

**An Excerpt From:**

FROM HUTCHINSON STREET

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Draft 3.0

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SCENE THREE

Later. Roberta and Jason are at the table. They are drinking wine. The bottle is almost empty.

JASON

(raising his glass)

Hey. I'm a good man.

ROBERTA

Wilson likes you.

The clink glasses together.

JASON

He's a funny fat man.

ROBERTA

Yes he is. You hurt my dog.

JASON

I'm sorry.

ROBERTA

Why be? You did it. Sorry is so dumb, Jason. I am so through with sorry.

JASON

Sorry.

ROBERTA

Prick, prick, prick. Oh!

(drops her head in her hands)

I can't go to my class like this!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

What class?  
JASON

Spanish.  
ROBERTA

Spanish?  
JASON  
(laughs)

ROBERTA  
So many people come through my line can't speak English. I got this one poor old Mexican lady crying in Spanish over her few crinkly food stamps. I didn't know what to do.

JASON  
So you're taking a class?

ROBERTA  
Got to. It's for my job.

JASON  
You're a good woman, Roberta. Most say "stick it, spic."

ROBERTA  
They're shoppers, too. They need food.

JASON  
Yes they do. I worked a roofing job with this Mexican kid once and he was a snotty brat. Always whining to himself in Espanol. Every time his beeper'd go off, he was split, gone.

ROBERTA  
He was your dealer.

JASON  
What?

ROBERTA  
I seen him come up the backstairs a few times.

A beat.

JASON  
Anyway.

ROBERTA  
Was he the one got you the stuff made us both so loaded we took all our clothes off and ate ice cream with forks?

A pause.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

JASON

They were wooden spoons.

A pause. They both burst out laughing.

ROBERTA

Don't ever do that again, that's bad!

JASON

Okay, I'll never eat ice cream with spoons, Bertie!

ROBERTA

You know what I mean.

A beat.

JASON

Well, he's gone anyway. Musta answered the wrong beep.

ROBERTA

If I see him, I'm not telling you.

JASON

Don't worry.

ROBERTA

You're off?

JASON

Offa that. I'm cleaner.

ROBERTA

Cleaner. You coulda killed Charlie, Jason!

JASON

I thought I left him air!

ROBERTA

That don't come in small packets you leave on the seats! It's called crackin' the window!

JASON

Gotcha. Next time, gotcha.

ROBERTA

You're not even supposed to be down here, anyway. You were banned.

JASON

Well I must have been unbanned.

A beat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

ROBERTA

Friday night.

JASON

With my dear friend. The oldest.

He touches her hand. She, his.

JASON (CONT'D)

I'm on a job next week so I got the rent.

She shakes his hand away.

ROBERTA

Don't even kid me. It'll just find a way up your arm, your nose, whatever.

JASON

I said I'm cleaner. I started seeing this lady at the Y last month and we hit it off. She's a help. It's all gradual, she said, so for the time being, it's okay to just have a drink. In fact, in light of all things, it's actually preferred.

ROBERTA

Preferred.

A pause.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. Good.

A beat.

JASON

How was he this weekend?

ROBERTA

He was good to her.

A pause.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

Got Wilson a glass. He's at 49 states!

JASON

Quite a collection.

ROBERTA

He's off to Muncie but I know it's because Indiana here cracked when I cleaned the shelf. He's been nice not telling me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

JASON  
What state he don't have?

ROBERTA  
Guess.

JASON  
Alabamey.

ROBERTA  
He's got an uncle there.

JASON  
Minnesotey

ROBERTA  
Aunt.

JASON  
North Carolina.

ROBERTA  
In the army.

JASON  
Shit, you know this guy's history, doncha?

ROBERTA  
Ask me more.

JASON  
Wisconsin.

ROBERTA  
Oh, yeah. It's only an hour away.

JASON  
Well.

(thinks deep)  
Alaska.

ROBERTA  
He's got that, don't he? Musta been an eskimo.

JASON  
Detroit.

ROBERTA  
Michigan.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (5)

JASON

Guess so.

ROBERTA

Worked there at a Ford plant 15 years I think. He just told me that last week.

JASON

Mysterious guy, Wilson.

ROBERTA

No. He lets me in. He just lives life, you know. He's so sweet.

JASON

People ever talk at work?

ROBERTA

About what?

JASON

You and him.

ROBERTA

No. Yuck. We could be daughter, father. He's just my bagger sometimes. We can't help but be friends.

Jason looks at trophies, plaques on hutch.

JASON

I see. Service award every year together.

ROBERTA

He insists on putting those up. I cringe when I see those.

JASON

Why?

ROBERTA

So many years.

A beat.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

You're not asking me any more states.

JASON

Big T, Texas.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (6)

ROBERTA  
Wilson goes every year for the rodeo. He's a country music fan.

JASON  
Really?

ROBERTA  
Oh, yeah.

A beat.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)  
Silly guy. I feel bad for him.

JASON  
Why -- he's been everywhere you haven't!

ROBERTA  
Oh. Yeah, that's right. I guess I mean, he lives with me. He's got no one else.

JASON  
Well, shit. Now I'm depressed.

ROBERTA  
You? I doubt that.

JASON  
Finished with her bowling balls?

ROBERTA  
Hope so.

A beat.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)  
You better leave.

JASON  
It's Friday night!

ROBERTA  
I gotta work tomorrow morning. Take care of her?

JASON  
Of course.

ROBERTA  
I'll call.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (7)

Bang the ceiling. JASON

Okay. ROBERTA

What's wrong. JASON

Looks too much like a normal family, doesn't it? ROBERTA

JASON  
(gulping the rest of the wine)  
"Pass the cheese, mi cheri!"

You're high. ROBERTA

Just as the second floor, baby. JASON

She is not amused. A beat.

Hey. I just had some red. JASON (CONT'D)

I know. ROBERTA  
(that's the point:)

Jason kicks an empty chair.

Just like any other family in America! I also put in a hard day's work building you a few new back stairs!! JASON

Didn't need 'em until you and your Mexicano burned down half the old ones last fall doing god knows what but I found the pipe!! ROBERTA

A pause. Awkward, fuming silence. Jason stands, returns the chair to the table. He doesn't know what to do, say. He walks over to the stereo, fumbles through some tapes, finds one, plays it. It is "Hot Blooded" by Foreigner. He drops to his knees.

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (8)

He crawls to Roberta, ending with his head on her lap. "Dancing," he moves her chair back and forth to the beat of the music. She smiles, laughs. She puts her hand on his hair. Katie enters from second bedroom. She is wearing pajamas.

KATIE

Mom?

JASON

She is so tired, honey. What you want?

KATIE

You left Charlie in the car.

JASON

I believe I apologized for that.

KATIE

No you didn't.

JASON

I did to your mother.

KATIE

Did you make her cry?

ROBERTA

No. C'mon hon, get to bed.

KATIE

It's 8:30. My dad let me stay up till midnight. We watched movies.

ROBERTA

You did?

KATIE

Mom?

ROBERTA

What were the videos?

KATIE

Places.

ROBERTA

Places?

KATIE

Places.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (9)

ROBERTA

What places?

KATIE

Places. Places he went to. Places he went. In his job.

ROBERTA

In his job.

KATIE

He has a job that takes him places.

(to Jason)

My dad.

JASON

(hurt)

I know.

KATIE

He asked about you.

JASON

Oh yeah?

KATIE

He said how's mom's boyfriend was.

ROBERTA

HE'S NOT MY BOYFRIEND!!

A beat.

KATIE

I'd like a telescope. With a super powerful lens. So I can point it from this far and see my dad.

JASON

Oh yeah?...

KATIE

He told me just to look up at all the airplanes heading west so I can see him pass over, but there's too many tall buildings here to see. I need a telescope.

ROBERTA

Go to your room.

JASON

I can tuck her in...

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (10)

ROBERTA  
No. Go to your room.

KATIE  
I'm staying up.

ROBERTA  
Yes. Good.

KATIE  
In my room. I'll be up.

ROBERTA  
Yes.

KATIE  
Check to see.

ROBERTA  
I will.

Katie exits into bedroom, shutting  
door. A pause.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)  
You know Carl now's flying for United?

JASON  
I knew Carl.

ROBERTA  
Of course.

An awkward pause.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)  
You've lived here long.

JASON  
Still am.

ROBERTA  
I think my grandfather signed you.

JASON  
My parents.

ROBERTA  
Bob and Loretta. Now it's just you.

(awkwardly smiles)  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (11)

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

I should just give you a lease for old time's sake, shouldn't I?

JASON

I should go, Bertie.

ROBERTA

Big Friday night at Shooters?

JASON

Not usually.

ROBERTA

Okay. So we can play "Guess Wilson's States."

JASON

I don't feel like it.

ROBERTA

He's been so many places. Except guess.

JASON

What.

ROBERTA

California.

JASON

Wouldn't guess that.

ROBERTA

Surprised his whole old life he hasn't made it to California.

JASON

He's waiting for that glass.

ROBERTA

He is.

JASON

Wonder why.

ROBERTA

The state is big. Too big. Where do you go first?

JASON

You pick a place.

ROBERTA

Oh, yeah. That must be how it is.

JASON

You ever been there?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (12)

ROBERTA

California? No.

JASON

You can go get him the glass. While you're in Denver. Hop west with Katie. For a vacation, maybe, I can stay here and take care--

ROBERTA

WILL YOU SHUT UP JASON! YOU CAN'T TAKE CARE OF A THING!  
YOU'RE A STUPID, LAZY DRUG ADDICT!!

A beat. A pause. Jason then stands.  
Walks to hutch, points:

JASON

I refinished that.

Jason storms out. He runs upstairs.  
Roberta follows half-way.

ROBERTA

I'm sorry, I'm sorry --

In foyer, shouting up stairs.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

I'M SORRY!!

Katie enters.

KATIE

It's too loud.

ROBERTA

(whispers)

Sorry.

KATIE

You're being loud.

ROBERTA

I said I'm sorry.

KATIE

My room is too small.

ROBERTA

I slept there.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (13)

What. KATIE

I said I slept there! ROBERTA

A beat.

That was my room. ROBERTA (CONT'D)

You said that. KATIE

When I was a little girl. ROBERTA

You told me before. KATIE

I didn't think it was small. ROBERTA

I didn't say it was small. I said it was ugly. KATIE

Oh, yes? ROBERTA

Yes. Ugly. Your room is ugly. KATIE

I'm sorry. ROBERTA

I want a pet. KATIE

What about Charlie? ROBERTA

He's too big. Sandra has a bird. KATIE

We had a bird. ROBERTA

No we didn't. KATIE

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (14)

ROBERTA  
I did. When I was a little girl. When I slept in your  
small, oh, I'm sorry, ugly room.

A beat.

KATIE  
What kind.

ROBERTA  
A parakeet.

KATIE  
I don't want a parakeet.

ROBERTA  
Okay.

KATIE  
I'm cold.

ROBERTA  
I'll turn up the heat.

KATIE  
Parakeets fly out windows.

ROBERTA  
You never had one.

KATIE  
Sandra did.

ROBERTA  
Oh, Sandra. Her's fly?

KATIE  
You're making fun of me.

ROBERTA  
No.

KATIE  
I want to call dad.

ROBERTA  
No.

Katie thinks.

KATIE  
No.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (15)

A beat.

I want to call dad.  
KATIE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry.  
ROBERTA

Stop saying that. You always say "I'm sorry."  
KATIE

I'M SORRY I ALWAYS SAY I'M SORRY, OKAY??  
ROBERTA

CALL HIM? YOU CAN!!  
(grabbing phone)

A pause.

I'm sorry.  
ROBERTA (CONT'D)

No.  
KATIE

Katie.  
ROBERTA

Tomorrow I want to see Sandra.  
KATIE

Okay.  
ROBERTA

I'd like to sleep.  
KATIE

You can. I'll tell you about the parakeet.  
ROBERTA

Sandra's?  
KATIE

Mine.  
ROBERTA

It flew away.  
KATIE

(CONTINUED)



CONTINUED: (16)

ROBERTA

No.

(for Katie to come sit with her:)

C'mon.

Katie gets up on couch.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

Not my bird.

Lights dim on the rest of the apartment. A light on the ceiling fan. Katie nestles with Roberta on the sofa to listen.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

My father brought it home one day. He bought it from a lady from the church who told him she trained birds. She was a widow who lost her husband in a war. She didn't know him at all. So her children were birds. She trained, so she said, little birds like parakeets and so my daddy bought one for me because I was home so much and he thought I needed a friend, but my mom was my friend Katie, my mom was my friend, but she was sick so much in what's now my bedroom, we didn't have much time to go out and do things together. I took on her duties. When my dad brought home Birdy, I was cleaning that same fan.

The fan slowly starts to rotate.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

He didn't say anything, he just walked over with a great, big smile and put Birdy on top one of the blades with his great, fat hands. He plucked me up off my stool, I must have been a feather in his hands, and we sat on this sofa and looked up together: Birdy didn't squawk, he didn't fly, he didn't ruffle a feather, he just stood like a statue on that blade as it turned him round and round and round, he was trained so good, anything that made Birdy a bird was worked right out of him. Daddy and I found that so funny. We laughed. When I was home alone, I'd put that sweet, quiet thing on the fan and turn it once to just hypnotize myself watching her tranquil solitude. Birdy watched me too, I thought.

A pause. Both watch the fan turn.

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

She died three weeks later. I went to the bathroom and heard a noise. When I came back, she was on the floor. She finally fell.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (17)

ROBERTA (CONT'D)

I picked her up and it was like she was one of those stuffed birds. But I couldn't tell whether she was alive or dead. I shook her. Maybe she was still doing her trick. I put her back on the fan, and she turned with it still, so I guess it didn't matter. She hypnotized me. When I grew taller, I could stand on a table and look on top of the blade. I was cleaning it once and found deep, deep, deep scratches into the wood which Birdy must have dug with her tiny feet. Down here, we must have never seen her fighting and scratching so hard.

Katie is asleep. Jason is at the door. Roberta covers Katie. Jason walks to her, touching her back. They kiss, passionately, desperately. They move to the front bedroom and shut the door. The ceiling fan still turns.

BLACKOUT.