

ELI

*(Storyteller mode.)* You know, for all the glares your mother gives me, I never get tired of em. Never. There's something in that eye roll, that wrinkled forehead, the way her hand touches her temple like she's got a headache. *(Chuckling, reminiscing.)* Oh this is a good one. You'll like this, Mendel. One time, we were just coming from the market. We had to buy some kinda fish or somethin—

LIBA

*(While washing.)* Whitefish.

ELI

I knew that. Whitefish. Well we were walking and she had the whitefish under her arm and all that. She has this walk where when she really wants to get somewhere, her shoulders barely move. Like a living statue! Well she was doing her walk thing and I was dragging behind as always so I tried to catch up and take my arm in her arm. But when I did, I felt something move. She yelled "What do you think you're doing?!? You threw the fish on the ground!!" And I looked and sure enough, there it was, lying in the dirt. Just goes to show—

MENDEL

*(Pretends to be asleep, snoring.)*

ELI

*(Goofing around.)* Oh you think that's funny, huh? Is this funny?

*(ELI starts tickling MENDEL. MENDEL giggles and squirms. A kid playing with his dad. They stop and ELI turns MENDEL towards him.)*

ELI

Mendel, please don't blame the people at the market for not giving you anything. Everyone has their own families to take care of. That's something I wish I had learned much earlier. Once my ankle's all good, I'll be back out there and you—

*(A hunger pain strikes, stronger than the last few. His hand rushes to his stomach, clutching the emptiness. He curls a bit more on his mattress and lets out a little hint of pain. MENDEL jumps and puts his hand on his father's head to comfort him. ELI does not want MENDEL to see him in such a weak state so he attempts to shrug off the pain relatively quickly.)*

ELI

I dreamt while you were out, Mendel. It was beautiful. I don't quite know what it was about but I have a feeling we were outside the wall somewhere far, far away (*Hopeful.*). I could feel the sun on my body and we were all (*Beat.*) laughing. Doesn't that sound ...

*(ELI starts to tear up remembering the dream.)*

ELI

I'm sorry Mendel (*Beat.*) It should be me. It—