

CUCKOO

Pilot (US)

Written by

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ACT ONE

EXT. THOMSON FAMILY HOME

A comfortable home in Shermer, an affluent suburb of Chicago - exactly the kind of liberal, NPR-listening, Prius-driving neighborhood that Fox News thinks is destroying America.

INT. THOMPSON FAMILY HOME, HALLWAY

PHOTOS of RACHEL on a mantelpiece. Rachel is the daughter of the Thompson family - a bespectacled, uptight 22-year old, who has just graduated college.

Photos show her playing the trumpet at the school concert, posing with a bunch of nerdy boys - the computer club, dressed up with her friend as Holmes & Watson for Halloween...

KEN (mid-40s) shouts up the stairs as his wife LORI (same) bustles about, putting on her coat.

KEN

Dylan! We're super-late to pick up Rachel!

DYLAN (14, sarcastic, unkempt) appears, eating a sandwich.

DYLAN

Shoot, sorry. Can't come. I'm eating this sandwich. Hey, but have fun with your golden child!

KEN

Come on, buddy, not this again. If you got into Northwestern Law School, we'd be proud of you too. (A LOOK FROM LORI) I mean, if you achieved anything equivalent. Actually, I mean we're proud of you anyway. You're... (STRUGGLES) OK. (BEAT) Now get in the car.

Dylan looks at him, huffs, then heads to the car.

KEN (CONT'D)

(to LORI)

Was that bad parenting?

LORI

We can afford the therapy.

EXT. INTERSTATE, NEAR CHICAGO.

Ken's Prius drives by - an Obama sticker on the back window. They pass a sign reading "O'Hare airport".

I/E THE THOMPSON FAMILY CAR

Ken is on his cell. Lori drives while listening Salt 'n' Pepa's "Push it" on the car stereo. Dylan plays a PSP in the back. Lori turns up the volume on the song.

<p style="text-align: center;">KEN</p> <p>(very smug)</p> <p>I'm not actually in the office, Bryan. I'm picking up my daughter... Yes, the law school one. Following in her father's footsteps! Not that I care!.. She's been in Thailand... Oh, you gotta go? OK, bye.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">LORI</p> <p>(singing along)</p> <p>Push it! Push it!</p> <p>(sings with the instrumental)</p> <p>Rachel's coming home. Push it! Push it! Rachel's coming home.</p>
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Ken hangs up, looks at Lori exasperated.

KEN

Lori, that was a client!

LORI

(singing to Ken)

Salt and Pepa's here, and we're in effect/ Want you to push it, babe Coolin' by day then at night...

Suddenly Ken joins in with her. They both know the words.

KEN & LORI

Working up a sweat! C'mon girls, let's go show the guys...

In the back, Dylan looks up from his PSP, mimes an intense, tortured scream, then returns to his game.

KEN & LORI (CONT'D)

Now push it! Push it real good!

INT. O'HARE AIRPORT, ARRIVALS

Ken and Lori wait for Rachel, holding an elaborate sign reading, "Welcome Home Rachel!" Dylan stands nearby.

LORI

I envy Rachel. A summer abroad. Adventures on the other side of the world.

KEN
 (smiles wistfully)
 The things she must have seen. The art. The cuisine. Oh, the architecture!

DYLAN
 She probably became a drug mule.

KEN
 Dylan!

DYLAN
 It happens all the time in Thailand. Or they get sex trafficked. (OFF KEN'S LOOK) It's what girls do, Dad, you can't baby her forever!

Dylan shrugs, puts in his iPhone headphones, wanders off.

LORI
 Ken! There she is!

Ken looks thrilled. Rachel comes out of Arrivals, grinning. She is TRANSFORMED - tanned, glowing, her hair in braids.

LORI (CONT'D) Rachel! Hey!
 KEN That *is* her! Rachel! Over here!

Rachel runs up, hugs Lori.

LORI (CONT'D)
 Honey, wow! You look amazing!

KEN
 (holding out his arms)
 Permission to approach the bench?

RACHEL
 (a little embarrassed)
 Granted, counsel!

Ken gives Rachel a big hug. His little girl is finally back! Then he catches sight of someone just over Rachel's shoulder.

A YOUNG MAN, grinning. He looks totally positive, totally part of the group. This is CUCKOO, a thirty year-old traveler - attractive, intense, *almost* inspiring, but ultimately absurd. He wears a poncho, fisherman's pants, sandals, a giant backpack.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 Well...here he is!

KEN
 I'm sorry?

CUCKOO clasps Ken, looking deep into his eyes.

CUCKOO
An honor, Ken. Just a great honor.

KEN
(confused)
Hi!

RACHEL
(equally confused)
Dad, this is Cuckoo. (BEAT) Didn't
you get my Facebook message?

KEN
I don't check Facebook, Rach - I'm
47. Nice to meet you though - what
was the name?

CUCKOO
Cuckoo.

LORI
And how do you and Rachel know each
other?

CUCKOO
(confident)
Oh, she's my spouse.

Beat.

KEN
I'm sorry?

RACHEL
Dad! I got married!

Ken and Lori freeze. Cuckoo walks up to Ken, embraces him.

CUCKOO
Thank you. She's beautiful.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOI/E THE THOMPSON FAMILY CAR

Lori and Ken in the front, still in shock. Cuckoo and Rachel all over each other. Dylan plays on his PSP, never looks up.

RACHEL

So Cuckoo and I were living in this tiny hut...

CUCKOO

I'm tight with one of the local fishermen - Ruang Sak...

RACHEL

...and every morning I'd get up with the sun and run along the beach...

CUCKOO

I was usually asleep! (WINKS)
Exhausted from the night before!

Rachel and Cuckoo laugh delighted.

RACHEL

Oh my god, I have so many stories to tell!

KEN

Great! How about the story where you went and got married?

CUCKOO

Rach, I got this. OK Ken, we were partying - hard - in Pom Pah. And we got talking about getting married and we were like '*WHY NOT?*'.

RACHEL

Why *not*?!

CUCKOO

Why the hell *not*?! I can't think of a reason.

Beat.

KEN

And how long had you guys been together?

CUCKOO

Our souls or our bodies? Well, our souls are eternal, born from the confluence of the stars at the dawn of time. We'd been doing it about two weeks.

LORI

And Cuckoo - what do you do? Do you... have a job?

CUCKOO

I love your concern. Yes, Lori, fear not, I do have a job. I am a wise man.

KEN

"Wise man"? Is that a job?

CUCKOO

It was Buddha's job. Jesus's job. Cat Steven's job. (BEAT) Obviously, I'm not putting myself in the same category as Cat Stevens.

An awkward pause.

CUCKOO (CONT'D)

Fine, have it your way, I'll sing some Cat Stevens.

(sings)

PEACE TRAIN'S A HOLY ROLLER ROLLER/
CLIMB ON THE PEACE TRAIN...

He sings confidently. Rachel looks at him, adoringly. Ken and Lori look bemused.

Dylan finally looks up from his PSP.

DYLAN

(to Ken)

I'm sorry, who is this guy?

KEN

Um, he's your sister's new husband.

DYLAN

(uninterested)

Cool.

He goes back to his game.

I/E DRIVEWAY OF THOMPSON HOME

The car pulls up outside the house. Everybody gets out. Dylan immediately walks in.

Ken looks at Cuckoo, who is standing in the middle of the drive with his eyes closed, humming to himself.

KEN
What's he doing?

RACHEL
Reading the energy.

Cuckoo opens his eyes - grins at the family.

CUCKOO
Oh yeah! It's *good*! Repeat: the vibrations are all good, guys! Come on, Rach! I'll carry you across the threshold!

Rachel jumps into his arms. Cuckoo carries her towards the porch, knocking over a garden statue as they go. The happy couple laugh delightedly and continue in.

Ken looks at Lori - this was not the day he expected...

INT. THOMPSON HOME, BATHROOM

Cuckoo is in the shower, joyfully singing an Indian devotional lyric.

CUCKOO
(singing)
Govinda jaia jaia! Gopal jaia jaia...

INT. THOMPSON HOME, KITCHEN

Ken and Lori are now in the kitchen.

LORI
She's in love, Ken! You see the way he looks at her? And Rachel is glowing! Her acne's gone!

KEN
Oh great! Well, as long as her skin's good, no need to worry about the down-sides. Like her new husband who showed up in a poncho.

LORI
Ken, we promised ourselves we wouldn't be the kind of parents who can't handle their kid's choices. Like our fathers.

KEN
You mean *your* father.

LORI
 Exactly. And if I'd listened to
 Dad, there would be no us. He
 didn't like you at first.

KEN
 Or ever since.

LORI
 C'mon, you. She's still your hot-
 shot lawyer daughter - only now
 with a fun, funky twist.

She does a quick, playful "shoulder-roll" breakdancing move.
 Ken glares at her, unmoved. She cuddles up to him.

LORI (CONT'D)
 At least get to KNOW him...

INT. THOMPSON HOME, RACHEL'S BEDROOM

Rachel packs the contents of her shelves into a cardboard box
 - folders, schoolbooks, certificates. She replaces them with
 new books about Buddhism, ethnic statues.

Cuckoo is unpacking many reams of paper from his rucksack.

RACHEL
 Dad didn't look so happy.

CUCKOO
 Ken?! Are you kidding? We clicked
 instantly. And by the way - his
 aura - wow! That is one special
 guy. A LOT to work with there.

Rachel looks at a book: 'Expert Debating'.

RACHEL
 So weird being home. Just three
 months since I left and I don't
 even *remember* this person. (TO
 CUCKOO) You've transformed me, you
 know that?

CUCKOO
 You transformed yourself. I was
 just the thing that speeds up a
 change without actually being part
 of the change itself.

RACHEL
 The catalyst.

CUCKOO
 (gazing at her)
 You always find the right word.

They share a beautiful moment. Suddenly...

DYLAN (O.S.)
You haven't changed.

Dylan has appeared at the door.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Underneath, you're still the same
nerd who cried when she got Canada
at Model UN.

KEN (O.S.)
Dylan, your mom wants you to set
the table!

DYLAN
(all smiles)
Coming, Dad!

He gives Rachel a death stare. She looks momentarily rattled.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
The tan will fade. But the geek
remains forever.

He slinks away. Ken arrives at the door.

KEN
Hey guys! Settling in OK?

Ken notices a Thai statue with an enormous phallus.

CUCKOO
Like it Ken? It's a powerful
fertility statue. (PLACES IT) Put
that next to the bed.

Ken looks around, notices Cuckoo's stack of papers.

KEN
Lotta paper there, Cuckoo.

CUCKOO
Oh this? This is my book.

KEN
(disbelief, then hope)
Your book? You're an author. That's
impressive.

CUCKOO
It's about my political philosophy.
I'd like it to be the most
important book of the twenty first
century.

KEN
Oh. Well, good to aim high.

CUCKOO
Well, most of it was *written* high,
so...

He laughs at Ken, super-friendly.

CUCKOO (CONT'D)
Right now, these are just things I
jotted down on my journeys.
Fragments.

He holds up one piece of paper. It says "Words are walls".

KEN
Words are walls? Does that... mean
something?

CUCKOO
It might, Ken. And when I work it
out: *a new beginning*.

Ken looks stunned. The doorbell rings.

KEN
Lovely. That will be Uncle Steve
and Aunt Connie...

INT. THOMPSON HOME, HALLWAY

Ken comes down the stairs, meets Lori in the hallway.

KEN
(agonized)
Just so you know - Steve is gonna
love this. This is a nightmare.

EXT. THOMPSON HOME, PORCH

STEVE, CONNIE and TOBY wait. Steve is a black fortysomething
businessman. Connie is Lori's 37 year old little sister. She
is wheeling Toby, Lori and Connie's elderly father.

STEVE
This is a nightmare. Big boasting
Ken droning on about Rachel and
Thailand. Steve Junior went
snorkeling in Florida last year.
Swam with turtles! *We* didn't make a
big deal about it.

INT. THOMPSON HOME, HALLWAY

Continuous. Lori opens the door. Connie, Steve and Toby enter. Big smiles and hugs all around (except from Toby).

CONNIE

(to Lori)

Sorry we're late, sweetie. Dad made us pick up a bucket of chicken.

LORI

Dad, I wish you'd let us feed you.

TOBY

(very rude)

Never!

CONNIE

So. Where's Rachel?

Ken and Lori look at each other.

KEN

Rachel? Well - something you should probably know. We have another guest for dinner.

STEVE

We weren't informed.

Cuckoo appears, his arms open in greeting. Inexplicably he's wearing a Native American headpiece. Rachel follows.

CUCKOO

Good evening everybody! (KISSES CONNIE) You must be Connie.

CONNIE

(already putty in his hands)

Hi.

Cuckoo gives Steve a warm hug.

CUCKOO

Uncle Steve. (BEAT) Mmmm. You smell great!

STEVE

(to Ken, over Cuckoo's shoulder)

Who's the weirdo?

Ken takes a deep breath.

KEN

OK, well. Cuckoo is Rachel's new husband.

RACHEL

Surprise!

CUCKOO

Word up my people!

Steve looks at Ken, his eyes full of delight.

STEVE

Rachel - you got married?! To this guy?! This is fabulous news! Hey Ken - congratulations, my friend.

KEN

(tightly)

Thanks Steve. Shall we go eat?

They move towards the dining room. Connie glares at Steve, who is grinning too much.

STEVE

What? I just love family.

INT. THOMPSON HOME, DINING ROOM

EVERYBODY is tucking into dinner. Cuckoo loves his food.

CUCKOO

You know the fishermen of Phuket have a saying: 'When a woman passes forty, her food is her love-making'. Very tasty, Lori.

LORI

Thank you Cuckoo!

STEVE

So Cuckoo. I take it you are in *some* way American.

RACHEL

Cuckoo's been traveling the world for twelve years. But he was brought up in Portland.

CUCKOO

Yeah, had to get out of that town. (CHUCKLES) Way, way too corporate.

TOBY

(insanely furious)

Where is my chicken?! WHERE IS MY GODDAM CHICKEN?!

LORI

(calmly)

Dad, you already had your bucket.

TOBY
 (grumbling)
 They fed us better than this in
 Vietnam.

CUCKOO
 You've been to Vietnam! Did you
 party on the beaches of Phu Quoc? I
 know right! Mindblowing!

TOBY
 My best friend Phil went down on
 Ong Lan Biên.

CUCKOO
 OK, Grandpa, not at the table!

He makes a face to the company. Old people!

DYLAN
 (to Cuckoo)
 So, what's with the stupid name?

KEN
 Dylan! Dylan wants to know if
 Cuckoo is your real name.

CUCKOO
 (baffled)
 Sure! (BEAT) Oh, you mean my birth-
 name! My birth-name is Dale
 Ashbrick.

STEVE
 (amused)
 Dale Ashbrick?

CUCKOO
 Yes, my friend. You see, some years
 back...

RACHEL
 Babe, I don't think they're ready
 for this story yet.

CUCKOO
 ...I was boating the Moctezuma
 river with a couple of Huichol
 Indian dudes, and...

RACHEL
 Cuckoo!

CUCKOO
 Come on, your family are people of
 the world... And I'd just taken a
 triple dose of the hallucinogen
 peyote.

RACHEL
 (to herself)
 Oh great.

CUCKOO
 You with me Ken? (KEN NODS)
 Awesome! So I'm in the river, I'm
 buzzing like a handsaw - and that's
 when I realize - I am not a person.
 I'm all people.

Beat.

LORI
 I'm not sure I understand.

CUCKOO
 I am *all* people. I am Dale
 Ashbrick. But I am also you, Lori.

He points at Lori, his hand quite close to her face.

CUCKOO (CONT'D)
 (pointing accordingly)
 And I am you, Dylan. And I am Steve
 and Connie. And I am you, Rachel,
 my wife.
 (pointing at Ken's face)
 And I am you, Ken.

KEN
 Well, obviously not literally...

CUCKOO
 (passionate)
 I'm not sitting here bullshitting
 you, Ken. I am you. And I am *in*
 you. I am right deep inside you.

KEN bites his tongue. Steve starts chuckling, loving this.

CONNIE
 So... if you're all people. Why did
 you bother changing your name?

CUCKOO
 What? Oh. Well, I guess I was just
 high.

INT. THOMPSON HOME, KITCHEN

A few minutes later. Ken brings in the dirty dishes, takes a
 moment to himself.

Steve enters, gloating. Not the guy Ken wanted to speak to.

STEVE

I feel for you buddy. Rachel tied to some insane hippy who wouldn't know a Corby press if it singed him in the face! I mean - if Steve Junior did this to me....but he never would. He idolizes his father.

KEN

Thanks for your concern Steve. Say, what *is* a Corby press?

Ken does not wait for the answer, but walks back to the living room. Steve looks irked, and turns to Connie, who has come in and overheard.

STEVE

He knows what it is! He's belittling me!

CONNIE

Aw, honey! How could he belittle a man who owns four dry cleaners? He probably forgot - what with this terrible blow to his family. (BEAT) Can't say I blame Rachel though - that guy is sex in a pair of sandals.

A slightly awkward beat. Steve looks worried.

STEVE

You know what a Corby press is, don't you?

CONNIE

(doesn't know)
Let's go join the others!

She runs in to join the others.

STEVE

(super-pissed)
It's an industrial press for pants!

INT. THOMPSON HOME, LIVING ROOM

Thai music on the stereo. The family stand in a circle around Rachel. Cuckoo plays a simple beat on an ethnic looking drum. Rachel dances, whirling about with two halves of a coconut, clapping them together in rhythm. She's really good!

RACHEL

(grinning)
It's called the Serng Krapo or Coconut Dance!

KEN
 (to Lori, whisper)
 Since when does Rachel dance?

LORI
 Since him.

Ken watches Rachel dancing, and begins to smile. Maybe this isn't so bad. He starts to clap along.

CUCKOO
 (to Lori)
 Hey mom! You take over!

LORI
 What?

CUCKOO
 Just do what I do!

Cuckoo passes Lori the drum. She takes it and drums along quite well. Everybody whoops and cheers.

Cuckoo now dances with Rachel - they grind in a way that could just about be culturally significant, but also looks a bit rude. Connie watches fascinated.

Cuckoo suddenly sings out - a weird high pitched Thai piece of singing.

CUCKOO (CONT'D)
 Come on everybody! Sing along with me!

Everybody finds themselves singing along with Cuckoo's strange Thai shriek. Ken is getting into it - maybe he's coming around...

INT. THOMPSON HOME, LIVING ROOM

The family stand around. Lori has filled up glasses for a toast. There's a cake. Ken stands to speak. All smiles.

KEN
 OK, I guess I should say a few words...

RACHEL
 Ooh! Actually Dad, Cuckoo was gonna make a toast...

Cuckoo walks forward, tapping his glass loudly with his fork.

CUCKOO
 Speech! Speech! Speech by me! Do you mind, Dad?

KEN
 (he does mind)
 Sure. Go ahead.

Everyone stands up and holds their glasses for a toast.

CUCKOO
 Hello new family! Well, I never!
 What an attractive family huh? All
 of you - so good looking.

This pretty much wins the crowd. Everyone is a little
 flattered. Steve nods, super-vain.

CUCKOO (CONT'D)
 So I gave this speech on our
 wedding day. But now I would like
 to give it again, with clothes on,
 and my new family present.

He removes a piece of paper from his pocket.

CUCKOO (CONT'D)
 Rachel, you are my light. I don't
 wanna be cheesy here - but you
 opened up my heart and made it sing
 like a big beautiful bird. And
 also, you complete me.

Everybody 'Aws'. Ken smiles - that was nice.

CUCKOO (CONT'D)
 Ken, when I look at Rachel, your
 only daughter, I feel myself
 swelling. With pride. Rachel is
 loving. She's enthusiastic.
 She's... adventurous: always
 seeking new things - new ways of
 doing things. This girl's the kind
 of girl who says yes to *everything*.

Everyone is struggling with this speech, particularly Ken.

CUCKOO (CONT'D)
 She's generous - so generous! - she
 just gives and gives. And gives.
 She's firm. She can be fiery - oh
 God - sometimes you can not hold
 her down. And I don't need to tell
 you that a tongue-lashing from her
 is quite an experience! Rachel
 loves to be on top. But when it
 gets hard, she gets her head down,
 and she WILL NOT STOP till the job
 is done. Truly impressive. Rachel
 is open. Welcoming. Warm inside.
 And finally - and most importantly -
 grateful. To Grateful Rachel!

ALL
 (awkwardly)
 To Grateful Rachel!

Ken swallows his discomfort, then toasts in return.

KEN
 OK, well, I too want to talk about Rachel. Don't *think* I'll be repeating anything Cuckoo has said. (BEAT) OK, why lie? This marriage was a surprise - a bombshell you might say...

DYLAN
 Get to the end.

Everybody ignores Dylan. Lori gives him an encouraging look.

KEN
 But, the thing is - the only thing that truly matters to me, to Lori, is that our little girl is happy. Rachel - wherever you go in life, I will be there with you. Whatever choices you make, I will support you. Always.

EVERYBODY aaahs and claps - what a lovely speech. Lori looks approving. RACHEL smiles up at KEN - overjoyed to hear this.

RACHEL
 Dad! I'm not going to Northwestern!
 I'm not going to be a lawyer!

Silence. The whole family is agog. Ken drops his glass. It lands right in the middle of the cake. It spatters his pants.

Opposite, Steve starts chuckling. Cuckoo chuckles along, puts his arm round Steve.

CUCKOO
 I know! So great!

Ken stares at Rachel. His life is falling apart. Toby looks up at Ken, seemingly sympathetic.

TOBY
 You deserve this.

He winks at him.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEINT. THOMPSON HOME, KEN & LORI'S BEDROOM

Lori and Ken are in bed.

LORI

This is Rachel's decision. Honey, this is what she *wants*.

KEN

You support her! Even in this you support her!

LORI

She's happy! Ken, being a lawyer is not the only job. In fact, I was kind of dreading having two of you in the house.

KEN

What does that mean?

LORI

Oh, you know. It's all 'what do you mean by that?' and 'I have two points' and 'define your terms.'

KEN

(still worked up)

OK. Two points. One - you can be chilled out, and fun loving *and* be a lawyer. For example - me.

LORI

Your face is turning red.

KEN

It's turning red with fun! Two - Rachel's not doing what she wants, she's doing what *he* wants. I'm going to talk to her.

LORI

(laughs)

Good luck with that.

KEN

(sighs)

You're right. She won't listen to me. (BEAT) I'll talk to *him*! She obviously believes anything he says.

Lori turns off the light. She can't be bothered with this.

LORI

You do that. Now... Sleepy time!

...and they cuddle up to go to sleep. From the next room...

CUCKOO (O.S.)

Yep. Yep. Yep. Yep.

It can only be one thing. Out on Ken's pained face...

INT. THOMPSON HOME, KEN AND LORI'S BEDROOM

Later. Lori is reading. Ken sits, in deep psychological pain. Cuckoo's 'Yeps' continue from next door.

CUCKOO (O.S.)

Yep. Yep. Yep. Yep.

KEN

Am I *allowed* to go and stop them?
Is that allowed?

LORI

Come on, Ken - she's married.
Remember when you and I were like
this?

Ken smiles. Trip down memory lane.

KEN

Oh yes, our first vacation. That
little hotel in Martha's Vineyard.
Guess I was kind of a powerhouse...

LORI

(cheerfully)

Yes, you were! Of course, it never
lasted anything like *this* long!

KEN

(peevied)

Good night.

He switches the light off.

INT. THOMPSON HOME, CUCKOO & RACHEL'S BEDROOM

Ken enters, with some coffee.

KEN

Cuckoo! Wake up, Cuckoo. I made
coffee. I thought we could...

Cuckoo is asleep in the bed, naked - his dignity barely
preserved by the duvet.

KEN (CONT'D)

Cuckoo! I figured we could take the car, drive up and look at the lake. Hang out. (BEAT) Wakey, wakey!

No response. Ken creeps forward, leans over to touch Cuckoo...

KEN (CONT'D)

Wake up, Cuckoo...

He touches Cuckoo. Suddenly, Cuckoo sits up and stares at Ken.

CUCKOO

Get out! Kuma Dadaio! Kuma Kakaio!
Kuma Mamako! Get. Out. Get! Out!.
Kuma Mamako! Kuma Kakaio!

Cuckoo slaps Ken round the face. Ken looks astonished.

EXT. CHICAGO LAKEFRONT

Ken and Cuckoo have just bought Sloppy Joe's from a cafe. They walk along the lakefront, eating them.

CUCKOO

Sorry about earlier. I'm always like that when I'm woken. You know - grouchy.

KEN

Water under the bridge.

CUCKOO

I'm not an early morning sort of person. I think - because I have so many profound thoughts, the brain needs time to rebuild.

KEN

I wanted to talk to you about this whole 'Rachel not being a lawyer' thing.

Cuckoo takes a mouthful of his food.

CUCKOO

She doesn't want to do it. Says it's not her... Oh man, this is frickin' delicious! What *is* this?

KEN

It's a Sloppy Joe.

CUCKOO

Slop-py Joe. So who's Joe? And why did the world deem him sloppy?

KEN

I don't know. Anyway, Northwestern...

CUCKOO

What's in this?

KEN

Oh. It's just chili on a... burger bun.

CUCKOO

When we get home - I want you to write down that recipe for me.

KEN

Do you not remember these from your childhood?

CUCKOO

Thing about me, Ken, my mind is fast and agile, like a supercool leopard. But my memory? Not so hot. Which is good, because I like to be in the present, which is so much harder if you're constantly *remembering* things.

KEN

Let's get back on track here. If Rachel's not going to be a lawyer, what will you do for money?

CUCKOO

OK. Rach and I have got a very simple philosophy on this. You don't need money, when you've got love.

KEN

Great. But, you do need some money - or, you can't eat.

CUCKOO

I ate today. I didn't have any money today.

He takes a delicious munch of his Sloppy Joe.

KEN

Yes, because I bought you food.

CUCKOO

May good people like you buy me food to eat every day of my life - Inshallah.

KEN

Right. So you're staying in Chicago. With us. I mean is Rachel going to get a job?

CUCKOO

Uh-uh. Rachel's on a spiritual journey right now. She needs room for her soul to grow.

KEN

So - are you going to get a job?

CUCKOO

I have a job.

KEN

Other than "being a wise man".

Cuckoo looks Ken in the eye.

CUCKOO

Ken, I'm a great believer in society.

KEN

So am I.

CUCKOO

Awesome. So in the most basic human societies, you would have hunters. People like you. Guys who were good at the basic stuff, you know. 'There food. There money. Go get. Ugh. Ugh.' Which is *tremendous!* But then there would be the thinkers too. Now they weren't good at hunting - like I'm not good at jobs. But they would eat the food provided by the hunters and in return think up something really cool for the future and shit. That's me. (POINTS TO HIMSELF) Thinker. (POINTS TO KEN) Hunter. (RE-POINTS TO KEN) Hunter. (POINTS TO HIMSELF) Thinker.

He smiles at Ken, and nods. A big moment for them.

KEN

OK, two points...

INT. THOMPSON HOME, KITCHEN

Ken enters. Lori is lying on her front on the kitchen table. Rachel stands above her, waving her hands over Lori's body. Both are rapt in concentration. Dylan sits nearby, texting.

RACHEL
(seeing Ken, grins)
It's Reiki. I picked up a few techniques in Thailand.

KEN
Lori, you do realize Reiki is not medical science. It's irrational superstition. It's totally unscientific.

LORI
Wrong, Ken. It's all about energy. And my knee feels a lot better!

KEN
What is happening to this family?! What's next? Sacrificing a virgin?

RACHEL
Ooo, watch out Dylan!

She and Lori laugh.

DYLAN
(fury and embarrassment)
I'm not! I'm... I'm not!

INT. THOMPSON HOME, HALLWAY

Later. Ken stares forlornly at the photos of Rachel on the wall we saw earlier, including Ken with Rachel at her graduation - happier days.

DYLAN (O.S.)
No way!

Dylan and Lori enter. Dylan looks furious.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Dad! You have to reason with her.

LORI
I told Dylan he had to trade rooms with Rachel and Cuckoo. You know *give them their privacy* - for their "naps".

She raises her eyebrows to Ken.

KEN

Dylan, your mom's right. Go and tell them you're trading rooms. (BEAT) Maybe knock first.

DYLAN

This Cuckoo guy is ruining everything. Why can't you just pay him off? Send him back to Thailand.

LORI

Dylan!

DYLAN

You'd be doing him a favor. Why does he want to be here anyway - living with you and married to Rachel who, I don't want to be rude but... *is a massive dog.* (BEAT) Give him some money, and he'd be out of here. I would be.

Ken looks at Dylan with interest.

LORI

I'm gonna pretend you never said that. Cuckoo's family now - he's part of our lives. This is the man who will father our grandchildren, be there for us in old age, carry your father's coffin. Tell him, Ken... Ken?

Lori's speech has only made Ken look more thoughtful...

KEN

What?... Oh yes, Dylan. That's a ludicrous idea.

INT. THOMPSON HOME, HALLWAY

The next day. Ken comes in the front door, looking furtive.

KEN

Lori! Rach!

No answer. Ken walks up the stairs purposefully.

INT. THOMPSON HOME, RACHEL AND CUCKOO'S ROOM.

Ken enters. Cuckoo is in deep concentration, listening to whale music.

CUCKOO

Hey Ken. It's whale music. Wait, wait...

He smiles, satisfied.

CUCKOO (CONT'D)
I love that part.

He turns the music off.

KEN
OK. (BEAT) I've been thinking about our conversation yesterday.

CUCKOO
We argued - and in that white heat of emotion we discovered a lot about ourselves. There's this energy between us, Ken. Did we know each other in a previous life?

KEN
I don't think so...

CUCKOO
Perhaps we were brothers. You were small, vulnerable, frightened of everything. I was strong. I saved your life. Many times.

KEN
Cuckoo, I've been thinking. About what we said yesterday. You and me, we come from different worlds.

CUCKOO
Pretty different, yeah!

KEN
Yeah! And I respect that. Totally... man. (BEAT) So - in my world - very different from yours - Rachel was going to Northwestern. She had good prospects

CUCKOO
Ken, I love your daughter.

KEN
Sure. But I've been thinking about that very perceptive thing you said. You're a thinker. So true. And my world - y'know - it's not really a place for people who think. All day. And don't do anything else.

CUCKOO
You're saying I don't fit here.

KEN

Wow! I hadn't made that leap. You put it so well.

CUCKOO

You know me! Thinking!

KEN

So how are we going to resolve this?

CUCKOO

I confess I don't know. I mean, Ken, honestly, this is a fascinating conversation.

Ken pushes an envelope across the table.

KEN

Do you miss Thailand?

CUCKOO

A little...

Cuckoo opens the envelope. It is full of money. He opens his mouth in surprise.

CUCKOO (CONT'D)

Woah. Ken, what is this?

KEN

I think if you took that money and found a different path for yourself, everyone would be a lot happier.

CUCKOO

This is so... Does Rachel know about this?

KEN

Rachel's a special girl. She needs a guy who can support her. Make this sacrifice, Cuckoo. The money's just to help you along.

Cuckoo thinks long and hard.

KEN (CONT'D)

Just take the money. And walk out the door.

Cuckoo has tears in his eyes. He takes the money.

CUCKOO

Thank you, Ken. (BEAT) I'm glad you said it. Hari Vishnu.

He shakes Ken's hand, walks out. Ken breathes a sigh of relief.

EXT. BUS STOP, SHERMER STREETS

Cuckoo is standing at a bus stop on the streets of Shermer, deep in thought, almost tearful. This is epochal for him.

KEN (V.O.)

Rachel, there's no easy way for me to say this. Cuckoo told me this morning, that he was considering...

RACHEL (V.O.)

What?

INT. THOMPSON HOME, KITCHEN

Ken is talking to Rachel. Very intimate.

KEN

Leaving you. Going back to Thailand. Without you.

RACHEL

No.

KEN

Yes. He said he could never feel at home here. He told me to tell you that he loved you, but that being with him wasn't your...*path*. He wanted you to go to Northwestern, work hard, set yourself up in a good career, marry someone nice - a doctor, or another lawyer - someone with a steady income, local, maybe someone who cheers for the Cubs.

RACHEL

Cuckoo said that?

KEN

I may have embellished. I was emotional at the time. I was just so sad to see him go.

Rachel breaks down in sobs.

INT. THOMPSON HOME, LIVING ROOM

Rachel is crying. Lori and Ken comfort her. Dylan plays games on the TV, oblivious to the others.

LORI

It doesn't make sense. He seemed like he adored her.

KEN

I know. You think you know someone!

LORI

Is that a bonfire in the garden?

KEN

He left some of his stuff. Couldn't leave it lying around. Too painful for Rachel.

(to Rachel)

You'll be all right honey...

RACHEL

I won't...

KEN

You will.

RACHEL

I won't.

DYLAN

She might not be.

LORI

Dylan!

DYLAN

I'm just saying. I mean, she's been married now. Kind of used goods. In some societies, we'd probably have to stone her.

Rachel cries more. Ken and Lori stare daggers at Dylan. Dylan shrugs.

KEN

Rachel, it might not seem like it now, but you're gonna get through this. I promise. Because however bad it gets, I will do anything, *anything* to make you happy. In the long term.

Rachel looks at her father, tears in her eyes. He has got through to her. A lovely moment.

INT. THOMPSON HOME, LIVING ROOM

Time for bed. Ken looks out over his front drive. His kingdom is safe again.

The security light comes on. Ken looks anxious. But it's the cat. Ken smiles. But as the cat walks away. A figure appears in the security light.

It is Cuckoo. He is pushing a dilapidated food truck.

EXT. THOMPSON HOME, DRIVEWAY

Ken runs out into the drive.

KEN

Cuckoo, what the hell? I thought we had a deal.

CUCKOO

We did, Ken. And here it is! You likey?

Rachel runs out the house, with Lori.

RACHEL

Cuckoo! Oh my god! Where have you been? What's this?

CUCKOO

It's a food truck. I'm gonna sell Sloppy Joes. Who knew? You can sell them from a truck! It's ideal!

LORI

You're going to sell Sloppy Joes?

CUCKOO

Yes, that is if you'll honor me with the recipe, Ken.

KEN

(exasperated)

It's chili in a burger bun.

RACHEL

Wait. You're going to work? But you said...

CUCKOO

I know what I said, Rach. But just because I'm a thinker, does that mean I can't be a hunter too? I mean, if anything, a thinker could be an even *better* hunter than a hunter, because of all his cool thoughts. For after all, what is a thinker but a hunter for the thoughts which a hunter can think. Right, Ken?

Ken looks utterly confused.

CUCKOO (CONT'D)

I lost him. Anyway, pretty sweet, huh? Only cost ten thousand dollars.

KEN

Ten thousand dollars?! You paid...ten thousand dollars?

CUCKOO

Yes, Ken. Do you want to look inside?

He opens the door - the door falls off, onto the driveway.

CUCKOO (CONT'D)

Door's a little cranky. The guy said it was probably worth less - but I gave him the lot because he seemed like a nice guy.

He starts putting the door back on.

RACHEL

I don't understand. Cuckoo - where did you get this money?

CUCKOO

Dad gave it me.

RACHEL

Dad?

LORI

(to Ken)

You gave Cuckoo ten thousand dollars to set up a business?

Everybody looks at Ken. There's nothing he can do.

KEN

Yep. Surprise!

LORI

Ten thousand dollars?

KEN

(pushing on)

You know, because I was on him about getting a job.

RACHEL

But why did you tell me he'd gone to Thailand?

KEN

Did I say that?

LORI
And why burn all his stuff?

CUCKOO
He burnt my stuff? Why *did* you do
that, Ken?

Long, awful pause. Lori, Rachel and Cuckoo stare at Ken.

KEN
TO MAKE IT AN EVEN BIGGER
SURPRISE!... Come on you three -
indoors! I'm sure I've got a bottle
of champagne somewhere!

Lori and Rachel start to go in.

LORI
(affectionate)
You funny, funny man.

Rachel and Lori go in, delighted. Cuckoo stops beside Ken. He
hugs him, warmly.

The door of the van falls off again.

CUCKOO
You and me, Ken. You and me.

END

*