

FRAN. It was my 'Get Out' money, Bob. I saw it happen to my mother. Stuck in a miserable marriage with a man she didn't love because she couldn't afford to leave. It wasn't going to happen to me. So, I put a little away. Every pay. Until I had enough to buy some shares.

BOB. Shares!

FRAN. Mining. Iron ore. The price goes through the roof and suddenly I'm a wealthy woman. I start to get nervous. I read the papers. I can see what's coming so I sell. And then the price goes down. I played it well.

BOB. Right.

FRAN. I'm not justifying it... I don't have to.

BOB. No. But a man wouldn't mind an explanation why he wasn't let in on it.

FRAN. I told you... I had to know I could go if I ever needed to.

BOB. Did you... Ever need to?

Her silence is the answer.

What stopped you?

FRAN. The children. I stayed because of the kids.

BOB. And me? Where was I in this picture?

FRAN. You can't love someone for thirty years straight. You fall out of love. Or there's no time for love. Or love is not the point. Getting by is the point. Raising children is the point. I'll stop if you don't want to hear this.

BOB. No... I want to know.

FRAN. You fall out of love. You just do. And you think about, maybe, something else. Another life. But it passes. If you wait long enough, one day you realise that the man you did love is still there, still sitting across the table from you, still sleeping on the other side of the bed. And you settle for that.

BOB. You settled for me.

FRAN. I'm being honest, Bob.

BOB. Was there ever someone else?

FRAN. Don't ask me that.

BOB. Was there?

FRAN. I don't want to hurt you.

BOB. Was there?

FRAN. There was someone who wanted me.

BOB. And?

FRAN. I said no.

BOB. Did you love him?

FRAN. For a moment.

BOB. Who was he?

FRAN. Does that matter?

BOB. I'm not sure.

FRAN. He was a patient. Long term. I cared for him. We had some time, you know, to get to know one another... He liked Leonard Cohen.

A moment.

I chose you. You and the kids. And what we had.

BOB. And regretted it ever since.

FRAN. No.

BOB. Yeah. You punished me, Fran. You punished us. Pip especially. With your fury. With your screaming out at the unfairness of it all. Married... With four kids. One you weren't expecting. An accident. You thought you were done. You had other plans. That was about the time wasn't it? When some other bloke wanted you? Funny what a husband will do to make sure his wife stays.

FRAN. You knew?

BOB. A man's not blind to his wife's unhappiness.

FRAN. So you thought a kid would fix it?

BOB. The kid happened... and I'm glad of it. Unless...

FRAN. Don't.

BOB. You're going to break my heart if you tell me that girl is not mine.

FRAN. You're Rosie's father.

BOB. I'm the man who brought her up, I know that much.

*She could hurt him with a lie or save him with the truth.
Or is it the other way around?*

FRAN. I never slept with him. I could have. He wanted me. I lay with him a few times. Late at night. Held him. Let him hold me. That was enough. And more than I was getting from you at the time. He asked me to go away with him. Me? Never had a man ask me such a thing. I thought about it. For a moment. A day. A week. And then I said no.

BOB. And settled for me.

FRAN. That's about it, yeah.

BOB. You're too hard, Fran... You want to learn how to give a man a way back.

Beat.

FRAN. I won't stand by and watch Ben go to jail. Not if I can help it. You need to know that.

BOB. It's your money, so do what you want with it. But what you give to Ben you have to give to the other three. I won't have one child favoured financially.

FRAN. It won't leave much over for you and me.

BOB. You and me?

Summer

Rosie

The roses are back in bloom. A year has passed since ROSIE returned from Europe. Everything is the same and yet so much has changed.

ROSIE snaps a rose from its stem. She plucks a few petals and lets them fall. FRAN is watching her.

FRAN. You'll break your father's heart.

ROSIE. Don't say that.

FRAN. Well?

ROSIE. What about yours? Will I break yours?

FRAN. No. I'm ready for you to go. I'm over being a mother.

ROSIE. I don't want you to be over me.

FRAN. Out of sight. Out of mind.

ROSIE. You don't mean that.

BOB enters.

BOB. Rosie, you've parked too close to the wall. I can't get my wheelbarrow through. I've told you a hundred times.

ROSIE. I'll shift it.

FRAN. Rosie's got something to tell you.

ROSIE. It can wait until later.

FRAN. No, it can't.

BOB. What is it?

FRAN. She's leaving.

ROSIE. Mum!

FRAN. She's enrolled in a course.