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Not Jenny

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not Jenny

A full-length play

By MJ Halberstadt

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CHARACTERS

Jenny	F, 30. Blond, naturally pretty.
Not Jenny	F, 30. Jenny's fraternal twin.
Jimmy	M, 23. Their younger brother.

SETTING

A living room in a Florida suburb.

Present day and thirteen years ago.

Minimal scenic elements are preferable.

SCENE 1

Present day. A living room- messy with the evidence of struggle.

Jenny sits in a wheelchair reaching for something on the bookshelf. On the other side of the stage, someone knocks at the front door.

NOT JENNY (O.S.)

Is anyone home?

Not Jenny enters the front door with a duffle bag over her shoulder and a bottle of wine in a paper sleeve. Jenny wheels around and they take one another for a moment. Much goes unsaid.

JENNY

Welcome back.

NOT JENNY

You look older. Like a woman.

JENNY

Thirteen years will do that. You look like a lesbian.

NOT JENNY

Yeah, well. What the fuck happened in here?

JENNY

We made a mess.

NOT JENNY

What the hell happened to this book?

JENNY

I asked Jimmy to hand it to me.

NOT JENNY

And what, a pit bull intercepted?

(silence)

(MORE)

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

How is Jimmy?

(silence)

Does he hate me?

(silence)

Does it hurt?

JENNY

I can't feel a goddamn thing.

NOT JENNY

Well that's a blessing. Kind of. I'm sorry I missed the funeral. I didn't hear until it was too late. How was it?

JENNY

Fantastic, it was a fucking funeral.

NOT JENNY

I read there was a car accident and that wearing your seatbelt saved you but it didn't say that you were...

JENNY

Crippled? Yeah. The doctors don't get sick of telling me how lucky I am.

NOT JENNY

It's true. If you hadn't had been wearing it, you wouldn't be standing here today.

JENNY

-sitting.

NOT JENNY

Sorry. Then that would have been Mom's *and* your funeral.

JENNY

Two for one special.

NOT JENNY

How long do you have the chair for? Or-

JENNY

It's permanent. Paralyzed from the waist down. Doesn't that make you just want to kill yourself?

NOT JENNY

I'm sorry, Jenny.

JENNY

But enough about me. Someone tried to tell me they heard you started a business.

NOT JENNY

Yes, I'm in publishing- travel writing. We've released a series of destination guides.

JENNY

I thought it was some lesbian thing.

NOT JENNY

It is, it's lesbian travel literature.

JENNY

And what, praytell, distinguishes it as lesbian travel literature? Naughty pictures of scantily-clad women peeking around the Eiffel Tower...

NOT JENNY

It's lesbian interest. My partner and I wrote them together. We find gay-and-lesbian-friendly accommodations, yadda yadda, et cetera.

JENNY

And what's it called?

NOT JENNY

"Amiss and Abroad".

JENNY

"Amiss and Abroad". Very clever.

NOT JENNY

Did you see the article about us? In The New Yorker?

JENNY

I didn't.

NOT JENNY

We're based in Los Angeles. Started out just in our apartment, and now we've got a staff of twelve and an office space, thank God. We were talking about moving the entire thing into a much bigger office, but-

Not Jenny begins to put her bag down.

JENNY

Whoa, whoa, what are you doing?

NOT JENNY

Putting my bag down, it's heavy.

JENNY

No, you can't stay-

NOT JENNY

I wanted to see you-

JENNY

Well you've seen me and it's not pretty, so-

NOT JENNY

Just for a night or two-

JENNY

-pick that bag back up-

NOT JENNY

-and I brought Moscato, imported-

JENNY

You can shove that overpriced bottle of French shit up your ass-

NOT JENNY

I just figured, considering what's been going on that I would-

JENNY

PICK THAT BAG UP!

NOT JENNY

All right!

Not Jenny puts the bag on back her shoulder.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

And Moscato is Italian, for the record. Not French.

JENNY

Why did you come?

NOT JENNY

I wanted to make sure you were okay.

JENNY

You know we're not.

NOT JENNY

I have to do something. I was gone all this time- and now this happened. That's what family does, they help one another heal.

JENNY

Some families, maybe. But when were we ever that kind of family?

NOT JENNY

In any event, I'd like to try. It's a step towards improving myself.

JENNY

And so you can see your favorite little brother.

NOT JENNY

That's part of it, yes. I'm here to help.

JENNY

No one's asking you to so you're here at your own risk.

NOT JENNY

Thanks for the warning, I think I'll be fine.

JENNY

You say that now.

NOT JENNY

There's just as much you don't know about my life as there is I don't know about yours. That's a problem I'd like to fix. We can finally talk woman to woman. So. Here I am.

Not Jenny finally puts down the duffle bag.

JENNY

Here you are.

SCENE 2

Fourteen years before Scene 1. The girls are 16. Not Jenny sits on the couch with a Composition notebook. Jenny rushes in wearing a gaudy dress, out of the wheelchair.

JENNY

Mom! You were wrong, it still fits! God, I love my metabolism. Mom, where are you?

NOT JENNY

She's not home.

JENNY

But I'm getting picked up for pre-pre-prom at Clarissa's in fifteen minutes! When is she coming back?

NOT JENNY

Don't know.

JENNY

How do you like it, Not?

NOT JENNY

Like what?

JENNY

The dress.

NOT JENNY

It looks great.

JENNY

You're not even looking. Are you still working on your application? You're like... six months early. I still don't get why you'd want to go to school in Alaska.

NOT JENNY

It's about as far away as I can get.

JENNY

That's so gay, you're such a gloomer. Look at my dress! Don't you think I'll be the hottest one there?

NOT JENNY

Is that what you're going for? It's not your prom, you're a junior.

JENNY

Like hell it isn't my prom. I'm gonna make it my prom. And the best part is the dress is totally Mom-approved right now. But watch this-

Jenny reveals (unfastens, unzips) a slit or two that reveal her chest.

JENNY (CONT'D)

They'll always remember this as the year Jenny won prom.

NOT JENNY

I can see your tits.

JENNY

It's perfect!

NOT JENNY

Jenny, I can almost see your nipples.

JENNY

I'm not asking for your approval! God! I'm not trying to get you to feel me up.

NOT JENNY

Who are you trying to get to feel you up?

JENNY

Oh, whoever.

NOT JENNY

Well, good luck. Don't be too loud sneaking back in or you'll wake Mom up and she'll rip you a new one. And I don't mean another easy-access tit slit.

JENNY

Speaking of sneaking back in, I wanted to ask you a favor.

NOT JENNY

Here we go.

JENNY

I was thinking I could go through our window so I don't wake her up.

NOT JENNY

Won't that wake me up?

JENNY

Maybe, but you're not gonna ground me. Look, all I'm asking is for you to leave the window open, don't make this out into some big deal. I promise I'll try to be quiet.

(off Not Jenny's look)

Ugh, nice face. This is your problem, you have no idea how to behave in social situations. People don't even know how we're related: someone like you who doesn't give a shit what she looks like, and someone like me who looks great every day. Here I am, giving you an opportunity - and I can already see that you're just thinking about how you can turn this against me.

NOT JENNY

Tell you what. I'll think about it, and if you wanna know what I decide, just try the window later tonight and you'll find out.

Jenny starts to fuss with Not Jenny's hair.

JENNY

I think I know why you're upset. Look, your face isn't actually that bad, if you would just let me do your hair- come here. This is called a brush.

NOT JENNY

I know what a brush is. Would you like me to introduce you to the bra?

JENNY

Ha, ha.

NOT JENNY

I didn't want to go.

JENNY

That's really easy to say now that none of the senior boys invited you. You don't have to be gloomy. You could be pretty if you wanted. I could help you. Hand me that clip.

NOT JENNY

I don't want your help.

JENNY

I don't believe you. Mom said you're always just trying to get attention. That's something we have in common: we're both just trying to get attention, only I know how to get the good kind of attention from boys, and you know how to get the bad kind of attention from school psychologists. No wonder you didn't get asked to prom. A guy will like you one day. Eventually there's got to be a guy who likes gloomers, but you'll find a guy a lot faster if you cut the act.

NOT JENNY

I'll keep that in mind.

JENNY

You know what this reminds me of? Remember that field trip to the aquarium we went on for Bio?

NOT JENNY

What about it?

JENNY

Remember they had a big tank in the middle of the rooms? And they brought in this guy like Jungle Steve or whatever who told us about the different fish and stuff that were in there.

NOT JENNY

Doesn't academia make you melt or something?

JENNY

I'm making a point, okay? It's a metaphor.

NOT JENNY

You don't know what that is.

JENNY

There was this one huge turtle floating around with its ass floating to the surface and it couldn't swim down because its back paws or claws or legs or whatever didn't work for some reason, only the front. It was the funniest thing ever, and Mr. Hanson is like "Jenny, pay attention" so I told him I was, I was looking at the turtle and he does that gay thing, like, "If you have something to say, share it with the class!" So I was like "Okay, Jungle Steve, what's wrong with that gimpy turtle?" And he tells us that his name is Humphrey, but I just called him Gimpy-

NOT JENNY

How sweet.

JENNY

-anyway, they rescued him from the wild! They don't know if he was born that way or if he got hurt somehow but apparently these turtles need their back legs to actually get underwater, or else they'll never actually swim like a normal turtle so like if Gimpy was still in the real world, he'd get eaten alive by sharks in two seconds. They rescued him from being killed, how cute is that?!

NOT JENNY

Good for Gimpy.

JENNY

Anyway, what I'm trying to say is you're kind of like Gimpy. Only instead of trying to get underwater, you just don't know how to get guys. Maybe I got all of the good social skills when we were born or something.

NOT JENNY

Like tact?

JENNY

Your problem is you blame everything on everyone else. 'Everyone else is psychotic' or 'Everyone in school are eight kinds of robots'. Or like Mom! You blame everything on Mom, like in your after-school activities thing on your college app. You're telling all these college admissions offices that you think Mom's a total waste and it's your job to take care of everyone in the family.

NOT JENNY

It is my job- but more importantly you read my application?

JENNY

Just the interesting parts. It isn't your fault you're completely anti-social, but maybe that's what I'm here for. I'm giving you the chance to do something cool for once, to help you realize that it's not other people that are the problem- it's you! I want to run interference for you like the aquarium did for Gimpy. It's a dog-eat-dog, survival-of-the-fittest world, and you can do something about it- just let me in the window, it's as simple as that!

NOT JENNY

Let me get this straight. You are comparing me to an physically disabled sea turtle because I wasn't invited to prom, which you believe is because I blame other people for their screw-ups and so you're offering me the chance to do you a favor as "charity"?

JENNY

...are we back at square one?

NOT JENNY

You can count on me double-bolting our window and I hope you get groped by Mr. Hanson when you're too wasted to find your date.

JENNY

Fine, forget it, I'm trying to help!

NOT JENNY

Maybe I don't want boys groping me!

JENNY

It's survival of the fittest!

NOT JENNY

You don't know what that means!

JENNY

Stop calling me stupid!

NOT JENNY

Prove me wrong!

JENNY

Boys won't like you if you don't lose the attitude.

NOT JENNY

I don't want boys to like me!

That's bullshit!

JENNY

No it isn't, I don't like them!

NOT JENNY

That makes you sound like a lesbian!

JENNY

I am a lesbian!

NOT JENNY

Jenny digests this.

Seriously?

JENNY

Yes.

NOT JENNY

Why didn't you tell me?

JENNY

Do you really care?

NOT JENNY

Well it explains a lot.

JENNY

A car honks offstage.

There's your date.

NOT JENNY

So you're a lesbian?

JENNY

Yes.

NOT JENNY

Wow. So. Then you're really like Gimpy.

JENNY

NOT JENNY

Go to your stupid prom.

JENNY

Does anyone else know? Not even Mom?

NOT JENNY

Especially not Mom, I don't want anyone to know.

The car honks.

JENNY

Well then. If you want it to stay that way, keep our window unlocked. I'm coming, calm down!

Jenny goes.

SCENE 3

Present day, immediately following Scene 1.
Jenny is back in the wheelchair.

JENNY

Here you are.

Not Jenny puts down the duffle bag.

JENNY (CONT'D)

You can stay tonight. But only tonight. And by the way, your side of the room became my extended closet.

NOT JENNY

Naturally.

JENNY

So you can take the couch.

NOT JENNY

I think I can live without a Queen-sized mattress for one night.

JENNY

You could sleep in Mom's...

NOT JENNY

Nooo thank you. Is there somewhere nearby I can buy rice milk, though?

JENNY

Rice milk.

NOT JENNY

Yes.

JENNY

I wasn't aware rice had udders.

NOT JENNY

They're invisible to the naked eye. Soy's fine too- do you have soy milk? Why am I even asking-

JENNY

Are you vegan or-

NOT JENNY

Mostly- I'll eat cage free eggs. I need some kind of milk sub for my coffee in the morning. I'll find a market I guess.

Not Jenny begins into the room, observing the damage.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

This place is a disaster zone. The plant on the couch, the dirt on the floor...

JENNY

Just leave it.

NOT JENNY

I'd forgotten life before learning to adhere to OSHA regulations. Because we work from home, so-

Not Jenny puts pieces of the book into a garbage bag.

JENNY

I said just leave it.

NOT JENNY

Where's Jimmy?

JENNY

Just missed him. Right before you came in he ran off.

NOT JENNY

Okay. Do you care to elaborate on what he's up to, or-?
(silence)

JENNY

Quit cleaning everything up, I told you you shouldn't do it!

NOT JENNY

I'm trying to be helpful.

JENNY

I can see that, and it's pretty condescending.

NOT JENNY

At least let me pick up the plant so we can sit and talk.

JENNY

Be my guest. I don't have much choice about the "sit" part.

NOT JENNY

Can I at least know who I should expect to see if I'm staying the night? Jimmy? Did Mom ever successfully marry anyone? Are you married?

Not Jenny puts the bag aside and goes for the
plant on the couch.

JENNY

Just Jimmy.

NOT JENNY

This place is a disaster. In our apartment we have to clean like a photographer could come by any time- well, actually we deal with a lot of photographers, they really could come by any time. So that's why it's driving me crazy and I can't just leave it here-

JENNY

Not.

NOT JENNY

Someone could get cut, or you could pop a tire.

Not Jenny has begun to pick up a shard of the vase and Jenny has wheeled onto her hand- from Not Jenny's face we can tell she's caught with a porcelain splinter.

JENNY

Listen to me! Stop acting like I'm a / charity case!

NOT JENNY

Jenny, my hand!

JENNY

We're not your good deed for the year! We don't need you cleaning up or / asking questions or feeling sorry for us.

NOT JENNY

I'm getting cut! Get off of me!

JENNY

Acting like it's your job to 'fix' everything because you are so much better.

NOT JENNY

I'm not trying to fix anyone!

JENNY

Then you can go back and tell all your friends / what we're like now- because you're so much better!

NOT JENNY

Jenny, get off of me!

JENNY

"Your Mom's dead? Good. Your brother's a burnout? Good. Your sister's crippled? Well, good, they all got what they deserved."

NOT JENNY

Okay, I'm sorry- I'll leave you alone!

What was that? JENNY

I'm sorry! NOT JENNY

Other part. JENNY

I'll leave you alone- no more questions, I promise. NOT JENNY

Jenny wheels off. Not Jenny pulls her hand back and surveys the damage. Not pretty.

How bad is it? JENNY

Do you keep Band-aids here? NOT JENNY

Medicine cabinet. JENNY

Not Jenny runs into the bathroom and mutters to herself. Meanwhile Jenny searches through the duffle bag, finds a Composition notebook and reads. She finds something deliciously funny.

What are you laughing at? NOT JENNY

Nothing. JENNY

She sandwiches the notebook between her back and the chair before Not Jenny returns.

Will it need stitches? JENNY (CONT'D)

I'll live. NOT JENNY

JENNY

If you really want to be helpful, grab that bottle of pills, will you? I can't reach it.

NOT JENNY

What are these for?

JENNY

Helps with the pain. In the parts of my body I can still feel.

Not Jenny grabs the bottle and gives Jenny one pill, then puts the bottle on the same shelf.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Wait, give me the bottle-

NOT JENNY

Says "one every six hours".

JENNY

No, I-

NOT JENNY

Uh-uh. One at a time, these are not for recreation.

Having been pre-occupied with taking the pill, Jenny notices Not Jenny on her way to the candy dish. Jenny stops her, perhaps with the umbrella.

JENNY

"Nah-ah-ah. Mother's rule."

NOT JENNY

What, I can't have a candy? I've been in transit for-

JENNY

"If you have candy before bed, your teeth will rot out while you're asleep-"

Not Jenny regards Jenny.

JENNY (CONT'D)

"-and the tooth fairy will crap under your pillow." Go ahead, sit. You wanted to chat.

NOT JENNY

I'm fine.

JENNY

Get comfortable.

NOT JENNY

I can't get comfortable with the room a mess and you acting like Mom about the candy!

JENNY

Don't start in about Mom again!

NOT JENNY

Oh, here we go-

JENNY

You may have been right about all the twats and the cunts in high school but you were wrong about Mom.

NOT JENNY

Was I?

JENNY

Yes. Everyone of those girls ran off and got married or went to college or got some fancy job in the city and every time I saw them they'd look down at me. "And how about you, Jenny, are you still living at home?" "Are you still working at Macy's?" "He broke up with you already? I can hardly keep track of your boyfriends, they never stay long, do they?" You were right, they were vain and mean and will stab you in the back just as soon as look at you. But Mom stood by me the whole time. She and I got the same shifts and so we would do breakfast together and go to work together and get our nails done together and get drinks together and come home and get even drunker and that was the best time of my life.

NOT JENNY

Sounds like a blast.

JENNY

Maybe it's not up to your elite standards.

NOT JENNY

No really.

JENNY

Mom had it rough, okay? It's not easy raising three kids on your own. She was really upset after you left- one of her boyfriends actually broke up with her because of you.

NOT JENNY

Because of me.

JENNY

Yeah, he was totally thrown off that she had a daughter she didn't speak to, and he especially didn't like that she'd named you Not Jenny.

NOT JENNY

Oh, yeah, that is my fault.

JENNY

You know what I mean. She had a really rough patch after he- after you left.

NOT JENNY

...let's crack open the Moscato! Do you have a bottle opener?

JENNY

It's not twist-off?

NOT JENNY

You don't have a wine bottle opener?

JENNY

We don't drink bougie wine all the time.

NOT JENNY

Wine with a cork isn't bougie, it's sensible.

JENNY

Then I guess we can't crack it open. Unless we actually crack its neck open- but that'd probably get glass in it-

NOT JENNY

Now you're worried about broken glass?

JENNY

So what types of refined entertainment do you and your wife enjoy? Tell me about that.

NOT JENNY

No thank you.

JENNY

I bet you two are the type who do yoga. No, tai chi. Reiki. No, golf! Lesbians golf. Is she waiting in the car? Back in a hotel somewhere? Do I get to meet her? Oh, I can't wait to meet my sister-in-law.

NOT JENNY

She's back in California and she's not my wife.

JENNY

What's politically correct? Partner?

NOT JENNY

You could call her that.

JENNY

What's her name? C'mon, you can tell me her name.

NOT JENNY

I'm not really in the mood to split hairs. Maybe I don't want you asking me questions either.

JENNY

Uh-oh, sensitive subject.

NOT JENNY

It's not sensitive.

JENNY

Then why do you have a problem talking about it?

NOT JENNY

I just don't want to talk about her with you.

JENNY

Or are you just embarrassed that you wound up with a partner named Jennifer.

NOT JENNY
(after a beat)

Who told you that?

JENNY

You did.

NOT JENNY

No I didn't.

JENNY

Mom did.

NOT JENNY

I never told her anything.

JENNY

She called me. Jennifer and I are good friends, we go way back.

NOT JENNY

Shut up.

JENNY

Jennifer and I dated too once. In fact she cheats on you with me. It was long-distance infidelity.

(silence)

Jennifer. That's pretty frikkin' funny.

NOT JENNY

The irony did not escape me. She used to go by Jenny but I had to tell her it was too weird for me and I'd prefer she went by Jennifer.

JENNY

Is that some like, sick Oedipal Freudian thing?

NOT JENNY

No, believe me it is not a turn-on. I guess it's my lot to go through life alongside a girl named Jenny who makes me crazy.

JENNY

But you didn't bring her with you because... you didn't want to introduce the family to her? Is she ugly?

(MORE)

JENNY (CONT'D)

(silence)

No, it's got to be the other way around! To avoid introducing her to the family! Because you didn't want her to see what humiliating depths you climbed from to become the big success you are now?

NOT JENNY

This is something I had to do alone.

Not Jenny sits.

JENNY

What is?

NOT JENNY

Seeing Jimmy.

JENNY

Well, brace yourself. But you might as well wait until the morning, he won't be back until late.

NOT JENNY

In that case, I'm going to raid the kitchen...

JENNY

(new sensitivity)

Hey, Not?

NOT JENNY

Yeah.

JENNY

I hate to ask, but... can you help me with something? Can you help me go to the bathroom? And take a bath? I wouldn't ask if I didn't need it. It's just Jimmy wouldn't do it before, and-

NOT JENNY

Yeah, yeah. I- yeah. Of course.

SCENE 4

Thirteen years before Scene 1. Jimmy's 10th birthday. Not Jenny is putting up streamers. Jenny enters. The girls are 17.

JENNY

Mooooom!

NOT JENNY

Not home.

JENNY

Where is she? When is she coming back?

NOT JENNY

You ask me this every time. She's picking Jimmy up from school.

JENNY

But I need her to fix this!

NOT JENNY

And I can't make her come back any faster.

JENNY

But... I need her... to fix this... right now...

NOT JENNY

Okay, Jenny, fix what?

JENNY

What do you care?

NOT JENNY

Fine, don't tell me.

JENNY

Okay, today's the day I was supposed to hear back from all my colleges and all I got were all these letters that said my applications were "incomplete", saying I had "outstanding credentials" which makes absolutely no sense because if my credentials were outstanding they should all have just accepted me! So I went to the guidance counselor and she said she did everything she could, and that she'd been calling here and everything but I never pick up the phone, Mom does!

(MORE)

JENNY (CONT'D)

And she's like "I alerted your homeroom teacher" but that's a dumb-ass system since I never go to homeroom because my health teacher always says breakfast is the most important meal of the day, and it's not my fault she said it or that the cafeteria is on the other side of the school. It's like this huge conspiring for me to not get into college! What am I supposed to do?

NOT JENNY

Talk to the guidance counselor.

JENNY

Oh I sure did, I told her to go screw herself!

NOT JENNY

Oh, Jesus.

JENNY

She messed everything up! Not... I didn't get into any of the colleges I applied to. They didn't even read my application.

NOT JENNY

So then you need to call them, figure out what they're missing, and fax it over.

JENNY

I don't know their numbers and who the heck uses a fax machine?

NOT JENNY

Um, admission offices?

JENNY

I can't do this all! It's not my fault!

NOT JENNY

And that's why you need Mom.

JENNY

Did you hear back from your schools?

NOT JENNY

Yes, I-

JENNY

See, that's not fair! How come you got your decisions and I didn't?

NOT JENNY

I sent in everything myself.

JENNY

And you didn't even ask if I wanted you to send my stuff too. It's a conspiring! I knew it!

NOT JENNY

Yes, one giant anti-Jenny 'conspiring'.

JENNY

What are those streamers for, are you throwing a party just to rub salt in the womb??

NOT JENNY

It's for Jimmy's birthday.

JENNY

Why are you throwing him a birthday party?

NOT JENNY

Families traditionally do that on the anniversary of their loved ones' births.

JENNY

Oh my God is it April already?

NOT JENNY

April first.

JENNY

Wait, you know what that means-

NOT JENNY

That it's Jimmy's birthday.

JENNY

-it means maybe all this college stuff is a big April fools' day joke!

NOT JENNY

And all of the colleges conspired against only you.

JENNY

Why else would this happen?

NOT JENNY

Because you expected Mom to mail all of your college application crap.

JENNY

She's Mom! Of course she sent it!

NOT JENNY

I bet if you try to sift through all of the papers on the dining room table, you'll find all of your stuff in there.

JENNY

No, she had to send it, I asked her to.

NOT JENNY

And I waited for her to remember Jimmy's birthday this year but guess who bought all this. It looks like, once again, Mom didn't deliver.

JENNY

(reeling with herself)

He's probably still pissed at me for opening the umbrella in the house yesterday.

NOT JENNY

You did do it just to piss him off.

JENNY

And I didn't get him anything. Not, can I...?

NOT JENNY

You get one present.

Not Jenny pulls out White Out and passes it to Jenny.

JENNY

Don't tell him this time.

NOT JENNY

Were you waiting for her to remind you?

JENNY

She has a lot on her mind, Not!

NOT JENNY

Like remembering the name of her flavor of the week?

JENNY

She can't remember every birthday.

NOT JENNY

She's got a pretty bad track record for birthdays, or have you forgotten that this is the woman who's never corrected her drug-induced stroke of genius to name her second baby Not Jenny.

JENNY

Is that why you're such a bitch?

NOT JENNY

Fuck you, I'm a bitch! "Not Jenny" is just one reason. You're a bitch too- that's another.

JENNY

I deserve that.

Not Jenny abandons the effort and sits next to Jenny on the couch. Jenny whites out the note on the biggest present.

NOT JENNY

Jenny, I need to let you in on something important.

JENNY

You already told me you're a lesbian.

NOT JENNY

It's not that.

JENNY

I never told anyone, okay?

NOT JENNY

Jenny. I know you love Mom, and I do too, but that doesn't mean she doesn't have problems just like anyone else. You seem to still think that she can do no wrong, but she screwed up your college applications.

(MORE)

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

Same way she's been promising me for seventeen years that she'll bring me to the court and get my name changed and guess what, my name is still the same.

JENNY

You can do it yourself when you're eighteen.

NOT JENNY

Which is in less than a year. We'll both be legal adults. So you need to know that sooner or later, and preferably sooner, you need to start thinking like an adult. Or you'll never grow up and you'll never be able to let go of Mom.

JENNY

Quit being such a know-it-all. Just because you got into college-

NOT JENNY

I didn't.

JENNY

You didn't?

NOT JENNY

No, I got wait-listed and they asked me to fill out this bullshit disciplinary explanation form.

JENNY

Why, because you told Clarissa Kuntz to kill herself? This is exactly what I'm talking about, you always pointing the finger everywhere-

NOT JENNY

And what are you doing right now? Blaming everyone else when you need to start taking initiative.

JENNY

Is that an Honors class?

NOT JENNY

You haven't been rejected. Call the offices. Tell them you'll fax it over right away. Get your application stuff from the dining room, bring it to the guidance office, they'll help you fax it over.

JENNY

I shouldn't have to do this.

NOT JENNY

Maybe not, but no one's going to do it for you.

JENNY

It's not fair.

NOT JENNY

Don't talk to me about "not fair", okay? Make your own path.

JENNY

I get it, Mrs. fortune-cookies-were-made-in-America. Will you help me?

NOT JENNY

I am not going to do it for you. But. I will help you sift through everything in the dining room.

Jenny hugs Not Jenny.

JENNY

(sincere)

Thank you, Not Jenny. I'll dig out the good in you eventually, I know it.

SCENE 5

Present day, shortly after Scene 3. Not Jenny runs the bath offstage. Jenny reads the Composition notebook in the living room.

NOT JENNY (O.S.)

How warm do you want it?

JENNY

Sixty-three degrees-

NOT JENNY (O.S.)

Is that warm, or-

JENNY

Kelvin.

NOT JENNY

Quit playing games, I'm doing this for you.

JENNY

Just don't scald me.

Jenny hides the Composition notebook before
Not Jenny returns.

NOT JENNY

It'll be a few minutes.

JENNY

Where was I?

NOT JENNY

You made finals.

JENNY

Oh yes. The final five pairs. The last event was a series of walk-offs. Formal-wear, casual, sportswear, swimwear, sports casual. The trick was we only had as long as it took the other four mothers and daughters to walk up and down the runway to get into our next outfit, so it was a scramble every time, we had a team of people helping dress us down and dress us up. You have to picture it, you step off the stage and into this cloud of spray and your shoes get pulled off under your feet, fabric flies over your head, a last hair gets yanked off your face- I swear, it was the most exciting Saturday morning of my life.

NOT JENNY

And this is at the shopping mall?

JENNY

Yes, but it felt like a big deal to us-

NOT JENNY

I'm not criticizing, you told me to picture it.

JENNY

You should have seen her, Not, I don't know if it was dieting or exercise or bulimia... maybe a little of all three, but Mom looked incredible. Even in the swimwear, she looked better than any of those other mothers, and even some of the daughters.

(MORE)

JENNY (CONT'D)

I know it was just at the mall, and you can make fun of it if you want but for that week I felt like we were celebrities. We'd get spotted around town and people would go up to us and say "My girlfriends and I think you two are gonna win!"

NOT JENNY

And did you?

JENNY

So we get to the last outfit. Sports casual,

NOT JENNY

What does that even mean?

JENNY

-we were in these super cute tennis outfits that matched but weren't identical- and we've both got racquets. And this whole week Mom's been joking about how she's going to pull out a tennis ball and whack it when we reach the end of the runway and I'm like "Mom, don't be an idiot, you can't do that," because it's supposed to be a fashion show, that's just tacky. She swore up and down she wouldn't do it. But we get out there and it's the last moment of the entire pageant they're judging before they make their official decision. So we reach the end of the runway-

NOT JENNY

-she pulls out a ball-

JENNY

-she pulls out a fucking tennis ball, and hits it towards the judges' table. I thought I was gonna have a coronary. I'm just trying to stay in character, but I can't help but watch as this ball, by some miracle, goes through the wreath on the podium. And the crowd went wild!

NOT JENNY

All sixteen of them?

JENNY

Whatever, they loved it. And when we turned to walk up the runway, she winked at me. And I was really proud to be her daughter, you know?

NOT JENNY

So did you win?

JENNY

The closing ceremony was that night, and we had to drive to pick up our dresses for it at Dotty's. And that's... when Mom drove into the pole and then I didn't wake up until three days later to find out she was dead and those assholes didn't even cancel the award ceremony for us, they just gave first prize to someone else.

A pause, filled with the running water from the bathroom.

NOT JENNY

I'm going to check the tub.

Not Jenny goes back into the bathroom. Jenny pulls out the Composition notebook, but can't read it. She puts it back before Not Jenny comes back.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

The stupid drain cover slipped out.

JENNY

Yeah, it always gets pushed out of the way when you're trying to fill the tub, and gets sucked back on when you're trying to empty it. There when you don't want it, gone when you do.

NOT JENNY

I should just hold it in place.

Not Jenny goes back into the bathroom. Jenny pulls the Composition notebook out and reads. After a moment, she inspects a sentence closely, then reads with new fascination.

JENNY

What a motherfucking bitch!

Not Jenny enters and storms to Jenny, snatching the book away.

NOT JENNY

That's mine!

JENNY

When were you going to tell me you two broke up?

NOT JENNY

It's none of your business!

JENNY

Here I am, thinking you're trying to be helpful or maybe just a little nosy about us and...

JENNY (CONT'D)

...do some good in the mean time....

NOT JENNY

That is why I'm here, to be helpful-

JENNY (CONT'D)

...and that's all fine, but what gives you the right to come back here after how many years? Twelve? Thirteen? Treating us like we're just the fleas you had to shake off...

JENNY (CONT'D)

...before you got to be a big success, but crawling back when all you need is a place to stay.

NOT JENNY

How do I treat you like fleas? Because I'm trying to clean? Because messes drive me crazy?

JENNY (CONT'D)

Because you look down at us! You've always looked down at us for being likable and pretty and happy! It's gone full circle and now you need a favor- you need a place to crash because Jennifer dumped you!

NOT JENNY

I'm not here because I need a place to stay, I have plenty of other places I can go and moving back in is the last thing I'm looking for!

JENNY

Then why don't you do us both a favor and stay in one of those fabled 'other places'?

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

I hate this fucking house because it reminds me of her and because it reminds me of-

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

-what you were like to me growing up! I came here because that's what people do! They check in on their family when shit hits the fan.

JENNY

Every dozen or so years.

NOT JENNY

Okay, I haven't been in touch with my family in thirteen years, but you haven't exactly been sending me Christmas cards either, so consider that before you write me off as not giving a shit. I'm going through a major crisis right now. Yes, the timing worked out strangely, but my world came crashing down around me last week.

(beat)

Jennifer was the first friend I made after I got out of here, and she's been with me every step along the way. Kindness, you know? Something I didn't grow up smothered by. We adopted two cats together, we buried her sister, we started a business from the ground up and built a travel writing franchise, we were talking about marriage! Until one day I find her on the copy machine with the eighteen-year-old male intern's tongue up her cooch. Next thing I know she's got an order of protection I don't know if our company's going to survive! All those years gone in a flash. And you know what she says? She gives me the lazy post-cheating excuse of "You should have known I was unhappy, you just don't pay attention to other people's needs," which leaves me wondering who on Earth I've been with for over ten years. So when a friend finds Mom's obituary the next day and says how weird is it that it says "She leaves behind two daughters: Jenny and Not Jenny", I have to explain that yes, that's my Mom and no, I didn't know she was dead, and yes, I have a sister named Jenny who I haven't seen since we were seventeen. Naturally I've been doing a lot of soul-searching and I figured it'd be a good idea to go back to my roots because right now I don't know what the hell else to do!

(beat)

Jennifer doesn't need me anymore, so I thought maybe my family would. Instead you're trying to throw me back out.

JENNY

Your company was called 'Amiss and Abroad'?

NOT JENNY

Yes. Travel writing.

JENNY

And now you probably feel like you're just 'amiss'.

They share a smile.

NOT JENNY

Fuck you. I'm not here to make you feel bad by cleaning or to rub anything in or... I'm here because...

(deep breath)

(MORE)

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

...well maybe I don't entirely know, but now that I'm here I can sense that somewhere deep under all this cruelty you're putting up between us, you need help.

JENNY

That's-

("bullshit")

NOT JENNY

-and you'll die before you ever admit it.

JENNY

You're so gay.

NOT JENNY

Correct, I am.

They smile.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

So do you mind? Can I stay?

JENNY

Yeah, all right.

NOT JENNY

Okay. Let's get you in the bathroom.

Not Jenny follows Jenny into the bathroom and shuts the door. A moment later Jimmy comes in the front door and tosses his car keys down.

JIMMY

They were all closed, just like I thought and if I try driving to Walmart I'll probably end up crashing our other car, so... you win! Dingalingalingaling! I give up! Where'd you put it? It's not in my bag, it's not in my room, it's not at Natalia's, and I refuse to believe you actually flushed it, so... where the fuck is it?

Jimmy notices the duffle bag on the ground, then looks at the bathroom door.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Jenny... is someone in there with you?

Jimmy stoops to the duffel bag and inspects it.
Not Jenny slips through the bathroom door and
they notice one another.

NOT JENNY

Jimmy.

JIMMY

Oh boy.

SCENE 6

Jimmy's tenth birthday, shortly after Scene 4.
Not Jenny decorates as Jimmy enters.

JIMMY

You remembered!

NOT JENNY

Of course I did! Come here, Mister ten-years-old, happy birthday!

JIMMY

Did you do all this for me? Are these my presents?

NOT JENNY

All for you.

JIMMY

Wow. Can I open them now?

NOT JENNY

Pick out one for now.

Jimmy picks the biggest present first- he stops
when he reads the label.

JIMMY

Did Jenny white out the 'Not' on the label again?

No.

NOT JENNY

They both know they both know. He opens it: a magic kit.

JIMMY

Wow, this is amazing! I can do all sorts of disappearing tricks! Maybe I can even saw you in half!

Or Jenny!

NOT JENNY

JIMMY

Thanks Not Jenny! I'm so glad you remembered!

NOT JENNY

You don't think I would forget your birthday, do you? Did Mom just drop you off?

JIMMY

Yeah, she's on her way to Dr. Dazey.

NOT JENNY

Is everything okay?

JIMMY

Yeah.

NOT JENNY

No it isn't, Jimmy, what happened?

JIMMY

She forgot my birthday again.

NOT JENNY

Come here, sit with me.

JIMMY

No, I don't want to.

NOT JENNY

Okay, listen. Mom loves you very, very much. And she... she has a lot on her mind, and sometimes when you have a lot of little things on your mind, you forget even the biggest and most important things! Like your birthday. And your birthday is especially hard for her to remember because it's the first of the month. It's number one, like you!

JIMMY

She yelled at me for crying.

NOT JENNY

Well. I bet she was very embarrassed for forgetting your birthday and was so mad at herself and she took it out on you.

JIMMY

She's getting my insulin refill at the doctor's office. I told her I was going to need more but she kept forgetting and then this morning I used the last. And then when I was crying she said that if it would make me stop complaining about it, she'd get the refill for me for my birthday.

NOT JENNY

She's giving you insulin for your birthday?

JIMMY

Yeah.

Not Jenny digests, then diverts with:

NOT JENNY

Look, I made a cake! Dr. Dazey said it's okay for you to eat because it's angel food. Doesn't it look good?

JIMMY

Yeah... that looks awesome!

NOT JENNY

Go take off your backpack and then I'll get started on some chicken nuggets, okay?

JIMMY

Are they Dillon's buffalo-blasted chicken nuggets!?

NOT JENNY

Maybe? And then we can have some cake!

JIMMY

But I shouldn't actually have any cake.

NOT JENNY

We'll see how your levels are once Mom brings your insulin...

JIMMY

I'm sorry.

NOT JENNY

Why are you sorry?

JIMMY

I don't know.

NOT JENNY

Don't apologize, okay? It's not your fault.

JIMMY

Okay. Where's Jenny?

NOT JENNY

Don't worry, she had to run back to school to take care of something important.

JIMMY

What's in that envelope?

NOT JENNY

This? It's nothing.

JIMMY

Isn't University of Alaska the college you wanted to go to?

NOT JENNY

Yes.

JIMMY

Is that an acceptance letter?

NOT JENNY

No, it's not.

Oh. Good.

JIMMY

A look.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I didn't want you going anywhere far. Did you get rejected?

NOT JENNY

No, I'm on the wait list.

JIMMY

Didn't you say that pretty much means the same thing as being rejected?

NOT JENNY

Oh good, I'm glad you reminded me of that.

JIMMY

Sorry.

NOT JENNY

It just means I have to wait.

Jenny rushes in beaming at a letter.

JENNY

Look what I've got. Looks like an acceptance letter that they sent my guidance counselor this morning because it turns out she faxed over my stuff yesterday after I yelled at her. Read it and weep: 'Congratulations'.

NOT JENNY

Congratulations.

JENNY

Look, Jimmy, I got into college!

Jenny hugs Jimmy, who is frozen on the spot.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I knew I could do it. You knew I could do it, didn't you?

JIMMY

Yeah.

JENNY

It just goes to show: if you put your best foot forward every day, you can do anything. Teachers can call you stupid, people can try to put you down, but you can ignore them all and still feel beautiful. Life really is survival of the fittest. Glooming around like Not Jenny won't get you anywhere.

Jimmy pulls out of the hug and studies Jenny.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Remember that, Jimmy, if you ever wanna go anywhere in life.

NOT JENNY

What college accepted you?

JIMMY

(reading)

University of Alaska. Isn't that-

NOT JENNY

U Alaska?

JENNY

I'm a Seawolf now!

NOT JENNY

Give me that.

Not Jenny inspects the letter.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

That's supposed to be me!

JENNY

Not everyone gets into college, Not, you could always enlist.

NOT JENNY

I can't believe they let a twat-waffle like you in.

JENNY

Don't go calling me names, I'm a college girl.

NOT JENNY

Did you steal my application or something?

JENNY

No, I applied.

NOT JENNY

Why on Earth would you apply to U Alaska?

JENNY

So I can get to know that boy on the cover of the admission pamphlet thing you left out. He's so hot, we're gonna make gorgeous babies, I know it. Oh my God, I wonder what year he is... Jimmy, did you see the present I got you?

JIMMY

Yeah. Thanks.

JENNY

Well, while you throw a jealous tantrum, I'm gonna go call my friends. "Friends" are people who like you.

Jenny goes.

JIMMY

Are you okay?

NOT JENNY

How can they accept her and wait-list me? She doesn't even care about U Alaska- that's my college! That's where I'm supposed to go! I can't do it anymore, Jimmy. I can't stay here for another day!

JIMMY

At least you get to stay with me.

NOT JENNY

I want to get the hell out! I shouldn't have to take care of you every Goddamn day just because Mom won't! This isn't exactly my idea of a good time, don't you get that? You're not stupid, Jimmy, you know what's going on here.

JIMMY

Nothing's going on.

Mom doesn't love us!

NOT JENNY

Yes she does!

JIMMY

She forgets your birthday every year, why do you think she does that?

NOT JENNY

You said, she has a lot on her mind.

JIMMY

She doesn't care about us, that's why! She only cares about Jenny!

NOT JENNY

Mommy loves me.

JIMMY

Wake up, Jimmy! You're starting middle school in September. It's time for you to see that everything isn't always fun and games.

NOT JENNY

Stop it, Not Jenny. You're just upset, of course Mommy loves us.

Not Jenny shoves Jimmy.

NOT JENNY

You're so stupid sometimes, you know that!? When the hell are you gonna grow up already? Jesus Christ, I'm getting out of here.

Not Jenny grabs car keys.

JIMMY

Where are you going?

NOT JENNY

Away for a little bit.

JIMMY

Take me with you.

NOT JENNY

Jimmy. I just need to go away for a little while. To get coffee, or...

Jimmy rushes a hug into Not Jenny.

JIMMY

Don't go! It's my birthday!

NOT JENNY

I'm just getting coffee.

JIMMY

Make coffee here!

NOT JENNY

I just need to get out of the house!

JIMMY

Then go in the backyard!

NOT JENNY

I just want to go for a ride, let me get to the door-

JIMMY

Then take me with you!

NOT JENNY

No, you need to stay home!

JIMMY

I'm not the one suffocating you!

This pauses Not Jenny.

NOT JENNY

What did you say?

JIMMY

If you go get coffee now, then the next time you leave it'll be far away for a long time!

Jimmy- NOT JENNY

You said. JIMMY

When did I say- NOT JENNY

JIMMY
In your college papers. You said the family's suffocating you. You called us "noise and distraction" and you'll be happy when we're a "distant memory".

Not Jenny deflates.

NOT JENNY
Has anyone around here not read my college application?
(beat)
Jimmy if I stay here, I... it's something big sisters and brothers sometimes have to do when they get old enough.

JIMMY
Don't you love me anymore?

NOT JENNY
Of course I do! Of course I love you! What would make you think I didn't love you anymore?

JIMMY
Because you're leaving.

NOT JENNY
Jimmy.

JIMMY
I hate you!

NOT JENNY
Jesus...

JIMMY
You have to come back!

NOT JENNY

I'll be back in an hour, I'm just going to cool off.

JIMMY

I'm not talking about right now, I'm talking about when you go away to Alaska or whatever, which I still don't think is a good idea. You need to pack if you're going to go far away. You should put me in your suitcase.

NOT JENNY

I don't think so, Jimmy- it'd be hard to breathe in there.

JIMMY

Then I'll bring a scuba tank.

NOT JENNY

I don't think that's a good idea.

JIMMY

Or leave a little hole open for me to breathe through-?

NOT JENNY

When I leave... if I leave... it won't be for forever. I'll come back for Christmas and every once in a while just to visit.

JIMMY

And my birthday? Promise you'll come back for my eleventh birthday.

NOT JENNY

I'll be here for your eleventh and your twelfth and your thirteenth all the way until you're too old to have birthdays anymore.

JIMMY

You're never too old to have birthdays!

NOT JENNY

Exactly. I'll always come back to you.

JIMMY

And will you send postcards, wherever you go?

NOT JENNY

Sure. If that's what you'd like me to do, I can send postcards.

JIMMY

You promise?

NOT JENNY

Of course.

JIMMY

You have to say it. You have to say "I promise".

NOT JENNY

Okay, "I promise".

JIMMY

Liar.

SCENE 7

Present day, immediately before Scene 1. Jenny in wheelchair. Jimmy eats pizza. The room is clean for now. Jimmy's pump beeps.

JIMMY

Can you do any tricks yet? Ah, come on, I keep telling you you've gotta start learning some tricks on that thing. Some people join the Special Olympics when they get stuck in one of those. There's probably a whole category in the X games you're probably eligible for. Don't tell me you're gonna sit here and waste an opportunity like that.

JENNY

The X games?

JIMMY

Skateboarding, roller blading, snow boarding... anything with wheels or boards.

JENNY

Can you picture me in a half pike?

JIMMY

"Half pike?"

JENNY
Yeah?

JIMMY
“Half pipe”. It’s half of a pipe.

JENNY
I think I’ll pass.

JIMMY
Fine, sit here and waste your life, see what I care. You smell. French fry?

JENNY
No thanks.

JIMMY
When does your nurse come back to give you a bath already?

JENNY
Yesterday I finished up my two week grace period, so now she’ll only come twice a week.

JIMMY
So you can only bathe twice a week?!

JENNY
That’s why I asked you to come back home without Natalia tonight. Thanks for that, by the way, I know you’d rather be at her place lately.

JIMMY
No big deal, I needed my night off.

JENNY
Gee, I wonder if he’s unhappy with her.

JIMMY
Yeah, and what do you know? Nights off are actually a really good thing- it’s part of our routine: a few nights at her place, a few nights here-

JENNY
Not lately.

JIMMY
I need a little time to myself.

JENNY

How's wartface doing these days? Haven't seen her since before the accident.

JIMMY

Fine.

JENNY

Did she stick with the diet?

JIMMY

No. But we've stopped going to KFC.

JENNY

That's a start.

JIMMY

I don't know when she made that executive decision, but she made me throw away my KFC on our way to Chick-fil-a. And I do not eat Chick-fil-a, on principle.

JENNY

Right, Chick-fil-a is total crap, as opposed to KFC. Or Gino's pizza

JIMMY

Wanna bite?

Jimmy's pump beeps.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

I don't normally eat Gino's but I had to watch her scarf down a chicken sandwich after throwing out my own lunch, and I was starving! One of us needs to go food-shopping, by the way.

JENNY

I vote you.

JIMMY

The only thing I could snack on in the whole house was almonds that expired last year- I didn't know almonds fucking expired. But anyway, I was pissed at Natalia today, so I was thrilled to cash in my night off and get my Four-Cheese-Xtra-Cheese.

JENNY

And so you can play with your dolls?

JIMMY

They are not dolls, they are Warhammer miniatures.

JENNY

They are dolls and they take up the whole garage.

JIMMY

They are not dolls, Mom told me I can keep them there- it's like the one cool thing she ever did.

JENNY

They are dolls, and please don't tell me all your freaky friends are coming over to wage a big Warhammer war out there.

JIMMY

They are not dolls, and no, Cleo and Oberon are not coming over, I'm just painting my new figures tonight because I haven't had a chance to yet.

JENNY

I still think they're gay as hell.

JIMMY

I still think I don't care what you think.

(a picosecond of irony)

Mom always said "Be your own person, I don't give a shit".

JENNY

Well I've got one request before you enjoy the night off to yourself.

JIMMY

That is?

JENNY

I need you to help me take a bath- and then you can go back to your toys and you can call them whatever you want.

(off Jimmy's expression)

Stop looking at me like that, this isn't easy for me to ask.

JIMMY

If I give you a bath tonight, you'll want me to help you every night.

JENNY

No, I promise this will be the last time.

JIMMY

Bullshit, no one else is coming to help.

JENNY

Tonight's different.

JIMMY

How?

JENNY

Never mind, you don't care.

JIMMY

Can't you do it yourself?

JENNY

Um. No? Fine, forget it.

JIMMY

Does that mean I'd have to take off your clothes? And, like, lift you? And touch you when you're all naked and-?

JENNY

You're my brother-

JIMMY

-exactly, that's gross! I can't drop everything and take care of my crippled sister for the rest of my life! I have a girlfriend, I have a job, I have a life. I'm not going to stay home on a Saturday night and change your diaper.

JENNY

You know I don't need a diaper.

JIMMY

I'm hyperbolizing!

JENNY

I'm just asking you to help me take a bath tonight and only tonight and then you never have to do it again.

Jimmy's pump beeps.

JIMMY

(to pump)

All right fine, I'll give you your refill.

Jimmy will rise and sift through his backpack, searching for his insulin.

JENNY

Can't you shut that stupid monitor off, I'm trying to talk.

JIMMY

You mean my pump, Jenny? I can't.

JENNY

Put it on silent.

JIMMY

Silent? What kind of device do you think this is? It's alerting me that I need to replace my insulin pretty damn soon, and it wouldn't be doing a good job / at warning me if I could put it on silent.

JENNY

All right already, shut up.

(once he has:)

Tonight is going to be my last bath and I want to look good.

JIMMY

Your last ba- oh. Oh! You think you're gonna off yourself.

JENNY

I knew you wouldn't understand.

JIMMY

No, I get it, I do.

JENNY

Don't go crazy trying to talk me out of it or anything.

JIMMY

Well. Like Mom always said, “Be your own person, I don’t give a shit”.

JENNY

Exactly. She never judged me for working in retail or not having any longtime boyfriends... and now with this thing it doesn’t look like I’m going back to work anytime soon, and no guy’s gonna want me looking like this... so what do I want to stick around for?

JIMMY

You’re right. There’s nothing. Not Mom, not me,

JENNY

Not Jenny.

JIMMY

Definitely not her. As if she gave a shit about any of us over here.

JENNY

In the natural world, I should be dead. I’m Gimpy the turtle. I’d just like to go- on my own terms.

JIMMY

Okay.

JENNY

Do you get that?

JIMMY

I said I did. But that doesn’t mean I’m giving you a bath. So what’s your method: Blow out your brains? Jump off a building? Star in a snuff?

JENNY

I think I’ll swallow the rest of that bottle of the pain meds the nurse left me-

JIMMY

-boring-

JENNY

-except the idiot left them on a shelf where I can’t reach.

JIMMY

If you’re getting in the bath anyway, why don’t you just drown in there? Or just grab a razor blade?

JENNY

Because I don't want to mess this up.

(re: her body and face)

You didn't see Mom in the private ceremony. They did the best they could to put her back together again, but she looked like two halves of the wrong oranges sewn together. A big line right down the middle of her face. Not the face of a beauty queen.

Jenny will painstakingly cross her legs by
picking one up with her arms.

JENNY (CONT'D)

That's not going to be me, I want to look beautiful when they find me so they can keep my casket open. You'll make sure they do that, right?

Jimmy's pump beeps.

JIMMY

Have you seen my insulin?

JENNY

I don't know, where did you leave it?

JIMMY

I keep it in that backpack- same place I leave it every day of my life, and it's not there.

JENNY

Pity.

JIMMY

I just ate a medium fucking pizza, I need my insulin.

JENNY

Where are you going?

JIMMY

We have some diet Coke left.

JENNY

No we don't.

JIMMY

I went to CostCo two days ago, we didn't already finish it.

JENNY

You're right, we didn't. I poured it down the sink.

JIMMY

Now why would you do that?

JENNY

Because I could. How's that for a 'trick'?

JIMMY

(it dawns on him)

What did you do with my insulin?

(off Jenny's look)

You couldn't just kill yourself and leave me alone, you had to keep fucking with me even now- even the night you're planning your suicide. What did I ever do? I just play with my 'dolls'.

JENNY

Yes, that's all you ever do. Even if it means missing her funeral.

JIMMY

Oh, here we go again-

JENNY

The woman had three kids and I was the only one at her funeral. Do you know how insulting that is? I had to explain to everyone-- in front of our mother's closed casket that one of us was on the other side of the country and had no idea, and the other was on the other side of town and had no excuse- he was just too busy playing with Warhammer pieces-of-shit in the garage. After everything she did for us.

JIMMY

Everything she did for *you* Jenny. You were her buddy, not me.

JENNY

So yes, I am resolved to fuck with you if it's the last thing I do. I can still reach the middle shelf of the refrigerator, I can mostly reach the sink, and I can still fuck with you. So you can either help take care of me while I'm still around and I'll / tell you where the insulin is-

JIMMY

You are such a bitch!

JENNY

-or you can just call me a bitch and not find out where your insulin is. But it looks like we've reached a standstill.

(silence)

Fine then, would you do me a favor and grab that book?

JIMMY

This? Your high school yearbook?

JENNY

Yes, hand it to me?

JIMMY

Feeling sentimental all of a sudden?

Jimmy puts the yearbook on a higher shelf.
Jenny grabs an umbrella and wheels to him.

JENNY

Don't be a dick. Give me my yearbook or put me in the bath.

JIMMY

Or what, you'll hit me with an umbrella?

JENNY

Yes.

JIMMY

If you can catch me.

JENNY

Then I'll open it. Bad luck if you open it in the house- I know how much you hate that.

JIMMY

Yeah, when I was ten or something.

Jenny opens the umbrella.

JENNY

Ooooooh! Now what?

(off Jimmy's look)

Fine!

Jenny shatters a vase with the umbrella, then pierces a hole into a potted plant, spilling dirt. (Perhaps we only hear this but it doesn't physically happen.)

JIMMY

I'm not cleaning that. I don't have to live in it. I hope you know I'm not fazed by any of this.

JENNY

Just help me take a bath.

JIMMY

Tell me where my insulin is and I'll do it.

JENNY

Fine. Bath first.

JIMMY

No. How about I'll give you your yearbook if you promise you'll tell me what you did with the insulin. And then I'll think about helping you take a bath.

JENNY

All right. I promise.

Jenny points to the yearbook. Jimmy gets it and drops it in Jenny's lap.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I flushed it all.

Jimmy evades the umbrella as he snatches back the yearbook, then crosses the room and tears the yearbook up.

JIMMY

Fuck you, fuck you, fuck you...

JENNY

Feel better now?

JIMMY

That is so seriously fucked up of you. I don't care if you kill yourself or not- but that's my insulin, that's my life and you sat there watching me eat my pizza knowing good and well I'd need my insulin when I was done. I could go into a coma. I have to go try to refill my script now if I can even find a drug store that'll be open, what is it, almost ten?

JENNY

Quarter after.

JIMMY

Shit! I've gotta go.

JENNY

I'll bet you could really use one of Mom's candies right about now, couldn't you?

JIMMY

Once again, you're in the wrong ballpark, that isn't how it works.

JENNY

Still, it's better than nothing, isn't it?

JIMMY

What I need is insulin.

JENNY

You said you'd get me in the bath.

JIMMY

Get yourself in the bath.

JENNY

You can't leave the house looking like this!

JIMMY

If I go into a coma, no one's cleaning anything! Or anyone!

Jimmy goes.

JENNY

Wait, get those pills from the shelf for me! Shut the door, I'll catch a cold.

Jimmy slams the door. Jenny smells herself.

JENNY (CONT'D)

I can't let them find me smelling like this. Screw you, Jimmy! Did you hear me? Screw you! *"Mom! Jenny took my insulin, tell her to give it back! Mo-om! Jenny's being mean to me, tell her to cut it out! How come you're not nice to me like Not Jenny was? I wish you left and she stayed! I like her more! She wasn't mean to me, she didn't push me, she didn't make fun of me. She remembered my birthday."* Yeah, well... where is she now? Where was she for your last twelve birthdays, Jimmy? *"I wish you left and she stayed."* Brat. You don't need her. No one needs her. You need me. Don't you.

After a moment, she tries to reach the pills. In the process, she knocks a plant onto the couch.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Fuck!

She throws more books to the floor, then uses some to try to knock the pills down.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck, fuck it all!

A knock at the door.

NOT JENNY (O.S.)

Anyone home? Hello? Is anyone home?

Jenny turns around, assuming the opening tableau of the play. Not Jenny lets herself in with the duffle bag over her shoulder and the bottle of wine in the paper sleeve. She notices Jenny only after she shuts the door.

Silence for a long moment. Much goes unsaid.

JENNY

Welcome back.

NOT JENNY

You look older. Like a woman.

SCENE 8

Jimmy's tenth birthday. Late that night. Jenny sits on the couch in the dark. Not Jenny crosses to the door with the duffle bag. Jenny switches the light on.

JENNY

Where are you going?

NOT JENNY

I'm taking the bus.

JENNY

What bus?

NOT JENNY

The bus that will take me out of town.

JENNY

That doesn't answer my question. Where are you going?

NOT JENNY

I'll figure it out.

JENNY

Were you even going to tell anyone you're leaving?

NOT JENNY

No.

JENNY

So, like, you're running away.

NOT JENNY

I'm going away.

JENNY

Is there a difference?

NOT JENNY

Running away makes me sound like I'm a kid. Going away is... as opposed to college. Since I guess that's not happening. U Alaska's admission office, as it turns out, is very sensitive to disciplinary infractions.

JENNY

Where do you think you'll go?

NOT JENNY

As far as I can. Berlin, maybe. Or Singapore. I don't have a goal. Just a suitcase. Why do you look like you're going to cry?

JENNY

It's just... were we ever friends, Not?

NOT JENNY

Friends? You're my sister.

JENNY

I know. But did we ever get along? We were kind of doomed from the start, weren't we? The names.

NOT JENNY

I guess so. Don't tell me you're getting misty now.

JENNY

Of course I am, you're running away!

NOT JENNY

You're nostalgic for a relationship we never had.

JENNY

Well, now that you're going I kind of wish I had one, okay? You wanna know why I applied to U Alaska? Maybe it sounds dumb, but I thought we could go be at college together. And besides, I told you I read your college application. And I mean I read the whole thing.

NOT JENNY

So?

JENNY

Your personal essay? I thought it was really nice. It... made me cry, actually. That part where you talked about... what was it... “

(MORE)

JENNY (CONT'D)

Do we both exist because we had to make each other become one another? Or do we both exist because that's just how it went in the womb? I can never know- I can only continue being who I am, whyever I am."

NOT JENNY

What, did you memorize it-?

JENNY

I had to think about it for a long time to understand it, but I think I do! You mean a lot to me too, Not.

Jenny hugs Not Jenny.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Hug me back.

NOT JENNY

No thank you.

JENNY

Hug me back.

NOT JENNY

No.

JENNY

Hug me back, you bitch, I'm your sister!

Not Jenny obliges a single pat on the back. Jenny withdraws.

JENNY (CONT'D)

You're probably so excited to get out of here. That was a stupid thing to say. Maybe now you can get a girlfriend.

NOT JENNY

What's that supposed to mean?

JENNY

Nothing bad- I just mean, oh God, you know... you'll probably meet lots of girls like you.

NOT JENNY

‘Gloomers’?

JENNY

No, no, no, I just mean... forget it, never mind.

NOT JENNY

At least I’m not a plastic perky little twat. I know who- I like who I am.

JENNY

I like who I am too. I like being liked. I wish you and I could have... I don’t know, understood one another at some point. I like being Jenny. Hey, now you can finally change your name just like you always wanted.

NOT JENNY

I don’t think so. I know I always wanted to, but I think I’ve grown into it.

JENNY

Really? “Not Jenny?”

NOT JENNY

Yeah. I think it suits me.

JENNY

Because it connects us?

NOT JENNY

You know what it is? I think ‘Jenny’ is pretty and happy-go-lucky. I think ‘Jenny’ is someone who is cheerful because she got everything she ever wanted. ‘Jenny’ is everyone’s favorite. ‘Jenny’ is the quintessential blond. ‘Jenny’ is a bimbo that everyone acts like they like, but you know deep down they don’t. They just don’t want to be hated by her so they do things for her. ‘Jenny’ doesn’t really have power over people, she just acts like she does and after a while people start to act like she does too. That’s what the name ‘Jenny’ reminds me of. And I’m glad that when I introduce myself to people, the first thing they know is that I’m not ‘Jenny’.

JENNY

Wow. I never realized you hated me so much.

NOT JENNY

I never said I was talking about you.

Not Jenny exits.

SCENE 9

Present day, shortly after Scene 5. Jimmy rifles through the couch cushions. His pump beeps. Not Jenny enters from the bathroom. We hear a hair dryer.

NOT JENNY

What are you doing to the couch?

JIMMY

Looking for something.

NOT JENNY

She's drying her hair now.

JIMMY

My hearing is fine. How was her bath? Was it everything she ever dreamed it would be?

NOT JENNY

I feel awful. Can you imagine? I mean how awful-

JIMMY

Yes, so awful, poor Jenny, let's light a candle for our sister and her dead legs. Let's light two, one for each.

NOT JENNY

How has it been? Here.

JIMMY

I try to stay at my girlfriend's when I can.

NOT JENNY

...is that all?

JIMMY

How would you like me to answer that question? "How has it been here." Bleak, Not Jenny, I've lived here my whole life.

Jimmy quickly drinks water, then looks at Not Jenny.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

What?

NOT JENNY

I imagine you're upset with me.

JIMMY

I'm twenty-three years old. It's not me you walked out on, just a kid with the same name. Why would I be upset with you- we don't even know each other.

NOT JENNY

I knew you'd be angry-

JIMMY

I just told you I'm not! Do you think we all sat here waiting for you to come back? No, life went on. Life sucks, people leave, but if you're smart you learn to adapt. You grow up after a while. It feels good, the same way rubbing a callus does. Like this one on my thumb, I'll just rub it sometimes and think about how it's literally a hardened piece of me. I burned it the first time during the month Jenny was in Alaska and you were already gone. Mom was trying to do the laundry, but it had been years since she'd done it and so she managed to flood the whole garage with soapy water and she started attacking the car for some reason? Complete nervous breakdown. She locked herself in her room and I was by myself for the first time and no one made dinner. I sat on that couch and cried because I didn't have anyone to take care of me. I cried and cried... and I did the one thing that always stops me from crying: I went to the mirror and looked at myself: bleary red eyes, snot dripping into my mouth hanging open. You know how that happens: you see yourself and it looks so pathetic you can't help but cut the crying crap. I looked at myself and said "Quit being a baby and make yourself macaroni and cheese". And I did. I made myself some Kraft macaroni and cheese. And that's when I burnt my thumb on the stove top like an idiot, but I made it. That was my macaroni and cheese and no one had to make it for me. You learn how to take care of yourself and soon everyone who took care of you isn't a god anymore. They're just other adults bouncing around and they're either in your way, or they're out of your way. And you've been out of my way for a while, so... don't worry about me.

NOT JENNY

I see. Life goes on, I guess.

JIMMY

It sure does.

Jimmy's pump beeps.

NOT JENNY

So then. Let's start now. Let's know each other. What's your new life like?

JIMMY

I've got a girlfriend, I've got a job, I'm starting to look for my own place.

NOT JENNY

Is that all I get? Jenny tells me you were in college for a while! That's good. But I guess it doesn't really work out for everyone. I never actually went to college. I didn't know Jenny dropped out after less than a month. I mean what was she thinking, only bringing one pair of pants? It's Alaska for crying out loud! I wrote you, I did. I started out writing every day. And then, you know. I never got anything back from you. I didn't know if you all had moved, or... I tried to get back to town for your birthday, but I'd run almost completely out of money by the time your eleventh birthday came. I didn't know where I was. I was hitchhiking. I had no way of getting back. But I found a diner and ordered a piece of cake and thought about you... then I found their pay phone and I called. I used all of my quarters calling home that day, but no one picked up. No one ever picked up the phone around here. When I finally got my own place, I sent you a postcard with my new address so you could reach me. Didn't you get my postcards? I must have sent over a hundred. I know I missed your birthday, but you could have written me too.

Jimmy shifts away.

JIMMY

I kept them. There in that box on the shelf.

NOT JENNY

That's nice.

JIMMY

Could you make a run to Walmart for me?

NOT JENNY

The one that's forty-five minutes away?

It's twenty-four hours.

JIMMY

For?

NOT JENNY

Groceries.

JIMMY

Is there nothing to eat in the house?

NOT JENNY

There were almonds, which were expired, which I finished, but-

JIMMY

I thought I'd pick up some groceries tomorrow, somewhere better than Walmart.

NOT JENNY

I meant more like now.

JIMMY

I was in transit all day- I promise I'll take you after I get some sleep-

NOT JENNY

So did you come here to make amends or something?

JIMMY

Something like that.

NOT JENNY

To apologize for being a promise-breaker?

JIMMY

I never got a postcard back! Not one! You'd have to be an idiot to keep writing postcards to a person who doesn't want you in their life, so if that makes me a promise breaker then call me a promise breaker, but you can't play the innocent either.

NOT JENNY

Please, Not Jenny, can we go to Walmart?

JIMMY

Why does it have to be this second?

NOT JENNY

JIMMY

No time like the present.

NOT JENNY

I'm not going to be your personal shuttle service.

JIMMY

But you're Jenny's bath butler.

NOT JENNY

Our sister is in a wheelchair- and as long as we're self-sufficient, we ought to help her.

JIMMY

Oh we "ought" to.

NOT JENNY

Yes.

JIMMY

Because someone's crippled and suddenly they're a saint.

NOT JENNY

That's not what I'm saying-

JIMMY

Then why should I help her? And the bigger question really is why should you?

NOT JENNY

Because she's my sister.

JIMMY

Well that explains it all!

NOT JENNY

It's what you do when someone needs help- and maybe you're not willing to admit it but you need help too.

JIMMY

Oh yeah, why's that?

NOT JENNY

Because our mother died! And we all need to heal- together.

JIMMY

What, because Mom was an idiot and drove into a lamppost? Don't worry about it. Not every death is like a huge devastation for everyone. I'm fine.

Jimmy rises suddenly.

NOT JENNY

What's wrong?

JIMMY

Don't you remember there was a reason you couldn't stand her in the first place? There was a reason you had to get away- and it's the same reason I'm not exactly thrilled at the idea of wiping her ass. Don't blame me for being- oh, God- don't blame me for getting- Jesus-

Jimmy, having worked himself into a frenzy, dry heaves into the garbage bag.

NOT JENNY

Jimmy, what's going on? Is your insulin running low?

The pump beeps.

JIMMY

All the drug stores were closed because it's after 10. I drove for an hour and a half looking and, of course, none of them are open. All I need is some fucking insulin!

NOT JENNY

You ran out?

JIMMY

No, Jenny took it.

NOT JENNY

Are you serious? Jenny! Are you going to throw up?

Not Jenny fishes Jimmy's pump out of his pocket and it beeps.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

"Please refill," great. What did Jenny say she did with the insulin? Jenny!

JIMMY

She says she flushed it- I don't know if I believe her.

NOT JENNY

Jenny! Get in here! Don't lean back, Jimmy, if you throw up you'll choke on it. Jenny, forget about your hair, get in the living room!

Jenny enters.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

What did you do with his insulin? Did you flush it down the toilet?

JENNY

Maybe. All this blathering on and on about Jimmy's insulin. "Jimmy can't eat this, Jimmy can't eat that."

NOT JENNY

We don't have time for this. Where did you put it?

JENNY

You know what the problem is with diabetes? It's over-diagnosed. What kid doesn't want sugar?

NOT JENNY

Do you have it or do we need to go to the hospital?

JENNY

And you've got the good sister to take care of you, how nice. "Don't pick on Jimmy, he's so sensitive, he's just a kid," Jesus Christ, that thing never shuts up!

JENNY (CONT'D)

And the whole time: "Beep! Beep! I want sugar!" I told you a million times to shut that fucking thing off!

JIMMY

It'd shut up if you hadn't flushed my damn insulin, you psycho! I can't shut it off, I've told you I can't!

NOT JENNY

The beeping's the least of our problems!

JENNY

You don't have to live with it day and night, Not, you don't know how bad it can be. Beep! Beep! Beep!

JIMMY

Tell me the truth, did you flush it?

JENNY

I'd have given it to you if you'd given me the bath I wanted!

NOT JENNY

Okay, Jimmy? We're going to get in my car and we're going to the hospital.

JENNY

Oh, relax, he's just being dramatic.

JIMMY

I don't need the hospital.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

He isn't being 'dramatic'! If you're not going to give it up, we don't have a choice except to-

JIMMY

-I don't know if my health insurance is going to cover Emergency Room...

JENNY

If everyone broke out like you do every time they had a craving, nobody would ever get anything done.

NOT JENNY

Are you feeling okay Jimmy? Are you going to throw up?

JENNY

"Aw, poor Jimmy. Are you going to make sick? Do you need your baba?"

JIMMY

See, this- this is why she's not worth it. It's shit like this that I can't deal with anymore-

NOT JENNY

All right! Both of you shut up, we need to have a family meeting!

JIMMY

Oh come on.

NOT JENNY

I'm not fucking around. Everyone gather around and sit down, you and you and I are going to air out our grievances in a mature way-

JIMMY

You don't get it- there is no "and", there is no "we", there isn't going to be any "working out our issues".

NOT JENNY

Yes, there is, now sit the fuck down so we can communicate effectively!

Jimmy does.

JENNY

"I run a small business so I know how to address conflicts..."

JIMMY

Why do you care so much about her? She's crazy!

NOT JENNY

We are three rational adults. We owe it to one another to be honest but that doesn't mean we have to act like savages.

JIMMY

You're supposed to sit too, then.

NOT JENNY

Yes! Fine. Good.

Not Jenny sits. Jimmy's pump beeps. They visibly choose to ignore it.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

So let's all use "I-feel" statements when we feel one way or another, as a way to express our thoughts and opinions.

JENNY

Meaning...

NOT JENNY

Well, for example- Jimmy told me I'm supposed to sit, when it might be more appropriate for him to say that "I feel that in order to conduct this conversation we should be at the same level-"

JIMMY

Well it just makes sense that if you want us to sit-

NOT JENNY

-and don't cut me off when I'm speaking!

JIMMY

Shouldn't you phrase that as "I feel that you shouldn't cut me off when I'm speaking?"

JENNY

Hold on. I feel that you should say that "you feel" she should have phrased it as "I feel that you shouldn't cut me off-

NOT JENNY

...right. Jenny, the way you're wheeling around makes me feel a little anxious.

JENNY

You wanted us all to sit down, and I'm sitting.

NOT JENNY

I know, but you're not sitting still.

JENNY

You never said I couldn't move around-

NOT JENNY

You know what I meant-

JENNY

Oh so I have to pick up on your signals now too?

NOT JENNY

Put your brakes on! Jenny. Will you please explain why you felt compelled to withhold Jimmy's insulin from him tonight?

JENNY

Let's see. I chose to take away Jimmy's insulin because I feel angry at him.

NOT JENNY

Okay, and why's that.

JENNY

Because he's a disrespectful piece of shit and he had it coming-

NOT JENNY

Jenny, I wish you would take this seriously-

JIMMY

Oh come on, Jenny. Why don't you tell her the truth? Why you're acting up tonight and why you were so desperate for a bath-

JENNY

It's none of her business!

NOT JENNY

What's none of my business!?

JIMMY

I guess you don't know why she wanted a bath so badly.

NOT JENNY

Because a person needs to bathe every now and then-

JIMMY

Errrr. Wrong.

JENNY

If you don't stop talking Jimmy, I swear to God-

JIMMY

See, your problem is you don't do nice things for people out of compassion or because they want you to. You do them for your own gratification so you can sleep at night. You don't even know that you just gave Jenny the last bath of her life.

NOT JENNY

What does that mean?

JIMMY

The reason she wanted a bath so badly was so she'd "look good" before she swallowed that bottle of pills up there. Didn't she tell you that? She wants out.

NOT JENNY

You what? No, Jimmy, she didn't tell me that she's planning on killing herself.

JIMMY

Oh, then there you go. Not the homecoming you expected, huh. She probably would have done it before but she couldn't reach them-

NOT JENNY

Jenny, is this true?

JIMMY

Think about it though, do you blame her? She can't do anything! She can't get a job, she can't keep a boyfriend, she can't even go to the bathroom for crying out loud and I, for one, support her wishes. How's that for being a rational adult?

NOT JENNY

Is this true? Are you going to try to kill yourself?

JENNY

You had to open your big fat mouth, didn't you Jimmy?

JIMMY

Oh, sorry, did I spoil your suicide attempt? Did I make it unpleasant?

JENNY

You know why else I want to do it? Because I'm stuck with you.

JIMMY

"And how does that make you feel?"

JENNY

And when that fucking thing goes off...!

The pump beeps and Jenny smashes it until it's surely broken. As she does:

JIMMY

What the fuck are you doing to my pump!
That's like a thousand bucks!

NOT JENNY

Jenny! Stop stop stop stop! What are you doing?

Jimmy pulls Jenny off the wheelchair and onto the floor.

JIMMY

What more do you need, Not Jenny? Let's go- just leave her on the floor and go.

JENNY

That's right, I'm crazy. I'm unwell. I'm certifiably loony, and I deserve to die.

NOT JENNY

God damn it, Jimmy!

JENNY

Just go! Both of you! You've always been closer, you've always hated me-

JIMMY

See? Listen to her, let's-

NOT JENNY

No, fuck you, both of you, SHUT UP!

NOT JENNY

Things are going to get better, I promise-

JIMMY

Before you start going on about "it gets better", just remember this is paralysis from the waist down. It's not like being a lesbian where you get a girlfriend and split the U-Haul and everything's peachy. It's not like being diabetic where you get your insulin and you're fixed. She can never walk again, that doesn't get better and she'd rather die!

NOT JENNY

You don't know what you're saying-

JIMMY

If this were the real world, she'd be dead!

NOT JENNY

What do you mean "real world"?

JIMMY

Like if she were a gazelle, they'd let her get eaten up by the lions, not push her around in a little gazelle wheelchair.

NOT JENNY

Really? Gazelles? Okay, gazelles don't help regulate one another's blood sugar either, just so you know. By your standards all three of us are a pack of misfit gazelles. Paralyzed, diabetic, lesbian. But in case you haven't noticed we are not gazelles! We are human beings and we take care of one another. That's the difference with being human- we help each other.

JENNY

Every Gimp needs an aquarium.

NOT JENNY

Exactly.

JIMMY

Maybe, but Gimpy wasn't an asshole! No person in their right mind smashes someone's insulin pump either!

NOT JENNY

She isn't in her right mind, don't you see that?! Our mother just died! We're all dealing with a fucking trauma! She was Jenny's world! Now are you going to turn against her when she needs you or are you going to be a sibling?

JIMMY

"Be a sibling". Why does it matter so much? There are plenty of people out there who don't talk to their families and the world keeps spinning-

NOT JENNY

Yeah, well, no offense to those people but I don't want to be them.

(Jimmy looks at her)

...anymore. I don't want them to be us. Parents die, spouses and kids come later, but siblings are there the whole time- and I thought, maybe, after all this time, after all this shit, you two would agree with me on that.

JENNY

It's in the candy dish.

NOT JENNY

What is-?

Not Jenny realizes, then crosses to the candy dish and opens it. Sure enough, the insulin is there.

JENNY

Do you hate me?

NOT JENNY

Just a little.

JIMMY

Well it's not going to help now but...

JENNY
Can you get me off the floor?

NOT JENNY
Jimmy?

Not Jenny and Jimmy prepare to pick her up.

JENNY
On the couch, please- I'm sick of the goddamn chair, I just want to feel like a human.

NOT JENNY
Count of three. One, two-

They lift her onto the couch, then collapse on either side of her. The siblings stare out in silence for a while.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)
You know what you need, Jimmy? You need to get out there.

JIMMY
Yeah.

NOT JENNY
You're twenty-three. Have some life experiences.

JIMMY
Yeah.

NOT JENNY
It helped me for a while. So like... go and see. I'll hold down the fort.

JIMMY
Yeah.

JENNY
Don't forget your dolls.

JIMMY
I won't.

They stare out. After a moment, Not Jenny grabs the phone and makes a call.

NOT JENNY

Hi. We need help.

End of play.

Please consider including the following four documents from Not Jenny's college application in productions of the play. They work well as program inserts (put one of the four in each program and they become conversation pieces before and after) or posted on a dramaturgy board. I created a "Thank You" page to patrons of the Bridge Rep of Boston production.

After-school activity sheet

Please provide a detailed list of any after-school activities you participate in.

To Whom It May Concern at University of Alaska Anchorage:

My guidance counselor seems to think I should accompany my after-school activities sheet with this "clarification letter" because of the nontraditional nature of my involvement, though I don't find there to be anything nontraditional about it. They're after two-twenty-two PM and they're things I do, so this list accurately describes my "after school activities" without even touching upon the typical chores of cooking, cleaning and groceries.

- 1) My brother is 10, so "Baby-sitting my brother" is what you would expect.
- 2) My sister is the same age as I, so "Baby-sitting my sister" involves avoiding pregnancy, evidence of hangovers and "assistance with homework".
- 3) "Care for small animals" refers to a succession of garden snakes my mother and I have purchased for my younger brother. My mother is too afraid to explain the concept of death to him, but too skeptical to purchase the necessary light bulb needed for said snakes. This asinine stubbornness has led to my need to purchase and care for approximately 37 replacement snakes to create the illusion that the original snake never died. The understudy serpents live in my underwear drawer.
- 4) I included "dinner with my family" not only because, as I mentioned, I am usually solely responsible for preparing these meals, but also because it has unofficially become my responsibility to steer the conversation away from any subjects deemed unsavory by the several members of my family- especially when my mother has any of her various and sundry boyfriends over.

Disciplinary Explanation

Please provide a thorough account of any and all disciplinary infractions or criminal history:

To the Office of Undergraduate Admission at University of Alaska Anchorage —
Attention: JC Villano

Thank you for letting me know I may direct to you my future correspondence. I was not aware the office required this until my guidance counselor mentioned it after I already sent my application. Here you go:

On September 25th of my junior year, I had an altercation with the bitch who sat next to me in Physics class. (I don't use the term "bitch" lightly, but the prompt asks me to describe the incident thoroughly.) The night before, I'd had an argument with my mother after she called my brother 'stupid'. Suffice it to say I said a bit more than my mother's constitution would handle that evening and she kicked me out of the house. I slept on the playground bench I usually do on evenings like this.

The next day, with no other option, I came to school in the same clothes I'd slept in. Naturally I did not look, feel or smell my freshest. In Physics class, the bitch to which I earlier referred turned to me and said, "You're especially disgusting today, why don't you shower?" To which I responded, "So are you, why don't you go kill yourself?" In most cases I leave people alone when I have nothing nice to say to them, but on this morning, a comment like "You're especially disgusting today" struck a chord and, at the risk of sounding melodramatic, made me want to kill myself. The teacher who witnessed the incident filed an infraction report and the assistant principal suspended me for two days. I fully understand that my comment was hurtful, rude and impolite but, to be frank, that's what I was going for.

I truly hope that your knowledge of this incident is not harmful to my chances of being accepted to your institution. I am being suffocated by the noise and distraction of my hometown and family. Please, JC, don't let the exception overshadow the rule- I will be an amazing college student once they are all a distant memory.

Supplement Essay

Pretend that you are eating Chinese food- what would you want your fortune cookie to say? (100-200 words)

Dear JC,

This letter comes in response to your note that some items are in need of clarification. First off, I'm sure that your suggestion that my name is misspelled and that I meant to write

“Jenny” was meant to be helpful, but I must insist that the name wouldn’t suit me at all, since I am not a floozy Valley Girl and I pass all of my classes without pushing my cleavage in teachers’ faces. Second, I’m unclear how my supplement essay never arrived in your office, but I do apologize. Please find my attempt at the prompt below. I should add that my writing has better results when I’m able to exercise more creative freedom.

As I stretch my imagination to its limits, I pretend that I am eating Chinese food- which means we’ll ignore the fact that I make a rule of avoiding unhealthy and inauthentic Americanized bastardizations of ethnic cuisines, we’ll ignore the fact that fortune cookies are not a Chinese creation and are actually printed in America, we’ll even ignore the futility required for a self-described atheist in trying to influence an already random and subjective prophecy- and I picture, as clear as day, a tiny strip of paper that is completely blank. The future will be what I make of it; it’s for me to define for myself.

Personal Essay

Option 3: Indicate a person who has had significant influence on you, and describe that influence.

To JC.

Let me begin by apologizing for insulting the name Jenny in my last correspondence. It would only be my luck that JC stands for Jennifer Claire. I hope you’ll overlook my error and we can move forward. I also apologize that my personal essay somehow never reached your office – please let me know if there are any other missing materials in my application. I am surprised to learn, for the second time, that materials I sent never arrived.

Some people like to say they are the complete opposite of their sibling. Not everyone can say that their given name insists upon it. My twin sister Jenny was born sixteen minutes before me, but I often feel like we’re universes apart. Growing up alongside someone so different has made me conscious of many existential questions.

Everyone learns about nature versus nurture, it’s psych 101, but not everyone considers de facto identity versus natural identity. How much of who I am is because of Jenny- and the other way around? I am pragmatic, cynical and mature for my age which could be in response to Jenny being emotional, optimistic and immature for her age. Do we both exist because we had to make each other become one another? Or do we both exist because that’s just how it went in the womb? I can never know- I can only continue being who I am, whichever I am. To be honest, I like that person, so ultimately I’m glad I have a twin sister who helped me become me. Whether she’s been a gift from above or the random

heads to my random tails, she's an important part of who I'm not. I'm looking forward to discovering more about who I am at college when I'm apart from her but ultimately, for better or worse, I can never really be separate from Jenny even if I'm not Jenny myself.