

KIM

And he's been in a very bad mood, lately.

SANDY

I'm sure he'll get something.

KIM

I hope so.... soon.

(Thinking)

So if you need me to work some Saturdays, I can. Weekends are no different from weekdays anymore. And I know Saturdays are always busy.

SANDY

We seem to be all right for now. Until she gripes too much, that's Jamie's full day of work.

Kim sips her coffee.

KIM

Just thought I'd mention it. Ben loves dogs. And, he's handy. If you need anything done around here he could do it.

SANDY

Thank you but Phil does most of that stuff.

They sit quietly.

KIM

Marriage can be tricky. I take it you're divorced, right?

There is a pause as Sandy looks away and Kim realizes that the conversation is over. Kim rises.

SANDY

You've been here a few months now, haven't you?

KIM

It will be two next week.

SANDY

That's what I thought. So it's time for health insurance.

Kim sits back down. Sandy gets up and pours herself more coffee.

SANDY

I told you after 60 days I'd put you on the plan.
Sandy smiles at her.

SANDY

Your "trial period" is over. You passed. And as of next week, you have full health benefits.

KIM
(kidding)

And a raise?

SANDY

Don't push it.

Kim chuckles.

SANDY

Of course your husband can be on the policy, too.

KIM

That's very helpful. Thanks.

SANDY

No problem.

Sandy sits.

KIM

You know, Ben's very good with dogs.....

Sandy picks up the notes on the table, not responding to Kim as JAMIE, Sandy's 20 year old daughter, comes rushing in. Jamie is wearing stylish, feminine clothing, not jeans. Around her neck is a long, flowing, colorful scarf. She looks at Sandy and stops.

JAMIE
(surprised)

Mom? Why aren't you dressed?

SANDY

Why should I be?

Sandy looks her over.

You don't look so dressed, either.

SANDY

What do you mean by that?

JAMIE
(taken aback)

To work in the yard. You're wearing nice pants. And what's around your neck?

SANDY

Oh this?

JAMIE
(She holds up the scarf)

It's nothing. It's cold outside.

SANDY

Well take it off. The dogs may grab it.

JAMIE

Okay.

She leaves it on.

JAMIE

But you need to go get dressed. Now.

SANDY

What's the rush?

JAMIE

Eric, I mean Mr. Bender is coming over. Remember?
Sandy looks at her quizzically.

JAMIE

My statistics teacher. Dog training in exchange for tutoring. We talked about it last week - you thought it was a great idea.

SANDY
(nodding)

What time is he coming?

JAMIE

Now! His morning is free. I told you all this already.

SANDY

You should have told Kim, too.

JAMIE

(nervously)

Hurry Mom. I don't want him to see you like this.

Sandy rises.

SANDY

Okay, okay, I'll go get dressed. What kind of dog does he have?

JAMIE

A terrier mix.

SANDY

A rescue?

Jamie doesn't look at her but NODS her head.

JAMIE

(pleads)

Come on, Mom. Don't embarrass me.

Sandy turns to exit.

SANDY

(to Kim)

Don't worry Jamie. I'll give him the classy treatment. Kim, when Mr. Bender rings the bell, please bring him into the kitchen.

JAMIE

(quickly)

I can do it.

SANDY

No, we need you out in the yard. Kim will let him in.

JAMIE

Fine.

Jamie gets the tea pot and starts to boil water on the stove.

KIM

Will his dog be with him?

Jamie shakes her head NO.

SANDY
(to Kim)

No. Tutor or not, everybody comes without their dog the first session. I still have to give him the beginning lecture. And being an academic, he may find it very interesting.

Jamie rolls her eyes but then smiles a fake smile when Sandy looks at her.

SANDY
(to Jamie)

I'll take a quick shower.

Sandy quickly exits. Jamie waits until Sandy leaves and then turns to Kim.

JAMIE

Don't worry about it Kim -- I can let Mr. Bender in.

Kim doesn't answer but watches Jamie adjust the tea pot.

KIM

Don't you want some coffee? It's already made.

JAMIE

No, I don't drink coffee anymore.

KIM

Since when?

Jamie doesn't answer and grabs a tea bag.

JAMIE

I have green tea now in the morning. I love it.

KIM

That's nice. I heard it's very healthy.

Jamie ignores her and prepares her tea.

KIM

You know it would be best to tell me these plans so I can put them in the calendar. I try to keep your mother organized.

JAMIE

I know, sorry.

Kim tops off her coffee. Her cell phone DINGS. She takes it out of her pocket, looks to see the text message.

KIM
(to Jamie)

That was Amanda. Yogi wasn't so good on his walk this morning.

JAMIE
(not paying attention)

That's nice.

Kim puts the phone back in her sweatshirt pocket. Jamie turns to her.

JAMIE

Kim?

KIM

Yes.

JAMIE

For some reason I can't get online in my room, I keep getting kicked off. It could be a distance problem with the router again. Do you mind if I use the office computer when you're not in there?

KIM

I don't see why not. I'll be doing inventory out back in a little while. You can use my office then.

JAMIE

Thanks. Mom's concern was that I'd get in your way.

KIM

No problem. Do you need it for your tutoring today?

JAMIE

No. I just need to look some things up. For school. A school project.

KIM

Okay.

(has another sip of coffee)

So tell me. Who's this Mr. Bender?

She smiles at Jamie.

What do you mean?

JAMIE

Well, is he young or old?

KIM

Mr. Bender? I don't know.

JAMIE
(uncomfortable)

Cute?

KIM

Maybe. I guess.

JAMIE
(squirming)

How did this little arrangement come about?

KIM
(fishing)

It just did. I need help in math. He's a teacher. He needs help with his dog. I know a dog teacher. Okay?

JAMIE
(annoyed)

No big deal. But I thought you were studying psychology?

KIM

I am. But you need a statistics class for the major. And that has math which I'm terrible in. End of story.

JAMIE

Jamie looks at her cup and stirs her tea.
Kim continues to look at her.

KIM

I guess you need to keep your grades up. I heard if you ace your finals your Mom will buy you new fancy noise reduction headphones.

JAMIE

Yes. So I can relax and don't always have to hear all the crap going on around here.
Kim looks a little surprised.

KIM

She also mentioned you want to transfer to the university next year.
Jamie gets angry.

JAMIE

Want to? I don't want to. And she probably told you I'm taking psychology as a "preparation" to be a dog trainer like her. Wrong. I'm taking psychology because I thought it would be easy.

Jamie slaps her spoon down on the counter and grabs a napkin.

JAMIE

Wrong again.

She puts the used tea bag on the napkin and puts them down on the counter.

KIM

(surprised)

Does your Mom know all this?

JAMIE

She doesn't listen. And really, please don't tell her we had this conversation, she'll just get mad and not believe you.

KIM

(nods)

Don't worry. I'll stay out of it.

Jamie sits and sips her tea. She gets up and adds more sugar and stirs.

JAMIE

I want to design clothes. Have my own line someday. Mom just laughs when I talk about it. But...

She turns.

JAMIE

See this scarf?

She holds up the scarf.

JAMIE

I designed and made it. Isn't it pretty?

KIM

(sincerely)

Yes, it is.

JAMIE

I get lots of compliments.

Jamie blows on her cup.

KIM

I can see why.

JAMIE

Thanks. So there's no reason for me to go to college. I want to go to an art institute.

KIM

You are very good with dogs though. They seem to love you.

JAMIE

Well I don't love them so much. Actually I think I like cats better.

Kim laughs and Jamie looks happier. Kim sees the soaked napkin and tea bag on the counter. She gets up, picks them up and throws them in the trash can. She then wipes the area with a sponge while Jamie sips her tea.

KIM

I'm sure your mom would want you to do what you wanted to do.

JAMIE

You don't know her that well. She's thinks she knows what's best for me. Jamie sips her tea again, gets up and adds more sugar.

KIM

I know it's hard, but you should try to discuss it with her.

JAMIE

I can't. But don't worry, I have a plan.

KIM

That's good.

A moment.

KIM

So what are the arrangements with your teacher?

JAMIE

Not sure yet.

KIM

Privates?

Jamie NODS her head YES.

KIM

How many?

JAMIE

Probably four or five.

KIM

Please tell me when you know. I need to put the days in the calendar.

Okay.

JAMIE

She then markedly changes her attitude.

JAMIE
(sweetly)

Kim, I know you're busy. So when the doorbell rings, I can get it.

Your mom said...

KIM

JAMIE
(interrupting)

I know.

She waves her off.

JAMIE

Don't worry about that. I should let Mr. Bender in. He'll be more comfortable that way. Okay?

She gives Kim a big smile.

KIM

Alright.

The office phone RINGS.

KIM

I gotta get that.

JAMIE

Thanks.

Kim smiles back and exits quickly. Jamie puts her unfinished tea down on the table and exits a moment later.

SCENE 3

GRUMBLING and THROAT CLEARING is heard as PHIL, Sandy's 70 year old father enters the kitchen.

He stops, looks around, adjusts his robe, then sits at the table. He looks at the coffee maker for a moment. Then just stares straight ahead.

The DOORBELL RINGS. DOGS BARKING.

Moments later Jamie gaily enters the kitchen chatting with her tutor ERIC (MR. BENDER). He is a clean cut young man in his mid 20's. He is wearing loafers, khaki pants, and a button down shirt.

Jamie and Eric are giggling about something and then see Phil....

Oh, Hi Grandpa.

JAMIE
(startled)

He looks them over.

Good morning Sunshine.

PHIL
(amused)

A moment as Jamie is flustered.

So, ah.....sleep okay Grandpa?

JAMIE

He gives a big yawn.

Never do.

PHIL

Eric and Jamie stand awkwardly. Phil looks at Eric, who nods politely.

So, what have we here?

PHIL

Grandpa this is Eric. I mean, Mr. Bender. He's going to have a few privates with Mom.

JAMIE

Eric reaches for Phil's hand and Phil doesn't move, making Eric lurch forward, and then shake it.

In the kitchen?

PHIL

Of course not.

JAMIE

She nervously giggles.

She first wants to meet and talk to him. First session.

JAMIE

Well, where is she?

PHIL

In the shower.

JAMIE

Jamie and Eric look at each other.

Maybe we'll wait outside.

JAMIE
(to Phil)

No, no. You can wait here.

Phil smiles.

PHIL

Phil motions to a chair
(demanding)

Sit! Please.

Eric, reluctantly, sits. Jamie stands by him.

PHIL
(to Jamie)

So why is this gentleman so special that he gets to come in the house?

JAMIE

Grandpa, Mr. Bender is very special. He teaches statistics and I'm having a few problems. He's offered to tutor me in exchange for a few training classes.

PHIL

I see.

Phil looks him over again.

PHIL

Is he your boyfriend?

They both nervously laugh.

JAMIE

Grandpa, he's my teacher.

An awkward silence, then....

JAMIE

I'll go see if Mom's almost finished.

She looks at Eric who looks uncomfortable.

JAMIE

Is that okay?

ERIC
(without enthusiasm)

Sure.