

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Silverware CLINKS lightly in the background. A handful of lingering DINERS remain in the darkened space.

THE PARENT (any gender, any age that makes sense) sits across from their unseen FIRST DATE as the SERVERS quietly finish up for the night.

THE PARENT

(matter of fact)

My ex had gone with her to the ER for this persistent flu she couldn't shake. It was weird. Sarah's one of those kids who was never sick.

The Parent smiles at the strangeness of how memories work.

THE PARENT

I so clearly remember thinking as I answered my cell that my wine glass needed refilling. Rosé. Anyway.

(then)

I stepped to the kitchen so I could hear -- our book club was having a loud debate, and I was laughing at them -- but when my ex finally spoke, her/his voice was so strained, the words so *strange*, I had to ask him/her to repeat him/herself.

A SERVER approaches, but First Date discreetly waves them away. The Parent makes note of the quiet kindness.

THE PARENT

When I got to the hospital, Sarah was still in her jeans and this pink flowered t-shirt I loved. Looking totally normal. I could tell she'd been crying, but she smiled when she saw me, really wanting to be strong. That's so Sarah. I smiled back and called her a drama queen. Sounds terrible, but it was a running joke between us. Then I sat and held her while the blood pounded in my ears, blocking out the incessant beeping of the IV that was suddenly, inexplicably coming out of her arm.

The parent First Date's gaze. If they can handle this, they can probably handle anything.

THE END