

HOWIE. Fisbo: For Sale By Owner. No middleman. I was trying to avoid the commission but we probably need one. (*Regarding sign-in sheet.*) This was a wash I think. (*Looking over clipboard.*) I thought we had a bite with that family — the little girl. Nothing, though. Maybe I priced it too high. Or they were just browsing maybe.

IZZY. (*Eating.*) You freaked them out, Howie. (*Beat.*)

HOWIE. No, I didn't. What are you talking about?

IZZY. You should've cleaned out Danny's room. Made it look like a guest room or something. An office, or whatever.

HOWIE. Why?

IZZY. Because everyone that went in there was like, "Oh, you have a son, how old is he?" Did you think people wouldn't ask that?

HOWIE. I didn't think about it. I just thought it'd be good for them to see there was a nice room for a kid.

IZZY. But common sense, Howie. You've got these robot sheets on the bed, the conversation's gonna come up. And so everyone asks, and then you tell them, and then there's this weirdness in the air.

HOWIE. Only *two* people asked. That's all.

IZZY. Well, you ooged them out. If you had a kid, would you wanna move into a house where a boy just died? People believe in that stuff, you know. House karma, or whatever you wanna call it.

HOWIE. Well, they're stupid then.

IZZY. Yeah, they are. But if you wanna sell your house you gotta take that into consideration. I can't believe *I'm* giving *you* business advice.

HOWIE. Is that what this is?

IZZY. I'm just saying, 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. Uh-uh, you're not pulling me into that conversation. You wanna tell total strangers all about Danny and how he died, it's none of my business. God knows it's something you enjoy doing, so you go ahead. But don't be surprised if nobody wants to buy your house. (*Finishes torte.*) Good God, Becca has gotta stop baking. I'm gynormous. (*We hear the dog barking out in the yard. Howie looks outside.*) Someone coming?

HOWIE. (*Regarding Taz.*) No, he's just mad he's still tied up.

IZZY. (*Looks at her watch, then.*) So, hey, let me ask you something ... (*Beat.*)

HOWIE. All right.

IZZY. Why is Becca so mad at me? Is it just because I'm pregnant or ...

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HOWIE. Becca's not mad at you.

IZZY. Then why does she act so pissed at me sometimes?

HOWIE. I don't know. You should ask her.

IZZY. I can't.

HOWIE. Why not?

IZZY. Because that'll only make her *more* pissed.

HOWIE. Yeah, probably, but —

IZZY. Is it because she blames me? A little bit maybe?

HOWIE. Oh my God, Izzy ...

IZZY. Because if I hadn't called to bitch about Mom she wouldn't have left Danny to run into —

HOWIE. Ten months later and you're asking me this?

IZZY. Well, I don't know.

HOWIE. No, Izzy. No. Nobody blames you.

IZZY. Okay. (*Beat.*) So it's just the baby then. The fact that I'm having a baby.

HOWIE. Honestly, I don't think Becca's mood has anything to do with you.

IZZY. She thinks I can't do it. Right? I'm not cut out to be a good mother?

HOWIE. She doesn't think that. You should *really* be having this conversation with her.

IZZY. I know I've been a fuck-up, but people get their shit together.

HOWIE. Of course they do.

IZZY. And maybe I'm not as organized as Becca, or homey, or whatever —

HOWIE. Nobody's comparing you.

IZZY. Really? Because that'd be a first.

HOWIE. Everyone's excited about the baby, Iz. But you gotta understand that there's other stuff going on around here.

IZZY. I'm not talking about the other stuff. I'm talking about me being a capable person who can raise a child, and look after it and protect it. I resent the feeling I get from her, and you too sometimes, honestly, that I don't *deserve* the baby. Or that I'm not mature enough, or smart enough or something, to take care of it. I mean, my God, if my mother could do it, how hard could it be? (*Beat.*)

HOWIE. You'd be surprised.

IZZY. Hey, that's not what I ... I just want to feel like you guys have some faith in me, because I'm up to it.

HOWIE. Great. I hope you are.

IZZY. Oh, you *hope*. Thanks, Howie.

HOWIE. I don't know where you want this conversation to go. And I really don't know why you're having it with me. (*Glances at his watch.*) Aw, fuck it. Nobody's coming. (*Howie takes off his suit jacket. He tosses it onto the couch, then heads into the kitchen.*)

← End

IZZY. Are you mad?

HOWIE. No.

IZZY. You seem mad.

HOWIE. (*From kitchen.*) I'm just getting a beer. You want one?

IZZY. No, I don't want a beer. *God.* (*Howie gets himself a beer out of the fridge, then reenters from the kitchen.*) Can I ask you something else?

HOWIE. What do you got, a list? "Things to ask Howie when he's cornered"?

IZZY. No. Not a *list*.

HOWIE. What is it?

IZZY. You're not gonna like it.

HOWIE. Well then, even better.

IZZY. Do you know my friend Reema?

HOWIE. This is the question?

IZZY. No, this is the prologue. You know how some books have prologues?

HOWIE. I'm familiar with the concept.

IZZY. That's Reema. You remember her?

HOWIE. Not really.

IZZY. I brought her to that barbecue like two years ago? Curly hair, kinda chubby.

HOWIE. Okay. I'll take your word for it.

IZZY. Well, Reema works at Calderone's. In New Rochelle. You know that restaurant? (*Beat.*)

HOWIE. Yeah.

IZZY. Well Reema, even though you don't remember her, remembers you pretty well from the barbecue, and she said she waited on you a couple weeks ago.

HOWIE. Did I stiff her on the tip? Because had I remembered her, obviously I would've —

IZZY. She said you were with a woman. (*Beat.*)

HOWIE. I was with another parent from the support group. Two weeks ago, right? We grabbed a bite after the meeting. If Reema had identified herself, I would've introduced them.

IZZY. Her husband doesn't attend the meetings?

HOWIE. Is this still part of the prologue?