

DOUGLAS Ethan, I'm sorry.

ETHAN No, that's okay. We weren't very... I mean, I haven't talked to him in a long time. *(He puts the letter away.)* Now, what were you saying?

DOUGLAS Uh... nothing. It can wait.

ETHAN Are you sure?

DOUGLAS Yes, yes. Is there anything I can do, Ethan?

ETHAN No.

DOUGLAS I mean, Caroline and I, we're just down the road. If there's anything you need, just call us.

ETHAN Douglas, I'm fine. Really.

DOUGLAS Well, all right. I'd better go then.

ETHAN You just got here.

DOUGLAS I know, but I'd better go. I'll leave you to your thoughts.

ETHAN You're not going to pester me about your list anymore?

DOUGLAS Tomorrow. There'll be plenty of time for pestering tomorrow. For now, I'll just get out of your way.

ETHAN Oh, Douglas, wait. *(He moves to the refrigerator and takes out the basket of eggs.)* Take these to Caroline, would you? She said she was going to make egg bread today. *(He gives the basket to DOUGLAS.)*

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DOUGLAS Oh, certainly. Thank you. I'll see you tomorrow then. Goodbye, Ethan.

*DOUGLAS exits. ETHAN picks up the letter. We flashback to ETHAN'S childhood. Two young boys, YOUNG MARTIN and YOUNG ETHAN enter from ETHAN'S bedroom. MARTIN is sixteen, ETHAN is eleven. MARTIN carries a pair of skates and a hockey stick.*

*Begin*

YNG. ETHAN Come on, Martin, why can't I play too?

YNG. MARTIN Because you can't, Nancy. You can't even skate. You'll just get in the way.

YNG. ETHAN I can too skate.

YNG. MARTIN Not like us you can't.

YNG. ETHAN *(moving to ETHAN at the counter)* Dad, Martin won't let me play hockey with him.

ETHAN Well, he's right, Ethan. Those boys are big. You'll get in the way and you'll get hurt.

YNG. ETHAN Dad, please. I'll be careful.

ETHAN No, Ethan.

YNG. ETHAN Please. I'll just stay off to the side until somebody passes it to me. I'll stay away from everybody. Please.

ETHAN Ethan...

YNG. ETHAN Please?

ETHAN *(Beat.)* All right, just this once then.

YNG. ETHAN Yayyy! I'll get my stuff. *(He exits to the bedroom.)*

YNG. MARTIN Aw, Dad, does he have to??

ETHAN Just this once, Martin. As soon as he sees how hard it is to play with you fellas, he won't ask again. And you look out for him, you hear? Don't let the other boys knock him around any. I don't want him coming back here in tears. All right?

YNG. MARTIN Yeah.

ETHAN And don't stick him in goal either.

YNG. MARTIN Yeah.

ETHAN And after you've finished playing, I want you to work on your stops and starts. That scout's going to be at the game tomorrow and I want him to see what a good two-way player you are. Okay?

YNG. MARTIN Yep.

ETHAN Good boy.

YNG. MARTIN I can't believe he's coming all the way from Toronto just to see me.

ETHAN Well, he's an old friend of mine, and that's what friends do for each other. Family and friends, Martin. The two most important things in life. Remember that.

YNG. MARTIN How could I forget? You say it every other day.

ETHAN And for good reason. But, now, he's not gonna recommend you to a junior team just because he's a friend. You're going to have to impress him, all right?

YNG. MARTIN I will.

*YOUNG ETHAN enters from the bedroom carrying a pair of skates and a hockey stick.*

YNG. ETHAN Okay, I'm ready.

YNG. MARTIN Come on then.

ETHAN Martin? *(He grabs a banana from the counter and tosses it to YOUNG MARTIN.)* Here. You need your potassium for those young muscles.

YNG. MARTIN Thanks, Dad.

*YOUNG MARTIN exits.*

ETHAN Ethan? You be careful now.

YNG. ETHAN I will.

ETHAN And if they try to put you in goal, say no.

YNG. ETHAN Okay. *(He starts for the door.)*

ETHAN Oh, Ethan, have you finished the painting for your mother yet?

YNG. ETHAN Not yet.

ETHAN Well, you'd better get a move on. Christmas will be here before you know it.

YNG. ETHAN I will.

*YOUNG MARTIN enters again.*

YNG. MARTIN Come on, Nancy, let's go.

*YOUNG MARTIN exits.*

END