

Lizzy and Jane: Deleted Scene

Here is Nick's son's mom, Rebecca. She was completely cut from *Lizzy and Jane*, becoming more a threat or a presence rather than a real person. But she was once real. And here she is trying to meet her son, Matt, for the first time at the park.

I pattered around Jane's house, bored and restless. There were places I could go, Pike Place Market, Melrose Market, the aquarium, the Space Needle... Nothing interested me. I kept seeing Andy, Brian, and Jane – all the people I'd come to know – cycle before my eyes. But not Paul, Tabitha, Suzanne or Chef Dimples. They remained distant, as they always were.

My phone beeped. Nick: At the park with Matt. Come join?

I immediately typed Yes and hurried the few blocks.

He didn't notice me approach until I sat next to him.

"Hi." He glanced at me then turned his attention back to Matt, who was running around with a girl.

"You said they start young." I chuckled.

"I'm sorry about today, about lunch. I needed to..." Nick ran his hand through his hair. "I needed to call Rebecca."

"Rebecca?"

Nick didn't move his focus from Matt. "She's staying at the White Cloud. She said she'll stay until I let her meet him and after this morning..."

"You didn't tell me."

"I didn't know how. I told her I'd think about it. I thought she'd leave, like before, but she called this morning to remind me that she's still here." He turned to me. "It's a good thing. I should be thrilled. I don't want Matt to feel like Brian does."

"That's totally different."

"Is it? Both have moms who aren't around. Rebecca wants to be. Who am I to deny it?"

"His father."

“Some father...”

“Stop it. You’re a great dad.” I opened my mouth to say more, when I noticed brown hair swaying perfectly.

“Nick,” I whispered. “She’s here.”

He startled. “Where?” He searched and found her. “She asked what I was doing this afternoon and I mentioned the park. So stupid.” He face drained of all color. “I haven’t told him yet.”

“Don’t let *her* tell him.”

Nick might underestimate Rebecca or not recognize what she was, but I did – then came the concession that she was Matt’s mom and I couldn’t diminish the power and complexity of that bond.

Nick stood up, perhaps to cut her off if she approached Matt, but she didn’t look to the kids at all. She kept her eyes trained on him as she crossed the playground. Her son was within a few feet at one point, but her gaze never wavered from Nick.

“You don’t mind I came, do you? You said you’d be here.”

Nick stepped in front of her and held his out his hands. “I haven’t told him. This isn’t the time or the place.”

“Of course not. I just wanted to see him. Where is he?”

Nick didn’t answer. She started to look around, searching. I think he expected that she would recognize Matt – that he’d get a fairytale reunion or tears of recognition and remorse – anything to let him know this was right and that he wasn’t a fool. Maybe Nick felt none of that, but I did.

Her eye didn’t stop as she scanned the playground. Her gaze returned to Nick and she raised her brows in question. I sat watching the father, the son, and the mother.

“He’s over there. The green coat.” Nick nodded his head. He dug his hands in his pockets as if to keep himself from pointing.

“Oh, Nick. He’s so cute. He’s adorable. Can I go see him?”

Nick blocked her line of sight. “Absolutely not.”

Her features clouded. “That’s not fair. How can you say that?” Her voice rose at the end. I glanced to Matt. He hadn’t noticed.

“Tomorrow. I need to talk to him tonight. He’s a kid. This is going to be a shock.”

“But—”

“Tomorrow.”

I watched her sift through her options and choose her best. “Can I join you?” She stepped around Nick and directed the question to me. A flicker passed between us and I was classified as a threat.

“Of course. Please sit.” I stood and stepped toward Nick, unwilling and unable to play. “I’ll see you later, Nick. This is between you two.”

He looked at me with a million questions in his eyes – none of which I could answer.

“Goodbye.” I reached up, kissed him on the cheek and walked out of the park. Vacation was over, at least as far Nick was concerned. Reality had just returned with silky auburn tresses and matchstick jeans.

I only looked up, ending my count of the cracks in the sidewalk, at Jane’s house, where I found Cecilia rocking on her porch swing. “Have you been here long?”

“I just arrived. I was about to call you, but got sucked in by this thing. It’s relaxing.” She tapped her foot to ground, perpetuating the gentle sway.

I sat next her. “Then I should be out here daily.”

She didn’t answer.

“You okay?”

She sighed and glanced at me, but still said nothing. I’d never noticed how pale her eyes were under all that black eyeliner.

“I’m not a patient, Cecilia. I’m a friend. You can talk to me.”

She sucked in a huge halting breath. “Thank you.” She pressed her fists into her eyes and screamed “Ugghhh...” Her yell filled the moment with more power and emotion than I could scoop out of a decade.

The scene continues with one you know, in which Cecilia and Lizzy sit on Jane’s front porch swing. *(Goldie if you want to make this longer, I left the continuation below as it’s slightly different from the final version.)*

It startled me. I looked around, but no one was about to witness or listen. I sat silent and took over the rocking motion with my foot.

“Sorry about that.” She lowered her fists. “It’s just that I have to hold it together there and usually I can. Then something like this happens.” We rocked for a few moments. “When I was young, everything felt so real, so final, scary even... That’s part of the reason I started using. Emotions ballooned into big, black demons that bit and overwhelmed me. In rehab, I learned I was wired that way. I feel things deeply – too deeply. It’s even got a name beyond high sensitivity...” She glanced over at me and shrugged.

She continued, “Anyway, an amazing counselor taught me to watch others, but create borders, protect myself while still being able to give, to make my world bigger, forgive myself and to be thankful – to believe that God gave me these odd sympathies, empathies, and emotions that are always in me, to be a blessing, even a gift. It was a shift in perspective and it’s good, but on days like today I’m falling again.”

I put my arm around her. “It’ll pass. And your counselor was right about perspective. I learned that from you. You have a beautiful one. Hope is a good perspective. Faith, a good lens.”

“I don’t feel it right now.”

“But isn’t that the point? That God is still there, reality is still there, no matter how you feel? Isn’t that what perspective is all about?”

She turned to me and widened her eyes, questioning.

“You’ve helped remind me of a lot I’d forgotten.” I shrugged and we swayed. Back and forth. Back and forth.

“I’m going to miss you.” She spoke into the silence.

“New York isn’t that far away.”

“It is, but thanks for saying that. We can keep in touch. Are you on Facebook?”

I chuckled. “I will be.”

She leaned back and pushed us harder. “What about you and Nick?”

“Will we stay in touch? No, I don’t think so.”

“That’s a shame.” She smiled at me. “In the Infusion Center, you’re stiff and you’re stiff with Jane. You get this tight expression in your eyes.” She narrowed her eyes

in an unflattering imitation. “But when you cook, you’re funny and you’re part of your work, not separate. You’re almost bubbly. And when I walked in and saw you with Nick the other day, you were lit up to a whole new level.”

“Yikes. Am I really that transparent?”

Cecilia quirked an eyebrow and nodded. I interpreted it to say *Suck to be you*. And she was right. On so many levels, that is exactly how I felt.

“Nick and I were a blip and while it was nice...” She pinned me with a glare and a raised the eyebrow again – so much more daunting when dyed jet black and firing twice in a moment. “Fine, it was more than nice, but still just a blip. I’ll go home, get back to work at Feast and, I hope, keep that bubbly feeling you described. That’s all I need.”

I then told her about Paul, Chef Dimples and trying to recapture my love and “gift” for cooking. As I told my story, I began to believe that I’d done it, that I’d regained what was lost and that I’d even found something new. After all, we had created the magic that day in the kitchen for Tyler, even for Jane. And I had created food that meant something to Nick – the chicken salad, the potpie, the ice cream. All these gifts were relevant, real and they mattered. *Didn’t they?* I kept telling her more and more, with a generated eagerness, until I believed it myself.

An hour later, as she headed down the steps, Cecilia blew it away with a single question. “What if it was never about the food?”