

Elizabeth.

~~ACT TWO~~

INT. PAUL & IDA'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY (D2)

Stella and Elizabeth sits at the kitchen island, as Fiona & Frank rough house nearby. Aiden prepares toaster strudels.

STELLA

But mom and dad are the perfect couple.

AIDEN

We've got apple, berry, snickerdoodle...

STELLA

I don't want a Toaster Strudel.

AIDEN

Trust me, it'll help with what we're about to tell you.

(Stella takes the strudel)

The way mom and dad act around you is a show. For your benefit.

STELLA

I don't understand.

ELIZABETH

They aren't the perfect couple. We don't know why mom left, but we do know they have problems. Just like everyone does. They just kept them from you because Dr. Chang told us not to "dump in." She said a positive emotional environment would give you a better shot at beating cancer.

STELLA

So, you all have problems you've been hiding from me? For the last ten years?

AIDEN

Not me. I'm great.

ELIZABETH

No problems here.

STELLA

Are you both lying to me?

ELIZABETH

Obviously.

AIDEN

I'm stress eating.

STELLA

Okay, so... what are your problems?

LONG BEAT. Elizabeth decides to share on Aiden's behalf.

2/1/17

→
START
SC. 1

LIFE SENTENCE PILOT

→

1/5

→ CONT.

12.

ELIZABETH

Aiden's a grown man who still lives with his parents, sells Adderall to soccer moms and uses your cancer to guilt them into sleeping with him.

AIDEN

And Elizabeth married a black man just to get mom and dad's to notice her.

STELLA

Oh my God. Is that true!?

AIDEN

Betsy is married.

ELIZABETH

Darrius is black.

ELIZABETH (CONT'D)

(off Stella's look)

Obviously, I'm joking! Not about Darrius being black. He clearly is. But that's not why I married him. Aiden is a moron.

AIDEN

Well, Elizabeth's a woman.

(off their looks)

What? I thought we were pointing out things that are totally obvious.

ELIZABETH

I married him because I love him. Though, I did have children quickly to give mom and dad something positive to focus on...

(Frank & Fiona SCREAM)

And I sort of regret that.

AIDEN

Just like I sort of regret selling drugs and sleeping with married women.

STELLA

You do?

AIDEN

No! I do what I have to. Dad doesn't give handouts to his loser son.

(re. Stella's rent check)

~~Just to his terminally ill daughter. And I sleep with married women 'cause I'm not looking for a relationship, and neither are they 'cause they're already in one.~~

→

2/5

→ CONT.

13.

STELLA

Wow. Okay, well... Aiden, I think a real relationship might motivate you to get your life on track, so I'm going to fix you up. And Elizabeth, if you need more help with your kids... I can babysit.

ELIZABETH

Can you? You know nothing about kids.

STELLA

That's not true. I know a lot. They're tiny people but for some reason they eat full sized food. Okay, I don't know much, but that's because you never ask me to babysit. Probably, 'cause you didn't want to "dump in." But I'm okay now, so I want you to dump all over me. You know what I mean. I'll babysit whenever you want.

ELIZABETH

It's okay. I don't need help. Now that my book's finished, I have plenty of time.

STELLA

Wait, you finished your book? That's awesome. I can't wait to read--

ELIZABETH

Stella, calm down. I didn't mean I finished it. I meant it's finished. As in... my publisher killed it.

STELLA

That sounds like a bigger problem than your kids. Why didn't you lead with that? And why would he kill your book?

AIDEN

Probably because it's a personal memoir called "Stella Dies at The End."

Elizabeth shoots Aiden a look. Stella takes this in.

STELLA

Now I know why you never let me read it. You didn't want to spoil my own ending.

ELIZABETH

Are you mad?

→

3/5

→ CONT.

14.

STELLA

Of course. But not because you wrote it.
And not because the title is lazy and
obvious. I'm mad because you're not going
to finish it. So, I don't die at the end?
So what? Come up with a new ending.

ELIZABETH

It's a memoir, I can't make something up.
I'd have to pitch my publisher a whole
new story. And I don't have one to pitch.

STELLA

Then, it's settled. I'll babysit, so you
have time to figure it out. Right, guys?

//END

~~Stella puts her hand up to high-five Frank as he runs by, but
Frank moves to avoid her... and topples over into a chair.~~

~~STELLA (V.O.)~~

~~Not surprisingly, Elizabeth did not
immediately take me up on my offer to
care for her children. So, I decided to
go talk to my dad and find out what was
really going on with him and mom.~~

~~INT. GOLF CLUB PRO SHOP - DAY (D2)~~

~~Stella enters and marches up to a GOLF PRO (30s).~~

~~STELLA~~

~~I'm looking for my father, Paul Ambrose?~~

~~GOLF PRO~~

~~I'm sorry, Mr. Ambrose cancelled his
membership a few months ago. I've heard
he's been hiding out at Powell's Books a
lot lately... if that helps.~~

~~STELLA (V.O.)~~

~~It didn't help...~~

~~INT. POWELL'S BOOK SHOP - DAY (D2)~~

~~Stella wanders through the iconic store until she finally
finds Paul, tucked in the corner reading a book on finance.~~

~~STELLA (V.O.)~~

~~I mean, it helped me find him. But I
didn't like what I found. My father was
always so strong-- like the Brawny Paper
Towel guy sans flannel. But today, he
seemed... disturbingly human.~~

4/5

~~STELLA
Great. It's practically writing itself.~~

INT. THE HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER (D4)

Stella and Fiona come out to find Wes, Frank and Elizabeth.

STELLA
Lizzy? How did you know we were here?

ELIZABETH
Wes told me. Question is, why didn't you?

STELLA
I wanted you to focus on your book.

ELIZABETH
Well, I've decided to give up. I tried,
but I've got nothing. Did they eat?

FIONA
I ate fancy jewelry!

ELIZABETH
Okay. Come on, we'll pick up a pizza.

Elizabeth and her kids walk out. ~~Stella calls after her.~~

~~STELLA
Please don't give up! And please keep a
close eye on Fiona's stool!
(then, to Wes)
Thanks a lot, Narc.~~

~~WES
So, it's not okay if your family lies to
you but it's fine for you to lie to them?~~

~~STELLA
No. That's why I needed you to do it.~~

~~WES
It's the same thing.~~

~~STELLA
Agree to disagree.~~

~~WES
That's not how that works. You can't just
deny a fact and say agree to disagree.~~

~~STELLA
Yes, you can. You should know that,
you're a Republican.~~

// END

5/5

→
START

SC. 2