

ETHAN I was hoping you were just a dream.
(He goes to the counter and pours himself a rum.)

MARTIN No such luck.

ETHAN So, did you find out about your assignment?

MARTIN No, they're swamped right now. It's a busy season for redemption I guess. They just told me to sit tight and they'll get back to me. So, you got your notice from the bank.

ETHAN Yeah, got it this morning, just like you said I would. (He picks up a letter.)

MARTIN It's amazing how I know all this stuff, huh? I tell you, if I'd had this knowledge while I was still alive, I would've been a rich man. I'd know which horse was going to win at the track, what the lottery numbers would be.

ETHAN Well, it's nice to see that you'd use that knowledge to help mankind.

MARTIN Yeah, right. And what did mankind ever do to help me? Gave me a torn up knee and heart disease. Remind me to send it a thank you card.

ETHAN You know, I would've thought that dead people wouldn't be bitter like that.

MARTIN Wouldn't be bitter? We're dead. We're all bitter! I met a man here who lived til' he was a hundred and two. He thinks *he* got shortchanged.

ETHAN Well, I would think that you'd be remorseful.

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MARTIN Ethan, I died and I lost a Riviera sale. It's been a bad week. Get the door.

ETHAN What?

There is a knock on the door

MARTIN Man, this is fun.

ETHAN (Moving to the door.) And don't you distract me.

MARTIN I won't say a word.

ETHAN Don't even breathe.

MARTIN I haven't for over a week now.

ETHAN opens the door. TERESA PIKE is there.

Begin

TERESA Hello.

ETHAN Oh, Teresa. Hi.

TERESA Hi.

MARTIN Hi.

TERESA How are you today?

ETHAN Fine.

MARTIN I'm dead on my feet.

TERESA Cold weather we're having.

ETHAN Yes, it is.

MARTIN Ethan, can't you take a hint? Invite her in.

ETHAN Uh... would you like to come in?

TERESA All right. But, just for a moment.

TERESA enters. ETHAN closes the door.

I just stopped by to ask you something.

ETHAN Oh? And what's that?

TERESA Well, I heard that your truck was broken down, and I was wondering if you'd be needing a ride tomorrow night.

MARTIN Oh, she likes you.

ETHAN Uh... well, actually Douglas McLaren and his wife have already offered me a ride.

TERESA Oh.

MARTIN What??!

TERESA Well, all right then.

MARTIN Are you out of your mind?

TERESA So, you won't be needing one then?

MARTIN Yes, he will.

ETHAN No, I won't.

MARTIN Yes, you will.

ETHAN No, I won't!

TERESA Fine.

MARTIN Ethan, can I see you over by the stove please? *(He moves into the kitchen.)*

TERESA Well, that's all I stopped by for then.

MARTIN Ethan??

TERESA Just wanted to make sure you weren't stranded here.

MARTIN Ethan? Now!

ETHAN *(to TERESA)* Uh... could you hold on for just a second, please? I have to check on something in the oven.

TERESA Oh, certainly.

ETHAN moves to the kitchen. He opens the oven and looks in.

MARTIN Ethan, who would you rather ride with? This woman here who, for some reason, seems to like you? Or Uncle Jed and Granny next door? I mean, do you think she goes around offering rides to everybody who has no transportation? Man, if I could kick your butt right now I would. *(looking skyward)* Come on, let me kick him once! Just once!

ETHAN closes the oven and moves back to TERESA.

Say, yes, Ethan. Or I'll haunt you for the rest of your life.

TERESA Everything okay?

ETHAN Yes, perfect.

TERESA Cooking supper, are you?

ETHAN Yes.

TERESA Funny, I don't smell anything. It doesn't even look like the oven's on.

ETHAN No, well, it's steak tartar. *end*

MARTIN Oh, nice save.

ETHAN You know, Teresa, maybe I will accept your kind offer of a ride.

TERESA Oh. All right.

MARTIN There you go.

TERESA I'll pick you up on my way to get Mr. and Mrs. Olmstead.

ETHAN Mr. and Mrs. Olmstead?

TERESA Yes, they both have failing eyesight and they can't drive. And then we have to pick up Harvey Pelletier. He's having his transmission rebuilt. You see, the school thought we should offer rides to anyone who doesn't have transportation.

ETHAN Oh, I see.

TERESA So, I'll be by tomorrow about seven-thirty?

TERESA moves to the door. ETHAN opens it for her.

ETHAN Seven-thirty. Good.

TERESA Good. Well, see you then.

ETHAN Goodbye.

MARTIN *(waving)* Tartar.

ETHAN closes the door.

ETHAN You knew, didn't you?

MARTIN Of course I knew. I know everything.

ETHAN You're not a very nice person in death either, are you?

MARTIN Hey, is that any way to talk to your brother who loves you?

ETHAN I have to go. *(He gets his coat.)*

MARTIN Go? Go where?

ETHAN The manure is piling up. *(He opens the door.)* It's piling up in the chicken barn too. *(He exits.)*

MARTIN *(to himself)* The kid never could take a joke.

YOUNG MARTIN enters from the bedroom. He is limping badly. He sits in the chair. YOUNG ETHAN enters, wearing a winter coat and carrying a small artist's canvas and a book bag. Begin

YNG. ETHAN How ya feeling?

YNG. MARTIN How do you think I'm feeling? I'll never play hockey again, that's how I'm feeling.

YNG. ETHAN Well, at least you don't have to stay in the hospital over Christmas. You should be happy about that.

YNG. MARTIN Leave me alone.

YNG. ETHAN Martin, it wasn't my fault.

YNG. MARTIN Get lost.

YNG. ETHAN *(He puts his canvas into the bag.)* You want me to bring you something back?