

TALLULAH: What? Sorry? Bullshit. How can one possibly feel sorrow for a person one doesn't like? Oh, but I forgot. You of course can. Being of that *nature*.

DANNY: What are you talking about?

TALLULAH: Deception.

DANNY: Just because I said I'm sorry you're d— (*He stops.*)

TALLULAH: Go on, Say it. Dying. Yes. I am. But let me tell you something, buster. I would rather spend an eternity of dying than a lifetime of dead. Like you.

DANNY: (*Defensive*) Like me? How like me? I'm not dead.

TALLULAH: Then what precisely do you call this? Because quite frankly, when I look at you? I don't see anything there. Oh, I can make out a body and hear a voice. But there's nothing—*there*.

DANNY: I am going to find Steve.

TALLULAH: See, you can't possibly convince me for one moment that THIS is what you dreamed about becoming.

DANNY: Steve?

TALLULAH: That HERE is where you pictured yourself working.

DANNY: Steve.

TALLULAH: That NOW is the time you THOUGHT you'd be having.

DANNY: Steve!

TALLULAH: I WANT TO KNOW WHY!

STEVE: (*Over speaker*) You looking for me?

DANNY: (*Flustered*) Steve. Good. I mean. We're ready to start again.

STEVE: Great.

DANNY: (*To TALLULAH*) You all set?

TALLULAH: Of course, darling. (*Then in a cryptic whisper*) Let the games begin.

(*DANNY understands her meaning as he signals to STEVE.*)

(*Beep. Beep. Beep*)

TALLULAH: And so Patricia, as I was telling you— (*Deliberately*) —hmm. So sorry. My mind seems to have gone blank. Completely blank.

DANNY: (*In an angry whisper*) Don't think I don't know what you're doing.

TALLULAH: Why, Daniel, whatever do you mean?

DANNY: Stop.

TALLULAH: Surrender.

DANNY: No.

TALLULAH: (*To Steve*) Again! (*A soft-spoken backhand to DANNY*) I told you wouldn't like the way I play. Because I—very much like you—*cheat*.

(*Beep. Beep. Beep*)

TALLULAH: And so Patricia, as I was telling you— ohhhh, my-my-my. I'm afraid this may take a bit of time.

DANNY: (*Surrendering*) Steve?

STEVE: Yeah.

DANNY: It looks like we're gonna need a little more time down here to, to, to—

STEVE:—rehearse?

DANNY: Yeah. Rehearse.

TALLULAH: Steve dahling?

STEVE: Yeah.

TALLULAH: I think what Daniel's asking, is that you give us a tad more space. (*Demanding*) Alone.

STEVE: I'll wait outside.

(*A door is heard closing: Beat and then:*)

DANNY: (*On the verge*) What do you want?

TALLULAH: Ohh, don't play games with me, young man. I'm too old. Too tired. And tragically now too sober. But thankfully the latter can change.

(*TALLULAH finds the bottle and pours two glasses. She attempts to hand one to DANNY who refuses.*)

TALLULAH: Suit yourself. (*She drinks her cocktail. Then his.*) Now then. You can tell me. And you want to know why you can tell me? Because I'm the only person you *can* tell. Sometimes, my dearest—we can say things to strangers we wouldn't dream of confiding in our very best of friends. I won't judge. Christ, how the hell could I? And don't worry. I'll take it to my grave (which according to those bastard doctors should be any moment now). So. Danny. Tell me.

(*DANNY starts to walk away from TALLULAH:*)

TALLULAH: Who was he?

(*DANNY stops. Trapped, caught. Pause*)

DANNY: (*With difficulty*) Just a guy.

TALLULAH: Do you think you could elaborate a tad?

(*Beat and then:*)

DANNY: College... We met our sophomore year at college. He used to sit two seats in front of me. Well. Not really in front of me. More like diagonally across from me. And to the left. Or was I to the left? No. He was behind me and I sat in front of him but to the right of—

TALLULAH: Jesus Christ! Did I not just say I have six months to live? Get to the goddamn visual!

DANNY: The what?

TALLULAH: The visual. Baby. What did he look like?

DANNY: Okay. Umm. The visual. Lets see. Umm. Average height. Umm. Real solid looking guy. Brownish hair. Oh. And teeth. He had teeth.

TALLULAH: Good.

DANNY: I mean. A. Umm. Really cool smile. Handsome in a not-so-handsome way. But you need to know I had a girlfriend at the time.

TALLULAH: Nothing wrong with a little subplot.

(*DANNY shoots TALLULAH a look.*)

TALLULAH: Proceed.

DANNY: There was this, umm—drive-in theatre where we used to hang out on weekends. We would never go in or anything like that. We used to just drive on this dirt road behind the lot in Eddie's truck. Until we found just the right spot—you know, so we could still see the screen through the trees? Anyway. We could never hear the actual audio track cause we didn't have any speakers. So we used to create our own dialogue instead. Making up our own lines and stuff. (*laughs to himself*) I mean, just crazy talk. Like things that had nothing to do with the real story. (*His laughter turns serious.*) It's as if pretending to be all these different characters allowed us to speak words to each other that—well—that we could never really say in life.

TALLULAH: The magic of the movies.

DANNY: (*Dismissing*) Yeah. Well.

(*Beat*)

TALLULAH: (*Delicately*) This, umm —

DANNY: Eddie.

TALLULAH: Eddie. Yes. Did you love him?

DANNY: (*Instinctively*) No. (*Then*) I—I don't know. I—  
(*Then admitting softly*) —yes.

TALLULAH: And did you— (*She gestures*)

DANNY: Huh?

TALLULAH: Did you— (*She mumbles*)

DANNY: What?

TALLULAH: Don't make me spell this shit out.

DANNY: (*Embarrassed*) Oh. Umm. Yeah.

(*TALLULAH rolls her eyes. Then:*)

TALLULAH: So why did it end?

DANNY: Because I had an obligation.

TALLULAH: To the man you were in love with or to the woman who loved you?

DANNY: To our unborn child.

TALLULAH: I see. Well. That is not a little subplot.

DANNY: She went and got herself pregnant.

TALLULAH: She got *herself* pregnant? Now THAT is a conception I'd like to see!

DANNY: I was going to be a father. And I had to do the right thing. So we got married. That was that. End of story.

TALLULAH: No-no-no-no-no, dahling. I don't think so.

DANNY: You wanted to know what happened so I told you.

TALLULAH: Not everything you didn't.

DANNY: I did.

TALLULAH: Your daughter. Remember her? Dear Baby Ruth.

DANNY: She doesn't have anything to do with this.

TALLULAH: You even showed me a picture. She's three. That's what you told me: she's three.

DANNY: So what?

TALLULAH: (*Overlapping*) How could that possibly be true? Not if that wife of yours gave birth to her in college.

DANNY: Would you just stop?

TALLULAH: (*Overlapping*) She would certainly be much older than that by now.

DANNY: I mean it. Enough already!

TALLULAH: (*Overlapping*) But then why would you be carrying a picture of her at only three years old?

DANNY: Shut up!

TALLULAH: What happened to your daughter?

DANNY: Nothing.

TALLULAH: Where is she now?

DANNY: At home.

TALLULAH: Where is she, dammit?!

DANNY: I don't know!

TALLULAH: WHERE IS SHE?!

DANNY: GONE! ALRIGHT?! YOU FUCKING BITCH?! MY DAUGHTER IS GONE!

(*TALLULAH is shaken from DANNY's outburst. Beat*)

TALLULAH: Gone. Where?

(*DANNY is stuck.*)

TALLULAH: (*Supportive*) Truth. Danny.

(DANNY takes a moment. Then:)

DANNY: (*Difficult and slowly*) We got married. She had the baby. A girl. Ruth. So what could I do? I stopped seeing him. Then started again. Then stopped. I couldn't leave her—and I sure as hell didn't want to leave him. So. There I was. Right smack in the middle of Responsibility and Desire. You ever been there?

TALLULAH: Too many times, baby.

DANNY: She confronts me. Again and again. Until finally I can't lie anymore and simply tell her the truth: that I am in love with someone who has never been and never will be—*her*. (*Beat*) She goes totally insane with revenge. Makes me pack up my things and move out of the house. And throughout it all? I don't break down. She files for divorce. I sign half of all the nothing I have over to her. And I don't break down. I—*stand* there. In that courtroom. Labeled by them as this sexual deviant. As I watch that judge sign away my right to ever see my daughter's face again. And throughout it all? I do not break down. Not once do I br— (*He finally does break down, sobbing uncontrollably.*)

TALLULAH: That's it dahling. Let it all out now.

(DANNY sobs louder as TALLULAH becomes unnerved.)

TALLULAH: Alright. Alright, dear.

(DANNY continues crying. Another burst of sobs)

TALLULAH: That's enough now.

(DANNY continues sobbing.)

TALLULAH: (*Under her breath*) Oh shit. (*She quickly searches her purse, looking for anything that will make him feel better. She pulls out a set of keys and jingles them.*)

TALLULAH: (*As if talking to a child*) Look. Keys. I have keys!

(DANNY continues crying.)

TALLULAH: (*Now as if talking to a dog*) A walk! Who wants to go for a walk? Come on Boy. Come on now. Come—

(DANNY is still inconsolable as TALLULAH remains at a loss. Not knowing what else to do, she takes a seat beside him and simply places her hand upon his.)

TALLULAH: Ugh. I'm exhausted.

DANNY: (*Humbly and genuine*) I. umm. *Lied* to you earlier. About my daughter. She's not three. She turned eighteen about a month ago. So I decided to finally get in touch with her. You know. Now that I *could*? (*Beat*) She was actually happy to hear from me. She even wanted to meet. So I sent her a ticket. (*Beat*) I don't even know what she looks like. (*Beat*) She was supposed to fly out this afternoon. (*Beat*) She's not coming. Changed her mind I guess. And I don't blame her for not ever wanting to see me again.

TALLULAH: She doesn't want to see you *today*. You don't know what's going on in that girl's head. Listen. Sweetie. You mustn't discredit the marvelous thing you did. *You opened a door*. Whether your daughter steps in or not is out of your hands.

DANNY: I never should have left. She needed a father. I should have stayed and made it work.

TALLULAH: Why? So you could be more miserable than you already are? Ohh, baby—we are not so different after all. You and me. I did the same thing my entire life that you're doing right now. I blamed myself. I carried a burden of guilt with me for years until one day I realized—it was never mine to cart. You see, my mama died of blood poisoning just three weeks after giving birth. To me. Yes. In fact. I was christened right beside her open casket. Hell of a way to start one's life, hmm?