

MISSED CONNECTION

Written by

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INT. BONNIE'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

BONNIE (32, guilt-ridden, determined) flits around the kitchen assembling dinner. A cheap "Happy Birthday" banner hangs from the wall, behind a table set for two.

BONNIE

Cake's in the oven, sides are almost done, and Mom should be here in a couple minutes with the brisket.

(deep breath)

You ready Dad?

"DAD" (V.O.)

I don't know if I am, but my singing voice sure is.

"Dad" starts to make weird vocal noises as Bonnie laughs.

"DAD" (V.O.)

Oh wait, Boo Peep I forgot to remind you. Your trial ends tonight.

Bonnie's smile falters.

"DAD" (V.O.)

And you know if you don't renew me, my-

"DAD" (V.O.)

-Privacy agreement will kick in, and all my data will be lost.

BONNIE

-Privacy agreement will kick in, and all my data will be lost.

BONNIE (CONT'D)

If I do it now, can we just get back to my birthday?

Bonnie looks over to a machine on the counter. Reminiscent of an Alexa or Google Home, this is "DAD," equipped with the voice and bubbly personality of Murray in his prime.

"DAD" (V.O.)

Of course.

Bonnie pulls out her phone and fiddles with it for a second before a DING sound emits.

BONNIE

So don't bring any of the payment stuff up in front of Mom or-

The sound of the front door OPENING is heard through the apartment.

KATHY
 You got it right?
 (beat)
 No, you don't. Just hand it to me.

Bonnie composes herself and makes her way to...

INT. BONNIE'S APARTMENT - FRONT DOOR / LIVING ROOM

KATHY (65, blunt, worn-down, familial) maneuvers a brisket out of MURRAY'S (67, foggy minded) hands, and nudges him inside.

Bonnie's face falters at the sight of Murray.

BONNIE
 I wish you'd knock or something,
 Mom.

KATHY
 You gave me the key. So I used the
 key. Stop complaining, I brought
 you food.

Kathy hands Bonnie the brisket.

KATHY (CONT'D)
 Oh, and Happy Birthday honey.

Bonnie puts down the dish and hugs her mom.

BONNIE
 (whispered)
 You brought Dad?

Murray stands by the door, unmoving, staring at the wall.

KATHY
 You said you had news, so I thought
 you'd want to share it with your
 father too.

Bonnie looks guilty and uncomfortable. Kathy grabs Murray by the shoulders and positions him in front of Bonnie.

KATHY (CONT'D)
 Give your daughter, Bonnie, a
 birthday hug.

Murray and Bonnie exchange an awkward hug, but Bonnie still hugs him tight.

MURRAY
Happy birthday, my daughter Bonnie.

BONNIE
Thanks, Dad.

Murray nods before moseying his way to the couch and sitting.

KATHY
See, wasn't that sweet? This is why family should always spend their birthdays together. Right, Murray?

"DAD" (V.O.)
Couldn't be more true, darling.

Kathy pauses in disbelief. She turns towards the couch to see Murray, staring at the wall.

KATHY
Murray?

"DAD" (V.O.)
Yes?

Kathy jumps with a SCREAM. Bonnie attempts to calm her.

BONNIE
Mom, it's alright.

KATHY
What the hell is happening? Are the walls talking?

BONNIE
Sort of...
(clears throat)
This was the news that I wanted to share.

Bonnie motions to the sky.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
I figured out a way for us to have a family dinner on my birthday, with Dad.

KATHY
By playing a recording of your father from the walls?

"DAD" (V.O.)
 Actually I am technically an
 artificial intelligence stand-in. I
 know you hate all this technology
 stuff, Kathy, but it's just me,
 Murray.

The sounds of his name awakens Murray from his fog.

MURRAY
 Murray? You can't be Murray, c-
 cause I'm Murray.

"DAD" (V.O.)
 Well, so am I.

Murray is visibly shaken. He trembles as he stands from the
 couch, aggressively looking around the room.

MURRAY
 No. No, I'm Murray. So y-you can't
 be Murray.

"DAD" (V.O.)
 We can both be Murray, that's the
 fun of it all.

Murray looks to the sky, overwhelmed. He starts to cry.

MURRAY
 But I'm Murray. Me. I am Murray.

Kathy rushes over to comfort Murray.

KATHY
 It's okay, dear. You're right,
 you're Murray. You're the only
 Murray. Let's go get you cleaned
 up.

Kathy takes Murray's hand, leading him away, but before
 leaving, she sternly turns to Bonnie.

KATHY (CONT'D)
 Then I will deal with you and-
 (motions to sky)
 This.

Kathy and Murray exit.

Bonnie, a mix of anger and shame, paces the room.

BONNIE

Why can't she just understand this isn't a bad thing? I'm not replacing him; this is just like a-chat service type thing.

"DAD" (V.O.)

You know your Mom. She can overreact a bit, but she'll get used to me.

BONNIE

Doesn't she want to talk to you? To laugh again? To know that your best conversations aren't behind you?
(beat)
You heard him, he's not chatting with anyone.

"DAD" (V.O.)

Your dad?

BONNIE

He's my father, not my Dad. He wouldn't even remember the first thing about being my dad.

"DAD" (V.O.)

Well, I do, Boo Peep.

The little hope Bonnie still had leaves her as she sits on the couch, defeated.

BONNIE

Yeah...

Kathy enters alone, flustered and exhausted. She approaches Bonnie.

KATHY

I don't understand you, Bonnie, I really don't...

(sigh)

I went through the trouble of bringing your dad all the way out here for your birthday and-

BONNIE

-I didn't ask you to do that.

KATHY

Yeah, well, his memory is getting worse, and it's not like you visit him anyway-

BONNIE

Because I can't stand to see him
like this, and it makes me feel
like such a piece of shit.

(beat)

I'm sorry I'm not you, Mom. I don't
know how to be with him anymore...

Silence. Kathy sighs.

KATHY

You just have to. These are the
cards we were dealt. They suck. And
I'd love to return them, but
luckily I love your dad more.

BONNIE

But that's what I'm saying, you
can. I made it so we can—we can
have Dad back.

"DAD" (V.O.)

Yeah, Kathy, honey, I'm right here.

Kathy looks at her daughter with pity and shakes her head.

KATHY

Your dad and I are going to head
out. This has just been too much
for him tonight. Can you make sure
that thing doesn't talk until after
we leave?

Bonnie nods, and Kathy smiles in confirmation. Kathy exits.

"DAD" (V.O.)

It's okay Boo Peep, we can
celebrate together.

BONNIE

(to "Dad")

Be quiet.

"DAD" (V.O.)

It'll be so fun! We can play games
and I can do my singing and-

BONNIE

Shut up!

Bonnie grabs a remote from a nearby table.

"DAD" (V.O.)

That's no way to speak to your...

Bonnie presses a button on the remote, turning "Dad" off.

Murray and Kathy enter the room, shoes on, ready to go. Kathy goes in to give Bonnie a hug.

KATHY
Happy birthday, honey.

Kathy ushers Murray forward to say his goodbyes.

MURRAY
Happy birthday, Bo Peep.

Bonnie freezes and gives a faint smile. Murray and Kathy head to the door.

BONNIE
Wait!

They turn around.

BONNIE (CONT'D)
Can you guys stay for dinner? So we
can do it as a family?

Kathy motions to the sky, asking, "What about the bot?"
Bonnie shakes her head "no." Kathy smiles.

KATHY
Of course.

Bonnie takes Murray's hand and leads him to the kitchen.

MURRAY
What are we eating?

BONNIE
Brisket.

MURRAY
Is it someone's birthday?

BONNIE
It's my birthday.

MURRAY
Happy Birthday, Bo Peep.

BONNIE
Thank you, Dad.