

ARNOLD / ISAAC

~~Hi Isaac! Just ... catch up. The world is going forward. There's no time to be worried about gender. Gender isn't radical. It's not even progressive. It's an everyday occurrence.~~

ISAAC: I barely recognize you.

MAX: I look the same, just hairy!

ISAAC [laughing]: That is so disgusting.

ARNOLD [as if saying any random word, like "chair," or "dish," etc.]:
Sgusting.

[MAX violently acts like ze is going to punch ARNOLD. ARNOLD covers.]

ISAAC: Hey!

MAX [to ARNOLD]: Idiot.

[Slight pause]

I better go.

ISAAC: I didn't puke 'cause of how you look.

MAX: Whatever.

ISAAC: I just throw up. Everybody vomits in Mortuary Affairs. It's what we get instead of medals.

PAIGE [off-stage]: MAAAAAAAAAAAX.

[Silence.]

MAX: Gotta go. Paige wants to act like she's teaching me how to save the world. She's serious about not cleaning. Just so you know. I picked up a sock one time and she grounded me for a week.

~~Max: It's not healthy.~~

~~Max: Nothing new there. Now it just looks that way. [Slight pause]~~

You sure you don't wanna come?

[A pause meaning no.]

[MAX starts to exit, makes a cartoon-like "you're-an-idiot" face at ARNOLD. ARNOLD flinches. MAX exits. ISAAC looks out the window. The car ~~is off-isaac looks at the kitchen.~~

↓ **START**

~~[A long pause as Isaac looks at Arnold and Arnold looks away. ARNOLD shivers. ISAAC turns the air conditioning off and looks down at his hands, which have makeup all over them.]~~

ISAAC [to ARNOLD]: You're all over me.

ARNOLD: Don't. Like. Her.

ISAAC: Max?

ARNOLD: Err.

ISAAC: Mom?

ARNOLD [an affirmation]: Huh.

ISAAC: Paige. You know her name. You can say it. Paige. One after another after another.

ARNOLD: Another.

ISAAC: Yeah.

ARNOLD: Tired.

~~Max: Drink your shake and you can go to bed.~~

~~Arnold: Doesn't drink the shake. Instead he holds his penis!~~

~~You don't want the shake?~~

~~ARNOLD: I'm sold.~~

~~ISAAC: Take the shake from ARNOLD. Consider it. I dump the shake in the sink!~~

~~ARNOLD: Okay?~~

~~ARNOLD: I'm saying yes! I'm happy!~~

ISAAC: You look better now. More like how you're supposed to look.

ARNOLD: How?

ISAAC: Determined.

ARNOLD: TV.

ISAAC: Yeah, you like your TV. You sit in your easy chair, watch your TV, and you're easy. And then you get angry for being too easy.

ARNOLD: Angry?

ISAAC: You're a man. You're stern. You get red faced. You beat the dog with a bat for barking too loud.

ARNOLD: I don't like. Barking.

ISAAC: No, you don't.

ARNOLD: And?

ISAAC: You take a salt shaker with you everywhere.

~~ARNOLD: picks up the salt shaker!~~

You eat hard-boiled eggs in the shower. I don't know why you do that.

ARNOLD: Because.

ISAAC: Right. You sit at the table with your shirt off and scratch your back with your dinner fork.

ARNOLD: And?

ISAAC: People like you. Enough. But not too much. Not enough to borrow things from you or send you invites.

ARNOLD: And?

ISAAC: And you take up space. You sweat. You leave your mark. Yellow stains on everything white. Under your pits, around your collar, on the toilet seat. You dole out allowances and punishments. You give me, you give Mom, us, bruises, welts when we do things or when we're too loud. You break our fingers if we leave a dirty dish in the sink.

ARNOLD: She. Talks. Too much.

ISAAC: She always talks too much.

ARNOLD: I don't like it.

ISAAC: You flick her with your finger to get her to stop.

ARNOLD: Like this.

[ARNOLD flicks ISAAC.]

ISAAC: Yes. She hates that.

ARNOLD: She takes it.

ISAAC: She asks you not to but you do it anyway because even though you're a man you want to be a child.

ARNOLD: You're a child.

ISAAC: I'm your boy grown up.

ARNOLD: What else?

ISAAC: You take me to batting practice and out driving but won't teach me how to do either. You sit and stare at things. I sit with you. We're quiet. You stare at things and I stare at you staring at the things.

ARNOLD: Things?

ISAAC: Lawns. Vinyl. Siding.

ARNOLD: Flowers? Stars?

ISAAC: No. Things. *Real* things.

ARNOLD: More.

ISAAC: You never cook except once a month when we eat fried chicken.

ARNOLD [*meaning, "I like chicken."*]: Chicken.

ISAAC: You take out the trash and obsess over shingles and yard work so you can be outside. You're fit but not so much it upstages you. You have a stash of porn in the garage and a secret jar of Polaroids, old flings who posed naked for you.

~~ARNOLD gets the Polaroids from a cookie jar.~~

You catch me staring at them and don't say anything, just leave. You like your beer to the point where you fight for it and whiskey to the point where you can't.

ARNOLD: Pictures?

~~ARNOLD throws the Polaroids up in the air like confetti.~~

ISAAC: Jesus.

~~ARNOLD. I like ~~closing his eyes and pointing to a random picture~~ that one.~~

~~ISAAC: I guess not by his pick! Oh no, Dad no~~

~~ARNOLD [defending his pick]: I like it!~~

ISAAC: Okay!

ARNOLD [*getting more aggressive about his defense*]: Tube sock titties.

ISAAC: I'm not trying to stomp on your girl.

ARNOLD [*on the attack*]: I stomp you!

ISAAC [*retreating*]: Hey, hey, okay. [*Slight pause*] That shirt does you good.

ARNOLD [*holding his penis*]: My penis is my best friend.

ISAAC: Okay.

ARNOLD: Heartbeat in a penis. Move nonstop. Like lava lamp. [*Slight pause*] Home.

ISAAC: You're home.

ARNOLD [*meaning, "I don't like the house being messy"*]: Messy.

ISAAC: Yes. You're a man. You like to come home to order.

ARNOLD: Sleep.

ISAAC: Okay.

[ARNOLD gets up and goes to his bed. ISAAC watches him. He looks around, takes a deep breath, and starts to clean. A curtain falls.]

↑ END