

the back of the line like gangbusters and shoves her way all the way to the front—

It's Sister Susan.

And she goes, "Hold on! If I'm going to have to gargle with that stuff, At least let me do it before Sister Christine puts her ass in it!"

NANCY. Well, I'm off.

Nancy quickly escapes out the door.

BEN. Mom—wait—

And now Bill escapes upstairs.

Ben and Brian look to each other.

Act 1 Scene 3a

Scene 3

Ben's Panic

It's now the middle of the night.

All around are overflowing bags of clothing from Nancy's refugee drive, and huge piles of loose clothes, the clothes of the dead.

The toaster is missing, along with a photo or two.

Next door, the TV is playing another crime show.

After a moment, Jess comes downstairs, still in her clothes.

JESS. Ben?

What are you doing?

// You're still working?

BEN. Hey, babe.

I'm so behind—

The judge on this case is like monumentally unsympathetic,

What are you doing up?

JESS. I just did four back-to-back phone sessions—

And then my sleepwalker needed an "emergency call."

What happened to Brian?

BEN. Who?

JESS. Your brother?

BEN. Oh, yeah, he went out for a drink.

JESS. Sounds kind of lonely.

BEN. I think he was lonely and that's why he went.

JESS. And your parents?

BEN. Went to bed hours ago.

JESS. In the same room?

BEN. I thought it was kind of a good sign.

JESS. Sure, if you block out the part where they barely spoke to each other,

And then your mom pretended to have dementia

And then your dad told a dick joke.

BEN. No, I know, it's insane, they're children.

Come here. Come here come here.

She goes to him.

Leans down to kiss him.

He kisses her stomach.

JESS. It's not even that.

It's more how you get when you're around them.

BEN. Wait, how do I get?

JESS. And what's going on with your hands?

BEN. It's my eczema, you know // and I don't have my cream—

JESS. Where's your cream?

BEN. I don't have it.

JESS. Okay, it's fine, let's go to bed, we'll be home in the morning.

BEN. Babe.

JESS. What?

BEN. We can't // leave them like this—

JESS. Wait, no, Ben, no no no I already canceled today's sessions to be here //

I have like a million things to do before this baby comes—

BEN. They need us—

They need us—

JESS. They need professional help—

BEN. And, look, Brian is obviously useless, and—

JESS. They don't even want us here—

BEN. Trust me, I get it—you don't think, you don't think it pisses me off?

JESS. What?

BEN. I mean none of this makes any sense.

Are they serious?

Is it a cry for help?

Is it even real?

JESS. Wait, no, people crying for help is real, Ben.

It means they need help, it means help me.

BEN. No, I know, all I'm trying to say is.

Just look at the facts, okay?

They never fought.

They always got along.

They have stuff in common—they're about to have a grandchild together.

What else do they want?

JESS. I don't know.

Love.

BEN. Sure, whatever that means.

JESS. Do you not know // what it means?

BEN. No, I know what it means for us, obviously—

JESS. Okay.

BEN. I'm saying for them, at their age—

And anyway, I'm not even talking about love,

I'm talking about marriage.

JESS. What are you talking about?

BEN. I don't know what we're talking about.

All I'm saying is,

Sure maybe they never had some like great marriage,

But I always thought they had like a regular marriage.

JESS. A regular marriage?

BEN. Uh-huh.

JESS. And what is that to you?
What's a regular marriage?

BEN. A marriage, I guess,
That doesn't end.

Sorry, babe,
I'm not in a place to be like super articulate or deep right now—
I'm getting crushed.

JESS. Could you—
Could you maybe just not call me that anymore.

BEN. What?

JESS. Babe.
I'm not a baby.
I'm not an actual baby you do realize that.

BEN. It's a term of affection.

JESS. Right, but when somebody doesn't like it
Then it's hostile.

BEN. Okay.
Good night.
Love you, babe. I love you.

JESS. Good night. I love you too.

She goes.

He sits alone.

Scratches his hands.

After a moment, he rushes upstairs after his wife.

From outside, a car pulls up.

Car doors close and "Thank you sir!" can be heard.

BRIAN. (*From off.*) ...I hope this is the right house—
I know it's the corner house but—
They all look exactly the same.

TOMMY. (*From off.*) I know, our Uber driver was like // what is
even happening?!

BRIAN. (*From off.*) I know, he was like...
He's probably still just like driving around like...

Act. 1 Scene 3b
Brian distracts
himself