

YOU BEEN LIED TO

Jack, 18, just found out from a stranger that the woman he thought was his sister his whole life was really his biological mother. He was raised as if his grandmother, Edith, was his mom. Eighteen years ago, Pam, who is now 31, came home pregnant. The details of that youthful pregnancy had long been kept a secret from Jack. Pam, who has spent several years in and out of rehab and living with transient boyfriends, now tries to explain to Jack what really happened and why.

PAM: *(Knocking.)* Come on, come on, let me in, Jack! Let me explain! I'm not going away until you let me in.

JACK: So stay at the door. What do I care?

PAM: I only want to say I'm sorry.

JACK: You and her are so alike. You lie to me for years and then you expect me to accept your apology just like that. It doesn't matter at this point. So please go away.

PAM: There's a lot to explain, Jack. You may understand why we lied if I can just explain. But please don't make me do this out here. All the neighbors will hear.

JACK: *(Opening the door a crack.)* The neighbors? The hell with the neighbors! We're talkin' about losing the basic pieces of who I am. Having everything all mixed up and put together in some twisted new story. You're worried about how the neighbors will look at you? Well, how have they looked at *me* all these years?! Ever think of that? *(Beat.)* You come home pregnant at thirteen. Next thing they know *Grandma's* changing my diaper, and I'm calling *you* sister. They must have been whispering like crazy all that time. Did everyone in this damn neighborhood know besides me?

PAM: No, of course not. And I can't tell you this stuff through a door, Jack. But I will tell you everything. That's why I'm here.

JACK: Oh, how nice. How thoughtful of you to come here and tell me that my entire life has been a lie!

PAM: Look, I know I should have told you about this years ago. I wanted to. I tried to a million times. I even wrote you a letter.

JACK: What are you talking about? I never got any letter.

PAM: I wrote it when I was eighteen. It was right after I moved outta here and in with that guy, Lou. 'Member? *(Beat.)* I wrote you a letter about everything, but she said you wouldn't understand. That it would be bad for you.

JACK: She?

PAM: Mom.

JACK: She's not my mom! Unfortunately, that would be you.

PAM: *(Beat.)* Okay, I know you're mad at me and you have every reason to be but she's heartbroken. She knows it was wrong not to tell you. Do you even know where she is right now?

JACK: Probably crying her eyes out at Uncle Joe's. Doing the martyr routine.

PAM: No, she's not. And I think if you would just talk—

JACK: What's there to talk about? How can I talk to her or you? How am I ever supposed to believe either of you again?

PAM: She's at St. Vincent's.

JACK: Hospital? *(Beat.)* Is she okay?

PAM: Yeah.

JACK: This isn't a load of bull to get me to open the door?

PAM: Come on, Jack, I don't lie about everything.

JACK: Yeah? Well, how am I supposed to know that? *(Pause. Opens door.)* Fine. Come in.

PAM: Thanks. *(Beat.)* She's okay. She just had to go to the emergency room to get some anxiety medication. She got hysterical last night when she went to Uncle Joe's.

JACK: I didn't throw her out of her own house ya know? I just refused to talk to her anymore.

PAM: I know.

JACK: (*Beat.*) When is she planning on coming back?
PAM: Later this afternoon I guess.
JACK: I'll get out of here by noon then.
PAM: What?! You can't leave here, Jack. You don't have any money. You don't even have a job.
JACK: I have a couple of friends I can crash with till I get a job and stuff. I am old enough.
PAM: But what about school?
JACK: Who cares?
PAM: No! That's what I always said. And look at me. I'm workin' two crappy jobs and have nothing to show for it.
JACK: Except a screwed up brother—oh, I mean son.
PAM: (*Pause.*) All I meant is that I think you should stay here with Edith and get an education.
JACK: Are you suddenly trying to be my mother? You're trying to tell me what to do? Like you know anything. You spent three-quarters of your life as a poster child for the white-trash pot smokers of America. I'm not too keen on your love life recommendations either since the two latest boyfriends who were "so nice" were actually felons.
PAM: Okay, that's enough.
JACK: I don't even know what I'm supposed to call you anymore—Sis, Mom, Pam?
PAM: There was a reason for all this, Jack. You don't know everything.
JACK: Well, I'm ready to hear this explanation. Cause this is the most screwed up thing ever. I mean, here I am just hangin' out on my porch one day. Life's as it always is, and some dude starts telling me he went to high school with my mom. I'm thinkin' he means my sister—he's talkin' about you, not Edith—'cause he's your age. So I'm not listening all that well—thinkin' about something else. Then he says, "So how is your mom? Is she as hot as she always was?" I want to pop him in the face, but I'm totally confused at the same time. My mom's about fifty years old, so I don't think she was ever hot to him. And if she was, I want to throw

up. I say, "I'm confused," and he starts laughing. I tell him that he must have things backwards because my mom's around fifty, but he tells me I'm wrong. He says he knew my mom, Pam, from high school. She got pregnant like eighteen years ago. She got around with a lot of guys he says.

PAM: That's not true. That's totally not true.
JACK: He says *her* mother, Edith, was not pregnant. He notices that I look about eighteen. He laughs. "Get it?" He says, "Get what I'm sayin'?" I grabbed his shirt—suddenly, like outta nowhere, I just start poppin' him good ones. He didn't even see them coming. He pushes me hard. And I'm laying there. He spits and says real dramatic, "You been lied to, boy." Laughs. (*Beat.*) And I feel like my brain was just put in a blender.
PAM: I'm sorry.
JACK: Yeah, well, that doesn't change anything. And please don't tell me that that moron is my father.
PAM: He's not. He had a crush on me a million years ago. He's a jerk—a complete liar.
JACK: But he wasn't lying about you being my mother was he?
PAM: No.
JACK: Do you even know who my dad is, Pam?
PAM: (*Angrily.*) Yes.
JACK: Well, I'd *like* to doubt that guy about your sleeping around, but it's not exactly like you've been a nun since I can remember. How many boyfriends have you had since . . . oh, last week?
PAM: Fine—think that about me now. But I wasn't at all like that back then. I never slept with anyone!
JACK: Well, you must have slept with someone or—
PAM: Look, I will tell you everything. And I know this is difficult for you, but this isn't exactly easy for me either.
JACK: Oh, I'm so sorry. I might have been less furious about this stuff had you told me sooner. Yourself. But to hear it from a stranger—to hear it like that so randomly.

PAM: I tried to tell you again this past year. I felt more together with keeping the jobs down.

JACK: So why didn't you?!

PAM: I started to a couple of times, but you always seemed like you hated my guts. Besides, Mom thought I should wait till you were out of high school.

JACK: And then I would have been out of high school and she would have said, wait until he's graduated from college. And it would have gone on and on. Why were you listening to her? At some point you have to make your own choices.

PAM: I wasn't that strong, Jack. And if I thought that the idea of it wouldn't disgust you, I might have considered it.

JACK: Might have considered it?! I thought you just said you tried to tell me? That you were gonna?

PAM: I was! That's not what I meant.

JACK: So what did you mean? That it's *my* fault?! It's my fault cause I mighta been disgusted?!

PAM: No! I just think it would have been easier to tell you if you liked me even a little!

JACK: Well, I don't *not* like you! I might've even thought you were cool, but it's hard to like someone who keeps messing themselves up over and over. I mean, why do you go out with losers all the time? Why didn't you go to college? Why don't you now? I'm sure the state would help you out. You're smart.

PAM: It feels too late. Everything feels too late.

JACK: Well, hell, what do you have to lose at this point?! You don't have anything!

PAM: *(Beat.)* I know I'm not who you want me to be, Jack, but I do and I did always love you.

JACK: Yeah, that was real obvious. Going away for ten years to live with loser boyfriends when I was a kid—now that made it real, real obvious.

PAM: I couldn't stay and not want to be the mother.

JACK: So why didn't you? You *were* the mother.

PAM: Because a kid can't have two moms. Edith was the better choice.

JACK: No, the truth would have been the better choice.

PAM: Maybe. Maybe it was a mistake.

JACK: Maybe? There's no maybe about it. *(Beat.)* And Dad? Who would that be? *(Pause. She looks down.)* What? You're not going to tell me?

PAM: I didn't say that. I need something to drink.

JACK: No, you don't. I thought you were supposed to knock that off?

PAM: I have. I just . . . you're right.

JACK: So go ahead. *(She looks at him.)* God, it was bad enough thinking he was some man we couldn't even bare to mention my whole life. The mysterious bad man in Edith's life who disappeared into oblivion and everyone hoped had been lost in some terrible catastrophe. But now the dad question seems more important somehow. Who is he? A diamond thief, a powerful mob guy or just some dude who works at an auto shop and watches TV all night long?

PAM: Maybe it's better not to know.

JACK: No way! Don't you dare do that! You've already kept so much from me. How dare you keep me from knowing about him too?

PAM: He's the reason we kept you from knowing so much.

JACK: Okay, so he may have been a jerk in high school, but that was eighteen years ago. He could have changed by now. Just because *your* dad wasn't someone you wanted to know doesn't mean I'll feel the same way! Just because he was a real rotten bastard doesn't mean my dad is.

PAM: He's the same man.

JACK: What? *(Confused.)*

PAM: He's the same person.

JACK: But . . . *(Long pause.)*

PAM: I'm not the only one in the family with bad taste in men.

JACK: That's disgusting.

PAM: Edith divorced him and threw him out.

JACK: So why'd you even have me?
PAM: Because I wanted you. We both wanted you. Maybe for our own selfish reasons. I wanted someone to love me for me, and I think Mom wanted someone she could protect—since she screwed that up pretty good.
JACK: Is he alive? Did you charge him?
PAM: Yeah, he's alive. And no. It's all over now.
JACK: Is it? Whose words are those? It doesn't seem over for either of us.
PAM: Well you can't dwell in it, Jack. It doesn't do any good.
JACK: Well, what the hell did you do for the last eighteen years but dwell in it with all those stupid guys? Yeah, you can say you shoved it under the carpet and you never talked about it, but you sure as hell dwelled on it.
PAM: Yeah, so what should I have done?
JACK: Set it right. *(He grabs his backpack.)*
PAM: What are you doing? Where are you going?
JACK: I'll be back.
PAM: No, Jack, talk to me. Where are you going? Don't do anything crazy. Come on!
JACK: I gotta go, Mom. I promise I'll be back.
(He exits. Pam is speechless.)

WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

Susan and Abe, 30s, have been brought together by their spouses, who are coworkers and extremely ambitious lawyers. Both Susan and Abe have complained to their spouses about the lack of time they have to go out. As a result, their spouses have suggested that they use each other for company. The two have gone out a couple of times in the past few weeks and have enjoyed the restaurants and each other's company immensely; still, something seems odd about their spouses' suggestion. As the scene begins, they are enjoying the view in an upscale bar in Minneapolis in a deliciously intense conversation.

SUSAN: Well, the general population there doesn't know! They don't understand the damage, the kinds of cancer and destruction it will do afterwards, Abe.
ABE: Oh God. It's just a lot of political posturing. Neither wants to look namby-pamby. It's like when a kid says my Willy's bigger than yours. You have to respond or you look bad. And when they say "weapons of mass destruction" that doesn't necessarily mean nuclear.
SUSAN: Well what do you think when you hear that? It's the first thing that comes to mind for me. I think radiation. I think nuclear bomb. There are fanatics over there. Once you cross the line, there's no turning back.
ABE: They won't cross the line.
SUSAN: Sometimes you don't even know when the line is crossed because with crazy people you're not even sure where the line is.
ABE: You act like if there's one wrong word between them, that's the end of the world—boom!
SUSAN: It's not *one* wrong word. It's one wrong word after