

guys about Andrew Carnegie—is it Carnegie or Carnegie, / I never remember...

RICHARD.  
Pretty sure Carnegie is correct...  
oh, maybe, yeah...

ERIK.  
Carnegie Hall, right?  
Carnegie Hall...

DEIRDRE. I forwarded it, Rich, 'cause it had this great answer to the question: "What makes Americans powerful and influential and wealthy?"

*Small beat as they eat.*

AIMEE. Trust funds?

DEIRDRE. No... not trust funds, / smart-ass...

AIMEE. What—too soon? Too soon?...

BRIGID. Yes, too soon...

DEIRDRE. What makes a person powerful and influential and wealthy is *not* growing up with power and influence and wealth. That's what the email said, anyway... (*Caught off-guard by her emotions.*) ... The gift of poverty is a... it's not a myth, / it's a real thing, it can be a blessing...

AIMEE. Whoa, Mom, are you okay?

DEIRDRE. Yeah I'm just happy to be with my girls, sorry...

*They eat. Brigid mouths, "Get a grip..." to herself.  
Erik cracks open another beer.*

ERIK. One thing I learned, Rich—and the older I get I see this—it's that having too much money—it can be just as bad for you as, you know, *not* having enough, / you know? Gotta be careful...

BRIGID. (*Embarrassed.*) Dad, why're you—what are you talking about—

RICHARD. I think I know what you're saying—do you mean—

ERIK. I'm saying—Dee's bosses have more money than God and they're stingy with her on everything, bonuses, vacation days... Aimes gets fired 'cause she's sick—*my* grandma almost lost her life in a fire 'cause her bosses locked the doors to her factory to keep 'em from takin' breaks, coupla blocks from here, so—and this isn't some scientific notion or something—but, yeah, I do notice that rich people are usually pretty messed up.

BRIGID.  
[Oh God...]

AIMEE.  
That's an elegant thesis, Dad.

RICHARD. Well, no, no, it's a good point, I just don't think being messed up is *necessarily* linked to how much money is in your bank account.

BRIGID.  
Of course...

ERIK.  
Yeah, but it *can* shift your priorities in ways that aren't good.

RICHARD. We agree on that, yeah, but so can being poor. Right? / Just meaning—

BRIGID. Yes...

AIMEE. Everyone's right, guys...

RICHARD. —I actually agree with you, I'm just adding that... yes, wealth can ruin people but so can poverty.

DEIRDRE. Well I'd rather be ruined in a Four Seasons somewhere, on a beach, you know?... I'll take wealth for four hundred, Alex...

BRIGID.  
Mom, that doesn't even  
make sense...

AIMEE.  
Oh, Mom...

RICHARD. ... I hear you, I'm just proud that my family went out of their way to ensure—you *do* get that I'm not able to touch my money until I'm forty, right?

ERIK. Uh-huh, but do *you* get how that sounds to a man my age?

RICHARD. No I hear you, I hear you... / I do...

BRIGID.  
We got the veggies from this  
farmer's market on Essex...

AIMEE.  
... pass the—thanks...

DEIRDRE. They're delicious...

BRIGID. We're gonna try and keep our fridge stocked with them,  
start juicing for breakfast.

AIMEE. Cool...

RICHARD. You guys liking any of the superfoods?

BRIGID. (*To Aimee.*) Rich made up a *list* that I emailed to these  
guys...

DEIRDRE. I even, I bought blueberries last week... they're not cheap.

ERIK. You also bought blueberry donuts.

DEIRDRE. Yeah, and you had three of them, so don't / act like you're  
better than me please.

ERIK. I did, no, I did.

AIMEE. Sadly, donuts are cheaper, too, huh?

DEIRDRE.  
Yeah.

BRIGID.  
Not cheaper when you consider  
how much heart disease costs once  
you're hospitalized.

*They eat.*

ERIK. So what, uh, when forty comes along, what happens... do  
you just, do you retire?

AIMEE.  
Dad...

BRIGID.  
No, he's studying to become a  
social worker...

RICHARD. Yeah, the main reason I'm not done with school yet  
is, I've been / in and out—

BRIGID. He took time off—

RICHARD. —Yeah, because for a while / I was—

BRIGID. You don't have to tell them...

RICHARD. —It's fine—in my early thirties—I was depressed for  
a bit, so—I'm fine now, just took me a while to get up and running  
again, but... I've been better for years, it's why I'm comfortable  
talking about it...

ERIK. You take medicine for that?

BRIGID. Dad, that's rude / to ask—

ERIK.  
Sorry, hey, sorry, just... in our family we  
don't, uh, we don't have that kinda depression.

RICHARD.  
It's okay.

AIMEE. Yeah, no we just have a lot of stoic sadness.

*They eat.*

ERIK. (*To Rich.*) Well... I'm sorry, if—

RICHARD. [It's fine.]

ERIK. ... Makes you wonder if—the kind of faith *we* grew up  
with... it's not perfect but you take for granted what a, a, a kinda  
natural anti-depressant it is...

AIMEE. No religion at the table—

DEIRDRE. Hey, my mouth is shut, you know / where I stand...

BRIGID. Mom... you brought a statue of the Virgin Mary into our house— / how is your mouth shut?

ERIK. Alright, okay... I didn't mean to get us... I was just saying it's funny you guys'll try—you put faith in, in juice-cleansing or / yoga but you won't try church—

BRIGID. I did *one* juice cleanse... *one*...

ERIK.  
—You eat chard to feel your best  
but you still—you said half your  
friends are in therapy, / *you* said  
that so I'm askin'—

DEIRDRE.  
My mouth is shut...

BRIGID. That's because—yeah, I was trying to get you to pay for *mine*—I still can't afford it—

ERIK. Well save some of the money you spend on organic juice and pay for it yourself—

BRIGID. Don't criticize me for caring about my mental health—

AIMEE. Okay...

ERIK. Well what about—Rich's mom is a therapist—why don't you get it from her?—

DEIRDRE.  
Erik...

BRIGID.  
Yeah, Dad, I'll get therapy from my  
mother-in-law, that's an awesome idea.

*Small beat.*

DEIRDRE. She's not your mother-in-law unless you get married—

AIMEE. Mom... [don't...]

BRIGID. Looking for work every day, it's depressing—

ERIK. Well you've still got the will to eat superfoods—if you're so miserable why're you trying to live forever?

*Aimee smiles involuntarily.*

BRIGID. Last week—I shouldn't even tell you—

ERIK.  
Tell us what?

RICHARD.  
I don't think you appreciate how hard  
she's been working... She's been bar-  
tending at two places while applying  
for every possible artist grant or res-  
idency you can think of... *(To Brigid.)*  
... tell them, you'll feel better...

BRIGID.  
Babe, you don't have to—

Babe—

ERIK.  
Tell us what?

BRIGID.  
He won't care...

RICHARD.  
You'll feel better...

DEIRDRE.  
Tell us...

ERIK. Of course I'll care.

RICHARD. Read it to him, you'll feel better.

*Brigid gets out her phone, searches for something.*

This one professor has been writing all of her recommendation letters for all these applications and—

BRIGID. Yeah 'cause there's only one that I felt close to at school, who actually knew who I was, so... I was gonna miss this one deadline so I called his office and... his assistant agreed to email the rec letter directly to me...

*Brigid hands her iPhone to Erik, who reads the PDF of the letter on her phone.*

AIMEE. What's it say?

BRIGID. ... at least now I know why I'm not even getting interviews for unpaid internships.

ERIK. (*Reading.*) What's the big deal?—he didn't praise you enough?

*Pissed, Brigid grabs her phone.*

BRIGID. Are you kidding me? (*Reading.*) "Brigid is a talented musician and composer; she served as a TA in my music theory class her senior year and many of the students noted how approachable and helpful she was to them in navigating the course. Initially, I must confess, I found Brigid's compositions almost willfully opposed to specificity and urgency. In her senior year, however, she showed marked improvement. And while her orchestral pieces still do not have the range or originality of her contemporaries, she always displays technical proficiency and great verve [What does that even mean?!]. Her hard work and positive attitude have made her an asset to the music department." (*Eyes watering.*) ... Why wouldn't he respect me enough to say he couldn't do it?

*Richard comforts her.*

ERIK. You can always work retail.

DEIRDRE.  
Don't / tease her, babe—

AIMEE.  
Dad—Bridge, he's a dick for writing this—

RICHARD.  
It's not easy to bounce back from this kind of thing, Erik—

ERIK.  
... Oh c'mon, hey, Rich don't treat me like—she knows I believe in her. (*To Brigid.*)—Are you so spoiled you can't see you're crying over something hard work can fix?—

BRIGID. Everyone whose opinion I value has read this—

ERIK. Your grandma grew up in a two-room cesspool and your tragedy is what—havin' to figure out how to get a new letter of recommendation? / Sorry if I—

BRIGID.  
It takes *years* to build relationships with—

DEIRDRE.  
She knows all this...

ERIK. —You're lucky to have a passion to pursue, if you don't care about it enough to push through this setback you should quit and do something else...

DEIRDRE.  
Alright... we're sorry,  
Bridge, that guy's a jerk...

AIMEE. (*To Erik.*)  
Wow, what is up with you today?

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*Upstairs: The light near the staircase burns out. The only light upstairs comes from the crack in the bathroom door (which is mostly shut) and the indirect light being thrown by the LED lantern in the recesses of the upstairs space.*

BRIGID.  
Shit, another bulb's out...

RICHARD.  
Oh great...  
Welcome to New York, guys...

DEIRDRE. It's just a light bulb... we'll live...

*Brigid goes in search of a spare bulb. Erik follows her.*

ERIK. (*To Brigid, who is still angry with him.*) Hey, hey, I don't wanna see you bent outa shape over something you can fix. / The Blakes bounce back, that's what we do.

BRIGID. Thanks... uh-huh, yeah... thanks Dad, I don't really need a lecture now... Rich—why didn't we ask the landlord to replace all the lightbulbs before we moved in?

RICHARD. Because that's a crazy thing to ask for, babe, no one asks for that.

DEIRDRE. (*Stifling laughter.*)  
Yeah, no one asks for that / ... and even if you did, it wouldn't matter, 'cause...

ERIK.  
Well, they're all probably on their last legs...