

GINGER

Written by

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INT. DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Upbeat MUSIC swells through the immaculate house. The dining room table is surrounded by bunches of balloons and a sign.

INSERT SIGN: HAPPY BIRTHDAY!!!!

MIRIAM NASARI, 61, juggles a plastic table cloth in one hand and phone in the other. She gushes into the phone:

MIRIAM
How does she look, Joey? Am I gonna be happy? Put her on, I need to hear from her.

Shrill BARKING can be heard from the other line.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Ginger? How's my birthday girl?
Aww, you love it, I can tell!

The DOORBELL chimes. Miriam grins.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Okay, baby, gotta go! It's your BROTHER!

Miriam makes kissy sounds before hanging up. She flings the table cloth onto the dining table, then rushes to the door.

INT. ENTRYWAY - AFTERNOON

Miriam opens the door.

DARIUS NASARI, 24, greets her with a tired smile.

DARIUS
Hey, Mom--

He's engulfed by Miriam's tight hug.

MIRIAM
Darius, honey, I'm SO glad you made it. How was your drive?

DARIUS
Um, fine. Yeah. Why don't we...?

He pushes past her to step inside. Miriam's smile falters before she closes the door. She rocks on her heels, waiting for him to remove his coat. Pulls him into another hug.

MIRIAM

How was traffic? You took the five,
right? Did you eat?

DARIUS

Yeah, I stopped for a burrito.

MIRIAM

For never coming to visit, the trip
doesn't sound so bad.

Darius frowns, face hardening. Miriam pats his shoulder,
kisses his cheek.

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

She leads him to the dining room, talking over her shoulder.

MIRIAM

Ginger's still at the groomer. You
can help me finish decorating!

DARIUS

Decorating? You--oh god.

He stops in his tracks to take in the state of the table. The
table cloth is covered in sports imagery. He gapes.

MIRIAM

You love it!

DARIUS

Uh...it's interesting. It looks a
lot like my sixth birthday party.

MIRIAM

Hm. You think so?

Miriam obliviously hands him streamers, points.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

That corner's a little sparse,
maybe you could-?

Darius opens his mouth, closes it. He hangs the streamers.

Miriam curls a ribbon, watches him. A hand raises to heart.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)

I miss having someone tall around.
If you stopped by more...

Silence falls. They both return to decorating for a beat.

Miriam's face perks up. She rises from her seat, leaves the room. She returns holding a BIG BOX.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
I'm surprising Ginger. Look!

The box turns. It's a display case featuring photos of a proud Pomeranian and two blue ribbons. Darius's lips part.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
It's her pageant wins! Great, huh?

DARIUS
Oh. You...do that now?

MIRIAM
I post about it on Facebook, don't you see my posts? Anyway, maybe you could help me hang it.

Darius doesn't answer, takes the case from her. He examines it more closely.

DARIUS
Did we have this before?

MIRIAM
It held some of your old trophies. I saved those for you if you want them.

Darius stares in shock at the case, before his gaze shifts downward. Miriam directs him to a spot of wall.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
I was thinking here, maybe. I don't know. Darius?

She eyes him with concern. He scoffs.

DARIUS
You can't be serious. You're not going to hang this!

MIRIAM
What? Why not?

Darius glances away, shaking his head.

Miriam tugs at her lip for a beat. Neither speak until:

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Why don't you come over more? You can tell me! I won't be offended.

DARIUS
I dunno. It's weird without Dad.

Miriam's head jerks back as if she's been struck.

MIRIAM
So, what, you'll go visit him?

DARIUS
No...I didn't mean it like that.

MIRIAM
(sarcastic)
It makes sense. I did everything
for you, but HE's the one you miss!

DARIUS
Mom! STOP.

MIRIAM
WATCH your tone! Show some respect!

DARIUS
You're acting INSANE! This whole
thing you're doing is insane!

Her sharp gaze holds on him. He stares back.

Miriam's lip quivers. She turns and leaves the room.

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Hunched over the counter, Miriam cries alone. She stares at a PHOTO: Darius at age 6 at his sports themed birthday. The party looks almost identical to Ginger's.

INT. DINING ROOM - AFTERNOON

Miriam, face cleaned, tepidly enters. Darius is gone. She looks curiously around.

INT. DARIUS'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Darius sits on his bed. The room around him looks as if it belongs to a teenager. His fingers trace the comforter when the door opens.

Miriam cracks the door, meets his eyes. He sighs, nods. She enters, joins him on the bed.

DARIUS
I didn't know you kept it the same.

MIRIAM
Of course. In case you ever came
back home.

He looks at her, half a smile. She's not smiling.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
I don't always know what I'm doing.

DARIUS
I know. It's okay.

MIRIAM
Well, not if I'm...bothering you
all the time.

A beat.

DARIUS
It's just the *guilting*. 'You never
call' or 'you never come over'.

Tears surface in Miriam's eyes. She nods.

DARIUS (CONT'D)
Mom, please don't cry. It's not
that bad.

MIRIAM
I've been pushing you away.

Darius shakes his head, pulls her into a tight hug. They
remain there for a beat.

DARIUS
Your love can be...a lot.

She laughs through her tears, pulls away.

MIRIAM
I just get lonely.

DARIUS
What about taking on a hobby? Like
scrapbooking? That case looked
really good.

MIRIAM
You think so?

He nods. She smiles, wipes her tears, hugs him again.

Her phone vibrates from her pocket. She checks it.

MIRIAM (CONT'D)
Oh, it's the groomer.

DARIUS
Let's go get her.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Miriam and Darius are gathered around the table, singing "Happy Birthday". GINGER, the Pomeranian, sits on a chair, not sure what's going on.

DARIUS
--And many more!

Miriam beams at him.

INT. ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Miriam waves goodbye before closing the door. From a window, she watches a car drive away.

Smiling to herself, she scoops up Ginger and coos at her.

END.