

10 CONT NIGHT

LILA #89
What can I say? Business finds me. I hardly call it work.

Dee + Lila

DEE

Keep your work off my porch.

LILA

Start →

And you, Deanna, stay out of my son. (beat) Where were you last night?

DEE

None of your business.

LILA

You were spotted.

DEE

Was I?

LILA

With my son Russell. Is this true? Let me remind you, Deanna: The rules have not changed since you've been away, my dear. Now I am not here to treat you like a child, but my rules in this town regarding the Finley women remain fixed. You are never to touch my son. Never ever. Never ever ever. Please repeat that so I know that I am understood.

DEE

Never ever. Fine.

LILA

Never ever ever...

DEE

Never ever ever.

LILA

Did you and Russell do anything last night.

DEE

Nothing.

LILA

Nothing?

DEE

Nothing. We talked.

LILA

That's something.

DEE

Talk is nothing. I didn't come all this way to *talk*. And we were talking last night, at the bar. Playing 9 ball to make the talk less awkward. And it's going well. He apologizes for his aloofness without ever using the word *aloof*. We talk, he tries to end the game on the 5 ball. I tell him about my collection of political bumper stickers; he points out all the people he beat the shit out of in the past 6 months. At the end of the evening, I try to give him a hug... and he... pulls away from me. "Mom says I can't touch you." You really told him that, that... that he can't touch me.

LILA

That's correct.

DEE

Well, that's, that's, well, that's stupid.

LILA

I'm sorry, Deanna. Hugs lead to other things.

DEE

It's not like I'm going to throw him down and snog him on the pool table. You got him on an Oedipal leash. It's sick, Lila. And if you don't like me, that's your problem, not his.

LILA

Who says I don't like you, dear?

DEE

I know you don't like me.

LILA

That's hardly the case, Deanna. Just because I don't shower you with a monsoon of love doesn't mean that I don't care for you and your family.

DEE

You care about us so much, you and Russ steal our inheritance.

LILA

Your father left you the house.

DEE

The toilet doesn't work. I'm going to spend the rest of my life crapping in holes and burning my toilet paper.

LILA

Deanna. I had absolutely nothing to do with the way Hewitt allocated his property. You know your father. He could be erratic.

DEE

I just wanted a hug.

LILA

Just a hug?

DEE

Yes.

LILA

I can give you just a hug.

DEE

Ohhh I know where your hugs have been, so no thanks.

LILA

Deanna, there are many eligible bachelors who would love to make your acquaintance. Please find them.

DEE

Russ won't listen to you forever. I'll wear him down. Like the Colorado River through the Grand Canyon. Your say-so will be a pile of sediment, just a big pile of dumb rocks. I will wear him down, you know I will.

LILA

You would be making a terrible mistake in losing your virginity to my son, Deanna.

DEE

My virginity— ha ha. Oh, ha ha. Ha ha ha.

(Pause)

A lot of people are like me. They know what they're waiting for. You know there's a person and this is the person and he is trying to end the game on the 5 ball and you can't let him because then the night will be over.

(Pause)

I can't stop thinking about him.

(Pause. Lila picks up Roby's guitar and holds it)

LILA

I used to work out of a bar in New Orleans. Your father was playing on the small stage, fending off the Monday night hecklers—this was before the hit record and packed music halls. And this Monday was especially rough because the first Monday of the month was known as Ten Cent Night. A single dime would buy you anything you wanted. You could have absolutely anything your heart desired for one little dime in that sweaty, crowded bar. Hewitt Finley caught my eye; or maybe I caught his; we were mutually caught. I asked him if he'd like to go to my room upstairs. And he said he was married and his wife was about bursting with you and Roby, and besides, he didn't have any money. Well, I said, Write me a song; half joking, but then not. He asked the bartender for a pen. Pulled a little raggedy notebook out of his back pocket. He wrote the title of the song: Ten Cent Night. Underlined it twice. Then he asked if he could write the song after because he wanted it to really mean what he thought it would mean. And we went up to my room and made love to the sound of breaking bottles; a bar fight had broken out below. And after, he sat on the end of my bed, with his guitar and that raggedy notebook on his knee. He promised he would return but a man like him, I know, would never return. So I followed him home to Burkeville. Your fragile mother gave birth to you and your sister. And then some months later, I had Russell. Quiet, shhh, says your father. Please don't let the world know how much I love you. How much, I say. More than the sky, he says. And you know how sad the sky gets when it knows it is no longer your true love. How it rains.

(Pause)

DEE

Russ is my brother?

LILA

Yes.

DEE

Russ is my brother.

(Pause)

LILA

Will you be all right, dear? Deanna...?

DEE

I'll be fine.

LILA

In time, something new will come along and you'll forget all about your inconvenient feelings for my son. It's not the end of the world. Don't mope, hm. There's plenty of men in—where is it you're living—Dallas, Houston?

DEE

Dallas.

~~LILA~~ end