

SCENE 8

At Florence and David's. Florence is in front of the hamster cage. We hear the hamster running on a wheel and gnawing. She observes it, then takes it in her hands. David enters.

DAVID

What are you doing?

FLORENCE

Nothing.

DAVID

You're gonna smother it!

FLORENCE
(after a beat, lying)

I wanted to pet it.

DAVID

I don't believe you.

FLORENCE
(insisting)

I wanted to pet it.

DAVID

You hate that hamster.

FLORENCE
Oh, come on! It's our son's hamster. I can't "hate" my son's hamster. But I do think it's time we got rid of it.

DAVID

I don't think that's the best thing for Matt.

FLORENCE

Can we at least put it back in his room?

DAVID

Seriously? After what happened the last time?

FLORENCE

We're not even sure she ate her babies.

DAVID

We're pretty sure. One night the babies are in the cage, the next morning they're not.

FLORENCE

Maybe the father ate the babies.

DAVID

She killed him.

FLORENCE

Another reason to get rid of her.

DAVID

You don't think there's been enough death already? She's in a cage. She's living her redemption. She's fine.

FLORENCE

So, her cage is a prison.

DAVID

Exactly.

FLORENCE

Because she ate her babies and killed her husband.

DAVID

Yeah.

FLORENCE

Okay. But why was she in prison before she killed her kids?

(Beat. David doesn't know what to say.)

Before, it was a cage, now it's a prison: what's the difference?

Beat.

DAVID

She's not bothering anyone there, Florence, okay?

FLORENCE

When you say “Florence”, to whom are you referring? Me, or the hamster? It’s unclear.

DAVID

Oh, that’s what we’re talking about.

FLORENCE

It’s kind of nuts that you let our son call his hamster “Florence”.

DAVID

It’s just a name.

FLORENCE

My name.

DAVID

When you were on your meds, we didn’t have conversations like this. You were doing fine.

FLORENCE

You just want me to be “fine” so I’ll leave you alone. But let me tell you something: in the messed-up world we’re living in, it’s not normal to be “fine”.

DAVID

When you’re on your antidepressants, I feel great.

FLORENCE

Because you’re existentially lazy.

DAVID

Who’s to say you’re not closer to truth when you accept that the hamster’s name is Florence? Maybe you’re more yourself when you’re on medication?

FLORENCE

No: I’m myself right now.

DAVID

We don’t know that.

FLORENCE

We know. The more I reconnect with the futility of my existence, the more my sex drive comes back.

DAVID
(worried)

Oh. Your sex drive is back.

FLORENCE

Not yet.

DAVID
(relieved)

Cool.

FLORENCE

But I can feel that it's on its way. You know, before, I was doing so many things to feel better...

DAVID
(very doubtfully)

So many?

FLORENCE

Eating well, going for walks, not too much coffee, not too much alcohol, not too much red meat... no screen time before bed... No porn. This one time, I'm at the grocery store and I don't have my bags, and now I have to choose between driving home to get my bags, or taking plastic bags from the store. And I don't know what's the most ecological thing to do. So, I have a panic attack: I leave the cart full of groceries in the middle of an aisle and take off, and the whole time I'm asking myself why the hell I'm spending my life managing plastic bags instead of reading Simone de Beauvoir...

DAVID

You've never actually read Simone de Beauvoir.

FLORENCE

Exactly, and now we know why.

DAVID

You could've just put the stuff straight into the cart, pushed the cart to the car, emptied the stuff into the car, and come home.

*Beat. Florence works it through. He's right.
Shit.*

FLORENCE

My point is, ever since I stopped giving a shit about plastic bags, my sex drive is coming back.

DAVID

I don't know what to do with that information.

FLORENCE

We could take our clothes off.

DAVID

You mean right now?

FLORENCE

No, no. But soon.

DAVID

Yeah, I don't know.

FLORENCE

No?

DAVID

No. It's just...

(he searches for something: lies)

I made an appointment with my doctor... I'm thinking of starting on antidepressants... So I'm guessing, by the time your sex comes back, mine will be gone...

FLORENCE

That's handy.

DAVID

Our sex drives are like ships in the night.

FLORENCE

Antidepressants are not recreational. It's not fun. Do you think it's fun?

DAVID

No, I need them.

FLORENCE

Why? You're never depressed. You have no emotions.

DAVID

I have emotions. Like, ever since you stopped yours, I feel insecure.

FLORENCE

Okay, so you're going to take antidepressants because I'm not.

DAVID

I think our relationship functions better when at least one of us is on antidepressants. I'm doing it for both of us. Until you start back on yours.

FLORENCE

That's blackmail.

DAVID

You know, and then you can re-quit... but gradually.

FLORENCE

Yeah, no: don't wanna.

DAVID

Up to you.

~~David leaves. Florence is alone again: the noise of the hamster, which is more and more invasive, becomes like the ticking of a bomb. Violet, in her bedroom, is talking with Ben on the telephone.~~

VIOLET

(on the phone)

Where did you ~~go~~ to today?

BEN

(from Alberta)

I'm in ~~Al~~berta.

VIOLET

~~Stu~~?

BEN

Alberta is huge. ~~So~~, anyway, I went on your Facebook. You posted some nice photos of you and the baby.

VIOLET

Mm-hmm.

BEN

So, you've stopped breastfeeding?