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Not Jenny

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BOSTON UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCES

Thesis

NOT JENNY

by

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requirements for the degree of
Master of Fine Arts

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Approved by

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The germ for *not Jenny* would have been thrown into the incinerator if it weren't for Michael Parsons' artful threat of what he would do to me if I didn't see it through. I owe it to him, Jaclyn Villano, Rick Park and Melinda Lopez that the play instead went into incubation and emerged as what it currently is.

I must thank my sister, brother, mother, father and grandmother because, thankfully, the emotional framework for the play is not inspired by my own family. Thank you all for understanding that none of you should feel implicated.

not Jenny was developed in Melinda Lopez' workshop classes at Boston Playwrights Theatre, artistic director Kate Snodgrass. Ilana Brownstein, Sidney Friedman, Ronan Noone and Richard Schotter were also instrumental in my time in the program. Actors McCaela Donovan, Nicole Howard, Grant MacDermott, Nael Nacer, Dakota Shepard and Giselle Ty each left their own significant mark on the characters. I relied on the energy and enthusiasm of Melissa Carter, Brenna FitzGerald, Jesse Garlick, Antonia Lassar and director Hondo Weiss-Richmond for the original workshop production through the Room to Live Festival.

A special thanks to Nicholas, who endured my long-winded rants while writing and revising, and didn't mind taking care of dinner when I was on a roll.

This play is dedicated to Lauren and Levi. Fists in- this is not us.

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PRODUCTION NOTES

The telling of this story relies on being able to make the distinction between past and present clear. This can be as simple clean versus dirty. The play has worked fine with two living rooms adjacent to one another, but I feel this detracts from its intimacy.

The characters must be played as sensitive and not senseless. They act cruelly not for the sake of cruelty, but out of a real pain. That said, this is a comedy, though perhaps only in the Russian sense. Perhaps unrelatedly, this play contains very dark humor. The play will drag if the actors lose sight of this.

Not Jenny's college application materials serve as transitions into the past of the play, but I find it helpful to not take them too literally. They may not necessarily be the documents she would choose to send in, but these monologues are definitely indicative of her frame of mind while she wrote them.

Oh, and for goodness sake, employ a fight choreographer.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

- Jenny: F, 30. Natural blond, naturally pretty. Previously a sales associate, now paralyzed from the waist down.
- Not Jenny: F, 30. Attractive, despite her best efforts. A travel writer. Jenny's twin sister.
- Jimmy: M, 23. A retail manager. Their younger brother.

PLACE

The living room of the house that the siblings grew up in, somewhere in the suburbs along the East coast of America. Perhaps Long Island, but not necessarily. The room contains the necessities of a 'home', but don't expect a family portrait. The front door to one side of the stage, the bathroom door elsewhere, an exit to the kitchen upstage.

TIME

The play alternates mostly between two days: one overcast evening during the autumn when the girls are 30, and Jimmy's 10th birthday thirteen years prior. Scene 2 takes place a year before that. The past and present of the play straddle the turn of the 21st century.

SCENE 1

Present day.

A living room. Front door on one side, bathroom door elsewhere. Couch, bookshelf, a side table with a covered candy dish. Books litter the floor— one is torn to shreds. Dirt has escaped out a hole in one potted plant, another lies on the couch. A broken vase. A wayward umbrella. Perhaps scattered almonds.

Not Jenny stands in the doorway holding a duffle bag over her shoulder. Stylish, short, dyed hair. Jenny sits in a wheelchair on the opposite side of the stage. Natural blond, naturally pretty, in need of a bath. They are 30.

Silence for a long 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)

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, how do you expect a funeral to be?

NOT JENNY

I didn't know you were...

JENNY

Crippled? Yeah. The doctors don't get sick of telling me how lucky I am. As if that isn't a huge 'fuck you'.

NOT JENNY

It's true. If you hadn't had your seatbelt on, 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, qualifies it as lesbian travel literature? Naughty pictures of scantily-clad women peeking around the Eiffel Tower, leaning seductively over Stonehenge...

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 again?

NOT JENNY

'Amiss and Abroad'.

JENNY

'Amiss and Abroad'. Very clever.

NOT JENNY

Based in Los Angeles. Staff of twelve. It's really taken off. We were talking about moving into a bigger office, but-

Not Jenny begins to put her bag down.

Whoa, whoa, what are you doing? JENNY

Putting the bag down, it's heavy. NOT JENNY

No, no, no, you can't stay- JENNY

It's just for a while- NOT JENNY

Why would you want to stay here- JENNY

I wanted to see you- NOT JENNY

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

Just for a night or two- NOT JENNY

Pick the bag back up, pick the bag back up- JENNY

It's heavy- NOT JENNY

PICK THAT BAG UP! JENNY

All right! NOT JENNY

Not Jenny keeps the bag on her shoulder.

Why are you here? JENNY

NOT JENNY

I wanted to check in on you all. Make sure you were okay. Where's Dad?

JENNY

Twenty to thirty years.

NOT JENNY

Sorry, what?

JENNY

You know we're not okay.

NOT JENNY

I have to do something. Thirteen years is a long time to be out of the loop and now this happened. That's what family does, they check in on one another.

JENNY

Some families, maybe. But when was our family ever that kind of family?

NOT JENNY

In any event, I'd like to try.

JENNY

Try away. We'll see how long that lasts. Something's going to push you over the edge, or I'm going to ask for too much, or someone back in Cali's going to need you, or... you'll leave again. I know you will.

NOT JENNY

I don't think so. I'm here to help.

JENNY

No one's asking you to.

NOT JENNY

I know.

JENNY

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

I don't think there's anything you can throw at me that's going to make me run away screaming. 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, and I'd like to fix it. With Mom around, we were too busy getting turned against one another to ever really connect, but now... with her gone, we can finally get to know one another. Talk woman-to-woman. I don't need to run away from our problems anymore. So. Here I am.

Not Jenny finally puts down the duffle bag.

JENNY

Here you are.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENT 1: AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Not Jenny speaks out, reading from her Composition notebook. She is 17.

NOT JENNY

To Whom It May Concern at University of Alaska Anchorage. Attached please find my after-school activities sheet. My guidance counselor seems to think I should accompany this with extra clarification because of the 'nontraditional nature' of my involvement, though I don't find there to be anything nontraditional about it.

First of all, anything that happens after two-twenty-two PM succeeds my high school's regular hours of operation- what you all refer to on your form as 'after school'. Since the list describes things I do, one would define each as an 'activity'. Ergo my list accurately and appropriately includes my most common 'after school activities'.

'House chores' include preparing meals for my family on weeknights, collecting the trash, laundry, groceries, cleaning and vacuuming. The other day I found my mother searching the refrigerator for floor cleaner, confirming my suspicion that she is, in fact, completely clueless about cleaning the house.

'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.

(MORE)

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

This asinine stubbornness has led to my need to purchase and care for approximately thirty-seven replacement snakes to create the illusion that the original snake never died.

My brother is ten, so 'Baby-sitting my brother' is what you would expect. My sister is the same age as I, so 'Baby-sitting my sister' involves avoiding pregnancy, evidence of hangovers and 'assistance with homework'. Unlike most baby-sitters, my work does not end when our parents come home. Depending on how drunk one or both of them are, my work can, in fact, double.

Finally, 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.

I wish that my obligations to my family left me more room to go through all the prescribed flaming hoops that are so attractive to college admission counselors, but being responsible in a family like mine leaves me no option.

SCENE 2

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

JENNY

Mom! You were wrong, it still fits me and I didn't have to go on a diet! God, I love my metabolism. Mom, where are you?

NOT JENNY

She's not home.

JENNY

I'm getting picked up in 15 minutes for pre-prom! When is she coming back?

NOT JENNY

Don't know.

JENNY

Whaddya think, Not?

Of what? NOT JENNY

My dress. JENNY

It looks great. NOT JENNY

You're not even looking. Are you STILL working that thing? I still don't get why you'd want to go to school in Alaska. JENNY

It's about as far away as I can get. NOT 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? JENNY

Is that what you're going for? It's not your prom, you're a junior. NOT 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-and-Dad approved right now. But watch this- JENNY

Jenny reveals (unfastens, unzips) two slits on either side of her chest.

They'll always remember this as the year Jenny came to prom in the hot dress. JENNY (CONT'D)

I can see your tits. NOT JENNY

It's perfect! JENNY

Jenny, I can almost see your nipples. NOT JENNY

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 Dad up and he'll rip you a new one. And I don't mean another easy-access tit slit.

JENNY

Actually, that's why I wanted to ask you a favor.

NOT JENNY

Here we go.

JENNY

Well, I was thinking I could go through your window so I don't wake anyone up.

NOT JENNY

Won't that wake me up?

JENNY

Maybe, but who cares? You're not gonna ground me. Look, all I'm asking is for you to leave your window open, don't make this out into some big deal. This is your problem, you have like, 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 you- I can see it in your face- you're 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 my window later tonight and you'll know.

JENNY

But what if you decide to lock it!?

NOT JENNY

Then it's not my problem.

JENNY

No wonder you didn't get asked to prom.

Jenny starts to fuss with Not Jenny's hair.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Look, your face isn't actually that bad, if you would just let me do your hair-

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 says 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. A guy will like you one day. Eventually there's got to be a guy who likes gloomies, but you'll find a guy a lot faster if you cut the act.

NOT JENNY

I'll keep that in mind.

JENNY

Remember the field trip to the aquarium we went on for Bio?

NOT JENNY

'We' didn't go. I went last year because I didn't have to take Enviro Systems twice.

JENNY

You know what I meant. You went and I went. Remember they had a big tank in the middle of one 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

Why are you telling me about the field trip? 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 at the top of the tank trying to swim down, but for some reason it just couldn't. 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

-and 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're stuck with their butts always floating and no matter how hard he swims with his front paws he'll never actually swim like a normal turtle which is why they rescued him. It's a dog-eat-dog, survival-of-the-fittest world, so unless they rescued him, 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. But I want to help. 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.

NOT JENNY

What do I blame on Mom?

JENNY

Well, like in your after-school activities thing on your college application. 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- hold on, you read my college application?

JENNY

Just the good 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! 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 fuck-ups and so you're offering me the chance to do you a favor as 'charity'?

JENNY

And we're back at square one.

NOT JENNY

You can count on me double-bolting that fucking 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!

Prove me wrong! NOT JENNY

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

I don't want boys to like me! NOT JENNY

That's bullshit! JENNY

No it isn't, because 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

JENNY
So you're a lesbian?

NOT JENNY
Yes.

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

NOT JENNY
Go to your fucking prom.

JENNY
Does anyone else know? Not even Mom and Dad?

NOT JENNY
Especially not Mom and Dad, are you kidding?

JENNY
I'd freak out too if I found out my kid was gay. You really haven't told anyone?

NOT JENNY
I don't want anyone to know.

The car honks.

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

Jenny goes.

SCENE 3

Present day, immediately following Scene 1. Not Jenny puts down the duffle bag. Jenny is back in the wheelchair.

JENNY
Here you are. You can stay tonight. But only tonight. And by the way, your room turned into Mom's extended closet, for your information.

Naturally. NOT JENNY

So you can take the couch. JENNY

I think I can live without a Queen-sized mattress for one night. NOT JENNY

You could sleep in Mom's... JENNY

Nooo thank you. NOT JENNY

Not Jenny begins into the room, observing the damage.

This place is a disaster zone. The plant on the couch, the dirt on the carpet... NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

Just leave it. JENNY

I'd forgotten life before OSHA regulations. Because we work from home, so- NOT JENNY

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

I said just leave it. JENNY

How's Jimmy doing nowadays? Did I just miss him? NOT JENNY

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

How is he? NOT JENNY

JENNY

He's Jimmy.

NOT JENNY

Okay. Do you care to embellish?

(silence)

Or do you care to embellish about whatever happened to Dad?

(silence)

Is he in prison?

(silence)

Did he come to the funeral?

JENNY

Sure. He had 'accompaniment'. But that's the first time I'd seen him since the trial.

NOT JENNY

What trial?

JENNY

I really wish you'd 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 I find it to be pretty condescending.

NOT JENNY

You shouldn't.

JENNY

Well I do.

NOT JENNY

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

JENNY

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

NOT JENNY

Can you at least tell me who I can expect to see if I'm staying the night? Jimmy? Dad?

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

JENNY

Just Jimmy. Dad's in prison.

NOT JENNY

Okay, so he is in prison. When did that happen?

JENNY

Turns out you were right about him and the secretary. The two of them embezzled hundreds of thousands of dollars out of the company, went on vacations together... after Mom found out about the affair it blew the whole thing wide open. Big investigation.

NOT JENNY

How long will he be in prison for?

JENNY

Secretary got out easy. She went back home to... where was it? Bangor, Maine. Dad also got nailed for tax evasion so he's got another four years. Dad leaving was almost like...

NOT JENNY

Like what?

JENNY

Never mind. Enough questions.

NOT JENNY

Okay.

JENNY

It was like you leaving. It was like he was never there.

NOT JENNY

I see.

Not Jenny goes for the broken vase.

JENNY

Don't touch that either!

NOT JENNY

This place is a disaster. In our apartment we try to live with the philosophy that a photographer could come by any time, and would we be embarrassed by what they saw. Of course, they really could come by any time, we deal with a lot of photographers, so that's why it's driving me crazy and I can't just leave it here-

JENNY

Sure you can.

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, my hand!

JENNY

I've had enough of you acting like we're all a bunch of charity cases you've got to stoop and pop your head in every time some shit goes down.

NOT JENNY

I'm getting cut!

JENNY

We don't need your help cleaning up or asking questions or feeling sorry for us. 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

It's not worth my time.

NOT JENNY

Jenny, get off of me!

JENNY

We deserve our privacy. I don't like the idea of you going back to your wife and your job and you can tell them all how fucked up your whole family's turned out without you and everyone can feel oh-so-proud of you because you turned out so much better than all of those fuck-ups at home. Your Dad's in jail? Good. Your Mom's dead? Good. Your sister's crippled? Well, good, they all got what they deserved.

NOT JENNY

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

JENNY

What was that?

NOT JENNY

I'm sorry!

JENNY

Other part.

NOT JENNY

I'll leave you alone- no more questions, I promise.

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

JENNY

How bad is it?

NOT JENNY

Do you keep Band-aids here?

JENNY

Medicine cabinet.

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.

NOT JENNY

What are you laughing at?

Nothing.

JENNY

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

Gonna 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

How many do you take? Or I'm sorry, should I rephrase that as not-a-question-

JENNY

One every six hours. 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.

Wait, give me the bottle-

JENNY (CONT'D)

You said you only need one.

NOT JENNY

No, I-

JENNY

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.

Nah-ah-ah. Mother's rule.

JENNY (CONT'D)

What, I can't have a candy?

NOT JENNY

JENNY
It's too late for candy.

Not Jenny regards Jenny for a long beat.

JENNY (CONT'D)
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!

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 their noses at me. "And how about you, Jenny, are you still living at home?" "Are you still working at Macy's?" "You broke up with him 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 in 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 together and get drinks together and come home and get even drunker and that was the best time of my life.

Sounds like a blast. NOT JENNY

Like you're perfect. JENNY

I don't pretend to be. NOT JENNY

Tell me about your wife. JENNY

No thank you. NOT JENNY

Is your she waiting in the car? Back in a hotel somewhere? Do I get to meet her? Oh, I'd just die to meet Not Jenny's wife. JENNY

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

I'm sorry, what's the politically correct word? Partner? JENNY

You could call her that. NOT JENNY

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

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

Uh-oh, sensitive subject. JENNY

It's not sensitive. NOT JENNY

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 fucking 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?

(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 from what humiliating depths you climbed to become the big success you are now?

NOT JENNY

This was something I had to do alone.

Not Jenny sits.

JENNY

Can I ask one question?

NOT JENNY

Doesn't mean I'll answer.

JENNY

Why haven't you left yet?

NOT JENNY

Because I didn't come here for any of those reasons you accuse me of. I'm not here to clean up or make you feel bad or to rub anything in anyone's face. I'm here because...

(deep breath)

...because 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.

JENNY

If you are here to help... could you do me a favor before you go to bed? Can you help me go to the bathroom and take a bath? Jimmy wouldn't before.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENT 2: DISCIPLINARY EXPLANATION

Not Jenny speaks out, reading from her
Composition notebook.

NOT JENNY

To the Office of Undergraduate Admission at University of Alaska Anchorage, Attention: JC Villano. My letter is in response to your note that there were some items in need of clarification. First is the question of my name which is, in fact, Not Jenny. I'm sure your suggestion 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.

I was not aware the office required full description of any and all disciplinary history. I also overestimated my guidance counselor's investment in my application, and incidentally my pride, when she inexplicably mentioned the incident in question in her recommendation letter. To my knowledge, the purpose of said letter was to recommend me, and I'm disappointed to learn that her lapse in judgment is resulting in this precarious position. By the way her name is Jen. Nevertheless, I'm happy to provide the requested information if it will help me get off the Wait List- I appreciate your sending University of Alaska's official Explanation of Disciplinary Infraction Form, which I have completed and included.

Not Jenny refers to this form.

On September 25th of my junior year, I had an altercation with the bitch who sat next to me in Physics class.

(MORE)

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

I don't use the term 'bitch' lightly, but the form asks me to describe the incident and circumstances thoroughly.

The night before, I'd had an argument with my mother after she called my brother 'stupid'. The argument became heated and my brother became more upset, which resulted in me becoming more angry and outspoken. 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 worn the day before and 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?"

I fully understand that my comment was hurtful, rude and impolite but, to be frank, that's what I was going for. In most cases I leave people alone when I have nothing nice to say to them, but on a morning like September 25th of my junior year, a comment like "You're especially disgusting today" struck a chord and, at the risk of sounding melodramatic, made me want to kill myself. Perhaps because of his lack of context for the altercation, the teacher who witnessed the incident filed an infraction report and the dean suspended me for two days.

This is my complete disciplinary report outside of warnings from the hall monitor. I'll be happy to send along copies of those if you need. I truly hope that your knowledge of this incident is not harmful to my chances of being accepted to your institution. Instead, I hope it emphasizes the desperation in my need to get out of this town, school and family. Please, JC, you have the ability to provide me that opportunity. Don't let the exception overshadow the rule.

Yours truly, Not Jenny.

SCENE 4

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

JENNY

Mooooom!

Not home. NOT JENNY

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
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 admitted 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! And she's like "I alerted your homeroom teacher" but that's a dumb-ass system since I never go to homeroom because I need to eat breakfast which my health teacher told me is the most important meal of the day, so it's like this huge conspiring for me to not get into college! So what am I supposed to do?

NOT JENNY
Talk to the guidance counselor.

JENNY

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

NOT JENNY

Oh, Jesus.

JENNY

What am I supposed to do? She fucked 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 fuck 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

Yes. You know where she is, don't you?

NOT JENNY

No, I'm sure she's picking Jimmy up from school or something. She'll be back and then you can take care of all this.

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 shove it all in my face??

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. Wait, so it's April first?

NOT JENNY

Yes. That's why I bought all the birthday stuff.

JENNY

But Mom usually takes care of birthdays.

NOT JENNY

And I waited for her to remember Jimmy's birthday this year but guess who bought all this.

JENNY

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

NOT JENNY

You did it just to piss him off.

JENNY

Shit, I didn't get him anything.

NOT JENNY

Were you waiting for her to remind you?

JENNY

She has a lot on her mind, Not! 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

Why are you such a bitch?

Not Jenny abandons the effort and sits next to Jenny on the couch.

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 Mom and Dad, okay?

NOT JENNY

Jenny. I know you love Mom and Dad, and I do too, but that doesn't mean I don't realize that they have problems just like any other people. You seem to still think that they can do no wrong. But Mom screwed up your college applications and everyone knows Dad is having an affair. They've been promising me for seventeen years that they'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 bull-shit 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 living 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?

JENNY

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

(antagonizing)

Sixty-three degrees-

NOT JENNY (O.S.)

Is that warm, or-

JENNY

Kelvin.

NOT JENNY

Quit playing games, I'm trying to fill the tub 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 past your face, 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, I'm just still trying 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. 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

So we were in these super cute tennis outfits that matched but weren't identical. And we've both got racquets.

(MORE)

JENNY (CONT'D)

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 that we have any control of before they make their official decision and we reach the end of the runway-

NOT JENNY

-and 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 heart attack. 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 where the trophy is. And the crowd went wild!

NOT JENNY

All sixteen of them?

JENNY

Every last one. And when we turned to walk up the runway, she winked at me. She didn't know she could even do that. Her stupid move paid off! 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 I didn't wake up until three weeks later and she was dead and those assholes didn't even cancel the 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 it always gets sucked back on if you knock it away with your feet 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 book out and reads. After a moment, she inspects a sentence closely, then reads with new voraciousness. Not Jenny enters and storms to Jenny, snatching the book away.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

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 take care of you-

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 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!

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

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

JENNY

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

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

...what you were like to me growing up! I came here because I have things I need to do that I can't do anywhere else. I need to check up on you, I need to check up on our brother, I need to figure some shit out. I came back because you're my sister, and that's what people do! They check in on their family every once in a while.

JENNY

Every dozen or so years.

NOT JENNY

Okay, the timing worked out strangely, but my world came crashing down around me last week. Yes, I haven't been in touch with my family in thirteen years, but they 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.

(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 keep going! All those years gone in a flash. And you know what she says?

(MORE)

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

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 the fuck 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. Naturally I’ve been doing a lot of self-reflection and I figured it’d be a good idea to go back to my roots because right now I don’t know what the fuck else to do!

(beat)

And if it bothers you that I pick things up, it’s because I’ve become a little anal-retentive, not because I look down at you.

Not Jenny sits and rests her head on her hands
and breathes slowly and deeply.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

I thought I’d be needed here. Jennifer doesn’t need me anymore, so I thought maybe Jenny does. 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. So can I stay? Can we work on this?

JENNY

After my bath.

NOT JENNY

Okay. Let’s get you in.

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

JIMMY

They were all closed, just like I thought. So... you win! Dingalingaling! 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 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.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENT 3: U ALASKA SUPPLEMENTAL ESSAY

Not Jenny speaks out, reading from her Composition notebook.

NOT JENNY

"Why do you want to attend University of Alaska Anchorage?"

I am a perfect fit for your institution for so many reasons- I am a hard worker, an independent thinker and I have a passion for travel. You will see that I have maintained a B+ or better in History and Italian for my high school career. While I have not performed as well in Math, Science or Physical Education, I hope you'll regard as more of a reflection of the toxic environment high school can be, and not on my intelligence or focus. I'm ready for college rigor and maturity. If you read my application with sensitivity, I think you'll find that I have what it takes to become a U Alaska Seawolf.

(MORE)

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

While I have not had the means to travel extensively in my seventeen years, I spend long hours reading and researching about the natural and man-made spectacles around the globe. Particularly those that are on the opposite side of the planet from my own home. My long term goals include traveling around the world, learning as many languages as possible, and becoming an advocate for international relations and communication. I can think of no better context in which to begin my worldly travels than U Alaska, which is as far away as I can get from my own home without applying internationally. Being far away from home will enable me to focus without the noise and distraction that my family has been my entire life. I am grateful that they have made me the person I am today, but will be even more grateful when they are a distant memory.

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 one now?

Jimmy opens the biggest present first: a magic kit.

NOT JENNY

Sure, but save some for after dinner, okay-

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? And look, I made a cake! Angel food with fruit filling- so there's not a lot of sugar in it. Doesn't it look good?

JIMMY
Yeah... it looks great!

NOT JENNY
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. But it's not your fault for being upset.

A beep.

JIMMY

Sorry.

NOT JENNY

Is that your pump?

JIMMY

Yeah, it has to get refilled.

Jimmy pulls out his insulin pump- a small device on a thin, short plastic tube. Jimmy keeps the pump on his belt.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Mom's getting my refill cartridge.

NOT JENNY

Is that where she is right now?

JIMMY

Yeah. I told her I was going to need more but she kept forgetting. 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

Yep. At least now it'll stop beeping.

NOT JENNY

FUCK!

I'm sorry. JIMMY

Why are you sorry? NOT JENNY

I made you upset. JIMMY

Don't apologize, okay? You don't ever need to apologize to anyone. NOT JENNY

I'm sorry. JIMMY

Jimmy. NOT JENNY

Okay. JIMMY

Go take off your backpack and then I'll get started on some ravioli, okay? NOT JENNY

Are they Dillon's four-cheese ravioli? JIMMY

Maybe! And then we can have some cake! NOT JENNY

I um... I shouldn't have any cake. JIMMY

Why not? NOT JENNY

Because I have to balance my meter, and there's not enough time for my levels to- JIMMY

Shit. Jimmy, I'm sorry. NOT JENNY

JIMMY

But thank you anyway.

NOT JENNY

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

JIMMY

Yeah, maybe. 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.

JIMMY

Oh. Good. 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 means the same thing as being rejected pretty much?

NOT JENNY

It means I have to wait. If I don't go there, then there's nowhere to go. And what do I want to stay around here for?

JIMMY

You have everything to stay around here for. You have me and Mom and Dad.

NOT JENNY

And Jenny.

JIMMY

And Jenny.

A beep.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Jenny rushes in beaming at a letter.

JENNY

Look what I've got. Looks like an acceptance letter that got faxed immediately to the guidance office once they got all my documents. 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. Even if people try to put you down, you can still feel beautiful. Teachers can call you stupid but don't listen to them. Life really is survival of the fittest. Gloom 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 admitted you?

JIMMY

(reading)

University of Alaska. That's really far away.

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 Jenny, 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

Fuck you!

Not Jenny opens the front door and begins breathing very heavily.

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

What, did she steal my application? How can they admit 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 do it for another day. I can't stay here, I feel like the walls in this house are chalkboards and all anybody does is scratch them wherever they go, whatever they do! It feels like I'm going deaf.

JIMMY

At least you get to stay with me.

NOT JENNY

I don't want to stay with you! I want to get the fuck out of this house so I don'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.

NOT JENNY

Our parents don't love us or each other!

JIMMY

Yes they do!

NOT JENNY

Dad's been fucking his secretary for years! Why do you think he goes away all the time?

JIMMY

For business.

NOT JENNY

No, Jimmy, it isn't for business, it's so he can get away from us.

JIMMY

Daddy loves us.

NOT JENNY

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

JIMMY

She has a lot on her mind.

NOT JENNY

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

JIMMY

Mommy loves me.

NOT JENNY

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

JIMMY

Stop it, Not Jenny. You're just upset, of course Mommy and Daddy love 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 can't handle this anymore, 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

You only care about yourself!

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!

NOT JENNY

What?

You said. JIMMY

When did I say- NOT JENNY

JIMMY
In your college papers. You called us our whole family '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 you could leave it a little 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

Every day!

NOT JENNY

I don't know about every day, but I'll send one every once in a while.

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.

Jimmy runs off.

NOT JENNY

Jimmy...

SCENE 7

Present day, immediately before Scene 1. Jenny in wheelchair. Jimmy eats almonds. The room is clean for now.

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

It's a 'half pipe'. Half of a pipe.

JENNY

I think I'll pass.

JIMMY

Fine, sit here and waste your life, see what I care. You smell.

JENNY

Thanks.

JIMMY

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

JENNY

Today I finished up my two month 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 tonight. Thanks for that, by the way, I know you'd probably rather be with Natalia.

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. I need a little time to myself.

JENNY

How's wartface doing these days? Haven't seen her in months.

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.

JIMMY
So I had to watch her scarf down fried chicken after throwing out my own lunch, and I was starving! I'm still fucking 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 is almonds. But anyway, I got really fucking pissed at Natalia today, so I was thrilled to cash in my night off tonight.

JENNY
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 basement.

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 that is not true. Don't tell me all your freaky friends are coming over to wage a big Warhammer war down there.

JIMMY

They are not dolls, and no, Cleo and Oberon aren't 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. 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 the fuck you want? 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.

How? JIMMY

Never mind, you don't care. JENNY

Can't you do it yourself? JIMMY

Um. No? JENNY

JIMMY
So you expect me to help you get in and out of the bathtub. And probably off and on the crapper too.

Forget it. JENNY

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-?

You're my brother- JENNY

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
I don't have a diaper, Jimmy, I can still control myself. 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 monitor beeps.

JENNY (CONT'D)
Can't you shut that fucking monitor off, I'm trying to talk.

JIMMY
I can't, actually.

JENNY

Put it on silent.

JIMMY

Silent? What kind of device do you think this is? It's alerting me that my blood sugar is running low and 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. The point is, 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 Dad,

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 like the turtle they rescued and put in the aquarium so he could live out his days being made fun of by bratty little kids. I don't want the embarrassment. 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. 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. 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 monitor 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

Well, I should try to find something sugary.

Jimmy begins towards the kitchen.

JENNY

Where are you going?

JIMMY

We have some juice left.

JENNY

No we don't.

JIMMY

I went to CostCo two days ago, we didn't already finish a gallon of orange juice and apple cider.

JENNY

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

JIMMY

Why the fuck would you do that?

JENNY

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

JIMMY

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-- I had to explain to *Dad* 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 just didn't give a shit, and was playing with fucking Warhammer piece-of-shits in the basement. 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 my book? I want to read it one more time.

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

JENNY (CONT'D)

Don't be a dick. Give me that book 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 twelve.

Jenny opens the umbrella, Jimmy is unfazed.

JENNY
Ooooooh! Now what?

JIMMY
Nice try.

JENNY
Fine!

Jenny shatters a vase with the umbrella, then pierces a hole into a potted plant, spilling dirt.

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. Fuck you.

Jimmy reaches for the candy dish. Jenny slaps the umbrella down in front of it.

JENNY

Nah-ah-ah. Mother's rule. Bath first or I'll jab you in the rib.

JIMMY

I'll give you your book 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 book. 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 book, then crosses the room and tears the book 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. I could go into shock. I have to go try to renew my script now if I can even find a drug store that'll be open, what is it, almost ten?

JENNY

Quarter after.

JIMMY

Fuck! I've gotta go.

JENNY

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

JIMMY

I don't just need sugar, Jenny, it's not that simple.

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!

JENNY

Then I guess you'd better go!

Jimmy goes.

JENNY (CONT'D)

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

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! Dad! 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.

Fuck!

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

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.

SCENE 8

Present day, shortly after Scene 5. Not Jenny holds Jimmy's arms. He doesn't find this to be tender. The bathroom door is closed- Jenny is drying her hair. The monitor beeps.

NOT JENNY

I imagine you're probably still feeling very upset. I'm sure this is all very traumatic. Seeing Jenny so helpless. Dad's nowhere he can help out. And Mom... gone. Over a beauty contest. It's no wonder you can't really bring yourself to talk quite yet. But I want you to know that I'm here and you can talk to me. When you're ready.

Jimmy sits.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

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!

Not Jenny sits.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

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 already run almost completely out of money by the time your eleventh birthday came. I didn't know where I was. I was hitch-hiking.

(MORE)

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

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. I just hoped you'd know it was me that day. 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.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

You don't have to keep moving away from me.

JIMMY

I kept them. There in that box on the shelf. Oh, don't take those out now, c'mon.

NOT JENNY

Why do you keep moving away from me?

JIMMY

I'm not, I'm just feeling very tired, and my stomach hurts.

NOT JENNY

I want to make sure you're okay.

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.

NOT JENNY

Okay. How have you been? 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.

Jimmy quickly drinks an entire glass of water,
then looks at Not Jenny.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

What?

NOT JENNY

I can tell you're upset with me.

JIMMY

I'm twenty-three years old. I don't even resemble who I was when you knew me. It's not me you walked out on, just a kid with the same name. So no, I'm not upset with you- how could I be? I don't even know who you are.

NOT JENNY

I knew you'd be angry-

JIMMY

I just told you I'm not upset with you! 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 callous does. A reminder that you've toughened up. Like I've got one on my thumb and I'll just rub it sometimes and think about how it's one more hardened piece of me. I got it 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 because you were the one who used to do it. I bet you used to be the one to clean the lipstick stains off Dad's collars so no one would see them, because when she found them herself... it was frightening. I thought, "She's going to kill someone- I just don't know who". Dad ran out and Mom 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 looked in 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. 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

You're right. Life goes on.

JIMMY

Could you pick some food up?

NOT JENNY

I was going to pick up some groceries tomorrow.

JIMMY

I mean could you go to like a gas station and get me a snack?

NOT JENNY

Is there nothing in the house?

JIMMY

Almonds, which I finished.

NOT JENNY

You've got a car, get it yourself. What happened to you, Jimmy? You're the only one I was actually looking forward to seeing and now... seeing what they've turned you into, I'm almost sorry I bothered. You've got this attitude that reminds me of... I didn't want to say this before but you even look like Dad.

JIMMY

I don't know if that's meant to be an insult or what.

Jimmy begins to shuffle through the postcard box.

NOT JENNY

I told you, I'll get groceries tomorrow.

JIMMY

I don't want a snack tomorrow, I want a snack now.

NOT JENNY

It's late!

JIMMY

What happened to my nice big sister who used to do everything for me? Halloween costumes, dinner, my birthday party... used to send me all these postcards. She went away and didn't come back like she promised and now she won't even buy me a snack. That's a pretty small favor to ask, considering the way you left, you owe me a lot more than a quick ride to 7-Eleven. Here, I'll even give you the money.

NOT JENNY

You are not going to make me feel guilty for not coming back-

JIMMY

You made me a promise-

NOT JENNY

I never got a postcard back! Not one! That's enough to make a person feel unwanted, and 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 I guess that makes me a promise breaker.

JIMMY

So then. What's keeping you here?

NOT JENNY

I'd like to make amends with you.

JIMMY

That's a laugh, coming from you. Do you really believe what you're saying?

NOT JENNY

Because that's what you do.

JIMMY

Not me. And certainly not you.

NOT JENNY

Maybe I do.

JIMMY

No, you're more the leaving type. I've told you before, you only care about yourself, because if that were true, the only way you're gonna make amends with me is to take me to California.

NOT JENNY

Hold the phone. What happened to your having a new life here? A girlfriend, a job and you're looking for your own place.

JIMMY

My girlfriend's a hippo, my job's at a Footlocker and anywhere I live here isn't going to be California. I bet you could hook me up with a job over there and the girls have got to be better looking than they are around here. You owe me.

NOT JENNY

Maybe I'm not going back to California.

JIMMY

Of course you are.

NOT JENNY

No, I started to realize that I'm needed here.

JIMMY

Why.

NOT JENNY

To take care of Jenny.

A significant beat.

JIMMY

Now that whole 'making amends' thing just now was a laugh, but 'taking care of Jenny' is just a truckload of horse-shit.

NOT JENNY

She needs our help.

JIMMY

Have you paid any attention to her?

NOT JENNY

Yes, a hell of a lot more than you, apparently. She told me you wouldn't help her go to the bathroom or take a bath-

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. 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

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

JIMMY

Oh, then there you go. Sounds like she's had enough, I guess. She probably would have done it before but she couldn't reach them- it was hysterical.

NOT JENNY

What are we going to do?

JIMMY

I'll reach the pills for her.

NOT JENNY

We can't let her do that!

Not Jenny pockets the pills.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

What are these, her meds? We're going to have to ration them for her but we can't let her get the whole bottle or... oh God, we're going to have to hide everything sharp and-

Jimmy rises suddenly.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

Where are you going?

JIMMY

Let her do what she wants.

NOT JENNY

This is suicide, Jimmy, not a questionable hairstyle. Sit down, we are not done talking about this.

JIMMY

What's this trash bag doing here?

NOT JENNY

I was using it to clean up the room, why? Jimmy, have you been drinking?

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.

NOT JENNY

Not yet, but if we build the ramps and the bars so she can pull herself and whatever else they do-

JIMMY

She doesn't want to be handicapped.

NOT JENNY

She doesn't have a choice.

JIMMY

Actually, she does. And she's choosing to cut her losses and get out before it gets worse.

Jimmy sits, still holding the bag.

NOT JENNY

No wonder she's trying to get rid of me. She needs me out of the way.

JIMMY

And what a great disappointment that must be, Jenny not wanting you around. Once again you've struck out- she doesn't want you here, you're just sticking around for your own gratification, congratulations!

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

NOT JENNY

Jimmy, what's going on? Is your insulin running low? Is that why you were out looking for a drug store?

The monitor beeps.

JIMMY

They're all closed... it's after 10. I drove... hour and a half... looking... 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. The monitor beeps.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

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

JIMMY

Flushed it.

NOT JENNY

Jenny! Get in here! Don't lean back, Jimmy, if you throw up you'll choke on it. Come here, sit up. Lean forward, don't hit your head. 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

All this blathering on and on about Jimmy's insulin. "Jimmy can't eat this, Jimmy can't eat that, don't eat this in front of him, he'll get upset. You know how sensitive Jimmy is about his diabetes."

NOT JENNY

We don't have time for this. He needs his insulin. Where did you put it?

JENNY

You know what the problem is with diabetes? It's over-diagnosed. Who doesn't want sugar? Technically we should just say every kid in the entire fucking world has diabetes!

NOT JENNY

Do you have it or do I need to call an ambulance?

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," And the whole time: "Beep! Beep! Beep! I want sugar! I want sugar!"

JENNY (CONT'D)

Jesus Christ, that thing never shuts up! 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 Jenny, you don't know how bad it can be. Beep! Beep! Beep!

JIMMY

Give up the insulin! 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', Jenny, he needs insulin and if you're not going to give it up, we don't have a choice.

JIMMY

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

JENNY

If everyone freaked out like you are every time I had a craving, no one would ever get anything done.

NOT JENNY

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

JIMMY

No, I'll be fine, just get me something to eat.

JENNY

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

NOT JENNY

You shut up. I'm getting some food from the kitchen.

JENNY

Nothing in there.

NOT JENNY

Stay with him, Jenny, I'm going to-

JENNY

I told you, there's nothing in there.

JIMMY

She's right, it's all gone.

JENNY

I threw it all out.

Not Jenny sighs deeply.

NOT JENNY

All right, we have a lot of shit to sift through. Let's take a step back and sit and talk it through.

JENNY

I'm seated.

JIMMY

Oh, Jesus, I'm not gonna Kumbaya about our feelings right now.

NOT JENNY

Sit the fuck down, we're going to work through this, the three of us.

JIMMY

Jenny's going to kill herself tonight, there's nothing to discuss.

NOT JENNY

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

JENNY

No. I'm gonna fucking do it.

NOT JENNY

Okay, I can't let that happen- Jimmy, sit down. Jimmy, sit down and shut up. Shut up, shut up, shut up!

JIMMY

And then if you want to try to 'make amends', be my guest, we'll fly to California and start fresh.

NOT JENNY

There is no starting fresh! I am talking about not allowing our sister to kill herself!

JIMMY

It's not our damn business! Let her do it if she wants to!

JENNY

He's right. Go, take him to California. Let me do what I want.

NOT JENNY

Things are about to get a lot 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. That's a huge fucking deal and she doesn't want to go through life like that. Can you blame her? Let's go!

NOT JENNY

Stay out of it, Jimmy.

JIMMY

Why should I? I'm the only one who's respecting her actual feelings! 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

I think you mean 'natural world', not 'real world' because in the 'real world' we are human beings and we take care of one another and you don't have much of a platform to stand on as long as you've got that pump plugged in. By your standards all three of us are a pack of misfit gazelles. Paralyzed, diabetic, lesbian. They don't get exactly get insulin injections in the natural world. That's the difference with being human- we adapt and we help each other adapt. We take care of one another.

(to Jenny)

You don't want to die, Jenny- Jimmy is going to start acting better.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

His monitor's going to stop beeping, he'll quit acting like such a- shut up!

JIMMY

I'm not going to get better, I'm going to get lost, and you're coming with.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

You'll see. No one's going anywhere, we're going to be just fine.

JIMMY

You don't get it- there is no 'and'. You can't have me and her, there isn't going to be any 'working out our issues'. Why do you care so much about her? She's fucking crazy!

The monitor beeps. Jenny slips close to Jimmy and, unseen, slides a pair of scissors very near the cord of his pump.

JENNY

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

She snips the cord and the monitor emits a shrill, extended beep.

JIMMY

What the fuck did you do to my-!

Jimmy throws Jenny off the wheelchair and onto the floor.

JIMMY (CONT'D)

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

JENNY

Shut it off, shut it off, shut it off, shut it off!
Oh my God turn that fucking thing off!

Not Jenny picks up the scissors and guards Jenny's body with them.

NOT JENNY

Stay away.

JIMMY

What are you doing? She's dangerous! She could have killed me!

JENNY

Make it stop!

Jimmy presses a button on the monitor and it stops the shrill beep.

JENNY (CONT'D)

Oh, thank God.

JIMMY

For once we're asking you to leave here. You couldn't get out of here fast enough the first time! Now I'm asking you to do the right thing and let's go!

JENNY

Go ahead. You've always been closer, the two of you.

NOT JENNY

Get me the phone. Stop staring at me, and give me the fucking phone.

Jimmy goes to get the phone and will hand it to Not Jenny.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

(to Jenny)

I don't know what you think you're trying to pull with hiding Jimmy's insulin but now I've got to take him to the hospital 'cause of you. It seems like you're having a field day trying to get rid of us both, but we're the only two you've got, and right now you need us. So get it together and stop acting like such a selfish bitch.

JENNY
Get me off the floor!

NOT JENNY
In a minute.

Not Jenny makes a phone call.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)
Hi, we need an ambulance.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)
(into phone)
My brother's a diabetic and his insulin's
been cut off and he's gone into... hold on-
(to Jenny)
Shut up for one minute.

JENNY
(in mockery)
Oh, help! Help! Please, help, my brother's
defective and can't take care of himself
anymore.

JENNY
Quick! And while you're at it I could really use some pretzels!

Not Jenny steps on Jenny's face. Jenny squeals
under the rest of the call.

NOT JENNY
(into phone)
Sorry about that- are you still there? He's gone into a state, I don't know. 76 Powell
Avenue. Yes. Thank you.

(she hangs up. to Jimmy)

They're coming.

(to Jenny)

Talk to me, Jenny. What is it you want? What do you want from us? Look at me! You're
not going anywhere so you may as well look at me!

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)
What is it you want? What exactly are you
trying to do?

JENNY
You just stepped on my fucking face! Who
the fuck does that?

JENNY
I want to be back in the chair.

JIMMY

Yeah, right, she's helping you after all that.

JENNY

Put me back and then leave me alone! Go, take him to California! Forget about me!

NOT JENNY

You're my sister! You need my help and, unfortunately for you, I give a shit.

JENNY

Then where were you for thirteen years, Not? Why weren't you taking care of us then? That is all we can ever say for one another! "You're my sister". What does that mean? Who cares? Can you honestly say you care about me for any other reason? We have nothing to do with one another, and we never have. We never would have met if we didn't grow up in this house together and what a load of fun that was. If I live, if I die, you are getting on a plane and flying back to California, and then what, we'll call each other on our birthday and won't that be awkward! You don't need to feel obliged to care about my life. I hereby relieve you of that obligation, poof! My life has been a series of me fucking up because I never knew what I wanted, but now I know what I want and it's one thing I can't fail at, so please stay out of it. You did such a good fucking job at it during our entire twenties. Don't pretend you wouldn't be relieved if you never had to worry about me again.

NOT JENNY

I want help you.

JENNY

No you don't, you hate me.

NOT JENNY

I don't. You're being an asshole, but I don't hate you.

JIMMY

You can't be serious.

NOT JENNY

Let's get you back in the chair. Are you ready? Three, two, one-

Not Jenny helps lift Jenny back into the chair.

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

You okay?

I'm paralyzed, not porcelain.

JENNY

Good.

NOT JENNY

I hear them coming. Let's go, Not Jenny. We're done here.

JIMMY

I'm not coming with you.

NOT JENNY

You'd rather stick around with her!?

JIMMY

You have to realize that people only do something like that if they're unwell. And she is unwell. She needs me to be the bigger person and help, not ditch her when she needs me.

NOT JENNY

And you're the prime example of sticking around, aren't you?

JIMMY

You wanna go to California? Be my guest. I'm fighting for Jenny.

NOT JENNY

Then you're an army of one.

JIMMY

I always have been.

NOT JENNY

You had me.

JIMMY

No, I had a ten-year-old boy with the same name. But I didn't have you.

NOT JENNY

An ambulance siren directly outside the house.

JENNY
(to Not Jenny, a difficult guilt)

It's in the candy dish.

Not Jenny crosses to the candy dish, lifts the lid and finds Jimmy's insulin. An ambulance siren in the distance. Not Jenny lets out a long breath.

NOT JENNY

Okay, I hate you a little.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENT 4: PERSONAL ESSAY

Not Jenny speaks out, reading from her Composition notebook.

NOT JENNY

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

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 I might have never considered. 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? How much of who I am would still be without her? And what about Jenny? How much of her identity is my responsibility? 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 am pragmatic, cynical and mature for my age which could be in response to Jenny being emotional, optimistic and immature for her age. This also might just be my nature, but no matter how much I try, I can never know what I would be like without my relationship with Jenny. I can never separate who I am from who I must be or why. I can only continue being who I am, whatever I am.

I like who I am, 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.

(MORE)

NOT JENNY (CONT'D)

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.

SCENE 9

Jimmy's tenth birthday. Late that night. Jenny sits on the couch in the dark. Not Jenny crosses to the door with a giant suitcase rolling behind her. Jenny switches the light on.

Where are you going?

JENNY

I'm taking the bus.

NOT JENNY

What bus?

JENNY

The bus that takes me out of town.

NOT JENNY

To where?

JENNY

I'll figure that out when I get there.

NOT JENNY

Were you going to tell anyone where you were going?

JENNY

No.

NOT JENNY

So you're running away.

JENNY

I'm going away.

NOT JENNY

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 Quebec. I don't have a goal. Just a suitcase. They make it look so easy on cartoons: just a polka dot blanket tied in a ball on a long stick. 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 was there ever a point when we got 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? And besides, I told you I read your college application. And I mean I read the whole thing.

NOT JENNY

So?

JENNY

The part about how your glad you had me for a sister? I thought it was really nice. It... made me cry, actually. I didn't realize you felt that way too.

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

'Gloomy'?

JENNY

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

NOT JENNY

At least I'm not a plastic perky little twat. I like being me.

JENNY

I like being me 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. You're gonna change your name, aren't you?

NOT JENNY

I don't think so. I know I always wanted to, but I think I've gotten used to 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 about it? I think 'Jenny' is someone perky and 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 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.

SCENE 10

Present day, shortly after Scene 8. Jenny sits alone. The whirling red lights of the ambulance come through the open door, then slide across the wall and vanish. After a moment, Not Jenny enters and shuts the door behind her.

JENNY
What did they say?

NOT JENNY
It's a good thing I called because he could have gone into a coma.

JENNY
Is he going to be okay?

NOT JENNY
They have to rush him to the ER and make sure he gets the drugs he needs. But yes, most likely.

JENNY
I'm a bad person.

NOT JENNY
You're sick.

JENNY
I'm sick because I'm bad.

NOT JENNY
No. You've got it mixed up. It's the other way around.

JENNY
Do you really think so?

NOT JENNY
Yes. And it's been that way for a long time.

JENNY
Then why are you still here?

NOT JENNY
Because Mom is gone. So now I'd like to try and fix that.

JENNY
You said you weren't trying to fix us.

I lied. NOT JENNY

It was the only way. (beat)

Hey, Not? JENNY

Yeah. NOT JENNY

I need to go to the bathroom. JENNY

Okay. NOT JENNY

Not Jenny begins towards Jenny.

Are you really going to stay with me? JENNY

Yes. NOT JENNY

Thank you. JENNY

I'll need your help. NOT JENNY

What can I do? JENNY

Try. NOT JENNY

Not Jenny pushes Jenny into the bathroom and slams the door behind her, a little too hard.

End of play.