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SF PERUSALS

Bad Jews

Joshua Harmon

A Samuel French Acting Edition

SAMUEL FRENCH
FOUNDED 1830

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The world premiere of ***BAD JEWS*** was produced by the Roundabout Theatre Company Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director; Harold Wolpert, Managing Director; Julia C. Levy, Executive Director) as part of Roundabout Underground at the Harold and Miriam Steinberg Center for Theatre in New York City on October 30, 2012. The performance was directed by Daniel Aukin, with sets by Lauren Helpern, costumes by Dane Laffrey, lighting by Mark Barton, and sound by Shane Rettig. The Production Stage Manager was Kasey Ostopchuck. The cast was as follows:

DAPHNA . . . . . Tracee Chimo

LIAM . . . . . Michael Zegen

JONAH. . . . . Philip Ettinger

MELODY . . . . . Molly Ranson

BAD JEWS returned to the Roundabout Theatre Company (Todd Haimes, Artistic Director; Harold Wolpert, Managing Director; Julia C. Levy, Executive Director) at the Laura Pels Theatre in New York City on October 3, 2013. The performance was directed by Daniel Aukin and retained the artistic staff and cast from the world premiere. The Production Stage Manager was Beverly Jenkins.

CHARACTERS

DAPHNA FEYGENBAUM – 22, Liam and Jonah's first cousin. 2/3 body, 1/3 hair. Thick, intense, curly, frizzy, long brown hair. Hair that clogs a drain after one shower. Hair you find on pillows and in corners of the room and in your refrigerator six months after the head from which it grew last visited. Hair that could not be straightened even if you had four hours and three hairdressers double-fisting blow driers. Hair that screams: Jew.

LIAM HABER – 25. Daphna's cousin: his mother is the sister of Daphna's father. Wire-rim glasses. U of Chicago Asian studies Ph.D. student. Former Fulbright scholar in Japan. Has as much of a sense of humor as an overdue library book.

JONAH HABER – 21, Liam's younger brother. Sometime-UVM sophomore. Less lanky than his brother. Less brainy. More brawn. More heart.

MELODY – 24, Liam's girlfriend. Short, stick-straight blonde hair. Which she wears with a barrette. To be extra cute. Mousy. She looks like someone who would have been abducted when she was nine but returned to her parents unharmed. Works for a non-profit.

SETTING

A studio apartment on the Upper West Side of Manhattan

TIME

Present day

(March. Not quite winter, not quite spring.)

(A studio apartment on the Upper West Side. A pull-out sofa [which is pulled out], a full air mattress, which has been inflated, and a twin air mattress, which may or may not be set up. Guests are coming, preparations have been made.)

*(***JONAH***, in boxers, black socks and a button down, sits cross legged, playing a video game. His suit jacket and pants are balled up somewhere in the room.)*

(After a moment, he hits pause. Beat. Then he stands up and presses his forehead against the window, which looks out on the Hudson River.)

(The bathroom door opens, which sends **JONAH** *back to his video game.* **DAPHNA FEYGENBAUM** *emerges from the bathroom in pajamas.)*

DAPHNA. I'm sorry but I still, I mean – you can see the Hudson River! From the *bathroom*! This apartment…

Really, Jonah? Boxers and black socks? Is that supposed to do it for me?

Let me – I would never want you to do it for me, you're my cousin and, gross. Just, like, if you're at all interested in people of the opposite sex who are not your cousins?

(She gestures at his current get-up.)

Don't.

Where's your suit –

(But before she can ask, **DAPHNA** *sees* **JONAH***'s suit, balled up. She wants to tell him to take better care of it, but decides not to. She admires it, then hangs it up.)*

I love that your Mom got you a new suit for Poppy's funeral before he even died.

JONAH. He was sick a long time.

DAPHNA. Mmm, not really, actually. But still, like, in your Mom's checklist of shit to get done while he was dying it was like, don't forget, Jonah's gonna need a new suit for when it happens. It's great.

Give me your shirt. I'll hang it up, you can wear it tomorrow it's not dirty give it to –

JONAH. No. I want to wear it.

DAPHNA. Suit yourself.

*(***DAPHNA** *watches* **JONAH** *playing video games. He senses her watching him.)*

JONAH. What?

DAPHNA. Nothing.

(She can't help herself.)

It's just, like, in so many cultures, like, I know so many guys AND girls your age who've been fighting for years. Gilad's been in the army five years and he's just two years older than you, but here you are, not a care in the world, in your boxers, in an apartment your parents bought you! I still can't get over the fact your parents bought you and Liam this apartment.

JONAH. It's just a studio.

DAPHNA. It's just a studio he says. Do you see the view? Have you seen the view from the *bathroom?* That's the Hudson River.

JONAH. I know.

DAPHNA. An apartment with a view like that, studio or no studio, on Riverside Drive, on 84th Street, I can't even imagine what it cost.

JONAH. It wasn't too bad.

DAPHNA. What's not too bad, like a million dollars?

JONAH. I don't know.

DAPHNA. Holy shit. So what, they were just like, here boys, have an apartment, mwah!?

JONAH. No, but Mom turned Liam's room into an office, so –

DAPHNA. Yeah that'll happen –

JONAH. So we only had my bedroom for guests or if Liam came home or, you know, there was a while they thought Poppy might move in –

DAPHNA. Are you kidding? Poppy was never moving in here –

JONAH. They didn't know for sure –

DAPHNA. Never. He was never moving in, that was never happening. Never.

JONAH. Ok but –

DAPHNA. My parents wanted him to move in with them but he said he would never do that, he was so insistent he didn't want to be a burden on –

JONAH. Ok! But they weren't sure and –

DAPHNA. No, they knew –

JONAH. Then this apartment was for sale and it's in the building, it's on their floor, so they got it. I don't see what the big deal is?

DAPHNA. Must be nice, that's all I'm saying.

JONAH. You're staying here.

DAPHNA. Right…

JONAH. So I guess it's good they bought it.

DAPHNA. Um, in normal families, Jonah, if people need a place to sleep, they like sleep on the couch, or double up in beds, or even – and this will really shock you – sleep in sleeping bags. They don't *buy* a spare *apartment* on the *off-chance* someone *might* need to spend the night.

JONAH. Whatever. Real estate is a good investment, plus I might maybe live here when I graduate, so it's not a big deal.

DAPHNA. Yeah, no, totally, totally, no biggie.

JONAH. Um… you're not poor.

DAPHNA. Compared to your family? We're like the Joads.

JONAH. I don't know who that is.

DAPHNA. You don't need to. Your parents buy you spare apartments.

JONAH. All I'm saying is, you're not poor.

DAPHNA. Are you out of your – the reason I'm an only child, Jonah, is because my parents couldn't afford another.

JONAH. So maybe they were poorer once, but they're not now –

DAPHNA. My parents are public school teachers. Do you even know the first thing about economics in this country? We *are* the middle class. The dictionary definition. Your Mom hasn't worked since she had Liam TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO because you're so rich she didn't have to.

JONAH. That's not true.

DAPHNA. Oh right, my bad, she has a home office now, so she can do what exactly?

JONAH. She's a consultant.

DAPHNA. Right. On what?

JONAH. I don't know. Ask her.

DAPHNA. Usually, people hire consultants because they're experts in their fields. In what field does Fanny Feygenbaum profess to be an expert?

JONAH. You know that's not her name.

DAPHNA. It's the name she was born with.

JONAH. But you know that's –

DAPHNA. It's what Poppy called her.

JONAH. You're not Poppy!

(A really intense beat. Somehow **JONAH** *has hurt* **DAPHNA***, though he's not sure how.)*

JONAH. I'm sorry. I didn't –

DAPHNA. No, it's – I'm just being… Sorry. Totally not your… Today was just like, intensely… intense.

JONAH. Yeah.

DAPHNA. Ugh. Feelings! Right?

JONAH. Yeah.

DAPHNA. Yeah.

(Beat. **DAPHNA** *gets up and tousles* **JONAH***'s hair. She gets a tissue, he turns off his video game, goes to the unmade bed and starts to make it up.)*

DAPHNA. What are you doing?

JONAH. Making up the bed?

DAPHNA. Liam can make up his own bed.

JONAH. Oh, no but, I was gonna sleep here.

DAPHNA. Uhh why?

Oh, right, I forgot: your parents worship him! So we should totally switch beds, that makes sense. I mean, who cares that we've been here for two days dealing with everything when Liam couldn't even be bothered to show up to his own grandfather's funeral.

JONAH. He's getting in tonight.

DAPHNA. The funeral was today. Not tonight. It happened. It's over. And he missed it. And I'm sorry, but between you and me, that is so fucked up.

JONAH. It's not his fault, he –

DAPHNA. Jonah, I literally, if I have to hear one more time about Liam dropping his iPhone off a ski lift and not having service for two days, I will literally – He knew Poppy was dying. He should have been checking in. I'm sorry, but he was with – what's her name?

JONAH. Melody.

DAPHNA. Melody. He could have used *Melody's* phone? If that had been me, if I had gone skiing for spring break despite knowing full well that my grandfather was basically on death's door, which, I would NEVER have done, but if that had been me –

JONAH. Poppy wanted him to go –

DAPHNA. If that had been me, I would have been calling home, every day, three times a day, at least, to check in and see and – and at the very least, I would have told my mom where I was going in case of an emergency, which, the pending death of the most important

person in your family is like the reason the word emergency was even invented in the first place. The idea that Liam just like flies off to Aspen with Melody and his like $1200 snowboard when his grandfather is dying and drops his phone off a ski lift which is in and of itself a beautiful metaphor for what money means to him –

JONAH. But I don't mind sleeping on the –

DAPHNA. No Jonah! No. He'll take the twin. He'll make some snide – but he'll take the – because I actually literally can't take the twin air mattress even if I wanted to because with my back, I actually have to have the extra room – but when he starts making a mockery of shiva my blood is just gonna boil –

JONAH. He's not going to mock anyth –

DAPHNA. Yes he will! He mocks us any chance he gets. Always has.

JONAH. What are you talking about?

DAPHNA. What am I talking about? Ok. Example. Example? Example. Two years ago at Passover, when he randomly came home, which was totally random and weird, with his last girlfriend, what's her face…

JONAH. *(laughing)* Miyushi.

DAPHNA. Miyushi, right, his Peace Corps whore. God she was atrocious. But so my Dad was reading a passage in Hebrew, which God forbid one does at Passover, and I look up and he's giving Miyushi this look across the table –

JONAH. What look?

DAPHNA. This look, like, this would be over by now if Jewy McJewerson would shut the fuck up. This look like, "I'm above all this," like, "You and I are on this spiritual enlightenment plane way above everyone else –"

JONAH. Come on!

DAPHNA. I'm serious. This look he gave her, I'll never forget it, it stayed with me so strong, and then after seder,

our parents had all gone to bed, we were watching TV and Liam was like, "I'm hungry," even though we'd just had this enormous meal and he went into the kitchen and found these shortbread cookies and even *Miyushi* was like, "I thought you weren't supposed to eat that on Passover," but Liam just smiled, popped a cookie in his mouth and was like, "I'm a bad Jew," then turned to me even though he *knew I* was keeping Passover, handed me the bag and goes, "Want one?"

"I'm a bad Jew."

JONAH. Not everyone cares about it the way you do.

DAPHNA. I'm not asking everyone to! I don't – I'm not even saying, I'm just saying, I don't understand why he has to take so much pride in how totally disdainful he is of –

JONAH. He's not disdainful –

DAPHNA. He is, Jonah! He is. If you *choose* not to see it, that's your choice, but the fact remains he looks down on me and looks down on my family –

JONAH. *(on "and looks down")* He does not look down on you! Or your family!

DAPHNA. For being what he is but doesn't want to be and for not hating it. He looks down on us. You know what, let's just drop it. Ok? Let's just. Whatever. Let's just drop it.

(long pause)

Whatever.

(long pause)

It's not even worth it.

(long pause)

It's just the reason I bring it up at all is, well, there is a reason, and I hate that I even need to do this but I know if I don't say something it'll just be, whatever, so there's something I want to ask you. Ok?

Ok?

JONAH. O… k…

DAPHNA. Poppy's chai.

I want it.

It's the only thing of his I want. Everything else, count me out, but Poppy's chai is like…

And I'm the only one who that stuff even matters to. You said so yourself, it doesn't matter to everyone like it matters to me so it makes sense that the person who religion like actually really means something to should get the most religious, I mean, I'm moving to Israel when I graduate? I want to join the army – there are all these weird immigration regulations but in the fall, I'm starting my rabbinical coursework with – did I tell you this? There's this amazing rabbi who does pre-rabbinical coursework in Haifa? For women? And she's vegan, and like – I know, a chai is typically worn by, men usually wear them but technically it's a piece of jewelry. I mean, a medallion on a chain? That's jewelry, and I'm the only one who wears – this is important to me, Jonah. I wouldn't be saying something if it wasn't, you know? And so, like, what do you think?

JONAH. I don't, I mean… it's not really up to me.

DAPHNA. It's not *up* to you, but when my mom talked to your mom she was like the kids should work it out, because apparently as it turns out Poppy's will is like basically useless which I don't blame him for, at all, but like, no one actually realized that someone would have to actually figure this stuff out at some point but now it's like that point is here, and, but, so, like…

JONAH. I really don't want to be involved in –

DAPHNA. You're one of Poppy's grandchildren, you're involved.

JONAH. I don't know.

DAPHNA. You have to know –

JONAH. No. I don't want it, so just… That's it.

DAPHNA. You don't?

JONAH. No.

DAPHNA. So then it's cool with you for me to –

JONAH. I really don't want to be involved in this –

DAPHNA. What about Liam?

JONAH. What about him?

DAPHNA. Do you think he'll agree with us, or, like, do you think like, he like, wants it?

JONAH. I said I don't –

DAPHNA. Has he said anything to you, or your Mom, or –

JONAH. You asked me how I felt, I said I don't want it, that's it.

DAPHNA. Ok. Then I'll talk to Liam about it. But – ok.

(beat)

It is so good to see you! Even under these circumstances, it's still like – you should visit me. Before graduation.

JONAH. What?

DAPHNA. 'Cause that's just gonna be a clusterfuck. But you should come down some weekend. It'd be fun, don't you think?

JONAH. …Yeah.

DAPHNA. Do you have a car? At school?

JONAH. I did, but then… not anymore.

DAPHNA. There's a bus. I know there is because some of my friends took it last fall to see Ben Harper maybe, or someone who is definitely not worth getting on a bus and driving four hours to see, but he was playing at your school that weekend and they took a bus, so you should come visit me.

JONAH. Ok.

DAPHNA. What weekend are you thinking?

JONAH. Um…

DAPHNA. 'Cause graduation's the last week of April, and the weekend before that is Senior week – don't ask, and the weekend before that I'll be studying for finals so maybe the weekend before that, which is in, like, two weeks. Weird. Would that work?

JONAH. Maybe.

DAPHNA. Ok, well, um, do you want to check?

JONAH. Yeah.

DAPHNA. And you'll let me know…

JONAH. Yeah.

DAPHNA. 'Cause I think you would really, really love Vassar, and I want to talk to you about that some more actually, because I know UVM has not been… which really says more about that school than anything about you. I mean that.

JONAH. …Thanks?

DAPHNA. But the onus is on us now, you know? If we want to maintain these relationships, we're adults, so it's not like if our parents make plans then I'll see you, cause, Poppy's dead, so our parents are gonna start transitioning into being the next generation of our family and we'll be like the parents, you know, like if Gilad and I get married next summer which we've been talking about then we'll have kids in five, six years tops which is why we need to start acting like, like taking responsibility which is why I don't even know if he wants it but if he does, like, you know, that conversation, if it winds up being a *conversation* it needs to happen at the right – it needs to happen properly, so if Liam brings it up before I'm – which I don't even know if he will, but if he does, can you just help me just quash that conversation?

JONAH. Uhm…

DAPHNA. Cause as long as that conversation happens in the right way, it won't even be an issue.

JONAH. Ok.

DAPHNA. Ok what?

JONAH. I don't know.

DAPHNA. So are you gonna visit me, or…

JONAH. Yeah, I just have to check.

DAPHNA. What do you have to check?

JONAH. My schedule and stuff.

DAPHNA. Um, ok, well do you wanna do that?

JONAH. Like now?

DAPHNA. Like yeah?

JONAH. Oh well I'll check when I'm back at school. My syllabuses are there. And stuff…

DAPHNA. Aren't those all online? All of my syllabi are online.

JONAH. Oh, maybe.

DAPHNA. Ok, so… I mean, if you don't wanna come you don't have to, there's no pressure, I just thought –

JONAH. No, yeah, it would be –

DAPHNA. If you don't want to come you don't have to.

JONAH. No I do I just have to check.

(Without words, **DAPHNA** *says, "Then check!"* **JONAH** *opens his laptop and begins surfing the internet, sort of hoping that before he can find his syllabi, a meteor lands in the apartment, which is sort of what happens when there's a knock at the door.* **LIAM** *and* **MELODY** *have come down the hallway, wheeled suitcases behind them,* **LIAM***'s $1200 snowboard tucked under his arm.* **DAPHNA** *gives* **JONAH** *a "here we go" look, then opens the door.)*

DAPHNA. Hi.

LIAM. Hey.

*(***LIAM** *gives* **DAPHNA** *the most tepid hug imaginable.)*

Melody, this is my cousin, Diana.

DAPHNA. It's Daphna.

LIAM. And you remember –

DAPHNA. You know that. He knows that.

LIAM. Jonah, maybe you could get off your laptop?

JONAH. I'm just checking something.

LIAM. Maybe you could just check something later and say hello?

MELODY. Hi Jonah.

JONAH. Hey.

DAPHNA. He's checking to see when he's –

LIAM. Why aren't you wearing pants?

(Embarrassed, **JONAH** *finds pants.)*

DAPHNA. – free to come visit me –

JONAH. We were just getting –

LIAM. Visit you?

DAPHNA. At Vassar.

LIAM. For what?

DAPHNA. For fun.

LIAM. What?

MELODY. This apartment is so nice!

DAPHNA. Who are you again? Sorry, just –

MELODY. Melody.

DAPHNA. Melody. Like a song.

*(***LIAM** *lifts his suitcase onto the full air mattress, setting it down on top of something belonging to* **DAPHNA**.*)*

DAPHNA. Hey, um, that's my – sorry, that's… where I'm sleeping?

*(***DAPHNA** *pulls her cardigan out from under* **LIAM***'s suitcase and re-folds it.)*

LIAM. I thought Mom said we were all staying here?

DAPHNA. Yeah, but, we've already been here, so, all that's left is…

*(***DAPHNA** *points at the twin air mattress.)*

LIAM. But that's a single. Two people can't fit there.

JONAH. I don't mind switch –

DAPHNA. *(to* **JONAH***)* No.

(to **LIAM***)*

We didn't know you were bringing a guest if we –

MELODY. We just came from Aspen –

DAPHNA. No one told me you were bringing –

MELODY. We flew here as soon as Liam heard the –

JONAH. I don't mi –

DAPHNA. NO. If we'd known you were bringing – we would have changed the sheets. Washed them. Dried them. Re-made the beds. Plus with my back…

LIAM. *(to* **JONAH***)* Why doesn't someone take your room?

JONAH. 'Cause her parents are staying there.

LIAM. They are?

DAPHNA. Yes Liam, they are. You know we can't afford a hotel in this city – we always stay with –

MELODY. It's fine. Don't even worry. We'll be fine. We like to cuddle.

(beat)

LIAM. *(to* **JONAH***)* How'd it go today?

JONAH. It was fine.

LIAM. And…

DAPHNA. More than four hundred people showed up.

LIAM. Jonah?

JONAH. It was nice. It was sad.

MELODY. Liam really wanted to be there. It's really such bad luck that everything with his phone and everything just went kaplooie when it did.

DAPHNA. It's not "bad luck" but you know what? Let's not go into it right now. Or ever. Ok? Thanks.

JONAH. *(to* **MELODY***)* How was Aspen?

MELODY. Oh. Uhm, it was so much fun. I'm still learning. I mostly just stayed on the bunny hills, but these little munchkins kept showing me up! It was so embarrassing!

LIAM. She was great.

MELODY. He's being generous. I fell down so many times I –

DAPHNA. Yeah there were more than four hundred people at the funeral. It was really packed.

MELODY. Four hundred! That's –

DAPHNA. He touched a lot of people, and he was a hugely important figure in the –

LIAM. Who spoke?

DAPHNA. I did. I spoke. Your mother spoke. The rabbi. Abraham Foxman.

MELODY. Who's he?

DAPHNA. Aunt Ruth.

MELODY. Whose aunt is that again?

DAPHNA. There were eight speakers. Maybe nine. Maybe ten. Ten, Jonah? It was a big deal. Nine. It was a big deal. A big deal.

LIAM. I really wanted to be there. We both did.

DAPHNA. Then you should have been.

(beat)

LIAM. I'm just… I'm gonna see if we can pull out the couch in my parents' place, cause –

DAPHNA. It's already set up for shiva, you can't –

LIAM. Well maybe we can find a spot to –

DAPHNA. There are no spots –

LIAM. Well maybe we can –

DAPHNA. You can't. We had tables brought in. Lots of tables. And they're all –

MELODY. This is fine –

LIAM. We can move a couple tables and make a little –

DAPHNA. You can't move tables everyone's asleep do you know what time it is it's really late and those tables are really heavy you can't just move them they're actually very heavy tables.

LIAM. We can at least give it a shot. Jonah.

DAPHNA. Please do not start moving everything around that some of us have spent hours and hours getting –

LIAM. Jonah.

(to **MELODY***)*

We're just going right down the hall to my parents. We'll be right back.

*(***LIAM** *exits into the hallway. After a beat,* **JONAH** *follows.* **MELODY** *and* **DAPHNA** *are alone.* **MELODY** *removes her shoes, then goes into the bathroom.* **DAPHNA** *watches her, occasionally running a brush through her hair.)*

(But our focus shifts to the hallway. **JONAH** *closes the door.* **LIAM** *points at it.)*

LIAM. I can't stay in there tonight.

JONAH. You can take the pull-out. I don't mind –

LIAM. No, I will not – You're not actually going to visit her at Vassar?

JONAH. I don't know.

LIAM. Jonah.

JONAH. She asked me to.

LIAM. Just cause she asked doesn't mean you have to go.

JONAH. I know.

LIAM. That's not how things work.

JONAH. I know.

LIAM. Jonah.

JONAH. What?

LIAM. You're not going.

JONAH. Uhm, ok.

LIAM. If she tries to –

JONAH. She –

LIAM. If she fucking does her fucking thing, in front of Melody? Fuck. No, we're staying in the apartment.

JONAH. There really isn't any room in there for –

LIAM. So we'll make room.

JONAH. It's just for a night or two –

LIAM. We can stay in the living room.

JONAH. It's set up for tomorrow. The couches aren't – if you start moving things, Mom'll freak –

LIAM. So we'll stay in Mom's office.

JONAH. There's no floor space with the new desk –

LIAM. I'll sleep in the kitchen.

JONAH. Mom said –

LIAM. I'll sleep on Mom and Dad's floor.

JONAH. With Melody?

LIAM. Why not? I don't care.

JONAH. It's just for a night –

LIAM. I'll sleep in the bathroom. I'll sleep with my head against the fucking toilet.

JONAH. You'll survive.

LIAM. Why is that – do you hear the language you use when you talk about her? Survival. If her parents weren't so completely tight-waded stingily totally, just, cheap – because they can absolutely afford a hotel, *absolutely,* but–

JONAH. Some of us have been stuck with her for two days straight and we've survived.

LIAM. Is that a dig at me?

JONAH. No. I'm just saying –

LIAM. It sounded like –

JONAH. No I'm just saying like, you've been here all of five minutes and…

LIAM. And what, Jonah? What?

JONAH. You should just relax, is all.

LIAM. I'm relaxed. Don't tell me to – This isn't a resort don't tell me to relax. Fuck. Just, let's just make some room.

(The boys exit down the hall. Our attention shifts back to the apartment. **DAPHNA** *watches the bathroom door, like a cat roused from an afternoon nap, pretending to still be asleep while she formulates a plan of attack, with one eye open.* **MELODY** *comes out of the bathroom.)*

MELODY. You can see the river from the bathroom!

This apartment is so nice.

It really –

DAPHNA. I love your hair.

MELODY. Oh. Thank you.

DAPHNA. Great barrette!

MELODY. Thank you.

DAPHNA. I wish I had straight hair.

MELODY. It's pretty boring actually. I always wanted hair like yours. It's so much more interesting.

DAPHNA. What's that?

MELODY. What?

DAPHNA. On your leg.

MELODY. Where?

DAPHNA. Is that, like, a musical note?

MELODY. Oh, my tattoo. Yes. It's a treble clef.

DAPHNA. That's a music thing?

MELODY. Yes.

DAPHNA. It's huge!

MELODY. Yeah.

(beat)

DAPHNA. Pretty!

MELODY. Thanks.

DAPHNA. Did you get it because you love music?

MELODY. Yeah. I studied opera in college, and when –

DAPHNA. You did?

MELODY. That was my major, yes.

DAPHNA. You majored in opera? Wow.

MELODY. Yeah.

DAPHNA. Do you perform in Chicago, or…

MELODY. No, no, I work for a non-profit. CHS? Chicago Historical Society.

DAPHNA. I don't…

MELODY. It's kind of, it's an educational program for underprivileged local area high school students to expose them to the city's architectural past. They make you memorize that.

DAPHNA. Very cool. But so do you still sing then, or…

MELODY. No. Not really. No.

DAPHNA. So you have a background in architecture too, or…

MELODY. Oh, no. I don't know anything about architecture, actually. But I'm just an administrator there.

DAPHNA. Oh ok. Cool.

(beat)

I'm sorry, I'm confused. You studied opera, but you're working at –

MELODY. At CHS, I know! I don't know, you know? I love opera, and I love to sing, but when I thought about trying to make a living doing that, it was just kind of so unappealing to me? And like, depressing? Just waiting so a million different people can tell you you're not good enough. It wasn't for me. And I tried. I did the whole audition thing. I went on, like three. Or two. Two auditions, maybe? It was awful. So I decided to do something else, but I got this tattoo, so I would always remember how important music is to me.

DAPHNA. Did you think otherwise you'd forget?

MELODY. I mean, I just wanted –

DAPHNA. 'Cause you always have your name, right? To remind you.

MELODY. It was really more symbolic, really, more than anything I guess.

DAPHNA. Symbolic of what?

MELODY. Of, uhm –

DAPHNA. Yeah that's so interesting to me because I just have the total opposite philosophy.

MELODY. On what?

DAPHNA. Tattoos. Or the need to like brandish yourself.

MELODY. It really doesn't hurt as much as you might think it –

DAPHNA. I don't want to think about it, I don't like thinking about pain.

MELODY. No but it's fun, they have all these designs you can –

DAPHNA. Melody. I can't get a tattoo.

I'm Jewish?

It's against Jewish law.

MELODY. I know a Jewish person with tattoos.

DAPHNA. Well they're wrong.

MELODY. Oh.

DAPHNA. Yeah. Jewish law prohibits tattoos of any kind but even if it didn't that wouldn't be a problem for me because just for like me personally, when I like step back and reflect on all the things that had to occur in the universe over billions of years so that I could be alive, in my body, right now, like, we're made of the same things as stardust, that's how connected we are, to everything, so to be like, who cares about the natural, larger-than-life mysterious universal reasons why my body was designed the way it is, like, screw that, I'm just gonna permanently etch this *doodle* onto my *body* which is composed of the same things that are in *stars!?!?*

Poppy had a tattoo, but that was different, obviously. That wasn't by choice.

B-14312. I memorized it. I used to – when I was little, I would trace it with my… he'd hold out his arm and I would – while he talked to my parents or watched…

I actually, actually, uhm, no.

(beat)

So, Liam. Liam, Liam, Liam. Has Liam ever told you his Hebrew name?

MELODY. His Hebrew…

DAPHNA. Yeah, his Hebrew name?

MELODY. I don't think so.

DAPHNA. Oh my God, you're gonna…

Shlomo. I'm not kidding. He like freaks out if you call him that, I've seen him go completely ape-shit, but…

MELODY. Shlomo?

DAPHNA. Yeah. Liam's named after his Dad's like best friend from boarding school, and I think he like killed himself or something, I forget the whole story, but since Liam's not a Jewish name, they went in the total opposite direction for his Hebrew one: Shlomo. Keep that in your back pocket for a rainy day.

*(***DAPHNA** *winks at* **MELODY.***)*

MELODY. In my back –

DAPHNA. So how did you and Shlomo meet?

MELODY. I mean… we met online.

DAPHNA. Online?

MELODY. Yes.

DAPHNA. What site?

MELODY. Match.

DAPHNA. Liam Haber was on match.com?

MELODY. He doesn't like me to tell people, he thinks it's embarrassing but I don't see what's so embarrassing –

DAPHNA. What did his profile say?

MELODY. It was straightforward. It wasn't anything weird. Which was a relief, cause, you know, there are a lot of weirdos out there –

DAPHNA. What was his profile name?

MELODY. I don't remember.

DAPHNA. Do you remember anything specific about his profile?

MELODY. Not re – I mean, he had a nice picture. I liked his smile.

DAPHNA. You liked his smile.

MELODY. Yes he has a very nice smile.

DAPHNA. Hm. Liam and Melody sitting in a tree. Right? Haha.

MELODY. I guess.

DAPHNA. So are you two just kinda, like, casually dating, or is this more, like, serious?

MELODY. I think… I think – yes, it's serious.

DAPHNA. How serious?

MELODY. Pretty serious, I think.

DAPHNA. Hm.

What kind of a name is Melody?

MELODY. What?

DAPHNA. What is its derivation?

MELODY. Oh, I don't know. Caucasian?

DAPHNA. What's your background?

MELODY. What do you mean?

DAPHNA. Where does your family come from?

MELODY. Oh. Delaware.

DAPHNA. Before that.

MELODY. Before what?

DAPHNA. Before Delaware.

MELODY. I mean, we've always been in Delaware.

DAPHNA. No you haven't.

MELODY. Actually yes we've always –

DAPHNA. Actually no you haven't *always* been in Delaware the only people who have *always* been in Delaware are Indigenous Delawareans but even they didn't start there even they crossed over the Bering Strait land bridge during the last ice age but if you look around Delaware if you actually opened your eyes and looked you probably wouldn't see too many of them right and why is that why is that well I'll tell you why that is the reason why that is and the reason why families like the one you come from can even live in Delaware is because all those Native peoples were SLAUGHTERED so people who look like you and pray like you and reproduce like you could grow up in peaceful suburban housing developments with bookshelves filled with the *King James Bible* and Nicholas Sparks novels and *Eat Pray Love* which is probably your favorite book but no Howard Zinn (am I right or am I right) so if your family has always

been in Delaware then actually the truth of the matter which we have to face unfortunately hard as it may be is that your family was more than likely major contributors and perhaps even leaders of the most atrocious genocide in American history which means you have the blood of genociders coursing through your veins right this very second but even if they did that they still had to come from somewhere so what I'm asking is where did your family come from before they moved to Delaware to perpetrate genocide?

MELODY. I don't want to have an argument.

DAPHNA. This isn't an argument, what are – we're talking.

MELODY. It doesn't feel like talking.

DAPHNA. We're talking. I'm just getting to know you, where you come from. I find it interesting. Really. Tell me.

MELODY. My Mom, I think my Mom is like, Dutch-Irish, maybe, and my Dad's side is German. And there's a little Scottish or Welsh in there too, I think.

DAPHNA. You think?

MELODY. But my family's – we're just American.

DAPHNA. Just American. Ok.

MELODY. But I really don't see why any of it matters, you know? Where people come from? People are just people.

DAPHNA. People are just people?

MELODY. Yes. People are people. It doesn't matter that you're Jewish or I'm –

DAPHNA. It doesn't matter that I'm Jewish?

MELODY. No.

DAPHNA. It doesn't matter?

MELODY. No.

DAPHNA. Well it matters to me.

MELODY. Ok.

DAPHNA. It matters to me very much.

MELODY. Right, but –

DAPHNA. And it's mattered to hundreds of generations of my family.

MELODY. I know –

DAPHNA. But to you: meaningless.

MELODY. I wasn't –

DAPHNA. 5,000 plus years of mattering, but not to you!

MELODY. That's not what I –

DAPHNA. And it really mattered to Poppy. I don't know what Liam told you, but it mattered to Poppy. A lot. He was –

MELODY. Can I – I'm thirsty. Is there, can I have something to drink?

DAPHNA. There's water.

MELODY. Ok.

*(***MELODY** *starts to move to the kitchen.)*

DAPHNA. No, sit. I got it.

*(***DAPHNA** *goes to the kitchen area.* **MELODY** *takes out her cell phone.* **DAPHNA** *returns with two glasses of water, and hands one to* **MELODY**.*)*

MELODY. Thank you. I just have a voicemail I have to, should –

DAPHNA. Of course. Go ahead. You're lucky your phone survived the ski lift.

*(***MELODY** *goes to the kitchen and pretends to listen to a voicemail, turned away from* **DAPHNA**, *who sips her water, slightly amused. After a moment, the boys appear in the hall.* **JONAH***'s about to open the door…)*

LIAM. Wait.

JONAH. What?

LIAM. I just need a second more to not be in there.

Don't look at me like that.

JONAH. I'm not looking at you like any –

LIAM. Like, I told you so.

JONAH. Well, I did.

LIAM. Whatever. It was worth a shot. How Mom could ever think putting me in the same room with Diana would even remotely –

JONAH. There really isn't another option –

LIAM. Can you not, like, jump to everyone else's defense over me whenever I say anything? It's really annoying.

(beat)

JONAH. She was asking about Poppy's chai.

LIAM. What?

JONAH. Daphna asked me about it.

LIAM. Don't call her that.

JONAH. She asked me about it.

LIAM. When?

JONAH. Before you got here.

LIAM. Fuck. She's gonna make this a thing, isn't she?

JONAH. I don't know.

LIAM. What'd she say? Fuck.

JONAH. She wants it.

(A moment, while **LIAM** *allows himself to feel the weight of this future fight.)*

LIAM. What'd she say?

JONAH. She wants it.

LIAM. Does she know I have it?

JONAH. No.

LIAM. So Mom didn't say anything?

JONAH. No.

LIAM. And you didn't tell her he gave it to me?

JONAH. He didn't give it to you, really –

LIAM. He gave it to me, Jonah. Poppy gave it to me.

JONAH. Mom gave it to you.

LIAM. Because Poppy said I could have it. Because he wanted me to have it. Because he gave it to me. Because he said I could have it.

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