

DESCRIPTION:

Jodi is Noah's exhausted mother, a prototype for the sandwich generation. She is consumed with caretaking for her paralyzed father and her special needs son. Jodi's got a good heart but overwhelm has numbed her sensitivity

INT - NOAH'S HOME - ENTRYWAY - CONTINUOUS

From the darkened coat closet, Noah watches his mother.

Jodi exhales - shaky - she turns toward the kitchen.

INT - NOAH'S HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Jodi sinks onto a barstool at the island.

JODI

I don't know what I'm supposed to do.

Noah steps into the kitchen.

Jodi spins around and pulls him into a crushing hug.

JODI (CONT'D)

WHERE HAVE YOU BEEN? I THOUGHT YOU WERE DEAD!

NOAH

Am I in trouble?

Jodi pulls back. Her fear hardens into anger.

JODI

You lied to me! You said you were on the school bus!

NOAH

You hate me!

JODI

(with rage)

I love you more than everything!

NOAH

You're yelling at me!

JODI  
I tracked your phone into a ditch!

NOAH  
I'm sorry!

JODI  
YOU WILL COME HOME ON TIME! AND YOU  
ARE NOT ALLOWED TO LIE TO ME!

NOAH  
You don't listen!

JODI  
What you did was dangerous!

NOAH  
I did good things!

JODI  
You lied to the bus driver!

NOAH  
I want have a girlfriend! And ride  
a bike!

JODI  
We've talked about this.

NOAH  
I can make friends!

JODI  
You ran away!

Jodi shoves the phone in Noah's face - Amber Alert glowing.

JODI (CONT'D)  
This is what happens when you don't  
know your limits.

NOAH  
I can do things!

JODI  
There are some things you cannot  
do! You have Down syndrome.

NOAH  
I'm a grown boy!

Jodi realizes what she's just said.

JODI  
Is that why you ran away?

NOAH  
I want to find a way I could... You know?

Jodi takes a breath.

JODI  
I don't. Try again.

NOAH  
(proud)  
I talked to a girl, and I got arrested!

Jodi doesn't buy it.

JODI  
You did all that today?

NOAH  
I saw a naked lady! I talked to a moose!

JODI  
Really.

NOAH  
"There are no bad people, only lost people!"

Jodi studies Noah.

JODI  
A moose said that?

NOAH  
(excited)  
Un hu!

JODI  
Noah, I'm trying - but it's my job to keep you safe.

NOAH  
I'm fifteen! Fifteen years old have bikes.

JODI  
We've been over this. You can't balance.

NOAH  
The other boys do.

JODI  
You're not like them.

NOAH  
I can be myself...

A long beat.

JODI  
You kept falling.

NOAH  
I got up.

Long pause.

JODI  
You didn't answer your phone.

NOAH  
I will.

JODI  
You lied to me!

NOAH  
I won't!

JODI  
You talk to strangers.

Noah thinks -

NOAH  
Only the nice ones.

Jodi exhales.

JODI  
You think *everybody's* nice.

NOAH  
Lots of people are nice!

JODI  
Noah, I'm trying....

A THUD on the bedroom door.

Noah opens it revealing -

GRANDPA, (80s) immobilized by a stroke that affects his speech.

GRANDPA  
(with an edge)  
You moved to that rotten apple.

JODI  
(defensive)  
It's a world class city.

GRANDPA  
What did I say?

JODI  
You said I'd come home in a *body bag*.

Jodi makes a connection. Her gaze turns to Noah.

GRANDPA  
I do not wish...

Jodi turns to Grandpa, softening.

JODI  
...you to be...

Jodi looks at Noah.

GRANDPA  
...a flightless bird.

Noah takes Jodi's face in his hands.

NOAH  
I will take care of you, Momma.

A beat.

JODI  
(soft)  
We have a lot of work to do.

Outside, a police car CHIRPS.

JODI (CONT'D)  
What's that?

NOAH  
The police Officer. He's waiting.

JODI  
Why?

NOAH  
Because of my big adventure, of  
course.

FADE TO BLACK.