

2.1

(TOM and LILY sitting on TOM's floor, an empty bottle of wine and an empty pint of whiskey next to them. They are drunk.)

TOM

So you've always wanted to work at a library?

LILY

Always.

TOM

That's amazing.

LILY

I like books. They're pretty reliable.

TOM

Me too. I should work at a library.

LILY

(Clearly flirtatious)

Or you could just visit my library....

TOM

Or I could do that.

LILY

Should I not have said that?

TOM

What? No, you're fine. You're. Great. So. The library.

LILY

The library. It's good. We're underpaid, understaffed, I'm overqualified. But it's good. Books are just so invigorating. My life...isn't, so it's nice to have a way to get that.

TOM

Your life's not interesting?

LILY

Not particularly. Is yours?

TOM

Is anyone's?

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LILY

Fair enough. Anyway, I like books. I always have. It's a nice way to escape.

TOM

What have you got to escape?

LILY

Not much anymore ...

TOM

But before?

LILY

Nothing.

TOM

Okay.

LILY

Anyway, long story short—library: good. Books: good. Job: good.

TOM

Good.

LILY

What do you do?

TOM

It's not very interesting. Not like the library. No books. No brains.

LILY

Well, tell me anyway. I'm curious. The elusive Tom Nelson....

TOM

I'm a telemarketer.

LILY

Oh.

TOM

See? That's why I didn't tell you! Now you hate me.

LILY

What? No. Nooo.

TOM

Yes! Yes, you do. Everyone hates telemarketers. Calling at the most awkward times, interrupting your dinner, asking you to buy something you really don't need. Everyone hates telemarketers.

LILY

Tom, if I wanted to hate you, I'd have a much better reason than you being a telemarketer.

TOM

Right.

LILY

God, I'm an asshole. I didn't mean it. I should really shut up. One too many glasses of wine I guess.

TOM

No. You're right. You have good reason to hate me.

LILY

I didn't mean that. It's weird, but it's no reason to hate you.

TOM

So maybe not you, but Ron...?

LILY

Ron is an alcoholic who doesn't know his elbow from his asshole.

TOM

So he hates me.

LILY

We don't really talk.

TOM

About me?

LILY

At all.

TOM

Oh.

LILY

Yeah.

(Silence.)

TOM

Do you wanna talk about it or...?

LILY

No. It's okay.

TOM

Okay. Well, tell me about--

LILY

Actually, yes. Yes I would. We never talk about important things in my family. Or we didn't. Now we just don't talk. At all. So, I have this brother, right? Big brother. Supposed to look out for me, supposed to guide me, blah blah blah. But when Daddy drinks too much and starts throwing punches, it's every man for himself, isn't it? When Mommy constantly ignores the boy for being a boy and disowns the girl for not being so girly, he has more important things to do than tell his sister everything's gonna be a-okay. (*Realizes what she's getting into.*) Oh Jesus.

TOM

You really don't have to talk about it if you don't want to. I can pretend like I didn't hear anything—

LILY

Nope. That's a sentence that can't be taken back. Might as well keep plowing forward. So the siblings grow apart. Each year, each bruise, each look of Mama Rose's scorn makes them take one more step away from each other. By the time they've graduated college, they're miles apart. But for the sake of the family they stay close together. They live in the same town, practically on the same block. But so they don't have to delve into painful memories, they only get together for holidays and birthdays. For the sake of the family, the brother takes over the father's business, because the daughter wants nothing to do with that legacy, and besides, Mother wouldn't approve. So when Father dies, the son can shoulder the burden. When Father dies, the family comes together one last time. For the sake of the family, after the father's death, they put their forgetful mother into a home, so there's nothing else to bind them together; each knowing the other won't visit her. And now the mother's dead. And that's that.

TOM

Well.

LILY

Yeah. There it is, Tom. The Murphys. The saga of your average American family. Is this who you thought we were?

TOM

Not exactly.

LILY

What did my mom actually tell you, Tom?

TOM

Well, she talked about you and Ron a lot. And your dad. Sometimes she thought I was him, and she'd try to kiss me or hug me. She'd tell me how much she loved me. (*LILY laughs.*) But one time. Boy. One time, she tried to hit me. She was screaming and cursing; it was terrifying.

LILY

Now *that* sounds more like them.

TOM

It was like that all the time?

LILY

Well, only in the privacy of their own home, Tommy boy. Otherwise, they put on a good face for the company.

TOM

So who was your mom? Really?

LILY

I don't think you really want to know.

TOM

No. I do. Really.

LILY

You sure?

TOM

Positive.

LILY

Pinky promise?

TOM

Pinky promise.

LILY

Okay. Well...she was a piece of work. How do I put this? However she seemed to you, she was probably the exact opposite. She had a vision for her children, one neither of us could fulfill. So we spent our lives disappointing her, but we tried so hard to redeem ourselves. We'd spend nights sitting in front of her bedroom door taking punches from our dad to keep her safe. In the morning, she might make us breakfast, but otherwise, there was no thanks.

TOM

God. (*HE looks sick.*)

Are you gonna be okay?
LILY

Yeah, I think so. It's just...wow.
TOM

Did your world just come crashing down?
LILY

Sort of.
TOM

Sorry. I didn't want to tell you.
LILY

I know.
TOM

You asked.
LILY

I know.
TOM

Can I ask you a question now?
LILY

One that will make your world come crashing down?
TOM

Maybe. I don't know.
LILY

Okay.
TOM

(The following exchange should start innocently but becomes a sort of interrogation. The questions and answers are automatic and get progressively faster until the very end.)

Who are you? Really?
LILY

That...is a big question.
TOM

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LILY

Okay. Let's start simpler. What's your favorite color?

TOM

Blue.

LILY

Do you have any brothers and sisters?

TOM

Two sisters.

LILY

Do you talk?

TOM

Sometimes.

LILY

About important things?

TOM

Not really.

LILY

Are your parents still alive?

TOM

My dad is.

LILY

Do you see him often?

TOM

Once a month or so.

LILY

Where are you from?

TOM

About an hour and a half east. It's a really small town.

LILY

What did you used to want to be before you became a telemarketer?

TOM

An astronaut or a mime. I wouldn't have to talk to anyone.

LILY

Am I talking too much?

TOM

No. But I don't normally talk this much. Maybe because I'm drunk. I haven't had this much to drink since college.

LILY

Why did you really visit my mother?

TOM

I told you that.

LILY

But it was bullshit. I want the truth. Why did you really visit my mother?

TOM

Listen, I really don't want to—

LILY

She's my mother. You owe it to me.

TOM

I don't do well with real connections. *(Pause. The scene comes to a halt.)* And I've never said that out loud.

LILY

(Encouragingly.)

Keep going.

TOM

I shouldn't. You would have me carted away.

LILY

Well now you're just making me more curious.

TOM

Really, I can't....

LILY

Can't or don't want to?

TOM

CAN'T! CAN'T! Shit, I don't even know you, okay?

LILY

Okay. Jesus. I'm sorry I asked.

TOM

No. No, God, I'm sorry.

LILY

Nope, it's fine. I'm gonna go.

TOM

No. Stay. Please. I'm sorry. Can't. See, this is part of my problem. I can't talk about these things.

LILY

What things?

TOM

These personal things. God, I sound....

LILY

Human? Come on, you can tell me...if you want to.

TOM

Okay, but I promise you, you won't like it.

LILY

Noted.

TOM

When I was twenty-two, one of my best friends went into a coma. I say "best friend," but I didn't really have friends the way most people think of them. I had people I hung out with, but no one I really talked to. *(Pause.)* We really don't have to do this. I'm not that interesting. You don't want to hear my whole story...

LILY

No, I do. Please.

TOM

Well, this friend of mine went into a coma, so I visited her. A lot.

TOM (CONT'D)

At first it was because I felt like I should. That's what a good friend does, or whatever. But then...no, I can't say this to you. I can't say this to anyone. I'm sorry.

LILY

Come on, Tom. You can trust me.

TOM

Trust isn't exactly in my vocabulary.

LILY

(Getting frustrated.)

How about I put it this way? You illegally obtained Ron and my records. I'm sure I could press some sort of charges if you were on my bad side.

TOM

Would you really do that?

LILY

Probably not.

TOM

But that's how badly you want to hear this?

LILY

Yes.

TOM

And you think I'm the crazy one.

LILY

Hey, just tell your story.

TOM

Well this girl in the coma, I found myself talking to her. She knew all of my secrets. She knew what girls I had crushes on and how pissed off I was at my sister for spending so much time in the bathroom in the morning. I couldn't tell these things to anyone else. They wouldn't care. And I told her about that too. "The emotional distance," I called it. The way I was so terrified of what everyone around me would think that I wouldn't even open my mouth. I had this person, this living person who listened to everything I said, and although she didn't respond—she couldn't respond—I felt this kinship with her. She knew things I had never told anyone. *(Pause.)* But then she woke up. And I was lost. I went back to her floor of the hospital, hoping that I could somehow go talk to another coma patient, but all the nurses knew who I was, who I had been visiting, and they looked at me with this odd mix of pity and disgust. So I left. I was lost for a while. The rug was pulled out from under me.

My friend was back in my life, talking and walking, but she didn't remember any of what I had told her. The connection was gone. So I looked for more permanent companions.

LILY

And that's when you went to Golden Terrace.

TOM

Not exactly. I started at another home. I met a few...friends, I guess. But they each got to the point where they were vegetables, and I felt like I was taking advantage of them. So *then* I went to Golden Terrace.

LILY

What was she like when you talked to her?

TOM

I mean, she was the perfect grandmotherly figure. I expected her to bake up a fresh batch of cookies any minute.

LILY

Nice?

TOM

Nothing but.

LILY

God, that's weird.

TOM

Your relationship with her was really as bad as you say?

LILY

(Pause. Considers the question.)

Do you want to play truth or dare?

TOM

Excuse me?

LILY

Truth or dare. Wanna play?

TOM

Are we thirteen?

LILY

No, we're thirty, but we've also just had a lot of alcohol and some serious issues, so why the hell not?

TOM

I've never played.

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Really? LILY

I don't like the truth part... TOM

Of course. Well, you can always pick dare. LILY

I guess so. You won't get mad? TOM

Nah. LILY

Okay, let's play. TOM

How should we decide who goes first? LILY

Rock, paper, scissors? TOM

Seems fair enough. LILY

Okay. Ready? TOM

Ready. LILY

(They play, but TOM goes by the "rock, paper, scissors" rhythm, while LILY goes with "rock, paper, scissors, shoot.")

Wait, you did it wrong. TOM

I did it wrong? You did it wrong. LILY

No, no, no. The game is called rock, paper, scissors for a reason. *(Demonstrating)* Rock, paper, scissors. TOM

Shoot. LILY

What? TOM

Rock, paper, scissors, then shoot. LILY

That's stupid. TOM

You're stupid. LILY

Your mom's stu—*(Catches himself. LILY cracks up.)* Do you just want to go first? TOM

No. That's not fair. LILY

Then we should think of another way to solve this problem. TOM

Thumb war? LILY

Deal. You don't play that wrong too, do you? TOM

Watch yourself, Nelson. LILY

One, two, three, four, I declare a thumb war. Five, six, seven, eight, try to keep your thumb straight! TOM and LILY

(They play. In the middle of the game, LILY realizes how close they are, falters, and loses.)

Ha! TOM

You got me. LILY

TOM
So, what will it be...truth or dare?

LILY
Truth.

TOM
Brave.

LILY
Showing you there's nothing to fear.

TOM
Right. Um....What's your....Who is your....I can't think of a good question!

LILY
That's what everyone says. Come on....

TOM
Okay. *(Pause.)* When was your first kiss?

LILY
(Laughing.) Really? That's the best you've got? Okay, I was twelve. His name was...Eric...something.

TOM
Something? You don't remember?

LILY
Eric Miller, okay? Eric Miller. It was behind the cafeteria at school. It was, in a word, awful.

TOM
(Laughing.)
What was wrong with it?

LILY
Everything. I mean, it's a first kiss. What can you do? I'm sure yours wasn't much better. Who was your first kiss?

TOM
It was a girl named Mary Jacobs. I was thirteen-- Wait. It's not my turn! You're trying to trick me!

LILY
No!

TOM

Yes. Yes, you were trying to get me to divulge.

LILY

No, it's just a natural thing to turn the question around. I was curious.

TOM

Fine. I'm not answering though.

LILY

I know. So...it's your turn.

TOM

Dare.

LILY

I dare you to... *(Giggles.)* Wait. I've had too much wine.

TOM

(Laughing.)

Why? What were you going to ask?

LILY

I can't tell you.

TOM

Can't or won't?

LILY

Can't! Can't! You'd think I was crazy.

TOM

What if I guessed? *(TOM slides closer, puts his hand on LILY's face, and kisses her. They pull apart for a second, look at each other, and move to the couch, kissing more and more passionately, shedding clothing, etc. Blackout.)*

2.2

(Another dream, LILY stands in a nightgown, facing the giant safe from 1.3, her back to the audience and to TOM.)

Lily? TOM

Yeah. LILY

What are you doing? TOM

Nothing. LILY

You can't open that safe. TOM

Can't I? LILY

No. Even I can't open it. TOM

Interesting. LILY

(TOM walks up to LILY. Looks at the lock, looks at her..)

Please don't. TOM

I want to know everything about you, Tom. I will figure it out somehow. LILY

(She begins to crack the safe.)

LILY
(Reading off the name as she moves the lock, as if reading the combination.)

Lily (thanks for putting me first, Tom)...Rose...Penny...Jon...Susan...Julie...Mary...
Dad...and finally, Mom. *(The safe opens, a teenager, BILLY, rushes out.)*

TOM

(Trying to push him back in.)

No! No, you can't come out. You were locked away. I was safe. GO BACK!

BILLY

Can't do that, Tommy Tippytoes. *(To LILY)* What are you doing with this asshole, baby? You could do *so* much better.

LILY

(Attracted to BILLY)

And who are you?

BILLY

Oh me? I made this kid's life a living hell for all of high school. The rest he did himself. Ain't that right, Tom? You and me, we go way back.

TOM

That's right. Now would you please leave?

BILLY

Oh, I'm not leaving til I get this hot piece of ass to go with me.

LILY

(Flattered.)

Me?

BILLY

Of course! That's kind of what I do with good ol' Tom here. First, I'll show you all of his flaws. *(BILLY circles TOM, pointing out each flaw with professional precision. He might even have a pointer.)* Number one, his eyes are far too close together. He's like a Neanderthal. Two, he's short. Need I say more? Three, muscles? Non-existent. And four *(pulls down TOM's pants)* it's so damn small. *(LILY giggles.)* Do I need to go into personality defects or are you convinced?

LILY

Well the personality issues are so much more obvious, I mean, the intimacy issues...

BILLY

The lack of a sense of humor.

TOM

I have a sense of humor...

LILY

The way he fidgets constantly. He's never at ease.

BILLY

And don't you think he might just be a little too effeminate for a woman such as yourself?

LILY

Yeah. You sure you like girls, Tom?

TOM

What? Yes. Of course.

BILLY

You never told her about Jon, did you, Tom?

TOM

(To LILY)

Jon was my best friend in high school.

BILLY

And by best friend, he means *boyfriend*.

TOM

No. I don't. That was something you made up so you could sleep with Susan.

BILLY

Well someone had to give her what she wasn't getting at home. *(High fives LILY.)*

TOM

(To LILY)

Please don't listen to him. *(To BILLY)* Just shut up, okay? Just shut the fuck up. The minute things are going well, you just have to bust in and fuck everything up.

LILY

I'll make him shut up. *(She kisses BILLY)*

TOM

Jesus!

(TOM wakes up with a start. LILY is lying next to him.)

TOM

Oh, my God. Oh my God.

(LILY wakes up.)

LILY

You okay?

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TOM

Um, yeah. I just...I have a lot to do...work and stuff. You know.

LILY

Are you asking me to leave?

TOM

No. Well, not really.

LILY

What's wrong?

TOM

I just really shouldn't have done this.

LILY

Was it that bad? I mean, it's been a while for me, but I didn't think I did too badly, considering.

TOM

No. No. It's not you.

LILY

"It's not you, it's me?" Jesus, Tom. I thought you were at least better than the clichés.

TOM

But really, it is. Remember the whole connection thing? This was too far. Way too far for me.

LILY

You can't hide from other people forever. What made you like this?

TOM

Did you hear a single word I just said? I can't tell you these things. *(Starts hyperventilating.)*
Or I'll have...I'll have....

LILY

A panic attack? Creative. Fine. I get it. I'll go. You have my number in your illegally obtained files, I'm sure.

TOM

I'm sorry.

LILY

Mom's funeral's Tuesday, if you want to be there.

(She exits. Blackout.)