

THE EASTMANS

"Teach Your Children Well"

Written by
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TEASER

EXT. GRAVE SITE - DAY

A bereaved man, MAC DONNELLY, 32, is accepting condolences from a MOURNER at the funeral of his wife.

MOURNER

Mac, I don't know what to say.

A large wreath with a photo of a LOVELY YOUNG WOMAN at its center is propped on a stand next to Mac. He looks adoringly at her smiling face.

MAC

One minute you're driving to the store with the love of your life -- your world as being close to perfect as you will ever know it... and then...

(a beat)

Why wasn't it me? Why?

Suddenly, Mac puts his hand over his heart collapsing to the ground in what at first appears to be extreme grief.

MOURNER

Hey, buddy. I know this is tough...

Mac starts to get up, rising to his knees, then collapses again. His body begins going into convulsions.

MOURNER

Jesus! Somebody call 9-1-1!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. FAIRFIELD HOSPITAL - PARKING LOT - DAY

Rows of cars sit lined up in their spots. We come to one with cigarette smoke coming out of its driver side window.

INT. CAR - CONTINUOUS

EMMA EASTMAN, 57, wearing scrubs is taking the last drag off her cigarette. A classic beauty, she has aged naturally with only the help of her good genes. She looks pensive, worried.

She picks up a box off the passenger seat and removes the lid. Inside are engraved invitations which read:

"Charles and Emma Eastman invite you to join them in celebrating their 35th wedding anniversary."

On the invitation are two pictures side by side. One of YOUNG EMMA and a man, CHARLES EASTMAN, and the two of them TODAY. Emma runs her fingers across the raised engraved lettering and lets out a long, sad sigh.

Her PAGER GOES OFF. She looks down and reads the message.

EMMA

What a load of crap.

She puts out the cigarette, slaps a nicotine patch on to her arm and gets out of the car. Over VOICES raised in argument.

INT. HOSPITAL SCRUB ROOM - DAY

A MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

This is very delicate surgery! I can not have a bunch of hired thugs breathing over my shoulder!

The voice is revealed to be that of DR. PETER EASTMAN, 35, wearing surgical scrubs. A cocky smart ass and too handsome for his own good, he is arguably the best vascular surgeon in the world and he knows it. Right now he is venting at TWO BURLY SECRET SERVICE AGENTS.

AGENT 1

(British accent)

Calm down, Dr. Eastman. Our orders expressly state that we are to be within 10 yards of the Vice-Chancellor at all times.

PETER

(infuriated)

He's Vice-Chancellor of England -- not the king of the world!

AGENT 2

I thought you American doctors were supposed to be known for your good bedside manner.

Peter's heard this before.

PETER

Good bedside manner has nothing to do with being a good doctor.

Peter's PAGE GOES OFF. He looks down at it, alarmed at what he sees.

AGENT 2

What is it?

PETER

(shaken)

Sorry, high priority. Higher than the Vice-Chancellor. He's going to have to wait to have surgery.

Peter runs from the room.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Through a two way mirror/window we see the reflection of DR. ANNA EASTMAN, 33, studying a YOUNG BOY, struggling with a puzzle. A dark haired beauty. She is intensely clear headed in her work and deeply complex in her personal life.

ANXIOUS PARENTS stand behind her.

MOTHER

It runs in first born males.

ANNA

(with meaning)

Of that I am well aware.

FATHER

(pointing to his son)

Dr. Eastman, notice he has poor figure-ground.

ANNA

Where did you pick up that phrase?
Just curious...

FATHER

The internet.

ANNA

Your son is doing great with this puzzle for a child his age.

MOTHER

Great? He's struggling.

ANNA

(firm but gentle)

No. He's three. And one day a three year old can be brilliant with a puzzle and an hour later, when he's late for his nap, he can throw it against the wall in frustration.

Anna studies these two with mounting scepticism when suddenly her PAGER GOES OFF. She looks at it, immediately concerned by what she reads.

ANNA

Will you excuse me?

INT. CHIROPRACTOR'S EXAMINING ROOM - DAY

A darling YOUNG WOMAN, 20's, CANDY GAMMILL, sporting a fabulous pair of breasts sits on the edge of an adjustment table before chiropractor, DR. SETH EASTMAN, 32. His boyish good looks have trouble written all over them. Seth has his father's natural charisma combined with his mother's sensitivity. He attempts to keep his eyes on Candy's chart.

SETH

Hello... Candy... How can I help you today?

CANDY

These are brand new and they're really hurting my shoulders.

Seth glances up at Candy. He gives her a charming smile.

SETH

I think we should have you lie on your back. I can't adjust you on your stomach as it might...

CANDY

Pop them?

SETH

And we wouldn't want to risk that.

Candy lies on her back while never taking her eyes off Seth. She's Red Riding Hood inviting the Wolf to dinner.

CANDY

Be honest. Do you think they're too big? Take a look good look at them.

Seth would love to do more than just look at them when his PAGER GOES OFF. Seth lets out an anguished sigh.

SETH

Candy, you have no idea how it pains me to say this, but I have to go. It's an emergency.

CANDY

(clearly bummed)

Why? It's not like you're a doctor or anything.

INT. PSYCHOTHERAPIST'S OFFICE - DAY

A COUPLE are in a discussion with a THERAPIST, 50's. They are DR. JAMES EASTMAN, 34, a compassionate and talented cardiologist who gives everything to his patients. MADDIE ROSS EASTMAN, 32, his emotionally starved wife, sits across from him.

MADDIE

(to the Therapist)

People say I must be so lucky being married to an Eastman, especially James. He's such a great doctor. He's so devoted to his patients... And I want to say he's devoted all right! At the expense of his wife and his children...

JAMES

(taken aback)

Maddie, I truly didn't know you felt this way.

MADDIE

That's because we haven't had a real conversation in weeks! The only time you're available to talk is in therapy!

JAMES

What if we take a vacation, just the two of us? Get some alone time.

MADDIE

It wouldn't last more than an afternoon.

(losing it)

James, there is no us. Just you and your work. And you are brilliant at what you do. And the real truth is that if I was your patient instead of your wife you would already know everything I'm thinking and feeling here today. And that makes me sad.

James struggles to respond to what Maddie has said when his PAGER GOES OFF. He has to make a choice.

MADDIE

(pleading)

Don't take that, James. Please.

JAMES
(resolute)
I have to go.

James rushes out as Maddie looks to the Therapist helplessly.

SMASH CUT TO:

AN EXTREME CLOSE UP on a YOUNG WOMAN's face.

This is DR. SALLY EASTMAN, 32, a pathologist. Soulful and unassuming. She speaks to someone off-camera.

SALLY
Hi, I'm Dr. Sally Eastman, the head of pathology here at Fairfield Hospital. It's nice to meet you. I have all your lab reports but first I want to address the results of your insulin tests. You do have diabetes. And it is in an aggravated state from being untreated for so long. I wish you could have come in and seen me sooner so we could run these tests. Preferably while you were still alive.

We pull back to reveal Sally talking to a LARGE MAN in a hospital bed. Sally pulls the sheet over his head. He is dead.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Sally's PAGER GOES OFF at an alarming volume. She looks at it and instantly goes into action. She checks the LARGE DEAD MAN's chart one more time.

SALLY
(genuinely sincere)
So sorry, Al. It was great spending this time with you. Rest in peace. I gotta run.

INT. AMBULANCE - DAY

Mac, still convulsing is in the back of an ambulance being worked on by several PARAMEDICS as it speeds down a country road.

EXT. THE EASTMAN INSTITUTE - DAY

Built of washed brick, this two story building is old and new at the same time. It has the air of importance it deserves without being intimidating.

INT. EASTMAN INSTITUTE LOBBY - DAY

DR. CHARLES EASTMAN, 60's, is the rogue patriarch of the Eastman family. Charming, caddish and nothing short of brilliant. He is currently speaking with HEATHER QUEENAN, an attractive journalist, 36. Charles, an unapologetic narcissist and truth teller, bares an outsized ego only out matched by his outsized brain.

CHARLES

When they called to say I had won the St. Andrews Genius grant I was truly surprised.

QUEENAN

Really, Dr. Eastman?

CHARLES

Call me Charles. Yes. Surprised that it's taken them this long to give it to me. I created that stent over twenty years ago.

QUEENAN

And seventy percent of angioplasties worldwide use your stent. You must be a very rich man.

CHARLES

(shrugging it off)
The point is countless lives have been saved by my invention yet they wait 20 years to acknowledge it?

QUEENAN

Your receiving this award perfectly coincides with a story we've been preparing on the human heart. An article in the New York Times Magazine is nothing to sneeze at.

CHARLES

(with a delightful grin)
I wouldn't sneeze at all if I was the cover story.

EXT. EASTMAN INSTITUTE PARKING LOT - DAY

Seth screeches into a parking spot in his beat up Mustang. James, in a brand new Volvo, pulls up next to him.

EXT. FAIRFIELD HOSPITAL LAWN - CONTINUOUS

Sally, on foot, is racing at a good clip across the grass. Before her is the Eastman Institute. She can see both James and Seth getting out of their cars.

INT. EASTMAN INSTITUTE LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Each individual out-of-breath Eastman now pour through every entrance. First Peter then Anna then James then Seth then Sally -- all with the same look of urgency and concern.

PETER

What the hell?

JAMES

It's the doomsday page.

INT. EASTMAN INSTITUTE HALLWAY - DAY

En masse, the entire clan come charging down the hallway.

INT. CHARLES EASTMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Charles and Heather Queenan now sit in his office.

QUEENAN

Many of the world's great hospitals believe the Eastman Institute is the best when it comes to cutting edge cardiac care.

CHARLES

All except the Georges Pompidou Hospital. Those stuck up French --

QUEENAN

No, they said so too.

(checking her notes)

"If you must have heart care in the United States it is the only place to consider."

CHARLES

That's what I mean. "In the United States." See? That's why everyone hates the French. Competition is a healthy thing. In work and home.

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

In fact I encourage it amongst all
my children.

The door flies open. Peter, Anna, James, Sally and Seth come
tumbling in shocked to find their father in perfect health.

SETH

(outraged)
Dad what the f--?

JAMES

(uncomprehending)
You're not dying? This specific
page means you are dying!

They look at their father completely stunned.

CHARLES

Oh good, you're all here. I want
you to meet Heather Queenan. She is
doing a story on my winning the St.
Andrews Genius Medal. You can all
congratulate me later at dinner.

PETER

(in total disbelief)
Dad, I left surgery for this!

CHARLES

I know you did. See, Ms. Queenan,
my children love me.

SETH

(under his breath)
Dad, I think you might want to re-
think that statement.

CHARLES

Be quiet. This is my eldest, Dr.
Peter Eastman.

QUEENAN

The vascular surgeon?

PETER

Yes.

QUEENAN

(checking her notes)
You're the one who perfected the
technique to thread the Eastman
Stent even through the most fragile
arteries.

PETER

Which I should be doing right now on Bennett Korder, Vice-Chancellor of England.

CHARLES

He's such a name dropper. This is Dr. James Eastman, partner at the institute, cardiologist, general surgeon, and my second son.

JAMES

Nice to meet you Ms. Queenan.

CHARLES

He's as devoted to his patients as he is to me.

QUEENAN

(to James)

You treated my aunt once. She still talks about you.

JAMES

Oh yes, Angela Queenan. Send her my best would you.

Peter rolls his eyes.

CHARLES

Dr. Seth Eastman, also a partner at the Institute... though he's currently on a leave of absence. His specialty is transplant work. He's ambidextrous which for a surgeon is like winning the lottery.

QUEENAN

You were recently brought up on charges by the AMA for over prescribing, weren't you?

The room goes silent. Seth stands tall.

SETH

(self-effacing)

In triplicate. To myself. Sort of classic in my field. I completed rehab and my license is on a temporary suspension.

QUEENAN

When do you plan to return to the Institute?

SETH

(half-kidding)

After this stunt today, the twelfth of never.

CHARLES

(eager to move on)

My two daughters, pediatric neurologist, Dr. Anna Eastman. Her current obsession is trying to find the cause and cure for autism. Noble, but --

ANNA

No one believed a polio vaccine was possible either.

CHARLES

And my youngest, Dr. Sally Eastman, head of pathology at Fairfield Hospital next door, which we also use as our operating facilities.

QUEENAN

Pathology. That's an interesting choice.

SALLY

It's like being the doctors doctor.

QUEENAN

As women, don't you think it's a little odd that neither of you are partners at the Institute but your brothers are? I mean you are both respected doctors in your own right. What's that about?

There is an uncomfortable pause as Sally and Anna look at one another smarting with discomfort.

SALLY

...Some arcane rule from my great grandfather's will that my father chooses not to amend.

QUEENAN

(in complete amazement)

You don't find that a bit chauvinistic?

ANNA

Welcome to our world.

SALLY

We remind him all the time that sex discrimination is against the law.

CHARLES

(with a smile and shrug)
So sue me.

SALLY

(brightly)
I just might.

There is an awkward pause. Queenan is loving this interview.

QUEENAN

(to Charles)
Where is your wife? No page for her?

CHARLES

Probably with a patient. She's an outstanding nurse.

PETER

Who can tell a real emergency page from a fake one. Nice to meet you.

INT. EASTMAN INSTITUTE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Peter, James, Seth, Anna and Sally are storming down the hallway all speaking at a rapid-fire pace.

PETER

(humiliated)
Clearly he's not getting enough oxygen to his brain!

ANNA

He's the dad who cried wolf!

SALLY

We're like those blind sheep that follow the pied piper off a cliff.

SETH

Weren't those lemmings Sally?

JAMES

Today's a big day for him. He just wanted to show us off.

SETH

Don't defend him. You were just happy to get out of therapy.

PETER

(surprised)

You're in therapy? I find that hard to picture.

ANNA

Prozac is cheaper. And you get quicker results.

JAMES

It's couples counseling. With Maddie.

At the mention of Maddie's name Peter becomes instantly uncomfortable.

PETER

I don't believe in therapy.

SETH

How did I somehow know that?

PETER

Gee, Seth. Now that you've gone to rehab you're so enlightened.

SETH

No. I just know that a little reflective thought isn't such a bad thing once in a while. You should try it some time.

James PAGER GOES OFF. He reads it.

JAMES

Thank God. A real emergency.

EXT. EASTMAN INSTITUTE - CONTINUOUS

They all exit out the front doors onto the front stairs. James rushes in the direction of the hospital. Peter steps in front of him.

PETER

I gotta get back, too. Race you there!

JAMES

You are so on!

Peter and James take off down the hill. Seth, Sally and Anna watch them go.

ANNA

When is that going to stop? They're grown men!

SETH

Never. They're still competing with each other for dad's approval.
(tongue in cheek)
Glad I don't have that problem.

SALLY

Same here.

They smile at one another. Anna remains unamused.

ANNA

Sally, there are a couple of tests I want you to run on a patient of mine, male, age three. Food and environmental allergies. Check a hair sample for aluminum. Can you run a blind test too?

SALLY

Sure. You think he's autistic?

ANNA

No, but the parents do. They're "cyberchondriacs." Hypochondriacs that surf the internet. Gotta run.

Anna goes back inside the Institute leaving Seth and Sally alone together. As twins their bond is unshakable.

SALLY

So tell me the truth. Are you ever coming back?

SETH

Don't know... I actually like what I'm doing. People feel better right away.

SALLY

But you don't save their lives.

Seth lets out a long sigh, becoming openly vulnerable.

SETH

The power and the stress that goes with that are what made me dip into the Vicodin jar.

Seth gives Sally a hug as she heads towards the hospital. We hear an AMBULANCE SIREN wailing in the background.

SALLY

What did the Pied Piper actually do to get those rats to follow him?

SETH

He forced them to grow up and become what he wanted them to be. Not what they wanted to be.

SALLY

Speak for yourself.

SETH

So what's the real reason Mom was a no-show? Any clue?

Sally looks away not wanting Seth to see her face.

SALLY

No clue at all.

EXT. FAIRFIELD HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM ENTRANCE - DAY

Emma stands waiting eagerly as an AMBULANCE pulls up with its sirens blaring. It comes to a halt and the doors fly open.

INT. PARAMEDICS TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

We see Mac strapped to a gurney an oxygen mask on his face and an IV in his arm. His eyes are wide with fear.

EMMA

What have we got?

A handsome PARAMEDIC, 32, responds.

PARAMEDIC

Thirty year old man collapsed at the funeral of his wife. He's complaining of chest pain, regular at 90, BP 140 over 70, gave him an aspirin.

EMMA

Let's get him in.

Mac is taken out by Orderlies. Emma turns to exit. The PARAMEDIC grabs her hand and pulls her back inside the truck. They are alone.

He leans in and gives Emma a passionate kiss on the mouth.

PARAMEDIC
Dinner tonight?

EMMA
Yes. And bring the truck.

END OF TEASER.

ACT ONE

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

James is standing over a hospital bed taking the pulse of Mac who lies there. In the silence, James looks up from his watch and notices that there is a tear running down one side of Mac's cheek. Emma is with him.

JAMES

The bullet? Again please.

EMMA

Same as before -- normal pulse, pressure, sats 95 room air. Chest pain, no radiation, shortness of breath, diaphoresis or nausea. Slight heart murmur no synchronisation problems. EKG you saw.

JAMES

Yes. Normal. Pupils dialated.

(to Mac)

Are you on any medications? Did you take anything this morning? Cocaine, caffeine?

MAC

(crying out)

I can't be here. I need to be with my wife. She's alone and she's missing me.

James studies Mac with laser-like focus, radiating a calm, natural confidence. He never takes his eyes off him.

JAMES

(gently)

And where is she?

MAC

She's dead.

JAMES

I'm truly sorry.

MAC

Please let me be dead. You can help me do that, can't you doctor? Can you make that happen?

The guy's death wish unnerves James, briefly.

JAMES

No, I can't.

(turning quietly to Emma)

Chem 10, troponin, accucheck -- and send a tox screen. I think we have an overdose.

(to Mac, reassuringly)

Mac, you're now under my personal care. I assure you that together we will figure out the best way to help you. Okay?

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

James and Emma walk and talk.

JAMES

He should be on a hold -- and get security to sit in the room. Either it's psych or tox so do everything. Even a thyroid panel, and plasma metaphrine and 24 hour uring for catechols.

EMMA

His thyroid could make him nuts.

JAMES

So could losing his wife.

Emma studies her son. He seems slightly sad.

EMMA

Penny for your thoughts?

JAMES

(covering)

How'd you know Dad's page was total B.S.?

EMMA

You learn a thing or two in thirty-five years

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

Anna is outside her son Tommy's school waiting to walk him home. She's pacing, deep in thought, but her reverie is broken when she spots her husband, RICK GREEN, 35, approaching. Rick has a rumpled look that is oddly appealing.

ANNA

What are you doing here? Today's my day.

RICK

We haven't worked out custody yet.

ANNA

Keep your voice down.

RICK

Jeez, Anna. At some point this is going to become known.

ANNA

At some point. But if you could do me the enormous favor of coming to family dinner tonight and pretend nothing's going on I would really appreciate it.

A SCHOOL BELL RINGS LOUDLY.

Anna looks at Rick with a "saved by the bell" expression.

Anna turns and sees their son, TOMMY, 3, adorable but distant being escorted by his teacher, JUNE LYNN, 40's, heading towards them. Both Anna and Rick smile at the sight of him.

RICK

Hey Tommy...

ANNA

Hi Tom Tom...

Tommy makes no eye contact with them. We can see that this is just the tip of the iceberg that's struck this marriage.

JUNE

Today was not a good day. I'm beginning to feel this is less than an ideal set up for him.

RICK

(dismissing her comment)
It's the class size. It's too big.

JUNE

(firmly)
But none of the other children are having a hard time with it.

RICK

Does every child have to be the same to go to your school?

ANNA

(to Rick)

Let her talk.

(to June)

What are you suggesting?

JUNE

Lately he's not using language to get his needs met. He grunts and he won't follow verbal directions... I think he needs to be evaluated.

Anna struggles to keep her composure. This is confirmation of her worst nightmare come true -- and Rick's.

RICK

My son is perfectly normal.

Rather than deal, Rick walks away. Tommy, his eyes riveted by a squirrel in a tree, doesn't even take in that Rick's gone.

JUNE

I've recommended so many children to you over the years, Dr. Eastman. I know this is terribly awkward. After all, you're the real expert on autism. Not me.

The overwhelming irony of this is not lost on Anna. She takes Tommy's hand as the two of them stand on the sidewalk, alone.

INT. HOSPITAL - JAMES'S OFFICE - DAY

James and Sally are conferring over Mac's test results.

JAMES

CT and MRI both negative...troponins negative. His kidneys are perfect. I thought he might have a tumor that could create an adrenalin rush. The psych consult was useless. It corroborated he's depressed but didn't answer the medical issue.

SALLY

Maybe this isn't a medical issue. It could have been a panic attack. They can feel like the beginnings of a mild heart attack.

JAMES

No, this was physiological in origin. I just haven't found the cause yet.

SALLY

Technically you need to release him. The last thing you need is the hospital administration breathing down your neck.

JAMES

David McGary is a short sighted buffoon. I can't believe he's watching over us here and at the Institute.

SALLY

Just don't push it. Okay?

James picks up the newspaper.

JAMES

Fine. Take a look at this. I did a little digging and found out Mac's wife was killed in a car accident last week. Sara Donnelly. Some jerk ran a red light.

SALLY

Fine, but...

JAMES

Mac was the one driving, Sara was the innocent passenger. Guilt and grief. That's a pretty lethal combination.

James phone rings. The caller I.D. reads "MADDIE." James chooses to ignore her call. Sally observes this.

JAMES

I'm not releasing him. I want more tests. Besides he's not emotionally ready to go home and face his life.

SALLY

(with genuine concern)
And from what I can tell, neither are you.

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

A Majestic two-story farm house without pretense. It has been in the family for 150 years. Ground zero for generations of the Eastman family. It unites them on a fundamental level.

INT. KITCHEN/FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A country kitchen with a welcoming center island spills into a warm casual family room with a fire in the fireplace. Charles is tending bar. Anna stands by him.

CHARLES
(slightly surprised)
You're here early.

ANNA
(self-conscious)
I need to speak with you about something.

CHARLES
Do you know who once called the martini "the only American invention as perfect as the sonnet?"

ANNA
H. L. Mencken.

CHARLES
How did you know that?

ANNA
(with a tired smile)
You've told me 600 times.
(taking a deep breath)
Daddy, I need to borrow some money from you. I'll pay it back. Rick has been looking for work, and he's got some leads on a few things, but I think Tommy is going to need some special services. He's showing some signs of developmental delay, nothing big mind you, only insurance doesn't cover those things.

CHARLES
As well they shouldn't. This whole autism thing is just a fad.

ANNA
(trying not to lose it)
Dad, don't talk about something you don't know the first thing about. Please.

CHARLES

You'd be fine financially if you were billing more patient hours not spending all your valuable time on research. You know my father never loaned me money. And I'm so grateful because it made me work harder. And I vowed to do the same with all of you. No exceptions.

Anna flinches. It is as if he has slapped her across the face. She stands stunned, absorbing the blow.

CHARLES

You'll see. You'll thank me later.

Suddenly, Tommy starts screaming and flapping his hands in the corner. Peter, who has just arrived, tries to help Tommy -- which only upsets him more. Emma comes out from the kitchen upon hearing Tommy's cries.

Off Emma's face watching her grandson's distress. She looks to Charles who watches Tommy as well but quickly looks away as if this episode means nothing.

Anna rushes to Tommy's side.

ANNA

(to Peter)

I've got it, thanks.

Peter, walks over to Charles.

PETER

Hey Dad, you better uncork me something pretty freakin' old after that stunt you pulled today.

CHARLES

You're in luck. I've a vintage Lafite-Rothschild '82 I've been dying to try.

Emma approaches them.

EMMA

Hello, darling. Is Hailey still coming?

PETER

I offered to pick her up, but she wanted to come by herself. Probably something to do with the ability for a quick getaway.

CHARLES

Hailey's back in the picture? Good for you. I always liked her.

James, Maddie enter with their children, IVY, 8 and BEN, 6 enter. The kids come running to Charles.

IVY/BEN

Grandpa!

Charles kneels down to them. He connects to them in a way he doesn't to Tommy.

CHARLES

Have you been practicing your ABC's?

IVY/BEN

Yes! "A" is for airway. Make sure it is clear. "B" is for breathing. "C" is for circulation. "D" is for disability. "E" is for exposure....

CHARLES

Excellent. For a reward you can look at my book with the scary medical pictures after dinner.

Ivy and Ben jump up and down. James and Maddie immediately shake their heads no.

MADDIE

They didn't sleep for a week after they saw that book.

Charles dismisses this.

CHARLES

Well they need to toughen up. I'll take them to surgery. Let them watch me work. I have to do a heart transplant next week.

MADDIE

Absolutely not! James talk to your father!

The doorbell rings. Maddie is happy to answer it. James watches her leave the room and leans in conspiratorially to Charles.

JAMES

(discreetly)
Maybe a tonsillectomy.

Charles nods.

INT. FRONT HALL - CONTINUOUS

Maddie opens the door revealing, HAILEY FYFE, 28. She looks as if she's stepped off the pages of an ad in Vogue. She is intimidatingly smart and pretty.

HAILEY

Hi, Maddie. How are you?

MADDIE

(truly unprepared)

Hailey... what are you?... Are you and Peter?...

HAILEY

We're back together.

MADDIE

(a beat, recovering)

Oh. Wow. Congratulations. I had no idea....when?

HAILEY

A month ago. We've been keeping it a secret.

MADDIE

I'll say. Peter's in the family room.

Maddie watches Hailey go, her eyes filling with tears. Unwilling to give in to her sadness she opens her purse and takes out a pill. She swallows it dry. It seems to fortify her. She walks back in.

EXT. FARM - NIGHT

Seth and Candy walk up the massive stone steps to a wrap around porch. Seth is just about to open the front door.

CANDY

You sure it's okay to bring a stranger home?

SETH

I'd have far more questions to answer if I didn't bring someone.

INT. FRONT HALL - CONTINUOUS

They pass Anna, holding a struggling Tommy in her arms.

SETH

Hey, Anna. This is Candy. Candy, my sister, Anna.

Anna can't manage to free up a hand from under the weight of Tommy and nods hello.

SETH

(to Tommy lovingly)

Tommy, my man. What's up? I have a present for you and I forgot it. Next time.

Tommy digs his face into Anna's shoulder. Seth gives a look of "was it something I said?"

ANNA

Too much stimuli here for him.

SETH

I feel his pain.

Seth takes Candy by the hand and they sneak upstairs.

INT. FAMILY ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Hailey stands cozily at the bar with Peter talking to Charles. Maddie watches them from a few steps away.

James walks up to Maddie and puts his hand on her shoulder.

JAMES

Can I get you some Merlot?

MADDIE

(cooly)

No.

Maddie walks towards Peter and Hailey effectively shutting James out.

JACK O'BRIEN, 33, the handsome paramedic we saw earlier with Emma, enters the room.

CHARLES

Jack! Hailey, have you ever met Jack O'Brien? He and Peter have been friends since Little League. We always have a place set at the table for him. He's a truck driver.

Charles gentle teasing of Jack is years in the making.

JACK

I'm a paramedic. Nice to meet you Hailey.

Sally enters, rushed.

SALLY

Sorry I'm late.

CHARLES

Sally, my angel! Wonderful. Now all we need to do is find Seth and we can sit down.

INT. THE FARM - UPSTAIRS - NIGHT

Seth is making out with Candy in a dimly lit doorway.

CANDY

What's this room?

Seth reaches in with his hand to flick on a light.

INT. STUDY - CONTINUOUS

Shelves displaying jars with odd things inside. An old examining table is prominently displayed.

SETH

Was my Grandpa's home office. Amazing, huh?

Candy can't take her eyes off all the jars.

CANDY

Are these what I think they are?

SETH

Yup. Real organs. Heart, pancreas... My appendix is third from the left.

CANDY

"SETH - 1988."
(suggestively)
That's a very big appendix.

SETH

A superfluous organ, really. Lucky for me I've got even bigger organs still intact.

Seth begins kissing Candy's neck as she slips away and heads for a human skeleton on display.

CANDY

Who's that?

SETH

A patient who didn't pay his bill.
Actually it's my great grandfather.
He left his body to science. That's
a big family tradition.

Seth leads Candy to the examining table. She leans back as Seth begins to unbutton the top of her blouse.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Sally helps Emma with the final preparations of dinner. Emma is nervous. She takes a large sip of wine.

EMMA

This should be interesting. The man
I sleep next to and the man I sleep
with are both going to be eating
dinner together.

SALLY

Are you sure you're up to this?

EMMA

What have I gotten myself into?

SALLY

I think you might need to make a
decision.

EMMA

(under her breath)
You're right. This is a total mess.

Emma picks up a large tray and takes it out to the table.

INT. THE FARM - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone is seated but for Charles who stands at the head of a beautifully set table laden with abundant amounts of food. The kids are at a separate table. Charles raises his glass.

CHARLES

The Hippocratic Oath we swore to
states that medicine is an art
taught to you by your parents and
to be passed onto your children. We
Eastmans do that quite well if I
may say so myself. To this family
who I love so much.

They all salute and "clink" glasses. Sally begins walking around the table with a fistful of straws. All the Eastmans take one.

SALLY

So who's going to carve?

CHARLES

Again with the straws? Just let Seth do it. He's the best.

EMMA

Stop that, Charles.

ANNA

(delighted)

I got the short straw.

Anna gets up and proceeds to carve the leg of lamb. Her touch is exquisite. Peter stands and taps his glass for attention.

PETER

I have an announcement to make... Growing up around a marriage like our parents has set the bar very high for all of us. Thirty-five years this week for Mom and Dad.

Everyone raises their glasses and cheers. Charles attempts to make eye contact with Emma, who manages a nervous smile.

PETER

The bar was also set high by our grandparents, Walter and Louisa Eastman, who were joined for life. In fact, they died just hours apart. One simply couldn't live without the other.

Off James's face. This strikes a chord with him.

PETER

Finding the right person to join us on this journey through life is not easy. But from the moment I met Hailey I hoped that she would be the one. It took a while, but luckily she has agreed. I only pray we can be as happy as Mom and Dad. We are getting married this fall.

Off Maddie's face as she watches Peter plant a tender kiss on Hailey's lips. The room buzzes with congratulations.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Mac lies in bed sobbing in grief. Two Nurses stands over him.

MAC

Sara. Sara...

Suddenly, Mac begins convulsing again. It's like an electric charge has been sent through his system.

NURSE 1

(calling out)

We need to page his doctor.

INT. THE FARM - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

A PAGER GOES OFF -- everyone at the table checks theirs.

JAMES

It's me. I've got to go to the hospital. Maddie and the kids will need a ride home.

James is up and out.

MADDIE

Peter lives closest to our house... Except... Hailey... oh...

HAILEY

Actually we came in separate cars. I'll drive behind you.

Peter gives a half-smile to Hailey that suggests "I'll make it up to." She smiles back, agreeing.

Off Maddie, smiling too. At Peter. Seth takes this in.

EXT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Anna has a sleeping Tommy in her arms. Emma and Sally are cleaning up.

EMMA

What were you and your father discussing before dinner?

ANNA

(a bad liar)

Oh, that stupid martini quote he loves so much.

Emma doesn't believe her.

EMMA

Well, I'm sorry Rick couldn't make it. Tell him we missed him.

Anna lets out a long sigh. She looks away from Emma.

EMMA

My love... I'm worried about you.

ANNA

Don't be. I'm a good soldier. I learned it from you.

This sends a chill through Emma.

EMMA

Is that how I come off to you girls? A good soldier?

SALLY

Never explain and never complain. That's the Emma Eastman way.

ANNA

You and Dad have one of those marriages everyone points to. And you're loyal to a fault.

Sally takes a large swig of wine from her glass.

EMMA

The idea that I could have taught you that it's admirable to suffer in silence breaks my heart.

ANNA

I never said you taught me to suffer in silence.

EMMA

(covering)

Sorry. I interpreted it that way.

SALLY

All Anna's saying is that you're a very patient and accepting person.

EMMA

Anna, if you're unhappy then you can do something about it. You're not beholden to anyone except yourself and Tommy. Not even us.

Emma looks at Anna giving her permission to do what she can't.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM

Mac is mid-convulsion when James runs in. He is surrounded by Nurses and an ER attending, DR. LARRY KONNER, 50's.

KONNER

I think he's having a psychotic break. His EKG is normal. But his pulse is through the roof. Possibly late onset schizophrenia.

JAMES

(to the Nurse)

Was he crying before this happened?

NURSE

Sobbing. And then he went into convulsions.

JAMES

Give him Beta Blockers and 2 milligrams of Ativan.

INT. HOSPITAL ARCHIVES - NIGHT

James is inside a room of large steel filing cabinets. He is searching through one. He finds a thick file of yellowed paper. It reads "LOUISA EASTMAN."

James takes it out and begins to read. He finds something and starts pounding the table with his hand.

JAMES

Yes!

EXT. ROAD - NIGHT

Peter and Maddie drive down the road with Hailey driving right behind them.

INT. PETER'S CAR - THE ROAD - NIGHT

Maddie is up front next to Peter. Ben and Ivy are fast asleep in the back. There is a long uncomfortable silence.

MADDIE

When did you decide to get back with Hailey?

PETER

After that night. With us. It was wrong. We have to forget it ever happened.

MADDIE

I can't.

(a beat)

Peter, I think I'm pregnant.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - NIGHT

James, the "LOUISE EASTMAN" file in hand, is in discussion with Dr. Konner.

JAMES

My grandmother, died within hours of my grandfather of an apparent heart attack. They said she died of a broken heart.

KONNER

That's just a bizarre coincidence.

JAMES

I don't think so. This is her autopsy report and she had levels of catecholamines the same as Mac's are now. Adrenalin surges from deep grief can create the symptoms of a heart attack. It's what killed my grandmother.

KONNER

Okay, back up, so you're saying a person can potentially die from a broken heart?

JAMES

Absolutely.

Off James's face, sure in the knowledge of what he's discovered.

INT. THE FARM - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Emma and Charles are puttering about the kitchen.

CHARLES

I'm feeling tired. I need to go up.

EMMA

Not before we talk about Tommy. It's getting worse, Charles.

CHARLES

(resisting her)

Anna is an overprotective mother
with an overly dramatic child.
Not a good combination.

EMMA

You don't want to look at it...

CHARLES

This "it" we're talking about.
Autism, right?

EMMA

Yes.

CHARLES

(growing defensive)

You're telling me there's something
wrong with my grandson's brain?

EMMA

(her voice rising)

Get off your high horse, Charles.
This is not about you. We're
talking about an epidemic...

CHARLES

Nonsense! Why I can show you
studies disputing all of these so-
called new findings --

EMMA

(truly angry)

You're like living with a verbal
assault rifle. I can't talk to you.

Emma turns away. Charles feels badly. He attempts to get back
into her good graces.

CHARLES

We have an anniversary party coming
up. Thirty-five years... that's a
huge milestone.

EMMA

That it is.

Emma won't budge. Charles gives up. He goes upstairs as Emma
begins running the tap water. Out the window Emma sees
HEADLIGHTS FLASH ON AND OFF in the distance. Her entire body
relaxes. She turns off the water and goes outside.

EXT. THE FARM - ROAD - NIGHT

Emma approaches a waiting ambulance about 50 yards from The Farm. The doors to the back are open and out comes Jack. Emma walks right into his arms. She gives him a passionate kiss.

INT. ALL-NIGHT DINER - NIGHT

Sally is nursing a cup of decaf when HER PAGER GOES OFF.

SALLY
I'm not a sheep.

She ignores the page.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

James sits in silence at Mac's bedside. His PAGER GOES OFF. Mac stirs. James looks at it and shakes his head.

INT. ANNA'S HOME - NIGHT

Anna is watching Tommy sleep when HER PAGER GOES OFF. She just rolls her eyes, ignoring it.

INT. PETER'S CAR - NIGHT

Now alone, Peter is driving when HIS PAGER GOES OFF.

PETER
No way I'm falling for this again.

INT. SETH'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Seth is busy making out with Candy. HIS PAGER GOES OFF. He throws it across the room. Candy lets out a giggle.

INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

Emma and Jack are about to get into it -- but Emma's BUZZING PAGER grabs her attention. She THROWS open the doors and starts RUNNING.

EMMA
(calling out to Jack)
Bring the ambulance to the front!

INT. THE FARM - MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charles is collapsed on the floor, a phone in his hand.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

A gurney carrying Charles is speeding through the hallway. Jack is pushing it. Emma is at Charles's side, upset, but also in control. James meets them first. Anna, Peter and Sally come running in.

EMMA

(feeling a foot pulse)
No DP pulses, good femorals,
pressures maybe 70 -- he's in
shock.

JAMES

He's hemorrhaging somewhere?

PETER

He's moving air but tachypnic,
could be cardiac... PE...

SALLY

Aneurysm, sepsis...

They turn a corner.

INT. EXAMING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Charles is pushed in and Jack backs out. James rips open Charles's shirt and begins examining him.

JAMES

No JVD, PMI normal, no murmur.
Pulsatile mass... oh no!

PETER

Holy Mother. He's got an abdominal
aortic aneurism!

ANNA

(calling out to Charles)
Triple A? Dad! When was the last
time you had a full medical
examination?

CHARLES

(weak)
Before 9-11.

PETER

What? That's seven years ago! Mom
don't you stay on top of this?

EMMA
I'm not his keeper.

CHARLES
(murmuring)
Physician heal thyself.

PETER
(furious)
Yeah? How's that working out?

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Seth comes in. Jack is outside the examining room door.

SETH
Jack, man, we're so lucky that you
were so close by.

Jack just nods, his eyes filled with guilt.

INT. EXAMING ROOM - NIGHT

Seth enters and looks at his father.

PETER
We've got to find what the hell
this is and if it's ruptured. He's
stable enough to scan, I think.

ANNA
Who's going to perform surgery? We
need to get somebody in who's not a
blood relation.

SALLY
Who's on tonight?

JAMES
It's Larry Konner. He's good, but
not good enough.

PETER
James is right. It's 1 a.m. and the
three of us are right here. Anybody
got a better idea?

The room goes silent for a second. Charles reaches up and
takes his oxygen mask off by himself.

CHARLES
Seth. I only want Seth. He's the
best cutter.

This creates an even greater silence. No one moves.

SETH
(gently reminding him)
Dad, my license is still suspended.

CHARLES
(with a slight smile)
I won't tell anybody.

SETH
Dad, it could be revoked
permanently for just taking your
blood pressure, much less
performing surgery.

CHARLES
You're better than all of them.
(forcefully)
Do it!

SETH
(holding his ground)
No! I can't risk my entire medical
future on you. Anna, Peter,
James... they're all capable.

CHARLES
You'd risk your career on Vicodin,
women... but not me? You don't even
care about being a doctor so what
does it matter?

This is like a knife in Seth's heart.

SETH
(erupting)
You are one selfish son-of-a-bitch!

CHARLES
You are going straight to hell!

SETH
(leaning in close)
Well, then I'll meet you there!

And with that Seth storms out of the room.

INT. HOSPITAL - O.R. - NIGHT

Peter, with James assisting, work on Charles. Anna and Sally
are attending.

PETER

There it is. That's a helluva big
aorta.

Anna and Sally look up at the monitor where Charles's aorta
is magnified 1,000 times its dimensions for all to see.

ANNA

It's at least 7 centimeters in
diameter.

SALLY

Seven point 3.

PETER

On the money, Sally.

JAMES

There's a lot of clot posteriorly --
bit of a leak, he had to have pain...

SALLY

Triple A's can be congenital. We'll
all have to be checked for this.

PETER

Typical. The man is meticulous
about everyone's medical conditions
but his own.

SALLY

He was a walking time bomb...

Above them, in the glass enclosed viewing area, we see Seth
looking down at the surgery. He's been crying. Tears of rage
and shame run hot against his cheeks.

INT. GALLERY - CONTINUOUS

Seth absentmindedly runs his fingers along the wooden bench
where he is seated and feels something. There are the
initials S.E. carved in the bench. Seth smiles in
recognition.

IN FLASHBACK

The GALLERY is filled with Doctors and NURSES circa 1985
intently watching. THE FIVE EASTMAN CHILDREN ages 7- 12 sit
in the front row of the gallery. Four are looking down at a
younger and darker haired Dr. Charles Eastman performing
surgery.

One BOY is not paying attention. It is YOUNG SETH, age 7. He is busy carving his initials into the bench with a real scalpel. He finishes and slips it to TEN YEAR OLD JAMES.

Young James quickly carves his initials and hands the scalpel to TWELVE YEAR OLD PETER. His everyday bravado slipping, Young Peter looks scared. He takes the scalpel, visibly nervous as he begins to carve. Suddenly the scalpel slips and cuts into Young Peter's hand. Blood squirts everywhere.

The SOUND OF THE ALARM takes Seth back into the present.

Off Seth's face looking down at the surgery at Peter.

INT. OPERATING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Peter, even though his face is half-covered by a surgical mask, he looks worried.

PETER

Proximal control is okay.... What's happening? Here's the leak.
Suction.

JAMES

Law of La Place -- as diameter increases so does wall tension.

ALARM SOUNDS AGAIN

ANNA

Pressure dropping, 70 systolic!

PETER

God damn it!

All eyes look to Seth up in the gallery, but he is already gone.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. PREP ROOM - NIGHT

Seth is scrubbing in as fast as he can. Emma is helping him.

INT. HOSPITAL - O.R. - NIGHT

Seth nearly pushes Peter aside as ALARMS scream.

SETH

(yelling)
Lap pads. Lots of them. Pack him up.

PETER
That's high tech.

SETH
Shut up and do it. Suction to
James. Vascular clamp to me.

JAMES
(realizing)
Can't start the stump until you get
full control, right?

ALARM

ANNA
Heart rate 110, pressure 60
systolic.

SETH
Kick up the infuser. Gotta fill the
tank.

Seth is looking hard for something. Peter knows.

PETER
(defensively)
What? The proximal suture line is
perfect. Perfect.

SETH
You've been putting in stents too
long. You're out of practice with
the basics.

JAMES
You should have ballooned with
iliacs, Peter. You were never good
with clamps.

PETER
Screw all of you!

ALARM

SETH
Reposition the proximal clamp close
to the renal arteries, right below.

ANNA
Now is not time! He's bradying
down! Gonna arrest!

SALLY
(whispering in his ear)
Come on, Daddy! Please, please hold
on. Live so you can make us doubt
ourselves one more day.

They come together.

PETER
Got it!

JAMES
Digital control.

SETH
Got the PFTE. Three - oh Dex.

Seth is sewing like a fiend; poetry in motion.

JAMES
Look out how you suture, brother.

ALARM SILENCES.

ANNA
Pressure coming up. 80.

JAMES
Nice. Laps coming out. Nice and...

SETH
Tight. Okay, do it!

PETER
Clamps coming off. Up...

JAMES
And down.

A moment. They watch the monitors. Breath is held.

SETH
Field is dry.

They all look at one another. Their eyes filled with emotion.

ANNA
Let's zip up this son-of-a-bitch.

SETH
I'll close.

PETER
(a beat)
Thank you, Seth.

This is a really hard moment for Peter and it's not lost on the rest of them.

SETH
It's cool.

PETER
None of what happened here tonight can ever leave this room. If McGary found out he'd have to report it to the board.

JAMES
We saved our father's life. End of discussion.

INT. SCRUB ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Emma sits alone taking in the wonder that are her children and the mess that is her relationship with this man.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAWN

James is sitting in a chair next to Mac's bed. Mac opens his eyes and looks at James sleepily.

MAC
(in a whisper)
Why don't you ever go home? You have a wife don't you?

JAMES
(with great vulnerability)
I do. But she's stopped loving me. She thinks I don't know. But I do.

MAC
That really sucks.

JAMES
It does. Because I'm not ready to stop loving her.

INT. HOSPITAL LABORATORY - DAWN

Seth is changing out of his bloody scrubs.

SETH
You'd better get rid of these. Evidence...

Sally pulls out a long steel drawer with a DEAD MAN inside. She puts the scrubs in with him and closes it up.

SALLY

He's homeless and getting cremated tomorrow. I call him Buddy.

SETH

Sally, as my former womb mate...
(sincerely)
I worry about you. In here. All the time. No windows. Just microscopes, tissue and blood samples. You know... and dead people.

Sally opens a refrigerator full of tissue samples and takes out two bottles of orange soda.

SALLY

Remember when we would be in the playpen together and all you wanted to do was get out and explore. I'd let you use my head as a stepping stool to escape. Because I never wanted to. I liked it in there.

SETH

Are you telling me the lab feels safe?

SALLY

Hey, I'm very popular in here. I will have you know that I was recently voted homecoming queen.

This cracks them up. They clink soda bottles.

SETH

Congratulations. Does this mean you're dating the quarterback?

SALLY

No. He broke his neck.
(half-serious)
After having a father and three brothers as outspoken and as demanding as you guys are I've discovered that the perfect man for me might just be one who can't speak or move.

SETH

Don't say that.

SALLY

(a beat)

Seth, I owe you an apology.

SETH

For what?

SALLY

I pretended not to know you were having a hard time. For my sake.

Sally and Seth look at one another. The moment is full. It's like they can peer into each others souls.

SETH

Was it that obvious?

SALLY

We're twins. We've been together since we were zygotes.

This makes Seth smile.

SETH

(realizing)

Dad pushed me to become a doctor and I've paid a huge price for that. But tonight when I saw him lying helplessly on that table I realized two things. How much I love being his son. And how much I love being a doctor. And I'm not about to give either of those things up. Not without a fight.

We watch Seth's face -- alive and open now.

END OF ACT TWO.

ACT THREE

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Charles is trying to get out of bed while a FEMALE NURSE is taking his vitals. She won't let him.

CHARLES
(protesting)
I just want to see my scar.

MALE NURSE
What possible difference could that make? Your scar is fine.

CHARLES
Do you know who I am?

MALE NURSE
Yes, I do, Dr. Eastman. And frankly I don't care. I'm the third nurse assigned to you today. Let's not go setting any records here.

And with that the Nurse beats a hasty retreat. Charles makes an abrupt move and winces in pain. Emma enters.

EMMA
Charles, you're terrorizing the nursing staff in ways no one thought possible. Least of all me.

CHARLES
Why don't I have a private room? This old man over there clacks his dentures like a metronome.

We hear the sound from the other bed. It's not pretty.

EMMA
Peter's patient, the Vice-Chancellor, has his Secret Service taking up the private suites.

At that moment the curtain opens and the OLD MAN in the bed next to Charles shouts to Emma.

OLD MAN
Nurse, I got to change rooms! This man keeps harassing people.

EMMA
I'll see what I can do, sir.

She pulls the curtain closed.

EMMA

I think we have to reschedule the party.

CHARLES

Not a chance. I'll be a good patient. It's too important.

(a beat, carefully)

Where were you last night? I was calling for you.

Emma begins plumping his pillows so he can't see her face.

EMMA

I couldn't hear you with the water running.

EXT. EASTMAN INSTITUTE - DAY

Seth gets out of his car with a present wrapped in children's wrapping paper. The card attached reads "Tommy."

Something catches his eye. Seth sees through the glass windows of an office where Peter and Maddie are in a heated conversation. Their body language is intense. It has an intimate quality without touching.

INT. EASTMAN INSTITUTE - CONTINUOUS

Once in the building, Seth unavoidably gets caught in the path of a crying Maddie, who is rushing out.

MADDIE

(forcing a smile)

Hi Seth. What have you got there?

They both work really hard to pretend this is not awkward.

SETH

Tommy's birthday present. A month late. I was just dropping it off. I missed it cause I was in...

MADDIE

Rehab. You're doing pretty okay with that now. Right?

SETH

Yeah. Pretty okay.

MADDIE

I gotta go pick up Ivy from ballet.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

An ORDERLY and a NURSE wheel in a new PATIENT next to Charles. It is Mac.

CHARLES
(abruptly)
Who's this?

NURSE
Your new roommate. I expect you to behave this time.

CHARLES
(to Mac)
So what are you in for?

MAC
Nobody knows. I've heard 'em whispering about something called "Broken Heart Syndrome."

CHARLES
(his curiosity peaked)
Yeah?
(turning away, sweetly)
Oh, Nurse... would you mind reaching into this drawer here. I need my reading glasses.

NURSE
Of course.

She enters and bends towards a table and gets his glasses.

CHARLES
Thank you so much.

She leaves and we see Charles now in the possession of her stethoscope which he's picked from her lab coat pocket. He then, very carefully, gets out of his bed and heads over to Mac's bedside.

Charles leans over Mac to listen to his heart.

MAC
Hey! What the hell are you doing?

CHARLES
Relax. I happen to be a somewhat brilliant cardiologist
(listening carefully)
You know you have a heart murmur?

MAC

Yeah, I've had it since like forever. The doctors say it's no big deal.

Off Charles face realizing the seriousness of the situation.

CHARLES

Well, it just became a very big deal.

MAC

What do you mean?

CHARLES

(dead serious)

Your heart is broken. Who'd you say your doctor is?

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Charles and James are having an animated discussion right in front of Mac.

JAMES

He had an adrenalin surge to his heart due to extreme grief. It mirrored the symptoms of a heart attack. I've been keeping him here under observation.

CHARLES

A good thing you did, too. It landed him here beside me so I could listen to his heart.

MAC

(confused)

Do you two know each other?

CHARLES

A little. Go on -- take a listen.

James begins listening to Mac's heart. He looks back at Charles. They share a knowing look. James then sits down next to Mac.

MAC

(getting scared)

What is it?

JAMES

Mac, the sound of your heart murmur has changed significantly since I listened to it even from this morning. I have to do an echocardiogram to confirm this but I think you have a bi-cuspid aortic valve. That means you were born with two valves instead of three. This can weaken the aorta causing it to tear.

MAC

(to Charles)

Is that right?

CHARLES

As right as rain.

JAMES

There's no way to repair an aortic valve once it tears. We have to do open heart surgery and replace your valve.

MAC

Or what?

JAMES

(a beat, carefully)

You die.

Mac digests what he's told. He is very quiet.

CHARLES

You are one lucky man. This is a one in a million catch.

MAC

(thoughtfully)

I am lucky. Relieved actually. I was serious when I told you I wanted to be with my wife... by dying now I can be with her.

Off Mac's determined expression.

INT. ANNA'S OFFICE - DAY

Anna is alone with the Mother and Father she counselled earlier about their son.

ANNA

The test results show your child is suffering from a minor language delay and nothing more.

MOTHER

But why?

ANNA

A developmental glitch. He'll need speech therapy once a week for the next three months. And you are going to have to create a language rich environment for him at home. Lots of reading aloud with as much verbal interaction as possible.

MOTHER

You seem to be minimizing this. As if it's good news.

ANNA

Considering the alternative, I think it's very good news. He's not deaf or autistic.

MOTHER

Are you a parent?

ANNA

I am. I have a son.

MOTHER

Well I'll bet he's just perfect.

Anna stares down this woman, fighting like hell not to lose control.

ANNA

No. He's not perfect. He's autistic. And that is a diagnosis, I guarantee you would never want to hear. It's an ugly word. Autism. It's like a bomb dropped on your life. And the collateral damage is huge. It rips a hole in your marriage and your finances and challenges everyone who ever loved you to stay on for one hell of a bumpy ride. So don't sit in my office and whine about a diagnosis of a speech delay for your child. Don't ever do that to a mother of an autistic child.

(MORE)

ANNA (CONT'D)

I've just given you a get out jail free card but you are too stupid to realize it! So take your diagnosis and get the hell out of my office!

EXT. INSTITUTE HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

The stunned Parents emerge from Anna's office where Seth is standing outside waiting. Anna's door slams and Seth can hear her audible sobs through the door. His heart breaks for her. Instead of knocking he puts the present for Tommy on the ground in front of her door and walks a few feet down the hall, stopping at the door of Peter's office.

INT. PETER'S OFFICE - DAY

Seth stands before Peter at his desk. Peter seems vulnerable; off his guard. The encounter with Maddie has left him shaken.

SETH

Tommy is in big trouble and so is our sister.

PETER

I know. None of it seems fair.

SETH

She's too good a doctor to be marginalized like this. What if she's on to something with her research?

PETER

You're right. It could even be the future of the Institute.

Seth observes Peter's demeanor -- his thoughtfulness. He decides to dive in.

SETH

I saw Maddie on her way out. She seemed kind of upset.

PETER

(purposely evasive)
She and James probably had a fight or something.

SETH

(a beat)
Peter, I've seen the way she looks at you.

Peter stares at Seth -- unable to go there with him.

PETER

You can never understand my life.

SETH

(reaching out)

Not if you won't let me.

INT. JAMES OFFICE - DAY

James and Sally are studying Mac's echocardiogram.

JAMES

There it is. We need him on a table ASAP but he's refusing. How is that possible?

SALLY

He thinks he's living in spite of his wife... because she died in the car accident and he didn't...

(in a flash of insight)

When instead he could be living because of her!

Sally runs out the door. James, confused, follows.

INT. MORGUE - CONTINUOUS

Sally is on her laptop performing a search as James watches.

SALLY

There is a way for him to be side by side with his wife -- only he doesn't have to die to get there.

JAMES

How? What are you talking about?

SALLY

Ordinarily you'd use a pig valve as a replacement. Right?

JAMES

Correct.

SALLY

What about a human heart valve?

JAMES

Depends what shape it's in.

SALLY
(scrolling down)
Well, I happen to have one in
excellent shape. It belonged to a
28 year old female.

James leans in to read the screen.

JAMES
(simply)
Sara Donnelly. Mac's wife.

They look at one another in amazement.

END OF ACT THREE.

ACT FOUR

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Charles and James sit by Mac's bedside.

JAMES

We only get one chance at life and the irony is that you are going to get two. Because of your wife.

CHARLES

Sara will live on inside you.

Mac takes a moment to comprehend the enormity of this.

MAC

Have you ever tried to make sense of death?

Charles and James share an understanding look.

JAMES

Yes. All day.

CHARLES

Every day.

JAMES

But our real job, Mac, is making sense of life. From everything you've told me Sara loved you...

They are finally reaching Mac.

MAC

...With all her heart...
I don't have insurance. I mean... I can't possibly afford this operation. Much less being here in this hospital.

Charles leans in and grips Mac by the arm.

CHARLES

But I can. Let me pay.

Mac is overwhelmed by Charles's offer. James is shocked.

MAC

(in awe)
You would do that? You're an amazing person. Like the dad I always wanted.

Charles looks at James and then back to Mac.

CHARLES
(tinged with regret)
You wouldn't want me as your dad.
Only as your friend.

INT. INSTITUTE CAFETERIA - DAY

Sally and Anna are having a cup of coffee together.

SALLY
It's the talk of the hospital that
he's paying for the surgery.

ANNA
Ironic, don't you think? Because at
moment I'm looking into joining a
practice in Hartford that will make
me a partner. And it's all because
Tommy's treatment is going to cost
a small fortune.

SALLY
What about Rick?

ANNA
I love him. But I can't wait for
him to get it together anymore.
(shaking her head, sadly)
Dad has no problem being generous
with someone he doesn't know. Why
is that?

SALLY
(realizing)
It's easier to be a hero to a
stranger than to your own family.

ANNA
That's a really screwed up thing
about us.

Sally looks at Anna her wheels turning.

SALLY
(decidedly)
It's very screwed up.

INT. HOSPITAL - O.R. - DAY

James, with Peter assisting, are operating on Mac. They feel
a presence.

They look up and see Charles, sitting up in the gallery, dressed in his hospital gown, watching over them.

INT. FAIRFIELD BANK - DAY

Sally approaches a BANK EMPLOYEE seated at a desk.

SALLY

I need to have the safe deposit box for Charles and Emma Eastman opened, please.

BANK EMPLOYEE

Certainly. I hope you don't mind... I know this is a small town and all.. but I'm new here. May I see some I.D.?

Sally offers up her driver's license.

BANK EMPLOYEE

(reading)

Emma Sally Eastman. Got it.

He hands the license back to Sally who smiles. She doesn't like lying, but this is important.

INT. FAIRFIELD BANK - PRIVATE ROOM - DAY

Sally is alone with the contents of Charles and Emma's box. She finds many things inside it... a lock of each of hers and her siblings hair as babies... pictures of young Charles and Emma on their honeymoon.. a copy of Charles's will, a listing of his assets and holdings, and a an unmarked envelope. She opens it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

The house is lit up ready for the anniversary party.

INT. THE FARM - MASTER BEDROOM DRESSING ROOM - NIGHT

Charles is getting dressed, examining his stitches in a mirror. He smiles admiringly.

CHARLES

Seth. I'd know your work anywhere.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Emma is dressed. She looks fantastic. Charles comes in.

CHARLES

You are still so beautiful.

Charles leans in to kiss Emma and she gives him her cheek.

CHARLES

(bracing himself)

Emma, we have 50 guests arriving downstairs to celebrate our anniversary. Do you have something you want to tell me?

Emma takes a deep breath.

INT. THE FARM - THE STUDY - NIGHT

Sally talks with Peter, James and Seth. Anna is conspicuously absent.

SALLY

What if she's really on to something? Remember when dad spent years perfecting the stent? Mom was supporting the family with her nursing because he didn't have time for outside patients.

(a beat)

All I'm saying is Anna is potentially a huge piece of business to lose.

EXT. THE FARM - NIGHT

Guests are arriving for the party.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Charles and Emma are deep in conversation.

EMMA

...I didn't realize we'd grown so far apart until I found myself having these feelings...

CHARLES

(reeling)

For someone else? This is unbelievable.

EMMA

Not really. The human heart is far more of a mystery than you will ever care to admit.

CHARLES

Oh please...

EMMA

Keep dismissing how I feel. That's how we got here tonight.

CHARLES

This is a cruel thing to do to someone just out of the hospital.

EMMA

You got a second chance at life. Why shouldn't I?
(a beat)
I'm in love with Jack O'Brien.

Charles attempts to wrap his mind around this.

CHARLES

(repulsed)

A paramedic? You're in love with a paramedic? Not even a doctor?

EMMA

This is what matters to you? You're not even upset that I'm having an affair with a man twenty five years younger than me? Just that he's not up to your standards? What is wrong with you?

CHARLES

(his voice rising)

He's a truck driver who picks up human road kill!... You could have your pick of MD's. I've seen how they lust after you.

EMMA

(losing it)

You challenge me and the children to love you every day. And I'm no longer up to that challenge.

Charles looks at Emma simply devastated.

CHARLES

Emma, we have five children, three grandchildren and thirty-five years of marriage... What do we do now?

Emma stands up finding her strength.

EMMA

We go and greet our guests.

INT. THE FARM - DEN - NIGHT

Sally, Peter, Seth and James approach where Anna is seated.

ANNA

(instantly suspicious)
Why do you all look so happy?

PETER

We discovered we have a common enemy. And it's not each other.

JAMES

Anna, you think you're alone but you're not alone.

SALLY

As brothers and sisters we're all genetically 50% of each other. And what's happening to you is happening to all of us.

ANNA

In regards to what?

SETH

In regards to Tommy.

ANNA

Oh.
(crumbling)
I'm losing him. And I'm powerless to stop it.

SALLY

Not if we can help it.

INT. THE FARM - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The guests have gathered to hear a toast from Charles.

CHARLES

My recent brush with my mortality has given this party an even greater celebratory atmosphere, but more importantly, it's given it a greater purpose.

(MORE)

CHARLES (CONT'D)

As most of you know I have always believed that medical science can bring comfort to the human heart by offering an explanation to what is often inexplicable. But tonight I'm not so sure.

(a beat)

To Emma who goes beyond what mere science could ever explain.

Charles looks at Emma, his heart breaking.

EMMA

I would like to make a speech. This party does have a greater purpose, like Charles just said... I want to announce before all of you tonight...

And in that instant -- Charles faints dead away.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. AMBULANCE FRONT - NIGHT

Jack drives as the five kids attend to Charles in the back.

PETER

Is he unconscious?

ANNA

His vitals are good.

JAMES

It could be a side effect of his new medications.

SALLY

Don't tell him that. Let him think he's in big trouble.

CHARLES

(coming to)

If she thinks I'm going to die and give her the pleasure... a paramedic?

PETER

What is he mumbling about?

SALLY

(covering)

Who knows? He's delirious.

A frightened Charles is coming to. He opens his eyes and looks into the faces of his five children.

CHARLES

I love you. I don't say it
enough... I love you. And I am so
proud of each and every one of you.

They are moved by this unusual display of emotion. Briefly.
They look at one another in silent unity.

PETER

Let's start.

CHARLES

Start what?

SALLY

You're strapped to a gurney. We
finally have you where we want you.

CHARLES

Captive audience, huh?

PETER

It's time to move aside, Dad.
Become the Emeritus partner. And
allow all five of your children to
be partners in the Institute. Keep
your office and advise us on our
patients. You have the money from
the stent patent. We need to move
forward and take our rightful place
in the world.

CHARLES

All children are put on this earth
to kill and replace their parents,
is that it? Well forget it. I'm
never going to die.

SETH

Good luck with that.

JAMES

Isn't that what you did with your
dad? And didn't you have to wrestle
this from his hands?

CHARLES

"Rage! Rage against the dying of
the light."

SALLY

Oh please, the light is not dying,
Dad. It's actually getting
brighter. For all of us.

SETH

Sally and Anna deserve a piece of the practice. Just because your father was some crazy misogynist...

CHARLES

His father too. It's a family tradition...

SETH

It doesn't mean you have to be.

CHARLES

(feigning innocence)
This is out of my control.

SETH

It will be soon if you don't give us equal pieces of the practice.

CHARLES

And how will you manage that?

JAMES

We... your sons... are going to put our three pieces together and give it to the girls and walk away. And that would give them the controlling interest.

SALLY

And we'll sell the practice.

ANNA

Hasn't the Mayo clinic been eyeing us for years?

CHARLES

I hate those bastards.

PETER

But that's not all.

CHARLES

That's not enough?

ANNA

We think a significant portion of the proceeds from the stent patent should be designated for the sole purpose of autism research.

CHARLES

Somewhere along the way you all got
this notion that I'm a rich man...
that's simply not true.

SALLY

It is true. I went into your safe
deposit box. I know everything.

This gets Charles's attention.

CHARLES

Everything?

SALLY

Everything.

PETER

So that's it, Dad. We're giving you
an ultimatum and we think its damn
fair. Split the practice five ways
and set up an endowment for autism
research so all children, including
your grandson, benefit. It's the
right thing to do.

Off Charles's face. He knows when he's beat. He smiles a
devilish smile. He's genuinely wowed at their ingenuity.

CHARLES

God, I'm a good father.

UP COMES THE SONG "TEACH YOUR CHILDREN WELL."

EXT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

As it barrels down the road into the darkness -- its siren
blaring.

THE END.