

JENNIFER: *(Completely skeptical.)* And you predicted it?
NICOLAS: Not exactly. We were watching TV, and I looked up and out the window for a second. In my mind, I saw my dad falling down a hill. I told my mom what I saw in my head. I was really nervous. I told her it was nothing when I saw the look on her face. So stupid of me. But then we got a call. That was it.

JENNIFER: *(Fiercely.)* You better not be lying! Cause that is totally not funny at all.

NICOLAS: Check the obituary section in the *Boston Herald* or the *Globe*. August, five years ago. I'm not lying. I wish to God I were.

JENNIFER: I'm sorry if you're not lying. I don't know anyone who lost a parent. I don't know what to say.

NICOLAS: There's nothing you can say. *(Beat.)* I just feel sorta down sometimes. I felt like he was the only one who totally understood me. Ya know?

JENNIFER: Yeah. It's so sad. I can't even imagine. I'm sorry.

NICOLAS: It did no good to know ahead of time. It really doesn't help things much to be able to predict. It just makes you uncomfortable. I wish some day that my psychic power would completely disappear like the boy in my book. Like maybe they already have. Maybe I was all wrong about that drunk guy dying on the bus.

JENNIFER: I'm gonna call the MTA, believe me. *(Beeping watch.)* Ah! That alarm is so loud. That's my timer. *(Turns it off.)* Three hundred twenty seconds are up and no bus in the—Oh my God! Is that the bus? That's the bus. Just like you said.

(Nicolas shrugs as Jennifer looks strangely back at him.)

JENNIFER: Creepy.

A GOOD SOLID HOME

After a half a dozen attempts at artificial insemination, Robert, 39, and his wife Monica decided to adopt a child. A private agency put the couple in contact with Angie, an 18-year-old girl who felt unable to care for her expected child. Monica and the pregnant mother quickly bonded via the phone and through letters. After some initial conversations over the phone, the couple arranged to adopt Angie's unborn child. Throughout the remainder of Angie's pregnancy, the adoptive parents asked the birth mother if she was certain about her decision. Angie reassured them, and she signed all necessary papers. It has now been two months since Angie gave birth and handed the baby over to the adoptive couple. Everything had been going smoothly until a week ago when Angie suddenly called them. In this scene, Angie travels from New Jersey to Florida to confront the adoptive parents.

ANGIE: Okay, I know I called ya out of the blue, but I've been thinkin' about this for the whole two months.

ROBERT: Ms. Andrews, I don't mean to be abrupt, but I think we should have a lawyer present.

ANGIE: Why? We're friends. Your wife and I wrote to each other like every week before he was born—about real personal stuff too. I'm not here to do no legal thing. I just want to talk about our, our like arrangement. Besides aren't you a lawyer or somethin'?

ROBERT: No, I'm an accountant.

ANGIE: Oh. Well, that's kinda similar, isn't it?

ROBERT: Not really. We'll have to discuss this tomorrow, Ms. Andrews. From our previous discussion, we thought you were coming tomorrow. We already made arrangements with our lawyer.

ANGIE: But I can't do tomorrow. We gotta drive back then. Like at 6:00 A.M. I gotta work. I can't miss like five days. My manager will fire me like that. (*Snaps her fingers.*)

ROBERT: Well, I'm sorry to hear that, but my lawyer has advised me not to engage in a discussion on this matter.

ANGIE: I'm not asking you to *engage* in anything! I just want to talk. I just want to talk about things, ya know.

ROBERT: Talk?

ANGIE: Yeah. About things. About the way I'm feeling.

ROBERT: We're trying to avoid any legal maneuvers. We'd be happy to talk to you tomorrow about whatever you'd like, but it's not a good time right now.

ANGIE: I don't care if it's a good time. I just drove from Jersey City for God's sake. Twenty-four hours in a beat-up sedan with a chain-smoker and no air. So I don't care if it's the perfect timin', I need to talk today. And I'm not doin' any maneuverin' or I woulda brought a lawyer myself. Right? Right?! (*Beat.*) I'd be pretty stupid—totally stupid to drive all the way here and start tryin' to maneuver with you guys. You're college educated and all. I don't even have a high school diploma.

ROBERT: You drove here?

ANGIE: Yeah, that's what I've been tellin' ya. It's not like I could afford first freakin' class on American Airlines. We're stayin' at my cousin's place.

ROBERT: Who's the chain-smoker?

ANGIE: My boyfriend. It's a real bad habit. Worse than pickin' your nose.

ROBERT: Your boyfriend? Is he new? I don't remember you mentioning him before.

ANGIE: Yeah, that was on account of the fact that he was sorta not my boyfriend at the time. He was in juvie. And I didn't know if it would work out in the end cause he's kinda violent. He got outta rehab recently. He seems better, but . . . He didn't even know I was pregnant.

ROBERT: Are you trying to tell me that he's the real father?

ANGIE: Oh God, no! My boyfriend was in juvie for like a year. No, the guy who got me knocked up was *real* mature, but married. Like I told you and Monica, he didn't want nothin' to do with it.

ROBERT: I see. So this has nothing to do with the father then?

ANGIE: No. (*Looks around.*) So this is a nice place, Robert. Real nice and cheery-like. It kinda looks like one of those interiors ya see in those home magazines. All perfect. Ya know, like the kind ya think nobody lives like that. Nobody is *that* coordinated. You are.

ROBERT: Thanks.

ANGIE: (*Looking out.*) Man, you and Monica got a view too. You're like practically on the beach. I'd kill to live on a beach like this. You probably got to be careful of typhoons and hurricanes blowin' down your house. Course we got beaches too, but they're full of needles and crap. Gosh, I can't seem to stop feelin' nervous-like.

ROBERT: Um, would you like something to drink, Ms. Andrews?

ANGIE: What? Ya mean like a drink-drink?

ROBERT: Oh. Well, if you'd like.

ANGIE: No, I wasn't gonna do a drink-drink. I don't really like drinkin' cause of how it affected my boyfriend. That's why he was in rehab. I had a Slurpee earlier and that made me real sick. They always do. I don't know why I get 'em. They always make me feel bloaty and like throwin' up. Ya know?

ROBERT: I'll be honest with you, Ms. Andrews. Your phone call earlier this week came as a complete shock. We've been worried that perhaps you're considering retracting the adoption. We haven't been able to sleep since.

ANGIE: I'm sorry. I know I feel crazy too. That's why I called, but then you guys seemed so far away and stuff. You were goin' on about lawyers and papers and stuff. It seemed like you just wanted me to disappear into thin air. Like I never existed.

ROBERT: I thought we all agreed that it would be less painful if we didn't have contact.

ANGIE: Maybe we agreed to stuff. I guess I changed my mind or somethin'. I mean, ya know sometimes how ya *think* you're gonna know how you're gonna *feel* about somethin' and then (*Slaps her head.*) WHAM it actually happens? And you don't feel the same way ya thought you were gonna. And ya gotta make peace with it. Ya know what I mean?

ROBERT: To a certain degree.

ANGIE: So where's your wife? Where's Monica? I'd like to talk to her too.

ROBERT: Visiting her parents. They live . . . not too far away.

ANGIE: She's tryin' to avoid me, huh?

ROBERT: We decided it was best for her to stay with her parents until we knew what you wanted.

ANGIE: I'm not tryin' to disrupt your life or anything. I like you guys. I really do. You're like family. It's just . . . Is Ricky there too?

ROBERT: Yeah.

ANGIE: Is he still as cute as when he was born?

ROBERT: You know, I really don't feel like talking, Ms. Andrews. I'd like you to leave.

ANGIE: Geez! I just asked a little question.

ROBERT: We thought everything was perfect until you called this week. For two months our lives have been about lacking sleep, changing diapers, and feeding schedules and it's all been absolute heaven. And now . . . well . . . you would hesitate *yourself* to launch into a casual conversation. Especially given the capricious circumstances. Wouldn't you?

ANGIE: Um, yeah. I guess. I don't know exactly what ya said. I just want to talk about my son.

ROBERT: Your son? *Your* son?

ANGIE: Yeah. Ricky. The one I gave birth to like two months ago. You scooped him up and brought him off to "perfect homes and beaches"?

ROBERT: I know who you mean. I'm commenting on the *my* part.

ANGIE: Oh. You think he's not mine just cause I gave him to you?

ROBERT: No, he's not. Legally, he's not.

ANGIE: He came out of me. He's made up of my genes and crap. I had it explained to me like this: If I bit off my fingernail and gave it to you and told you you could keep it, even if you told everyone it was yours, it's still really *my* fingernail. Ya know?

ROBERT: You had it explained to you like that? By whom?

ANGIE: Never mind that. My point is he's mine.

ROBERT: Are you honestly equating our son to a chewed off fingernail?

ANGIE: No, no! I'm just tryin' to do this anthology thing that someone explained.

ROBERT: (*He stops, shakes his head in disbelief at her, but doesn't bother to comment on her misuse of words.*) Yes, biologically, he's yours. I agree. But we've been caring for him for two months now. We're his parents. He's bonded to us, and we love him. He loves us. It's not as if you weren't aware of the fact that this was going to happen. You signed the papers. We planned, as parents do, for more than seven years to have a child. Seven years!

ANGIE: Well, it's not *my* fault you couldn't do it! (*Robert looks stung.*) I didn't mean nothin' by that. A lot of good people can't do it.

ROBERT: That's true. And a lot of irresponsible, miserable people can.

ANGIE: So what's that supposed to mean?

ROBERT: I don't mean that about you. It's just, it's difficult to explain how hard it is. And I don't feel it necessary to describe the details to everyone. Suffice it to say that it's full of hospitals, and incredible amounts of time, and money, procedures, and discussions, and decisions, and heart-breaks. We are all taught that having a child is a natural

occurrence—anyone can do it. Anyone . . . but *you*. Each attempt gets your hopes up. And worse, you carry the hopes of all your friends and family with you. Each time it fails, you feel like a deficient human being. You feel that God is against you. That you don't deserve what others receive so naturally. It keeps, it keeps making you feel less than you are over and over.

ANGIE: I know what you mean. I always kinda feel that way about myself. I didn't know you guys went through that much. Monica told me you did that test tube thing a couple times.

ROBERT: I'm sorry to go on about it.

ANGIE: No, I don't mind. I like that a whole lot better than you being so formal, calling me Ms. Andrews. It's not like you guys don't know me as Angie. I like it better when you're being real. Cloudy talk and big words always make me nervous. I got people in my life who do that cloudy talk thing. They act like I can't see through it. Like I'm dumb, but I'm not, ya know? I just screwed around in school. If I had my way now, I'd get my GED in a second, so I could go to college.

ROBERT: You could, Angie. It's a lot easier to get work when you have an education.

ANGIE: You're just saying that so I don't even consider takin' back Ricky.

ROBERT: Was that your intention? Because you told me your intention was *just* to talk.

ANGIE: I don't know. I'd like to see Ricky. And Monica.

ROBERT: His name's not Ricky. Please stop saying that. It's Joshua.

ANGIE: What? Joshua? But . . . I thought—

ROBERT: We never signed an agreement concerning that. This is infuriating. He's our son.

ANGIE: But Joshua sucks. Ricky's a much better name. It sounds like a singer or a race car driver. Joshua is like a snotty kid who thinks he knows everything.

ROBERT: He's named after my father.

ANGIE: No offense. (*Beat.*) Maybe you could call Monica. Get her to come back here for a few hours with him?

ROBERT: I don't think that's a good idea. What good will it do? You'll just long for him all the more when you leave. Why would I facilitate that?

ANGIE: You guys just acted like my friends till you got him. Now, it's like—"See ya! Bye!"

ROBERT: We did not mislead you, Ms. Andrews. You agreed all along. It's all signed, sealed, and delivered. We agreed to pay for all your hospital bills and be as supportive to you as possible, and afterwards sever ties. Not because we wanted to, but because it would be confusing and difficult for everyone involved.

ANGIE: Well, I know, but sometimes people change their mind. You know I still have time to change my mind. I talked to people, and I can still take Ricky back.

ROBERT: Okay, and this is where this conversation ends because I am very angry. One—because you said you just wanted to talk and weren't planning any legal maneuvers. Two—because you are obviously attacking our rights to *our* legal son. And three—I told you I didn't want to discuss this without a lawyer present. I want you to leave now, Ms Andrews!

ANGIE: I'm not attacking you! I've just been real sad. Like there's a hole in the middle of my gut since I gave him away that day. I always had sort of a hole in me, but it's bigger now and more noticeable. Even my boyfriend noticed it first thing when he came home. I told him I was pregnant and gave the baby away. He was like, "That's so strange cause I could see there was a hole in you. It's so obvious."

ROBERT: A child can't fill that void, Ms. Andrews. I felt empty when I was eighteen years old too. Everyone does. I didn't know what I wanted or who I was.

ANGIE: I don't think that's it. I don't know. Maybe. (*Pause.*) Okay. Maybe you're right!

ROBERT: We have so much to offer your son, Angie. And I don't mean just material things, although that makes life easier, but I mean a solid home, a wealth of experiences, and a sense of who we are. Things you haven't even given yourself enough chance to develop yet. If you only knew how much of a family we are already, you wouldn't even consider this.

ANGIE: *(Pause.)* A kid makes you feel like ya did somethin'. Like you accomplished somethin'.

ROBERT: Yes, but what a kid needs is for you to give *him* a sense of accomplishment, which only happens after *you've* accomplished things you're proud of in your own life.

ANGIE: I know you don't think I've done anything in my life. I haven't. Havin' Rickie made me feel like I did somethin' so good, I wanted to hold onto it. I know I ain't got a lot to give him like you do. I mean, you live so close to Disney World for one. And you're both real smart and nice. Even when you use big words. I kinda wanted to see the place. Ya know? Check it out. Make sure it looked right. I get afraid some times. I get afraid that I won't have another chance.

ROBERT: You're so young, Angie. You'll have another chance. Plenty of them. I know it. And by that time, you'll have so much more to share.

ANGIE: You think? I don't know. *(Beat.)* Ya know, you're kinda encouragin'. The way a father should be. *(Beat.)* I was on the bus the other day and this old drunk lady fell over on the seat behind me. Dead. I felt sad. Like no one would even know or care. Cause maybe she never did nothin' in her whole life. I got a flash ahead like that would be me if I didn't change. Since then, I've been thinkin' about school and goin' back.

ROBERT: Why don't you?

ANGIE: Yeah, like I have the money. Big joke. Just like my life. *(Looking out the window.)* I gotta go get Tommy, my boyfriend. He's sleepin'. He told me he'd whip my butt if I

didn't get him outta the sun, so he don't burn up like a lobster. *(Pause.)* So I ain't ever gonna see my son again, am I?

ROBERT: I think it would end up being very painful.

(She nods.)

ANGIE: I guess Monica and I can't be friends either. *(He nods gently.)* This really sucks.

ROBERT: I want you to have something. *(He pulls out a checkbook and hands her a check.)* Here.

ANGIE: *(She takes it.)* I didn't come here for no money! I don't care about money!

ROBERT: I know.

ANGIE: Don't be thinkin' I did! *(Looks at check, holding her chest.)* Holy Sh—geez! That's a lot. Too much! *(Handing it back.)* I can't take that. I can't even hold it without getting all shaky. And I never came here for that!

ROBERT: Angie, you gave us the most incredible gift we could have asked for. Please let us give you something in return. *(He tries to hand it back to her. She puts up her hand to say no.)*

ANGIE: No, it's not right. Look, I didn't come here for money, but, honestly, and I feel real ashamed about this, but my boyfriend did. He convinced me that you guys owed me somethin' for my sufferin'. Not just for the hospital bills. I don't agree with him. And truth is he'd probably steal the money away from me anyhow. He told me it would be easy to come here and sorta pretend like I wanted Ricky. Thing is, I do. At least, to see him. I was pretendin' before but I kept gettin' distracted by the truth when we were talkin'. I don't know. It's so messed up. I mean, you're right, what kinda life could I give him? But you, you're good people. You got a nice house, and you're married. Me, I don't even know if I'll be with my boyfriend next week. I—he'd be better off with you. You're smart and real good. I see that in you. It's just hard, ya know? So much for me bein' a good liar.

ROBERT: I appreciate your honesty. *(Hands it back.)* And I still

want you to have it. Just promise me you won't tell him. Okay?

ANGIE: No. Like I said, I'm not good at lyin'. And he'd just blow it on nothin'. But I could use one favor.

ROBERT: Anything.

ANGIE: Send me a picture of him? Send it to me by mail. I want to look in his eyes, so I can see how happy he is. Ya know? I just want him to be happy.

ROBERT: *(Nods.)* I promise.

ANGIE: *(Angie starts to leave. She stops without turning.)* And Robert? *(Beat.)* All that crap about filling in the hole in my gut and being able to make it through school. And telling me that I will have lots to share with a kid some day. Tell me honestly. Don't lie, okay? Did you mean those things for real?

ROBERT: *(Beat.)* Every word.

ANGIE: *(She looks right at him.)* You be a good father, okay? *(Points at him.)* Treat him right or I'll be back! Give him a kiss good-bye from me. Will ya? *(He nods. She exits in a rush.)*

HIT-AND-RUN

When Evie and Neil, both 18, accidentally hit a homeless man in a deserted portion of Montana, a clash of morals and values ensues. Their future and their relationship begins to unravel from the moment Evie slams on her brakes.

EVIE: *(Shocked and panicked, but not screaming, Evie gets out of the car to look.)* I never even seen him. It's like he came outta nowhere.

NEIL: *(Standing next to the body.)* Get in the car, Evie!

EVIE: *(Seeing the man on the ground, covering her mouth.)* Oh my God. I'll stay with him. I'll stay with him. You get help. I'll stay with him, and you get help.

NEIL: *(Yelling, and grabbing her.)* Get in the car, Evie. Now.

EVIE: What are you doin'?!

NEIL: Please. I want you to get in.

EVIE: *(They get in.)* Oh God! Oh God, oh God. I can't believe this is happenin'! I didn't see him. Did you see him? We should do somethin' about his bleedin' right away.

NEIL: *(Touching her arm.)* It's okay. It's okay, hon.

EVIE: No, it's not okay! He looks really bad! You've got to drive! I can't.

NEIL: Drive where? We're in the middle of Montana, Evie. There isn't anythin' for miles.

EVIE: There was a . . . there was a house a couple miles back. I don't know where exactly, but—but awhile back. Where we stopped to eat, remember? Just back there. They'll let you call an ambulance.

NEIL: Now, hold on, Evie. Let's just talk about this first.

EVIE: Talk about what, Neil?! What's there to talk about? I hit him! I can't drive back. I'm too scared to drive. You drive back there. It's not that far.

NEIL: He's a homeless guy.