

Caitlin & Nick 1

NUNZIO. No, but that doesn't stop us! (*Grandparents laugh and start singing and dancing in their seats.*)

NICK. Could someone please pass the salt. And a weapon! (*A spot on Emma.*)

EMMA. (*To audience.*) And so dinner went on. A beautiful meal. We enjoyed the veal, then a fresh tomato garden salad, then ravioli with eggplant on the side, then we had coffee with ricotta cheesecake and fresh-baked anisette cookies. And all through this beautiful meal, I looked at my grandson and the lovely girl sitting next to him, and I thought yes, oh yes, he had found his reason to stay.

CAITLIN. Everything was so delicious, Aida. Thank you so much.

AIDA. Caitlin, tonight for when you're watching TV, let me take the veal and make you a sandwich.

NICK. Nan!

AIDA. (*Rushing into the kitchen.*) No trouble, no trouble ...

NICK. Nan, get back here! (*But she is gone.*) Look Caitlin, you don't have to take the veal.

EMMA. What's it gonna do, kill her?

NICK. Nan, please!

CAITLIN. Nick c'mon, it's no big deal, I'll take it.

NICK. Caitlin, you're a guest, you don't have to.

CAITLIN. Yes Nick, I know that —

FRANK. Caitlin, we like you. We hope we see you again soon.

CAITLIN. I really had a great time. You're all so sweet.

NUNZIO. We're old. We're adorable. (*Aida rushes back in with a bag.*)

AIDA. Here we are!

CAITLIN. Thank you, Aida. Good night everybody.

AIDA.	EMMA.	FRANK.	NUNZIO.
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It was lovely	Bye!	Come back	Bye now!
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having you!	Bye-bye!	any time,	Bye-bye!
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Come back	sweetheart!
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soon!

Start

EMMA. See you at Pathmark! (*Nick and Caitlin exit onto the porch.*)

NICK. Ahhhh! Oh my God, oh my God, oh my God. Okay, first, and foremost, I am so sorry. I mean, deeply, deeply sorry.

CAITLIN. Nick, no, don't apologize for anything, I —

NICK. Look, I feel I owe you something. Something expensive. So how about you let me take you to dinner this week. We can go to a

nice vegetarian restaurant and no one will ask if you're in therapy.

CAITLIN. Nick, I thought you didn't like blind setups.

NICK. No, um, no, I don't. But I, uh, I like you. (*A beat.*) And let me just say, I am really, really normal away from my family. That's right, I'm actually intelligent and somewhat charming, and I'm sensitive — but of course in a very macho sort of way. (*They share a smile.*) So you falling for any of this?

CAITLIN. Uh — maybe.

NICK. Okay, "maybe's" not bad, not bad at all. My grandmother was right. She did good. (*A beat.*)

CAITLIN. Nick, I have a confession to make.

NICK. Oh-oh. You've got a boyfriend, you've got a girlfriend, you're really a man, what?

CAITLIN. Nick, I knew you'd be here today. That's the real reason I came. I've just been, I don't know, feeling a little lonely, maybe even a little desperate — oh my God, I said that word out loud. But yeah, maybe even a little desperate, and I figured — well, since I liked your grandmother so much, maybe she's got a grandson who — well ... oh, God —

NICK. Hm. Interesting. Well then, if I may be so bold — what *did* you think of Emma's grandson?

CAITLIN. Well that's the thing. I mean, seeing you with all four of your grandparents, well I was thinking of mine and —

NICK. Right, you said they were all gone.

CAITLIN. I did know my mom's mom, but, what I'm saying is — well — you spent the whole evening yelling at them.

NICK. Oh, that. Well, ya know, family. It's just the way we speak to each other. I take it you and your grandmother didn't speak so ...

CAITLIN. No, we never yelled. We used to — talk.

NICK. Talk? I'll have to try that with them sometime.

CAITLIN. Actually, my grandmother used to read to me. But not children's stories, no. You see, after my grandfather died, she started to read these books, these wonderful books, as a way to get through the day without him. When I was about nine years old, she read me *Great Expectations*.

NICK. Wait. She read you Dickens? In its entirety?

CAITLIN. It took six months. And you know how people read to children to put them to sleep? Not my grandmother. She read to enthrall me. And I'd hold onto her so tight, her voice just covering me like a blanket.

NICK. So Caitlin, how about it? Dinner? Tomorrow night? (*A beat.*)
You okay?

CAITLIN. Yeah, I, uh — well, seeing you all here — um, my grandmother, when I was thirteen, she, well ... I'm sorry, Nick — I can't do this with you —

NICK. What?

CAITLIN. I mean — oh God — you seem like an okay guy, but — but you just acted like such an asshole with them!

NICK. What?!

CAITLIN. Us going out — I'm sorry, I — I ...

NICK. Now wait a minute, Caitlin! Caitlin, come on! (*Caitlin quickly exits.*) Wait! So what're you saying then? You're desperate and you're turning me down?! Caitlin! (*After a moment, Nick reenters the house. Grandparents are seated, eagerly waiting for him.*)

GRANDPARENTS. Well?! (*Nick begins pacing about the room.*)

NICK. You know — you — you people are unbelievable!

NUNZIO. Again with the “you people”?

EMMA. She turned him down.

NICK. You invited her over without telling me. Which you had no right to ...

AIDA. Nicholas, don't get upset. I'll get a fruit bowl.

NICK. No! No food now! Everyone sit and listen to me!

FRANK. You see anyone standing?

NICK. Did any of you take into consideration how I would feel? Did any of you take into consideration how your sneaky little plan — which didn't work, by the way! — was infringing on my life? Hell, no! And exactly what kind of plan was that? You expected what? For us to meet and fall in love and spend the rest of our lives together!

EMMA. Yes!

NICK. Well it doesn't happen that way!

NUNZIO. It happened to us!

NICK. That was a hundred and fifty years ago! Today, we do things different. We have careers and ambitions and we only fall in love with people who *we* choose, who *we* pick, when we're damn good and ready!

EMMA. Well that's the problem right there!

NICK. But no, you people, you just did what you wanted because you want me to live my life your way. Well you know what, maybe I don't want to get married.

Stop