

RABBIT HOLE
Side #1 - NAT & BECCA

BECCA: No, but...I passed by Danny's daycare last week, and the kids were all in the yard. (*Off NAT's look.*) What? I was just walking by. That's how I get to the post office.

NAT: Yeah. Anyway, that's too bad about Debbie. But that can happen. Friends disappear. I remember when Arthur died - (*Stops herself.*) Sorry. (*Pause. Holds up a toy.*) What about this?

BECCA: No, it's busted. (*Takes it and tosses it.*)

NAT: You know, the thing about Debbie...

BECCA: Yeah?

NAT: It's just as bad the other way sometimes. Do you remember Maureen Bailey?

BECCA: Sure.

NAT: Well I couldn't get rid of her after your brother passed away.

BECCA: I remember.

NAT: *Always* at the house. *Always* checking in on me. Eatin' up the cinnamon buns Uncle Jimmy brought me. I never had a moment to myself. And of course it was nice, I guess, but it didn't feel like it was about me. It just felt like she had nothing else to do. Like consoling me became her *hobby*. Something to fill up her day. And finally in the middle of coffee one afternoon, I said, "Maureen, why are you here all the time?"

BECCA: What'd she say?

NAT: She said, "I want to be there for you, Nat, I want to share in your grief." And so I said, "Well, it's not working. I seem to have it all to myself still. You plant your fat ass in that chair every frickin' day - "

BECCA: You did not say that.

NAT: I did - "and suck up all my coffee, and I don't see you leaving with any of this grief you're allegedly sharing with me. In fact the only thing you do take outta here are my cinnamon buns." (*Beat.*) So I never saw her again obviously. (*Beat.*) Which was too bad actually, because she was the only one who was willing to talk about Arth - (*Stops herself again.*)

BECCA: You can say his name.

NAT: Can I? I don't know your rules, Becca. I don't wanna get scolded.

BECCA: You can talk about Arthur. I just don't like the comparisons.

NAT: Okay.

BECCA: It's not like the Arthur stuff didn't...He was my brother, so obviously that was a really hard time for all of us.

NAT: I know.

BECCA: But that was a long time ago, and it was very different. For me.

NAT: Of course it was.

BECCA: Okay then. (*NAT finds some papers on a bookcase.*)

NAT: What's this?

BECCA: Oh, it's a...It's just a story that boy wrote. He sent it to us.

RABBIT HOLE
BECCA & NAT - side #2

NAT: *(holds it up.)* Monkey?

BECCA: Um, keep, I guess. *(She does.)*

NAT: Howie doesn't mind this?

BECCA: It was his idea. After that open house. Seems his grief goes out the window when it comes to maximizing profits. *(Beat.)* Sorry. I don't even know why I said that. Just being mean. *(THEY go back to work.)* Besides, it's not like we're getting rid of everything. *(Something stops NAT. She's holding a pair of Danny's sneakers. They're smaller than she remembers. BECCA glances over at her and realizes what's happening. Simply:)* Don't do that. *(Takes the sneakers.)* Quick and clean, like a Band-Aid. *(Places the sneakers in a garbage bag.)* Otherwise we'll never get through it. *(Beat.)* Did Izzy tell you I was taking a continuing ed class? We're reading *Bleak House*. Isn't that hilarious? He handed out the syllabus and I just laughed. *Bleak House*. Of course no one knew what I was laughing at, which was great. *(NAT looks up at her.)* It's in Bronxville so no one knows me. I'm normal there. That's what I like best about it. I don't get "the face" every time someone looks at me.

NAT: What face?

BECCA: You know. *(Demonstrates, solemn pity.)* "Oh, hi. How ya doin'? Hangin' in there?" *(NAT laughs a little.)* I hate it. *(They strip the robot sheets off the bed.)* And you know what's nice? These ladies don't even talk about their kids or their husbands or any of it. I think they're just so happy to be away from all that. It's probably the last thing they wanna talk about. Because I'm sure most of them are bored housewives, right?

NAT: I don't know. I've never met these people.

BECCA: Well, that's who takes Westchester continuing-education classes, isn't it?

NAT: I guess.

BECCA: Sure, and they're just so happy to be talking about Dickens instead of dog what's for dinner. "Yay, we're reading literature." It's like they're in college again. Who'd *wanna* talk about their families? I know I don't. (Beat.) Anyway, I like it. I like that I'm just a lady taking a class. And next week we start *Madame Bovary*. That oughta get the ol' girls goin', huh?

NAT: I don't know that book.

BECCA: No, I know. (NAT accidentally flips the switch to an obnoxious yapping dog. It's loud.)

NAT: What the hell? (Trying to turn it off.). How do I -? That's annoying.

BECCA: (Over the noise.) try listening to it for hours on end! (Switches it off.) Izzy gave him that. Only people without children give these kinds of gifts. Or people who want to punish parents. You know what? Debbie's kids might like that. We should save it for *them*. That'd show her.

RABBIT HOLE
NAT & BECCA - side #3

NAT: Hey, you know what I was thinking of this morning?

BECCA: What?

NAT: (*chuckling a little already.*). Remember that gourmet basket you and Howie got me for Mother's day last year, with the biscotti and the fancy biscuits? And I put the chocolate out when you came over for dinner, and Danny ate the entire bowl of chocolates when no one was looking?

BECCA: (*She's heard this story many times.*). Yup.

NAT: And then Howie was like, "Where'd all the chocolates go?" And I said, "Danny ate them. Leave him alone, kids like candy." And then Howie said, "But those were chocolate-covered espresso beans!" Remember?

BECCA: I do.

NAT: But Danny had eaten the whole bowl, so he was, you know, really really weird. And running in circles and climbing up the walls, and putting things on his head, and he was up until like three a.m. Remember that?

BECCA: Only too well.

NAT: I didn't know what the damn things were. I just thought they were candy. You get me these fancy baskets with all this crazy stuff in 'em - espresso beans. I tell that story to everyone. People get a kick out of it. (*BECCA smiles.*)

BECCA: (*After a beat.*) Mom? (*NAT looks up at her.*) Does it go away?

NAT: What?

BECCA: This feeling. Does it ever go away? *(Beat.)*

NAT: No. I don't think it does. Not for me, it hasn't. And that's goin' on eleven years. *(Beat.)* It changes though.

BECCA: How?

NAT: I don't know. The weight of it, I guess. At some point it becomes bearable. It turns into something you can crawl out from under. And carry around - like a brick in your pocket. And you forget it every once in a while, but then you reach in for whatever reason there it is: "Oh right. *That.*" Which can be awful. But not all the time. Sometimes it's kinda...Not that you *like* it exactly, but it's what you have instead of your son, so you don't wanna let go of it either. So you carry it around. And it doesn't go away, which is...

BECCA: What?

NAT: Fine...actually.

(They are both silent for a couple of beats. Becca nods a little. She gets up and goes back to work. So does Nat.)