

THE DAMAGE DONE

(revised)

by

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A city park. One bench. (Or a picnic table) Maybe a trash can.

Bobby is sitting on the bench. There is a cane leaning against the bench near him. He is wearing jeans and a t-shirt

Tina comes on. She is better dressed. Nothing fancy though.

TINA

Okay. You're here.

BOBBY

Yeah... Like I said I'd be.
It's been awhile, eh.

TINA

Two months. You were at Holly's birthday party two months ago.

BOBBY

I mean it's been awhile since we met here. So this is kinda like old times.

TINA

Well let's hope not.

BOBBY

Come on, it wasn't all--

TINA

It was in this park, maybe even on that bench where it dawned on me.

BOBBY

What?

TINA

That it was never going to work out.

BOBBY

Really.

TINA

Yeah. I mean I didn't leave you right away because--

BOBBY

Because you decided to try anyway,

TINA
 Yeah, well that's what I do. I try
 anyway.
 (off cane)
 Someone leave that here?

BOBBY
 No it's mine.

TINA
 What's wrong?

BOBBY
 I fell out of the forklift.

TINA
 Fell out?

BOBBY
 Fell *getting* out.

TINA
 And?

BOBBY
 Busted up my ankle. You know, from
 how I landed.

TINA
 How bad is it?

BOBBY
 Not sure. I need to get x-rays.
 (off cane)
 But in the meantime...I got this.

TINA
 And that helps...

BOBBY
 Yeah... I mean it's still--

TINA
 Let's see.

BOBBY
 What?

TINA
 Let's see how you use it.

BOBBY
 Really?

TINA

Yeah...

BOBBY

Okay. I mean it's just a basic thing, right. So...

He stands and takes few steps with the cane in his left hand

TINA

Which ankle is it?

BOBBY

(points to left)

This one...

TINA

And that helps? What you're doing now helps.

BOBBY

Yeah...

TINA

Funny...

BOBBY

Why?

TINA

Because it should be in the other hand.

BOBBY

Oh...

TINA

Yeah, "oh."

Bobby switches hands for the return to the bench.

BOBBY

Yeah this feels a lot better.

TINA

It shouldn't.

BOBBY

Why not.

TINA

Because you're still doing it wrong.

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

The cane and the foot with the injured ankle should hit the ground at the same time.

BOBBY

Oh...

TINA

Yeah...

BOBBY

I guess I was just imagining that it was better before. Like wishful thinking or something.

TINA

Or something...

BOBBY

(sitting)

How'd you know that.

TINA

Kyle busted his ankle a few years back.

BOBBY

Yeah I remember one of the girls telling me that. How is Kyle?

TINA

He's fine. I'll tell him you asked.

BOBBY

Like he cares. Or does he? Does he all of a sudden give a shit what I say about anything?

TINA

I really don't know. Your name only comes up in connection to your daughters.

BOBBY

About what a disappointment I am you mean.

TINA

Not always. And not much at all for quite awhile now.

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

When they were younger and he saw one of them crying because you hadn't turned up to take them somewhere when you were supposed to... We both had a lot to say about you then.

BOBBY

I'm better about that now.

TINA

Are you?

BOBBY

Sure. Oh. Has Holly said something? I mean I missed her final hockey game but--

TINA

Why Holly?

BOBBY

What?

TINA

Why do you always assume it's Holly that had a problem with--

BOBBY

Because Alison never complains about anything.

TINA

Right. And why do you think that is?

BOBBY

Because she probably gave up on me a long time ago.

TINA

Or maybe she just cuts you more slack. Because she knows.

BOBBY

Knows what?

TINA

That you need it. What else? She's a very understanding young woman.

BOBBY

Yeah...

TINA

Anyway it was a shutout. Holly's last game she got a shutout.

BOBBY

I know. I feel bad about missing it.

TINA

She's the only goalie in the league to get one. Ever. It was historical. It was fucking... monumental. And you missed it because--

BOBBY

Well I had a lot going on then and--

TINA

You forgot. You just forgot, Bobby.

BOBBY

Yeah. But if I'd know she was going to get a shutout--

TINA

Oh. You mean if you could see into the future and notice that big fat zero on the scoreboard and then watch her make that stupendous save in the dying seconds of the game to preserve the shutout then you would have definitely been there.

(she looks at him)

I'm sorry. I promised myself I wouldn't do that.

BOBBY

You mean beat up on me...

TINA

I mean stress the negative.

BOBBY

Or dwell on the past.

TINA

Well the past is all we have so...

(sitting)

So... you're a licensed forklift operator now.

BOBBY

Yeah. Well definitely on the way. I mean I still need to be observed.

TINA

I bet you do.

(off the cane)

You know what? I think you should lose the cane.

BOBBY

No it's probably way too early to--

TINA

Why haven't you had the ankle x-rayed yet?

BOBBY

I'm still looking for a doctor.

TINA

You mean a certain kind of doctor. One who'll "doctor" the x-rays for you. People get put in jail for what you're doing, Bobby.

He is just looking at her.

TINA (CONT'D)

Lose the cane. Drop the application to workman's comp. Go back to work tomorrow like you've had a miraculous recovery. And avoid the jail time you might get for insurance fraud.

BOBBY

For a first offence?

TINA

What are you talking about?

BOBBY

You mean they'd count those break-ins I was part of?

TINA

Why wouldn't they?

BOBBY

I was basically a child.

TINA

They don't go by level of maturity.
You were 20.

BOBBY

A messed-up 20 who was being
pressured by his peers.

TINA

That defence didn't really work the
first time.

BOBBY

Well a three month sentence wasn't
bad. It could have been a lot more.

TINA

And it will be this time. Lose the
cane.

BOBBY

Okay. Yeah... I was feeling pretty
bad about it anyway. I'm just
trying to buy myself some time to
pursue my other interest. It's
really hard to get any writing done
when you're always working the late
shift. And I'm not senior enough
to--

TINA

Wait. Back up a little. Writing?
You're trying to write something?

BOBBY

Yeah. I thought Ally would have
told you. I'm writing again.

TINA

Again as in you were... writing
before?

BOBBY

You knew that. When we were
together I wrote stuff sometimes.
You knew that, T.

TINA

No I didn't.

BOBBY

Yeah you knew. You told me to stop.

TINA

No I didn't. Why would I tell you to stop something I didn't know you were doing in the first place?

BOBBY

You told me to stop whatever it was that was keeping me from getting a job and keeping it.

TINA

And that was writing.

BOBBY

You knew that,

TINA

No I didn't!

BOBBY

I fucking showed you some of it.

TINA

Some of it. What? You mean that poem? That *one* poem you wrote.

BOBBY

You said you liked it.

TINA

Well I might have said it was pretty good but--

BOBBY

You said you *really* liked it. And ever since then I've had this dream about doing a lot more. And you know, making a go of it.

TINA

(looks at him)
Are you retarded?

BOBBY

Hey. Come on. First of all no one uses that word anymore. Even I know that, and you being this big shot social worker who probably has to deal with people who might be... be...

TINA

Challenged?

BOBBY

Yeah challenged in that way, well you should definitely not use it.

TINA

I don't. I never use it. It's offensive.

BOBBY

Right.

TINA

Right. But are you? Are you fucking retarded, Bobby?! You write one poem 17 years ago or something, I say it's okay and you--

BOBBY

Not okay. Really good. You said it was really good.

TINA

Whatever!! That's the thing that made you secretly want to be a writer all these years? Are you fucking kidding me?

BOBBY

It wasn't a secret. I just never mentioned it.

TINA

What's the difference?

BOBBY

Well if you'd have asked I would have told you.

TINA

Asked. Why would I feel I needed to ask that, Bobby. Think back for a minute. We're doing whatever we were doing all those years ago. Shopping, having sex, arguing, moving from one crappy place to another. And in the middle of all that I was just supposed to stop and ask you..."Hey. How's the writing coming along anyway"?!

BOBBY

No. But it might have helped if you had.

TINA
Jesus...
(muttering)
Retard...

BOBBY
I heard that.

TINA
Good.

BOBBY
Yeah. Anyway now is different.

TINA
I'm sorry?

BOBBY
I'm almost finished?

TINA
Finished what?

BOBBY
My first book.

TINA
You first what?

BOBBY
Book. You know a...

TINA
A novel. You're writing a novel?

BOBBY
No not a novel. It's real. The
story is real.

TINA
What story.

BOBBY
Our story.

TINA
Our story. You mean it's about you
and me.

BOBBY
And everyone else. All our friends.
Our parents.

TINA
Our parents? Jesus. You can't do that.

BOBBY
Why not. They're part of the story.

TINA
Yeah but--

BOBBY
Don't worry. I changed their names.

TINA
You changed their names.

BOBBY
Yeah so they wouldn't get upset.

TINA
So that means you changed our names too.

BOBBY
No. Why would I do that?

TINA
Because people would still know who they were if you didn't.

BOBBY
No problem. I made us both orphans who don't know who their parents are.

TINA
But... our names are the same.

BOBBY
Yeah...

TINA
So anyone who knows us will know that that's a lie.

BOBBY
It's not really a--

TINA
I thought this story is supposed to be real.

BOBBY
It is.

TINA

Then that's a fucking lie.

BOBBY

No I'm taking liberties. That's what writers do.

TINA

And that's what you are.

BOBBY

Absolutely. And so far it's going pretty good. I read some of it to Willie and he--

TINA

Oh. Willie liked it, did he. Was he wasted at the time?

BOBBY

He said he wasn't. And he let me keep reading it to him for quite awhile.

TINA

How long is quite awhile?

BOBBY

Twenty minutes?

TINA

He was able to concentrate for all that time, eh.

BOBBY

Yeah...

TINA

Well okay then. You're on your way. Your ex-con druggie pal who's never read anything in his life and still, pushing 40, only goes to super hero movies... he can be your guiding light. Your muse.

BOBBY

You don't need to be sarcastic about it. He's not my "muse." Wouldn't that have to be a woman?

TINA

Maybe. I don't know...

BOBBY

Well that's not what he is anyway.
He's just an example of a reader

TINA

A reader who doesn't read.

BOBBY

Well not yet. But maybe he'll start
with my book

TINA

Lets's bet on it. I bet no fucking
way. And I bet the lives of our
children.

BOBBY

Hey that's not--

TINA

He's never read a goddamn thing in
his life, Bobby

BOBBY

Well that could change if there was
something that interested him.

TINA

And what would that be?

BOBBY

My book. My has already interested
him.

TINA

And why's that?

BOBBY

Because some of it is about him.

TINA

Jesus...

BOBBY

Well not him exactly. Just people
like him.

TINA

You mean idiots.

BOBBY

He's not an idiot. He's just had a
lot of bad luck.

(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

And no one was around to show him another way to do things.

TINA

So it's his parents' fault that he turned out the way he did.

BOBBY

Well they didn't help.

TINA

Is that what your book's about? All the ways parents fail their children. Is that why you've changed their names?

BOBBY

Maybe.

TINA

Well what about you? Is there someone like you in your book?

BOBBY

Whatya mean by someone like me?

TINA

Someone who--

BOBBY

Yeah.

TINA

Yeah what?

BOBBY

What you were about to say...

TINA

Which was?

BOBBY

Someone who was never around enough his kids enough. And when he was... he wasn't patient enough or concerned enough or--

TINA

I would have stopped at not there enough.

BOBBY

Yeah?

TINA

You were always concerned. Even if it was from a distance. And you had your moments of impatience but not always.

BOBBY

That just sounds like you're making excuses for me.

TINA

Yeah? Well I guess it's a habit I can't totally shake.

BOBBY

Are still doing that. I mean when you talk to the girls about me.

TINA

Sometimes. I mean they still want to know what happened with us, so I have to tell them that--

BOBBY

That there was a lot I couldn't deal with? That I was pretty much in shock from the time I found out you were pregnant the first time?

TINA

Yeah...

BOBBY

And stayed pretty much in shock right up to when you left me for your idiot boss while you were pregnant the second time. It's okay. All that's true.

TINA

You were too young.

BOBBY

Were you too young?

TINA

I grew up fast. Too fast.

BOBBY

And I couldn't. Not even if I went slow. The truth is, I think I went backwards. Having kids made me feel younger. Dumber. Almost useless.

(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I was always trying to figure out... what my responsibilities were.

TINA

You mean besides holding on to a job.

BOBBY

Yeah besides that. I mean I knew there was a lot more to it, and I was thinking about that all the time, and then all of a sudden you were gone. And living with someone else just because he could support you.

TINA

Which seemed like a pretty good reason at the time.

BOBBY

Yeah, okay. I get that now. But it was another shock, right. Then I was still working out being an... "absent" father and trying to do that the best way I when wham!... You leave the idiot boss and you're with some big shit lawyer. And now he's their every day dad and I'm like what the fuck, I might as well be dead. So yeah. There I was in shock all the time. And not really understanding what was going on... or even if it mattered. Because it looked like it didn't. Not to you. Or even to the kids. Or maybe not even to me.

TINA

(a long look at him)

How come we always get sidetracked onto your problems?

BOBBY

I dunno. It kinda seemed like I should explain why--

TINA

I mean almost right away.

BOBBY

Yeah.

TINA

I ask to meet you, and you show up with a cane you don't even know how to use.

BOBBY

Yeah that got us off on the wrong--

TINA

And that's not why we're here. I didn't want to meet, just so I could--

BOBBY

Try to knock sense into me one more time.

TINA

Right. But there you were in the middle of something that I knew wasn't going to turn out well. And what am I supposed to do. Just let you jump off the cliff again?

BOBBY

Yeah. I get it. But not to worry I was just--

TINA

Trying to buy time to work on your life's dream.

BOBBY

Come on. I never said it was--

TINA

Yeah I'm sorry. Habit.

BOBBY

Yeah. I screw up. You think it's still your job to straighten me out.

TINA

Yeah. But it isn't, is it. I'll leave that to Tracy.

BOBBY

Stacy...

TINA

Right. Sorry. Have you shown her what you've written?

BOBBY

No. I don't know how she'd deal with it. She's still not over the fact that I never played hockey.

TINA

What? You played. I came to your games, Bobby.

BOBBY

I played for fun. I stopped when the coaches started yelling at us. Talk about taking things too seriously. Who needs that shit. But the thing is, her whole family are fanatics about the game. And her dad says he saw me play once, so he's always going on at me about how I could have been a prospect. I think he's got me mixed up with someone else.

TINA

So do I. I mean you were okay but--

BOBBY

Whoa. Now you're an expert too? I was more than okay.

TINA

Yeah but you were no Billy Johnson.

BOBBY

No. But-- You noticed? You noticed how good Billy Johnson was?

TINA

We all did.

BOBBY

Whatya mean, you *all*?

TINA

All the girlfriends. He was our favourite.

BOBBY

He was?

TINA

Yeah. Where is he now anyway?

BOBBY

He's dead.

TINA

No way.

BOBBY

Yeah so much for that super-stardom you all expected, eh. He drank himself to death. Plus people say he had other problems.

TINA

Besides dying?

BOBBY

Besides drinking.

TINA

Drugs?

BOBBY

Yeah. A lot of them. And he was HIV positive. So was his wife.

TINA

Yeah? Who was she?

BOBBY

We didn't know her. He met her in rehab. She was on the national figure skating team

TINA

And is she still around?

BOBBY

No. She died too.

TINA

Wow. All that talent and then...

BOBBY

What?

TINA

Nothing. It all turned to nothing. He might as well have been nothing right from the start.

BOBBY

Do you mean that?

TINA

No. Yes. I don't know. Look here's the thing. The reason we're here.

(looks at him)

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

I want you to connect with the girls.

BOBBY

What's that mean? I'm already pretty--

TINA

I mean really. Really connect. Become as close as you can to them. They need more than one person in their lives that they can talk to.

BOBBY

About what?

TINA

Everything. Get as close to them as I am. They'll need you to do that.

BOBBY

They will?

TINA

They do. They will. Whatever. Can you try to do that?

BOBBY

Be like you, you mean?

TINA

Yes.

BOBBY

No. I mean I don't think so. You're like this amazing mother who can do all these amazing things with them, and I'm just. Well I'm not.... I mean I wanna be but... to be like you is almost--

TINA

Calm down. I'm just asking you to be someone they can tell absolutely anything to.

BOBBY

They can do that now, can't they.

TINA

No. They can't.

BOBBY

Okay but they can tell me pretty close to everything. They can tell me a lot and I-- What's this about?

She just looks at him.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Tina?

TINA

I have to go away.

BOBBY

What? Go away where?

TINA

I need to... improve my situation.

BOBBY

I don't get it. What situation?

TINA

Too many people are above me.

BOBBY

Where?

TINA

At work. I need to go away and get more... I need to get a Masters.

BOBBY

You mean go back to school?

TINA

Yes.

BOBBY

Because too many people are telling you what to do.

TINA

Yeah. My "superiors" who know way less than I do... who just don't get what the people I deal with are going through. But they're in charge so... Anyway, there are a few places where you can get a Masters of Social Work in a year. I need to go to one of those.

BOBBY

Where are they?

TINA

Scotland. California. Australia. I like the sound of the one in Australia.

BOBBY

Jesus. You'd go to Australia for a year.

TINA

Yeah. So that's why--

BOBBY

You can't do that. You can't leave the girls.

TINA

Well I can't take them with me. Holly's a year away from--

BOBBY

Yeah she graduating from high school, and you're planning to--

TINA

And Alison wouldn't want to leave Holly so--

BOBBY

Would Kyle go with you?

TINA

Kyle's not in the picture.

BOBBY

Not in what picture? The picture with you going to Australia or the picture where he stays and the girls live with him.

TINA

Neither.

BOBBY

I don't--

TINA

He's just gone. We separated three months ago.

BOBBY

Really?

TINA

Yeah. I asked the girls not to tell you.

BOBBY

Why?

TINA

Because I didn't want you to know.

BOBBY

Why not?

TINA

Because I didn't want you to get your hopes up.

BOBBY

What are you saying, T?

TINA

What do you think I'm saying?

BOBBY

You think I'd be hoping there'd be a chance we could get back together.

TINA

Which there is isn't. Bobby. It's been 15 years.

BOBBY

17.

TINA

17 since I gave up on you. 15 since the actual divorce.

BOBBY

Yeah but it's the giving up on me that I celebrate.

(off her look)

Just kidding.

TINA

Right. Good. Anyway do you know what that means? All that time passing?

BOBBY

Well I know what it means to me.

TINA
And what's that?

BOBBY
It... means that for 15 years I've
been...

TINA
What?

BOBBY
Never mind.

TINA
You've been what?

BOBBY
Missing you. Missing being with the
only person I ever wanted to be
with.

TINA
Really?

BOBBY
Yeah. Sad, eh.

TINA
What about Tracy?

BOBBY
Stacy. It's not the same.

TINA
Or the one before her. Trudy.

BOBBY
Judy. Why do you do that?

TINA
Do what?

BOBBY
Always pretend to get their names
wrong?

TINA
I'm just teasing you.

BOBBY
You're not jealous?

TINA
No.

BOBBY

You sure?

TINA

Yeah. After all this time? That would be nuts. I still care about you Bobby, but there's no way I'd ever want to--

BOBBY

What happened between you and Kyle?

TINA

I think it just... ran its course.

BOBBY

What's that mean? Ran its course.

TINA

It means that we--

BOBBY

I think it means you always knew it wouldn't last forever.

TINA

No it means... It doesn't matter what it means. We need to talk about how you're going to get yourself closer to your daughters.

BOBBY

If you go away.

TINA

When I go away.

BOBBY

So it's for sure.

TINA

I just don't know where yet.

BOBBY

Do you want me to move into your house?

TINA

I don't know. Maybe. Probably.

BOBBY

I'd have to ask Stacy.

TINA

Why?

BOBBY

Well she really likes our apartment.

TINA

That's okay. She can stay there.

BOBBY

I can't do that.

TINA

Sure you can.

BOBBY

No I just can't leave her like that.

TINA

She can visit.

BOBBY

I don't know how that would go down. I mean--

TINA

No, you have to do this! You have to for once put your kids first, okay!? I don't want to fucking hear about whatever it is that might make this "difficult" or... "inconvenient" for you.

BOBBY

Yeah. Okay. But I've done that before. Put them first.

TINA

Not really.

BOBBY

I think I have.

TINA

But you haven't. You've done it when it was easy for you.

BOBBY

Not always.

TINA

Most of the time. And now that you have the beginnings of a big writing career who knows how that's going to affect-

BOBBY

That's not fair.

TINA

You don't think so?

BOBBY

No. I don't.

TINA

Okay. But I wasn't trying to be fair. I was trying to make a point.

BOBBY

Well I could make a point or two myself?

TINA

Yeah? About what?

BOBBY

Kyle.

TINA

What about Kyle?

BOBBY

It's actually about you and Kyle and my daughters.

TINA

He was good for them.

BOBBY

In some ways.

TINA

In what ways, wasn't he?

BOBBY

He pushed them.

TINA

Pushed them...

BOBBY

Yeah you know to--

TINA

Do well in school?

BOBBY

Not just in school. In everything. Why do you think Ally quit the swim team. Kyle was always on her about her backstroke. He wanted to get her extra lessons.

TINA

And that made her not like swimming anymore.

BOBBY

It made it too important. Same with Holly. She mentions once that she might like to be a lawyer, and he drags her down to his office, so she could see what it was like. That backfired on him though, didn't it. Four hours with his money hungry partners was all it took to turn her off ever--

TINA

That was exactly what he wanted her to see.

BOBBY

Sorry?

TINA

How empty and stupid corporate law is... so that hopefully she'd head in another direction. Maybe into human rights law or--

BOBBY

He did that to turn her away from what *he* does?

TINA

He's a very interesting guy in that way. He does what he does for the money, but he has no illusions about what it means. What you're saying about him sometimes pushing them too hard is true but overall--

BOBBY

You wanted to be a family. You wanted you and the girls to be part of a safe family. That's all it was about.

TINA

Yeah. Maybe that's true. So?

BOBBY

He was never their dad.

TINA

They knew that.

BOBBY

I don't think that's true.

TINA

It is.

BOBBY

So how come I heard Alison on the phone once calling him Dad.

TINA

She did that a few times when she was younger. I asked her to stop.

BOBBY

When I heard her say that... I felt like killing myself.

TINA

Come on...

BOBBY

No. It was maybe the worst thing that's ever happened to me.

TINA

She was just a kid. She didn't know what to make of the situation. We were together in that house. We ate breakfast together every morning.

BOBBY

Yeah just like a real suburban family.

TINA

Well we were in the suburbs so...

BOBBY

Right. Have to fit in. And you had barbeques.

TINA

A few. Big fucking deal. Plus you were keeping your distance, Bobby.

BOBBY

Yeah well I didn't what to make of the situation. I didn't like how it made me feel. Stacy calls me Bob by the way.

TINA

So what?

BOBBY

I'm just saying...

TINA

Sure whatever. Would you like me to call you Bob, Bob? Would that make you feel more...

BOBBY

More what?

TINA

Well how does it feel when ... whatsername calls you that?

BOBBY

I don't know. I was just saying...

TINA

More adult? More capable?

BOBBY

Maybe. But you can call me Bobby. It's okay.

TINA

No. She might be on to something. Maybe she gets a better response from you when she uses Bob. It was her that got you into the forklifting business, wasn't it. Maybe she should try moving on to Robert and see how that works. Maybe you'll even start your own forklifting company.

BOBBY

Anyway...

TINA

Anyway what, Bob?

BOBBY

He's gone. Kyle's "not in the picture" anymore, right.

TINA

No. He's not.

BOBBY

Not at all?

TINA

No...

BOBBY

He cheated on you, right?

She just looks at him.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Well did he, or didn't he?

TINA

Yeah...

BOBBY

Just once?

TINA

What's it matter?

BOBBY

So not just once. With different people?

TINA

Yeah. Three of them.

BOBBY

Right.

TINA

Right. And how do you feel... hearing that?

BOBBY

Honestly?

TINA

Of course. What's the point in adding one more lie to our life story.

BOBBY

I feel very fucking happy to hear it.

TINA

Happy? Is that really the word you want to use?

BOBBY

Yeah. Happy is just fine. After all these years you get to feel a little bit of how I felt.

TINA

Because it's the same, right. What I did was the same as when you did it.

BOBBY

Cheating is cheating.

TINA

No it's not.

BOBBY

Oh it's different when you do it.

TINA

I didn't do it to have a sexual adventure. I did it to get away from you!

BOBBY

What the fuck...

TINA

To untie myself from you. And to get out of that fucking useless life I was leading in a basement apartment with two little girls and a guy who couldn't get us out of there because almost everything he did, every job he had... turned to shit.

BOBBY

So you slept with your boss. You slept with him because he had money. You know what that made you?

TINA

Yeah. Smart. Because the three years I spent with him allowed me and the girls to get out of that useless life. It allowed me to go back to school. Become self... sufficient.

BOBBY

And then move on...

TINA

Yeah.

BOBBY

Because you'd gotten everything you needed from him.

TINA

You did your share too.

BOBBY

Of what? My share of what?

TINA

Using people.

BOBBY

For what?

TINA

Sex. Mostly sex. And whatever else you needed. Support. Pity.

BOBBY

Pity. What the...

TINA

Yeah. Or are you going to tell me you were in love with those dozen or so women you fucked.

BOBBY

Not all of them.

TINA

Not any of them.

BOBBY

How would you know?

TINA

Well tell me then. Who'd you love?

BOBBY
This is bullshit!

TINA
Do you love Tracy?

BOBBY
Stacy! Her name is Stacy!

TINA
Who the fuck cares? Did you love
Judy?

BOBBY
Trudy! No that's right... Judy. And
no, not really.

TINA
Not really what, Robert?

BOBBY
I don't... didn't really... love
them.

TINA
Any of them?

BOBBY
Probably not.

TINA
And do you know why?

BOBBY
Because I only ever loved you!
That's why!

TINA
Bullshit! I could buy that for the
first few years maybe, but after
that it was... well you just
couldn't be bothered to put in the
effort with them

BOBBY
The effort. Jesus.

TINA
Yeah you just couldn't be bothered
to care that much.

They look at each other.

BOBBY

So... are you okay? I mean with the Kyle thing.

TINA

Yeah. Like I said it ran its course.

BOBBY

And now you're moving on.

TINA

Yeah.

BOBBY

Because he fucked around.

TINA

There are a lot of reasons. That's one of them.

BOBBY

Yeah. And I'm guessing another one is that you did too?

TINA

Fuck you.

BOBBY

Who did it first?

TINA

(approaching)
What?

BOBBY

Well it wouldn't be the first time you got the ball rolling, would it? And there are even richer guys than Kyle in the world.

TINA

You asshole!

She smashes him in the face.

BOBBY

Hey. What the--

TINA

You prick!
(hits him again)
(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

You've been thinking that all this time? That I'm just a whore, just some--

BOBBY

No but--

TINA

What other choice did I have? Was I just supposed to let me and the girls rot away in that dump we lived in.

(pushes him)

All this time. That's what you held onto.

BOBBY

Well was pretty fucking drastic, what you did.

TINA

Because of you.

(pushes him again)

Because you wouldn't snap out of whatever fucking daze you were in.

(pounding his chest)

I hate your guts!! You hear me? You made me do that.

(more pounding)

You did!!

BOBBY

Okay okay... that's enough...

(grabs her hands)

Knock it off!

TINA

(still at him)

Go to hell.

BOBBY

I mean it!

She swings at his face, he ducks, then pushes her hard. And she falls back onto the ground,

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Jesus...

TINA

It took a lot to leave you. I had all these feelings I had to ignore. All this stuff to forget.

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

Things we'd done together since we were like fourteen. I mean almost everything in my life involved you in some way. And when I tried to move on it was like... I don't know like trying to be a new person or something. My mum said you were just a really bad habit. And that was true, I guess. But you were also... part of me. And not a good part. A painful part that I had to cut off.

(crying)

Why couldn't you just do better. Just pull your head out of your ass, get rid of all your stupid ideas about what you *could* be doing, instead of what you *should* be doing. A musician with no musical ability. An explorer. A goddamn explorer. Remember that? A whole year of listening to you going on about volunteering to go to the South Pole. Jesus. And now you're a writer. Well good fucking luck with that.

They just look at each other.

BOBBY

I thought I should give it a try.

She heads for the bench. Sits.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Did I hurt you?

TINA

No...

(looks at him)

Looks like I hurt you though.

BOBBY

A little.

TINA

Good...

BOBBY

You don't mean that.

TINA

Yeah. I do.

BOBBY

You... I mean we... just got carried away.

TINA

Then or now?

BOBBY

Now. Just then. It was lot of stuff we just kept inside for all that time just... coming out. No one's to blame.

TINA

You are.

BOBBY

Yeah but--

TINA

No you are. You really are. If you ever write about this stuff, you know about you and me, be sure to make that clear.

BOBBY

I already have. Well not completely but Willie thought I was pretty hard on myself.

TINA

You're talking about your "book" now?

BOBBY

Yeah.

TINA

It's really about you and me.

BOBBY

Some of it. Some of it's about... other stuff. Stuff I--

TINA

Stuff you saw?

BOBBY

Saw. Or thought I saw. It gets confusing when you're writing it down.

TINA

It does?

BOBBY

Yeah well... or you get afraid sometimes.

TINA

Of what?

BOBBY

Of the truth I guess. The truth can be pretty scary when you're writing it down.

TINA

If you say so. I just try to kinda live it. Not, you know, make it up or become part of some book or something.

BOBBY

It's me though. It's not someone else. When I write it feels like the real me.

TINA

What about Willie and Sonny and all those other goofs. Are they the real them?

BOBBY

Yeah. Maybe too much. I kind of describe some of the things they got up to.

TINA

You mean some of the criminal things.

BOBBY

That they got away with. Yeah so maybe I should change their names too.

TINA

Or maybe you should just let them finally suffer the consequences.

(looks at him)

And am I the real me too? I mean when the real you writes how does he see me?

BOBBY

You wanna read some?

TINA
You brought it?

BOBBY
Part of it.

He takes out a folded envelope with a lot of writing all over the outside.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
(hands it to her)
Here.

TINA
It's your phone bill.

BOBBY
Yeah well sometimes I get ideas when I'm out walking, and I just...
(a napkin from his pocket)
And this too.
(hands her the napkin)
Read the envelope first though. It's stuff about how we met and when we were first together. I thought I should make sure you're all right with it before I put in, you know... the actual book thing.
(hands her the phone)
It's not very long.

TINA
Thanks. That's very thoughtful.

BOBBY
You mean that I'm asking if you're all right with it... or that it's not very long?

TINA
Both.

She is reading.

BOBBY
Writing's a funny thing. Private. But you want people to read it, so what's that about? Those two things together.
(leans over)
How do you like it so far?

TINA
(looks at him)
You're right. It's you.

She keeps reading.

BOBBY
Yeah well I--

TINA
Shhh.

She keeps reading. He sits next to her. She looks up. She is crying.

TINA (CONT'D)
Okay, yeah. This is me... This is
us... This is how we...

She starts to sob. Loudly. Almost out of control.

Bobby starts to reach out. Stops.

BOBBY
Tina?

TINA
It's okay. I'll be okay...

But she starts sobbing again. Stands. Hands him back his phone.

TINA (CONT'D)
I have to leave.

She leaves.

Bobby watches her. Puts his face in his hands.

BOBBY
Oh Jesus...

Recovers slightly. Looks at his phone.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Ahhh...

He punches in a number.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
(into phone)
Hi... Yeah sorry... It just got to
be... Yeah I showed her...
(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Well you said you didn't have time to read it, and I told you I needed to show her, so... It doesn't really matter who reads it first... No it doesn't ... Okay. But if it does then I guess it should have been her anyway... Look don't make this about more than it is... Yeah you can definitely decide that for yourself but-- Yeah... Okay. Well she left so I guess I'll just start back... Right. Twenty minutes. Bye

He disconnects. Looks around, stands and starts off in the opposite direction from where Tina went.

Tina is coming back though.

TINA

Where are you going?

BOBBY

I was... I thought you'd left.

TINA

(approaching)

Why'd we agree to meet here.

BOBBY

Well you said you wanted to ask me something and--

TINA

No. I mean here. In this park. Whose idea was it?

BOBBY

I'm not sure.

TINA

Maybe we didn't even talk about it. Maybe we just agreed to meet and we both assumed it would be here.

BOBBY

Maybe.

TINA

That's kinda strange.

BOBBY

We always met here.

TINA

So what.

BOBBY

Well...

TINA

Why'd you show me that? That thing you wrote.

BOBBY

I told you. I wanted to find out if it was--

TINA

I mean that particular part about us coming here to break up. When I told you about me and--

BOBBY

Your boss. Yeah. Because... I guess what I wrote it's the closest thing to...

TINA

To what? The closest to what? The truth?

BOBBY

What I remember feeling like. And what I thought... and what I thought you were thinking too. So yeah the truth as best as I could get to it.

TINA

So according to you I was thinking "This is gonna kill him."

BOBBY

Yeah.

TINA

Yeah...

BOBBY

Does that mean you were? You were thinking it'd kill me.

TINA

I was thinking that it would be really hard for you to hear.

BOBBY
Not that it would kill me.

TINA
No. But that--

BOBBY
It would hurt.

TINA
Yeah...

BOBBY
A lot.

TINA
Yeah...

BOBBY
Yeah. So you cared about me. It
wasn't just a big fuck you.

TINA
No. No way. I mean after all we'd--

BOBBY
Okay. Yeah. That's good... And the
rest. Does that sound like you. I
mean I wrote what I remember you
saying... but the other stuff, the
confusing stuff I figured you were
just thinking, was that close too.

TINA
Close enough.

She sits. He sits beside her.

TINA (CONT'D)
I'm not going somewhere to get my
Masters.

BOBBY
You're not?

TINA
No. My supervisors can be jerks but
I can work around them. No big
deal... I'm sick.

He looks at her.

BOBBY
How sick?

TINA
I need help.

BOBBY
Is it cancer?

TINA
No. Not that kind of help.

BOBBY
So what--

TINA
My spirit is--

BOBBY
Your what?

TINA
My spirit. It's damaged. I need to
get it healed.

BOBBY
What are you talking about?

TINA
I'm very unhappy.

BOBBY
Because of the Kyle thing?

TINA
Well that didn't help. But it's--

BOBBY
It can't be because of me.

TINA
It can't?

BOBBY
Well what happened between us was
so long ago.

TINA
Yeah except part of what happened
"between us" is our two daughters.

BOBBY
Is it them? They're making you
unhappy?

TINA

No. They're great. They grew up to be terrific young women. But they didn't do it alone. I gave them almost all my energy and most of my time... I've been a mother since I was 18. That's just about half my of life. And most of that time I was alone.

BOBBY

Not always. You had your boss.

TINA

Harry. You can call him Harry. You don't have to keep referring to him as my boss. You've made your point.

BOBBY

What point.

TINA

The one that makes me feel pretty shitty.

BOBBY

Yeah. Okay... But anyway there was him, then Kyle...

TINA

The mothering... all the important things about mothering were always up to me.

BOBBY

You're not just talking about doctors' appointments, are you.

TINA

No. I'm not. Doctors' appointments, dentists... meeting with teachers..

BOBBY

I did that a few times.

TINA

Twice. You did that twice.

BOBBY

You kept count?

TINA

No. But they were memorable events so--

BOBBY
I'm sorry.

TINA
Yeah...

BOBBY
No I mean it.

TINA
It doesn't matter now. You were young. Too young. Even when you got older you were still too young. And Harry didn't like the kids all that much so--

BOBBY
But Kyle was better, right. According to you Kyle was like Mister Amazing to them.

TINA
When he has there he was pretty good, yeah.

BOBBY
And when he wasn't he was busy fucking his brains out all over the place.

TINA
Okay. You don't have to--

BOBBY
Probably fucking his secretary, half his clients, and most of the women in your neighbourhood.

She just look at him.

TINA
Finished?

BOBBY
Yeah. It's just that...

TINA
What?

BOBBY
I always suspected it. There was just something about the guy.
(MORE)

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Like he thought he was God's gift
or something. Yeah I fucking knew
it. The jerk-off!

TINA

(a beat)
Finished now?

BOBBY

Yeah... Yeah....

TINA

Anyway it's not about the time it
took to do all that running around
with them. It was about all the...
energy I needed to do the important
stuff. Just being with them. Being
do deeply concerned about them.
Explaining things. Helping them to
understand what was going on around
them.

BOBBY

At school you mean.

TINA

At school. In the playground. On
the streets. All those years we
spent living in that shitty
neighbourhood. How many druggies
did they come across? Homeless
people begging. All that sickening
crap. I didn't ever want them to
think that's all there was out
there, right. I mean who knows what
kids get into their heads if you
don't talk to them about things.
And then later in high school. All
the bitchiness from the girls. The
leering from the boys...

(looks at him)

I need to go away.

BOBBY

To where?

TINA

There's a place. Kind of a retreat.
It can help me get better.

BOBBY

How?

TINA

I'm not sure. But it's got great reviews.

BOBBY

You found it online?

TINA

I checked it online. But it was recommended by a colleague.

BOBBY

Another social worker?

TINA

They burn out pretty regularly. Especially the ones who deal with the mentally ill... So this place has a rep.

BOBBY

(sits beside her)

Okay... Okay but you have to solve this some other way. You can't leave.

TINA

Bobby.

BOBBY

No that can't happen. I mean what are you going to tell the girls.

TINA

What I just told you, more or less. They'll get it.

BOBBY

And you'll be okay with that. Leaving them alone for how long?

TINA

They recommend six months minimum. Could be a year though. And they won't be alone unless you decide not to be there with them.

BOBBY

And that's why you want me to man up and--

TINA

I don't like that expression. It's not about being a man, whatever that means. It's about being a father.

BOBBY

Yeah, but six months, maybe a year. Just how fucked up are you?

TINA

I can function. I can keep my job. Keep guiding them through what's left of high school. I can even be pleasant to the neighbours. But inside I'm just hanging on.

BOBBY

Really?

TINA

By the time I was born my dad was gone and my mum was already sick. Already dying really. Then well there was us, and all that difficulty with being so poor with kids and...

Bobby is breathing heavily.

TINA (CONT'D)

(looks at him)

Stop that. Okay just... don't. I thought you were over that. Those panic attacks.

BOBBY

I... I...

TINA

Breathe. Put you head down and breathe...

He does. But he is gasping. It slowly subsides. He sits up.

BOBBY

Sorry.

TINA

It's okay.'

BOBBY

That... hasn't happened in awhile.

TINA

What was it?

BOBBY

Whatya mean?

TINA

What set you off? The thought of taking care of our children on your own full time?

BOBBY

No. It was... what you said. Everything you said about... well your life... It was just... It was...

TINA

Yeah. Sorry. Who needs to hear all that stuff, right?

BOBBY

No it just made me sad. And then the sadness got to be--

TINA

Too much. Right. By the way, you should take all that out of your book. All that about our break-up and whatever else you've got in there like that. No one's gonna want to hear all that. And even if they do...

BOBBY

They won't get it?

TINA

Maybe not. Who's gonna read it anyway? Not anyone we grew up with?

BOBBY

Stacy reads sometimes.

TINA

Reads what?

BOBBY

You know... adventures?

TINA

You mean romances.

BOBBY

Yeah romantic adventures. And she says they've got some pretty sad things in them.

TINA

Yeah. But they're not real. Maybe if you turn our pathetic life story into a romance for women who never grew up...

BOBBY

She grew up. She's just--

TINA

A little out of it.

BOBBY

Not about important stuff. She's got it more together than she let's on in front of you.

TINA

Why's that?

BOBBY

You scare her.

TINA

I what?

BOBBY

Well you don't actually scare her. You...

TINA

Intimidate her?

BOBBY

Yeah. You intimidate her. I've told her you don't mean to.

TINA

Except I do. I mean to intimidate the hell out of her.

BOBBY

Really? Why?

TINA

What's it matter. Why are we even talking about Stacy

BOBBY

I guess it's because I was planning to say that she'll help me.

TINA

Help you write your book?

BOBBY

No with the girls. If you really need to go away, Stacy will help me with them.

TINA

No she won't.

BOBBY

She's good with kids. She's got nieces and nephews and she's great with them.

TINA

That's wonderful. But when I hear that, what I think is that she'll be the one doing all the work. I want it to be you. I want it to be just you and them.

BOBBY

Because?

TINA

Lots of reasons. For one thing, before they go off to lead the rest of their lives they need to experience your undivided attention. I mean... I might not come back.

BOBBY

For awhile you mean. You mean you might not come back for longer than six or months... or even a year.

TINA

Or ever.

BOBBY

Tina?

TINA

Let's talk about that later. Right now I want to give you an idea of our average day. Me and the girls.

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

You know, so you won't be too nervous about it. A lot of it is fun. We cook together. Watch movies, binge on British crime shows. Sometimes we read to each other. In the summer we garden...

BOBBY

Okay. But you're still not--

TINA

Happy? No. I'm totally faking it now. I'm worried they see that though. And that's no good. Better that I'm gone and we bring in someone from the bull pen. Anything in that list I just told you about that you think you're not up to?

BOBBY

My cooking's still not the best.

TINA

That's okay. Theirs is. Alison can do Thai. Holly is the Queen of Pasta.

BOBBY

Yeah Holly made me a pasta chicken thing once that was-- You taught them?

TINA

I encouraged them. It took awhile to get them into the swing of things though.

(she looks at him)

It's not that I think I won't come back. It's that I need to think, at least for awhile, that I don't need to come back. You get that?

BOBBY

(to himself)

Do I get that? Do I get that?

TINA

Bobby?

BOBBY

Yeah. Yeah I get that. You've been needed for a long time.

TINA

Right. And that's okay. That was good up to a point, I guess. But maybe there's something else out there for me.

BOBBY

You think so? Really?

TINA

I said maybe.

BOBBY

Yeah but...

TINA

Maybe not? Sure. I'm not discontented, you know. My job is worthwhile. My children love me. But my life... I look back, and I know I can't... I can't start that life over but maybe...

BOBBY

There's another one.

TINA

Maybe. Kinda.

BOBBY

Like me becoming a writer.

TINA

(hesitantly)
... Okay...

BOBBY

Maybe you could be a writer too.

TINA

I don't want to be a writer.

BOBBY

Or an artist. Maybe not an artist who... makes art. Maybe a cartoonist. Yeah. You used to do that. You'd draw characters for the girls when they were young, and some of them were very--

TINA

I don't want to be a cartoonist, Bobby. I'm not looking for a career. It's not that.

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

I want to get to a place that seems like, even though it's not, like a new start. But inside. Not feeling how I did when I was three and I heard my mum cough until she lost her breath and then saw her pass out for the first time. That was as scared as any kid can get I think. But... well that damage is done, right.

BOBBY

Yeah...

TINA

But if there was away of starting things like it was part two of my life and not everything from part one carried over. Just starting out again without ever hearing or seeing my mother like that. Or worrying every day at school if she'd be there to pick me up. And if she wasn't...

BOBBY

What would you do, right.

TINA

Yeah. What would I do. That poor little girl was me. And I can't let her go. I want to but... it doesn't seem fair to just leave her. You understand that?

BOBBY

Yeah...

TINA

(looks at him)

Don't put any of that in your book, okay.

BOBBY

Okay.

TINA

It's too personal. I'm just thinking of you now. I mean I suppose you have hopes of making a living of some kind off it.

BOBBY

I guess.

TINA

Well then... maybe you should make it funny.

BOBBY

It already is. Willie laughed.

TINA

Really. What's wrong with that guy? I mean seriously. There was nothing funny about what I read.

BOBBY

Not that part. But overall...

TINA

What kind of book can have things in it, that are about such fucked up people in such fucked up situations and still be funny?

BOBBY

A fucked up one.

TINA

And you think people will want to buy it.

BOBBY

I don't know. Maybe I should let more people take a look at it.

TINA

Yeah. You got anything else on your phone? Anything you think might be funny.

BOBBY

Just one part I'm still working on.

She reaches out a hand.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

You sure?

TINA

You got anywhere else to be?

BOBBY

No. Well Stacy is kind of expecting me.

TINA

Why?

BOBBY

Well I usually come home at some point.

TINA

And is that a point in time?
(off his look)
You want me to read it or not?

BOBBY

Yeah. That'd be good.

He is finding it on his phone.

TINA

How is Stacy anyway? I guess I should have asked. But I really don't give a shit.

BOBBY

(handing her the phone)
I know.

TINA

She's just a little too...
(looks at him hard)
Too what?

BOBBY

I don't know exactly. But I know what you're getting at.

TINA

Yeah. You know, it's funny. How you can meet someone and think they must have named themselves. Just somehow gotten into their parents' heads when they were looking at the baby name book and said, "That one. Stacy! I'm gonna be a Stacy, for sure!" And she is. She's definitely a Stacy.

BOBBY

Well maybe. I mean if you think Stacys are all kinda--

TINA

Shhh. Let me read.

She reads. Giggles. Laughs. Laughs a little louder. Really laughs.

TINA (CONT'D)

Yeah...
(looking up)
This is funny.

BOBBY

Really?

TINA

Oh yeah.... This is Willie and that
other goof Sonny, right.

BOBBY

Yeah... during one of their break-
ins.

TINA

They told you this.

BOBBY

Just some of it. The rest I kinda
made up.

TINA

Yeah but they could have done all
of it. They're that...

BOBBY

Pathetic.

TINA

Stupid and pathetic.

BOBBY

Yeah. It's the combo, I think.

TINA

What is?

BOBBY

The thing that makes it funny.
Stupid and pathetic together.

TINA

Plus it's outrageous. And a little
sad too. Did you mean it to be sad?

BOBBY

I didn't mean it to be anything. I
just wrote it. You really liked it?

TINA

Yeah but--

BOBBY

What?

TINA

I don't know if anyone else will.

BOBBY

Me either. But I can't do much about it. I mean if it's funny or sad or pathetic or whatever else it is. I just write what I hear in my head. I hear us and all those other people talking, and I just write down what they were saying...

TINA

Even those cops. They were in your head too?

BOBBY

Yeah.

TINA

(smiles)

They were too much.

BOBBY

Yeah too much. They were too fucking much. That one who kept saying he was gonna dance the tango on someone's head. I knew a cop who talked like that.

TINA

And so he's in the book.

BOBBY

Yeah and who knows if that's good or bad, right.

TINA

Maybe I could get someone to read it who reads a lot. Maybe I could ask Mandy.

BOBBY

Who?

TINA

Mandy Temple. Red hair. A little shorter than me. Big laugh.

BOBBY

Yeah I remember her. You're still in touch?

TINA

On Facebook, yeah.

BOBBY

Why are you on Facebook?

TINA

What's wrong with being on Facebook?

BOBBY

Nothing, I guess. Just wondering why you are.

TINA

So I can keep in touch with people like Mandy. And other people we went to high school with.

BOBBY

Like?

TINA

Like just about everyone, Bobby. Anyway I can ask her if you want.

BOBBY

Ask her what?

TINA

To read your book.

BOBBY

Okay, but suppose she doesn't like it. I don't want her shitting on it to all your friends on Facebook.

TINA

I could ask her not to.

BOBBY

How would you do that?

TINA

I'd just tell her that you didn't want it discussed there.

BOBBY

But you'd say that to her on Facebook?

TINA

I could private message her.

BOBBY

Yeah but then she'd think I'm scared of what people might say about it.

TINA

You are scared.

BOBBY

Well more nervous than scared.

TINA

It's sometimes okay to be scared.

BOBBY

Yeah but I'm not. I'm nervous.

TINA

I think you're scared. I know when you're scared Bobby. You're scared right now.

BOBBY

About her shitting on my--

TINA

And about me going away and leaving you with the girls.

BOBBY

No. That's another example of me being nervous.

TINA

And scared. It's okay. Nobody expects you to be perfect.

BOBBY

I know that. Believe me, if there's one thing I'm sure of, it's that no one expects me to be perfect.

TINA

Don't go there. You don't need to start up with the self pity. It was never very attractive, and at your age it's a little disgusting.

BOBBY

Really.

TINA

I'm just being honest.

BOBBY

Okay... Well here's some honesty for you then. All that about needing a new beginning and how difficult your life has been... you don't think that was self-pity?

TINA

Jesus. So you didn't understand a goddamn thing I said.

BOBBY

Sure I did.

TINA

No you fucking didn't.

BOBBY

Just because I think you were feeling sorry for yourself doesn't mean I didn't understand what you were saying. Yeah there was a lot of other things you said that weren't like that, but there was a hell of a lot of "poor me" in there too.

She approaches him.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

(backing up)

Look whatever you're thinking of doing, don't!

TINA

Stand still.

BOBBY

I mean it, Tina!

TINA

Do you? Do you really?

She tries to kick him in the crotch. He sidesteps. She tries again. He sidesteps again and grabs her.

TINA (CONT'D)

Let me go.

BOBBY

Knock it off.

TINA
I need to do this!

BOBBY
I'm not going to let you kick me in
the balls, Tina.

TINA
Please.

BOBBY
No!

TINA
Please! I need to do this. Just
once. Let me kick your balls up
into your intestines. Come on,
asshole!

BOBBY
(pushes her away)
For fuck's sake. What's wrong with
you?!

TINA
Nothing. You know how long I've
wanted to do that? And you couldn't
just let me, could you? You had to
"protect yourself"!

BOBBY
What?

TINA
You couldn't just stand there and
take it. Experience the pain. Maybe
even pass out from it. You selfish
prick!

BOBBY
Come on, T. Get a grip.

TINA
And this time you really deserved
it. You really had it coming.

She sits on the bench.

TINA (CONT'D)
All those things I said about my
life... I've never said them to
anyone else. I thought you'd
understand. Well wrong again, Tina.
(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

Okay maybe I was, maybe I *am* feeling sorry for myself. But there was so much more in what I told you. So for you to throw that one thing back at me...

BOBBY

I was mad. You know, about you saying basically the same thing about *me*.

TINA

Except I was right. Totally right. And you were just a little right.

BOBBY

How long?
(off her look)
How long have you wanted to do that to me?

TINA

Kick you in the balls? Forever almost.

BOBBY

Jesus...

TINA

Not all the time. But fairly regularly.

BOBBY

Wow.

TINA

You must have known.

BOBBY

Well I suspected. That look you got in your eye sometime. Did you ever want to do that to Harry or Kyle.

TINA

No. Not really.

BOBBY

They didn't make you mad.

TINA

Not like you did. And still do apparently. You have a special talent for it, I guess.

BOBBY

Stacy never gets mad at me. Judy only sometimes. And never *that* much.

TINA

Well I suppose it's part of the special bond we have.

BOBBY

(smiles)
Yeah...

TINA

Why are you smiling? That's not a good thing, Bobby. Making someone that mad or allowing yourself to get that mad... is definitely not a good thing.

BOBBY

Are you sure?

TINA

Yeah. I am. And the fact that it can still happen shows how lucky we were that we broke up.

BOBBY

Are you sure?

She looks at him.

TINA

Don't go there, Bobby.

BOBBY

Go where?

TINA

You know where. We're not getting back together. Okay? Got that?

BOBBY

I never--

TINA

Are you nuts?

BOBBY

No. Yes. I dunno.

TINA

Things not so good with Stacy?

BOBBY

They're okay. I don't know.

TINA

What don't you know?

BOBBY

How things are with her. I never notice.

TINA

What a weird thing to say.

BOBBY

I mean it's pretty much the same every day. She goes off to work and so do I. Then we come home and... eat. Then there's sex. Or tv.

TINA

That's a choice? Sex or tv? It can't be both?

BOBBY

You mean do we watch porn while we're fucking?

TINA

No that's not what I-- Jesus. Why would I be asking you that?

BOBBY

Sometimes we go bowling with her family.

TINA

You bowl?

BOBBY

Not very well.

TINA

But you bowl. Wow.

BOBBY

You think that's a big deal.

TINA

You hated bowling. Even the thought of it.

BOBBY

Yeah well-

TINA

I think you've compromised your principles, Robert.

BOBBY

Come on.

TINA

At least Trudy, sorry Judy had half a brain.

BOBBY

Just because Stacy bowls doesn't mean she's--

TINA

No, sorry. You've definitely moved in a downward direction with this chick.

BOBBY

Yeah. I moved down. Right.

TINA

Definitely.

BOBBY

But you moved up.

TINA

We weren't talking about me,

BOBBY

We are now. Did you leave Harry for Kyle? Did you fuck yourself into a better lifestyle, Tina?

She is just looking at him.

TINA

Kyle put me through school.

BOBBY

I thought that was Harry.

TINA

Did I say that. No. Harry just helped me get away from you. I got my degree because of Kyle.

BOBBY

So the answer is yes. You fucked your way into an even better situation.

TINA

Harry had his financial ups and downs. I wanted more security for the girls. With Kyle I never had to worry about them having the things they needed. Or even the things they didn't need. They could have some stuff that just made life a little more fun.

BOBBY

And you too. You got stuff too.

TINA

Which I didn't need. Which I never cared about.

BOBBY

Sure.

TINA

Its the truth.

BOBBY

Okay...

TINA

(standing)

It's the fucking truth.

BOBBY

Are you about to try kicking me in the crotch again? Because I'm ready for you. And if you try that shit again you'll be the one who gets hurt.

TINA

Was that a threat?

BOBBY

I'm just saying...

TINA

You'd hit me? After all this time you'd actually lay hands on me. Really?

BOBBY

I don't... No. No!

TINA

Right. Because if that gets added to all the other things you did, well that would be the end.

BOBBY

Of what?

TINA

Of us.

BOBBY

You mean you'd be willing to end something that's already ended.

TINA

I'd make sure you'd never see the girls again.

BOBBY

Okay that's stupid.

TINA

Why?

BOBBY

You don't need to threaten me for something I never did.

TINA

You said I'd get hurt.

BOBBY

I was trying to scare you. No one wants to be kicked in the balls... I mean I was supposed to just stand there and hope you kept missing? So... I tried to scare you.

TINA

You didn't.

BOBBY

I think I did.

TINA

Not really. You never scared me that way. Just about every other way but not like that.

BOBBY

Every other way?

TINA

I was scared of having to live on the street, for example.

BOBBY

I would have never have let that happen.

TINA

Well we came close to it too many times. And pretty close to starving to death as well.

BOBBY

Starving to death? No way.

TINA

Well that's what happens when there's no food. And one of us has lost another job. And there aren't any fairies out there dropping baskets of goodies at our door.

BOBBY

No. But there were foodbanks.

TINA

Yeah, that was your fallback. Like I ever would have agreed to it.

BOBBY

I know. But that was just... stupid.

TINA

Stupid...

BOBBY

Well what are they for if people don't want to use them just because--

TINA

Because they're ashamed! No No. It never would have happened. I would have killed you all in your sleep and then walked into traffic.

BOBBY

Like hell you would have.

TINA

That was the plan. Just like that, pal.

BOBBY

Yeah well... good thing that didn't happen then. I mean things were rough for sure. I'm not denying that. And it was mostly my fault. I said that too. I mean I wrote about it. But thinking you'd just--

TINA

Really? You wrote about it being mostly your fault?

BOBBY

Well it seemed too important to leave out. All that potato soup we ate.

TINA

Did you try to make it funny?

BOBBY

I didn't try to make it anything. It's just what it was.

TINA

You should take that out too. No one will like it. They'll just think--

BOBBY

If I keep taking those things out, there won't be much left.

TINA

Yeah... Okay fuck it. Let them think whatever they want.

BOBBY

It probably won't get... printed anyway.

TINA

That's true. I mean the more I hear about what's in it...

BOBBY

(sitting)

Look maybe if I chipped in a lot more... spent more time with the girls, you wouldn't have to go away.

TINA

Yeah, but there's something else.

BOBBY

Like?

Tina reaches into her pocket. Takes out three different pill bottles.

TINA

I'm tired of hiding these.

(off his look)

Three different doctors. Three different prescriptions.

BOBBY

What for?

TINA

Well right now to get me through the day.

BOBBY

Meaning?

TINA

Meaning I take a reasonable amount for the time being. But all together, all at once... And I'm outta here.

BOBBY

Outta here. You mean...

TINA

Yeah...

BOBBY

No.

TINA

Don't say no. You can say anything else. But "no" sounds like an order. You don't get to say if I can take my life. No one does.

BOBBY

It's not fair.

TINA

You mean to our daughters. I know. But there you go. Life sucks. Life can really overdo it, if you know what I mean.

BOBBY

Have you talked to anyone?

TINA
Well those doctors...

BOBBY
And they didn't help?

TINA
(off the pills)
Sure they did. And God bless them
for it.
(off his look)
Oh you mean besides giving me
these. Didn't they give me a reason
to live? Not their job, pal. In
fact, after I told one of them
about my life and how I felt about
what a less than great adventure
it's been, I think he was actually
in favour of me ending it all.

BOBBY
That's bullshit.

TINA
Ya think? Well maybe I was just
not listening closely.

BOBBY
What did he actually say?

TINA
Whatever. He actually said
whatever. A lot.

BOBBY
Well maybe he was just--

TINA
At a loss for words.
(shrugs)
Whatever.

BOBBY
So this place you're going to...

TINA
Is it for rehab? In part. I mean
they offer that. But that's not
what I'm looking for. I mean I'm
not sure I'm worth the effort ...
Do you understand what I'm telling
you Bobby? Are you getting how bad
it is with me.

BOBBY

I thought about killing myself
once.

TINA

No you didn't.

BOBBY

When we were all in that last
basement apartment. That dark
little hole. I thought if I got
life insurance then made it look
like an accident that you guys
would probably be okay.

TINA

Really?

BOBBY

Yeah...

TINA

But that was just a thought.

BOBBY

No. But we didn't have enough money
to afford life insurance anyway so--

TINA

You must have been pretty
depressed. You never came across
that way. You were always...
just...

BOBBY

Kinda out of it. But that time I
wasn't depressed or out of it. I
just thought it was a good idea ...
It's not about money now though, is
it? Kyle didn't fuck you over like
that too, did he.

TINA

No I got to keep the house. The
girls will have that. So no, it's
not about the money. Which is
pretty funny... because so much of
what brought me to all this was.
Money and everything about not
having it. My mother's situation...
Money might have helped keep her
stay alive longer. I mean who knows
how all that affected her.

BOBBY

Could it be that you're just
...tired?

TINA

Sure. But not in a way that
getting more sleep is going to
help. So are you willing to do this
for me?

BOBBY

You're talking about being there
for the girls now.

TINA

What else would I-- Oh you thought
I might need you to assist me if I
decided to take my little friends
here all at once. Not to worry. I
can handle that if it comes to it.
You take a few stiff drinks then
start swallowing...

BOBBY

So you've really thought about
this. You're fucking serious.

TINA

Yeah. So about our daughters...
there are some important things
to be on the watch for. Ally works
too hard, for example. You need to
make her relax sometimes. Encourage
her to do her homework in front of
the tv.

BOBBY

You're kidding.

TINA

Trust me. She could do it while she
was skydiving and still get an A.
And Holly is going to be under all
this pressure to get into the right
university. Some of it's real. But
you have to keep reminding her that
it's not that important.

BOBBY

It's not?

TINA

Well it kinda is. But she can't let
it... paralyze her.

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

The pressure they're putting these kids under about all that stuff is way too much. What's a degree worth now anyway? Ask those young people working in Starbucks how many have one, and watch all their hands go up.

BOBBY

I never go to Starbucks.

TINA

You probably will when you become a successful writer though.

BOBBY

That was a shot, right.

TINA

Or maybe a prediction. Just try not to always write about the fucked up, angry and desperate and you stand a chance. But back to the girls. They remember those bad early years. You know, before I slept our way out of it... so I think that's one reason they work so hard. You can't dismiss that. If you talk to them about it, you can't poo-poo that because it happened. And it happened to them. But at the same time...

BOBBY

There's a limit. Got it. They to keep moving on.

TINA

Right. Also... boys. Boys are an issue.

BOBBY

Yeah...

TINA

Not for you. For them. You can't pull any of that protective father shit.

BOBBY

Meaning what?

TINA

They're not your little princesses.

BOBBY

I've never treated them like that.

TINA

Wait until you stumble on to some guy drooling and feeling one of them up.

BOBBY

Jesus...

TINA

Remind you of someone? You couldn't keep your hands off me for the first four or five years. You and tits, man. You ever get over that?

BOBBY

Not entirely. But don't worry. If I see them with anyone who reminds me of myself even a little, I'll--

TINA

Spring into action. Got it. But since you brought it up, that should actually be anyone a little like you or anyone of your idiot friends, okay.

BOBBY

Okay. Sure.

TINA

They both have pretty good senses about that stuff. But there are still a fair amount of parent foolers out there, so stay alert.

BOBBY

What about curfews?

TINA

You know they have them, right.

BOBBY

Yeah but I was thinking of making it earlier.

TINA

How much earlier?

BOBBY

Eight. Eight-thirty.

TINA

Jesus. Eight-thirty? What's wrong with you?

BOBBY

Just for awhile. Until I get more relaxed about being in charge.

TINA

Bobby. If you say eight-thirty, they'll just laugh at you.

BOBBY

They already laugh at me.

TINA

With affection and understanding. You say that and you'll notice an immediate change. Also, it might be better if you didn't think about being "in charge."

BOBBY

Too much pressure, right,

TINA

On you, you mean.

BOBBY

Yeah...

TINA

Talk the curfew issue over with them. They might agree to something a little earlier for awhile... just because they feel sorry for you.

BOBBY

I can accept that.

TINA

Something else. If they both disappear into one of their rooms at night and don't come out, don't get all worked up. They're not snorting anything. They're just talking. They can talk for hours.

BOBBY

About what?

TINA

That's none of our business. I thought it was mine for awhile, but they straightened me out. I mean Holly did.

BOBBY

How?

TINA

It was kind of ugly. Everyone was making a big deal about being sure you knew what they were up to 24/7. Especially girls on the Internet. So it got me pretty worked up, and one night, they were both in Holly's room, I tried to catch them by surprise, and instead of knocking I just barged in. And when I saw them on their laptops I started yelling some shit about needing to know what they were up to right now! Alison told me she was just messaging friends, but Holly told me it was... none of my business. And she was pretty firm about it. So okay. I got that... kind of. But then she said, "Haven't you got anything better to do with your life than sticking your nose into what your children are doing?" I wasn't working at the time, so I actually didn't. And it hurt. A lot. So... I slapped her. And then she got even mouthier and more hurtful, so I slapped her again.

BOBBY

Ah, man...

TINA

Yeah. And then you know what she did?

BOBBY

Slapped you back?

TINA

Something worse. She walked to her door, gestured to the hallway and calmly, very very calmly, said, "You're not welcome in my room anymore, so please leave." And don't return until you're ready to apologize.

BOBBY

And did you?

TINA

What? Leave? Oh yeah. Because what the fuck was going on, right. She was talking to me like I should have been talking to her. And as I was walking past her I sort of mumbled that I was sorry.

BOBBY

And that was the end of it...

TINA

You clearly haven't spent enough time with this girl. She told me she didn't believe that I was sorry at all. And that I should only come back when I meant it.

BOBBY

Fuck me.

TINA

Yeah. So no messing around with the first born. I'm just telling you.

BOBBY

I'm a little scared now.

TINA

Alison will make sure she goes easy on you... for awhile at least.

BOBBY

Anything else?

TINA

Yeah. Sex.

BOBBY

What about it?

TINA
They're having it.

BOBBY
Both of them?

TINA
Yeah.

BOBBY
Alison is only 15.

TINA
That's how old you and I were when
we first did it.

BOBBY
Except we really didn't.

TINA
Well I wasn't going to ask her if
her guy actually managed to get
inside her before he came. I mean
basically when you get to that
point you're doing it.

BOBBY
Do you want me to tell her to stop?

TINA
No. I want you to do what I did.
Keep reminding her to take
precautions.

BOBBY
The best precaution is not doing
it.

TINA
So you've recently joined an
evangelical church?

BOBBY
What?

TINA
Look they both know you and I were
having sex when we were just as
young. Do you want to come across
as being full of shit about it?

BOBBY
No. But I was using condoms.

TINA

Not very good ones if you remember.
But you can add that to the list of
protective measures if you want.
High quality rubbers.

BOBBY

Yeah. I'll tell her to make
sure they-- Who is he anyway? The
guy...

TINA

A classmate. His name is Marco.

BOBBY

Marco. Right.

TINA

Right? What's that mean, "right"
You'd feel better if his name was
John or Peter, would you?

BOBBY

It's just that I know a couple of
Marcos.

TINA

And they're both players, are they?
A couple of complete douches?

BOBBY

As a matter of fact, yeah.

TINA

Well this one is nice.

BOBBY

Okay. And who is Holly doing it
with?

TINA

Holly. Yeah. You're gonna have to
get your head around this.

BOBBY

What?

TINA

She's got a couple of irons in the
fire.

BOBBY

She's sleeping with two different
guys?

TINA

No. One guy. One girl.

(off his look)

It was my idea. I thought it was a good for her to just try both out.

BOBBY

Why?

TINA

Because I sensed she wasn't a hundred per cent into the guy.

BOBBY

It could have just been that particular guy.

TINA

There were others. And it was just mother's intuition.

BOBBY

That she was bi? Or gay.

TINA

Or open to the possibility of both.

BOBBY

At the same time?

TINA

Sorry?

BOBBY

I don't mean one, then the other. I mean like--

TINA

Like a... unit? All three together?

BOBBY

Yeah. But not like a three-way. I mean--

TINA

Like always. What made you go there?

BOBBY

I don't know.

TINA

Is that what you wanted for us?

BOBBY

No...

TINA

Are you sure?

BOBBY

Yes. No. Yes... So?

TINA

So... what?

BOBBY

Well what am I supposed to do about that? Those... feelings.

TINA

Nothing. We're not together anymore, Bobby. And even if we were-

BOBBY

Not *my* feelings. Holly's... feelings, whatever they are... about all that

TINA

Just keep making her feel all right about... whatever they are.

BOBBY

Sure...

TINA

I mean it.

BOBBY

I know you do. I'll be... positive.

TINA

Right. *Be* positive. Don't try to get away with just *looking* positive. Actually that should apply to everything you say to them.

BOBBY

It might be hard.

TINA

No harder than it's been for me. Pretending there's nothing wrong when all I actually wanted to do was run away somewhere and maybe just...

BOBBY

Yeah.

TINA

I'm going to keep in touch with them with texts, emails, whatever. And I'll keep doing that.

BOBBY

Pretending.

TINA

Yeah. As much as I can.

BOBBY

But you'll tell *me* the truth, right. You have to let me know everything that's going on with you. How you're feeling. I mean even if it gets worse.

TINA

Okay.

BOBBY

Really. I'll need to know.

TINA

You won't be able to do anything.

BOBBY

Yeah but I'm used to that.

TINA

Right. So you can at least worry.

BOBBY

I try not to...

TINA

Just one of your states... being kinda out of it, and then all of a sudden paralyzed by worry, alarm... anxiety. You were even like that in kindergarten.

BOBBY

Kindergarten. Right. That's how long we've known each other.

TINA

You were in love with me.

BOBBY

I was?

TINA

Yeah. You couldn't keep your eyes off me.

BOBBY

I was worried about you. You looked scared all the time.

TINA

I was.

BOBBY

Because of your mum...

TINA

Yeah...

She lowers her head. He watches her cry for awhile.

BOBBY

You can make it better.

TINA

I don't know...

BOBBY

You can. You just go away and make it all better for yourself.

TINA

Yeah. One of my shrinks said something about that. He said I didn't have to live today like it was a denial of yesterday.

BOBBY

He meant you could just be happy?

TINA

Yeah...

BOBBY

Well there you go.

TINA

I didn't believe him.

He hugs her. She hugs him back. His cell goes off. He answers.

BOBBY
(into phone)
Yeah... I'll be awhile longer...
Just talking... About things that
need to be talked about... Like our
daughters... Look I'll be there
when I get there... Yeah. Bye...

He disconnects.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Sorry.

TINA
That's okay.

Bobby looks at her.

BOBBY
Yeah...
(deep breath)
Sorry... for everything really.

TINA
I know...

BOBBY
No. Really. Everything. I just
didn't get it. Not ever, I guess.

He looks shaken.

Tina just looks at him.

TINA
You remember the first time we got
high together?

BOBBY
Yeah it was right here.

TINA
Not when we smoked weed. I meant
when we did the heavy stuff. We
were in your basement. Right off I
started to fly.

BOBBY
And I got sick.

TINA

And worried. You're the only person I ever saw do heroin and get worried about something not having anything to do with the experience.

BOBBY

I was worried about you. I didn't think you were reacting well.

TINA

I was fine. I was terrific.

BOBBY

I never did it again.

TINA

No surprise there.

BOBBY

How about you?

TINA

Not until a couple of years ago. One of my... clients is a part-time dealer.

BOBBY

As well as being mentally ill.

TINA

Those two things aren't necessarily related.

BOBBY

Are you sure?

TINA

He is. Anyway I was feeling like crap as usual, and also I thought it would be a way to bond with him. That I could help him more if we did that together.

BOBBY

Okay. So you smoked some with him.

TINA

Injected.

BOBBY

No way.

TINA

Oh yeah. Right into the arm, pal.

BOBBY

How was it?

TINA

Three dozen times better than the first time. Well that's just a guess, but it seems right.

BOBBY

And it made you bond with the guy?

TINA

I forgot he was even there. I forgot a lot. I forgot all the things I needed to forget. I wasn't afraid. I wasn't sad. I wasn't tired of being afraid and sad. So that was a possibility right there. Doing that more often became an option.

BOBBY

But not really.

TINA

Right. Not really. After the third time I knew I was this close to letting it take me away forever. So I said goodbye to my bipolar dealer and tried to just get on with it.

BOBBY

I think you're trying to tell me you'd like to go back to it.

TINA

That's a possibility.

BOBBY

But not really.

TINA

Well it'd be good way to forget stuff again.

BOBBY

Yeah. I tried that with booze.

TINA

Right. That's those two years you disappeared out of the girls' lives.

BOBBY

I couldn't stand coming to get them. Seeing that family you'd made with Kyle. That house. I told you. I told you I was having a hard time with that.

TINA

I thought you were just whining.

BOBBY

I know. You were pretty tough on me about it.

TINA

The girls, Bobby. It was always about what it was doing to them.

BOBBY

Anyway I stopped.

TINA

Stopped whining.

BOBBY

That too. But I meant the drinking.

TINA

I think I can do this. Go away. Get some other things happening in my head for awhile.

BOBBY

Then come back?

TINA

Then come back, yeah. Probably.

BOBBY

We'll be waiting.

TINA

No don't wait. Just get on with it.

BOBBY

I don't mind waiting for you.

TINA

I don't want you fucking waiting for me.

BOBBY

I'm gonna do it anyway.

TINA

It's too late for us. Too much for too long, too long ago.

BOBBY

Are you sure?

TINA

You're one of the reasons I'm so messed up.

BOBBY

Are you sure?

TINA

Stop asking me if I'm sure.

BOBBY

Okay. But are you? I mean maybe *now* I'm one of the reasons you could be okay.

TINA

Right.

BOBBY

No seriously. Because I think I owe you.

TINA

Oh you definitely owe me, but...
(looks at him)
What about Stacy?

BOBBY

She'll be fine. She's got her bowling league.

TINA

Yeah. Is she any good at it by the way? Bowling.

BOBBY

She's fucking awesome. She's got trophies. They all do. Her whole family. Dozens of trophies.

TINA

Really. I don't have any of those.

BOBBY

Me neither.

TINA

Not for anything.

BOBBY

Not a single one, no.

TINA

Yeah I guess that's one of the things we've got in common. No one ever gave us any trophies.

They just look at each other. Tina looks away first.

THE END