or while you're crying your eyes out over The Green Mile and never known it.

EMMA

The Green Mile?

BERNIE

It was in the dollar bin at CVS. I love Tom Hanks.

EMMA

You always called on Saturdays? Saturdays were usually good days.

BERNIE
I knew it. I had a feeling.
Mother's intuition.

EMMA
Sundays are better.
(beat)
If you still want to call
sometimes.

BERNIE
You'll record a new message?

EMMA
Or... I might pick up. For the time
being.

BERNIE
Oh.

EMMA
But you can't bring up your mission
trips.

BERNIE
Haven't got one to speak of.

EMMA
Or charitable opportunities. Or
juice. Or vitamins. And no woeful
tales of good Samaritans or weepy
anecdotes about me as a child.

BERNIE
What else am I supposed to talk to
you about? Television and food?

EMMA
I would be okay with that. TV and
food.

BERNIE
So common.

EMMA
I hate that little squirrely guy
from the Green Mile.

BERNIE
Everybody does.

EMMA
Something

BERNIE
Something.

EMMA
(beat)
Do you think Trip is an Aiden? Or a
Mr. Big.

BERNIE
Mr. Big? Please. He married you,
didn't he?

EMMA
Mr. Big marries Carrie eventually.

BERNIE
I don't recognize the films as
canon. The ice cream is melting.
Are you going to eat part of this?

EMMA
If you're sharing.

BERNIE
He's a Smith. No, what am I saying,
he's a MacDougal! The hair, the
family money!

EMMA
He's not a doctor.

BERNIE
And he's not... ?
(impotent)

EMMA
Nope. Consummated.

BERNIE
Well!
(to Trip)
Are you going to join us?

TRIP
Sure.

WE HEAR: Trip sit, the three spoons digging into the sundae.

TRIP (CONT'D)
Do I have to be one of the
boyfriends? I really think I'm more
like a Monica.

