

My Turkey Redeemer Liveth

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Synopsis: Frantic to get her refrigerator fixed the night before Thanksgiving, when she's cooking dinner for her boyfriend and his kids, Lisa calls a repair hotline. Both her turkey and her love life are in jeopardy and the man talking her through it isn't who she thinks he is, but he turns out to be just the troubleshooter she needs.

Characters:

LISA – a woman in her thirties or forties, in professional attire

JEREMY – a man around Lisa’s age in sweats and a hoodie

RANDY – a slightly older man, in business casual attire

CHELSEA – Randy’s daughter, sixteen, casually dressed

Time:

Present, the day before Thanksgiving around 6 pm

SCENE 1

Lights up on LISA, frantically studying her laptop at her kitchen table, near the refrigerator. She picks up her phone and makes a call. As it rings, lights come up on JEREMY at his desk doing paperwork. He puts it aside to pick up his phone.

JEREMY:

Hello, Jeremy Williams—

LISA:

Hi, you have to help me. I am so screwed.

JEREMY:

Of course. What’s the problem?

LISA:

My refrigerator’s dead and your website’s a total mess and I’m about to lose my Thanksgiving turkey!

JEREMY:

Our website?

LISA:

Yeah, it’s completely useless. That’s why I’m calling. You *have* to help me figure out what’s wrong with my fridge.

JEREMY:

I’m probably not the best person for that.

LISA:

Come on. If you can’t help me, who the hell can?

JEREMY:

I don't know for sure, but how about this: You tell me where you are, and I'll look around for a repairman.

LISA:

You're kidding. You actually think I'm gonna find anyone to come here the night before Thanksgiving?

JEREMY:

Okay, relax and we'll try to figure this out. There has to be somebody in your area who does emergency repairs.

LISA:

Aren't *you* supposed to be the guy who knows how to do that stuff? The guy who can talk me through it?

JEREMY:

I'm sure there's someone more qualified--

LISA:

Look, we're not gonna find anyone else tonight. You're my only hope, so *please* tell me how to fix this stupid fridge.

JEREMY:

All right, I'll see what I can do. (*Picks up pen and starts writing*) Why don't we start with some basic information.

LISA:

What do you need first?

JEREMY:

A name would help.

LISA:

ChillMaster 320.

JEREMY:

That's pretty formal. Do you have a nickname?

LISA:

Very funny. I'm Lisa.

JEREMY:

I'm Jeremy. It's good to meet you, Lisa. I assume you don't have your copy of the ChillMaster manual anymore.

LISA:

No, and your website's such a mess I couldn't find much information. You should get someone to overhaul it.

JEREMY:

Okay, but why don't we focus on one repair project at a time? Do you have any idea when it stopped working?

LISA:

Not exactly. I got home from work at 5:15, and the turkey didn't feel very cold, so the fridge probably died this morning.

JEREMY:

How old is it?

LISA:

I can't tell, maybe six or eight months?

JEREMY:

Wow, that's a short life span.

LISA:

True, but the poor thing is fulfilling its holiday destiny. They usually last longer if they're set free in the wild.

JEREMY:

You've set refrigerators free in the wild? *(They laugh)* Okay, I got it now. It's your turkey's that's young.

LISA:

I haven't seen an ID but yeah, it's pretty young.

JEREMY:

How about the refrigerator?

LISA:

Who knows? It was here when I moved in two years ago.

JEREMY:

Can you give me an approximate age?

LISA:

My best guess is ancient.

JEREMY:

Ancient like it has a freezer the size of a shoebox?

LISA:

No, ancient like it came over with the Pilgrims. And yeah, my shoes might fit in the freezer, but my boots wouldn't.

JEREMY:

Hmm, so you can't just shove Tom in the freezer.

LISA:

Nope. How long can a turkey survive in a broken fridge? And how long can I sit and watch it without going insane?

JEREMY:

Depends on size. How many pounds are we talking about?

LISA:

None of your business!

JEREMY:

What?

LISA:

Why do you need to know that?

JEREMY:

So I can estimate how much time you've got before the turkey goes bad. It'll help if I know what it weighs.

LISA:

Oh, the *turkey*. It's 19 pounds.

JEREMY:

That's a pretty big bird. You must be feeding an army.

LISA:

Only five people. My boyfriend, his two sons and his daughter. But Chelsea can't eat turkey, so I made her a quinoa kale salad.

JEREMY:

No offense, but blech!

LISA:

It tastes worse than it sounds, but Randy said she wouldn't come unless I promised to have something vegan for her.

JEREMY:

Can you move the turkey to a neighbor's house?

LISA:

No, the ones who are home don't have enough space.

JEREMY:

Couldn't Randy store it?

LISA:

No, he went to pick up his kids.

JEREMY:

And there's no way you can get into his place?

LISA:

Unfortunately no, I can't. I mean, I don't have a key to Randy's apartment, if that's what you want to know.

JEREMY:

I wasn't asking, but okay.

LISA:

Seriously, we've only been together for four months.

JEREMY:

And I take it you don't have any family nearby who could help out.

LISA:

We haven't had that conversation about exchanging keys.

JEREMY:

With your family?

LISA:

What? No! Most of them moved to Florida. I was talking about Randy. We're not ready to discuss the key issue yet.

JEREMY:

Got it. Will Randy be home later tonight?

LISA:

No, he's gonna be in Connecticut until sometime tomorrow. He's staying overnight at his ex-wife's house.

JEREMY:

Aha.

LISA:

Don't *Aha* me! I'm glad they get along so well. Not that it's any of your business, but her fiancé lives there too.

JEREMY:

You're right. It's probably good they have a friendly divorce.

LISA:

You bet it is.

JEREMY:

I only meant that it's kind of bad news for your situation right now—I mean, it's bad for the turkey.

LISA:

Tell me about it.

JEREMY:

Can't you just cook it tonight?

LISA:

Sure, but then what happens after I take it out of the oven? I can't just stick it on the counter 'til tomorrow afternoon.

JEREMY:

Right, I see your point.

LISA:

I've never met Randy's kids before and giving them salmonella would make a rotten first impression.

JEREMY:

Have you tried calling Randy?

LISA:

What for?

JEREMY:

He might be able to come back early. Or at least he could help you locate a refrigerator to borrow for the night.

LISA:

I really hate to bother him, but that might be worth a try. If I put you on hold, will you promise not to hang up?

JEREMY:

Sure, I'm not going anywhere.

LISA:

Thanks. I'd rather not start over with someone else.

(JEREMY stays on the phone and looks over papers on his desk. LISA hits the phone button and listens briefly.)

LISA:

Hi, babe, my refrigerator died while I was at work, and I'm worried the turkey's not gonna survive. Is there any chance you could come back here tonight so I can bring it over to your place? Call me as soon as you get this, okay? *(Hits a button, returns phone to her ear)* Hey, Jeremy, are you still there?

JEREMY:

I'm here. *(Sets down paperwork)*

LISA:

Randy didn't pick up, but I left a message on his voicemail. Before your website crashed, I read that I'm gonna need a flashlight and maybe a blow dryer too. I have them both right here. *(Picks up flashlight)*

JEREMY:

You read that on *my* website? I don't think--never mind. Just go to the back of the refrigerator and shine the flashlight there.

(LISA moves to refrigerator and aims flashlight at the back.)

LISA:

I'm there now.

JEREMY:

Great. Can you find the . . . umm . . . compressor?

LISA:

Is that the big loopy thing that looks like intestines or the little black thing that looks sort of like a round hibachi?

JEREMY:

I think it's the round black thing.

LISA:

You *think*? Aren't you supposed to know that?

JEREMY:

I'm pretty sure.

LISA:

Pretty sure. I'm so glad you're on top of this.

JEREMY:

I'm sorry, Lisa. (*Laughs*) I'll admit I'm no genius at repairs, but I do have one important thing going for me.

LISA:

What's that?

JEREMY:

I'm here and I promise you I'm not going anywhere. And as you mentioned before, I am all you've got.

LISA:

Whatever. Anyway, I'm seeing a whole bunch of ice on the back of the fridge. Can you at least tell me if that's normal?

JEREMY:

I know that one. It's not normal at all, and that's where your blow dryer comes in. Get ready to do some defrosting.

LISA:

Okay, I'm gonna plug it in right now (*Sets down flashlight, picks up dryer*) Hang on, Randy's calling back. (*Sets down dryer, checks screen and presses button*) Hi, did you see my voicemail? . . . Wait a minute, who's not coming tomorrow? . . . *WHAT?* Look, I'm sorry they broke up, but why on earth are *you* planning to stay there?

(LISA Sets down phone, slumps over and starts to cry. After a moment she straightens up and grabs the phone again.)

You know what, Randy? Come to think of it, I don't give a damn why you decided to skip out on me. You and I are finished . . . no, I'm sorry but it's over, so go ahead and stay in Connecticut for as long as you like. Feel free to spend Christmas and Easter and Flag Day and Halloween there while you're at it . . . Are you serious? I break up with you and the best you can do is put in an order for leftovers? Sure, why not? I'll *mail* you some turkey tartare!

(LISA punches a phone button then slams the side of the refrigerator.)

Hi, Jeremy, I'm back. It looks like I won't be needing the turkey after all. They're not coming tomorrow.

JEREMY:

None of them? Why not?

LISA:

Randy's ex-wife split up with her boyfriend today. Now she's all upset, and the kids don't want to leave her alone to come down here.

JEREMY:

What about Randy?

LISA:

Randy says he doesn't want to leave the kids on Thanksgiving, so he's staying there and taking them all out to dinner.

JEREMY:

Really?

LISA:

Yeah, I think it's a crock too. Nobody wants to have dinner with me, not even Randy. Go ahead and enjoy your I-told-you-so.

JEREMY:

I'm sorry, Lisa, and believe me, I'm not enjoying any of this. I just hope you're okay. Is there anything I can do?

LISA:

No, but thanks anyway. I'm planning to have a good cry, drink tomorrow's wine and eat tomorrow's pie.

JEREMY:

What kind of pie did you make?

LISA:

Apple.

JEREMY:

That's probably my favorite pie.

LISA:

And vegan pumpkin.

JEREMY:

That's probably my least favorite.

LISA:

You've eaten it?

JEREMY:

Of course not. Why would I ever bother eating my least favorite pie? But I can tell it's something I'd hate.

LISA:

Me too.

JEREMY:

You really went all out for Randy. For everyone. I hope he turns out to be the kind of guy who deserves it.

LISA:

Well, it turns out he doesn't. On the other hand, I deserve all the apple pie I can eat and all the wine I can drink.

JEREMY:

That you do. But I can't help feeling a little sorry for Randy.

LISA:

For Randy? After what he did?

JEREMY:

Don't get me wrong, he treated you badly and I don't blame you for being angry. But he's in a pretty tough spot if you think about it.

LISA:

I didn't think about it much. I just followed my gut and told him to get lost. We obviously don't belong together.

JEREMY:

That's interesting. Are you re-thinking that decision now?

LISA:

No, I think my gut knew what it was doing. They're all in Connecticut comforting his ex-wife while I'm all alone here. And I'll be celebrating Thanksgiving with a dead refrigerator and a decomposing turkey.

JEREMY:

That sounds pretty depressing.

LISA:

It sure does.

JEREMY:

I'll bet Randy's not happy either. After all, he's going to miss out on a wonderful home-cooked meal with you.

LISA:

He couldn't care less.

JEREMY:

No, he must realize how hurtful it was to cancel on you that way. I'm guessing he's pretty upset about it.

LISA:

Oh, you think so? He sounded awfully worried about his wife and kids and awfully casual about ditching me. Not once did he even mention my refrigerator problem. He just expects me to take care of it on my own.

JEREMY:

I'm so sorry, but don't worry, you're not on your own. We're in this together and we're going to work it out, okay?

LISA:

Thanks, but there's nothing else to work out. Oh, and on top of everything, Randy had the nerve to ask me for leftovers. After we broke up! *Have a great Thanksgiving and be sure to save some turkey for me.* What a jerk!

JEREMY:

Do you think Randy's still in love with his ex-wife?

LISA:

Does it matter? Either way, I can see the writing on the wall. Something or someone would always be taking priority over me.

JEREMY:

How do you know? This might have been a onetime thing.

LISA:

Hey, if Randy really cared, he could have invited me to join him up there. He could have taken us all out for dinner.

JEREMY:

Maybe he thought it would be awkward.

LISA:

Of course it would, but he could have asked. He could have let me decide if I'd rather feel awkward or left out.

JEREMY:

It could be awkward for him too. And his family.

LISA:

That's more to the point. What counts is how they feel, not how I feel. You know, he could have introduced me to the kids ages ago, but it didn't matter enough to him. The reality is I didn't matter much.

JEREMY:

I wish I could say something to make you feel better.

LISA:

Thanks, Jeremy, but I'll be all right.

JEREMY:

What are you going to do now?

LISA:

I told you, I'm gonna get drunk on tomorrow's wine and eat tomorrow's pie. Meanwhile, you can go talk to all the other losers.

JEREMY:

What losers?

LISA:

The people who are calling your hotline.

JEREMY:

Hotline?

LISA:

Yeah, *this* hotline. Hello—the ChillMaster troubleshooter line? You help people figure out how to fix their refrigerators?

JEREMY:

This isn't a hotline.

LISA:

You're kidding. Then why were you helping me?

JEREMY:

Because you asked me to.

LISA:

I asked because I thought you were some repair guy in Kansas or Ohio.

JEREMY:

Why Kansas or Ohio? Do I have an accent?

LISA:

No, but the hotline people always seem to live somewhere out there. And your area code looks kind of Midwestern.

JEREMY:

What does a Midwestern area code look like? Corn fed?

LISA:

I don't know. But if you're not out there, where are you?

JEREMY:

Back here. I'm in Jersey.

LISA:

Hey, me too.

JEREMY:

I know. Your area code has that East Coast look.

LISA:

Are you in North Jersey or South?

JEREMY:

I'm at the shore. Belmar.

LISA:

That's near where I live. God, are you stalking me?

JEREMY:

(Laughs) You called me, remember?

LISA:

Right. Well, if you want a free turkey, take it while it's safe to cook. I can hand it off to you at the Dunkin' Donuts on Route 35.

JEREMY:

Thanks, but I'm not home. I'm a few miles away at my hospital.

LISA:

Hospital? Are you a doctor? Or a nurse?

JEREMY:

Nope.

Are you a patient?

LISA:

None of the above. I'm a priest.

JEREMY:

Priest? You mean like a hospital chaplain?

LISA:

Bingo!

JEREMY:

You don't sound like a priest. Prove it.

LISA:

What kind of proof do you need?

JEREMY:

I don't know. Sing "Climb Every Mountain" or "The Bells of St. Mary's."

LISA:

Sure, I'll get right on that. But first, you should probably get your blow dryer going and melt that refrigerator ice.

JEREMY:

I'll pass. I don't see the point anymore.

LISA:

You might get it working in time to save the turkey.

JEREMY:

I don't think so, Padre. I'd rather just let the turkey go rancid. Maybe I'll zap him with the dryer to help him along.

LISA:

You gonna blindfold him first?

JEREMY:

Yeah, and I'll give him a last cigarette. *(Laughs)* You know, for a priest you're a real smartass. Isn't there a commandment against that?

LISA:

Like what?

JEREMY:

LISA:

How about Thou shalt not snark upon thy neighbor?

JEREMY:

I'll check the New Testament. There might be something the Book of Matthew. Or maybe the Book of Seinfeld.

LISA:

That's all you got, Padre? More snark?

JEREMY:

Well, before you put that turkey in front of the firing squad, I have a more practical idea. You want to hear it?

LISA:

I'm listening.

JEREMY:

You could put him in a plastic bag, throw in some ice to keep him chilly and then bring him over to my hospital.

LISA:

Why, are you gonna give him the last rites?

JEREMY:

No, we're gonna repurpose old Tom. The cafeteria staff can cook him here, and we can take him to a homeless shelter tomorrow.

LISA:

Who's *we*?

JEREMY:

I promised I'd help serve Thanksgiving dinner at the Brigham shelter, and you don't have plans anymore.

LISA:

That's pretty harsh. What makes you so sure I have nothing else to do? . . . Okay, I have nothing else to do.

JEREMY:

And as a bonus, if you make the delivery in maybe an hour or so, I'll be off duty and I can buy you a pizza.

LISA:

You're on. I'll even bring the apple pie for dessert.

JEREMY:

Great. What kind of wine do you like with pizza?

LISA:

Usually I have red, but anything's fine with me. Are we gonna drink sacramental wine or the regular kind?

JEREMY:

How about a nice secular merlot? I'll call the liquor shop down the street and ask them to hold a nice bottle for us.

LISA:

Funny, this almost sounds like a date.

JEREMY:

Well, I admit I was kind of thinking along those lines.

LISA:

You're kidding! *Oh, geez*, you're worse than Randy.

JEREMY:

Really? How do you figure that?

LISA:

Randy only cheated on a librarian. Maybe not cheated, but he ditched me for his ex-wife. And look who you're cheating on.

JEREMY:

What do you mean? I haven't dated anyone else for months. And you told me you already broke up with Randy.

LISA:

Look, *Thorn Birds*—just because I'm on the rebound doesn't mean I'm willing to go out with anybody.

JEREMY:

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to imply--

LISA:

I should call the Vatican and turn you in.

JEREMY:

For what?

LISA:

For being a vow-breaking weasel. And a lowlife.

JEREMY:

I don't think the Vatican will care. I'm an Anglican.

LISA:

And a scumbag. And a--you're a *what* now?

JEREMY:

An Anglican. Didn't I mention I'm an Anglican priest?

LISA:

No, you didn't! You mean you're a *Protestant* priest?

JEREMY:

Sure as God made little Communion wafers.

LISA:

So you can have a wife . . . wait, *do* you have a wife?

JEREMY:

Nope.

LISA:

Do you have an *ex*-wife? Or kids?

JEREMY:

Not guilty on both counts. So you're coming?

LISA:

Sure. As soon as I blast my fridge with the blow dryer.

JEREMY:

I'll text you the directions. See you around 7:30?

LISA:

Okay. Can you ask a security guard to bring me to your office?

JEREMY:

If you want. How come?

LISA:

With the kind of night I'm having? I've had enough surprises already and I want to make sure you're on the level.

JEREMY:

Gotcha. Go to the security desk near the main entrance and give them my name. They'll bring you to my office.

LISA:

I swear, you'd better be wearing a white collar.

JEREMY:

Sorry, but I'll be wearing a blue hoodie.

LISA:

Then you can forget about it. I'm not handing my turkey and apple pie over to some alleged priest in a hoodie.

JEREMY:

I was planning to go to the gym, so I already changed.

LISA:

Well, you may want to change back, Padre.

JEREMY:

And suppose I don't?

LISA:

Then the security guard's getting my apple pie and you're getting the vegan pumpkin. And the quinoa kale salad.

END of SCENE

SCENE 2

Shortly after 8 pm that evening in the hospital cafeteria. JEREMY is wearing a Giants hoodie but has added a white clerical collar. He and LISA are at a table having pizza and wine. LISA's phone rings. She glances at it but doesn't move to pick it up.

LISA:

I'm sorry. It's Randy again. *(Pushes phone away and shouts at it)* Not on your life. Leave me alone, you bozo!

JEREMY:

He's only going to keep calling. Why not talk to him and get it over with?

LISA:

Oh, okay. *(Picks up phone.)* Randy, I told you we're done so please stop calling . . . I'm not home, I'm at Seaside Medical . . . Of course I'm not sick, I'm having dinner here . . . The chaplain, not that it's any of your concern. Goodbye. *(Hangs up.)*

JEREMY:

You want to talk about it?

LISA:

First I want another slice. *(Takes a slice and JEREMY follows suit)*

JEREMY:

My kind of woman. Then can we start on your apple pie?

LISA:

I'm not sure you earned it. Really, a clerical collar with a Giants hoodie?

JEREMY:

It's a fashion statement.

LISA:

What's the statement? Hi, I'm from Our Lady of ESPN?

JEREMY:

I followed your instructions.

LISA:

Well, the pizza's good so I'll let it slide.

JEREMY:

And I let you choose the toppings. Next time, I want mushrooms too.

LISA:

There's gonna be a next time?

JEREMY:

I hope so.

LISA:

Great. Me too.

JEREMY:

I'm a little out of practice at dating. Is it wrong to mention a future date while you're in the middle of the first one?

LISA:

No, it's a nice change. Guys usually keep you guessing.

JEREMY:

About what?

LISA:

About whether they want to keep seeing you. At the end of the evening, they'll say something like *I'll call you* or *We should do this again*. Then you have to wait and find out whether they really meant it.

JEREMY:

That's it?

LISA:

Most of the time that's how it goes. If I don't hear from a guy in a week or so, I figure I'm not on his radar.

JEREMY:

So women do a lot of waiting. That doesn't seem fair.

LISA:

I waited a long time for a chance to meet Randy's kids. And he was definitely in no hurry to meet my family.

JEREMY:

Really?

LISA:

Yeah. When my mother was visiting, he claimed he had too much going on at work to meet her. Said it would have to wait 'til next time.

JEREMY:

Maybe he was busy. I mean, I don't get to socialize that much because of my job.

LISA:

But you help people in crisis. Randy sells office furniture.

JEREMY:

Even salespeople get swamped.

LISA:

Oh please, give me a break! You and I only met tonight, and look how you made time to see me right away.

JEREMY:

Well, you're pretty special. I mean, we sort of connected on the phone, so I wanted to get to know you better.

LISA:

Exactly. A guy who thinks you're special finds a way to see you.

JEREMY:

Even if you have to meet up at a hospital or a homeless shelter. Yeah, I definitely know how to impress a woman.

LISA:

I'm not complaining. Not yet anyway. But I warn you, if our next date's at a penitentiary, I'm outta here.

JEREMY:

Don't worry. *(Laughs)* We'll go to a nice restaurant, I promise.

LISA:

With a dress code and everything?

JEREMY:

You bet. No hoodie and no gym rat clothes.

LISA:

Maybe you could wear one of those giant bishop hats.

JEREMY:

I'll see what I can do. More wine?

LISA:

Sure. Tell me, when did you realize I might be a wrong number?

JEREMY:

To be honest, it took a while. I get a lot of calls asking for help, and I never know what the problem's going to be.

LISA:

Real emergencies or stuff like a turkey on the critical list?

JEREMY:

Both. Smaller problems can seem huge if you're facing them alone.

LISA:

Such as?

JEREMY:

Let's see. One patient's grandfather had a dead car battery and two of our volunteers wanted help with their college essays. And just last week a patient's wife needed advice about how to get her sink unclogged.

LISA:

Why would she ask you?

JEREMY:

She wasn't sure who to call and I was close by. Besides, her husband was in intensive care and she was glad to put her mind on something else.

LISA:

You really do all that stuff?

JEREMY:

I try, or I look for someone who can. This job has called on every skill I have: fixing cars, speaking French, cooking--

LISA:

Cooking?

JEREMY:

A rehab patient needed help making stuffed artichokes for her new in-laws. It was a tough recipe, but we got it done.

LISA:

That's a pretty strange request.

JEREMY:

I've actually had stranger ones. My first appliance call was from an old man who thought his kitchen was bugged.

LISA:

Let me guess. You did an exorcism on his oven.

JEREMY:

No, he wanted me to track down the hidden microphones. He was sure the government had planted them all over the room.

LISA:

You're kidding. *(Laughs)* I'm sorry, I know it's not funny.

JEREMY:

Of course it is. The poor guy kept swearing at his toaster and his dishwasher. It was sad but it was hilarious too.

LISA:

Funnier than threatening to execute your turkey?

JEREMY:

I didn't think you'd actually do it.

LISA:

No, but I was pretty stressed. Your moral support meant a lot.

JEREMY:

I'm sure you do the same for the people in your library.

LISA:

If I need to.

JEREMY:

I'll bet you've fed some homeless people.

LISA:

A few. How did you know?

JEREMY:

You have a good heart. Look how you tried to give Randy's family a special day. You even made that vegan salad and pie. Thanks, by the way.

LISA:

For what? I didn't bring them.

JEREMY:

I know. Thanks for leaving them home.

(They laugh. RANDY enters and heads to their table.)

LISA:

Randy, what are you doing here? How did you find me so fast?

RANDY:

I was right down the road the last time I called. After our fight, I figured I'd better come back and talk to you.

LISA:

You could have saved yourself the trip.

RANDY:

What made you decide to come to a hospital anyway? *(Points at Jeremy)* With Reverend Whosits here?

JEREMY:

Actually it's Father Whosits, but please call me Jeremy.

RANDY:

You're a *priest*?

JEREMY:

Why does everyone say that?

LISA:

To be fair, the outfit's not helping.

RANDY:

No, it definitely isn't. So you're counseling Lisa? With *wine*?

LISA:

He's not counseling me. He's feeding me.

RANDY:

No way are you a priest.

LISA:

He is so, and he works here.

RANDY:

In that getup? No way. You couldn't even pull that off at Notre Dame.

LISA:

What, you expect him to submit proof?

JEREMY:

Dude, I'm definitely not singing "Climb Every Mountain" to *you*.

(LISA bursts out laughing.)

RANDY:

Who asked you to?

JEREMY:

Never mind, it's a private joke.

RANDY:

You were so upset on the phone. When you said you were here with the chaplain, I thought you came to talk about us.

LISA:

Yeah, I was furious with you. But I didn't come here to spill my guts about our breakup. I came to deliver my turkey and have dinner with Jeremy.

RANDY:

Got it.

LISA:

I couldn't keep the turkey in my broken fridge, so I brought it to the hospital cafeteria. The staff is cooking it for us.

RANDY:

For *us*? And that's supposed to explain why you two are sitting here trading private jokes and drinking wine?

LISA:

What's the matter with drinking wine? He's a priest.

JEREMY:

Yeah, it's what we do.

RANDY:

I'm trying to talk to my girlfriend. Do you mind?

JEREMY:

We're also having pizza. *(Pulls out a chair)* Help yourself.

LISA:

Jeremy, you don't owe him any explanation. Or any pizza. I'm not his girlfriend anymore and he's not staying.

RANDY:

Actually, I've been on the road for a while. I'm starving. (*Sits*)

JEREMY:

You want pepperoni or meatball and onion?

LISA:

Who cares what he wants? Will you please leave?

RANDY:

I dropped everything to get here. The least you can do is hear me out.

LISA:

The *least*? I already did the *most*! I cleaned and shopped and cooked all week for you and your kids. And for what?

JEREMY:

Guys, why don't you stop and take a breath?

RANDY:

I told you. The kids were very concerned about my wife—my ex-wife.

LISA:

And meanwhile you weren't concerned at all about what you were doing to your girlfriend. Your *ex*-girlfriend.

RANDY:

I'm here, so obviously I did care. You're the one who took off to be with Father . . . (*JEREMY indicates the pizza boxes and RANDY points to one.*) Meatball.

LISA:

Father Meatball? Do you know how childish you sound?

RANDY:

No, I want a meatball slice. (*JEREMY hands it to him*) Thanks. You didn't waste time finding a dinner date even if it is a priest. No offense.

JEREMY:

None taken. While we're on the subject, I should tell you—

RANDY:

Save it. I've heard how single women in their thirties get desperate to find someone, but a *priest*? That's pathetic!

LISA:

Pathetic? You arrogant son of a bitch!

RANDY:

Come on, that's no way to talk. Is it, Father?

JEREMY:

Well, I wouldn't say you're an arrogant son of a bitch.

RANDY:

Thanks.

JEREMY:

You're more of a clueless son of a bitch.

RANDY:

Hey!

JEREMY:

You don't have all the facts. And you're not listening to Lisa.

LISA:

You're wasting our time, Randy. Go back to Connecticut. I'm busy tonight and I have other plans for tomorrow.

RANDY:

I suppose you're planning to go to church with the Father? Are you trying to impress him? Or is that your idea of making me jealous?

JEREMY:

You win, Lisa. He's arrogant too.

LISA:

Damn straight!

RANDY:

Will you calm down? And stop swearing.

LISA:

Stop telling me what to do. I wouldn't put up with that even if we were together. Which we're not. And we aren't going to be.

RANDY:

We have to talk about that, Lisa, but not here.

LISA:

You bet your ass not here. I'm still having dinner.

RANDY:

It looks like you're almost done eating now. Why don't you and I meet at your place in about half an hour?

LISA:

No way! I'm spending the evening with Jeremy and I'm seeing him again tomorrow so I won't be available then.

JEREMY:

Lisa, if you two want to talk privately, I'll go back to my office.

RANDY:

I'd appreciate that.

LISA:

I wouldn't. I'm staying here with Jeremy. If he still wants me to. *(To JEREMY)* Are you seriously planning to leave?

JEREMY:

I only thought you two might want to clear the air.

LISA:

Is this part of your usual couples counseling routine? Or is it *your* way of bailing on me too? Trying to push me off on Randy.

JEREMY:

Of course not. I'm only trying to be fair.

LISA:

Good luck with that, Padre. I tried to be fair to him and look where it got me. I couldn't wait for all of us to spend the holiday together. Turns out I was the only one.

JEREMY:

That must have been so disappointing.

RANDY:

Hey, I'm here. What more do you want?

LISA:

What I *didn't* want was to be stood up in the first place.

(RANDY bites into his slice of pizza. JEREMY moves closer to LISA and touches her shoulder.)

JEREMY:

Don't worry, Lisa, it'll be all right.

LISA:

Nothing's all right! They didn't want to be with me and apparently neither do you.

(LISA cries softly. CHELSEA starts approaching, unnoticed by the others.)

First you tell me how special I am, how you want to get to know me. Now you're pushing me off on Randy like I don't matter at all.

JEREMY:

No, you're wrong. I've been having a great time and enjoying your company so much. But Randy came all this way to talk to you. *(Gives her a napkin and clasps her hand.)* I'm sorry. I know you've had a tough day.

(CHELSEA noisily pulls up a chair and sits between RANDY and JEREMY.)

CHELSEA:

She's not the only one!

RANDY:

Chelsea, I told you to stay in the car.

JEREMY:

Hi, are you Randy's daughter?

CHELSEA:

Yeah, who are you? Is this pizza for anybody?

JEREMY:

Anybody who's not a vegan.

CHELSEA:

Okay. *(Takes a slice and bites into it.)* Who did you say you were?

JEREMY:

I didn't, but I'm Jeremy.

RANDY:

He's Lisa's dinner date.

CHELSEA:

I thought she was *your* girlfriend. And what's she crying about?

RANDY:

Oh, who knows?

LISA:

What? (*Stops crying, sits up straighter and glares at him*)

JEREMY:

Come on, Randy, you know why Lisa's crying. She's been through a lot tonight and she's feeling rejected. By all of us, I guess.

RANDY:

(*Turns to LISA*) Why should you feel rejected, Lisa?

LISA:

(*Turns to JEREMY*) Jeremy, why are you explaining anything to him?

JEREMY:

(*Turns to CHELSEA*) Chelsea, why are you eating pepperoni?

CHELSEA:

(*Turns to RANDY*) Hey, Dad, why am I sitting in on your girlfriend's date?

JEREMY:

Okay, that's a lot of questions. Now let's try giving some answers.

RANDY:

Why don't you butt out, Father?

JEREMY:

(*Throws his hands up in the air*) Or if you insist, we can just keep going round robin on the questions.

LISA:

Good, my turn. Randy, how dare you barge into Jeremy's place of business and then act like *he's* the intruder?

RANDY:

How am I supposed to act when you're with another guy? A priest!

CHELSEA:

I came to New Jersey to meet a woman who's dating a priest?

LISA:

Chelsea, I'm sorry. I've been looking forward to meeting you for months, but your dad and I broke up earlier tonight.

CHELSEA:

You mean you dumped my father for this guy? He's a priest! And he's wearing a hoodie with his priest collar.

JEREMY:

No, Lisa and I met for the first time tonight, Chelsea. And for the record, guys, I'm an Anglican priest not a Catholic one.

RANDY:

So what?

JEREMY:

We don't take a vow of celibacy the way Catholic priests do.

CHELSEA:

Okay, we're Methodists, so you're gonna have to break it down for me. Does that mean what I think it does?

JEREMY:

Basically, it means Anglican priests can date women.

RANDY:

So they can date other people's girlfriends? Do you have an Anglican Bible around here? I'd like to look that up.

LISA:

Randy, I'm not your girlfriend. I know you left your wife alone to come back here, but that doesn't change anything.

CHELSEA:

He told you my mom's alone? *(Laughs)* Good one, Dad.

LISA:

Why, are your brothers with her?

CHELSEA:

No, they're on their way to Dad's place.

RANDY:

Lisa doesn't need to hear this.

LISA:

Oh, I think I do.

CHELSEA:

Mom and Carl got back together tonight. After that, Dad said we should clear out and come to New Jersey after all.

LISA:

(Laughs) So the real reason you're here is that your wife doesn't need you anymore. You're unbelievable, Randy.

RANDY:

Hey, I drove through God-awful traffic for you.

LISA:

I'm gonna go to the kitchen and check on the turkey. *(Stands up)* The *other* turkey.

RANDY:

Very funny. First you guilt me into spending Thanksgiving with you and now that I'm here, all you're doing is complaining.

JEREMY:

Randy, that's not fair. You misled Lisa about why you changed your plans.

LISA:

Yeah and this is the guy you want to hand me back to--like I'm some rental car you're done with. *(Starts to cry)* Thanks a lot, Jeremy.

(LISA exits. JEREMY stands, starts to follow her and then turns to RANDY)

JEREMY:

Did you want to talk to her first?

RANDY:

Nah, let's give her a few minutes to calm down.

CHELSEA:

Hey, Father, mind if I take the last slice? *(Reaches for it)*

JEREMY:

No, but I am curious. What makes you think you're a vegan?

CHELSEA:

What makes *you* think you're a counselor?

JEREMY:

Actually, I'm not. I mean, I'm a chaplain and I do pastoral counseling, but I haven't been counseling Lisa.

RANDY:

How did you meet her then?

JEREMY:

We met on the phone. Lisa needed advice about how to fix her refrigerator and she called me by mistake. Her turkey was thawing and she had nowhere to store it, so I suggested she donate it to one of our homeless shelters.

RANDY:

She gave away our turkey?

JEREMY:

It's not yours anymore. You cancelled on Lisa after she prepared all that holiday food: turkey, apple pie, quinoa kale salad, vegan pumpkin—

CHELSEA:

Quinoa salad? That sounds awful!

JEREMY:

I agree, it's not the ideal holiday dinner. Lisa only cooked it because your father said you had to have a vegan meal.

RANDY:

That's what you told me, Chelsea. How come you lied about being a vegan?

CHELSEA:

Because I thought . . . you know, that if I said I couldn't eat turkey, you wouldn't make me come with you.

RANDY:

You made it up so you wouldn't have to go to Lisa's?

CHELSEA:

Sort of, but now I feel bad about it. Nobody told me that she was gonna cook a whole extra dinner for me.

JEREMY:

Lisa's thoughtful like that. Why did you want to avoid her?

RANDY:

Yeah, why? This is the holiday when I get to be with you. Your mom has all of you at Christmas but Thanksgiving's mine.

JEREMY:

The day seems to be pretty important to your dad. Didn't you want to share it with him and get to know his girlfriend?

CHELSEA:

Not so much. I mean, this my third *important* Thanksgiving with some random woman he happens to be going out with.

JEREMY:

Really?

CHELSEA:

Yeah. The first Thanksgiving after the divorce we had dinner with some dental technician named Joan. She lived in Stamford and her dinner was awful.

RANDY:

It wasn't that bad.

CHELSEA:

You've gotta be kidding. There was no stuffing or potatoes or gravy and the only dessert she gave us was fruit salad. Oh, and she didn't have a TV, so we couldn't watch movies or football or anything.

RANDY:

I didn't know that was gonna happen.

CHELSEA:

Last year it was Sonja, that teacher in Westfield who recited the holiday poems. The food was good, but she wanted to show me how to make rag dolls. Jeez!

JEREMY:

It may take time for your dad to find the right person, Chelsea. And he's going to want you to meet anyone he cares about.

CHELSEA:

Cares about? So how come he only starts caring about them in mid-November? You heard Lisa say she's been wanting to meet me for months, right? Well, I didn't even know Lisa existed until last week.

RANDY:

There was no reason to mention her.

CHELSEA:

There never is until you're ready to break the news about Thanksgiving. Then you tell us the woman who's cooking dinner is nobody serious. Just a friend.

JEREMY:

Is that true, Randy? Did you really describe Lisa that way? Because she clearly thought it was more than a friendship.

RANDY:

We're dating, yeah, but it's been pretty casual. I never said I loved her, and I didn't ask her to make us dinner. She offered.

CHELSEA:

Dad says single women like to cook on holidays so they can impress guys.

RANDY:

No, I didn't. I only said holiday cooking is a novelty for them and it gives them a chance to show off their cooking skills.

JEREMY:

That doesn't really sound any better.

RANDY:

I don't see anything wrong with that. I'll bet a lot of single women have invited you over for holiday dinners.

JEREMY:

A few. But I'd never want to lead someone on or make her feel like she's being . . . anyway, I work a lot of holidays.

RANDY:

Being *used*. That's what you were going to say. Look, this was Lisa's idea. I can't help it if she got the wrong impression.

CHELSEA:

That's a moot point now. Lisa's done with you.

RANDY:

She isn't really. You think she is?

CHELSEA:

Duh! She keeps telling you that, only you won't listen.

RANDY:

Lisa doesn't mean it, honey. Her feelings are hurt and she's trying to manipulate me. That's what all the crying is about.

CHELSEA:

No it's not, Dad. She might've been hurt at first, but now she's just ticked off. (*Points to JEREMY*) He's the one that's making Lisa cry.

JEREMY:

Me? I swear, I never meant to hurt Lisa.

CHELSEA:

Probably not, but don't you get it, Father? She only starts to cry when she thinks you're trying to dump her.

JEREMY:

Believe me, Chelsea, dumping Lisa is the last thing I want to do. I'm only trying my best to do what's right.

CHELSEA:

What's right?

JEREMY:

I need to help them resolve their relationship one way or the other.

CHELSEA:

No, you need to stop playing the good guy and pay attention. Lisa already resolved it by herself. She's into *you*, not my dad.

RANDY:

Hey!

CHELSEA:

Sorry, Dad, but it's so obvious. Lisa's moved on, and to be honest I don't blame her. You're as bad as Cameron.

RANDY:

Cameron? That red-headed football player you like so much?

CHELSEA:

Liked. Past tense

RANDY:

Why. Didn't he ask you to the homecoming dance?

CHELSEA:

No, he asked some girl from his geometry class. He was only paying attention to me so I'd help him with his term paper.

RANDY:

That little creep! I'll break his neck.

CHELSEA:

Don't bother. I'm over him.

RANDY:

Already? Are you sure?

CHELSEA:

Of course. Cameron's not worth being hurt about. Anyway, it was my idea to help with his paper in the first place.

RANDY:

I see where you're going with this, honey, but my situation is different. Lisa's older and she can take care of herself.

JEREMY:

Apparently she can. That's why she broke up with you.

RANDY:

What the hell do you know? You just met Lisa tonight, and she and I have been together for months.

JEREMY:

You said it was casual.

RANDY:

And I suppose you're serious about her? After an hour or two?

JEREMY:

Not yet, but if she gives *me* a few months, I'm pretty sure I will be.

CHELSEA:

He's for real, Dad.

RANDY:

Are you saying he's the better guy? Better than I am?

CHELSEA:

Of course not. He's just better for Lisa.

RANDY:

You don't know that.

CHELSEA:

Well, let me ask Father Jeremy something.

JEREMY:

What would you like to know?

CHELSEA:

You're probably close to my dad's age and you're not married, right?

JEREMY:

Right.

CHELSEA:

You've been dating for a long time.

JEREMY:

Yeah, on and off.

CHELSEA:

So how many of those women did you spend Thanksgiving with?

JEREMY:

Counting Lisa? Tomorrow?

CHELSEA:

Yeah.

JEREMY:

One.

CHELSEA:

See, Dad?

RANDY:

What does that prove?

CHELSEA:

It proves Lisa's already more important to him than she is to you.

RANDY:

I seriously doubt that, honey.

CHELSEA:

Oh yeah? Then let's take a look at the facts. You're the guy who canceled on her and left her on her own during a crisis.

RANDY:

That couldn't be helped. I had all of you to worry about.

CHELSEA:

Okay, but you did leave her hanging. Father Jeremy's the one who's been worrying about her and helping her figure stuff out.

RANDY:

Come on, that's his job.

CHELSEA:

Not when some wrong number calls about a broken fridge. He likes Lisa, even if he's been pretty stupid about it.

JEREMY:

Yeah, I have. But I'll make it up to her if she gives me another chance.

CHELSEA:

Don't you get it, Dad? He wants to be with her tomorrow. Even if he doesn't get a home-cooked meal out of it.

JEREMY:

I really do.

CHELSEA:

Seriously, Dad, we should just say goodbye and get going.

RANDY:

I don't know. I'll talk to Lisa when she comes back.

CHELSEA:

We don't have that kind of time. It's getting late and we have to hit the nearest supermarket while it's still open.

RANDY:

Why?

CHELSEA:

To buy some groceries so we can make our own Thanksgiving dinner. Don't you think it's time you and I gave it a try?

JEREMY:

That's a great idea, Chelsea. And it's not that hard. Get a small turkey or maybe a chicken so it'll cook pretty fast. And you can buy gravy in a jar to save time.

CHELSEA:

It'll be fun, Dad, I promise. This time next year, maybe you can wow some woman with *your* domestic skills.

RANDY:

Maybe you're right. *(He stands and JEREMY follows suit)* Let's go find Lisa.

JEREMY:

No hard feelings? *(Holds out a hand)*

RANDY:

Not really. *(Shakes JEREMY's hand)* Happy Thanksgiving, man.

JEREMY:

Happy Thanksgiving to you both.

(They exit and JEREMY sits down. He sips his wine for a moment, then CHELSEA returns.)

CHELSEA:

I wanted to give them a little privacy to say their goodbyes. Just so you know, my dad's basically a good guy.

JEREMY:

Of course he is, Chelsea. That's why Lisa cared about him in the first place.

CHELSEA:

Don't blow it like he did. Lisa's pretty cool.

JEREMY:

I'll do my best.

CHELSEA:

I told her I was sorry about the vegan thing. Be sure you apologize too.

JEREMY:

I will. You be sure to buy a meat thermometer.

CHELSEA:

Okay. I hope the supermarket has some decent pies left.

(JEREMY stands, reaches for the apple pie and hands it to her.)

JEREMY:

Here, take the one Lisa made. It's apple.

CHELSEA:

My favorite.

JEREMY:

Mine too. *(Laughs)* Easy come, easy go.

CHELSEA:

I'll make sure we bring back Lisa's pie plate. Before long she'll probably want to bake another pie just for you.

JEREMY:

I hope so. Good luck with dinner.

CHELSEA:

Good luck with Lisa.

JEREMY:

Post some photos on Facebook, okay?

CHELSEA:

Hey, I'm sixteen, not sixty. I'll put them on Instagram. *(CHELSEA glances toward the exit, then waves.)* There's my dad. Gotta go.

JEREMY:

It was nice meeting you. *(Holds out a hand. CHELSEA shakes it, then kisses his cheek.)*

CHELSEA:

You too. *(JEREMY glances over at RANDY)* Lisa's not with him, but I'm sure she's still around. Thanks for everything.

JEREMY:

Back at you.

JEREMY watches them exit, his glance lingering there afterwards, then sits down. He sips wine, then hesitantly he picks up the phone and makes a call.)

LISA:

Hello? *(She appears at the exit, unnoticed by JEREMY, and takes a few steps toward him.)*

JEREMY:

Hi, I have a real problem. It's about this woman I really like. I think I messed up and I need your help fixing it.

LISA:

All right, I'll do what I can to help. First of all, do you have any wine handy? And maybe some apple pie? *(Slowly moves toward him.)*

JEREMY:

I have some wine and I did have a pie, but unfortunately I just gave it away.

LISA:

WHAT? (Starts laughing, still moving slowly) You gave away my pie?

JEREMY:

I'm sorry, but it was for a good cause. I'll make it up to you, cross my heart.

LISA:

Oh yeah? How?

JEREMY:

Let me give it some thought. In the meantime, I know where we can get hold of a vegan pumpkin pie. *(Sees her, but they both stay on the phone.)*

LISA:

Try again, Padre. *(They move toward each other until they're about two feet apart.)*

JEREMY:

I will. I'm gonna try like you wouldn't believe. *(Holds out a hand to LISA.)* But first I have to put you on hold.

(LISA takes his hand. At the same time, they set down their phones and turn to face each other.)

CURTAIN