

SCENE 1

2  
Ben  
7 #1

Emily is reading a letter. She finishes. She hands it to Ben.

EMILY  
Thank you.

BEN  
You're welcome.

(Pause.)

EMILY  
It's to be expected.

BEN  
I thought you should see.

(Pause.)

BEN (cont'd)  
You know what this means.

EMILY  
It means she doesn't have a job anymore.

BEN  
It also means we've lost the tuition waiver.

(Pause.)

EMILY  
When?

BEN  
Now.

EMILY  
Like, today?

BEN  
The letter is dated yesterday.

EMILY  
I don't get to finish the semester?

BEN  
No.

EMILY  
Michael and I are doing 3D modeling of proteins involved

EMILY (cont'd)  
in steroid hormone action.

*Ben #1*

BEN  
Michael's going to have to carry on without you.

(Pause.)

BEN (cont'd)  
You know that busybody down the street? Bea Lumley? She  
took it upon herself to inform me that people have been  
upset with you.

EMILY  
Why would they be upset with me?

BEN  
Because you started going to classes again when campus  
reopened.

(Pause.)

EMILY  
I've got a 4.0.

BEN  
Since kindergarten.

EMILY  
I assist in the lab.

BEN  
You're the best student in the department.

EMILY  
I've never missed a class. I've never missed a lab. I  
didn't do anything wrong.

BEN  
Leave it be.

(Pause.)

EMILY  
I can't not be in school.

BEN  
We can't afford it.

EMILY  
How much do we need?



BEN  
There's tuition, fees, books.

EMILY  
I'll get a job.

BEN  
It's over ten grand a year.

EMILY  
I'll take some time off. I'll get a job. Then I'll go  
back to school.

(Pause.)

EMILY (cont'd)  
Which animal are there the most species of on earth?

BEN  
Not now.

EMILY  
Guess.

BEN  
It's not the time.

EMILY  
Please?

(Beat.)

Dad?

(Pause.)

EMILY (cont'd)  
What animal are there the most species of on earth?

BEN  
Some kind of invertebrate.

EMILY  
Of course.

BEN  
Sponges.

EMILY  
Way off.

BEN  
Mollusks.

EMILY  
Respectable guess.

BEN  
Some kind of insect.

EMILY  
Which.

BEN  
I don't know.

EMILY  
Beetles.

BEN  
There you go.

EMILY  
350,000 species of beetles.

BEN  
That's a lot of beetles.

EMILY  
You know the J.B.S. Haldane line.

BEN  
I don't.

EMILY  
When J.B.S. Haldane was asked what studying nature had taught him about the creator, he said, "God has an inordinate love of beetles."

(Pause.)

EMILY (cont'd)  
Are you angry with me too?

BEN  
Why?

EMILY  
What Bea Lumley said.

BEN  
Emily. You're going to have to learn to be strong.

(Pause.)

EMILY  
No one in this family is like anyone else.

*Ben #1*



Ben H1

BEN  
Every family is different.

EMILY  
I mean no one in this family is like anyone else in this family.

BEN  
You have Josiah's eyes.

EMILY  
I'm not talking about heritable traits. I mean, like, what would each of us do if we had a day to ourselves. Josiah would practice arpeggios. Sarah would read in her room. Mariah would bake cookies. You'd be submitting one of your inventions to the patent office.

BEN  
What would you do?

EMILY  
I'd spend the entire day in Systems Bio Lab.

BEN  
That's what your mother would say.

EMILY  
No it's not.

BEN  
She loved being a student. Like you.

(Beat.)

EMILY  
I'd spend the day at the river. Flying kites.

(Ben hands Emily another letter. She sees the handwriting.)

EMILY (cont'd)  
No thank you.

BEN  
It's from your mother.

EMILY  
I know.

(He takes the letter back.)

BEN  
Family is family. I hope one day you'll come to understand

BEN (cont'd)  
that.

(Pause.)

EMILY  
I'll take some time off. I'll get a job. I'll go back to  
school. And then.

BEN  
And then what.

EMILY  
And then someday things will be better again.

└─  
Ben