



STAN                   What's that?

ABBY                   Chris starts school on Tuesday. Chris, honey, go watch TV in the bedroom for awhile, okay? You can watch on the waterbed.

*CHRIS exits.*

So I was thinking, it might be best if he stayed with you. I don't want him to have to start late. And it doesn't make sense to enroll him in a school only to have to take him right out again and re-enroll him when this whole thing is temporary anyway.

STAN                   What's temporary?

ABBY                   This. This is. Our separation.

*(Pause.)*

Isn't it?

*(Pause.)*

You said you needed time.

STAN                   Yes. I said —

ABBY                   — you don't love me anymore.

STAN                   I never said —

ABBY                   You did!

STAN                   I said: I don't *know* / if I —

ABBY                   And what-what are we supposed to do? Just sit around and wait with the kids while you have the house to yourself and throw parties and women over / and pretend like we don't even *fucking exist!*

*On "fucking exist," ABBY throws a large stack of Racing Forms in the air, causing them to fall all over the room.*



If you really don't want to ... I can call the school and try to arrange / something.

STAN                    You don't have to do that. It's better this way. Really.

ABBY                   All right, if you're sure. Thank you. You won't forget, will you?

STAN                   Forget what?

ABBY                   To take him to school.

STAN                   No. What school is it?

ABBY                   Claremont. It's on College / Avenue ...

STAN                   I know where it is.

ABBY                   You'll pick him up, too, won't you?

STAN                   Yeah yeah, of course ...

*Pause.*

ABBY                   So what will you do while we're gone?

STAN                   I'm still figuring it out. I figured I'd hit the track next weekend. I think the system is finally ready, Abby. I've been going over my results and if this data means what I think it means, it's very exciting.

ABBY                   What does it mean?

STAN                   It means the system works. It means you and I are never going to have to worry about money ever again. You want to hear how I've done it?

ABBY                   Not ... not right now.

STAN                   Oh. Okay.

ABBY                   To be honest, it's a little hard getting worked up about it. You do this, Stan. You cater the system to the existing results. You

manipulate the system to a single day of races, or week of races, and it appears as though you've won. Then you take it to the racetrack and it doesn't work. It never works.

*Pause.*

STAN I can never catch a break, can I? Jesus. What the fuck is wrong with me?

ABBY That's just another racket. It's a game you're playing. You're playing "The Victim." "Poor Me." "What's wrong with me?"

STAN According to Werner, life *is* a game.

ABBY Even if it is, you're not winning, Stan, you're stuck sitting on the sidelines.

STAN That's why I have to change things.

ABBY You can only change things by not denying what you have. Werner says, "Find the greatness in your life the way it *is*."

STAN I get that. But all the things that got me here are all lies. The truth is: Life is meaningless. We're all going to die and anything else is just fooling ourselves.

ABBY Does this have anything to do with your father getting remarried?

STAN What do you mean?

ABBY Your mother called. She wanted to make sure we're still going to the wedding.

STAN What did you tell her?

ABBY I said I wasn't sure.

STAN You told her — ?

ABBY You expect me to go to my parents, / then come back ...

STAN I already told him we'd be there.

ABBY                    Make up an excuse if you want. But I'm not flying to New Mexico just to / keep up ...

STAN                    My mom already bought the tickets.

ABBY                    I'm sorry, Stan, I just can't.

STAN                    Wait a minute. How are you getting there?

ABBY                    To my parents'?

STAN                    You're not driving, are you?

ABBY                    How else do you expect — ?

STAN                    I thought your father was picking you up.

ABBY                    No. No. I'm driving myself.

STAN                    You're never driven on the freeway before, have you? What if you and Deirdre get killed in an accident?

ABBY                    Then all your problems will be solved.

STAN                    *(brief pause)* That isn't funny.

ABBY                    I'm sorry. You're right, though, if I take the car, how are you going to get around?

STAN                    No, we'll be all right. You should keep the car.

ABBY                    That's okay, I can drive my parents' car.

STAN                    You can't drive a stick.

ABBY                    I can learn. Besides, Petaluma isn't that big a place. You'll need it more than I will.

STAN                    For what? No more job to go to.

ABBY                    But ... aren't you going to look for another job?



*Pause.*

ABBY I'm sorry I threw your Racing Forms on the floor.

STAN That's okay.

ABBY I just get ... I get so angry sometimes.

*Pause.*

STAN You don't have to go to the wedding.

ABBY No, it's all right. I'll go if it means that much to you.

STAN No. You shouldn't. Besides, what the hell is the old man thinking? What is this, his fifth? The prick.

*Pause.*

ABBY Maybe you're right. Maybe we should make this a permanent separation.

*(Pause.)*

I left the number on the fridge in case you need it. And there's some frozen dinners in the freezer in case you get hungry later.

*Pause. STAN squeezes her arm gently. Pause.*