

⑧

## The Last Dance

*ONE and TWO are teenage girls.*

*TWO sits at a table, with head buried in arms, passed out asleep. ONE enters, sees TWO asleep and runs over to the table.*

ONE: (poking TWO) Rise and shine! Up and at 'em! Wakey, wakey!

TWO: (raising head very sleepily) What?

ONE: You were sleeping.

TWO: Uh huh. Ok.

*TWO plonks head right back on the table. ONE pokes her again.*

ONE: Rise and Shine! Up and at 'em! Wakey, wakey!

TWO: Ok, Ok. Stop poking me.

*TWO sits up and yawns.*

TWO: I was having the greatest dream.

ONE: There's no time for dreaming. There's no room in the schedule for dreaming of any kind.

TWO: I was a mountain climber and I was able to leap from peak to peak, like those mountain goats? It was amazing.

ONE: I can't leave you for five minutes.

TWO: Why not? I might actually get some sleep.

ONE: You can't sleep. We're not finished.

TWO: (squinting at ONE) Isn't it night time?

ONE: Technically.

TWO: (looking at watch) Isn't it two in the morning?

ONE: Not even close.

TWO: It's ten to. That's pretty close.

ONE: You can't sleep. I just figured out polynomials. I don't know where to start with complex numbers and quadratic equations. Whose bright idea was it to stay up all night?

TWO: Yours.

ONE: You went along with it! You said it was a great idea! "Sure Kari, it'll be fun."

TWO: Yeah but that was at two in the afternoon, not two in the morning.

ONE: It's not two. It's ten to.

TWO: Same thing. (she yawns) We've done a lot, Kar. We're doing good.

ONE: I can't believe this. Why didn't I take better notes? Why didn't I study this week? My whole life is flashing before my eyes. I can see it. I'm going to go to the exam tomorrow. I will sit down and everyone else will sit down all together in the gym, row after row after row. The bell will sound and everyone but me will open their papers, pick up their pencils and off they'll go. Everyone around me writing, writing, writing. Pencils scritch scratching across the page. Everyone with their heads bent low and their hands moving faster than the speed of light. They'll know all the answers. Not me. I'll sit there and my paper will remain closed and my pencil will sit on the desk. And then, because my pencil is not supposed to sit on the desk, it's supposed to be in my hand doing equations, it'll start talking to me.

*TWO stands behind ONE, talking as ONE's pencil.*

TWO: Hey. Psst. Psst! What're you doing?

ONE: Nothing.

TWO: I can see that. Everyone else has started.

ONE: I know.

TWO: Pick me up.

ONE: I can't.

TWO: Do it.

ONE: No.



TWO: Here's an interesting fact: you can't actually pass the exam unless you pick me up and start writing. I'm no good sitting here on the desk. I can't answer questions by osmosis. Here, let me try. (TWO closes her eyes and scrunches up her face) Hmm. Hmm. Nope, no good. Pick me up.

ONE: I can't.

TWO: Do it.

ONE: I don't know the answers! I don't know anything. I'll open that exam and I won't know the first thing.

TWO: Why not? You did study, didn't you?

ONE: Of course I did.

TWO: Did you?

ONE: Sort of.

TWO: You didn't study?

ONE: I did, I did. I just didn't study properly. I stayed up all night and nothing stuck.

TWO: That was stupid.

ONE: I know.

TWO: That was a loser move.

ONE: I know.

TWO: I mean there's loser and there's loser and THAT was really –

ONE: Ok, ok, I got it. A loser move. Loud and clear.

TWO: The biggest exam of the year and you pulled an all-nighter? What were you thinking?

ONE: I don't need to be lectured to by my pencil.

TWO: Fine I won't say anything. Good luck, loser.

*TWO turns her back on ONE.*

ONE: I'll fail this exam and automatically fail the course. I won't get into the school I want, and everyone else will. Everyone will get these great jobs and I'll be left behind.

*ONE crosses to the edge of the stage.*

ONE: At the 10 year reunion I'll be alone and bitter. I'll probably smoke, too. Bitter, bitter cigarettes. Everyone else will be happy and fulfilled and I'll have lived a wasted, ruin of a life, all because I didn't take this exam seriously.

*TWO turns, a totally different energy. This is the 10 year reunion.*

TWO: Hey, hey, hey! How are you! (flings arms around ONE) It is so good to see you! I didn't expect to see you here. (holds ONE out at arm's length, with hands on both shoulders) Let me have a look at you. You look... great! You sure do! (forcefully pats ONE on both shoulders) How do I look? (turns away, causing ONE to spin off balance) Oh, don't tell me. I know I look tired. I know I look a little worn. That's what happens when you're a senior partner in the hottest law firm in New York. You have to live with tired and worn. Oh, but every time I see that view of Central Park from my window, I know it's worth it! (seeing someone behind ONE) Hey, is that Donny? Didn't you used to date? Didn't you dump him because he wore glasses? His wife is GORGEOUS! Look at the rock on her finger. He's one of the hottest actors in Hollywood now, did you know? Hey Donny! Donny!

*TWO completely knocks over ONE. She makes her way back to the table and plonks her head on it. We're back in the present.*

ONE: Yep, that's the way it's going to be. Everybody with hot jobs and big rocks and nice views and I'll be standing in the corner, sucking on cigarettes.

TWO: (turning her head to the side, keeping her head on the table) You know, if you actually studied, instead of complaining about studying, maybe you won't have to take up smoking.

*ONE turns and looks at TWO, as if seeing something for the first time.*

TWO: Wouldn't that be some excuse, though. Someone could be all, 'smoking kills' at you and you could say, "Back off. I just ruined my life." And they would say, "Yeah, you really did. Go ahead, light up. Peace out."

ONE: (sitting at the table) Why aren't you panicking?

TWO: (*lifting her head*) Hmm?

ONE: Why aren't you in a grand mal panic? Why aren't the sirens going off and the red lights flashing?

TWO: Sometimes if I lift my head too quickly I see a whole bunch of white lights.

ONE: We're in the same boat, aren't we?

TWO: What do you mean?

ONE: We sat at the back of the same class, spent the same amount of time not paying attention, took the same pitiful notes, studied for the same exact amount of time and you are sleeping like a baby. Why?

TWO: (*she sure does know*) I don't know.

ONE: You have a C in the class just like me, right? (*TWO doesn't say anything, she stares at the table*) Don't you have a C in the class? Won't you fail the class if you fail the exam? Like I will? (*TWO doesn't say anything*) Chelsey.

TWO: Yeah. This is probably a bad time to bring this up...

ONE: What?

TWO: I don't really, exactly have a C.

ONE: You don't?

TWO: Uh uh.

ONE: You told me you did.

TWO: Yeah. That was a mistake.

ONE: You said, after every quiz, after every test – "What did you get, Kari," and I'd tell you and then you'd say, "Oh yeah, me too, me too."

TWO: Yeah. This is such bad timing...

ONE: You were lying.

TWO: Umm...

ONE: You lied!

TWO: Yeah.

ONE: So what do you have?

TWO: Let's make some coffee and we'll do those espresso shots and then we can knock complex numbers on their head, no problem. Everything will work out.

ONE: You have an A. Don't you.

TWO: Something like that.

ONE: A plus? You have an A plus.

TWO: I guess I do. Yeah.

*ONE sits with a stunned look on her face.*

ONE: Why didn't you tell me?

TWO: I didn't want to make you feel bad!

ONE: Yeah, I'm much happier finding out this way. You really eased my mind, Chelsey. Way to go!

TWO: You were having so much trouble and I didn't want to hurt your feelings.

ONE: I don't believe this. How did you get an A plus?

TWO: I don't know. I just (*she waves her fingers about*) did.

ONE: No one just (*she imitates the way TWO waved her fingers about*) gets an A plus in Algebra. Did you bribe Mr. Curry?

TWO: No.

ONE: Did you bribe one of those Math Club geeks?

TWO: No! Why do you think I need to bribe someone to get a good grade? And they're not geeks.

ONE: So how did you do it?

TWO: Math just comes, you know, easy, sort of, for me. I like it. That's all.

ONE: Algebra comes easy for you.

TWO: See, I didn't want to say that.

ONE: Algebra comes easy. For you. You find Algebra easy.



TWO: Yeah. I get math. I like it. I don't mind doing the homework. So I don't... *(she doesn't want to say this)* really have to study.

*ONE stares at TWO and then turns to stare out. She's in total disbelief.*

ONE: Fine. *(pause)* Fine.

TWO: Now you're mad.

ONE: I'm not mad. I'm just – now you bring this up. Now is not the greatest time to bring this up. It's two in the morning Chels. It's not ten to anymore. It's full on two.

TWO: Yeah.

ONE: You and I are supposed to be in the same boat. We're supposed to be in the boat with the leaky bottom, together. We're supposed to be bailing as fast as we can, together. Laughing, together. Sinking, together. Now I'm in the boat and I'm going down. There are fifty circling sharks and you're on some luxury cruise ship sipping pineapple juice and getting a suntan.

TWO: *(a little annoyed)* It's not like that.

ONE: This is all your fault. You encouraged me to slack off, to not take notes, to not study.

TWO: I didn't encourage anything -

ONE: You planned all this didn't you!

TWO: What?

ONE: You did this on purpose. You've harboured some deep-seeded resentment against me and you've been planning for years to take me down at this exact moment. I will fail this exam and I will fail this course and I will not be able to graduate and you're going to go on and that's it. You're standing on the deck of your fancy boat waving, "Bye bye, Kari! Have a nice life sucking on cigarettes! Hope you like being bitter till the end of time!" You make me sick, you really do. This is a sick trick and I'll never forgive you for it. Not in a million, trillion -

TWO: *(standing)* I should go.

ONE: What?

TWO: I'm leaving.

ONE: You can't go, it's late.

TWO: Yeah. I don't want to be here anymore.

*TWO turns to go and ONE has to run over and stop her.*

ONE: What? Chelsey! Stop. You can't go. You can't leave in the middle of the night.

TWO: Then I'll call my mom to come get me.

*TWO tries to leave again and ONE stops her. TWO does not look at ONE.*

ONE: *(pleading)* Chelsey?

*There is a pause and TWO looks ONE right in the face.*

TWO: You talk a lot, Kari. You do. I know sometimes you talk without thinking. And it is late. And you're fired.

ONE: I am tired.

TWO: So I'm sure you didn't mean most of what you just said. But I get the feeling you did mean some of it. Because this isn't the first time. I'm not going to listen to you anymore, Kari. I didn't do anything wrong. I have to go.

ONE: Look, I'm sorry. I –

TWO: I've been your friend through a lot. I was there through everything with Donny and that huge blow-up with your parents last year. I have listened to you talk about your weight and your hair and your face and your everything. I have danced to every tune you've played and mostly, I've been ok with that. Because I thought you were my friend. And it didn't bother me that you never ask about me and what's going on with me because I thought you were my friend. But you don't want a friend, do you? You want a sounding board. Doesn't matter who it is. You just live in your little world and I guess I've had enough of it. I've had enough. I'm done.

ONE: Chelsey?



ONE: I'm the kind of person who orders 2 dash 10's. I have 2 dash 10 written all over me!

TWO: I see.

ONE: ( *pacing* ) This is terrible. I have people coming over. The legal department has been talking about this party for weeks. I have a lot of expectations to live up to.

TWO: Well, a 10 dash 2 would certainly be a conversation starter. You could have a ton of conversations about a 10 dash 2.

ONE: I don't want a conversation starter. I want my 2 dash 10! The whole night is planned around the 2 dash 10! The canapés have been colour-coordinated to the 2 dash 10. I had a string quartet compose a piece of music dedicated to the 2 dash 10.

TWO: This is some party.

ONE: Darn right it is. Without, it seems, a 2 dash 10!

TWO: Seems a little much, though. If you want my opinion.

ONE: If I what?

TWO: Sounds like you're putting a lot of pressure on yourself. What if the party doesn't go smoothly? What if someone spills a drink, or has an allergic reaction to the shrimp? You may feel relieved to have a 10 dash 2 around. The 10 dash 2 can really come in handy. Sure your 2 dash 10 is fine when things are going well. But when there's a problem, that's when a 10 dash 2 can really save the day.

*ONE stares at TWO. He points accusingly at TWO.*

ONE: This is a conspiracy.

TWO: Huh?

ONE: A plot. A plan. This is a company conspiracy.

TWO: Oh, come on now...

ONE: I know it. I can smell it. This has nothing to do with confirming orders. That 10 dash 2 is here on purpose! You want to get rid of your 10 dash 2's and you're foisting them on unsuspecting 2 dash 10ers! A conspiracy I tell you! A downright evil conspiracy. Conspiracy! Conspiracy! Conspiracy!

*ONE turns away and crosses his arms. There's a pause. TWO scratches his head and finally answers.*

TWO: Well...

ONE: (*turning back to TWO*) What?

TWO: I'm saying... There's might be...

ONE: (*totally surprised*) You mean I'm right?

TWO: There might be... something to your theory.

ONE: Are you kidding? (*whispering and leaning in*) This is a conspiracy? A honest to goodness conspiracy?

TWO: (*leaning in and whispering*) Why are you whispering?

ONE: (*whispering*) I don't know. You're not bugged, are you?

TWO: (*whispering*) No.

*ONE stands up straight. So does TWO.*

ONE: (*full voice*) What do you know?

TWO: I shouldn't say.

ONE: But there is something?

TWO: There is.

ONE: About my 2 dash 10?

TWO: I shouldn't say.

ONE: You have to.

TWO: I can't.

ONE: You've already started. You can't stop now.

TWO: I shouldn't say.

ONE: You can't leave me in the lurch.

TWO: Well...

ONE: I have to know. Please!

TWO: Ok. I'll tell you. You may not like it.

ONE: I can take it.



TWO: It might make you mad.

ONE: I'm all ears.

*ONE sits down and gestures TWO to join him. TWO also sits.*

TWO: It's about your tone.

ONE: My tone? My dial tone? On my phone?

TWO: Your voice tone.

ONE: *(he holds his throat)* What about it?

TWO: When you talk, you give tone. You speak condescendingly to people you believe are beneath you. You give attitude.

ONE: And what's wrong with that?

TWO: Milly doesn't like it.

ONE: Who's Milly?

TWO: That's another thing. Milly has been taking your orders for three years now. 7 dash 38's, 14 dash 3's, and 9 dash 9 dash 5's. She says her name every time she answers the phone. And you don't know it.

ONE: Of course I know her name...

TWO: You call her Maude.

ONE: I do?

TWO: She doesn't like it.

ONE: Wait a second, wait a second. *(getting mad)* Am I hearing what I think I'm hearing?

TWO: I told you it might make you mad.

ONE: I've got a 10 dash 2 instead of a 2 dash 10 because I offended some... secretary? Some plebe who answers the phone? She thinks I give her tone? *(he stands and starts to pace)* Just wait, just wait, she hasn't begun to see tone. Who's your manager? Who's your president? I want the president of the company and I am going to tell him a thing or two about tone. I will show him an ocean and a seas worth of tone. I will give him mountains of tone. I will -

TWO: Milly's the president.

ONE: Milly?

TWO: Yep.

ONE: The girl who answers the phone?

TWO: She'll be real pleased to hear you call her a girl. And that you automatically assumed the president was a guy. She's always cracking up over people who do that.

ONE: What's the president doing answering the phone? How am I supposed to know it's the president on the phone?

TWO: You're not supposed to know.

ONE: That is downright sneaky.

TWO: Depends on how you look at it.

ONE: I'm looking at it as sneaky.

TWO: That's your prerogative.

ONE: Darn right it is. So what do we do now? Am I getting my 2 dash 10 or not?

TWO: I only got a 10 dash 2 in the truck.

ONE: Does she want me to apologize?

TWO: Nope.

ONE: Does she want me to write a letter?

TWO: Nope.

ONE: Give to charity? Throw a cream pie in my face? What?

TWO: She wants you to sing to her cat.

*There is a pause. ONE is sure he's heard wrong.*

ONE: I beg your pardon?

TWO: Milly wants you to sing to her cat. She's very connected to her. If you call Milly up and sing to her cat, she'll forget the whole tone thing and she'll ok the delivery of a 2 dash 10.

ONE: Is Milly serious?



TWO: Milly is dead serious.

ONE: Milly is a lunatic.

TWO: *(with a shrug)* Milly's the boss.

ONE: I don't have to apologize, which would be the sane move in this situation, but if I sing to a cat everything's hunky dory?

TWO: The cat likes nursery rhymes. Makes her happy. Cat's happy, Milly's happy.

ONE: I refuse. I absolutely refuse. It's ridiculous, and no, no. I won't do it. Take your 10 dash 2 and get out.

TWO: Ok. *(turns to go)* But the 10 dash 2 stays.

*TWO starts to cross the stage to exit and ONE tries to do everything to stop him, without actually physically stopping him.*

ONE: What?

TWO: I gotta fulfil the order.

ONE: You can't.

TWO: My paperwork says I gotta deliver a 10 dash 2 to this address, and that's what I'm going to do.

ONE: I didn't sign the paperwork. I don't want it. I refuse the delivery!

TWO: I'll just put it out on the lawn then?

ONE: You can't do that! I'm giving a party tonight. How will it look with a 10 dash 2 on the lawn? What will the neighbours say?

TWO: I'm sure you'll be able to move it to the side. You just need one of those mini forklifts.

ONE: I'm going to call the papers on you. All the news stations. Radio, TV, the works!

TWO: Yeah they love Milly. She's always winning awards, she's even got a key to the city. I'm sure they'd love to talk to you about her.

ONE: This is blackmail! Extortion!

TWO: *(exiting)* Have a nice day!

ONE: *(calling out)* I won't back down! I won't! I really won't! You think I will but I won't!

*ONE pauses, trying not to give in. Finally he gives a big sigh and calls out.*

ONE: Wait! Come back!

*TWO comes sauntering back in.*

ONE: If I sing, I get my 2 dash 10.

TWO: Yep.

ONE: And you won't leave that thing on my lawn?

TWO: If the order changes, I will fulfil it completely.

ONE: And it has to be singing?

TWO: Nursery rhymes.

ONE: And it has to be nursery rhymes?

TWO: *The Itsy Bitsy Spider* or else.

ONE: All right. *(he pulls out a cell phone and presses a number)*

TWO: You have our company on speed dial! That's cool.

ONE: *(he grimaces at TWO and speaks into the phone)* Good afternoon. May I speak to Milly, please? Milly! Milly it's so good to talk to you. I have one of your deliverymen here...

TWO: Hank.

ONE: I have Hank here, Milly, and – *(to TWO)* She wants to know if your niece is feeling better.

TWO: Oh, she is.

ONE: *(on phone)* She is.

TWO: All the kids in her class signed her cast.

ONE: *(on phone)* All the kids in her class signed her cast.

TWO: But she says it itches like crazy!

ONE: *(on phone)* But she says – *(to HANK)* Do you want to talk to her?



TWO: There's that tone...

ONE: *(takes a deep breath in and then talks on the phone)* But, he says, her cast is itching like crazy. Yes, isn't that always the way. Anyway, Milly, I am calling because it has been brought to my attention there's been a misunderstanding which has led to a 10 dash 2 in a truck in my driveway instead of the 2 dash 10, which I clearly remember ordering this morning.

TWO: *(wagging his finger at ONE)* Ah, ah ah...

ONE: *(he clears his throat)* I understand that my – that the manner in which I spoke with you was unacceptable. And I'd like to remedy that right now. By singing to your cat. Oh, I insist. It would be my utmost honour if you would allow me to sing *The Itsy Bitsy Spider* to your cat, Princess Pattycakes? Yes, Princess Pattycakes! Please let me sing to Princess Pattycakes. *(to HANK)* She's very touched.

TWO: That's our Milly!

ONE: *(to TWO)* She's holding up the cat to the phone. *(to phone)* Ready Princess Pattycakes? Ok... *(starts to sing)* The Itsy Bitsy Spider went up the – *(he is suddenly stopped)* No, I'm not doing the gestures. Because I'm holding the phone.

TWO: I'll hold the phone for you.

ONE: But the cat won't see the gestures.

TWO: She'll know if you don't.

ONE: But it's – *(he controls himself)* Fine, fine.

*ONE gives the phone to TWO who holds it to ONE's mouth so he can sing and do the gestures.*

ONE: *(singing)* The Itsy Bitsy Spider went up the water spout.

TWO: And be happy, too. She'll know if you're not happy.

ONE: *(singing, now with a smile on his face)* Down came the rain and washed the spider out! Out came the sun and dried up all the rain, so the Itsy Bitsy spider went up the spout again.

*ONE ends in a pose. TWO takes the phone and talks to Milly.*

TWO: Yep, he did it. Hand gestures and all. Did she like it? Awwwwwww. *(looking at ONE)* He was relatively happy. Happy enough. *(he laughs at something Milly says)* Too true. Ok, you got it, Boss.

*TWO hangs up the phone and hands it to ONE.*

TWO: You're all set.

ONE: That's it?

TWO: That's it.

ONE: I get my 2 dash 10?

TWO: You are the proud owner of a 2 dash 10.

ONE: *(celebrating)* That's great! That's so great. So when? When do I get it?

TWO: Right now. It's in the truck.

ONE: *(stops celebrating)* You had one in the truck? All this time, you had one in the truck?

TWO: Sure.

ONE: But why didn't you – I had to – why did you make me go through all that?

TWO: No one messes with Milly. You remember that. Next time, it won't be a 10 dash 2 on your lawn. It'll be a 47 dash 1 dash 6 dash 54A.

ONE: *(look of horror)* No!

TWO: With the hook attachment.

ONE: Holy smokes.

TWO: And she'll make you do the Bird Dance. Princess Pattycakes loves the Bird Dance. *(exiting)* Have a nice day!

*TWO starts singing and doing the Bird Dance as he exits. ONE stands with wide eyes and an open mouth.*

— THE END —