

THE CHANCE

by

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Small two-bedroom apartment in a low income five storey building.

Marcie, 56, is on the phone.

MARCIE

It doesn't matter if it's "legal" to raise it. I'd have to make at least twelve dollars more an hour to pay that much rent ... A better job? Come on, if I could get a better job, you think I'd wanna live *here*? ... Well it wasn't meant to be funny, so ... What kind of action? ... You mean I'll be thrown out ... Of course you've got another choice. Just start thinking like a decent human being, and all sorts of other choices will enter your head ... It wasn't an insult. It was advice.

(disconnects)

Ah for chrissake!

Jo, her daughter, 23, comes out of the bathroom and heads for the kitchen. She's had a late night.

JO

What's up?

MARCIE

We're getting evicted.

JO

When?

MARCIE

I'm not sure. But we should definitely get prepared.

JO

How do we do that?

MARCIE

Well first off, we get used to the idea that it's actually gonna happen. We don't get our hopes up.

JO

(entering kitchen)

No problem there.

MARCIE

How are you feeling?

JO

Not great.

MARCIE

You should stop drinking for
awhile. Give your body a break.

Jo returns with a cup of coffee.

JO

Right...

MARCIE

No seriously. It'd be the smart
thing to do. And maybe pull back on
all that makeup you wear for work.
Give your face a rest too.

(no response)

Who was that man you had in here
last night?

JO

His name was Greg.

MARCIE

Craig?

JO

No. Greg.
(thinks)
Or yeah, maybe Craig.

MARCIE

Did you meet him at work?

JO

He's a friend of Amie's. She
introduced us.

MARCIE

So he wasn't a customer.

JO

He's both. Her friend *and* a
customer.

MARCIE

I thought you weren't going to have
anything more to do with men who go
to that place.

JO

Where'd you get that idea?

MARCIE

Well you seemed to agree with me
when I brought the subject up.

JO

You mean because I didn't argue
with you about it.

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

Sometimes I'm just not up to it,
Mum. What's the deal? We tried not
to make too much noise.

MARCIE

Well that might have worked if
you'd taken him into your room
instead of going at it on the
couch.

JO

We got carried away.

MARCIE

Why didn't you go to his place?

JO

He's in the middle of a divorce.
And his wife is still in the house.

MARCIE

And even though the marriage is
over, he thinks bringing a stripper
home might be a little much.

JO

He didn't want to upset her.
They're working out terms.

MARCIE

Is that why she's divorcing him?
Because he goes to the clubs?

JO

Maybe. You want coffee?

MARCIE

This isn't going to help. This way
you're going about things now.

JO

And what way is that?

MARCIE

It's like you think it doesn't
matter at all what you do. And
that's not a good way to look at
things...

JO

I'm trying not to look at things.
I'm just *doing* things.

MARCIE

Stupid things.

JO

Do you want coffee or not?

MARCIE

It's because you think you're going to jail, isn't it.

JO

Coffee, Mum. Yes or no.

MARCIE

Yes. Coffee would be nice. Thank you. And a piece of toast.

JO

Sure...

She brings the coffee and returns to the kitchen.

MARCIE

You might not, you know. You might get community service. Then you could go back to school and--

JO

What do you want on this?

MARCIE

Sorry?

JO

Your toast. You want jam?

MARCIE

Yes, please. And margarine. Anyway what good does it do to dwell on the bad things?

JO

I'm not.

MARCIE

Sure you are. You're dwelling.

JO

No. I'm preparing.

MARCIE

Sounds like you're giving up.

JO

I'm preparing to give up. If I have to serve time I want to be--

MARCIE

Numb...

JO

What?

MARCIE

You want to be numb. I get that, but be careful you don't take it too far. Total numbness might be hard to recover from.

JO

(bringing toast)

I'll keep that in mind. I gotta get ready. I'm working the lunch hour.

Jo starts off.

MARCIE

Yeah, what a thing that is. Men eating their lunch while you shake your rear end in their face... Oh I found your boyfriend's wallet in the couch.

(holds it up)

Must have fallen out when--

JO

Just put it on the table, I'll take it with me when I--

MARCIE

Man's got a lot of credit cards.

JO

(turning back)

You looked?

MARCIE

Why not?

JO

Is there any cash?

MARCIE

Yeah. Four hundred dollars.

JO

Okay. You can keep that. He probably won't miss it.

MARCIE

He won't?

JO

He was pretty wasted. Just use it for whatever you need.

MARCIE

I'm not sure I'd be comfortable doing that.

JO
 Okay then don't. Just put it back
 in his wallet.

MARCIE
 I don't think I'd be comfortable
 doing that either. You know, a few
 months ago I wouldn't have even
 considered keeping it. But I'm
 getting seriously fed up with all
 these people calling and asking for
 money I don't have.

JO
 Yeah. I know.

MARCIE
 Plus it's depressing. I mean I get
 fed up and angry, but I'm also
 getting depressed again. And that's
 no good, is it?

JO
 No. It's not.

MARCIE
 I mean how can I keep it together
 if I slip into that dark place all
 over again.

JO
 I don't know.

MARCIE
 Me neither. But that's what I do,
 right. I keep it together.

JO
 Well you try anyway.

MARCIE
 Yeah. I try. I try very hard.
 But... well sometimes you need a
 little help.
 (looks up)
 Thanks.

She pockets the money.

JO
 Don't do that. Don't look up like
 that when you say thanks. It freaks
 me out. All of a sudden you're
 talking to an invisible person in
 the sky?

MARCIE
 It's something she used to do, so I-

JO

I know why, mum. But that was her, okay. It's not you. And that money didn't come from...

(points up)

It came from a guy who likes the way I look with my clothes off. So just use it to pay some bills.

MARCIE

I think I should pay some to my dentist because I'm pretty sure that back tooth is starting to rot. Or no, it should probably go towards the rent.

JO

I gave you rent money, didn't I.

MARCIE

I had to use it for other things. Hydro, contents insurance, phone bill. So if you can--

JO

Yeah. I can give you more when I finish my shift.

MARCIE

That's one good thing about working days. You don't blow all you make out drinking with your friends. Big tippers, are they? The men who eat their lunch there.

JO

Some of them.
(leaving)
Depends.

MARCIE

On what?

JO

How well I fake it, maybe.

Jo goes into the bathroom.

Marcie opens the wallet. Takes out the money. Starts looking at all the credit cards. Finds a folded cheque. Unfolds it. Looks closely at it.

MARCIE

Jesus...

Her phone rings. She answers it.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Speaking...

(a long listen)

Okay. I understand. But I don't know what I can do about it. Maybe you could suspend the interest until I catch up ... Right. But if you don't, I'll never get up to date, and eventually I'll get so sick of owing you that much money that I'll probably just kill myself ... No it wasn't a threat. It was an idea. Look I need you to give me a break, okay. I got sick. And I couldn't work for almost a year ... Depression. I lost my partner and-- ... Yeah, thanks. Anyway, I was in bad shape, depressed, stressed out and in grief and that meant that I had to live on my credit cards and-- You know what, forget it. Basic thing is I can't give you anything this month.

A knock on the door.

JO

(from her bedroom)

I'll get it.

Jo heads for the door.

MARCIE

(still on phone)

Because this month I have to pay my Visa bill. Next month is when I was planning to pay you something ... I don't know. Maybe a hundred ... No not for sure. But I'll try.

Jo comes in with Amie, her coworker. The same age. A little tougher looking.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

Look I have to go. The plumber's here.

JO

Who was that?

MARCIE

Mastercard.

AMIE

They hassling you?

MARCIE

I'm a little behind.

AMIE

You want some advice on how to handle credit card companies? Tell them to go fuck themselves. They're all thieving bastards.

MARCIE

Yes they are. But I'm trying to hold onto my almost half decent credit rating.

JO

She wants to buy a house.

AMIE

Really?

MARCIE

Just a small one. And I need to qualify for a mortgage.

AMIE

With what you make? Good luck.

MARCIE

How do you know what I make?

AMIE

Because I worked at Walmart too, remember. And you're on reduced shifts, aren't you.

MARCIE

Just for another few weeks.

JO

It's a suspension.

MARCIE

An unjust suspension.

JO

A customer was getting in her face.

MARCIE

She called me an ignorant cow. She's lucky I didn't deck her.

JO

She just *threatened* to deck her.

MARCIE

Obviously I wasn't fully recovered.

AMIE

From what?

MARCIE

My depression.

AMIE

You were depressed? When was that?
I'm only asking because you've
always seemed fine to me.

MARCIE

Well I wasn't.

JO

(to Amie)

It was after...

AMIE

Oh, right. That. Sorry. Yeah that
was rough. That chick is totally
lucky you didn't lay her out. You
know, that's more or less how I got
fired.

JO

Except you actually kinda did it.

AMIE

It was a little shove. The woman
lost her balance.

JO

(smiles)

When she dropped her cane.

AMIE

What cane? There was no cane.

JO

(to Marcie)

Yeah there was no cane. I was just--

AMIE

My point is, the managers in that
store expect their employees to
take any amount of shit the
customers dish out. And when you
don't... adios!

(to Jo)

Maybe you can convince Ruben to
chip in.

JO

For what?

AMIE

Her house.

MARCIE

Who's Ruben?

AMIE

The new man in her life.

MARCIE

(to Jo)

You told me his name is Greg.

JO

Greg? Not Craig?

(to Amie)

It's Ruben?

AMIE

Yeah. Unless there's some other guy named Greg or Craig you've been seeing.

JO

Uhh...

AMIE

The guy you left the club with is Ruben Joseph. And I think he's loaded. At least that's the impression he gives.

JO

Yeah... Greg. That was a month ago. Nice guy.

AMIE

He's in real estate.

JO

Greg?

AMIE

No. Ruben. I mean that's what he told me.

MARCIE

Maybe that's just what he tells people.

JO

Instead of what?

MARCIE

Instead of what he really does. Or who he really is. Do people in real estate take payments in cheques made out to cash?

JO

What are you talking about?

MARCIE

(shows them)
Your friend has a cheque like that
from someone named Dean Olsen for
\$300,000.

JO

(taking cheque)
This was in his wallet?

MARCIE

Yes it was.

JO

And you took it. I mean it didn't
just fall out. You didn't find it
on the floor. You actually took it
from his wallet.

MARCIE

Like I said, yeah.

JO

Why, Mum?

MARCIE

Might be because you were having
sex with him on my couch.

(to Amie)

Maybe it made me feel like I kind
of knew him or something.

AMIE

That makes sense in a way. Some
chick leaves her makeup in front of
my mirror, it's mine.

MARCIE

Good point, sweetie.

(to Jo)

So? \$300,000. Is that someone
paying him a real estate
commission?

JO

I don't know. Maybe.

MARCIE

And giving him that kind of cheque
for it? That's normal?

JO

No. Probably not. But--

MARCIE

He's a criminal.

JO

Mum.

AMIE

Actually he might be. I mean if it's a commission or some kind of fee, why isn't it made out to him?

MARCIE

He sounds risky. He's a risky, shady individual for sure.

(to Jo)

You can't be going around with someone like that just before your sentencing hearing.

(to Amie)

Tell her.

AMIE

(to Jo)

She's probably right. I mean I've only known him for a few weeks so--

MARCIE

I thought you went to school with him.

AMIE

No. No that was his friend Rick.

JO

What the--

AMIE

Hey! We were all drunk. It could have been *your* mistake, you know.

MARCIE

Her mistake about what?

AMIE

Which one of them she was planning to bone.

JO

The one you went to school with seemed like the safer bet.

AMIE

Well you're still alive, so--

MARCIE

Bone. God I hate that word. Where's the chance of even a little tenderness when you think of "boning" someone.

JO

That's not an issue for me these days, Mum.

(to Marcie)

Hand it over.

(off her look)

The wallet... and that cheque.

MARCIE

You're gonna give it back to him?

JO

Right.

MARCIE

Well... are you at least going to ask him for a reward.

JO

For finding it in our couch?

MARCIE

Well suppose I hadn't even told you.

JO

What?

MARCIE

Well it could have belonged to anyone.

JO

What do you mean "anyone?"

MARCIE

Anyone you've had over since you've been living here. And most of them are long gone, right. So me knowing that woulda meant there'd be no reason to even mention that I'd found it.

JO

Just hand them over.

Marcie just looks at her. Then gives her the cheque.

MARCIE

I'm a little desperate, Honey. Couldn't you just ask him for me? Say my mum found this and she'd like a little something. All he can say is no.

JO

We gotta go.

(to Amie)

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

Just give me a minute to get dressed.

AMIE

Don't bother. There was a fire at work early this morning. The club's closed. I was going to tell you. But I didn't.

JO

Closed for how long?

AMIE

Forever. The place burned down.

JO

Jesus...

AMIE

Yeah it sucks.

MARCIE

Or maybe it doesn't. Maybe it's good. You could take it as an opportunity to try something else.

AMIE

I don't know if any of the other clubs are hiring. Out near the airport maybe.

MARCIE

I didn't say *somewhere* else. I said *something* else. You don't have to twirl around that stupid pole naked forever.

AMIE

Who said we did? I'm going to cooking school.

JO

And I'm going to jail.

AMIE

(to Marcie)

Yeah. So there you go.

MARCIE

She's not necessarily going to jail.

AMIE

Well where else do they put convicted kidnappers?

MARCIE

When it's their own child they've taken, they usually make concessions.

JO

Yeah. So maybe two years instead of five.

AMIE

Really? Just two? You can do that no sweat.

JO

Ya think?

AMIE

Sure. I've done almost two when you put all my drug convictions together.

MARCIE

Not really the same thing when they're separated like that. Anyway I'm worried she'll get even more time if they find out she's been stripping.

JO

They can't do that.

AMIE

Yeah. How was she supposed to support herself?

MARCIE

By doing something else.

JO

And making a lot less money. If it comes to me having to do more time, I'll just grab Suzy again and take off.

MARCIE

There's that bad part of your brain talking to you again. We'll just hire a better lawyer.

JO

With what? Look Mum, you've got enough problems, so don't worry about what I--

AMIE

(to Marcie)

You got money problems, right?

(MORE)

AMIE (CONT'D)

(sitting)

I can lend you a few hundred.

MARCIE

Every day?

AMIE

What?

MARCIE

A hundred dollars every day for two years. That's what it's gonna take to get me in a good enough situation.

AMIE

Good enough for what?

MARCIE

To buy a house. Like you were already told.

AMIE

I thought you dropped that idea.

MARCIE

When?

AMIE

When I told you it couldn't happen.

MARCIE

So you think you're my financial advisor now?

JO

She's right, Mum. Anyone would tell you the same.

MARCIE

Well if it's all right with you, I'll wait until I'm in a position to ask the bank and have them tell me. In the meantime both of you should stop stepping on my dream.

Angies's cell goes off. She answers it.

AMIE

(into phone)

Hey. What's up...

(to Jo)

It's Rick.

(into phone)

Yeah I heard. It's really--

What?... Wow, that's...

JO
What is it.

AMIE
Three people died in that fire.
(into phone)
You know who they were?... Jesus.

JO
Who?

AMIE
The Riley brothers.

MARCIE
They're owners, aren't they?

JO
Yeah...
(to Amie)
Who else?

AMIE
(into phone)
Who's the third?... Oh, man
that's-- You all right?... Okay ...
Yeah. Let me know ... Right. Later.

She disconnects.

AMIE (CONT'D)
The other one was Ruben.

JO
What?

Jo seems a little shaken.

AMIE
He hung around to play pool with
the Riley brothers. And they got
trapped down in the basement.

Jo sits. Stands. Sits again.

AMIE (CONT'D)
You okay?

JO
Well it's kinda--

MARCIE
Can I see that wallet?

JO
Why?

MARCIE
Just hand it over, okay.

Jo obeys.

Marcie digs out the cheque.

MARCIE (CONT'D)
Is there any way this could still
be of value.

JO
He's dead, Mum.

MARCIE
I meant to *us*. I think cheques made
out to cash are just like money.
Anyone can use it, right.

Marcie puts the cheque on the coffee table in front of the
couch.

MARCIE (CONT'D)
Let's just think about that for
awhile, okay.

They are all looking at the cheque.

JO
What's going on, Mum?
(off cheque)
You're not thinking about cashing
this cheque, are you?

MARCIE
Well someone should cash it.

AMIE
It belongs to Ruben Joseph.

MARCIE
He's dead.

AMIE
Yeah but he mighta told the guy who
gave it to him.

MARCIE
Told him what?

AMIE
That he'd lost it. You know, so the
guy who gave it to him could put a
stop payment on it.

JO

Or he might have told the Rileys.
Maybe that's why he went there so
early this morning. To look for it.

MARCIE

Not to play pool, you mean. Well
anyway if he told them it was lost
it doesn't really matter because
they're dead too. So...

(a thought)

Have you checked your cell this
morning? He might have texted you
when he discovered it was missing.

Jo's leather jacket is on a chair. She pulls her cell out of
a pocket.

AMIE

Can you put a hold on a cheque made
out to cash.

JO

(off her cell)

Yeah there's a text. He wanted to
know... if he left his wallet here.

MARCIE

You should answer it.

JO

Answer a text from a dead guy.

MARCIE

We should have it on record that he
didn't leave it here.

(to Amie)

Google it.

AMIE

What?

MARCIE

See if you can put a stop payment
on a cheque made out to cash?

JO

I don't like what's happening, Mum.
You're putting something in motion
here.

MARCIE

It's a simple investigation into
the facts and possibilities.

Amie is Googling.

JO

Right. Look what we should really be doing with it is giving it to his wife.

MARCIE

Why? You think she needs it?

JO

I don't know. And that's beside the friggin' point, Mum.

MARCIE

Says who?
(to Amie)
So?

AMIE

Can't find anything about that. Maybe we should just try to cash it and see what happens.

JO

No it's too risky. It's gotta go to the wife. So how do we do that?

AMIE

We could give it to his pal Rick. He probably knows her.

MARCIE

He also probably knows that a cheque made out to cash is the same as money. So what are the chances of him just cashing it himself?

AMIE

Pretty good, probably.

Marcie's cell goes off.

MARCIE

(answering)
Can't pay today. Call me next week.

She disconnects.

AMIE

Man, you owe a lot of money, eh.

MARCIE

Maybe not for long though. And wouldn't that be an unexpected mercy.

JO

Nothing you say can convince me that we should do this.

MARCIE

I haven't even started trying, so don't be so sure, Honey. I haven't brought up your daughter yet, have I?

AMIE

Yeah...

JO

Whatya mean, "yeah"?

AMIE

Well that money could mean a fresh start for you when you get out of prison.

MARCIE

Or it could mean you never have to go to prison. You could just take off.

JO

Okay, here we go.

MARCIE

I don't like the way you said that. Have I ever advised you to break the law before.

JO

Only by having me watch you do it.
(to Amie)
She started passing bad cheques a few months ago.

MARCIE

I don't consider it a bad cheque if you have an intention to pay later.

JO

How much later?

MARCIE

Well that depends, doesn't it.

JO

So you're still doing it.

MARCIE

Only when I have to.

AMIE

Sounds like the two of you might be doing some time inside together.

JO

You hear that, Mum?

MARCIE

She was just kidding.

AMIE

Not really.

JO

(to Marcie)

If you wind up in prison, Suzy won't have either of us. It'll just be Jimmy and his idiot sister in her life.

AMIE

Yeah that chick is not all there. Probably from too much acid, eh. What's that stupid movie she's always going on about?

JO

Guardians of the Galaxy.

AMIE

Yeah. Talking all the time about it like it's...

JO

Real.

(to Marcie)

She thinks it's very realistic. And there's probably something just like that happening somewhere in the universe right now.

AMIE

Which is beyond weird. Isn't one of the characters a peanut or something?

JO

A raccoon.

AMIE

Whatever. It's still some kind of crazy to think that movie is like a documentary or something.

(to Marcie)

And Suzy's hearing this stuff, right. You gotta stay around to balance that situation out.

MARCIE

All the more reason to get this cheque cashed as fast as possible. I might not be able to stop myself from doing some illegal things to get myself out of trouble. When things close in like they are...

JO

Things? You mean collection agencies?

MARCIE

I wish. No. It's Rocco.

JO

Who the fuck's Rocco.

MARCIE

He was the guy on that flyer I got a few weeks back. Remember? "Need money? Call Rocco"... So I did. Anyway it turns out that Rocco has a very strict pay back schedule with extremely high interest rates.

AMIE

You mean he's a loan shark.

(to Jo)

There's been a guy named Rocco hanging around the club for awhile. Thick neck. One wonky eye. He's friend of Ruben's, I think.

JO

Yeah I've seen him.

(to Marcie)

And you owe him how much?

MARCIE

Well the interest compounds daily, so that depends on what time it is. The new day begins at 5pm.

JO

Jesus... So it's a lot.

MARCIE

A lot more than I borrowed, yeah.

JO

Okay. Well then that means I need to...

Jo grabs the cheque.

MARCIE

What are you doing?

JO

You're afraid and you're desperate. And that's when you make your biggest mistakes.

MARCIE

That's when everyone makes their biggest mistakes.

JO

Yours are worse. So... I'm gonna rip this friggin' thing up.

MARCIE

No. No no no. You can't do that. It's money!

JO

No it's trouble.

AMIE

It *could* be trouble. But it's *definitely* money. And I think we should--

(to Marcie)

Am I in for a share, by the way?

MARCIE

Of course, Sweetie. It'll be a three-way split.

AMIE

Great. Okay. Yeah...

(to Jo)

I'm with your mum. We gotta think ahead a little.

MARCIE

Yes, put it down, Jo. Let's at least talk about it some more.

AMIE

Yeah its definitely worth talking about.

MARCIE

There are things we could do with that money that would change our lives.

JO

Right. Like you said... I could just take off. That's not gonna happen no matter what. You think I'd leave Suzy?

MARCIE

I meant take off *with* Suzy. You got a bad deal in that custody hearing because you had a shitty lawyer.

AMIE

She also had a drug problem.

MARCIE

Which she was fighting. And they could have given her more time to get herself together. But since they didn't...

AMIE

Yeah since they didn't, you could use some of this money to get the hell away from here. And you and Suzy could have a chance to make it all better.

JO

For how long?

AMIE

For as long as you don't get caught.

JO

Jesus...

AMIE

I'm not saying I'm totally for the idea. I'm just not totally against it.

MARCIE

(to Jo)

Jo? Joanna?

JO

I'm thinking...

Marcie sneaks a look to Amie.

MARCIE

Okay but be brave in your thinking.

Amie is edging closer to Jo from behind.

JO

Whatever that means. This cheque isn't something we found on the street. This cheque is... connected to people who might--

MARCIE

Stop it! Stop thinking like that. You're not seeing where this could take this.

JO

You mean besides to the bottom of the lake.

MARCIE

Is this all we want out of our lives? Places like this to live in. Jobs in places like Walmart or Dollarama or sleazy strip clubs? Please, Jo. Things like this don't drop into your hands for no reason.

JO

What are you talking about?

MARCIE

Well maybe it's God's will.

JO

God's will. Gimme a break, okay.

Amie suddenly throws her arms around Jo from behind, pinning both of Jo's arms to her side.

JO (CONT'D)

Hey!

Marcie gently takes the cheque from Jo's hand.

MARCIE

There we go...

Amie lets Jo loose.

JO

(to Amie)

What the fuck?

AMIE

I couldn't help it. It just came to me.

JO

What? What came to you?

AMIE

A little pastry shop. You know, cakes, cupcakes, maybe some sweet rolls. I could start something like that for myself.

MARCIE

Yes you could. That's smart positive thinking, Amie.

(to Jo)

You should try thinking like that.

JO

Like what? Starting a pastry shop?

AMIE

Sure. As long as it wasn't across the street from mine.

MARCIE

(to Jo)

I was talking about you and Suzy getting yourselves into a better situation somewhere. That sentencing hearing might not turn out well.

AMIE

(to Jo)

Yeah. Jimmy's a lying douche and he's going to say all kinds of shit about you.

MARCIE

Right. He will. So let's consider all that. Rocco and the possibility he's gonna start squeezing me big-time for his money, Amie's pastry shop dream, the serious amount of prison time you could get...

AMIE

Leaving Suzy anywhere near Jimmy's wacko sister...

MARCIE

Right. And let's give all those things the weight they deserve. In the meantime I'll just put this cheque back where it was, okay.

She does. And they all look at it (and each other) again.

Jo's cell goes off. She looks at the screen.

JO

Oh fuck, what's he want?

(into phone)

Hi... Yeah I heard... No. It's never opening again ... Well what's that's to you, Jimmy?

MARCIE

What's his problem?

JO

He's worried I won't make my support payments.

AMIE

Asshole.

MARCIE

Yeah. Tell him *you're* worried he's too stupid to be a human being. That he's just a dumb animal who has no right being anywhere near his daughter let alone in charge of her well being. No let me do it.

(grabs the phone)

Listen up, idiot. Don't worry about your damn support payments. You've got no right to be even asking that question... Right. But the judge was a hard-hearted man who didn't take into consideration all the times you were out of work and didn't contribute a cent to your daughter's support. So don't go about trying to suck any more money out of Jo, or you'll be getting a visit from a friend of mine ... No. Not one of my "lesbo pals." And yes, you are afraid of them. Yes you are! You're scared shitless of lesbians, you idiot. But this guy's gonna be a whole *other* kind of scary to you. So back off! Or you'll be dealing with something you might not survive!!

She hands the phone back to Jo.

AMIE

(to Marcie)

Rocco? You're gonna set Rocco on him.

MARCIE

It was just something that popped into my head.

JO

(into phone)

Yeah well she hates your guts, so whatya expect. Look, put Suzy on, okay ... Just do it. I need to talk to her.

MARCIE

How she got involved with that fool I'll never understand.

AMIE

Me either. And I've had my share of fools. Maybe we both should have switched teams like you did. Sheila never treated you bad, did she?

MARCIE

No. She just died on me.

JO

(into phone)

Hi Sweetie. How's my girl...

Jo heads into her bedroom.

MARCIE

(quietly to Amie)

Look, you really need to commit to this, okay.

AMIE

This what?

MARCIE

This problem Jo's got with cashing that cheque.

AMIE

Well who pinned her arms?

MARCIE

Yeah that was good. But I'm talking about persuasion. We need to make it clear that the rewards outweigh the risks.

AMIE

Even if they might not? Like what about if the cops get involved. Or suppose the guy who signed that cheque is not a legit person and he finds out that we--

MARCIE

How long are men going to be paying you to do what you do?

AMIE

You mean at work? I don't know. I guess it depends on how well I take care of myself.

MARCIE

You mean your breasts.

AMIE

Not just my breasts, but yeah.

MARCIE

Plus there's gotta be girls doing it now that are a lot younger than you. And they don't need so much... maintenance, do they.

AMIE

No. Not usually.

MARCIE

Look that pastry shop thing, it's a nice idea. But whether you do that or not, how about just having a few choices. About how you could change your life, get another kind of job, like your mother kept wishing you would. Or maybe even an apartment of your own instead of that dumpy house you share with all those other "entertainers."

AMIE

It's okay there. I like most of the girls. But yeah, a little privacy would be nice...

MARCIE

I'm not saying your future isn't in pastries, but there are other things you could consider doing.

AMIE

You mean like bread?

MARCIE

What?

AMIE

I could just be a bread maker, and forget the pastries. I mean they can be tricky to do anyway, and you have to be pretty patient.

MARCIE

That's important information. But I meant separate from all that. Any job that didn't have you doing whatever you do for men you don't even know. Maybe you owe that to your poor dead mother. Because you were basically a shitty daughter to her, right.

AMIE

I guess.

MARCIE

No need to guess, Sweetie. You broke her heart.

AMIE

She told you that?

MARCIE

Yeah. All the time. Did you think she was happy with what you did for a living?

AMIE

No... but she never tried to make me ashamed of it like you are either. There are worse things I could be doing. I'm not hurting anyone. And that's something, isn't it. I've met guys at the club who brag about how they swing deals that screw a lot of people. I'm a better person than they are.

MARCIE

Some serial killers are better than they are. The point is--

Amie's cell goes off.

She answers it.

AMIE

(into phone)

Hey, Rick... Yeah I'm there now... I don't know, I'll ask.

(covers speaker)

He wants to know if Ruben left his wallet here.

Marcie gestures.

MARCIE

(in a whisper)

And the answer is...?

AMIE

Right.

(into phone)

No. They haven't seen it...

MARCIE

(whispers)

Who's asking?

AMIE

(into phone)

Who's asking ... Yeah but besides you ... How does she know he lost it?

Marcie gestures.

Amie covers the speaker.

AMIE (CONT'D)

The cops told his wife it wasn't on his body.

(into phone)

Well it's not here so--

MARCIE

How do they know it was Ruben if he didn't have his wallet on him?

AMIE

Hey, Rick. are they sure it was Ruben. I mean if he didn't have his wallet ...

(to Marcie)

His wife identified his gold watch.

(into phone)

No real reason. Just curious ...

Yeah I'm sure ...

(she disconnects)

Jesus...

MARCIE

That question upset him?

AMIE

Yeah... You got any any snacks?

MARCIE

There are some chips in the cupboard next to the fridge.

Amie goes into kitchen.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

This Ruben fellow... maybe he actually wasn't in real estate.

AMIE

(from kitchen)

I never thought he *was*.

MARCIE

You said just the opposite awhile ago.

AMIE

Well...

(returning with chips)

Sometimes I say the opposite just to hear how it sounds.

MARCIE

The opposite to what you *think*?

AMIE

Or to what I said. You know, to see if it sounds more like the truth.

MARCIE

And it didn't.

AMIE

(eating)

What didn't? What I said then? Or what I said just now.

MARCIE

Then.

AMIE

Yeah that was wrong. No way was he in real estate. But so what?

MARCIE

So we have to do this right now.

Marcie grabs the cheque and heads for the door.

AMIE

Where you goin'?

MARCIE

There's a bank down the block. It's time to find out what this thing is really worth to us.

Marcie hurries out.

Jo comes out of the kitchen, putting her cell away.

JO

She's got a cold, but it doesn't sound too-- Where's my mother?

AMIE

Off to the bank.

JO

(noticing)

With the cheque.

AMIE

I guess she got tired of trying to convince you.

Marcie's phone goes off.

JO

That's hers.

Jo finds it under a cushion where Marcie was sitting.

Jo looks at Amie. Amie shrugs.

Jo answers the phone.

JO (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 Hi... No it's her daughter ... Okay
 ... Yeah. I'll tell her...

She disconnects.

AMIE
 Who was that?

JO
 Rocco.
 (off her look)
 The loan shark? He wanted me to
 tell my mum that after this time...
 it gets a lot worse.

AMIE
 What does?

Marcie opens the door and comes in. Her nose is bleeding.

JO
 (pointing)
 That...

AMIE
 (looking)
 Ah, shit.

MARCIE
 I'm going to need a little tending
 to here.

AMIE
 (heading to the bathroom)
 I'll get a wet cloth.

MARCIE
 Good idea.
 (reaching out to Jo)
 Give me a hand, Honey. I'm a little
 woozy.

Jo is helping her to the couch.

MARCIE (CONT'D)
 Must be in shock.
 (sitting)
 That guy was very efficient.
 (off her face)
 This only took two seconds.

JO
 Put your head back, okay.

MARCIE
(obeying)
Yeah...

JO
It was a message. From Rocco.
There's more to come if he doesn't
get his money.

MARCIE
All of it? That's almost eight
thousand.

JO
You borrowed eight grand from the
guy.

MARCIE
Six. But like I said the interest
is--

JO
Holy fuck, Mum.

MARCIE
Yeah. It's a mess. I owe so much.
And to just about everyone. Plus I
still haven't paid for Sheila's
funeral. And that's bothering me
more than anything. She'd hate
owing that.

JO
Well she's dead, so she doesn't
know about it, does she.

MARCIE
You're sure of that, are you?

JO
Yes.

MARCIE
Sheila was right. A little religion
could have helped you calm down and
make better choices.

JO
Has it helped you?

MARCIE
It came to me too late.

JO
Yeah. Look, I liked Sheila. I
appreciated that she helped you
pull it together after Dad fucked
off.

(MORE)

JO (CONT'D)

But all that God stuff she was into meant nothing to me... Why didn't she have insurance. I mean even just enough to take care of her funeral...

MARCIE

She cashed it in.

JO

Why?

MARCIE

To pay for the lawyer.

JO

Why'd she need a lawyer?

MARCIE

Your lawyer.

JO

She paid for my lawyer?

MARCIE

Yeah and the asshole wasn't worth a penny of what she gave him.

JO

I thought I was on legal aid.

MARCIE

It ran out.

JO

Well... I never asked her to do that.

MARCIE

Not directly.

JO

Meaning?

MARCIE

Well she knew you spent all your money on booze and weed, so if you weren't *doing* that she wouldn't have had to--

JO

I was out of my head, mum. I'd lost custody of my little girl.

MARCIE

Yeah. I know. So someone had to step up. And that was Sheila.

Amie returns with a cloth, begins to wipe Marcie's face.

AMIE

This Rocco guy doesn't fool around, eh.

MARCIE

Yeah. You know, under different circumstances he'd be a valuable friend.

JO

What the hell's that mean?

MARCIE

Well we might be in need of some protection. Suppose the guy who gave Ruben that cheque is not a respectable person. Suppose he thinks he's not gonna be out that money now. And then suppose he finds out we cashed it.

JO

Which we haven't done yet... have we?

MARCIE

I didn't even get close to the bank. The guy blindsided me on the sidewalk and then just kept moving.

JO

Well then...

MARCIE

Yeah. We need to think this through in a whole other way.

AMIE

So you don't want to cash it now.

MARCIE

When did I say that. I meant we need to come up with a more detailed plan for when we do it. This should have been on my mind all along. We all have to take off out of here.

(to Amie)

Does it really matter where you start baking cupcakes.

AMIE

I guess not. But I've never lived anywhere else.

MARCIE

Yeah. Well I've heard that living anywhere else can be wonderful.

(to Jo)

And you and Suzy needed to get away a long time ago. Away from your ex and his spaced out hippie sister, away from your dealers and away from all the dead-enders you meet in bars. We'll go somewhere. We'll all start off as new people. No obligations. Just possibilities. Okay. Yeah, I'm excited!

Her cell rings. She finds it where Jo put it down. Answers it.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Fuck off.

She takes the cheque out of her pocket.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

(heading for door)

Let me try this again.

JO

Whoa!

She moves to intercept her. Amie stops her.

AMIE

Let her go. She's got a point. I mean I've been thinking.

JO

It's too late.

AMIE

For what?

JO

For you to start thinking.

AMIE

That's a crappy thing to say.

JO

It's true. All you've done your whole life is follow me. I quit school. You quit school. I started dancing. A month later you were in that club doing it too.

MARCIE

Jo, don't. Okay.

JO

Well it's true. She's always just done whatever I did.

(pushes Amie)

So where's the "thinking" in that.

AMIE

(pushing back)

Yeah well when *I* got knocked up, I *thought* having an abortion was better than shacking up with the loser who did it to me, like you did.

JO

(another push)

And now you think it's better to just go along with whatever my mother wants us to do.

AMIE

(push)

Yeah because it's the best thing for all of us.

JO

(push)

You *think*!

AMIE

Yeah. I do. And that makes it two to one. So give it up, okay.

JO

Okay. Yeah. Fuck it. But first, let's get rid of this stupid thing!

She pulls Amie's clip on large pony tail off.

AMIE

You bitch!

Jo throws the piece to her. Amie is re-fastening it.

MARCIE

So... can I go to the bank now?

Her phone goes off again.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

I told you to-- What? ... I don't know what you're talking about. What's your name? ... That name doesn't sound familiar to me.

JO

Who is it?

MARCIE
(covers speaker)
It's Dean Olsen.

JO
Shit. That's the guy who who signed
the cheque.

MARCIE
(looking at cheque)
Yeah. She's right. I never bothered
to look. Or maybe I looked and
forgot. I guess I'm a little too
excited

AMIE
(to Marcie)
Hang up.

JO
No.
(to Marcie)
Find out what he wants.

AMIE
Yeah. And then hang up.

MARCIE
He wants to talk about it.

AMIE
The cheque? How do you know?

MARCIE
He just told me.

AMIE
Hang up.

MARCIE
(into phone)
Like I said, I don't know what
you're talking about ... Okay. Go
ahead...

JO
Go ahead with what?

MARCIE
He's telling me all the things that
could happen to us if we don't give
it back...

JO
You mean he just assumes we have
it.

MARCIE

Yeah.

AMIE

Hang up. Please hang up!

MARCIE

Shh. I'm trying to listen...

(into phone)

Can you repeat that last thing? ...
Really? You think you'll get away
with that?

JO

Away with what?

MARCIE

You don't need to know.

(into phone)

Finished? ... Good. Now let me tell
you a little something about who
you're dealing with here.

AMIE

No. Don't. Don't tell him anything.
Just hang up!

MARCIE

Shh!

AMIE

This is bad...

(to Jo)

That name. Dean Olsen. It sounds
familiar to me.

JO

Yeah I just fucking told you, he's
the guy who signed the cheque.

AMIE

I mean... besides that.

MARCIE

(into phone)

I was born in 1958. I was orphaned
in 1959 when both my parents were
killed in a car crash. And nothing
about my life since then has been
easy. I was put in-- ... No I won't
shut the fuck up. You need to-- ...
What, now?... Okay...

She walks to the window. Looks out.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

I see two men. Which one are you.
Okay so who's the other one... Rick
who?

AMIE

What?

Amie and Jo rush to the window.

MARCIE

You know them?

JO

Yeah.

AMIE

The one on the left is Rick.

JO

And the other one is...

AMIE/JO

Ruben.

MARCIE

Ruben the dead guy?

AMIE/JO

Yeah...

MARCIE

(into phone)

Okay what's going on? Why'd you say
you were Dean Olsen when you're
really...

AMIE

Ruben Joseph.

MARCIE

Ruben Joseph. And you're supposed
to be dead ... No I don't think
that's a good idea.

(to Jo and Amie)

They want to come up and explain.

AMIE

Hang up.

JO

Is that gonna be your only
suggestion here?

AMIE

You got a better one? I don't think
we should have even admitted that
they're there.

(MORE)

AMIE (CONT'D)

That was a big mistake. We should have gone to the window and said we didn't see anyone down there.

JO

What are you talking about?

AMIE

It would have made them think they were at the wrong address.

JO

Except they could see *us*. They looked up and *saw us*, so--

AMIE

Right. But my basic point is that opening up communications was a really big mistake. Guys like Rick, that's all they need to start fucking with our heads.

(whispering)

Hang up...

MARCIE

Don't you even want to know why the guy who's supposed to be dead... isn't?

AMIE

No... They're experts at messing with people. Even from a distance like now. Imagine what they can do up close.

JO

Just tell them we need time to consider it.

MARCIE

If they can come up?

JO

Yeah...

MARCIE

That'll make it sound like we have something we need hide.

JO

We do.

AMIE

She's right.

MARCIE

Well I have to tell them something.

AMIE

No! You don't. Just hang the fuck up!!

Marcie shrugs and disconnects. They are all looking down on the street.

JO

They don't look happy.

MARCIE

Looks like he's calling again.

Jo's cell goes off.

JO

That's mine.

AMIE

Don't...

JO

Be quiet...

(answers phone)

Hi, Ruben. You look like shit. I guess that's because you're dead, eh. What's up with that? You're dead. You're not dead. Make up your mind, man.

AMIE

(still looking out)

Doesn't look like he's laughing.

JO

(into phone)

Does your wife know?... That you're alive, what else...

(covering)

It's "none of my fucking business."

AMIE

Maybe he's right. Maybe you should just wish him well and end the conversation. I'm hungry.

(heading into kitchen)

Anyone else want a sandwich or something?

MARCIE

(to Jo)

Ask him if he needs the money because he's starting a new life?

(off Jo's look)

Just a thought.

JO
 (into phone)
 Does anyone else know you're
 actually alive, Ruben ... Okay.
 (to Marcie)
 He's not here to talk about that.
 He's here to get that cheque back
 "one way or another."

MARCIE
 Ask him whose body it was they
 found.

JO
 I don't want to know that.

MARCIE
 Why not?

JO
 Well it... could have been a friend
 of mine. One of the bouncers. A
 bartender.

MARCIE
 And you don't want to know if they
 killed one of those people to cover
 up that Ruben is starting a whole
 new life?
 (off her look)
 Well it makes sense if you think
 about it.

JO
 Ham and cheese okay?

MARCIE
 Just tell him there's no way we're
 returning that cheque. And that we--

She grabs the phone from JO.

MARCIE (CONT'D)
 (into phone)
 I've got a suggestion.

AMIE
 Mustard?

MARCIE
 (into phone)
 A deal. We make a deal ...
 (to Jo)
 No deals. Just the cheque.

JO
 Ask him why he told you he was Dean
 Olsen.

MARCIE

He heard that. He says it was a mistake.

JO

What?

MARCIE

(listening)

He forgot you might be here and you could identify him...

(more listening)

He thought if he told me he was Dean Olsen, I might give him the cheque back.

JO

Because Dean's the one who signed it?

MARCIE

I guess.

AMIE

(from the kitchen)

Dean Olsen. Yeah. I just remembered who he is. He's a friend of Rocco's.

MARCIE

My Rocco?

Takes the phone back.

JO

Yeah, Mum. *Your* Rocco. Jesus.

(into phone)

Is Dean Olsen dead, Ruben?

AMIE

What? No. Don't go there?

JO

Is his body the one you put in there after you set that fire?

AMIE

Whoa! Take that back. Tell him we don't give a shit about that.

MARCIE

I do. We need to keep pushing... get them back on their heels.

AMIE

No that'll just make them more dangerous.

(MORE)

AMIE (CONT'D)

I think we should just hand over the cheque. We're in way over our heads here.

MARCIE

No we were in over our heads. Now I think we might have a chance to make this all good.

(to Jo)

It's time to end the call. We need a strategy.

(to Amie)

Yeah I'd like that.

AMIE

What?

MARCIE

Mustard.

(off her look)

Okay? Can you do that now? Make those sandwiches?

AMIE

Sure.

She heads into the kitchen.

AMIE (CONT'D)

I hate this. Being afraid of douche bags like that.

(to herself)

Get it together, girl. Come on.

MARCIE

(off Jo's look)

I think better on a full stomach. You know that. Now hang up. Do it.

JO

(into phone)

Gotta go.

She disconnects.

Marcie heads over to the couch.

MARCIE

Okay so how to proceed..

Jo's phone goes off.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

Don't answer it.

JO

Okay.

A phone goes off in the kitchen. Amie comes in with her phone in her hand.

AMIE

They're calling *me* now. Why are they calling *me*? How do they even know I'm here?

JO

You told Rick.

AMIE

Right.

MARCIE

And they probably saw you at the window.

AMIE

Yeah. But... Okay but that doesn't mean I'm involved. I could just be visiting. They think I'm in this with you.

JO

You are.

AMIE

Am I? Really? I mean I was up for it in some way but--

MARCIE

You wanted the money.

AMIE

Yes. I did. But now...

Her phone stops going off.

MARCIE

Stay strong, Amie. Keep thinking about a better future. We just need to--

AMIE

Stay alive. We need to stay alive. That's the number one thing on my list.

MARCIE

Yeah but not just that. This is our chance to do better than just staying alive. Trust me.

Jo's phone goes off.

AMIE

Answer it.

JO

Now you want me to talk to them?

AMIE

Just to ask if I can leave.

MARCIE

Bad move. They'll grab you for sure.

AMIE

I can go out the back.

Jo is looking out the window again.

JO

It's just Ruben now?

AMIE

Where'd Rick go.

MARCIE

Maybe he just went away.

JO

Or maybe he went to cover the back.

Jo's phone stops.

AMIE

Yeah. Maybe. But that's okay. I mean he likes me, so he'll probably just let me leave.

(off their looks)

Okay that's stupid. Let's call the cops.

MARCIE

We're not there yet.

Marcie's phone goes off.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

My turn.

(to Jo)

How'd they get my number anyway?

JO

Not sure. You were my contact at work. You know, for emergencies.

MARCIE

Like what? If you fell off the stage?

AMIE

A girl was attacked last year.

MARCIE

In the club?

AMIE

No. After she left. He got her in the parking lot. It was a guy she'd had kicked out when he got too aggressive.

MARCIE

Was it bad?

AMIE

He almost killed her.

MARCIE

Almost killed her. Okay. But we should just keep on with our lives. I should stay in crippling debt. You should keep working in jobs that put you in danger from your "customers." We should just give up, turn that \$300,000 over to those guys out there, and let them be on their way.

(to herself)

On their way...

JO

What?

Marcie's phone goes off. She answers it.

MARCIE

(into phone)

Okay first off, one more threat from you, we call the police, and there goes your escape money ... Well what else could it be? Did you fake your death just for fun?...

(to Jo)

That got him.

(into phone)

I'm suggesting a four-way split. You and Rick. Me and Jo.

AMIE

Hey!

MARCIE

I thought you wanted out.

AMIE

I changed my mind. Being so scared of those dickheads, didn't feel right to me.

(MORE)

AMIE (CONT'D)

Maybe being a baker is what I'm really meant to be, but I'm not gonna be a baker who takes a lot of shit.

MARCIE

Good for you.
(into phone)
Make that a five-way split.

AMIE

Thanks...

MARCIE

How about those sandwiches?

Amie nods and goes into the kitchen.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

(into phone)
...Well one fifth is better than nothing. You'll just have to find somewhere cheaper to hide out. We're all pulling back on our dreams a little. So what do you say?... Really?

(to Jo)
He's okay with that.

JO

So he says.

MARCIE

Right.
(into phone)
One more thing. Who are you running from anyway? ... What's that mean?

JO

Who is it?

MARCIE

He won't say.
(into phone)
Call me back in a few minutes, okay.

She disconnects.

JO

What is it?

Amie comes in with a tray of sandwiches and pickles.

AMIE

(putting tray down)
Here you go.

JO
Thanks...

MARCIE
(to Amie)
Nice presentation.

JO
Mum?

MARCIE
Yeah. Just let me get some of this
into my stomach.

She takes a bite. Chews. Swallows.

MARCIE (CONT'D)
Okay. Everyone thinks Ruben is
dead, right. But actually it's Dean
Olsen who's dead. So if Ruben plans
to live as Dean he needs... he
needs...

AMIE
What? He needs what?

MARCIE
He needs his... signature. He
doesn't want to cash the cheque.
Well he probably would if we let
him have it, but mostly he needs
the cheque to get Dean's signature.
Maybe copy it.

JO
So he can get used to forging it.

MARCIE
And that gives him the ability to
to get new I.D. Plus access to
everything else Dean has.

JO
Which is probably a lot. Or it
wouldn't be worth it.

MARCIE
Makes sense.

Amie is eating most of the food on the platter.

JO
So if that's true, what does it
mean to us?

MARCIE
Sheila loved dill pickles. She had
cravings for them all the time.
(MORE)

MARCIE (CONT'D)

(to Jo)
Remember?

JO
Yeah...

MARCIE
I miss her so much.

JO
I know.

AMIE
I liked her. She was always kind to me.

MARCIE
She felt sorry for you.

AMIE
Why?

MARCIE
For the same reason I do. Your poor mother wasn't up to the task of guiding you. Not that it always matters. Jo was given lots of guidance and look at her.

(to Jo)
All that trouble you had with drugs. And you were warned about that a lot. Even your father had enough on the ball to talk to you about it.

JO
(to Amie)
Yeah, once. Just before he staggered out the door for the last time, he looked at me and said, "Try to stay clean for as long as possible." I was ten.

AMIE
You told me you were thirteen when he left.

MARCIE
She was.
(to Jo)
No need to make it sound any worse than it was. What was your question again?

JO

My question? Oh right. If Ruben really just needs to see or copy the cheque, what does that mean to us.

MARCIE

You mean how do we do that? Well maybe we go to a public place, just let him take a picture of the signature. But...

JO

But what?

MARCIE

Just thinking. There might be consequences we're not aware of. Why did Dean Olsen give Ruben that cheque in the first place?

She starts to search for something in the kitchen drawers.

JO

What is it, Mum?

MARCIE

(a thought)
He has associates.

JO

Who does.

MARCIE

There was a list of them on the flyer. Made the whole thing look more legitimate.

She finds the flyer.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

(to Amie)
Now you said Dean Olsen was a friend of Rocco's, right

AMIE

Yeah. I mean that's what I thought but--

MARCIE

No no, you were right, honey. And not just a friend. Dean was one of Rocco's associates.

She shows them the flyer.

JO

So the cheque was--

MARCIE

A loan... A loan Dean gave Ruben on behalf of Rocco. A loan Ruben wasn't planning to repay. And Rocco got wind of that somehow and was about to--

(of flyer)

I need that back.

Jo hands it to her.

She looks at the flyer. Punches in a number she sees on it.

JO

Be careful, Mum.

MARCIE

No time for that now, Honey. We're too close.

(into phone)

Yeah. Can I talk to Rocco? ... No that's okay. Just tell him that Ruben Joseph is standing across the street from 96 Willowbank ... No he's not dead. That was Dean Olsen's body they found in the club. Tell Rocco he's getting screwed ... Yeah. Willowbank. 96.

(disconnects)

Okay then...

AMIE

What now?

MARCIE

Now we wait.

Her phone goes off. She answers it.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Hold your horses, Ruben. We're still thinking about how to proceed.

She disconnects.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

If this all works out, have you been thinking about how you'll get Suzy away from Jimmy?

AMIE

(to Jo, still eating)
Yeah. You told me he never leaves
you alone with her.

JO

He doesn't. But I know how to
distract him long enough for one of
you to take her.

MARCIE

Well just don't do anything you'll
have to go to a doctor for later.

Marcie picks up a canvas bag from the floor beside the couch,
and takes out her knitting.

JO

What are you doing?

MARCIE

I've been trying to finish these
socks for Suzy for quite awhile.

JO

And now is as good a time as any,
eh.

(to Amie)

Are you seeing this?

AMIE

(chewing on a pickle)
Everyone has their own way of
dealing with stress. I eat. I eat a
lot.

MARCIE

Well you'd never know it.

AMIE

You burn a lot of calories working
that pole.

MARCIE

Which reminds me...

(to Jo)

Have you had any thoughts yet about
a new profession.

JO

No.

MARCIE

Why not?

JO

Maybe because I'm worried about someone bursting through that door and blowing all our heads off.

MARCIE

That's never going to happen.

JO

You're sure of that, are you.

MARCIE

Yeah I'm all of a sudden feeling totally relaxed about the whole situation. I mean it's all relative, right.

(off Jo)

Her father was a selfish demanding prick. And in all my retail jobs I was expected to just shut up and take whatever garbage the customers threw at me. Now I've got these banks bugging me to pay thirty percent interest on my overdue credit cards. You believe that? Thirty percent? Come on, that's just fucking evil... So these guys we're dealing with now are just--

JO

What? The same? These guys aren't bankers, Mum. I thought you'd have figured that out by now.

AMIE

(sucking on a pickle)

Yeah, me too.

MARCIE

Well I've never worked in an "exotic" club so I haven't experienced the charms of men like this before. But I've got them pegged now, so don't worry.

(holds up a sock)

Do you think she'll like them?

AMIE

They're pretty.

(to Marcie)

Can you maybe you can teach me how to knit sometime?

JO

Sure she can. She'll just hang out in your bakery and when you can spare a few minutes...

Suddenly from outside the sound of a car screeching to a halt and male voices yelling.

Jo goes to the window.

MARCIE

What's happening, Honey.

JO

Jesus. Some guys just grabbed Ruben and they're throwing him into a car... and...

Sound of car speeding away...

JO (CONT'D)

...taking off! Oh. And here comes Rick from around the back of the building. He looks at the car speeding away. Lets what's just happened sink into his stupid head... and then runs like hell in the opposite direction.

MARCIE

Like I said, very efficient.

JO

Rocco? Yeah, he is.

Marcie's phone goes off.

MARCIE

(into phone)

Hey there ... Yeah, very impressive.

AMIE

Rocco?

Marcie nods.

MARCIE

(into phone)

So where does that leave us ...

Really? Are you serious? ...

(to Jo)

He's serious!

JO

About what?

MARCIE

(into phone)

Well what can I say, that's very generous ... And you're okay with that because? ... Oh...

(to Jo and Amie)

(MORE)

MARCIE (CONT'D)

He took out life insurance policies
on all his advisers.

You know, because their work
involves a certain amount of risk.

Amie and Jo just look at each other, confused.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

Well that's great ... Yeah these
last few years have been pretty
rough, all right ... Yeah. Okay. No
worries. We're on our way out of
this place. And you'll never hear
from us again, promise ... Yeah to
you too, Rocco. And God Bless.

She disconnects, goes into the kitchen.

AMIE

What's she doing?

JO

Beats me.

Marcie brings out three cans of beer.

MARCIE

I've been saving these for a
special occasion...

AMIE

Beer for a special occasion?

JO

They're imported.

MARCIE

Crack em open, girls. We've been
given a green light.

JO

To do what?

MARCIE

Anything we want. Anything we can
do with \$300,000. We can cash the
cheque. The money is actually
Rocco's because Dean Olsen was
working for him when he gave it to
Ruben.

JO

So it was a loan.

MARCIE

Yes.

JO

And he doesn't want it back.

MARCIE

No.

AMIE

Why not?

MARCIE

Because he likes me. Well he actually feels sorry for me. And also... he says he owes me. I mean he couldn't get the money from the policy if he couldn't prove it was Dean who was killed in that fire. And as soon as he gets Ruben to... you know, confess, he's gonna be up two and a half million bucks. How about that? The only man who's ever treated me with any understanding is a vicious hard-core criminal. Yes he had me beaten a little, but when the story got told he--

JO

He opened up his gangster's heart and is letting you keep all that money.

MARCIE

As long as we don't let anyone know. Because he has a "rep" to think about, right. I told you it was meant to be.

JO

You told me it would come from God. Not a loan shark.

MARCIE

Well I'm no expert, but apparently God actually does work in myster--

JO

Please.

MARCIE

Okay think what you want. But in the meantime, drink up. Then we've got some serious planning to do.
(she downs half her can)
This time I'm going to make it all the way there.

AMIE

To the bank.

MARCIE

Right. I won't be long.

She leaves.

AMIE

I'm pretty excited. I'm not kidding about wanting to bake things.

JO

I know.

AMIE

Ever since I was a little girl...

JO

I know. I know. I remember your little toy oven.

AMIE

I loved that oven.

JO

Yes you did.

AMIE

I didn't know it at the time. But it was pointing me in a direction. My love for that oven. It was showing me my... my what?

JO

Your destiny?

AMIE

Yes. Right. And now we have to concentrate on yours. Find out what you really want to do.

JO

I want my daughter. It won't matter what job I get as long as I have her with me.

AMIE

Sure. But it'd be nice if you were doing something you enjoyed. Remember all that drawing you did when we were in grade school. Those drawings were beautiful.

JO

They were cartoons.

AMIE

Beautiful cartoons. And maybe you could--

JO

Do it professionally? Come on.
I don't dream about that stuff.
What to do or how to live.

AMIE

Everyone has dreams. All the other
girls at the club probably have
dreams. Emily's gonna go to law
school.

JO

No she's not.

AMIE

She changed her mind?

JO

Yeah. She told me one night when we
were both high.

AMIE

So why didn't she tell the rest of
us?

JO

Tell you what? That she wasn't as
special as you all thought?

AMIE

I looked up to her.

JO

And that's my point.

JO (CONT'D)

She just wanted to make money, get
high, never think about what was
ahead and party like the rest of
us.

AMIE

But still make us think she was
special.

JO

Yeah well...

AMIE

Do you think you can really give it
up. The life?

JO

You gotta do it sometime. I'm not
up for getting a boob job every
second year.

AMIE

Me neither. But I'll miss some things about it.

JO

The men. You'll miss all that attention you got from them?

AMIE

You won't?

JO

I got over that a long time ago.

AMIE

So you say. I see you out there. You're still working it.

JO

Because it's fun in a way. I mean looking at all those guys with that weird hungry expression on their faces. I actually get a little high on the power I have over them.

AMIE

Yeah. Me too.

JO

And that's pathetic, right,

AMIE

Right. I guess so. No. Right. If you look at it in a certain way it's pathetic. But in another way it's--

JO

It's what?

AMIE

A job. A good paying one too.

JO

Yeah okay. I guess it woulda been okay if I'd saved some money, but since that didn't happen, it was really just a pathetic waste of time.

AMIE

Maybe we shoulda done porn.

JO

Yeah. Then I woulda had even more money to blow.

AMIE

Plus you never know who you'd wind up with. I mean they hire those guys for their dicks, not their personalities.

JO

Yeah... But here we are. Both of us ready to move on. Betting on success.

AMIE

What?

JO

We're betting on success. That's what a guy my mum saw on TV was advising everyone to do. She thinks her problem is that she always bet on failure. Just like her mother did. Which is why, when she found that cheque, I knew we were in for a wild ride. Finally a chance to bet on success. And bet big too.

AMIE

Yeah. Very big.

JO

Okay here's the thing...

(looks at her)

I'm gonna need your help to get Suzy away from Jimmy.

AMIE

Sure.

JO

We need to rooify him.

AMIE

Okay. That'll be fun.

JO

Yeah. So if you come on to him, and then--

AMIE

Me? Why me?

JO

Because it wouldn't work with me. He knows I hate his guts.

AMIE

So do I.

JO

Yeah but that's not what he thinks. He thinks you've had the hots for him since high school.

AMIE

No way.

JO

Yeah it's true.

AMIE

No fucking way. How'd he ever get that in his head.

JO

Maybe because his head is up his ass. I'm pretty sure he thinks all women wanna bang him. Look all you have to do is show up, make sure Suzy goes to her room, and then get him a little worked up.

AMIE

Fucking yuk.

JO

And when he's excited enough, slip it into his beer.

AMIE

I can't let him touch me. Maybe I'll just talk some really filthy shit to him.

JO

You can try, but you'll probably have to let him do something to really get him going.

AMIE

Jesus. Okay. He can have a little boob play.

JO

That should be enough. When he's out, you call, I come in, we grab Suzy. And we're outta there. You all right with that plan?

AMIE

Unless I come up with one that doesn't have him putting his hands on me.

Marcie comes back in. Smiling. Excited

MARCIE

All good. They asked a couple of questions like they're supposed to, I guess. I told them they weren't entitled to know where I got it because it wasn't cash. Cash is a whole other thing because it could be from drug money or something. Anyway, they called Dean Olsen's bank to see if the cheque would clear, and when they they were told that wasn't a problem...

(to Jo)

They put it in our account!

She produces a receipt.

JO

What account?

MARCIE

The one we opened to put the rent in.

(shows receipt to Jo)

Amazing, isn't it. Can't be many people who have their bank balance go from 43 to 300,000 and 43 with just one deposit. Like I said, a miracle.

JO

You said a gift from God.

MARCIE

And that's not a miracle?

JO

I'm just wondering if God's gonna help out all the other people with just \$43 in the bank.

MARCIE

Okay. I get that.

(takes out phone)

No more God talk.

JO

Who are you calling now?

MARCIE

We need to dress up and celebrate. I'm going to make a reservation at a fancy restaurant. Either of you know one?

AMIE

Rick took me somewhere once. He was trying to impress me.

MARCIE

What was it called?

AMIE

Our Place.

JO

Yeah I went to it with Ruben.

(to Marcie)

We're not going there.

MARCIE

Why not?

JO

It's a mob hangout.

MARCIE

You mean gangsters go there?

AMIE

Wannabes mostly. The occasional
tourist...

JO

Couldn't we just go out for a
burger? Or maybe Chalet Chicken..

AMIE

(clapping)

Oooh, Chalet Chicken.

JO/AMIE

Please!...

(like kids)

Chalet Chicken! Chalet Chicken!

AMIE

(to Marcie)

We can still dress up if you want.

MARCIE

For Chalet Chicken? We don't have
to be stupid about it!!

(a little stagger)

Ohhh... I'm a little dizzy

(heading for couch)

Better sit down...

JO

You okay?

MARCIE

(sitting)

I think I've been letting myself
get too worked up.

(to Amie)

Pass me my knitting, will you.

AMIE

It's right beside you.

Amie heads to kitchen.

MARCIE

Oh yeah...

(picks it up)

You know what this is like, what just happened to us? It's like that movie where the guy shares his lottery winnings with a waitress.

JO

It's nothing like that.

MARCIE

Well it was unexpected, right. Just like it was for her. Unexpected like so many things in life. Except this time it was actually something good.

She takes a few deep breaths.

JO

What are you doing?

MARCIE

Just trying to calm down.

A few more breaths.

Amie returns with a glass of water. Gives it to Marcie.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

(drinks, drinks more)

There. Good... Now have you two made any decisions about where we should head off to?

AMIE

Not yet.

MARCIE

Well I think we should just buy a car. Travel around a bit. Find a small town that suits our needs.

AMIE

A small town without a pastry shop would be good.

JO

Yeah but it should definitely have a girl's hockey team.

MARCIE

Suzy wants to play hockey?

JO

Only if she can be the goalie.

AMIE

Tell her why.

JO

(to Marcie)

Because at the end of the game,
when the teams each get in a row to
shake hands, the goalie is always
first in line.

MARCIE

Well that's a good sign. It shows
generosity of spirit.

JO

No. She just likes to be first.

Marcie's phone goes off.

JO (CONT'D)

What now?

MARCIE

(looks at screen)

No it's okay.

(into phone)

Hi April... No it's good that you
called. Guess what? I can pay my
bill off today. The whole thing ...
Well some money came in from
Sheila's estate ... No it was a
surprise ... Yeah, so I'll drop in
later with it. And April, thanks
for your patience. And thanks to
Harry too. You've both been very
very kind ...

She disconnects

AMIE

Who's April?

JO

She and her husband own the little
grocery around the corner.

MARCIE

They've been carrying us for six
months.

Marcie's phone goes off.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

(into phone)

... Speaking ... Yes. Yes I know it's way past due. I know I promised. But I'll definitely be able to get it to you tomorrow. All of it ... Okay there's no need to be sarcastic ... Well if saying "whoopie!" wasn't sarcastic what was it then ... Oh you're just really happy for me. Right. After three months of talking to me like I'm a criminal, all of a sudden you care.

JO

Tell him to fuck off.

MARCIE

Its a her.

AMIIE

Bitch!

MARCIE

(into phone)

Look, there's something I've wanted to ask you for awhile now. Do you own stocks in that bank? ... No? Then why have you taken this whole thing so fucking personally?!

Marcie disconnects.

Another call.

JO

Mum. Don't, okay?

MARCIE

It's my dentist's office. I should let them know the bill's gonna get paid. Even though some of his work has been pretty shoddy lately.

JO

(to Amie)

She thinks he might be going blind. He's almost eighty.

MARCIE

Eighty-five.

AMIE

Jesus...

MARCIE

(into phone)

Hi, Celia. Guess what. You can tell him I'm going to pay it off tomorrow ... Yes all of it ... You're welcome. Bye.

(disconnects)

I don't think she believed me.

She laughs.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

I guess all those people I owe think I'm way beyond hope.

JO

Well then they don't really know you, do they?

AMIE

(to Marcie)

Yeah, the way you worked this thing...

JO

(to Marcie)

You took on all those sleazy guys and you got what you wanted.

AMIE

I was very impressed.

JO

Me too.

MARCIE

Really? Good. Because I think I might do something like this again.

(off their looks)

Not right away. But when we've settled somewhere else... If we ever need more cash. Or... if I just want to have a little fun.

Jo and Amie look at each other.

MARCIE (CONT'D)

I wouldn't mind having more fun...

Blackout

THE END

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