

March 30, 2009

RABBIT HOLE

Izzy

And then I see her across the bar, coming at me with this look, you know. And everybody just clears a path for her, and I'm like, "What's with this nut-job?"

And she's all sweaty and yelling. Blowing her stank-breath in my face. And cussing. Then I figured it, "Oh, she must be Auggie's girlfriend." So, she's all talking like a maniac. And people are looking at us. So, I just made a fist, hauled off, and BOOM!

Becca

What does that mean?

Iz

It means I hit her

Becca

No, you didn't

Iz

What would you have done?

Becca

Well I certainly would have hit her.

Izzy

She was up in my face!

Bec

I know but it's so...

Izzy

What?

Bec

Jerry Springer.

Izzy

What's that supposed to mean? You thing I'm trashy?

Becca

You punched a woman in the face!

Izzy

She provoked me!

Becca

Were you drunk?

Izzy

No

Becca

She gonna press charges, ya think?

Izzy

No, Auggie would kill her. She's over it anyway. She moved out. Went to her cousin's or something.

Becca

What are you talking about?

Izzy

She moved. Out of Auggie's place. They're not together anymore.

Becca

I'm sorry...do you know these people?

Izzy

Auggie I do. The girlfriend I only heard about.

Becca

Were you sleeping with him? This Auggie guy, whatever his name is? You were sleeping with him, right?

Izzy

Where ya goin' with all of this?

Becca

You tell this story like you're an innocent bystander. You say you don't know who this woman was—

Izzy

I didn't!

Becca

You were having sex with her boyfriend!

Izzy

That is so beside the point!

Becca

It is?!

Izzy It was over between them for a long time. She didn't care what he did.

Becca

Then why did she accost you in a crowded bar?

Izzy

Because she is a lunatic!

And Auggie told her I was pregnant.

Becca
Oh, Izzy.

Bec
What? You didn't want to tell me?

Izzy
I know, right?

Izzy
No

Becca
You are not.

Becca
Does Mom know?

Izzy
He's a really good guy, Bec. You're gonna like him. He's a musician.

Izzy
Yeah?

Becca
That's terrific.

Becca
You told Mom before me?

Izzy
No, not like you think.

Izzy
I had to.

Becca
Is that why you're here? To tell me you're pregnant?

Becca
Oh, Izzy.

Izzy
Stop saying that.

Izzy
Pretty much.

Becca
What are you gonna do?

Becca
How long have you known?

Izzy
A few weeks.

Izzy
Well I'm gonna keep it, if that's what you're asking. Auggie wants to, too. We're excited about it. This is exactly the kind of thing that gives a person clarity.

Becca
And you're just telling me now?

Izzy
Well, Bec...

Becca
Izzy....

Izzy
Look, I'm sure this is really hard for you. I don't need any advice or lectures. I just need you to pretend to be happy for me. Okay?

Becca
Well...of course I'm happy for you. I was just taken aback. I don't need to pretend. Izzy, gimme some credit.

Becca
Well I should probably hold off on this then.

Izzy
What do you mean?

Becca
I'm washing all these clothes to give to Goodwill. I might as well save them for you. In case you have a boy.

Izzy
But what if it's a girl?

Becca
Then I'll bring them down to Goodwill. What's the big deal?

Izzy
It'd be weird, that's all. If it's a boy. To see him running around in Danny's clothes. I would feel weird. You would, too, I think. I'm sorry.

Becca
It's probably a girl anyway.

Izzy

I'm sorry, Bec. If this is hard. I know the timing really sucks.

Becca
Hey. What can ya do? I'm glad you told me. And I am really happy for you.

Becca
Why are you defending her?

Howie
I'm not. I just think it's silly to get worked up about it.

Becca
I'm not worked up. I'm just saying.

Howie
You're right. It's a mess, but what can we do? Maybe it'll be fine. Izzy's not a moron. Okay, she acts like one sometimes, but...A baby can be good for a person.

Becca
I know that, Howie.

Howie
You want more wine?

Becca
No, I've had two already.

Becca
Mom's thrilled by the way.

Howie
She called?

Becca
Izzy must've told her I knew.

Howie
And how was that?

Becca
What, two hours on the phone with Mom?

Becca
How's Rick?

How
Rick's fine.

Becca
And Debbie?

How
Debbie wasn't there.

Becca
Why can't she call me?

Howie
She's uncomfortable, Bec.

Becca
It's her job to call me.

Howie
It's probably hard for her.

Becca
Hard for her?

How
I'm just saying...

Becca
I should drop her a note.

Howie
Maybe you should.

Becca
“Dear Debbie—just so's ya know, accidents aren't contagious.”

Howie
Okay, let it go.

Becca
Let what go?

Howie
Whatever's making you tense.

Becca
Oh jeez, Howie.

Howie
Now turn around.

Becca
For what?

Howie
Just face that way.
Thank you.
(Massages her) See? Your shoulders are all knotted-up.

Becca
Yeah, well...

Howie
Forget about Debbie and Izzy and whoever else is
bugging you.
(He kisses her neck.)

Uh-huh.

Howie
Becca...

Becca
No? Al Green isn't roping?

Howie
No.

Becca
What are you doing?

Becca
I;m sorry. I'm feeling kinda antsy tonight.
You're right, the Izzy stuff got under my skin.

Becca
Al Green.

Howie
I'm kissing your neck.

Howie
It's been almost eight months.
(Beat.)

Howie
I thought it was nice. That's all. I was trying to
make things nice.

Becca
I see what this is. You're trying to seduce me.

Becca
But who's keeping track?

Becca
Well... you can't. I'm sorry. But things aren't
"nice" anymore.
(Pause)

Howie
Am I?

Howie
I am. I'm keeping track.
(Beat.)

Howie
I think you should see someone. I know you're
not one for therapists, but I think you should. We
could go together if that'd help. Or maybe you
could try the group again.
No? Yes? Do you have an opinion?

Becca
Alright, Romeo.

Howie
I'm sorry. (Off her look) What? That makes me
perverted? Wanting to have sex with my wife?

Howie
What?

Becca
I didn't say that.

Becca
There are piles of clothes up there, Howie.

Howie
Well you give me these looks like I should feel
guilty.

Becca
I think we should sell the house.

Howie.
We'll get it done tomorrow. I'll pitch in.

Becca
Well considering everything else- the fact that
Danny died for example-don't you think maybe it
is a little selfish? For you to be roping me into
sex when I don't wanna have it?

Howie
Come on, Becca, what?

Becca
Yeah, right.

Becca
I've been thinking about it for a while, and since
we're on the topic—

Howie
I will.

Howie
I wasn't roping you into anything.

Howie
How were we on the topic?

Becca

Becca
I think it'd help if we moved.

Howie
Well...

Howie
Okay.

Howie
I don't wanna move.

Becca
Well what? Well that didn't work out?

Becca
Look maybe..maybe we can consider it at least.
The house?

Becca
He's everywhere, Howie. Everywhere I look, I still see Danny.

Howie
I didn't say that.

Howie
Yeah, we'll consider it.

Howie
We love this house.

Becca
Then what?

Becca
Thank you.

Becca
I can't move without—I mean, look at this. Everywhere. Do you even know? Here: The puzzles. The smudgy fingerprints.

Howie
If that's the issue.

Video tape.

Howie
I like seeing his fingerprints.

Becca
If what's the issue.

Danny
Now can I?

Becca
Because you don't have to sit and stare at them day in and day out. You get to go to work.

Howie
--then...maybe we should try again.

Howie
Let me just get the dog. Taz, lay down.

Howie
Well, if you want to go back to work, Becca—

Becca
Oh, Howie...

Video Tape

Becca
I don't.

Howie
What? I'm only saying.

Danny
Did you see me, Daddy?

Howie
--you can call up Sotheby's.

Becca
Is that...is that what this was?

Howie
I did.

Becca
No I can't. That's not who I am anymore. I left all of that to be a mom.

Howie
No. No, of course not. It just...it might be something to talk about at some point.

Danny
No you didn't. I'm invisible.

Becca
I...I can't. I'm sorry. I can't have that talk .

Howie
Ohh.
(Becca shadow at the top of the stairs)

Danny
I have magic.

Howie
Oh, I didn't realize.

Danny
Do you want to be invisible?

Howie
Okay.

Danny
Pffhhh

Howie
Is that it? Am I invisible.
(Becca slips away)

Howie
Do you see me?

Danny
Yeah

Howie
No, you don't. I'm invisible.

Danny
But I can still see you because I have magic.

Howie
Ohhh

Danny
Did you forget that part?

Howie
Yeah, I forgot that part.

Nat and Becca

“Happy birthday, dear Isabel...Happy Birthday to you...”

Becca
You have interesting theories.

Nat.
Don't patronize me.

Becca.
I'm not mom. I was being serious.

Nat.
Normal people don't fly around in their own planes, for example. I don't know anyone with his own plane, do you Howie?

Howie.
Well, I know one guy but-

Nat.
But that's not the norm.

Howie.
No, you're right, he's not average.

Becca.
He's a member of the jet set.

Nat.
Jet setters! Buzzing around in little Pipers or whatever, crashing off the coast of Massachusetts. Regular people don't have ten relatives die in separate plane wrecks. All those good looking people falling out of the sky like that. It's a frickin waste. But it isn't a curse. It's just rich people acting stupid.

Howie.
Well, not necessarily.

Izzy.
It was stupid.

Nat.
Hey, look at me! I'm a Kennedy! I can catch a ball while flying down a mountain-of course he died...

Becca
Anyone want more cake?

Howie
None for me.

Becca
We should do gifts then.

Izzy
Yay! Gifts!

Nat
I don't know how I got on all of this Kennedy stuff. What was I talking about before?

Howie
Aristotle Onassis

Nat
Oh right, that makes sense.

Izzy
You were saying how he'd get really tipsy and never stop talking.

Nat

I'm not tipsy, I had a very interesting point to make.

My point was about Onassis, and how when his son died, he was so distraught by the senselessness of it all, that he put up this big reward to anyone who could prove that someone had sabotaged the plane.

Becca
Here we go.

Nat
He needed a reason for losing his son. But it didn't come of course. And it killed him. The grief did. Because he never came to terms with it. It's like the Kennedy curse, isn't it? People want things to make sense.

Becca
We don't think Danny died because of a curse Mom.

Nat
Of course not.

Becca
Or because someone sabotaged us, or was out to get us. We know there's no sensible explanation.

Nat
I know you do.

Becca
Why are you telling this story?

Nat
I'm just talking. I can't talk?

Becca
You never just talk.

Izzy
Hey, here's an idea, let's change the subject.

Becca
Didn't I say no wine?

Izzy
Mom, you promised.

Nat
Promised what? It's not my fault she missed my point.

Becca
What point?

Nat
Don't flip Becca. I'm just trying to talk to you.

Izzy
I'm gonna clean up, because I think we're just about done here.

Nat
Howie says you won't go to the support group. I always thought talk was healthy.

Becca
So this is what exactly, an intervention?

Izzy
If it is, then I'm really pissed.

Howie
It's not an intervention.

Nat
We're just having a discussion.
I remember when Arthur died, I found the support group very helpful.

Becca
Well that's you. It isn't me. And Arthur isn't Danny.

Nat
I'm not saying he is. I'm just saying it was helpful.

Howie
She doesn't like the people.

Becca
Howie--

Nat
What's wrong with the people? They've lost children, too. They understand what you're going through.

Becca
No they don't. They understand what they're going through.

Nat
I wish someone had sat me down when Arthur died. I wish someone gave me a little advice.

Becca
You know what I wish?! I wish you would stop comparing Danny to Arthur! Danny was a four-year-old boy who chased his dog into the street! Arthur was a thirty-year-old heroin addict who

hung himself! Frankly, I resent how you keep lumping them together.

Nat
He was still my son.

Becca
And I don't recall anyone giving you instructions on how best to grieve for him. I think it's time for me to go to bed now.

Nat
I was never that mean to anyone. When Arthur died I was just as upset as she was, but I never took it out on other people like that.

Izzy
What about Mrs. Bailey?

Nat
Nobody's talking about Mrs. Bailey, Izzy, please.

Howie
You know what this was about?

Howie
We got a letter today from Jason Willette.

Nat
What, why? What'd he want?

Howie
She said it didn't bother her but...Sorry, Iz

Izzy
No hey, this was great, really. Let's do it again next year.

Jason:
Dear Mr. and Mrs. Corbett,
I wanted to send you my condolences on the death of your son, Danny. I know it's been eight months since the accident, but I'm sure it's probably still hard for you to be reminded of that day.
Even though I never knew Danny he sounds like he was a great kid. I'm sure you miss him a lot. I've enclosed a short story that's going to be printed in my high school lit magazine. I was hoping to dedicate it to Danny's memory. Would it bother you if I dedicated the story? If so, please let me know.
I know this probably doesn't make things any better, but I wanted you to know how terrible I feel about Danny. I know that no matter how hard this has been on me, I can never understand the depth of your loss.

Sincerely,
Jason Willette

PS Would it be possible to meet you in person at some point?

(Howie plays VCR...tornado documentary)

Howie
What is this? Becca? . . . Becca?!

Becca
What? (Becca runs downstairs)

Howie
What is this?

Becca
It's the Discovery Channel. The tornado program. You said you wanted to watch it. I recorded it for you. Why?

Howie
It's Danny's tape.

Becca
No. Pride and Prejudice was on that tape. We were watching it last night.

Howie
I switched them.

Becca
What?!

Howie
Becca!

Becca
It was one of the baby videos?

It's the only copy, Becca!

Becca
Well, I didn't do it on purpose.

Howie
Are ya sure?

Becca
What does that mean?

You think I recorded over Danny's tape on purpose?

Howie

Maybe subconsciously.

Becca

Subconsciously. Is that what they're telling you at group? How I'm doing things subconsciously?

Howie

You're trying to get rid of him. I'm sorry, but that's how it feels to me sometimes. Everyday, it's something else. It feels like you're trying to get rid of any evidence he was ever here.

Becca

I didn't know that tape was in there.

Howie

I'm not talking about the tape. The clothes. His shoes.

You wanting to sell the house!

Taz! Sending Taz to your mother's!

Becca

There was a lot going on, Howie. We couldn't deal with the dog.

Howie

I was fine with the dog.

Becca

Well he got underfoot.

Howie

And he was a reminder

Becca: Yes, he was a reminder. So what? I wanted one less reminder around here. That's perfectly normal.

Howie: And since you never wanted the dog to begin with.. Well if I hadn't bought the dog—

Becca

And if I hadn't run inside to get the phone, or if I had latched the gate

Howie:

I left the gate unlatched!

Becca:

Well I didn't check it! I'm not playing this game again, Howie. It was no one's fault.

Howie

Not even the dogs.

Becca

I know that.

Howie

Dogs chase squirrels. Boys chase dogs.

Becca

Are you telling me or yourself?

Howie

He loved that dog!

Becca

Of course he did.

Howie

And you got rid of him

Becca

Right, like I got rid of the tape. I get it.

Howie

It's not just the tape! You have to stop erasing him! You have to stop it!

Becca: Do you really not know me, Howie? Do you really not know how utterly impossible that would be? To erase him? That tape was an accident. And believe me, I will beat myself up about it forever. I'm sure. Like everything else that I could've prevented but didn't.

Howie: That's not what what I'm talking about.

Becca: No? Because it feels like it is. It feels like I don't feel bad enough for you. I'm not mourning enough for your taste.

Howie: Come on, that's not-

Becca: Or morning in the right way. But let me just say, Howie, that I am mourning as much as you are. And my grief is just as real and awful as yours.

Howie: Something has to change here. Because I can't do this...like this. It's too hard. How much more do we have to lose?

I miss the dog. I'm sorry, but I miss him. I want him back.

(Howie heads upstairs, leaving Becca alone.)

Montage

Howie

It's an open house.

Izzy

I'd never do one of these thing. Strangers strolling through, looking under my beds.

Howie

That's what you gotta do to sell a house.

We should probably get a broker. I think a lot of people are afraid of For Sale By Owner. No middleman, but we probably need one. Maybe I priced it too high.

Izzy

Should've cleaned out Danny's room. Made it look like a guest room or something, because everyone that went in there was like, Oh you have a son, how old is he? And then you tell them, and then there's weirdness in the air. If you had a kid, would you wanna move into a house where a boy just died? House Karma, or whatever you wanna call it. Sometimes you gotta sort out what is and isn't appropriate to say to people.

Howie

It isn't appropriate to talk about my son?

Izzy

But don't be surprised if nobody wants to buy your house.

Howie

I was with another parent from the support group. Two weeks ago, right? We grabbed a bite after the meeting. That woman is a friend of mine whose daughter died of leukemia six months ago. Just because I was holding a person's hand

doesn't mean... I'm not having an affair! I was comforting a friend!

Becca

This is why I hate shopping. Everything in there's like "Oh look, Froot Loops, Danny liked Froot Loops. We were in the same aisle as this kid and he wanted these fruit roll-ups, and his mother wasn't gonna buy them for him. In fact she starts ignoring him completely, just turns her face away and pretends he's not there. Just goes about her shopping, like that's gonna shut up him, or teach him a lesson or something. "It's only three bucks, why don't you just get hi the roll-ups?". And she told me to mind my own business, and then tried to move her cart around me, but ran over my foot so I smacked her. I wanted to shake her.: "Look at him. Don't pretend he isn't there!" But I didn't say that. I just stood there, kinda startled, and she was kinda startled, and then Mom came over and told me to go out to the car, which I did not need her to do. Just made it seem Like I was a crazy person. I mean it was a fruit roll-up. Just let him have it. Am I wrong? (End Montage)

Nat: Keep or toss?

Becca: Toss.

Nat: This too?

Becca: Yeah. The Runaway Bunny. Remember this one?

Nat: That was your book.

Becca: Um, keep, I guess.

Nat: Howie, doesn't mind this?

Becca: It was his idea. After that open house. Seems his grief goes out the window when it comes to maximizing profits. Sorry. I don't even know whey I said that. Just being mean

Nat: What the hell? How do I-- That's annoying.

Becca: Try listening to it for hours on end! Izzy gave him that. Only people without children give these kinds of gifts. Or people who want to punish parents.

Nat: What's this?

Becca: Oh, it's aIt's just a story that boy wrote. He sent it to us.

Nat: What is it, an Alice in Wonderland kind of thing, or-

Becca: No, it's more science fiction.

Nat: It's dedicated to Danny.

Becca: Yeah, he asked if he could do that.

Nat: Why? It's about Danny?

Becca: No, not at all. It's about a scientist.

Nat: Oh.

Becca: Or the son of a scientist, actually. The father discovers t his warren of—It's like a

network of holes to other galaxies, or parallel universes...

Nat: It doesn't sound very good.

Becca: It's okay. He's young.

Nat: Keep it?

Becca: Yeah, we should keep it. I think I'm gonna see him actually.

Nat: Who?

Becca: Jason Willette.

Nat: Why?

Becca: I don't know. I just....want to.

Nat: What about Howie?

Becca: Frankly I don't care what he thinks.

Nat: I'm just saying.

Becca: Mom? Does it go away?

Nat: What.

Becca: This feeling. Does it ever go away?

Nat: No. I don't think it does. Not for me it hasn't. And that's goin' on eleven years. It changes though.

Becca: How?

Nat: I don't now. The weight of it, I guess. At some point it becomes bearable. It turns into something you can crawl out from under. And carry around- like a brick in your pocket. And your forget it every once in a while, but you reach in for whatever reason an there it is "Oh right. That." Which can be awful. But not all the time. Sometimes it's kinda...Not that you like it exactly, but it's what you have instead of your son, so you don't want let go of it either. So you carry it around. And it doesn't go away, which is...

Becca: What..

Nat: Fine..actually.

Jason: I might've been going too fast. That day. That's one of the things I wanted to tell you. It's a thirty zone. And I might've been going thirty-three. Or thirty-two. I would usually look down, to check, and if I was a little over then I'd slow down obviously. But I don't remember checking on your block, so it's possible I was going a little to fast. And then the dog came out, really quick, and so I swerved a little to avoid him, not knowing, obviously.... So, that's something I thought you should know. I might've been going a little over the limit. I can't be positive either way though.

Jason: Should I go?

Becca: No. I'm fine. I liked that story you sent by the way. I liked it very much. It reminded me of Orpheus and Eurydice. Do you know that Greek myth?

Jason: Not really.

Becca: Eurydice dies, and Orpheus missed her so much, that he travels to Hades to retrieve her, but in the end it doesn't work out.

Jason: I should read it.

Becca: Yeah, it's similar. But instead of Hades, you have the rabbit holes. The parallel universes.

Becca: Is that something you believe in?

Jason: Parallel universes?

Becca: Yeah.

Jason: Sure. I mean, if space is infinite, which is what most scientists think, then yeah, there have to be parallel universes.

Becca: There have to be?

Jason: Yeah, because infinite space means.... It means it goes on and on forever, so there's a never-ending stream of possibilities.

Becca: Okay.

Jason: So even the most unlikely events have to take place somewhere with versions of us leading different lives, or maybe the same lives with a couple things changed.

Becca: And you think that's plausible.

Jason: Not just plausible- probable.

Becca: So somewhere other there, there's a version of me.

Jason: If space is infinite. Then there are tons of you's out there, and tons of me's.

Becca: And so this is just the sad version of us.

Jason: I guess.

Becca: But there are other versions where everything goes our way.

Jason: Right.

Becca: Well that's a nice thought. That somewhere out there, I'm having a good time.

Howie: Did you let him off the hook?

Becca: What do you mean?

Howie: Did you tell him we didn't blame him?

Becca: We don't blame him.

Howie: No, I know, but did you let him know that?

Becca: I guess so.

Howie: So I don't have to meet him then, do I?

Becca: Not if you don't want to, no.

Howie: Okay.

Becca: Why aren't you at group?

Howie: I just decided to skip it tonight. Wasn't up to it.

Becca: How come?

Howie: I think I might be done. With the group. I don't think I'm gonna go back.

Becca: Why, what happened?

Howie: Nothing, I just don't think its' as helpful to me anymore.

Becca: So Rick and Debbie invited us over for a cookout this weekend.

Howie: Really?

Becca: Sunday.

Howie: Sounds great.

Becca: She said she kept meaning to call, but before she knew it months had gone by, and she assumed I hated her, so it just seemed easier to not pick up the phone.

Howie: And that was good enough for you?

Becca: I don't know. Probably. We'll see how the barbecue goes. Yeah. It'll be good to see the them though. We should get something for Emily. We missed her birthday.

Howie: Right. Okay.

Howie: It's so quiet.

Becca: That's because I slipped Taz a couple of ambient. You think we should reconsider the house.

Howie: If nobody bids, we might have to.

Becca: There are worse things, I guess.

Howie: Yeah.

Becca: It's a nice house.

Howie: I know.

Becca: So what are we going to do?

Howie: About what?

Becca: I don't know, pick something.

Howie: Well.....We could to Village Toys tomorrow and pick up Candy Land for Emily.

Becca: Okay, Candy Land.

Howie: And then on Sunday we go to the cookout, we talk to Rick and Debbie, and to make them feel comfortable we ask the kids a bunch of questions about what they've been up to, and we'll pretend that we're really interested. And then Rick and/or Debbie will bring up Danny and maybe that'll go on for a little while. And after that we'll come home.

Becca: And then what?

Howie: I don't know. Something though. We'll figure it out.

Becca: Will we?

Howie: I think so. I think we will.