

The Destruction of the Fourth World

by Murray Mednick

Characters

Bernard (Bernie) 13

David, *his brother*, 31

Rose (Rosie), *their Grandmother*, 75

Chrystal, *David's wife*, 30

Caleb, *The boys' father, Rose's son*. 56

Coyote (*invisible*)

Dialogue in parentheses are asides to the audience.

Bernie

OFF: The curtain rises, the house lights dim. Coyote, through whom both Being and Nonbeing manifests, stands there, onstage, looking out. Coyote looks at the audience.

Coyote VOICE OFF: (They're listening with their heads in their pockets. They can't figure out who this Indian is, looking at them as though he understood their personal idiosyncracies—but they're willing to go along with it, up to a point. "Listen," he says, "since the day I've been born in America, that is to say, way long before any of you, the situation has been the same, "Don't make the white-eyes uncomfortable, or feel bad about themselves, both the women and the men, and you might endure for a long time your glorious, meaningless, immortal life." This inevitable tension—between money and celebrity and entertainment versus true intelligence—is suspect, intractable and eternal. That said, this is a story about intelligent people, or, more exactly, about me, Coyote. Ushers, please be sure that the customers have all paid what they owe, and proceed to lock the doors. Thank you. Amen and good luck.)

Bernie and Caleb

Bernie How do I pray?

Caleb I don't know. Why pray?

Bernie I can't control the ox.
Caleb Why control the ox?
Bernie He leads me to stray.
Caleb Stray from?
Bernie My own mind.
Caleb Where do you go, China?
Bernie Yeah, China, Dad.
Caleb I see.
Bernie So?
Caleb So what?
Bernie You know about that?
Caleb What?
Bernie Straying and praying?
Caleb I'm not sure that I do, no.
Bernie Okay.
Caleb Okay, what?
Bernie Okay, okay. To pray?
Caleb I don't know. *(Pause)*
Bernie Do you not know?
Caleb No.
Bernie Then why sit before me, leaning forward like you care?
Caleb It's my duty.
Bernie Looking concerned and intelligent?
Caleb You're a good kid, Bernie.
Bernie Say something, Dad.
Caleb I just said something.
Bernie About prayer.
Caleb I don't know anything about it.
Bernie Come on, Dad.

Caleb You figure it out.

(Moments later)

Caleb You could look it up.

Bernie That's what I'll do.

Caleb Make it hard.

Bernie I will.

Caleb Make it hard on yourself.

Bernie I hear that.

Caleb Maybe you'll find something.

Bernie Maybe I will.

Caleb It's all there somewhere.

Bernie In the books.

Caleb In the books.

Bernie The text.

Caleb The teachings.

Bernie The laws.

Caleb It's all there if you search.

Bernie That's what I'll do then.

Caleb Because I don't know myself.

Bernie Thanks.

Caleb I don't know the first thing.

Bernie That's okay.

Caleb About prayer or God.

Bernie Neither do I.

Caleb Or what, or who.

Bernie I know.

Caleb You're supposed to pray to.

Bernie Or how.

Caleb Right. I don't have a clue.
Bernie What to say.
Caleb But I know one thing.
Bernie How to say it.
Caleb No—you don't do it for yourself.
Bernie The words.
Caleb You don't ask for yourself.
Bernie Or the song.
Caleb You sing it for others.
Bernie I see.
Caleb You sing the song for others.
Bernie Good.
Caleb So they'll have rain.
Bernie Crops.
Caleb So they'll have good fortune.
Bernie In their lives.
Caleb Not you, not yourself.
Bernie For them.
Caleb For them, not you.

(Later)

Caleb Bernie.
Bernie What?
Caleb Let me ask you something.
Bernie Ask.
Caleb You steal clothes?
Bernie Me? I don't go out much. It's not me.
Caleb Who is it, then?
Bernie I can't say.

Caleb Who steals clothes?
Bernie I can't say, but she likes style, she likes new things.
Caleb I know who it is.
Bernie You knew all along.
Caleb She's into style.
Bernie Grandma Rosie. She forgets.
Caleb Definitely, but it's not her.
Bernie She gets mixed up.
Caleb I won't mention any names.
Bernie Chrystal.
Caleb Your mother did it, too, before she died.
Bernie She did?
Caleb Not often. Once in a while.
Bernie Where is she now?
Caleb She's in the ocean. She was in the ocean.
Bernie No, her body was in the ocean.
Caleb Wait a minute.
Bernie What?
Caleb Her spirit is someplace else?
Bernie It has to be somewhere.
Caleb Certainly you can tell the difference.
Bernie Between?
Caleb Between the living and the dead.
Bernie They say there is a long line.
Caleb Who says?
Bernie (The Hopi) I can't say.
Caleb The long line of what?
Bernie The long line of the dead.
Caleb No, between your mother and your grandmother.
Bernie Of course.

Caleb What's the difference?
Bernie One is living and one is dead.
Caleb Exactly.
Bernie Meanwhile the other one forgets everything.
Caleb Which one?
Bernie The living. *(Pause)*
Caleb She had to win, your mother. She had to be above me at all times.
Bernie And so?
Caleb So you're not talking about that, are you?
Bernie No.
Caleb You're talking about memory?
Bernie Right, Dad.
Caleb A withering away of the branches?
Bernie Yes. That's it. In the brain.

(Moments later)

Caleb You buy cookies?
Bernie What?
Caleb You buy cookies?
Bernie Yes.
Caleb You buy cookies for the class?
Bernie No.
Caleb She blames me. Your grandmother.
Bernie For Maysie.
Caleb Who is Maysie?
Bernie Not for the class.
Caleb No more cookies.
Bernie Not for the class.

Caleb No more cookies for anybody.

Bernie Why can't you be nice?

Caleb I am nice.

Bernie You're not being nice.

Caleb I'm nice to you.

Bernie Just be nice.

Caleb You don't have to be proud.

Bernie I want to be proud.

Caleb You don't have to bribe your friend with cookies.

Bernie I'm proud.

Caleb You don't have to be proud.

Bernie I'll be proud.

Caleb I don't care if you're a little proud.

Bernie Okay, I'll be little proud.

Caleb But no more cookies.

Bernie They're for my friend, Maysie.

Caleb Let her buy you cookies.

Bernie Can you be nice?

Caleb Only once.

Bernie Can I give her the cookies then?

Caleb This once.

Bernie Okay.

Caleb That's all.

Bernie Okay.

Caleb Just this once.

Bernie Okay.

Caleb You'll bring them to school?

Bernie What?

Caleb The cookies. You'll bring them to school.

Bernie Maybe I will.

Caleb That's the only way, Bernie.
Bernie What?
Caleb School.
Bernie Okay, Dad.
Caleb Don't forget.
Bernie I saw her, Dad.
Caleb Who? Maysie?
Bernie No. My mother.
Caleb No, you didn't.
Bernie I saw her in a window. She was a reflection in a window.
Caleb It's impossible.
Bernie I'm telling you.
Caleb What was she wearing?
Bernie Something from the fifties or sixties.
Caleb You're imagining things.
Bernie You can see things from the spirit world in a reflection.
Caleb Who told you that?
Bernie The person's not there but their image is in the window.
Caleb Who told you that?
Bernie I can't say. (Coyote)
Caleb Okay, Bernie.
Bernie Okay.
Caleb Do your homework.
Bernie I'm doing my homework.
Caleb That's all I can say, do your homework.
Bernie I'm doing my homework.
Caleb Let me see it when you're done, please.

(Moments later)

Caleb Don't hide from Dad.
Bernie I'm not.
Caleb Don't hide things from Dad.
Bernie I won't.
Caleb Or try to lie.
Bernie I'm not.
Caleb Because we'll know.
Bernie Yeah, yeah, of course.
Caleb And God will know.
Bernie Where is God?
Caleb He's under the bed.
Bernie Ha. You don't know anything about it.
Caleb He's under the bed, ha ha.
Bernie All right, Dad.
Caleb He's under the bed and in the ceiling.
Bernie Right, Dad.
Caleb So don't bother to lie.
Bernie About?
Caleb I don't know. Cookies, candy and clothes.
Bernie Come on.
Caleb Cookies, candy and clothes.
Bernie Like what.
Caleb Because I hear about it from your grandmother.
Bernie You're afraid of my mother?
Caleb Your mother is dead.
Bernie You're afraid of my mother?
Caleb Did you hear me?
Bernie You should stand up.
Caleb Who told you that?
Bernie She told me.

Caleb Maybe you didn't hear me? Your mother killed herself.

Bernie You should stand up, and then I'd be proud.

Caleb She didn't want to hear about it.

Bernie What?

Caleb The murder of the Jews.

Bernie I'm a Jew.

Caleb That's right. By birth.

Bernie What do you mean?

Caleb Otherwise you're a complete American, like me.

Bernie I'm not hanging around for that. I don't want to be that.

Caleb What?

Bernie An American. (I'd rather be an Indian.)

Caleb Good luck.

Bernie My mother said I was from the Middle East.

Caleb You're not.

Bernie By origin.

Caleb So, she still didn't want to hear about it. (The Holocaust)

Bernie Who wants to hear about it?

Caleb Your grandmother.

Bernie Okay. What's the lie?

Caleb What lie?

Bernie The one you referred to earlier.

Caleb Don't say you went to school if you didn't go.

Bernie Okay, I lied.

Caleb You lied to Grandma and you lied to me.

Bernie I'm sorry.

Caleb And you lied to the sky. Because that's where God is.

Bernie Where?

Caleb I told you.

Bernie In the sky and in the air?

Caleb In the ground and in the mind.
Bernie In the People, Dad.
Caleb He's everywhere, Bernie.
Bernie You should learn about it more. (That's where Coyote is.)
Caleb No.
Bernie Why not?
Caleb It's too late now.

(Later)

Caleb Why did you complain?
Bernie I didn't complain.
Caleb Your grandmother calls me to tell me you complain.
Bernie She called you? Grandma Rosie?
Caleb Yes. So why did you complain?
Bernie I didn't complain. About what?
Caleb You go somewhere? And you know you're not allowed.
Bernie I'm not allowed?
Caleb To buy junk.
Bernie I don't buy junk.
Caleb I don't like the building.
Bernie It's an ordinary building.
Caleb No. It's depressing.
Bernie All buildings are depressing.
Caleb No, it's that particular building.
Bernie What's wrong with it?
Caleb It's a mall. And she can't control you there.
Bernie I don't buy junk.
Caleb What do you buy?
Bernie I buy equipment.

Caleb What kind of equipment?
Bernie Electronics.
Caleb Electronics?
Bernie Electronics.
Caleb She doesn't know anything about electronics.
Bernie I know she doesn't.
Caleb So you take advantage.
Bernie I take advantage?
Caleb You take advantage and then you complain.
Bernie How did I complain?
Caleb She won't let you buy things.
Bernie It's my money.
Caleb It's money she gave you.
Bernie She gives me the money and she forgets where it is.
Caleb I know.
Bernie I try to buy something and she won't let me.
Caleb It's her prerogative.
Bernie It's my money.
Caleb She's trying not to spoil you.
Bernie Electronic equipment?
Caleb Because she knows you have no mother.
Bernie She can't remember from one minute to the next.
Caleb So she thinks she's your mother?
Bernie Yeah, Dad. And she isn't. She's my grandmother.
Caleb Okay, Bernie.
Bernie So I can buy what I want.
Caleb I didn't say so.
Bernie I can buy whatever I want.
Caleb If you go to school. Only then.
Bernie I'm done.

Caleb What do you mean?
Bernie I'm not going to buy anything anymore. I'm done.

(Later)

Bernie Please don't leave the door closed.
Caleb I don't like the door open.
Bernie Leave it open.
Caleb She wouldn't like it.
Bernie Who wouldn't like it?
Caleb Your mother. She never liked it with the door open.
Bernie My mother's in the spirit world now, Dad.
Caleb Your mother is dead, may she rest in peace, but she never liked the door open.
Bernie Why?
Caleb Because the whole outside world could walk in.
Bernie Was she right?
Caleb Of course, she was right.
Bernie Well, that's all good then.
Caleb What is?
Bernie You can leave the door open.
Caleb And I still see her, I see her everywhere.
Bernie What was it she didn't like?
Caleb She didn't like the door open.
Bernie No, besides that.
Caleb Anybody could walk right in.
Bernie Besides that, Dad.
Caleb She didn't like complaining.
Bernie You don't either, Dad.
Caleb I know.

Bernie Can you leave it open?
Caleb The door?
Bernie Yeah.
Caleb Why? Are you expecting company?
Bernie Yes.
Caleb Who are you expecting?
Bernie I'm expecting a friend.
Caleb They can knock. Your friend can knock on the door.
Bernie Okay.
Caleb Your friend could knock on the door and then you can open it.
Bernie Great.
Caleb You can leave your own door open.
Bernie Okay, thanks.
Caleb You can leave the door to your own room open.
Bernie I got it.
Caleb There. I think that's a fair arrangement.
Bernie Thanks a lot, Dad.
Caleb The house door is closed, and your door is open. I think that's fair.
Bernie Thanks.

(Later)

Bernie Dad?
Caleb What?
Bernie Grandma thinks she's in Brazil.
Caleb I know she does.
Bernie What are you going to do?
Caleb What can I do?

Bernie Maybe she should have an operation.

Caleb They don't have that kind of operation, Bernie.

Bernie It's very primitive.

Caleb That's right. Things are very primitive.

Bernie She thinks weird things about the building.

Caleb This building?

Bernie Yes.

Caleb It's just a building.

Bernie I know.

Caleb So don't complain.

Bernie I didn't.

Caleb Don't complain about your grandmother.

Bernie I didn't.

Caleb Then don't.

Bernie It's you that complains.

Caleb Me?

Bernie You complain all the time because she picks on you.

Caleb I do?

Bernie Because you're chicken.

Caleb I'm not chicken.

Bernie Otherwise I'd be proud.

Caleb You should be proud.

Bernie I'm not.

Caleb It's because she's nuts.

Bernie So are you.

Caleb No, it's because she has to.

Bernie What?

Caleb She has to.

Bernie What?

Caleb She has to be above me.

Bernie Then you should fight.

Caleb Fight?

Bernie No matter what. Fight back, Dad.

Caleb I can't fight. The woman's nuts.

Bernie Then why not fight?

Caleb She's my mother. I can't win.

Bernie Why can't you win?

Caleb You don't understand.

Bernie What?

Caleb She can't be not above.

Bernie Then don't blame me.

Caleb You're right.

Bernie And she can't remember.

Caleb You never know.

Bernie It's not my fault. Don't blame me.

Caleb You're quite right.

Bernie Don't blame me.

Caleb I can't win. And your mother, too.

Bernie What?

Caleb I could never win.

Bernie Dad? I'll keep my door closed.

Caleb You can't keep your door closed.

Bernie I thought that's what you wanted.

Caleb No that was the front door. The front door should be closed.

Bernie I want to keep my door closed, unless I come out.

Caleb Why?

Bernie I need to keep my door closed, Dad, like you said.

Caleb What did I say?

Bernie So the whole world doesn't come in.

Caleb I don't remember saying that.
Bernie The outside world.
Caleb What about it?
Bernie I don't want it coming into my room.

David and Caleb

Caleb He says he saw his mother—your mother—in a window.
David In a window?
Caleb In the mall.
David He was hallucinating.
Caleb When he told me, I could see her clearly.
David Well, you would, Dad.
Caleb I don't know about women, David.
David I have my problems, too, Dad.
Caleb Sometimes I think they should all die, like your mother.
David All of them?
Caleb Just die out and leave us in peace.
David I don't know about that, Dad.
Caleb Then I could take care of you guys.
David Sure, Dad.
Caleb Without any pestering from her.
David Which is not what my mother thought.
Caleb Without any hysterical oppression.
David Are you talking about Grandma?
Caleb Without the bullshit.
David Or are you talking about my mother?
Caleb Definitely bullshit.
David Dad?

Caleb She was a secular woman with a lot of morals.

David My mother? Sarah?

Caleb Yes, and so am I. I'm secular. And so is everybody, except for Rosie.

David Rosie is a survivor.

Caleb When she remembers anything.

David So what's Bernie doing with a bar mitzvah coming up?

Caleb He's not doing it. He doesn't do his Hebrew homework.

David He's into Indians.

Caleb What's the Indians got to do with him?

David Everything else is lies.

Caleb This his mother would approve.

David Maybe that's why he's not doing it.

Caleb She hated the survivors.

David But that wasn't right. It wasn't their fault.

Caleb The special pleading. The righteousness.

David So she didn't get along with Rosie.

Caleb No.

David That wasn't right.

Caleb Special pleading. Where you can't forgive and you can't forget.

David I don't know if that's right.

Caleb True, you don't know and I don't know.

David I wasn't raised to be a religious...uh...

Caleb No, you're a secular person, like I said already.

David Still, I'm not sure. The future and the past, they mean equally nothing.

Caleb Is that right?

David As far as I'm concerned.

Caleb And the present?

David This is it.

Caleb Tell Rosie that.

David I don't think so.

(Moments later)

Caleb Where were we?

David When?

Caleb Before.

David We were right here.

Caleb No. I mean what were we talking about?

David How my mother hated the attitude of the survivors.

Caleb Yes, and she was a Marxist, too. On top of everything else.

David So why did she kill herself? (If she killed herself.)

Caleb I don't know why.

David Maybe she lost hope in America.

Caleb She had a lot of integrity.

David I remember that.

Caleb So a person can't go around stealing clothes and shit.

David Who does that?

Caleb I don't know, whoever.

David Who does that?

Caleb Whoever does it.

David Not me.

Caleb That's how husbands kill their wives.

David It happens.

Caleb First you think it's a nice piece of twat.

David Right.

Caleb Then it turns out she's a full-grown lizard with a mouth.

David I hear you.

Caleb With a mouth. And you don't want to hear that voice.

David No.

Caleb That voice that thinks it owns you.

David I know it.

Caleb You want to drown it or cut it's throat. What's your wife's name?

David You don't know her name?

Caleb I know her name. I just forgot for a second.

David See a doctor, Dad.

Caleb I just forgot. *(Silence)* Is it Chrystal?

David Yes. It's Chrystal. My mother's name was Sarah.

Caleb Right. Chrystal. And Sarah,

David Your wife's name was Sarah. Now deceased.

Caleb Of course. I know that. I just forgot.

David How could you forget?

Caleb What kind of name is Chrystal?

David That's her name.

Caleb Stupid name.

David That's her name.

Caleb What's up with Chrystal?

David Nothing's up with Chyrstal.

Caleb She like her father-in-law?

David Not really.

Caleb What's she like?

David She's like a girl, she's like a female.

Caleb Meat-time in the universe.

David What?

Caleb I was just thinking.

David Aloud?

Caleb I was thinking aloud.

David I don't know, Dad. Thinking aloud?

Caleb So where is she now?

David Who?

Caleb Chrystal.

David Why, Dad?

Caleb We're nothing without our families.

David She'll be home soon.

Caleb We're abnormal.

David (I like to sneak into her from behind.)

Caleb What was that?

David What?

Caleb It's disgraceful. Were you thinking aloud?

David Just a thought, Dad.

Caleb It's so cowardly and disgraceful.

David No, that's you, Dad.

Caleb In magazines it all looks normal.

David It's the photo, the glossy.

Caleb Right, no scum in the photo. No stupid jism.

David Life marching on planet earth.

Caleb The dreaded reproductive act.

David Pretty bodies writhing like larvae.

Caleb Hey, not bad, Dave.

David Like larvae. Only they look nice.

Caleb To us, son, to us they look nice.

David It looks nice in the magazines.

Caleb They know how to do it, son. They know how to make it nice and glossy.

(Later)

David Did you go to see Grandma?

Caleb I'll go tomorrow.

David Tomorrow is good.

Caleb I'm afraid she won't recognize me.

David It can happen, Dad.

Caleb You went today?

David Yes.

Caleb What happened? *(ROSIE is revealed upstage, sitting in a chair, facing away.)*

David When I came in, her back was to me. She was sitting there, holding her head pensively in one hand. She was sitting with another woman, but they weren't talking. Just sitting there, sadly. I watched her for a second and then I went around in front of her. *(Crosses to ROSIE)* She looked up at me. I said, hi, Grandma.

Rosie Hello.

David I'm your grandson, David.

Rosie Of course, you are. I'm sorry.

David *(To CALEB)* I felt hurt she hadn't recognized me.

Caleb It's amazing, isn't it, the egoism of that? And she wasn't going to admit to it, either. Too proud.

Rosie Do you have a girlfriend?

David I'm married, Grandma.

Rosie I heard she dresses nice.

David Who told you?

Rosie A little birdie told me.

David Her name is Chrystal.

Rosie Of course, it is.

David Dad is going to come again tomorrow.

Rosie Oh, good. (*Pause*)

David How are you doing?

Rosie Doing?

David Yes.

Rosie I'm very busy with issues.

David Issues?

Rosie The Germans. You know, many of them settled here after the war. War criminals. Murderers. They found refuge.

David Where is that, Grandma?

Rosie Where?

David Where.

Rosie Brazil, Argentina. Other places in America. They created problems for the working class, of course, especially here in Rio.

David I see.

Rosie My whole family vanished. I'm the only survivor.

David I know.

Rosie Sometimes I feel like jumping out the window, like that Chinese fellow.

David Who is the Chinese fellow?

Rosie But I think I have another family here in America.

David You do.

Rosie So I don't want to hurt them by committing suicide.

David That's good, Grandma.

Rosie I don't know if that's good or not.

David I think it's good.

Rosie Well, that's good.

David My Dad will be here tomorrow. Caleb.

Rosie Oh, yes. I know someone named Caleb. It's a biblical name, isn't it?

David I believe so, yes.

Rosie I went to Berlin, to the Jewish Museum, after many years of denial. And I came out shriven and released. We had survived, after all, in spirit, like the oxygen in the air and the water and in us. Could you follow that, boy?

David I think so.

Rosie Well, I'm glad you came to see me. It was good talking to you.

David I love you, Grandma.

Rosie Take care.

David You, too. (*Crossing back to CALEB*) She said she had some work to do, which I knew was a lie.

Bernie and Caleb and David

Caleb So, listen up. We'll have to come up with a plan.

David A plot?

Caleb A plan.

David Why?

Caleb To keep an eye on my mother.

David Why? She's not going anywhere.

Caleb Your brother and me and maybe your wife, Chystal.

David Rosie's not going anywhere.

Bernie I don't think so.

David She's already there.

Bernie In Rio.

Caleb How old are you?

David I'm thirty-one.

Caleb Not you, Bernie.

Bernie I'm thirteen.

Caleb That's old enough.

Bernie I'll stay in my room, if you don't mind.

Caleb I do mind.

David You can't do that.

Bernie Shut up, David.

David You can't do that.

Bernie I'll stay in touch. I'll talk on the phone, I'll e-mail every day.

David That's not the same.

Bernie Not the same as what?

David Don't play those tricks on me.

Bernie What tricks?

David Questions on top of questions. Stop right there.

Bernie I'm done.

Caleb No going back, now. We're committed.

David From where? Where'd we go?

Bernie We didn't go anywhere.

Caleb From the principle.

David What's the principle?

Caleb It's the principle of humiliation.

David Which is?

Caleb Thou shalt not be brought to tears by your son.
(Or wife.)

David When?

Bernie Dad?

Caleb While you're washing the dishes.

Bernie That's not what we were talking about.

David We weren't talking about that.

Caleb While you're disciplining your child.

Bernie I don't have a child.

Caleb Brought to tears in your ladies apron.

David It's true, I wash the dishes. (He needs to see a doctor.)

Bernie You need to see a doctor, Dad.

Caleb Get your gun and we'll shoot the motherfuckers.

Bernie Who?

David The women?

Caleb No, the swells on their thoroughbreds in their fine boots.

Bernie Dad, we weren't talking about that.

David He's got a point there, though.

Bernie You're watching a movie, Dad. You're in a movie.

Caleb So what?

Bernie And you are too, David.

Caleb Okay, you know what I mean. Relax. We blow the fuckers off their horses. Excuse me. (*Exits*)

David What was that?

Bernie We're sitting here talking and he goes to the movies.

David What is that?

Bernie I don't know what that is.

David I think it's brain malfunction.

Bernie Too many movies. And why do you go along with it?

David It's fun. Give the guy a break why don't you?

Bernie Get him to a doctor.

David No, you do it.

Bernie No. You do it.

Caleb

(I'm not in plastics. I'm a chemistry and biology teacher. But you have thousands of these creatures, they want to have money, so they manufacture a hundred million plastic machines that will never disintegrate for eternity. In other words, they'll be here with God at the end of time. That's pretty much all I know about God. When the Messiah comes, the plastic will be here with Him. That's all I know about the Messiah. But do I really care? About plastics? About God? About the Messiah? Do you? When we can go to an alternative reality, as my boys say, as my mother does? To Rio de Janeiro? Or as my wife did, into the ocean, even if my son says he sees her once in a while? I don't know. I'm only asking. What do you think, if you ever think? Obviously, I need help. I'm sorry, I didn't mean to insult you. That was the last thing I wanted to do. They'll never get me to a doctor. Not a chance. I don't believe in doctors. On the other hand, my mother said she'd never set foot on German soil, and then she went to the Jewish museum, in Berlin. So, you never know. Oh, here's Bernie.)

Bernie and Caleb

Bernie Dad?
Caleb I was talking to myself.
Bernie You do that.
Caleb I know I do. I'm aware of it.
Bernie That doesn't make it okay.

Caleb What's so wrong with that?

Bernie Only crazy people do it.

Caleb That's your opinion.

Bernie You should pray.

Caleb Why?

Bernie It's a better alternative.

Caleb I don't know how to pray.

Bernie Look it up in the Sages.

Caleb No, you look it up. You're supposed to be the bar mitzvah boy.

Bernie I'm not. I quit.

Caleb Manhood is on its way.

Bernie I'm postponing manhood.

Caleb Until?

Bernie Until the Messiah comes, as you say.

Caleb I never said that.

Bernie Anyway, it's postponed.

Caleb The Messiah? (That's for sure!)

Bernie I know one thing. You be sincere. You put your heart into it.

Caleb But it's not for yourself.

Bernie That's what the Indians say.

Caleb It's true. I agree with them.

Bernie You always say that.

Caleb I still say that.

Bernie Pray for the Messiah.

Caleb And the plastic?

Bernie Pray for the Messiah to burn away the plastic.

Caleb I don't know how.

Bernie And pray for your mother.

Caleb I don't know how.
Bernie And pray for your wife.
Caleb I don't know how.
Bernie Who lost herself into the currents of the ocean.
Caleb God bless her.
Bernie Say Lord have mercy.
Caleb Lord have mercy.
Bernie Otherwise there's no hope.
Caleb There's no hope.
Bernie You said it, for yourself, Lord have mercy.
Caleb Lord have mercy on my wretched soul.
Bernie Good, Dad.
Caleb Lord have mercy on my wife, my dear wife.
Bernie Where is she, Dad?
Caleb I don't know where she is.
Bernie She's in the spirit world.
Caleb Maybe she's in the spirit world. I think she was eaten by the fishes.
Bernie She's in Brazil, Dad, with Grandma.
Caleb Is that a joke?
Bernie I'm sorry. I didn't mean to make a joke.
Caleb Maybe she is in Brazil, for all I know.
Bernie Was she mean to you?
Caleb What do you think?
Bernie I think she was.
Caleb I brought it on myself.
Bernie How did you do that?
Caleb That's what she would say. She'd say, Oh? How do you do that?
Bernie What did she mean?

Caleb She meant jerk, she meant, you're a jerk.

Bernie Why a jerk?

Caleb Because I'd make these statements of over-certainty.

Bernie I never heard that word before.

Caleb It's when you say something that's overly sure of yourself.

Bernie Oh, yeah, you tend to do that.

Caleb Yeah, like I brought it on myself with my pride.

Bernie Yeah.

Caleb Like I just figured out what parenting is. Or, I got it about Aristotle.

Bernie Did you?

Caleb I thought so at the time. Finally. He was an observer, Aristotle.

Bernie Maybe you did get it.

Caleb Yeah, a one word analysis.

Bernie You're a minimalist.

Caleb She'd say, Oh, really, how did you do that?

Bernie No reason to break up a family.

Caleb I agree with you. But who could live with false bravado?

Bernie So this is a reason to check out?

Caleb I don't know. You seen her lately?

Bernie No, I haven't seen her lately. I only saw her once at the mall.

Caleb At the mall?

Bernie In the window at the mall.

Caleb You don't go, do you?

Bernie I don't go anywhere. But maybe she'll show up again. Rio, maybe.

Caleb It's not funny.

Bernie She could be in Rio, living the high life.
Caleb That is funny.
Bernie For all we know.
Caleb We don't know.
Bernie For sure she disappeared, Dad.
Caleb She vanished.
Bernie We miss her, God knows, with all her positive opinions.

Bernie and David

Bernie Dad is having problems.
David He stands there, he forgets why he's standing there.
Bernie Take him to a doctor.
David What's a doctor going to do?
Bernie Maybe they have drugs.
David For sure they have drugs.
Bernie So take him.
David But do they work?
Bernie How will we know unless he tries them?
David He won't go.
Bernie You have to make him go.
David You do it.
Bernie We have to trick him into it.
David First you have to leave your room.
Bernie Why?
David Forget it.
Bernie Why did Mom kill herself?
David I don't know. Are you changing the subject?
Bernie Yes. Why?

David How could I know why? I'm not the Messiah.

Bernie No kidding? I'm shocked to hear that.

David So you're off the hook.

Bernie I'm saying, maybe it was Dad.

David Don't say that.

Bernie I said it already.

David I think it was the Holocaust.

Bernie It's a fatal error in the brain.

David Are you talking about Dad?

Bernie The earth's brain. Not some little German idiot.

David Can we stay on the same subject?

Bernie This is the subject.

David She couldn't stand it.

Bernie Mom?

David Who else would I be talking about?

Bernie I can think of at least two other people.

David She thought the world was a death machine.

Bernie Well, that makes sense to me. I don't know why Rosie stays alive.

David Yes, you do.

Bernie It's because she won't remain defeated.

David Right.

Bernie She wants to win.

David We lost already. We lost forever. We got on the trains.

Bernie Don't say that.

David I just said it. All the genes. One third of the genes.

Bernie A fatal error in the brain.

David People as smart as you, Bernie. Thousands.

Bernie A misunderstanding of the cosmos.

David You don't go out lately. Why?

Bernie It's shitty out there.

David Why?

Bernie Everybody is pretending. I don't want to see their faces.

David You have to go to school (*Pause*) Every day.

Bernie I don't think so. (I have everything I need right here.)

David Bernie?

Bernie It's funny about the disease.

David What?

Bernie That Grandma has and Daddy's getting. I have an idea.

David What?

Bernie Grandma, she still has the feelings connection.

David I agree.

Bernie But she loses the mental connection.

David The context.

Bernie It has nothing to do with all the bullshit that's been written or read.

David No. I agree.

Bernie The paradigms and synapses and MRIs.

David You're a prodigy.

Bernie She loses association and context.

David A genius.

Bernie Fire.

David Fire?

Bernie In the sense of combustion, oxygenation.

David I take it back, Bernie. You're nuts.

Caleb and Rosie

Caleb I've been meaning to tell you, Mom. I've been having my own problems.

Rosie Issues?

Caleb Issues. Memory issues. I seem to lose my train of thought sometimes.

Rosie Trains. Evil.

Caleb I forget the names of things.

Rosie Do you read Hebrew?

Caleb No.

Rosie Anyway.

Caleb It's quite frightening.

Rosie I know it is. I think it's poison. Poison got into the earth somehow. Poison chemicals and gases. I was telling someone about it.

Caleb Bernie. Bernard.

Rosie Yes, they'll have to burn it off, cleanse the earth.

Caleb My other son.

Rosie Of course, he is. That would be David.

Caleb No, Bernie.

Rosie Of course, Bernie.

Caleb There's a big difference in age, so it confuses people.

Rosie I know I could be confused.

Caleb I'm confused myself sometimes.

Rosie Is he the bar mitzvah boy?

Caleb Yes, Bernard.

Rosie Good for Bernard. Make sure he studies.

Caleb I will. I mean, there's some resistance there.

Rosie Resistance?

Caleb Never mind.

Rosie He's an angel and he should sing like one. He'll join the other angels. I saw them on the walls of the Jewish Museum. They couldn't defeat us because they're only animals, bugs and things.

Caleb I don't think they want to hear about this anymore, Mom.

Rosie Who doesn't?

Caleb The Germans. (Maybe you and me.)

Rosie I wouldn't let them in.

Caleb Excuse me?

Rosie I wouldn't let them in here.

Caleb Okay.

Rosie Without a ticket. (*Laughs*) And you watch out. Watch your step.

Caleb I'll bring Bernard.

Rosie Keep an eye out.

Caleb I will.

Rosie The fucking murdering idiots. Who cares what they think?

Caleb I'm just wondering, does he take you to the mall?

Rosie Who?

Caleb Bernie, your grandson. He take you to the mall?

Rosie It sounds like it.

Caleb Do you forget to pay?

Rosie For what?

Caleb For items, like clothes, you forget to pay?

Rosie I must, musn't I? How humiliating! But it goes to show you, doesn't it, nobody is playing with their own money in the first place, that's why all this stuff at the mall is so odd, don't you think?

Caleb All right, Mom.

Rosie It's like monopoly money!

Bernie

(I had a dream. I was riding a little scooter. The scooter was about the size of my hand. Tiny. You made it go by pressing a button that was attached with a wire. I had to put it down somewhere to go on foot. I think it was to shop in a handicrafts area. So I put the little contraption down—that is, my scooter—on a shelf somewhere, and when I looked for it again, I couldn't find it! I panicked. I had lost my ambulation! Wherever I looked for it was a place of business owned by beautiful black women. Oh, how I loved them!, but they ignored me or didn't see me, and I never found my scooter. This tells you all you need to know about me and the author.)

Caleb, Bernie, David

Caleb Here we are, me and both my sons.

Bernie And the earth is shaking its booty.

David The earth is shaking its booty?

Bernie We're in a tremor?

David We're in an earthquake?

Bernie Are we going to fall into a hole?

Caleb I don't think so. It's shake, rattle and roll.

David (That wasn't funny.)

Bernie The earth is shaking off the white bugs with clothes.

David You scared me.

Bernie Shaking out the bugs.

David We're the bugs?

Bernie We're the bugs.

Caleb That's a good example.

David Of?

Caleb Annoying misstatements of half-truths.

David That's you, Dad, in a nutshell.

Caleb Don't say nutshell.

David Nutshell.

Caleb It's bad grammar.

Bernie Nutshell?

David No, shaking off the white bugs with clothes.

Bernie He meant the earth shaking off the humans.

David I know it.

Bernie With hurricanes, earthquake and tornadoes.

David Fire and flood.

Bernie Drought and sinkholes.

David Starvation.

Bernie Cyclones.

Caleb So get ready for the fifth world.

Bernie What does that mean, Dad?

Caleb Sorry.

Bernie It has no meaning.

David It's another typical example.

Caleb Of what?

David An overstatement.

Bernie Pray.

David There's another one.

Bernie Sway and pray and bow and praise. It's the Jewish religion in a—

Caleb Nutshell?

Bernie Thanks, Dad.

David Pray to what? The Sun? The solar system? The universe?

Caleb Pray to the silence and the void.

David That makes no sense at all.

Caleb Help others, help others!

David Even if a human being is a piece of shit?

Caleb In America you're even less than that.

Bernie You're a bag of chemical soup!

David Oh, that's good.

Bernie Only because it makes you feel better.

Caleb And you can pay off the debt you owe for your stupid existence.

David Okay, how?

Caleb If you go to meetings and donate soup and admit your failings, and help the homeless and the lonely and the mad, then you can save your souls.

Bernie I can't do that, Dad.

Caleb Why not?

Bernie I don't have a soul.

David I can't stand the stench.

Bernie I don't like people.

David I'm not interested.

Bernie I have other things to do.

David I'm trying to believe in something real.

Bernie Actually, I don't believe in anything.

Caleb You're not trying anything and you have no idea what's real.

Bernie So what?

Caleb So you should both shut up about trying and believing and real.

Bernie I have a test tomorrow.

Caleb How can you have a test if you don't go to school?

Bernie I take it on the Internet.

David You're turning into a recluse.

Bernie Call it whatever you want.

David You're turning into a recluse. I'll go and visit Rosie in Rio.

Bernie There is no Rio.

Caleb There is to Rosie.

David Rosie is in Rio!

Bernie Right down the street in Assisted Living is our Grandma Rosie, either in Rio or Buenos Aires.

Caleb Maybe we should all go.

Bernie It's too crowded.

David It's too crowded?

Bernie There's just all this biology running around trying to make more biology. I don't know if I can stand it.

David That's a totally different subject.

Caleb I agree with you there, son.

David That was a totally different subject!

Bernie It's true.

David It had nothing to do with assisted living.

Bernie True, except maybe in Rio it does.

Caleb I see what you mean, David.

David That's good.

Caleb Nothing to do with assisted living.

David Even though an act of kindness brings you to tears.

Caleb It's true. I cry.
David And it's not even real, it's on television.
Caleb Television?
David You know, where you see sweet people helping each other.
Caleb You never see that in life. Not in this country.
David So we got that straight. Dad.
Bernie So I'm not going to school or the mall anymore.
David You're not?
Bernie No. And I'm not buying any more dumb cookies.

Caleb and David

David Go and see your mother. She asked for you.
Caleb She remembered my name?
David "My oldest son."
Caleb I'm her only son. And she's in Brazil. It's too far.
David She's in assisted living.
Caleb I don't want her not to know me. It hurts.
David Actually, I don't know if I want to go anymore.
Caleb So why ask me to go?
David I don't know why.
Caleb Talk to Chrystal.
David What does Chrystal have to do with it?
Caleb She'll tell you.
David She'll tell me what?
Caleb About your mother.
David She'll tell me about my mother?
Caleb Yes.

David What?

Caleb I don't know what.

David You don't know what and you don't know who.

Caleb Who?

David That's right. Who you are.

Caleb I'm you, actually.

David What does that mean?

Caleb Biologically.

David And ask her about the clothes.

Caleb The clothes?

David She wears nice clothes. Outfits.

Caleb She likes clothes.

David She looks great.

Caleb I feel that.

David What's the question there?

Caleb I don't know what the question there is.

David Oh. Where does she get the clothes?

Caleb In the mall.

David In the mall?

Caleb In the mall.

David Okay.

Caleb She goes to the mall, she gets the clothes.

David Okay.

Caleb And she pays for them. It's Rosie who walks out with the clothes.

David Rosie?

Caleb Yes, she's a kleptomaniac.

David and Chrystal

David Chrystal.
Chrystal What?
David You look great.
Chrystal Thank you.
David Chrystal.
Chrystal What is it?
David Nothing's wrong. He asked me to ask you.
Chrystal Who did?
David My father.
Chrystal So, ask.
David Who am I?
Chrystal Don't start.
David About my mother.
Chrystal What about her?
David I have no idea.
Chrystal Yes, you do.
David A little, a note, that's all.
Chrystal She left.
David She's gone.
Chrystal She's gone.
David Maybe she killed herself.
Chrystal She did.
David Why?
Chrystal She was an idealist.
David Did you ever talk?
Chrystal Of course we talked. We did dishes. We did laundry.
David What did she say?
Chrystal About what?

David About the situation.

Chrystal What situation?

David Our situation. The human situation.

Chrystal That it was based on murder and it was getting worse.

David Why murder?

Chrystal Don't be stupid, David. Do me a favor.

David Sorry.

Chrystal Because there's a limited amount of water, and a limited amount of land, so people are going to kill each other for it. Okay?

David Okay.

Chrystal Stalin made a deal with Hitler and sold out the Jews.

David He did?

Chrystal According to your mother, he did.

David So why was she mad at the Jews?

Chrystal Because they were ashamed of themselves, and then they had a weird pride, like nothing worse had ever happened to another people.

David Isn't it true?

Chrystal I don't know. But it happens all the time. People get it into their heads to slaughter their neighbors. But you knew all this already David, so it's annoying to have to explain it to you.

David Thank you.

Chrystal You're welcome.

David But it's not so simple.

Chrystal It's simple. That's why you better keep an eye on Bernie.

David On Bernie?

Chrystal Bernie.

David Which brings me to another question.

Chrystal What is it?

David It's the strangest thing.

Chrystal I agree totally. You want to eat?

David Not right now.

Chrystal If not now, when?

David Maybe later. You look great.

Chrystal You said that.

David I don't know what he meant.

Chrystal Who?

David My father.

Chrystal About?

David Women.

Chrystal We bleed.

David You bleed?

Chrystal That's what he means. About women.

David You menstruate?

Chrystal Yes, David.

David That's what he meant?

Chrystal I think that's what he meant.

David Who doesn't know that?

Chrystal Well, what could he mean?

David He means dangerous.

Chrystal Dangerous.

David He means women are dangerous.

Chrystal I don't think that's what he means.

David That's what he means. That's why he's strange.
He means dangerous.

Chrystal I don't think so. Unpredictable.

David Unpredictable.

Chrystal No. Dangerous. Is what he means. You're right.
David Dangerous.
Chrystal For him. That's his experience. They've left him. They've left him alone in a dangerous situation, where the world is falling apart. Don't you see?
David Yes, I do.

Bernie and Caleb

Caleb What's up? So, what's up?
Bernie What's up?
Caleb Sky's up.
Bernie You always say that.
Caleb I'll stop.
Bernie I'm doing homework now.
Caleb What are you doing?
Bernie Homework.
Caleb What's the homework?
Bernie Algebra. It's Algebra. X's and Y's. I like it.
Caleb I liked it.
Bernie That's good.
Caleb You miss your mother?
Bernie Yes.
Caleb You miss your mother?
Bernie I said yes.
Caleb So do I.
Bernie I figured.
Caleb You did.
Bernie I figured or you wouldn't have asked.

Caleb What do you miss?

Bernie I miss her smell.

Caleb Yeah. I miss her smell.

Bernie You don't know where she is.

Caleb Her bones are in the ocean. They'll be recycled.
(*Enter DAVID*)

David Are we talking about you know who?

Caleb Yes. She'll be in the air eventually.

Bernie She's in the Land of the Dead.

David We know that.

Bernie She left a note.

David We know that, too.

Bernie You want to hear it?

David Again?

Bernie You want to hear it again?

Caleb Go ahead.

Bernie I know it by heart. I'll recite.

Caleb Recite.

Bernie Here it goes: "I wanted to say something in my own behalf. After all, I have a right to speak, though I live between worlds, the world of the seen and the world of the unseen." (*Pause*) You wanted to comment, David?

David No. Proceed.

Bernie "The world of reflection in windows, of glances in mirrors, quick cuts in movies and other magical illusions. Clearly, my views of life and the premises—"

David Principles.

Bernie "Principles of living I accepted when I was alive were not romantic. So it's impossible to have a tragic view. Things happen and no one is to blame."

David Except you yourself. Sorry.

Bernie “We are meant to breathe air and drink water.”

David (No shit.)

Bernie “To eat well and be intelligent and not go on murderous rampages. I saw the destruction of the Fourth World coming and decided to drown in the water.”

David (Good thinking.)

Bernie Are you adding something?

David No. Get it over with.

Bernie “I had believed in reason and a just scientific re-orientation of the world. These turned out to be false and those people selling them turned out to be self-serving idiots and clowns. I left a signal to my sons: believe in nothing and keep an eye out for Coyote, for that would be the beginning of the End. This is the signal.” Is that it?

David More or less. (*Silence. Exit CALEB*)

David Now you did it, Bernie. (*Pause*)

Bernie I have seen Coyote.

David I haven’t.

Bernie You’ll never see with the eyes you have on.

David I see with my own damn eyes.

Bernie Sure you do.

David The eyes of a grown-up.

Bernie Mazel tov.

David What happened with your bar mitzvah?

Bernie What happened?

David What happened, Bernard?

Bernie Nothing happened, David.

David Okay.

Bernie Okay is right.

David Okay.

Bernie And nothing is going to happen.

David Fine with me.

Bernie Fucking thing is in Hebrew.

David I know.

Bernie It's a language I don't understand.

David Baruch atah. It means blessed art thou.

Bernie I know what it means.

David That's Hebrew.

Bernie I know what Baruch atah means.

David That's all they do is praise.

Bernie Who's that?

David The Jews. They stand up, they praise, they sit down, they murmur praise.

Bernie There are not enough Jews.

David In the world?

Bernie Where else would they be if not in the world?

David I don't know. Mars?

Bernie Not funny. There are not enough, and I have a solution.

David What's the solution?

Bernie It's a one-state solution. The Jews and the Arabs in one state.

David Talk to Dad.

Bernie Why?

David He's a member.

Bernie What does he know? He doesn't know anything about it.

David It's a radical solution.

Bernie One state. And we'll be brothers with the Arabs.
A member of what?

David I can't remember the names now. Jewish organizations.

Caleb and David

David In the synagogue, they praise. The rest of the time they complain.

Caleb It's singing. What's wrong with singing?

David I don't like the praise, and I don't like the complaints.

Caleb Who are you?

David Good question.

Caleb You like and you don't like.

David Actually, I lied.

Caleb Who doesn't lie?

David Everybody lies. Why? There's a substance in the brain.

Caleb There's a substance in the brain.

David There's a substance in the brain, it has trouble.

Caleb It has trouble.

David It has trouble with reality. So it says things.

Caleb The mouth.

David Stop repeating me.

Caleb The mouth.

David It's a sin, a substance in the brain that lies its ass off.

Caleb What is this substance?

David It's a kind of plaque. So you see hate instead of love.

Caleb That was your mother. That's what she saw.

David Is she loved now? Who loves Sarah now?

Caleb Sarah is in another world, where love doesn't matter.

David Which world is that?

Caleb Brazil.

David You never been to Brazil.

Caleb I saw the movie. That's all I need.

Caleb I know this: every day she looks at the horizon and she thinks about her soul.

David How do you know?

Caleb I know because I know. She did that here.

David She looked at the horizon and thought about her soul?

Caleb Yes. She wonders. Do I have a soul, and where does it go?

David Why the horizon?

Caleb Because it's round, and because it meets the sky.

David She goes down to the beach.

Caleb So you get a sense of the infinite.

David I can't believe in God if he's in such deep shit all the time.

Caleb Well said.

David He like can't do anything about anything.

Caleb That's why I asked you.

David About?

Caleb Prayer.

David Well, there's your answer.

Caleb "Maybe you better yourself and forget about God."

David That's Rosie.

Caleb "Maybe it's you, not God."

David Me?

Caleb "Yeah."

David What can I do? Can I make a new world? Can I reverse time?

Caleb We're back in Job again.

David Can I bring back the dead?

Caleb "So pray. Pray for forty hours with no food or drink or rest."

David Who said that?

Caleb Rosie. "Prepare. Sit down. Suffer. Maybe you'll make something of yourself."

David That was my bar mitzvah, years ago.

Caleb Sorry.

David Benedictions from Grandma. May she find immortality.

Caleb Amen.

David There on the horizon, in Rio. (In the world of assisted living.)

Caleb One world doesn't last long into the other.

David So there's no bar mitzvah for Bernie?

Caleb No. He won't come out of his room.

David I don't blame him. And if he talks to my mother, I want to hear about it.

Caleb Why?

David I told you. I miss her.

Caleb You believe Bernie is channeling your mother?

David No.

Caleb Then what?

David I just want to hear about it.

Bernie and Caleb

Bernie Dad?

Caleb What?

Bernie I think there should be a one state solution.

Caleb So do I, Bernie.

Bernie So why don't they do it?

Caleb They don't like each other. They hate each other. They kill each other.

Bernie That's ridiculous. What are we alive for?

Caleb You're asking me?

Bernie What are we doing here?

Caleb I don't know.

Bernie It's ridiculous.

Caleb What do you want from me?

Bernie Do something. Say something.

Caleb There should be one state for Arabs and Jews. Everybody equal.

Bernie Don't tell me. Tell the world.

Caleb All right. I'll write something.

Bernie Do it now.

Caleb I'm writing. The idea is to go fast.

Bernie Go, go.

Caleb I'm writing. (*Thinks*)

Bernie Are you done?

Caleb No. (*Thinks*)

Bernie Are you done?

Caleb Give me a minute why don't you?

Bernie Okay. (*CALEB thinks*) Okay, you done?

Caleb I'll say what I have.

Bernie Say.

Caleb "There's different kinds of love. There's love of the family, which is one kind of love. Like when my mother went to the Jewish museum, she saw all the families, and she imagined all the arguments."

Bernie Go on.

Caleb “And the love of one’s people, which she also saw there, in herself. There’s romantic love, like my love for my wife, Sarah, which has fantasy in it, and biology.”

Bernie Are you finished?

Caleb No. “ And then there’s a bigger love, Love in general, a kind of Universal love.”

Bernie That was good.

Caleb Thank you. Maybe there’s only one love really and the other loves are expressions of that or examples of that?

Bernie I’m feeling very suspicious of what you just said, Dad.

Caleb So am I.

Bernie Because it should also include the paramount question. (I meant to say “permanent.”)

Caleb Which is?

Bernie What are we doing here?

Caleb Praise God.

Bernie And?

Caleb Serve God.

Bernie And?

Caleb Obey God.

Bernie And?

Caleb That’s enough. I’m tired.

Bernie I want to talk to this person.

Caleb It’s not a person you can talk to.

Bernie What is this God?

Caleb He has no beginning and no end.

Bernie And me?

Caleb This I don’t know.

Bernie What kind of material?

Caleb You or God?

Bernie Both.

Caleb I'd say both.

Bernie Both what?

Caleb Same kind of material.

Bernie What?

Caleb Some coarse, some fine. Some you can't see, some you can. (Sunlight is made of particles.)

Bernie I had a beginning. I was a thought in someone's eye.

Caleb You were an impulse in someone's body.

Bernie I was biological.

Caleb Correct.

Bernie Not God.

Caleb There he is, here he remains.

Bernie He doesn't have to eat?

Caleb Of course he has to eat.

Bernie What does he eat?

Caleb That I don't know. Something tasty. He's not an idiot.

Bernie People have to eat.

Caleb Correct.

Bernie They eat shit.

Caleb Right.

Bernie They eat fish. They ate all the fish. They eat animals.
They ate all the animals.

Caleb Good. You did good.

Bernie What did I do?

Caleb You did good.

Bernie To go fast?

Caleb And to include your mother and brother and sister-in-law.

Bernie And?

Caleb One line only.

Bernie Exactly. And not only that.

Caleb What else?

Bernie Usually you have behavior. He drinks, he smokes, he hits, and so on.

Caleb And?

Bernie Here we have no behavior.

Caleb Rule number five.

Bernie The fifth rule.

Caleb No sitting, standing, slapping, kissing, drinking, eating or doping.

Bernie No.

Caleb No walking, running, hiding, looking, or waiting.

Bernie Wait.

Caleb What?

Bernie Maybe sitting. Maybe standing.

Caleb Okay.

Bernie Maybe slapping.

Caleb Okay.

Bernie Maybe looking and waiting.

Caleb Okay.

Bernie So that's the sixth rule.

Caleb Fine and good.

Bernie No behavior.

Rosie and Caleb

Rosie Hello this is Rosie.

Caleb Hello, Mom!

Rosie Hello.

Caleb Hello, hello.

Rosie So what's up with you guys?

Caleb Marriage and school and school and marriage. What else? And you?

Rosie Me, I'm in Rio, I'm experiencing life for others.

Caleb That's what you did here, am I wrong?

Rosie Wrong.

Caleb How am I wrong?

Rosie There, I did my duty. Here I serve.

Caleb What can I say?

Rosie Don't say anything.

Caleb You're all right?

Rosie I'm perfect.

Caleb Perfect already?

Rosie Certain things are the same, I'll have to admit.

Caleb Tell, admit.

Rosie It's the human body, it's just the same, only worse. That's why I left the states.

Caleb Say again?

Rosie Flesh and blood idiots. Teeth and tongues and toilets.

Caleb You thought you could get away from that?

Rosie No, only my own genes.

Caleb You brought them with you.

Rosie The family and you.

Caleb I have the same or different genes.

Rosie I knew you like the back of my hand.

Caleb What else is new?

Rosie I'm sick of the back of my hand.

Caleb You're sick of me.

Rosie I'm sick of you.

Caleb I'll hang up now if you don't mind.
Rosie How can you blame me?
Caleb I don't blame you.
Rosie Even you don't like being you.
Caleb Who does?
Rosie I do.
Caleb You do?
Rosie Definitely, though not all the time.
Caleb Nobody does anything all the time.
Rosie We're talking about states.
Caleb That reminds me.
Rosie What?
Caleb Never mind.
Rosie There is no same state for long.
Caleb That's what I mean.
Rosie You can't do anything all the time.
Caleb That's what I said.
Rosie So what reminds you of?
Caleb Of?
Rosie Never mind.
Caleb I know—a same state solution.
Rosie That's ridiculous. That's absurd.
Caleb One state for Arabs and Jews.
Rosie Forget about it.
Caleb It's Bernie's idea.
Rosie Don't blame Bernie.
Caleb Hang up, why don't you?
Rosie One state for Jews only.
Caleb Hang up.
Rosie The others can go ahead and die.

Caleb I'll hang up now.
Rosie No, I think I will.
Caleb Go ahead. Go.
Rosie Bye.
Caleb I'll call you.
Rosie Call. See if I care.

Chrystal and David

David The other rule is, you don't say the name of G-d. You say G-d with a dash.
Chrystal God has a name?
David In Judaism He has a name.
Chrystal This must only be for the gentiles.
David Excuse me?
Chrystal His name.
David No, never mind.
Chrystal I mean the dash.
David You're not supposed to say the name.
Chrystal That's fine.
David That's all I mean.
Chrystal Fine and good.
David That's the seventh rule. And no interpretation.
Chrystal No interpretation of the seventh rule is the eighth rule?
David No interpretation and no behavior.
Chrystal No interpretation of behavior? (We're talking performance here.)
David No interpretation OR behavior.
Chrystal That's eight or nine rules we have already.

David Check out Leviticus.

Chrystal Tell them what we're talking about.

David I don't know if I should.

Chrystal Tell them or they won't know. (We're talking about acting.)

David (We're talking about acting.)

Chrystal It's because people have limitations.

David It's beyond limitations.

Chrystal What do you mean?

David You should talk to my Grandmother.

Chrystal I have talked to your Grandmother.

David They're like incomplete beings, cells in a larger structure.

Chrystal What is?

David I take that back.

Chrystal You can't take it back.

David Why can't I take it back?

Chrystal Because you already said it.

David You mean it's written?

Chrystal It's written down in the Book of Life.

David Amazing, Chrystal.

Chrystal It's like with predestination.

David What is?

Chrystal People say that after it's already happened.

David Maybe you should explain.

Chrystal (People say it had to happen after it already happened.
So, of course.)

David I don't know if they got that.

Chrystal I talked to your mother, too.

David When was this?

Chrystal She used to sit in the mall while I shopped.

David (What can you expect from such a creature?)

Chrystal She'd sit on the edge of the bench in her dark glasses, eyes half-closed.

David She watched the creatures.

Chrystal She watched and she despaired.

David She knew what they were thinking. She could hear their greed.

Chrystal She'd see a kippa and want to throw something.

David "Don't be holy in front of me," she'd say.

Chrystal "I know you," she'd say.

David "You're in a state of self-righteousness."

Chrystal On the other hand, she could smell an anti-Semite at a hundred yards.

David You don't have to go far in a mall.

Chrystal "I'm not interested in buying anything," she'd say. "It's all cheap shit."

David Isn't that depression? Isn't that classical depression?

Chrystal I think it is, actually.

David I think it is.

Chrystal What is this larger structure?

David I believe it's life on earth.

Chrystal "Either vermin or angels."

David What angels?

Chrystal Your mother would say.

David What's the difference?

Chrystal Angels take care, vermin eat and then they eat again.

David It's all about reproduction, my mother said, and fertilizer.

Chrystal Right. And all kids think they have a right to live.

David My brother won't come out of his room.

Chrystal He wants his Mama.

David She left before he locked himself up.
Chrystal She could see it coming. Now what?
David Get Grandma Rosie to come home.
Chrystal You do it.
David Okay, I'll do it.
Chrystal Call her.
David Okay.
Chrystal On her cell.
David I'll do it.
Chrystal Do it now.
David Okay, in a minute.

(Moments later)

David Hello, Grandma.
Rosie Who is this?
David You know me, Grandma.
Rosie So say your name why don't you, what could it hurt?
David It's David.
Rosie I know why you called.
David Tell me why I called.
Rosie You called for your father.
David No.
Rosie How is your father?
David You should call him.
Rosie I'll call him.
David Call him.
Chrystal Hello?
Rosie Who's this?
Chrystal This is Chrystal.

Rosie What happened to the other one?

Chrystal The other one?

Rosie On the phone. He was a man, I believe.

Chrystal That was David.

Rosie David?

Chrystal My husband.

Rosie You called for your husband?

Chrystal I have to admit.

Rosie Where is he? He's hanging by the phone?

Chrystal He's hanging by the phone.

Rosie Say hello and tell him to take three steps back.

Chrystal Hello and three steps back. (*DAVID takes three steps back.*) Okay, he did it.

Rosie So what's the matter?

Chrystal Bernie won't come out of his room.

Rosie How do you know?

Chrystal We look at his room. The door is closed. He won't come out.

Rosie Oh.

Chrystal This isn't the first time.

Rosie Oh. He's not going to school?

Chrystal And it won't be the last.

Rosie I see.

Chrystal You're not worried?

Rosie Why should I worry?

Chrystal It could be a sign of mental illness.

Rosie Are you crazy?

Chrystal Not me, him.

Rosie The whole planet is nuts and you bring up Bernie?

Chrystal You have a point.

Rosie The earth is having a fit, a fever and a conniption.
Guess why?

Chrystal It's because of us.

Rosie Congratulations.

Chrystal That's why Bernie won't come out of his room.

Rosie Why should he?

Chrystal And you won't come home.

Rosie I'm in Rio. It's too far to travel.

Chrystal You're not in Rio.

Rosie Says who?

Chrystal A bird told me.

Rosie Fuck the bird.

Chrystal Come on, Rosie.

Rosie Why should I?

Chrystal You're needed. We need you here.

Rosie That's nice.

Chrystal Seriously.

Rosie Here I'm working with the poor. They have some common sense. They know who their enemies are. By you, they believe anything and get it all mixed up with God. God forbid.

Chrystal It's true. Here I'm attending to complete strangers.

Rosie That's what I heard. They don't know which end is up, most of them.

Chrystal I know, believe me.

Rosie I believe you, I believe you.

Chrystal But I hear it's just as bad in Rio.

Rosie You heard what?

Chrystal I heard it's crazy in Rio.

Rosie Crazier than Brooklyn?

Chrystal Yeah.

Rosie I think so, too.

Chrystal Well, there you go.

Rosie I don't think so. I think I'll stay.

Chrystal You might as well be here.

Rosie No, thanks. I don't go anywhere and it's a bad situation.

Chrystal We're lucky.

Rosie We're lucky we're not eating each other yet.

Chrystal That's what I mean.

Rosie No, it isn't.

Chrystal There's earthquakes, tsunamis, torpedos—I mean, tornadoes—fires and hurricanes.

Rosie Of course. That's what it means for the earth to have a fit and a conniption.

Chrystal Of course.

Rosie But don't explain too much.

Chrystal I won't.

Rosie The earth has bugs and we're the bugs.

Chrystal I hear you.

Rosie My own mother used to say.

Chrystal I'll call again soon.

Rosie Good.

David I'll talk to her. Let me talk to her.

Chrystal David wants to talk to you.

Rosie Who?

Chrystal David. Your grandson.

Rosie Put him on the phone.

David Hi, Grandma.

Rosie Hi, honey. I heard there's insanity going around.

David You heard right.

Rosie Kill them all and then kill yourself.

David Excuse me?

Rosie I said, kill them all and then kill yourself.

David That's what I thought you said.

Rosie It's the only solution. I couldn't stop shooting. People have yellow plaque on their brains. And fungi on their toes. And tumors in their lungs. I could go on and on.

Chrystal Get off the phone.

David But I have to get off, Grandma.

Rosie I got the picture.

Chrystal I want to talk to her.

David I think you got the picture, Rose. Here's Chrystal.

Rosie Thank you, Chrystal!

Chrystal You're welcome!

Rosie Good bye and good luck!

Chrystal You too!

Rosie It's a pleasure!

Chrystal Me, too!

David What did you want to say to her?

Chrystal Just a minute.

David Say it already!

Rosie Who is yelling there?

Chrystal Your grandson, David.

Rosie Tell him to shut up.

Chrystal Shut up. Okay where was I?

Rosie I'm in Rio and you're in Brooklyn. So far so good.

Chrystal I've been meaning to tell you.

Rosie Yes?

Chrystal When you go to the mall, who takes you to the mall?

Rosie The mall?

Chrystal The mall.
Rosie No one.
Chrystal No one?
Rosie No one takes me. Anymore.
Chrystal Okay, if by any chance they do take you, remember.
Rosie What?
Chrystal You have to pay.
Rosie No, I don't.
Chrystal Why not?
Rosie They are capitalist pigs and they owe us our very lives, that's why.
Chrystal Okay, I'm sorry I brought it up.
Rosie Put your son back on.
Chrystal He's your grandson, Rose.
Rosie Put him on.
Chrystal He's my husband.
Rosie So put him on already.
David Hello.
Rosie Listen, have a baby. You remember how to do that?
David Sure, Grandma.
Rosie Otherwise, keep your mouth shut.
David Good bye, Grandma.
Rosie Good bye.

David and Chrystal

David You call that a conversation?
Chrystal Yes, what do you call it?

David There are no words.

Chrystal I thought it was a wonderful conversation.

David It's not rational.

Chrystal Since when are you so rational? You're an anxiety neurotic.

David What does that mean, exactly?

Chrystal It means you're in a state of anxiety. Did you take your pill?

David I'll take it now.

Chrystal Good. You'll calm down and feel normal.

David What about Rosie?

Chrystal She's not gonna calm, I mean come.

David Why not, I wonder?

Chrystal Come on David, she's in Rio, it's too far.

David The fanatical Marxist.

Chrystal At least we know where the clothes are.

David Where are they?

Chrystal Where I don't know.

David You just said you know.

Chrystal I mean in Rio. How did they know it's this family?

David My father's card.

Chrystal Your father has a card?

David That's all I can think of. My father has a card.

Chrystal And for your information, David, I pay for my own clothes.

David With your own card, I presume.

Chrystal Correct.

David That's why this country is up to its eyebrows in debt.

Chrystal It wasn't me, David.

David I'm not saying it was just you, obviously. I have a card.

Chrystal You have a card?

David Of course I have a card. And you have a card.

Chrystal Think of this: No more money. No more goods.
No more nothing.

David That was a thought?

Chrystal That was the beginning and ending of a thought.
No more money, ending with no more nothing.

David What's in the middle?

Chrystal The middle is to make money on money is extreme
capitalism.

David I'm not even going to comment on that.

Chrystal Okay.

David That's what I do, obviously. I'm in the top one percent
and so are you.

Chrystal I'm so happy I can't stand it.

David Good.

Chrystal Meanwhile, your brother Bernie has packed it in.

David He's on line.

Chrystal What does that mean?

David The chickens come home to roost.

Chrystal They have to go somewhere.

David They're running around in his head.

Chrystal I thought you were a nice guy, David.

David I am.

Chrystal What happened?

David Everything's out of control.

Chrystal Meaning?

David People can't remember and can't think straight.

Chrystal They never could.

David It's gotten worse.

Chrystal It's always been the same.

David You have to have educated people in a democracy, not consumist idiots who can't spell.

Chrystal That's not a word, consumist.

David Consumer, okay?

Chrystal It's true. People don't know much, but they never did.

David Why not?

Chrystal They're animals.

David So we let them vote?

Chrystal Idiots will take us to war and take our money, too.

David Thank God we live in a democracy, Chrystal.

Chrystal Where the idiots aren't taking us to war?

David I can't argue with that, honey.

Chrystal So this conversation is nearly over.

David It is as far as I'm concerned.

Chrystal Wait for a tornado, David.

David What does that mean, wait for a tornado.

Chrystal Wait for a tornado.

David What does it mean?

Chrystal To sweep you into the sky.

David Sweep?

Chrystal Vanish.

David Okay, Chrystal.

Chrystal Into the sky.

David Thanks.

Chrystal In the wind. A big wind.

David Thanks a lot.

Chrystal Don't insult me.

David What is going to be the answer to this situation?

Chrystal I don't know. Who made the wind?

David Nature made the wind.
Chrystal Nature made the wind and we made the velocity.
David I don't disagree with you.
Chrystal You don't?
David No.
Chrystal The Hopi had it right.
David The Hopi had it right.
Chrystal So it doesn't matter—Rosie in Rio, Bernie in his room.

Caleb and Bernie

Caleb So what are you doing in there all day and all night?
Bernie I'm connected.
Caleb To what are you connected?
Bernie I got computer software variations, video games, TV, radio, plus an iPod and a cell phone. I can do everything from here that you could do from anywhere else. There's no reason at all for me to leave this room except to burn down the neighborhood.
Caleb Excuse me?
Bernie Just a thought, Dad.
Caleb That's the thing, you're thinking too much.
Bernie I'm not thinking. I'm planning, I'm looking, I'm listening, I'm figuring it out.
Caleb That's not thinking?
Bernie Call it whatever you want.
Caleb Maybe you should do some real thinking.
Bernie You're contradicting yourself again, Dad. *Otra vez.*

Caleb You can see that a normal human being doesn't stay in his room all the time. Only prisoners do that. On death row.

Bernie That was good, Dad.

Caleb You can't stay in your room all the time. That's final. You have to go to school. You have to go out and play. You have to help your Dad.

Bernie I'll help my Dad from here. The rest you can forget about.

Caleb How do you figure that?

Bernie By phone and by e-mail and so on.

Caleb I'll call the police.

Bernie Go ahead. I'll stay in jail.

Caleb I'll call an ambulance.

Bernie I'll stay in the hospital.

Caleb You can't stay in the hospital.

Bernie Why not?

Caleb There's nothing wrong with you.

Bernie I see and hear Coyote, often.

Caleb Except in the head.

Bernie It's what they call a mitzvah, Dad. Only the sublimely gifted can see Coyote.

Caleb You don't say?

Bernie I just said.

Caleb I'm your father.

Bernie There's nothing wrong with that.

Caleb That's not what I meant.

Bernie What did you mean?

Caleb You have to do what I tell you, and if you don't—

Bernie What?

Caleb I'll kick the shit out of you.

Bernie Sure, you will.

Caleb You heard me!

Bernie You haven't raised your voice in anger in fifty years. Now you'll start? I don't think so.

Caleb You never know. But you better listen to me.

Bernie Or?

Caleb I'll kick the shit out of you and I'll take away your toys, that's what! I'm your father! (*Stands*)

Bernie Where are you going?

Caleb I'm not going.

Bernie Then why are you standing near the door?

Caleb I'll sit down again, because I'm not done.

Bernie Sit down, why don't you?

Caleb I have more to say here. I have a tire iron.

Bernie You have a tire iron?

Caleb I have a tire iron.

Bernie Everybody has a tire iron. In their car.

Caleb I keep it near me at all times. (*Reveals a tire iron, the only actual prop, and swings it like a club.*)

Bernie Dad, can we take a break?

Caleb Sure we can take a break.

Bernie Go out and come back later.

Caleb Okay, let's say I did that and now I'm back, we'll take a pause and start over. (*Pause*) Of course, it's all quite mysterious. She drowned, you know, your mother. Sarah. She drowned.

Bernie I know.

Caleb It's a good way to go. We'd talked about it often. You swim out into the ocean until you get tired and then you keep on swimming, and swimming, and then it's too far,

you've gone too far and you can't make it back, and you're so tired, it's easy to let it go, so you let go.

Bernie I used to dream about that.

Caleb What was the dream?

Bernie I can't remember exactly. Only, I couldn't save her, mainly.

Caleb Let's take another break.

Bernie Okay. *(Pause)* The tire iron, Dad?

Caleb I'd just like to point out, I don't think it's a conscious intention, of course, it's more a subconscious intention, which is much more important and consequential. I'll tell you one thing that happened. I wanted to go around armed. I mean, I wanted to arm myself. The idea began occurring in my mind—while dozing, or waking up in the morning, the sense of wanting to be armed with a stick or a club, even a gun. I ended up using a tire iron. I keep it near me at all times. I know that if I'm attacked, I'm going to use it, I'm going to beat my attacker to a bloody pulp. *(Pause)*

Bernie Should we pause?

Caleb This may have some relevance to your ideas about the Jewish state, but I'll tell you one thing: I will always be armed.

Bernie Thanks, Dad.

Caleb I'm leaving now. I can't stay in this one room so long. And you can't, either.

Bernie

(COYOTE leers at the audience. He is a Hopi Black Arabian Jew.)

You have turned everything to shit, he says,
And you blame it all on me!
All I ever wanted to do was eat and fuck,
Just like you, you piece of walking excrement,
You fertilizing fuckhead, you TV flacko,
You jumbo mumbo fantasy believer,
You helpless scab-scratcher, you aging hipster,
You corpse-breathing writer of songs,
The hell with you!

Caleb and Rosie

Caleb Bernie won't come out of his room.
Rosie Who can blame him? America is ugly and mean.
Caleb Who's talking about America?
Rosie It's full of devils and I'm never coming back.
Caleb Devils? You believe in devils?
Rosie Of course I believe in devils and demons and God knows what.
Caleb Only America is ugly and mean?
Rosie No. The whole world is ugly and mean.
Caleb You believe in Coyotes?
Rosie I don't believe in Coyotes. Coyotes are dogs. Dogs are dogs.

Caleb Bernie has a friend who is a Coyote. *(Silence)* Okay. Did you hear what I said?

Rosie When?

Caleb A minute ago.

Rosie What?

Caleb Bernie won't come out of his room.

Rosie So what? Maybe he needs a break from people.

Caleb That's what he says.

Rosie Maybe it's true.

Caleb What if he comes out of there with a gun or a knife?

Rosie Why would he do that?

Caleb I don't know. I told him I had a tire iron, which I do.

Rosie That's good.

Caleb I don't know if it's good.

Rosie Then why are you asking? *(CALEB sighs)* What's the matter?

Caleb Nothing. *(Silence)* I do have one. *(Silence)* When Sarah died I had a violent paranoid streak.

Rosie I'm sorry to hear that, but it's entirely your own fault. *(CALEB sighs)* What's the matter now?

Caleb Nothing, Mom.

Rosie People have forgotten their ideals, their responsibilities to the working class.

Caleb I agree with that.

Rosie Good.

Caleb People just want to buy things. Made in China, of course.

Rosie You could send them to Harvard, whatever, the London School of Economics, they're still Chinese.

Caleb I don't know if I got that, Mom.

Rosie What is it with the Coyotes?

Caleb He's a figure.
Rosie I thought he was an animal.
Caleb He's a legendary figure.
Rosie Like Stalin, the Man of Steel.
Caleb Not really.
Rosie Me, I live in Rio, where the animals are animals and there are no men.
Caleb He'll come out of there and open fire or start a fire.
Rosie Stalin?
Caleb No, Bernie. *(Sigh)*
Rosie Where do the dogs come into this?
Caleb Coyotes. He has a friend named Coyote.
Rosie He talks to his friend Coyote?
Caleb So he says.
Rosie That can't be all bad. (Only divine intervention can help us now.)
Caleb He'll burn the place down.

(VOICE OF COYOTE: A fire will go around the earth. The earth's crust will burn to a cinder.)

Rosie And then what? What? What? What?

(VOICE OF COYOTE: The earth will burn. The atmosphere will evaporate. Nothing will live. Including Brazil, where the water is going fast and the trees are burning. And these assholes continue lying and leering.)

Rosie All right, I'll talk to him, whatshisname.

Caleb Bernie.

Rosie I'll talk to him. And his friend, too.
Caleb Coyote.
Rosie I'll talk to him, too.
Caleb You can't see him.
Rosie Good. It's just as well.

Rosie and Bernie, and Caleb

Rosie Only divine intervention can help us now.
Bernie Should I pray?
Rosie Pray.
Bernie I don't know how to pray.
Rosie Get down on your knees and get ready to die.
Bernie Is that prayer, Rose?
Rosie That's all I know. Don't call me Rose.
Bernie That's not prayer.
Rosie It's either that, or join the Party.
Bernie The Communist Party?
Rosie You heard me.
Bernie All right. I'll do that.
Rosie Go for a walk.
Bernie A walk?
Rosie I said go for a walk.
Bernie No.
Rosie No?
Bernie I'll tell you what, Grandma.
Rosie What?
Bernie I see devils.
Rosie Devils? Who told you that?

Bernie They look like American people, but they're not.

Rosie I understand. (Someone told him.)

Bernie They're stupid and mean.

Rosie That's not devilish. That's us.

Bernie Well, they're trying to trick you, so they can go to the store.

Rosie I see.

Bernie They want to buy stuff.

Rosie Well, you seem friendly enough, and young.

Bernie It's Bernie.

Rosie And I know you'll do everything you can to help the unfortunate, which is all of us. (Enter CALEB)

Bernie You don't recognize me, Grandma, but I love you.

Rosie Yes, I can feel that you do. Likewise, I'm sure.

Caleb Hi.

Bernie Here's my Dad.

Rosie Yes, I feel like I know you as well and that you are a very good person. You probably take good care of the people around you.

Caleb Thank you. This is Bernie, remember, who stays in his room?

Rosie (Yes, and this must be his room.) Bernie, I heard you stay in your room a lot.

Bernie I do. All the time, actually.

Rosie Why?

Bernie I have everything I need there.

Caleb Electronics.

Rosie Elect what?

Caleb He has a lot of equipment in his room.

Rosie What if he has to go to the bathroom?

Caleb He has his own bathroom.

Rosie Don't you need to go to school?

Bernie No.

Rosie You seem young.

Caleb He has contacts.

Rosie Contacts?

Bernie Certain forces of nature, as represented by the Hopi Prophecy, and a legendary figure named Coyote.

Rosie The happy what?

Bernie It's hard to explain.

Rosie Of course, it is. I had a visitor recently who had a lot of equipment.

Caleb Cameras.

Rosie She had come a long way to see me.

Bernie All the way to Brazil. (*Laughs*)

Rosie What's funny about that?

Bernie I'm sorry.

Caleb That was Mrs. Jonah, Mom, an old friend of yours.

Rosie Yes, I recognized certain qualities in her.

Caleb She's making a documentary, about survivors.

Rosie Oh, yes, I am a survivor. I don't know if that was good or bad, and you don't either. Thank you both for coming.

Caleb I'll take you home, Mom.

Rosie You're very nice. I have a lot of work to do at the moment. Soon as I get there. To prepare.

Bernie To prepare?

Rosie You know, flyers, meetings, e-mails, the whole gamut. Organization is the key. Try to remember that.

Caleb Let's go, Mom.

Rosie Bye, bye.

Rosie

(Here in Rio. They don't look at you in the eye. They look at the sidewalk. They jiggle their money. They're thinking bad things about themselves or others. They want to have a good time. They like to watch television and go to a ballgame. They're interested in sex. That is, for fun, more than reproduction. They drive their cars into each other and enjoy the noise. They want to survive. They fear their own nonexistence. I wanted to explain about the Jewish Museum, how my mind was changed at that time, and I felt happy for the Jews, how we had not been slaughtered in vain, how History was alive in some way. It was seeing the pictures of the children, and the books, and the wisdom of the Fathers. I know there are those who don't believe me and don't want to hear about it. I know from my own experience. The Germans, they don't want to hear about it. Myself, I said I would never go to Germany. But then, in my old age, I saw with my own eyes how my mind could be changed. My own mind.)

Bernie and David

David You were saying, what happened in the dream?

Bernie I wasn't doing anything or saying anything.

David Try.

Bernie I'll try.

David And don't look at the audience. So, Bernie.

Bernie Yes?

David They don't realize they're alive, they think they're going automatically to heaven.

Bernie Is that right?

David That's what you've been saying.

Bernie I was only asking, Is that true of them?

David I don't know. How would I know?

Bernie You're not wrong. But I don't think you're right, either.

David Forget it. Just don't look at them.

Bernie I'm not looking. (*Looks*)

David Don't let them see you do that. Look at me.

Bernie Okay.

David Look at me.

Bernie I'm looking. (*Pause*) I have a question.

David Go ahead.

Bernie What do you mean by heaven?

David According to the gentiles, it's where our Father lives.

Bernie Dad?

David No, Bernie, I think they mean God.

Bernie What about us?

David Us?

Bernie Do we go to heaven?

David For us it's not so automatic.

Bernie What do we have to do?

David We have to be nice. On Yom Kippur we pay our dues.

Bernie I don't get it.

David Me, neither.

Bernie You're supposed to be a teacher.

David I don't teach theology.

Bernie But what the fuck is heaven? (Excuse my language.)
It's absurd.

David That's what I'm saying.

Bernie And then you got these other ones making bombs to
blow people up.

David That's right.

Bernie They go to heaven?

David I don't know, Bernie. You figure it out.

Bernie That's what Dad said.

David He doesn't know either.

Bernie He doesn't remember my name half the time.

David I know.

Bernie I'm his son. He calls me you.

David He might go to heaven because he doesn't know which
way to turn.

Bernie That's funny. But this is serious.

David Is that why you stay in your room?

Bernie People are blowing themselves up with bombs.

David Exactly, meat for the worms. You didn't answer me.

Bernie What was the question?

David Can you tell me what she said?

Bernie Who?

David Mom. Can you tell me what she said?

Bernie Rosie?

David No, Mom. Come on, Bernie. You told Dad you had a
dream about Mom

Bernie I did.

David Tell me what she said in the dream.

Bernie She said the Indians had it right.

David What did they have right?

Bernie They had a lot of things right, David.

David What did she say?

Bernie “They didn’t bury their dead, because they would contaminate the earth.”

David And?

Bernie “They didn’t burn their dead because they would contaminate the air.”

David So what did they do?

Bernie They put them on scaffolds so the vultures could eat them.

David Oh. Great. What did you say?

Bernie I was dreaming.

David Mom said things.

Bernie The dreamer doesn’t say things. My main idea was we should have one country, Palestine. But I didn’t speak it.

David I see. And what did she say?

Bernie She said, “They won’t have water or air.” One country with Arabs and Jews together. I thought, “What could be wrong?” She said, “Don’t burn the oxygen out of the air.”

David But what does that mean?

Bernie I don’t know. I’m just telling you.

David Talk some more to your mother, Bernie, who is not here anymore.

Bernie And you believe me?

David What?

Bernie You believe I can talk to our mother in my dreams?

David I don’t know what to believe. Like heaven and hell and spirit worlds and Coyote and the rest of it.

Bernie Or you’re being nice because you might want me to come out of my room.

David Who said anything about coming out of your room?

Bernie *(Looks at the audience)* No one.
David Look this way. Good. I have to go now. I have a wife.
 Speaking of which, she'll give you a call.
Bernie Well and good.

Bernie and Chrystal

Bernie Chrystal?
Chrystal Yes, yes, yes?
Bernie It's nice to speak with you.
Chrystal Hello, Bernie.
Bernie Hi, Aunt Chrystal.
Chrystal Oh, that's nice. Hi.
Bernie Hi.
Chrystal Actually, I'm your sister-in-law.
Bernie Exactly.
Chrystal Nice talking to you.
Bernie I know.
Chrystal I was wondering.
Bernie What?
Chrystal You want to go to a ball game?
Bernie Oh, God, no.
Chrystal Why not?
Bernie Too many people and too many cars. And the garbage is
 a foot deep.
Chrystal How about a concert?
Bernie What kind of concert?
Chrystal Classical?
Bernie No.

Chrystal Rock & Roll?

Bernie No.

Chrystal Jazz?

Bernie No.

Chrystal Punk?

Bernie No.

Chrystal What kind of music do you like?

Bernie The kind I can listen to in my room. Here, I have total freedom of choice.

Chrystal It's also social. It's also about being with other people. Concerts. Events.

Bernie I don't want to be with other people, obviously.

Chrystal Don't you want to be with your Aunt Chrystal?

Bernie You can visit me.

Chrystal You can visit me, too.

Bernie I said it first.

Chrystal You could come to my school.

Bernie I don't go to schools.

Chrystal Why not?

Bernie They're out of control. You know how it is with like a dreidel?

Chrystal I'm not sure.

Bernie Are you Jewish?

Chrystal You know I'm Jewish.

Bernie You're a convert.

Chrystal True. The best kind. Of Jew.

Bernie So you know what a dreidel is. You spin it and eventually it wobbles. The earth is spinning but not quite at the right rate, so there's a glitch in the rotation. Could you follow that?

Chrystal I think so.

Bernie The way you can tell that is in the schools. No one knows how to be because the spin is out of control. So there's no ideal and the hierarchy is out of whack. In these kinds of situations the cosmic forces have to redo the situation from scratch.

Chrystal That's a fantastic theory.

Bernie Well, you can believe it or not, it's up to you.

Chrystal It does make sense.

Bernie Because everything is connected.

Chrystal Of course they are.

Bernie So, you see what I mean?

Chrystal I think I do, yes.

Bernie Why I stay away from the schools.

Chrystal Where did you learn about this, if you don't mind my asking? (*Silence*) Don't tell me if you don't want to.

Bernie From the Hopi.

Chrystal Are they Native Americans?

Bernie They're Indians.

Chrystal That's what I meant.

Bernie Yes.

Chrystal Bernie, you have time for another question?

Bernie What's the question?

Chrystal What does this all have to do with fire?

Bernie Who told you about fire?

Chrystal Your brother, David.

Bernie He doesn't know anything about it.

Chrystal That's why I'm asking you.

Bernie Fire is oxygen combining with other elements to create heat and light. (And rust.)

Chrystal Is that why you want to burn things?

Bernie Who said I wanted to burn things?

Chrystal I don't know. Somehow I got that idea.

Bernie There's all kinds of ideas sloshing around in people's heads.

Chrystal Like what?

Bernie Like the amount of oxygen is always the same.

Chrystal Isn't it?

Bernie No. The higher you go the less there is.

Chrystal What are you doing all day long?

Bernie I have everything I need, right here in my room. I study, I watch things, I talk to my friends. I play video games. I'm like any normal teenager.

Chrystal Bernie, come out of your room and go to a real school.

Bernie No.

Chrystal If you're such a normal person, act like a normal person.

Bernie Okay, I'm not normal.

Chrystal Yes, you are.

Bernie No, I'm not.

Chrystal You have a window?

Bernie A window?

Chrystal In your room.

Bernie Of course.

Chrystal Good.

Bernie What are we talking about now?

Chrystal I don't know. You lost me, or I lost you.

Bernie Come on over, we'll play something on my digital electronics.

Chrystal What?

Bernie You know, music or a speech or an opera.

Chrystal Okay, Bernie.
Bernie Anytime.
Chrystal I will do that.
Bernie Okay, I'll see ya.
Chrystal So long.
Bernie Thanks for calling, Aunt Chrystal.

Caleb and David

Caleb The sins of the fathers.
David What does that mean, the sins of the fathers?
Caleb I'm not sure. It sounds right.
David The sins of the fathers. Where is that written?
Caleb I don't know. I never learned where things were written.
David Somewhere in the Bible.
Caleb Your grandfather, he came to America in 1905, he never learned a word of English. All his life he was illegal.
David So?
Caleb That must mean something. On the other side, Rosie was the only one to come over. She lost everybody. Not a single relative survived.
David What does it mean?
Caleb Something is passed.
David Why Bernie wants to burn things down.
Caleb Something like that.
David I don't.
Caleb You won't procreate.
David It's not up to me.
Caleb Still.

David Still?

Caleb Something is passed, it has consequences for generations. You have these German kids now, I wouldn't be surprised if they had problems, like autism.

David You should look it up on the Internet.

Caleb Maybe I will.

David Excuse the expression, but the kid is an idiot.

Caleb You mean Bernie?

David Yes, the very Bernie who wants to burn things down. I'll say it again, the fuckin' idiot is a fucking idiot.

Caleb That was brilliant. And you, you won't have children and you walk around with a yarmulke, and you have no idea why you do or what it means.

David What does it mean?

Caleb It's so birds don't shit on your stupid head.

David Thanks, Dad.

Caleb Don't mention it.

(Later)

Caleb It's like Rosie says. Half-assed so-called human beings shitting on their own world.

David So what did you expect?

Caleb I don't believe in anything. I believe in nothing.

David You repeated yourself.

Caleb I don't give a shit.

David Neither do I. They're not rapturing US up.

Caleb So what's the plot?

David What's the plot?

Caleb What's the plot?

David You mean the theory?

Caleb Yes.

David The plot is that some Christian people are planning to ratchet up to the heavens and I don't think they're taking us with them

Caleb Explain it to me again, how does this affect the state of Israel?

David The state of Israel is told about in the Bible.

Caleb This I know already. Where it is spoken about, I don't know.

David I don't either, but because of the war over there, the time has come for these people to be catching the train to heaven.

Caleb Oh.

David Well, it's not a train.

Caleb What is it?

David We've reached the limit, Dad, of my understanding.

Caleb And this is why Bernie wants to burn things down?

David I don't know why Bernie wants to burn things down, maybe his grandfather never learned English and chased after women. Like you said.

Caleb And this is why he won't come out of his room?

David I don't know the answer to that either, except he lost all his relatives on his Grandmother's side by their being shot in the head and suffocated by gas and hung from the rafters and strangled and starved to death, and so on. The unspeakable.

Caleb So the question is. (*Silence*)

David What?

Caleb Who goes first?

David You mean, like the Marx brothers?
Caleb No, I mean, yes.
David You mean the baseball joke, like with Abbott and Costello? Who's on first?
Caleb No.
David You mean, which mad person goes violent first and where?
Caleb Yes. Bingo. And I think it has to be Rosie because of the connection there with the Holocaust, like you mentioned.
David Wait a minute.
Caleb Why?
David I have to catch my breath here.

(Moments later)

David Well, you lost me there, Dad.
Caleb I was only thinking.
David Let's pause again please. *(Pause)*
Caleb That could definitely be Rosie. Each day she goes more into Brazil.
David I've been meaning to say.
Caleb Yes, you have. *(Silence)* Yes, you want to say something?
David Yes, the sad thing is the connection between Chrystal and me.
Caleb This is true.
David A loss of faith.
Caleb Who could blame her?
David I don't blame her.
Caleb She's not Jewish.
David She is Jewish.
Caleb So you can't blame her.

David She's more Jewish than I am.

Caleb This is true. Let's see what happens.

David This happens. That's why people should stay together.

Caleb I didn't get that.

David That's why people should stay together.

Caleb Why? Because this happens?

David Yes.

Caleb I don't get it.

David That's all that happens.

Caleb So people should stay together?

David Yes. Because it's the only thing that happens.

Caleb Okay, if that's what you think.

David That's what I think.

Caleb It doesn't make any sense, but that's fine with me.

David Good.

Caleb Hopefully, you will stay together.

David You didn't.

Caleb No.

David What happened?

Caleb She may have had a brain disorder. Sarah.

David You don't know?

Caleb We never found her. Maybe she got raptured.

David I don't think so.

Caleb Just a joke. Bad joke. Very bad joke.

David I'm not laughing.

Caleb I was a dedicated teacher, like you. Biology, chemistry. Then the respect went out the window and into the streets. I fell into a bad mood of various dimensions. For Sarah, it was a sign of the end of all things to come.

David That's too much.

Caleb It was a bit much.

David I think so.

Caleb Shut the door, David. I don't know why I said that.

David It's okay.

Caleb Leave it open. You were here at the time. You heard the news.

David It was hard to hear. It's hard to hear to this day.

Caleb Hard to hear. Then I had to stand there feeling my teeth in my mouth, the back of my tongue coated with bacteria, my feet aching on the floor and a lump of emotion in my chest I could do nothing about. What is that?

David It's grief. We have no control over grief.

Caleb That's what I said. I said I have no control. Like Bernie, I was afraid to leave the house.

David Maybe some people have control.

Caleb Who?

David I don't know who. Some people.

Caleb Maybe they're already dead.

David I have control.

Caleb No one has control. Emotion comes up, that's it. Otherwise, no emotion.

David Maybe that's me, then. Maybe I'm dead.

Caleb You have no emotion?

David Chrystal says I have no emotion.

Caleb You have no emotion so you have plenty of control?

David That's what she says. So I must be dead.

Caleb No, no, no.

David I think I'm dead.

Caleb You're not dead. She should get pregnant.

David She can't get pregnant, Chrystal.

Caleb Excuse me, but do you have intercourse?
David None of your business, Dad.
Caleb Excuse me for asking.
David None of your fucking business.

Bernie and Rosie

Bernie Grandma?
Rosie What?
Bernie I was trying to explain.
Rosie What?
Bernie This happens.
Rosie This happens?
Bernie Yes.
Rosie So, what happens?
Bernie This.
Rosie Bernie, don't talk to me if that's how you talk.
Bernie A mega-volcano could erupt and destroy us all.
Rosie Let it erupt.
Bernie You're a misanthrope.
Rosie What's that?
Bernie You don't like people.
Rosie Neither do you.
Bernie Or seventy-five atomic bombs could go off.
Rosie Why seventy-five?
Bernie I don't know why. Do you care?
Rosie No and yes.
Bernie You can't say no and yes.

Rosie Yes, I can. I'm in agreement with the Hopi, like you.
I saw the end of mankind.

Bernie In the camps?

Rosie In the camps, and in your basic human stupidity.

Bernie Say more.

Rosie People don't understand anything, least of all each other.

Bernie So it's a failure.

Rosie It's a failure. They never will. It's too bad.

Bernie A few miles down, you come to hot magma.

Rosie I know. That's what I said.

Bernie You're a smart grandmother, Grandma.

Rosie Definitely. I was in a concentration camp when I was twelve. Angels were being prepared there for a life in heaven.

Bernie Somehow I don't feel like I've explained myself successfully.

Rosie That would be right, my boy.

Chrystal and David

Chrystal He plays with matches.

David Who does?

Chrystal Don't say who does.

David Who does?

Chrystal Your little brother Bernie, for burning.

David It's Bernard.

Chrystal He's out of his little mind.

David He had the highest test score in his class.

Chrystal What test?

David I don't know what test. It was a smart test.

Chrystal So he's so smart he won't come out of his room?

David He's sensitive. Generations of rabbis came before him.

Chrystal How do you know?

David Intelligence is a wonderful thing.

Chrystal Sure, if the brain is attached to the body.

David Rabbis were in Poland since the fifteenth century.

Chrystal That was a few lines back, David.

David Who cares?

Chrystal Certainly not me.

David Rosie's family was in horses.

Chrystal What were they doing in Horses?

David It's not a town. It's a profession. They bought and sold horses near the city of Pinsk.

Chrystal Where is that?

David Ukraine.

Chrystal Not Poland?

David That was my father's side.

Chrystal Ultimately, we're all Jewish.

David No, we're not. Tell me, What do you like so much about it?

Chrystal It's simple, lots of rules, 24/7, remember who you are and what you're here for. You don't have to think too much.

David What do you think about getting together?

Chrystal How is that related?

David It's a commandment: Be fruitful and multiply.

Chrystal I don't think so at the moment.

David Maybe later?

Chrystal I don't care if he never comes out.

David Who is that?

Chrystal Bernie. Bernard.

David Did you hear what I said?
Chrystal Especially not with matches or a lighter.
David You didn't hear me.
Chrystal I heard you. The answer is no.
David Why?
Chrystal Don't take it personally.
David How can I not take it personally?
Chrystal There are too many fucking people in the world already.
David Kiss me, at least.
Chrystal I'll kiss you, but that's as far as it goes.
David Kiss me here.
Chrystal All right. I'll kiss you there, too.
David Thank you.
Chrystal Don't thank me.
David I take it back.
Chrystal Don't take it back. Be quiet.

David

(And then I submitted. She said "relax" and I relaxed. I felt the warmth of Mother Earth and the love of a woman. Things were all right for a couple of days after that. Then, to gratify her, I gave up all pork products, and after that, I separated milk from meat, and refused to eat the two together on the same plate, a kosher decision which made Chrystal happier still.)

Caleb and Rosie

Rosie You start with nothing and you end with nothing and nothing's in between.

Caleb Motherhood?

Rosie Maybe motherhood.

Caleb Some people are just glad to be alive.

Rosie Don't start.

Caleb Breathing air.

Rosie Mazel tov.

Caleb Not six feet under.

Rosie More power to them.

Caleb Alive! Alive! Be happy!

Rosie It's okay with me.

Caleb Enjoy the moment!

Rosie And now it's gone.

Caleb It's so interesting.

Rosie What is?

Caleb The difference in attitude.

Rosie It could just be I.Q.

Caleb It could.

Rosie You're my son, but I'm smarter than you.

Caleb That's what I'm saying.

Rosie You got cheated on half the genes.

Caleb I'm not that stupid.

Rosie Let me ask you something.

Caleb Ask.

Rosie Why did you turn her to ashes?

Caleb Who did I turn to ashes?

Rosie Sorry. What's her name, your good wife, as you call her?

Caleb Sarah. She was a good wife.

Rosie It's against the Jewish religion.

Caleb What is?

Rosie To burn people.

Caleb She wanted to be burned. She thought burning was good. In India they're going up in smoke all over the place. But we never found her, actually.

Rosie It's not a good idea.

Caleb It's a totally different religion.

Rosie I don't care. I'm totally against it.

Caleb We never found her, Mom, I just told you.

Rosie Sarah?

Caleb Yes. We never found her body. So there was nothing to burn.

Rosie What do you do with the ashes?

Caleb They're in a box usually.

Rosie And where do you put the box?

Caleb The box is kept in a crypt.

Rosie And where is the crypt?

Caleb The crypt is in the cemetery.

Rosie Me, I've thought if over, I want a regular Jewish funeral.

Caleb You've thought it over about cremation?

Rosie Yes, but I'm against it. It doesn't seem right in this place.

Caleb In the camps, of course, they had ashes.

Rosie That's correct. Former human beings.

Caleb I'm sorry I said that.

Rosie Why? It's the truth. What do they do with the ashes here?

Caleb Some people scatter their ashes.

Rosie They scatter them?

Caleb Yes. Over the water. Over the land.

Rosie Over someone's head maybe.
Caleb There's an idea.
Rosie Life is strange and disappointing.
Caleb People don't like to hear that.
Rosie I don't like to hear it either.
Caleb Nobody wants to hear about it.
Rosie There are plenty of Jews here, believe it or not.
Caleb Hard to believe.
Rosie They were here before New York or Charleston.
Caleb I don't think so.
Rosie You could look it up. It's all written down.
Caleb I will. I'll check it out, Mom.
Rosie Do it before the earth burns up and the oceans
boil, David.
Caleb It's Caleb.
Rosie Caleb.

Bernie and Caleb

Caleb Bernie, why don't you come out of your room finally,
at last?
Bernie I don't want to.
Caleb Why not?
Bernie I don't want to come out of my room.
Caleb Come out of there this instant.
Bernie No.
Caleb Act like a normal person.
Bernie I am a normal person. I did this already with Chrystal,
Dad. We had a total conversation.

Caleb So what? This is your father talking. Act like a 13-year-old.

Bernie I am a 13-year-old. You didn't hear what I said.

Caleb So come out of your room.

Bernie No.

Caleb Bernie, this is really hard for me.

Bernie I'm sorry.

Caleb I miss you.

Bernie I miss you, too, Dad.

Caleb Then come out and be with me once in a while. We'll go to a game, we'll go to the movies. We'll do things.

Bernie Maybe later.

Caleb When later?

Bernie I don't know.

Caleb You know what it's like for me?

Bernie No.

Caleb Do you want to know?

Bernie No and yes.

Caleb It's lonely. I don't have anyone to talk to. I spend days and nights by myself.

Bernie I'm sorry, Dad.

Caleb I'm sick of myself. Aren't you?

Bernie No. I have a lot to do. I talk to people all the time.

Caleb I don't.

Bernie You should, Dad.

Caleb I should, but I don't. I have no one to talk to.

Bernie David?

Caleb He's a married man. He has no time for me.

Bernie Your mother?

Caleb That's a riddle, not a conversation. She thinks I'm David.

Bernie Join a club, Dad, or go back to work.

Caleb I suppose I could do that.

Bernie Get married again.

Caleb To who?

Bernie Get out and meet someone.

Caleb I don't know how to do that anymore. I think about the next thing with a woman and I lose interest.

Bernie What next thing?

Caleb The next thing to say, the next thing to do. The whole thing is a pain in the ass. On the other hand, I'm by myself too much. I'm afraid I'll start talking to myself.

Bernie I'm sorry. It's not my fault. Don't start talking to yourself.

Caleb I see myself doing it.

Bernie Call someone on the phone.

Caleb Like I just did?

Bernie Yeah.

Caleb Excuse me, but I don't understand. Do you?

Bernie What?

Caleb Call, Bernie

Bernie You took away my cell phone, remember?

Caleb Yes, of course.

Bernie So I only use the walkie-talkie. Only relatives.

Caleb That's right.

Bernie People. I don't like them and I'm afraid of them.

Caleb I thought you said—

Bernie I stick to videos.

Caleb You watch TV?

Bernie No.

Caleb You don't watch TV?

Bernie No.

Caleb Because it's the last thing I want you to be doing in there.

Bernie It's all lies, Dad. Lies and people selling you shit.

Caleb That's what I'm saying.

Bernie And bad acting. Like I can't stand another minute.

Caleb So come out and be with people.

Bernie It's all over with people, Dad.

Caleb Can't be, son.

Bernie Not like they have TVs in their heads, but something similar.

Caleb I didn't follow that.

Bernie Anyway, it's not that. It's the violence.

Caleb All people?

Bernie Humans. All.

Caleb All?

Bernie Yes, but I make an exception for the relatives.

Caleb Well, thank God for that.

Bernie If they do the walkie-talkie thing, only.

Caleb Why?

Bernie Why?

Caleb Why?

Bernie Because of the Hopi.

Caleb Leave the Hopi out of this.

Bernie Because of the people.

Caleb Why? Explain it to me, please.

Bernie Because you don't know what they'll do next. You don't know and they don't know. So how can you trust them, how can you like them? Their only predictability is biological. They have to eat, sleep, shit, and reproduce. Otherwise, they'll kill each other at the drop of a hat. Or if you bend over to tie your shoe laces. Or if you lean

against a building. Or if you go for a walk with your dog. They'll kill you with a car bomb if you're in the vicinity, so my advice to you is to stay out of the vicinity.

Caleb So what can we do?

Bernie Stay out of the vicinity. They'll kill you by air or by sea, you won't know which. And not only that, their minds are not attached to their tongues, their minds are attached to their sex organs or to their intestines. That's where their minds are. So it's a mistake to talk to them. I only talk to my immediate family—like you, Dad—and I try to keep it to a minimum. They'll throw up on you, too.

Caleb They?

Bernie Yes. And I talk to Coyote. The people have no control over their functions, which makes them unpredictable, like I say, which makes them mad. So they want to destroy Earthmother. They just want to piss on her or pour poison into her veins. That's their attitude. Just ask anybody. Who comes first? Them. They come first. They come first over Earthmother.

Caleb You're reading too much Hopi Indian material, Bernard.

Bernie No, I'm not. It's not just the Hopi.

Caleb Yes, it is. That's why you talk like that. That's why you won't come out of your room.

Bernie Look around you, Dad. Some of them think they're going to heaven. They're rotting corpses and they think they're going to heaven. They're rotting while they're alive and they think they're going to heaven, and they throw their garbage into the street. They throw their garbage into the street and their shit they throw into the water, into the rain.

Caleb Okay, that's enough.

Bernie That's why I'm afraid of them and I don't like them.
(Silence) You asked me, Dad.

Caleb And you?

Bernie Me, too. I don't like me, either. I'm just like them and just like you.

Caleb Oh.

Bernie Full of shit and false ideas.

Caleb I see.

Bernie So if I ever get out of here I'll burn the place down.

Caleb Stay here, then.

Bernie I'm not ready right now to go out there and start burning it down.

Caleb Good.

Bernie Destroying the safe places and the armaments they all use.

Caleb Okay.

Bernie Not just yet.

Caleb I wish your mother was here.

Bernie I don't.

Caleb You don't?

Bernie No, the earth is not the place to be these days.

Caleb Your grandmother then.

Bernie The days are numbered in Brazil, too, Dad.

Caleb She's not really in Brazil.

Bernie She is in her mind.

Caleb Don't do anything until I talk to your grandmother.

Bernie What does that have to do with anything?

Caleb Just don't do anything until I talk to somebody.

Bernie Talk to somebody, Dad.

Caleb Please don't do anything weird.

Bernie You too, Dad.
Caleb Come out of there.
Bernie Don't start talking to yourself.
Caleb This is your father talking.
Bernie She can't remember anyway, Grandma.
Caleb You heard me, Bernard. Bernard?
Bernie What?
Caleb What's that smell?
Bernie It's the TV burning.
Caleb Bernard!
Bernie What?
Caleb Just pull the plug! Pull the plug!
Bernie Okay!
Caleb Pull the plug! Pull the plug or I'll call the police!
Bernie I pulled the plug! It's not burning!
Caleb Put the fire out and pull the plug!
Bernie I did!
Caleb Or I'll call the fire department, the police, and an ambulance!
Bernie I did, Dad!
Caleb Is the fire out?
Bernie It's out.
Caleb Thank God. Now, give it to me, please. No more TV.

Rosie and Caleb

Caleb Rosie. It's me. Caleb.
Rosie I know. Don't call me Rosie.
Caleb I'm sorry.

Rosie I'm your mother.

Caleb My son Bernie is in his room.

Rosie I heard.

Caleb He doesn't come out.

Rosie Right.

Caleb He set fire to his television set.

Rosie How can you do that?

Caleb I don't know how.

Rosie It's dangerous.

Caleb This is your grandson we're talking about.

Rosie Not a smart idea.

Caleb No. So I took it away from him.

Rosie Good.

Caleb I told him I would talk to you.

Rosie Why?

Caleb I don't know why.

Rosie What can I do?

Caleb Talk to him. He talks to his relatives.

Rosie Think about it.

Caleb What does that mean, "think about it."

Rosie I don't know. It must mean something.

Caleb It's completely meaningless.

Rosie Have it your way.

Caleb I think I'll change the subject now.

Rosie See if I care.

Caleb David asks me to have a meeting with Chrystal.

Rosie David? Chrystal?

Caleb That's your other grandson and his wife.

Rosie About what?

Caleb About having a child.

Rosie Nice. And?

Caleb I avoided the meeting. I pretended I didn't hear him.

Rosie Why?

Caleb I have my own problems.

Rosie You can't interfere.

Caleb Exactly.

Rosie On the other hand, he's your son.

Caleb I thought he meant something else, David. I said that. And then I said, of course.

Rosie You lied.

Caleb I half-lied, because I was actually confused. I thought I should.

Rosie But you didn't want to.

Caleb Right. I wanted to go home and watch the news and deal with Bernie.

Rosie Not deal with Bernie.

Caleb And not deal with Bernie. I was divided in two.

Rosie I have had that. Experience.

Caleb All I could do was lie.

Rosie You tend to do that.

Caleb There was two of me, meanwhile I pretended there was a third one.

Rosie Who couldn't hear?

Caleb Right, confused by early Alzheimers.

Rosie And you liked the power of being asked, the attention?

Caleb Right.

Rosie So you were tempted in the first place?

Caleb Yes, but I didn't want to seem too eager. Being asked for help.

Rosie The helpful Dad.

Caleb Yes. Even though my heart was pounding. I lied.

Rosie What did you say?

Caleb I said Bernie was waiting for me at home.

Rosie They had invited you for dinner?

Caleb Yeah. I said, let's have coffee another time, because coffee is less serious.

Rosie But they had invited you for dinner?

Caleb Yes.

Rosie Now what?

Caleb I'll talk to Chrystal.

Rosie What will you say?

Caleb I'll say nobody knows, and nobody will ever know.

Rosie What?

Caleb Anything.

Rosie Anything?

Caleb Neither the future nor the past. Meanwhile, there's Bernie to consider.

Rosie You remember Rabbi Nachman?

Caleb Of course.

Rosie He also never came out of his room.

Caleb There's no comparison, the kid is an idiot. *(Silence)*
I'm sorry.

Rosie What do you want from me?

Caleb Talk to him. Get him out of his room.

Rosie I'll talk to Bernie, you talk to Chyrstal.

Caleb It's a deal.

Rosie Not that it will do any good.

Caleb Why do you say that?

Rosie We have passed the point of no return, David.

Caleb Caleb.

Rosie What's the matter with you?
Caleb Nothing.
Rosie And the other one?
Caleb Bernard?
Rosie He shouldn't play with those things.
Caleb The TV?
Rosie Right.
Caleb I agree, Mom. I took it away.

Rosie and Chrystal

Rosie This is Rosie, who is this?
Chrystal Chrystal. You dialed my number.
Rosie Are you all right?
Chrystal What do you mean by that?
Rosie Are you all right?
Chrystal No. At the moment I feel more wrong than right.
Rosie What did you do wrong?
Chrystal It doesn't matter what.
Rosie It's Kafkaesque. You feel it's your duty.
Chrystal My duty?
Rosie To be wrong. It's something in the Ashkenazi genes.
Chrystal It can't be, I'm a convert.
Rosie Then you got it from David.
Chrystal Okay, Rose, maybe I did.
Rosie That's the only explanation I can think of.
Chrystal Bernie thinks it's because we declared war on nature.
Rosie Not us! That wasn't us! That was the gentiles!
Chrystal God talked to Abraham.

Rosie Bernie said that?

Chrystal Yes. God talked to Abraham, from outside life.

Rosie What was he supposed to do?

Chrystal He did the best he could.

Rosie Abraham or Bernie?

Chrystal Both.

Rosie Bernie could be confused.

Chrystal He listens to the Hopi.

Rosie They talk to him?

Chrystal Like God talked to Abraham.

Rosie Oh, I can't believe that.

Chrystal It's the end of the Fourth World.

Rosie Why Bernie?

Chrystal I agree with the Indians. They didn't get enough credit. They took care.

Rosie You didn't answer the question.

Chrystal I don't know why Bernie.

Rosie Maybe he's imagining things.

Chrystal It's like the Tibetans and the Dalai Lama.

Rosie What is?

Chrystal Why Bernie is chosen.

Rosie He's Jewish for God's sake!

Chrystal His parents separated, or his mother drowned, he broke in two, and now a third party joined in.

Rosie Who is that?

Chrystal A Coyote. Mr. Coyote.

Rosie Indeed. He talks to a dog?

Chrystal He's not exactly a dog.

Rosie The dog talks back to him?

Chrystal He says a mega-volcano is about to erupt.

Rosie Where?
Chrystal Somewhere in Asia.
Rosie When?
Chrystal Soon.
Rosie Great.
Chrystal Sulphuric acid will take the place of oxygen in the air.
Rosie Great talking to you.
Chrystal So what should we do?
Rosie Talk to Mr. Coyote?
Chrystal He's not a person.
Rosie Of course he's not a person!
Chrystal He's a spirit. He lives in the Spirit World.
Rosie So how do you talk to him? Walkie-talkie?
Chrystal Bernie talks to him.
Rosie I'll call him.
Chrystal Coyote?
Rosie No, Bernie, obviously, Sarah.
Chrystal It's Chrystal, Rose.
Rosie Obviously.
Chrystal You have to call Caleb, who gets him on the phone, or go
 over there yourself.
Rosie I'll go.

Bernie and Rosie

Rosie Hello, Bernie.
Bernie Hi, Rose.
Rosie Don't call me Rose. I'm your grandmother.
Bernie Grandma.

Rosie You're mad at your mother because she went to hell?
Bernie Wouldn't you?
Rosie Hell is a state of mind, like Rosie in Rio.
Bernie You're talking about yourself in the third person.
Rosie So what? This bothers you?
Bernie Not really.
Rosie That's the trouble with the Ashkenazi.
Bernie What?
Rosie They're bothered by something they can't put their finger on it.
Bernie I know what it is.
Rosie That's why I wanted to talk to you. *(Silence)* So tell me already.
Bernie It's because God talked to Abraham.
Rosie How do you know this?
Bernie It's in the Bible.
Rosie Noah's ark is also in the Bible!
Bernie So?
Rosie You believe that, too?
Bernie It depends on how you look at it.
Rosie Let's get back to the original question.
Bernie Why God talked to Abraham?
Rosie No, why you're mad at your mother.
Bernie I'm not mad.
Rosie What are you?
Bernie I'm sad.
Rosie I'm sorry. *(Silence)*
Bernie Why did you do it?
Rosie What?
Bernie Go to Brazil.

Rosie I wanted a second chance. I didn't realize.

Bernie What?

Rosie I had no more chances. *(Pause)* Brazil is going fast.

Bernie Why is that?

Rosie Nobody has their own money. Everyone has other people's money.

Bernie I see.

Rosie So anyway. Who is this Coyote?

Bernie He's not a person.

Rosie What is he?

Bernie He is what's left over when the world is destroyed.

Rosie Where will he live?

Bernie In the wind. In the waterfall. He's also known as Trickster.

Rosie What will he do?

Bernie He'll trick one of the cosmic heavyweights to send an arrow down here.

Rosie A what?

Bernie An arrow. It'll stick in the ground and bring new life.

Rosie I see.

Bernie He'll challenge one of the gods to a bow and arrow contest.

Rosie You mean contest.

Bernie Contest. And Earthmother will get one in the butt.

Rosie Okay, Bernie. I miss you.

Bernie Come home then.

Rosie I'm thinking about it.

Bernie I'll have Coyote give you a call.

Rosie I don't know about that.

Bernie It won't be like a regular phone call, Rose.

Rosie Okay.

Bernie It'll be like a balloon or something, or a kite, or a cloud.

Rosie Okay.

Bernie Or a shine in the sky.

Rosie Okay, Bern.

Bernie So watch the sky.

Rosie I will. I'll watch the sky.

Bernie Look up once in a while, like every hour of every day.

Rosie Okay, son.

Bernie And you'll see something. Something weird and interesting.

Rosie I guess I've given up.

Bernie What?

Rosie Getting you out of your room.

Bernie Don't worry, Grandma. You'll be the first to know.

David and Chrystal

David They say the earth has died three times already. Once by ice, once by flood.

Chrystal Who says?

David The Hopi. I forget the other, maybe dust. Volcanoes and earthquakes.

Chrystal Bernie's into fire.

David Yeah, he's into fire. And you? What are you into?

Chrystal I think we'll suffocate for lack of oxygen.

David Oh for God's sake.

Chrystal That's a good one. For God's sake. The magma is not far down.

David What do you mean?

Chrystal The magma of the earth, molten iron. It's not that far below the crust.

David Why suffocate?

Chrystal The oxygen is draining away. Fire can do it. Heat. Sulphur.

David You're unbelievably pessimistic.

Chrystal I have a head on my shoulders and something between the ears.

David I get it.

Chrystal You don't have to be a genius to see what's coming, just average intelligence.

David It's not that I disagree.

Chrystal Of course not. You're not stupid.

David We could get hit by a meteor.

Chrystal If you throw shit into the water it becomes shitty water.

David We could lose our fertility.

Chrystal Same with the air.

David Do you have no hope?

Chrystal None. You take me for an idiot?

David No, I'm sorry.

Chrystal And I won't perform a sex act.

David Why not?

Chrystal It's feeding the beast.

David It's new life, Chrystal.

Chrystal It's creepy. And what'll it eat?

David Milk.

Chrystal I'll have no milk. It'll be contaminated by things like chromium and rust.

David Then I won't go on living.

Chrystal Radioactive dust.

David Did you hear me?

Chrystal Neither will I, David.
David What should we do?
Chrystal We don't need to do anything. Just wait. And be kind.
And I'm glad you're kosher finally.

David and Chrystal, and Caleb

David It's my father on the phone.
Chrystal What's he want?
David I don't know. Ask him.
Chrystal He wants to put his two cents in.
David She says you want to put your two cents in.
Chrystal Tell him I talked to his mother.
David She said she talked with your mother. Here you talk to him.
Chrystal Caleb?
Caleb This is not a movie. The Messiah is not coming.
Chrystal Who said the Messiah is coming?
Caleb Not you. Excuse me.
Chrystal I wouldn't know the Messiah if he was you or David or Bernie.
Caleb None of the above.
Chrystal He's not coming, Caleb.
Caleb How do you know?
Chrystal Keep an eye on your younger son. He's a pyromaniac.
Caleb I never said he was coming in the first place.
Chrystal Bernie or the Messiah?
Caleb The Messiah, Bernie is home with his books and his DVDs and his iPod.

Chrystal What does it mean, Caleb?

Caleb What does what mean?

Chrystal To keep on dying, generation by generation.

Caleb You mean to keep on living?

Chrystal Living and dying.

Caleb It passes the blood.

Chrystal The blood is immortal?

Caleb Yes.

Chrystal Excuse me, but I don't think so.

Caleb Our blood is us, our ancestors and our future.

Chrystal No longer, Caleb. Do you know why? Too much carbon in the air.

Caleb Not exactly.

Chrystal They thought they could just suck it up, between the magma and the crust.

David (What was that?)

Chrystal Suck up the oil and burn it, cook the atmosphere. But the magma is boiling.

David (I don't think he heard you.)

Chrystal The magma is boiling, Caleb, meaning earthquake and volcano.

Caleb Then what?

David (Storm and flood. Hurricane and cyclone. Tsunami.)

Chrystal That's right, David. Caleb, are you there? Well, the line is dead.

David There's a dead zone there on his balcony.

Chrystal Yes, you're right. I'll call him back later.

Bernie and Caleb

- Bernie** The Hopi will go into underground caves, Dad.
- Caleb** Is that where you're going?
- Bernie** They have magical pictures of bison and antelope and little horses.
- Caleb** Well, that won't save them.
- Bernie** We are creatures which makes sunlight into intelligence.
- Caleb** How do you know?
- Bernie** We're like sensitive wires.
- Caleb** Who told you this?
- Bernie** Coyote. But when the oxygen is gone, they'll go down, down into the ground.
- Caleb** The Hopi?
- Bernie** They'll come up again with eyes the size of beachballs.
- Caleb** You're out of your mind.
- Bernie** No bodies hardly at all. And they'll eat the sulphur.
- Caleb** Am I responsible for this atrocity?
- Bernie** You and everybody else.
- Caleb** God help us. You especially.
- Bernie** Pray, Dad, or praise. Whatever that is. Praise and praise.
- Caleb** I'll go to the Wall and bow.
- Bernie** Too late. Go to a cave and hide your face. Put on a holy garment.
- Caleb** You come with me.
- Bernie** No.
- Caleb** Where are you going?
- Bernie** I'm going with Coyote to the Land of the Dead.
- Caleb** Where is that? (*A pause*) Bernie!

Bernie What?
Caleb Where is that?
Bernie I don't know. Brazil, maybe.
Caleb Oh, for God's sake!
Bernie It's for Earthmother, Daddy, for Earthmother.

Rosie and Caleb

Rosie Rosie, your mother.
Caleb Caleb.
Rosie I know.
Caleb Bernie's not in his room.
Rosie Uh, oh.
Caleb Who knows where he is or what he's doing.
Rosie He's setting fires is what he's doing, the fucking arsonist.
Caleb Who knows?
Rosie Good God, they'll blame the Jews for everything.
Caleb There'll be no everything.
Rosie There'll be no Jews.
Caleb There'll be no nobody.
Rosie When the Jews are gone, what's left?
Caleb The Earth itself will die. It says so in the Talmud.
Rosie Where in the Talmud?
Caleb I forget now. It's carbon. When there's too much carbon you can't breathe.
Rosie I see.
Caleb So we'll say good-bye.
Rosie Good-bye.
Caleb Bye, Mom.

Rosie Bye, bye, Baby.

Caleb Bye.

Bernie

(Coyote looks at the audience. They resist the impulse to applaud. What does this have to do with the fate of the Jews, they wonder. The Jews are us, says Coyote, calmly, we are all Arabs. Pause. Well, it's all right if you don't think so. Me and my Hopi friends are not Arabs and you are all shit and not too bright. How's that? No, insults don't seem to work either. Anyway, I'm escorting the Hopi to their special caverns set aside for them by Earthmother. We'll clean things up eventually and we'll start over. Meanwhile, we thought we'd take a few righteous Jews with us to the center of the Earth. Those of you who qualify, and want to come, follow me. Oh. The gentleman over there asked how you qualify. Well, you have to be an American, of course, and have harbored no resentments for the last 90 seconds. Okay? Let's go.)

The End