

HANNAH

Kiss the Mezuzah, kids. **(They do)** And Edward, come sit next to me. Oh, Nettie dear, would you bring some cookies for the children.

(Nettie exits. Eddie sits on the couch arm. Becky & Jill sit on the couch)

HANNAH

Eddie, I just wanted to say thank you.

EDDIE

What for?

HANNAH

For giving your grandfather a chance to relive his life with us. He won't tell you this, but he's having a ball.

EDDIE

Oh, well, I'm really glad, Nanna. You know I didn't expect I would enjoy it this much either. I guess my teachers' not as big a jerk as I thought she was.

(The DOORBELL rings)

BECKY

I'll get it. **(She starts to climb over the back of the couch when NETTIE enters and pushes her back down. NETTIE opens the door. It's SAM)** Hi daddy! Nettie, can I help you with the cookies? **(NETTIE exits followed by BECKY)**

EDDIE

Hi dad. **(He Crosses to puzzle chair as SAM stands right of HANNAH)**

HANNAH

My gosh, Sam! This is a wonderful surprise! We didn't expect to be seeing you today. How has the tour been?

SAM

Hello Hannah, it's nice to see you again too. Things are pretty good with the band. We have a gig coming up in New York City next month. Should be fun. Oh, I'm sorry, I had forgotten about your hip. Are you feeling better?

HANNAH

Well, other than this darn wheelchair, I'm much better. New York is it?

GORDON

(Enters with sheet music) Well look who the cat dragged in. Hi ya Sam. **(They meet center)** How's that Rock-a-Billy band of yours doing? **(They shake hands)** Any new **mall** appearances coming up that we should know about? Hee hee hee.

SAM

Hello Gordon. No, no mall appearances. **(He looks at Jill)** Thanks for asking though. **(He sits next to JILL on the couch)**

HANNAH

Gordon, Sam's band is going to New York. They have a very important concert coming up. **(to Gordon)** Be nice. **(Gordon shrugs)** When you are in New York Sam, will you see your Dad?

JILL

Mom. We just got word that Sam's dad has cancer and only has a few months left.

HANNAH

Oh Sam, I'm sorry dear. I'm sorry to hear about your father.

GORDON

I'm sorry son. Please say hello to him for us and give him our deepest sympathy.

SAM

I won't be seeing him Gordon. I promised myself a long time ago I would never step foot in his house again and I don't plan to.

HANNAH

Oh Sam, please. Can I get you anything, a drink, maybe some . . . **(NETTIE enters with the cookies followed by BECKY who sits on the phone chair)** Here Sam, have a cookie. **(She takes one off the plate and hands it to Sam.)** How's your mother dear? Is she handling this alright? Is there anything we can do for her?

SAM

My poor mom! She doesn't know what's going on with him or much of anything else these days. She's in a nursing home now . . . Alzheimer's. She doesn't recognize stuff like she used to. Doesn't know when I come by, or even who I am. I don't visit her much anymore. **(pause)** You know, she's better off not being able to remember the pain and the horror in that house. My dad was a very violent guy. Beat the hell out of both of us until she finally divorced him. No, I don't think I'll be stopping by this trip.

JILL

Sam, I knew there was trouble in your childhood but I had no idea.

GORDON

No one should have to grow up like that. My god, what you and your mother must have endured all those years.

SAM

Yeah.

HANNAH

Children, why don't you go in the other room with Nettie for a little while. Take the cookies.

SAM

No, you kids can stay. Look as long as I'm getting this off my chest, they might as well hear it too. Jill has been hoping I'd let this stuff out. Somehow I think she knew coming here would trigger something in me. You always seem to know what I'm going to do even before I do.

GORDON

Sam, you're pretty worked up and obviously in a lot of pain. But you shouldn't talk about your father like that now.

SAM

(Crosses to GORDON) I've been pissed off at my dad my whole life, Gordon. He beat me anytime he felt like it. Nothing I did was ever good enough for him. Do you have any idea what that's like for a kid, always trying to please your father and always being told you're useless, you're a failure? My pain, my frustration turned to anger. Nothing I did was right, so what the hell, I went after everyone. It didn't matter to me, white, black, Asian, Catholic, Jew. You looked at me funny and I went after you. Then one day, pretty early in high school, I took him on and that stopped it. But it didn't stop my anger. Not until I met Jill.

JILL

Oh, Sam!

SAM

Your daughter is amazing. She saw something good in me . . . I don't know how or what would have happened if she hadn't. She pushed me stronger into my music, the band. She gave me confidence. She made me believe I could be something. Until then I was just Sam. . . **START MUSIC** a very angry man.

SAM sings #10:

SAM I AM

(3:11)

SAM I AM SAM I AM
A VERY ANGRY MAN
SAM I AM SAM I AM
I COULD HAVE BEEN AN ALSO RAN

MY FATHER HIT ME BLACK AND BLUE
UNTIL I COULD NOT STAND
SAM I AM SAM I AM
A VERY ANGRY MAN

BUT MY LOVE MY JILL
NO PLACEBO NO PILL
SHE SEEMS TO FIND A WAY
TO HELP ME EVERY DAY
TO HELP ME GROW AWAY FROM ANGRERS FLOW
YOU SEE MY WIFE AND ONLY LOVE
WAS SENT DOWN FROM ABOVE

SAM I AM SAM I AM
A VERY ANGRY MAN
SAM I AM SAM I AM
I COULD HAVE BEEN AN ALSO RAN

I AM WHO I AM
SHE GETS ME IN CONTROL
If I ANSWER WITH A YELL
SHE SMILES AND ALL IS WELL
SHE DOES HER THING
IT IS HER QUIET ROLE
SHE KNOWS THE WAY TO RING MY BELL
TO STOP ITS MIGHTY TOLL

MY MUSIC LOUD AND BANGING
YOU CAN HEAR MY EMOTIONS FLOW
DRUMS GUITAR AND CLANGING
MY FIRE SHOUTS ITS GLOW

MY BUTTONS ALWAYS SET
FOR EMOTIONS TO EXPLODE
BUT SHE IS MY SAFTY NET
SHE IS A COMPLEX CODE

SAM I AM SAM I AM
A VERY ANGRY MAN
SAM I AM SAM I AM
I COULD HAVE BEEN AN ALSO RAN

MY FATHER HIT ME BLACK AND BLUE
UNTIL I COULD NOT STAND
SAM I AM SAM I AM
A VERY ANGRY MAN

BUT BLESSED IS HE
WHO HAS A WIFE LIKE ME

SAM

And the funny thing is that when we started dating I had no idea she was a psychologist. Jill has gotten me into a much better place. And she does it without manipulation, you know, you let me come to conclusions that work, and somehow those conclusions are the ones you want. I don't know how you do it, but it still keeps happening. In fact . . . that's how she got me to come over here today!

EDDIE

(Crosses to couch arm) Way to go, Mom!

SAM

Anyway, that's why I have no contact with my father. And I'm going to damn well make sure you kids never suffer like I did. You're never going to be bullied like that, not by me, not by anyone -I promise. **(Sits on couch)**

GORDON

Sam we do the best we can as parents but you can't protect your children from everything.

SAM

I don't want them to grow up to have that kind of anger. And I see the possibility. I know this is a sore subject for both of you, but if they participate and display being Jewish; they're going to grow up being victims. I don't want them to have to suffer anti-Semitism and bigotry. At least they won't have that burden to face, if they're not Jewish.

JILL

Oh Sam, that's why you fight me about the Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, why you won't come to Shabbat dinners on Friday nights with mom and dad. Honey, I promise you . . . these are different times. We love you, Sam. You don't have to put up that shield for us.

BECKY

(Sits on couch arm) We love you daddy.

SAM

I love you, too.

(Sam grabs his family to him and they embrace. This tender moment is broken by Nettie's entrance holding a sandwich on a plate)

NETTIE

I have to pick up my car now Mrs. H. Mrs. Clark from next door will be taking me.

HANNAH

Oh that's good, Nettie. Is everything all fixed?

NETTIE

I suppose so. They couldn't tell me too much of anything

EDDIE

Why not? **(Crosses to puzzle chair)**

NETTIE

Well, while I'm talking to the mechanic on the phone, this big motor home with the whole front end bashed in was towed into the shop.