

ABBIE

No, it's true. I've thought it. She probably lied to me about a lot of things. I'm such a...Maybe they're right. Maybe I should have driven her, or called. I just...you get used to this idea of how things are. You know bad things happen, just not to you. So you don't think...you don't do...

BURT

Sometimes, no matter what we do, life just intervenes. I watched Danielle like a hawk, and she still ran away.

ABBIE

When?

BURT

Years ago.

ABBIE

No, I mean if you watched her like a hawk? When was she able to go?

BURT

When I was sleeping. We all have to sleep sometime.

Burt takes a sip of the soda.

ABBIE

Strawberry soda?

BURT

Yeah. I bought it on a whim. It used to be my favorite, as a kid. I kind of regret it now. It's too sweet. (puts soda back on trunk)

ABBIE

It was Crystal's favorite.

BURT

Really?

ABBIE

Yes. I bought some, the last time I was at the grocery store. Just in case.

BURT

I did that, for Danielle as well. Stocked up on her favorites.

ABBIE

I'm lying. I buy it every week. A six pack of strawberry soda. They're piled in the corner of my kitchen. She couldn't hope to drink that much in a month.

BURT

Eat some more.

ABBIE

I'm fine. Thanks.

BURT

You're looking better.

ABBIE

Thanks.

A beat.

ABBIE

Did you ever do anything you regretted, when you were looking for Danielle?

BURT

What do you mean?

ABBIE

I went to see him. Elliot.

BURT

Her boyfriend?

ABBIE

Ex-boyfriend. They'd broken up shortly before she went missing.

BURT

You don't think he had anything to do with it?

ABBIE

No. Not really. He broke up with her. So he wasn't jealous. I don't think he's the dangerous type.

BURT

People surprise you.

ABBIE

No. Maybe some, but not him. I just...I wanted to know if he'd seen her. I thought maybe she'd kept in contact with him. Crystal was crazy about Elliot.

BURT

Aren't we all crazy about our first loves?

ABBIE

Maybe. But she...it's hard, with kids. Trying to tell them that you'll love many times in life. But at that age, it's all so important isn't it? I hated being a teenager. The hormones. The anger. The passion. Everything was such a big deal. I wish I'd thought of that more, before she'd gone missing. Tried to remember what being a teenager was like.

BURT

How everything is so immediate.

ABBIE

Yes.

BURT

It takes them so long to learn the pleasure of delayed gratification.

ABBIE

Yes. Maybe that's why she liked Elliot so much. He wasn't like that. He was older than he should have been. Not in that morose way kids can be. He was just quieter, gentler, more aware. Even today. He should have been furious, sad, angry, I don't know. But he wasn't. His parents were angry. I went there, after the phone call. After Frank...They thought I was accusing him of something. I wasn't. I just wanted to know what he knew. If Crystal was going to call anyone besides me, it would be Elliot. It made me angry, that they thought I was accusing him of something, like maybe he had something to hide. So I pushed my way past them and ran into the house, calling his name. I found him, in his room, lying on his bed reading a book. There I was, at his doorway, cheeks red, snot-nosed and crying. He looked up from his book with that quiet grin of his and just said, "Hey." Like seeing me was the most normal thing ever. That kid is so calm, it's infuriating.

BURT

You didn't do anything, did you?

ABBIE

No. Nothing much. I screamed. I fussed. I don't know why. Poor kid. Eventually, I just cried. I sat on the bed and cried. He did too. Quiet tears. He even cries like a grown up.