

ACT [1]

SCENE [5]

(The cozy Understudy Bookstore. A warm haven from a winter storm outside. The \*Estranged Son\* has left Emma, the girlfriend, alone in the store.)

(David, the boyfriend, enters out of breath and carrying a guitar.)

DAVID

Emma! Thank god. I need to tell you-

(Emma checks her watch or phone.)

EMMA

And that's ten.

DAVID

What?

EMMA

Ten minutes.

DAVID

Emma-

EMMA

You couldn't even come after me? Honestly, David, this is a disaster. It took you ten whole minutes to come find me.

DAVID

That's not what happened! Please just tell me you still have the-

EMMA

In that time, I slipped and fell twice, found a quarter, lost the quarter, came to the Understudy, and poured out my life story too- Oh, I'm not sure I got that guy's name.

DAVID

I'm sorry, okay? Tonight wasn't supposed to go like this. Not even close!

EMMA

No kidding. I mean, the Understudy? No one actually enjoys theatre.

DAVID

I know. (Frustrated) Ugh, this is all so messed up.

EMMA

(Sincere) David I've really tried. I love you, I love your family. Hell I was ready to celebrate rosh- (can't pronounce it) rosh-hash-banana with you all. I was excited!

DAVID

It's Rosh Hashanah-

EMMA

But this isn't going to work.

DAVID

Look, just open the locket and I promise-

EMMA

That's just it! We've been together for so long and not even a whisper of a proposal?

DAVID

Emma-

EMMA

I know I should've said this earlier, but I... I feel like we're coasting, and that's just not me. You're so kind and thoughtful and smart, but damn if we don't just do the same thing day after day. It might be difficult to believe but... I want the house on the hill. I want the minivan, heck, I may even want the kids, but none of that feels closer today than it did three months ago. (Beat) I was ready to convert for you... But you're just so content. Painfully content. And this--

(She holds up the locket.)

EMMA

I really thought you might- (another breath) But I was wrong. Again.

(Beat.)

DAVID

I shouldn't have let you leave.

EMMA

Well, here we are.

DAVID

I chased after you. Got all the way to the door.

EMMA

Why did you stop?

DAVID

Seems that the staff at Antepima, for all their charm, don't have a soft spot for dine-and-dashers. The sous-chef tackled me and dragged me back to the table.

(Emma stifles a laugh. A break in the tension. David laughs a little too. The moment builds, we witness their chemistry.)

DAVID

Go ahead, it's funny.

EMMA

I'm sorry, I'm just picturing you- (more laughter)

DAVID

Well at least I didn't slip on my way over here.

EMMA

Twice!

DAVID

I'm guessing both falls correlate to the finding and then losing of that quarter you mentioned?

EMMA

What? No! Totally separate incidents.

DAVID

Oh sure, sure.

EMMA

You think I'm lying!

DAVID

And we went over the Ten Commandments all of two days ago.

EMMA

Right, in our bi-weekly commandment study.

DAVID

Oh, so now you're mocking Torah?

EMMA

No! I was being sincere!

DAVID

Oh really?

EMMA

Yes! Just because tonight is a mess doesn't mean...  
(the energy turns) Doesn't mean, I'm not being  
sincere.

(Beat.)

DAVID

I love you.

EMMA

I love you too... But I want to get married, and I'm  
not sure you do. And that's not a future I can see  
myself being a part of.

(She goes to the window.)

EMMA

It's like this blizzard. You can't see more than a few  
feet ahead of you... But in the end it's just snow,  
and I wouldn't have minded it so much if we could have  
walked through it together.

(Beat.)

DAVID

I understand. I guess I should go tell my Ima.

EMMA

What?

DAVID

My Ima. She'll be pretty upset.

EMMA

What are you talking about?

DAVID

She's probably cold too. Her and the rest of the family.

EMMA

David, I swear, if you're messing with me right now-

DAVID

I'm not. They're right around the corner from the restaurant. Somewhere I thought we were going to be till a few minutes ago.

EMMA

Why would they- I mean, the locket and- and... You didn't propose! You had the chance and you didn't.

DAVID

Emma Martin, I've loved you from the moment I saw you. I love your eyes, your hair, I love your passion, I love the genuine kindness that I see in you every single day.

EMMA

David-

DAVID

You can mistake my quietness for coasting, my slowness for contentment, but please don't mistake that locket for indifference. I don't just want to walk through that storm with you, I want to run in it. For as long as we're able!

EMMA

You're so dramatic... (Beat change) And why the hell do you have a guitar right now?

DAVID

Why don't you have a guitar?

EMMA

David!

DAVID

Let's just say dinner may have gone a bit differently  
if I'd just kept it simple.

EMMA

What are you talking about?

DAVID

My grandmother's locket has seen better days, but I  
recently added my own special touch to the interior.

EMMA

What-

(He goes too her.)

DAVID

Emma, just open it.

(She does.)

EMMA

This is Hebrew...

DAVID

It says, "יָקָרִי, הָאֵם תַּחַת אֵי?" (*Yak'hiri, ha'em  
taitchataen itay?*) Darling, will you marry me?

## **- SONG -**

(POST SONG)

EMMA

Oh my god! Your family!

DAVID

They'll be okay for a little longer-

EMMA

I'll be right back!

DAVID

Where are you going?

EMMA

To tell your poor Ima I'm sorry for making her stand  
in Chicago snow. Just give me five minutes!

(She rushes out.)

DAVID

Emma!

(He can't stop her, so he doesn't try.  
He resigns himself to bask in the post-  
engagement glow.)