

**Beyond Cannoli**

**By**

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SCENE 1

Logan International Airport at 1:30 a.m. as shown on a wall clock in the background. VALERIE, mid 20s, sits slouched in a bank of chairs at baggage claim. She wears no makeup, looks tired and disheveled as one would whose time is focused on caring for someone who is sick. She wears a T-shirt, a rain slicker, and jeans tucked into rubber rain boots. She yawns, looks at her watch, sighs in frustration. A buzzer sounds and the clickety-clack of the baggage conveyor starts. Valerie sits upright, visibly relieved. We hear the noise of a crowd gathering. Then HOPE, late 20s, appears, quickly approaching Valerie with a fancy rolling carry-on bag and another large purse over her bent arm. She is dressed in tight jeans, high heels, has manicured and polished nails, freshly made up face, long, flowy hair, and sunglasses on top of her head.

HOPE

Valerie! Bonjour! It is so good to see you.

VALERIE stands. HOPE air kisses VALERIE on one cheek, then the other as if she is still in France.

VALERIE

Yeah.

HOPE

It was such a long flight. I needed to stop in the little girl's room for a few minutes to freshen up as soon as I got off the plane. I couldn't stand it.

VALERIE

I bet.

HOPE

(Looking at VALERIE's rain gear.)

Oh shoot. Is it raining? Did you bring me an umbrella? My hair is going to get all frizzy.

VALERIE

(Opening her empty hands.)

Does it look like I brought you an umbrella?

HOPE

Well it's not something I could easily pack. You could have thought of me.

VALERIE

You mean thought of your *hair*?

(beat)

And you could have thought to call or text me that your flight was delayed three hours.

HOPE

Was it that long? I was having such a lovely conversation with the pilot I lost track of the time. His name is Preston. Isn't that sweet? You could call him Press for short and press him like a button. (Squeals.) He has the dreamiest eyes and the kind of thick hair you just want to run your fingers through. So yummy.

VALERIE

Oh...great...You know, it's a two-hour drive to the airport, and then three hours of waiting here, and two hours back. That's seven hours away from Marilyn. I had to scramble to find a nurse who could look after her last-minute. You have the spare change to cover that cost, don't you?

HOPE looks at VALERIE blankly.

VALERIE (CONT.)

No, I didn't think so.

HOPE

Well why would she need someone to look after her in the middle of the night when she's asleep anyway? It's just a plain waste of money, if you ask me.

VALERIE

Seriously? You think-

HOPE

(Secretively.)

Oh! There's Preston. Don't you need to go use the little girl's room or something?

VALERIE

No.

VALERIE stares at HOPE staring at Preston.

Look. We've got to get going. Let's  
find your bag and get out of here.

HOPE pulls a compact and a lipstick out of the bag over her arm, watches herself apply a bright red lipstick in the little mirror, looks at herself approvingly, and then drops the lipstick and compact back into the bag. She looks ready to pounce.

VALERIE (CONT.)

Hope!

Hope jumps with surprise.

HOPE

What?

VALERIE

We've got to get going.

HOPE

Oh, you are such a killjoy. I've just flown all this way, and I'm tired. Can't a girl have a little fun?

VALERIE

What? No. The answer is *no*. We need to get home to Marilyn!

HOPE

Great! I know what I'm coming home to. We have to lighten things up...Oh. That reminds me...I have something for you.

Hope pulls a little paper bag out of the big bag over her arm.

Here. Open it.

VALERIE looks at the bag suspiciously.

HOPE (CONT.)

Go on. It's not going to bite.

VALERIE opens the bag and looks inside. After seeing what it is, she sticks her hand in and pulls out a fancy bottle of perfume. She looks at HOPE, baffled. HOPE grabs the bottle and unscrews the cap, and holds it under VALERIE's nose.

(MORE)

HOPE (CONT.) (cont'd)

Sniff.

HOPE smells it, coughs, and wafts the odor away.

HOPE (CONT.)

Oh come on. *C'est bon, no?* as they say in France. Indulge yourself. It's perfect for a lovely night out.

VALERIE

Ha! Lovely night out. *Lovely night out?* When was the last time I had a *lovely night out?* Huh? You don't get it, do you? I am living in the boondocks! Two hours from Boston where there is nothing to do. No one to meet except the boring townies. I am taking care of *your* sick mother because it's what Dad would have wanted. Every day is hard and lonely, and I try to give Marilyn hope and keep her spirits up...Remember? It's why I called you and told you to come home all the way from *France?* She needs that to look forward to. If I were even to wear this perfume in the house, Marilyn would be too sensitive to it. It's the last thing she needs!

HOPE snatches the bottle from VALERIE's hand and drops it back into the bag.

HOPE

That's just great. Because I bought another bottle for Mom, too. Why didn't you tell me?

VALERIE

How was I supposed to know you were getting us perfume? You're on the other side of the globe! Don't you know anything about elderly sick people?

HOPE

Apparently not, according to you.

HOPE digs in her back and pulls out a second paper bag with perfume, turns on her heels and drops the two bags in a nearby waste basket.

VALERIE

You didn't have to throw it out.

HOPE

No? Well what do you want me to do with it? Give it to Press...so he can give it to all these other ladies and woo them instead of me?

VALERIE is silent. HOPE smooths her top and her hair and looks back in the direction of Preston.

VALERIE's cell phone rings.

VALERIE

Hello?...Marilyn, what are you doing awake?...Yes, she's here...We'll be leaving the airport as soon as we pick up her bag, so don't worry...We'll be home before you wake up in the morning...I'm sorry it's Izzy. She's the only one I could find last-minute...She does not smell...I swear she doesn't...She wouldn't give you the ice cream because it's not good for you. I told her not to. It upsets your stomach, remember? With all the meds you don't need-...Not chocolate either...No, chocolate is not a vegetable even if you heard it on the news...OK...Hold on.

VALERIE removes the phone from her ear and offers it to HOPE.

VALERIE

It's for you...

HOPE

Oh, I think I see my bag!

HOPE starts to walk away.

VALERIE

*Hope!* She asked for *you*. Take it!

HOPE reluctantly takes the phone.

HOPE

Mommy?...Hi Mommy...Yes. I am in Boston with Val...At Logan, not Mike's Pastry...Cannoli?

VALERIE shakes her head indicating no to the cannoli.

HOPE (CONT.)

Sure, Mommy. We can pick up cannoli  
at Mike's on the way home.

VALERIE waves her arms and shakes her head as she mouths  
"No."

HOPE (CONT.)

The kind with chocolate chips?...I  
did hear chocolate was a  
vegetable...yes, we'll be sure to  
get the kind with chocolate chips,  
then...Right...No, I'm not bringing  
home a boyfriend...I know it's  
important to find love...OK,  
Mommy...Can't wait to see you,  
too...(makes kiss noises) muuuaah  
muuuaah muuuaah.

HOPE hands to phone back to VALERIE who hits the hang-up  
button.

VALERIE

Why did you say we'd get her  
cannoli?

HOPE

Why not? She probably won't  
remember anyway.

VALERIE

Oh ho ho...yes she will! Sweets she  
will remember. They are so bad for  
her. The doctor said they mess up  
her hormones even more, and she has  
more pain and is less responsive  
after eating them.

HOPE

Let her live a little, OK? You said  
she should have something to look  
forward to. Life with you taking  
care of her...she must be so  
deprived.

VALERIE

(glaring while Hope looks in the  
direction of the conveyor belt)

Well if you can do better, why  
don't you? She's not even *my*

(MORE)

VALERIE (cont'd)  
mother...Besides, it's 1:30 in the  
morning. Helloooo. Mike's is  
closed.

HOPE  
(Secretive again.)  
Look! Preston is looking at me.

VALERIE grins and flirtatiously waves at him with her  
curling fingers. Then she watches as a woman who was behind  
her and VALERIE walks over to him. HOPE plays with her  
fingers some more as if she had been stretching them and her  
hand all along and looks back at VALERIE.

VALERIE  
I'm sorry, Hope.

HOPE  
He must have just forgot that we  
had talked earlier. I'm not that  
unforgettable usually.

VALERIE  
(Looking towards Preston and  
the woman)  
You know, they're wearing rings. I  
think they're married...they look  
like a nice couple.

HOPE  
(Trying to take an  
inconspicuous peek)  
Well he should have told me he was  
married instead of carrying on like  
I was the best think since the  
iPhone. Some men!

VALERIE  
Look. Let's just get your bag and  
go, OK?

HOPE  
OK.

The two watch the conveyer waiting to see HOPE's suitcase.

VALERIE  
There are not many bags left. What  
did it look like?



HOPE

It was black.

VALERIE

Well that's a help...95% of all suitcases are black.

HOPE

It had a tag the same color as my lipstick.

VALERIE

Really? You got a tag that matches your lipstick?

HOPE

Yeah. I made it by drawing with my lipstick on it.

VALERIE

Oh right! Of course. Doesn't everyone do that?

HOPE

Well I didn't have a pen.

VALERIE

Do you see it?

HOPE

No.

VALERIE watches as the last bag is picked up.

VALERIE

Hope, there goes the last bag.

HOPE

Oh.

VALERIE

Why can't you stay on top of your baggage?

HOPE

Why can't you not get bent out of shape about it? Maybe a cute guy will have to deliver it to Mommy's tomorrow? I swear, you are such a killjoy!

VALERIE

Maybe a guy will deliver it, maybe he won't...but seriously? You want him to see you at Marilyn's? Oh now that's a turn-on.

HOPE

He probably has a mother, too.

VALERIE

First of all, it may not be a guy who drops it by, and if it is, he's probably married. Second, if he's not married, chances are he lives in Boston if he works for the airline and isn't going to want to stick around in podunk Mattapoissett. Third, the whole reason you are here is for Marilyn, not to take up your time dating some guy.

HOPE

You don't get it, do you?

VALERIE

Me not get it? Oh this will be a first. OK. Tell me, dear sister. What am I not getting?

HOPE

The thing that will make Mommy happiest is if I am married. OK? It's all she ever talks about. If I don't walk in with a man on my arm, I am nothing. I don't want her to die without seeing that I will be taken care of.

VALERIE

Hope, you can't rush something like that. Plus these days, she's got more important things on her mind, like cannoli. You'll always be ok in her book.

HOPE

That's easy for you to say. You're not her daughter...Well, not her real daughter. She doesn't expect anything from you.

VALERIE

Christ! I am more her daughter than you are right now. I'm the one who is taking care of her in her hour of need. And her memory is going fast. You said so yourself. She won't remember whether you are married or not at this point. All you have left with her is time. And you've hardly given her that.

HOPE

(Pause, then quietly.)  
You are such a killjoy.

VALERIE

Hope...this isn't a dress rehearsal. This is life. This is what is happening now. You're missing your curtain call.

HOPE thinks for a moment, then digs into her bag again and pulls out a small box. She opens it and shows VALERIE.

HOPE

Do you think she'll like this instead of the perfume or cannoli?

VALERIE touches the necklace in the box.

VALERIE

Maybe. It's very nice. And it's something she can hold on to and think of you by...it's thoughtful.

HOPE looks up and sees something behind her.

HOPE

Hey! I think that's my suitcase.  
How'd it get over there?

VALERIE shrugs. HOPE gets the suitcase, checks the tag, and rolls it over to VALERIE. As they leave...

VALERIE

Thank God. Let's go.

HOPE

Can we get some cannoli anyway?

VALERIE

I told you...Mike's is closed at 1:30 in the morning. For

(MORE)

VALERIE (cont'd)  
Chrissakes! C'mon. Let's go  
already.

HOPE  
Do you think Mike at Mike's Pastry  
might be single?

VALERIE  
He's probably ancient. Mike's  
Pastry has been there forever.

HOPE  
Maybe he has a son. Or a grandson.

VALERIE  
Move!

HOPE  
Ohhhh! It's raining. My hair is  
going to frizz up!

VALERIE and HOPE exit together.

THE END