

# THE UNEXPECTED

a 10 minute play

by Greg Gould

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**CHARACTERS**

LISA            36, a mother of one (soon to be mother of two)  
JEANNIE       17, a daughter of two (soon to be mother of one)  
ROBERT       38, Lisa's husband; Jeannie's father

**LOCATION**

Family dining room

**TIME**

A Thursday evening

*Lisa, wearing an apron over a beautiful evening gown, sits at a romantic table for two: candles, silverware, champagne – the works. She’s rehearsing for a big conversation that’s yet to happen . . .*

LISA: Honey, look. I know you don’t like surprises but . . . *(beat)* Honey. Baby. I know we’ve been talking about scaling back . . . *(beat)* Honey. Do you love me?

*Her phone rings.*

LISA: Hey! Where are you? Where? Did you get my messages? Yes tonight. She’s at the movies. Yes, with Super Meat Boy. When will you be home? Cause I’ve got a surprise. Of course it’s a good one. Look, just get home. Ok. See you soon.

*Jeannie enters.*

JEANNIE: Mum?

LISA: Darling. What are you doing home?

JEANNIE: I live here.

LISA: I know that. I thought you were going to the movies.

JEANNIE: I was.

LISA: So?

JEANNIE: So what?

LISA: So what are you doing here?

JEANNIE: What? I can’t come home when I feel like it?

LISA: Of course you can. I just wasn’t expecting you.

JEANNIE: Obviously. What’s going on?

LISA: Nothing. I’m just putting together a nice meal for your father. What do you think?

JEANNIE: I think you’re acting weird.

LISA: How so?

JEANNIE: You’re using the fancy cutlery for starters.

LISA: What fancy cutlery?

JEANNIE: This stuff. We only use this at Christmas. Or when dad’s creepy boss comes ‘round. Shit. He’s not here is he?

LISA: No. And don’t use that word. You sound uncouth.

JEANNIE: Did you and dad have another fight?

LISA: No. You say that like we always fight.

JEANNIE: You do.

LISA: We do not. We fight an appropriate amount.

JEANNIE: More than appropriate lately.

LISA: Well, your father's busy at work and I . . . well, I've been going through some things of my own. But it's nothing for you to worry about.

JEANNIE: Is that why you're wearing heels? And lipstick? And that dress? Oh god. I just realised what this is. This is date night!

LISA: What?

JEANNIE: Date night. You and Dad. You're gonna . . . gross!

LISA: Oh, Jeanie. Stop it.

JEANNIE: It'll be the laundry scene all over again.

LISA: I thought we agreed to not talk about that.

JEANNIE: But why on the washing machine, Mum? I use that.

LISA: You do not. And stop being silly. Tonight's not like that. Your father and I are just having a nice meal. Which is why you have to skedaddle.

JEANNIE: Hey?

LISA: That's right. Off you go.

JEANNIE: You're kicking me out?

LISA: Yep.

JEANNIE: Where am I supposed to go?

LISA: I'm sure grandma would love a visit. Or Uncle Phil. They're always saying they don't see enough of you.

JEANNIE: But I don't want to go to grandma's.

LISA: And I didn't want to sit through three hours of Batman with your father. But what are you gonna do?

JEANNIE: Mum, I'm serious. I want to stay home tonight.

LISA: Did you and Devon have a tiff?

JEANNIE: No. Well yes. I'm just not feeling well.

LISA: Oh, honey. Why didn't you say so? What's the matter? Is it cramps?

JEANNIE: It's not cramps, mum.

LISA: Are you hot? Might be that flu that's going round.

JEANNIE: I think it's more a belly thing?

LISA: What makes you say that?

JEANNIE: I puked all over Devon's car.

LISA: Oh, honey.

JEANNIE: He was pretty pissed.

LISA: Yes. Well, puke doesn't bring out the best in people. You ok now?

JEANNIE: Yeah. I just wanted to come home and, you know, regather.

LISA: Of course, honey. Of course.

*Lisa hugs Jeanie tight.*

*Beat.*

LISA: Ok. Run along.

JEANNIE: Mum!

LISA: What? You said you were fine.

JEANNIE: Yeah but there's something else I wanted to talk about.

LISA: Look. Jeanie. I know Devon is a big deal right now. I get it. I had a boyfriend at your age. But believe me, he'll get over the puke.

JEANNIE: Yeah, I know. But –

LISA: Good. So off you go.

JEANNIE: Why do you always do this?

LISA: What?

JEANNIE: This. You dismiss me.

LISA: I don't dismiss you.

JEANNIE: You do. All the time.

LISA: You're being silly.

JEANNIE: That's exactly what I'm talking about!

LISA: Honey, I'm not dismissing you. I'm . . . postponing you.

JEANNIE: This is important.

LISA: So is this dinner.

JEANNIE: You have dinner with dad every night.

LISA: Yes. But tonight we have things to discuss.

JEANNIE: You're not listening to me.

LISA: I'm listening just fine. You don't seem to be hearing my response.

JEANNIE: God. I'm so sick of you doing this! You don't listen.

JEANNIE

If you could just pay attention for ten seconds instead of fobbing me off you'd realise I have something important to say. But no. You can't do that. It's always, "not now honey". Or "later honey". Or "I'm in the middle of something honey". Well this can't wait. I need you to listen. Mum. Stop. Please. Mum! Listen to me. Mum! Why aren't you listening! Mum . . .

I'm pregnant!

What?

But you're too old!

What does that mean?!

LISA: Hang on. What do you mean 'you're pregnant'?

JEANNIE: I'm pregnant. I don't know how else to say it.

LISA: But when? *How?*

JEANNIE: Well, Devon and I drove up to the lake and -

LISA: I don't mean *how?* I know *how?* I mean *how?* How could you do this? What have I always told you?

JEANNIE: To use my head and to only do what felt right.

LISA

I listen. I'm listening. But you never listen back. I can't just drop everything every time you and Devon have a disagreement. There are other things going on in the world, Jeannie. Other people! Sometimes I have troubles too. Did you know that? Sometime I have things I need to sort out. Are you hearing me? Do you know what I'm saying? Jeannie . . .

I'm pregnant!

*beat*

What?

*beat*

But you're too young!

*beat*

What does that mean?!

LISA: That's right.

JEANNIE: It felt right, mum.

LISA: You're seventeen years old!

JEANNIE: I know!

LISA: Did he pressure you? I know boys can be *insistent*.

JEANNIE: It's not Devon's fault, mum. Well, not completely. But we both wanted it.

LISA: Your father was right. He's like a slimy little piece of processed meat.

JEANNIE: Mum!

LISA: Jeannie. You're pregnant!

JEANNIE: I know! So are you.

LISA: I know!

JEANNIE: So why are you yelling at me?

LISA: I don't know! It just feels right!

JEANNIE: Well stop it. I'm freaking out here. I can't have a kid. I'm not even sure I want a kid. I know Devon doesn't. You should have seen his face when I told him. He just sat there. Staring. That's when I puked. Right there in the car. He was like, 'watch the seats, man! I just had these cleaned!' He was totally flipping out. And now you're flipping out. And later Dad's gonna flip out. And I don't know what to do!

*Jeannie bursts into tears.*

LISA: Oh, hey. Honey. I'm sorry. Come here.

*Lisa hugs Jeannie.*

*Beat.*

JEANNIE: I've ruined everything.

LISA: No one has ruined anything.

JEANNIE: Devon hates me.

LISA: He doesn't. He's pissing his pants right now, but he doesn't hate you. This is my fault. Your right. I haven't been listening.

JEANNIE: Mum, I didn't have sex with Devon because of you. I did it because he's hot.

LISA: Still. I've been so wrapped up in my own head. You father's been talking about making changes. Cutting back at work. Taking some time for himself. We were so young when we had you. Now along comes another surprise. Or two.

JEANNIE: I'm sorry, Mum.

LISA: No. That's not what I meant. I just wasn't expecting this this. Not with me. Not again. And certainly not with you.

JEANNIE: So you're not pissed?

LISA: I'm furious. But I love you. We'll get through this. Together. *(beat)* You want to know something funny?

JEANNIE: What?

LISA: The day I told your father I was pregnant with you, I puked all over his car too.

JEANNIE: Really?

LISA: Yep. His little Datsun. There were chunks of gurge everywhere. On the seats. On the dash. In the ash tray.

JEANNIE: How'd he take it?

LISA: He freaked. We were young. He thought his life was over.

JEANNIE: So what changed?

LISA: Time. He just needed to get his head around things. That's the funny thing about men. They're idiots. All they want to do is play with their cars and comic books. Yet they step up when they need to. The good ones anyway.

JEANNIE: You think Devon will step up?

LISA: Dunno. Maybe. Either way you've got me. And your father.

JEANNIE: Dad's gonna freak isn't he?

LISA: It's gonna be an interesting conversation, that's for sure.

*Beat.*

JEANNIE: Mum?

LISA: Yeah?

JEANNIE: You and dad . . . it wasn't on the washing machine, was it?

LISA: Timing fits. And it was a good angle.

JEANNIE: Oh god!

LISA: C'mon. He'll be home soon.

JEANNIE: Right. Well, I'll leave you to it.

LISA: Like hell. I'm not doing this by myself. Not this time. No, set a place. Dinner for two just became a family affair.

JEANNIE: You know you don't need any of this, right? The dinner. The dress. You can talk to dad.

LISA: Yeah, I know. Stay here. I'm goanna go change.

*Robert charges in, all excited.*

ROBERT: Honey! Guess what?! I did it! I finally did it! I quit my job!

*Blackout.*

*END*