

INT. ARTHUR AND SHEILA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Arthur is typing notes into his computer. He stops, tries to remember something, takes a book down from a shelf and starts to page through it, looking for a reference.

The phone rings. Sheila answers it.

SHEILA (O.S.)
Hello... Yes, he is... May I ask
who's calling?

Sheila comes in, holds the phone out questioningly to Arthur.

SHEILA (cont'd)
Alice Holmes?

Uneasily, he takes the phone from her.

ARTHUR
Hello?... Hi, Alice. How are
you?... Yes, I did. I mean, we...
Uh-huh... I know, but -... Well,
Alice, I just think -

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Alice is on the phone.

ALICE
I know what you think, Arthur. And
you're welcome to think whatever
you like. You can write it all up
in your little academic paper - any
kind of - crap you want to write.
But leave me and my daughter out of
it. Because for us, it's not an
academic question. For us it's
very real, Arthur.

ARTHUR (O.S.)
I know it's real, Alice. I mean,
that's what I'm trying to deal with
myself right now. The reality of
what happened and why and what it -
you know - what it cost everybody
involved. That's - that's kind of
what I'm -

ALICE
Arthur, nobody knows what this cost
better than I do. Nobody knows it
better than Cassie.

(MORE)

ALICE(cont'd)
Because we live with it. Every day
of our lives.

INT. ARTHUR AND SHEILA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

As he talks to Alice, Arthur paces back and forth, increasingly agitated, gesticulating more and more intensely. Sheila watches him.

ARTHUR
I know that. I'm not saying it
hasn't been incredibly painful for
you. I know it has. But it's been
painful for him, too. And so the
question is -

ALICE (O.S.)
He raped my daughter, Arthur.
Raped her. A three-year-old child.

ARTHUR
I just don't think that's true,
Alice. I just don't think it
happened.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ALICE
I'd like to know how you come to
that conclusion.

INT. ARTHUR AND SHEILA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

ARTHUR
Through research. Through talking
to people. Reading the trial
testimony and the police reports.
Background material on - children's
testimony and - memory and -

ALICE (O.S.)
My life is not a research project,
Arthur!

ARTHUR
But it does matter. All this
stuff. It's not like you can just -
ignore it. You have to - somehow -
take it into account.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ALICE

I do take it into account. I take it into account that it's very easy for people who weren't there to have all sorts of interesting theories about what happened in my life.

INT. ARTHUR AND SHEILA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

ARTHUR

But haven't you ever - I mean, with all that's happened - with all we've come to understand over the years - about - about these cases - haven't you ever wondered? Haven't you ever questioned - I mean, whether -

ALICE (O.S.)

(explosively)

No! I know what happened to me, and I know what happened to my daughter. And people like you who think you can come in after the fact and - explain it all away - you're just raping her all over again.

Arthur stands a moment, numbly silent.

ARTHUR

I'm sorry.

INT. ALICE'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

ALICE

I hope that's true, Arthur. I really hope that's true.

More silence.

ALICE (cont'd)

Arthur? Are you still there?

ARTHUR (O.S.)

I don't know what to say.

ALICE
Well, perhaps there's nothing left
to say.

INT. ARTHUR AND SHEILA'S APARTMENT - CONTINUOUS

ARTHUR
Yeah. All right. I'm sorry,
Alice. Good-bye.

He puts the phone down. He sees Sheila watching him. He goes into the living room, sits in front of the TV, and picks up the remote. He turns the TV on. Sheila stands in the doorway behind him.

SHEILA
That sounded rough.

He nods. She sits beside him. Silence.

SHEILA (cont'd)
Look, Arthur. Take it easy. It's
a doctoral thesis. Read some
books, collect your research, throw
around some jargon. Get your
degree. Get on with it.

Silence. He flips through the channels on the TV.

ARTHUR
I just want one person to say, "I'm
sorry." You know? I mean, this
terrible thing happened. This
really bad, bad thing. And, yeah,
it was a long time ago, and people
were scared, and maybe they didn't
know any better. But it's been
eighteen years. And people do know
better know. Or they should. At
what point do you say, "Look, we
fucked up. We made a bad mistake.
And we're sorry."

SHEILA
It's like oobleck.

ARTHUR
Oobleck?

SHEILA

Didn't you ever read Bartholomew and the Oobleck? It's a Dr. Seuss book.

He shakes his head.

SHEILA (cont'd)

Well, the king is tired of all the usual kinds of weather - rain and sun and snow and all that. So he asks his magicians to make him some new weather. And they go down into their magicians' cave and they say,

(deep "magician's" voice)

"Won't look like rain, won't look like snow. What it'll look like, I don't know." So they mix something up in their big black cauldron, and these little green specks start falling from the sky. And pretty soon the specks turn into big sticky green blobs. And the birds get stuck to the trees, and the king gets stuck to his throne, and the trumpeters can't sound the alarm because their trumpets get all stuck up. And Bartholomew Cubbins goes running to the king, and he says, "You have to do something." And the king says, "What can I do?" And Bartholomew says, "Maybe if you just say, 'I'm sorry. I was wrong.'" So the king says, "I'm sorry. I was wrong." And all the oobleck melts away and the birds can fly again and the trumpeters play joyful fanfares on their trumpets.

He smiles at her.

ARTHUR

It's a parable.

SHEILA

Well, sure. Let's say a long time ago a lot of well-intentioned people made some really bad shit come down in this country. And you want just one of those people to stand up and say, "I'm sorry."

(MORE)

SHEILA(cont'd)

I was wrong." But the problem is, in real life, the king never does say "I'm sorry." Kings, in general, don't.