

VIVIAN (YC) 1

ELLEN

What are we going to say to each other, Vivian? Are you going to tell me I'm cruel and irresponsible? Unfit, maybe? A lowlife. An addict. A useless source of humiliation. I can own it, or maybe I'll come up with every reason why you deserve it.

VIVIAN

Stop it. Let's just stop it.

ELLEN

I want to take David home with me. He's my son, he belongs with his mother. I'm okay now.

VIVIAN

I don't know, Ellen.

ELLEN

I'm off hard drugs. I'm back in New York. I'll hit all the publishing houses for a job. Get my career back on track. I've come to take him home.

VIVIAN

You know, I love you more than anything else in the world.

ELLEN

Oh God. Please don't start with that.

VIVIAN

That's the truth. After everything that's happened this year, that's the truth. The worst has been the feeling that I've lost you. That I had you, but then I lost you.

ELLEN

You always made me feel like a kid. Sitting here I feel like a kid.

VIVIAN

You're a grown woman.

VIVIAN 2

ELLEN

I can remember being eight or nine maybe. One time you left Daddy at a New Year's Eve party and you ran off with Ezra.

VIVIAN

There was a lot of unpleasantness back then. It had nothing to do with you, you have to believe that.

ELLEN

Daddy was raving. Standing down there in the garden, raving drunk. I snuck downstairs in my nightgown. Found him lying there in the snow. I tried to drag him inside but he was too heavy. I thought he'd freeze to death so I lay down on top of him to keep him warm. He just kept whispering in my ear about how Mommy didn't love us any more and how he was going to take us away to where you would never find us.

VIVIAN

Christ.

ELLEN

But then he went to live on the farm with a nurse. Strange remedy, giving an alcoholic a nurse.

VIVIAN

What was I supposed to do? I didn't know what to do.

ELLEN

Don't ask me.

VIVIAN

I never abandoned you, Ellen. I never tricked anyone into taking you. You lived in the same house, slept in the same room every night. Went to good schools.

ELLEN

How do you know that? Were you ever around? You abandoned me!

VIVIAN 3

VIVIAN

I always came home.

ELLEN

Yeah, just so you could turn around and leave us all over again.

VIVIAN

Don't you understand? I couldn't stand it. What could I do? You were into drugs at fifteen and I was powerless to stop you. Was I supposed to stand by and watch you kill yourself?

ELLEN

You're my mother! You should have been there! You were just looking for an excuse to run off to your next affair.

VIVIAN

You can come here and try to make me feel guilty about your childhood, about your father. You can take me to court. You can take drugs. You can do whatever the hell you want, Ellen. You're a big girl. But you cannot take David out of this house! I've acquired a responsibility and I won't negate that responsibility. Not now. Not in good conscience.