

**SCENE NINE**

*(The dinner table **RACHEL, JESSICA, ETHAN, BETH** and **JOSH**. It's about twenty minutes or so into the meal – everyone's had enough time to eat at least one course – the conversation has been a little strained, as **JESSICA** is now visibly drunk – and this is not a situation they've encountered before. **JOSH** seems more detached and laconic than ever, apart from an occasional flash of anger and disgust racing across his face. But the others press ahead valiantly.)*

BETH

It's...everything is delicious.

RACHEL

Well have some more.

BETH

Oh no, I'm stuffed.

RACHEL

Oh, that's crazy, you've barely eaten a thing.

BETH

God, no, are you kidding?

RACHEL

begin  
Eat some more stuffing.

BETH

Well, a – a dollop. A half a dollop, really. Half a metric dollop.

RACHEL

I'm sorry?

BETH

Nothing, never mind, just a little bit, please.

ETHAN

There's no such thing as "just a little bit" of food when my mother's serving.

RACHEL

Well, it's Thanksgiving, there shouldn't be any such thing, right?

ETHAN

It's an oxymoron, like jumbo shrimp or Fox News. This is great stuff, Ma, I love the potatoes – we had these last year, right? The dinner last year?

JESSICA

Last supper.

RACHEL

What, honey?

JOSH

It's –she's –she was making a joke. She's had a little bit too much wine.

JESSICA

I'm a big girl, can handle myself.

RACHEL

Everything's the same as last year, absolutely everything.  
*(JESSICA half snorts a laugh at this)*

ETHAN

Weren't they good Josh? The potatoes?

JOSH

Yeah.

JESSICA

I love red potatoes. I love them mashed like this. Or roasted.

BETH

They're great.

JESSICA

I haven't made them for so long though, because Josh hates roasted potatoes.

JOSH

I like them mashed.

JESSICA

Yes, but they're too fattening to eat them mashed all the time. I love like, roasted chicken with roasted potatoes but I haven't made it for so long because he hates it. There's a lot of food I've stopped making just because Josh doesn't like it.

JOSH

How did saying I like the potatoes turn into an attack on me?

JESSICA

Awww.

BETH

I know what you're saying, though, Jessica, I do. When you're married to someone you end up adopting their habits. Alec used to hate to eat anything tomatoey – so after a while I just stopped eating it myself – I only recently rediscovered it – I can't believe I went so long without it.

RACHEL

end Alec was...I'm sorry, who was Alec?

*(ALEC now appears – it should be sudden but not overly dramatic – he should simply be there)*

ALEC

Why would you bring me into this?

BETH

Oh, um, he was my - sorry, yeah – my husband.

ALEC

Jesus.

RACHEL

Oh, you were --

ETHAN

Beth's husband died in 9/11.

ALEC

And cue the awkward silence. *(JESSICA downs her glass of wine. ETHAN, too, takes a rather large gulp of his)* Nice work; you've just invented the world's most depressing drinking game.

JOSH

What?

RACHEL

Oh...I'm...so sorry.

BETH

Thank you.

JOSH

World Trade Center?