

Scene: Toni Gets the Book

The doorbell rings once. Toni does not acknowledge the door and keeps tying her shoes. On the other side of the door, Fred begins knocking and singing Toni's name. Toni leaves a shoe untied, stomps to the door, and opens it.

FRED

Hey, Toni!

TONI

Hi Fred.

FRED

Got a package for you today, sweetheart.

TONI

Yeah, okay thanks.

FRED

...What do you think it is?

TONI

Um...I'm not sure

FRED

Well, it looks like your mom's handwriting...you know like on those birthday cards she sends? And the christmas cards! She's a funny lady, the way she writes "From: *Santa Claus*" on them all.

TONI

Yeah.

FRED

Of course she knows you know...I mean, how old are kids when they find out about Santa these days? How old were you when you found out about Santa's secret and all that?

TONI

Um...

FRED

You know when you found out [whispered] *he wasn't real* and all that.

TONI

Oh. Uh...

FRED

I'm only asking because my oldest one, Joe, I mean, he's nearly 8 now and I don't know if I should tell him or not.

TONI

Well--

FRED

Cuz I remember one year, when I was 8 or 9 you know, I stayed up on Christmas Eve cuz I wanted to ask Santa if he'd brought my sister the teddy bear from the Sears catalog that she wanted and I heard some noise and went into the living room and found my mom putting presents under the tree. I didn't talk to her all of Christmas day. That's probably why I have trust issues. I told her that last year, I said, "Mom, you and Santa are why I have trust issues" and she said "Fred, eat your christmas log."

TONI

[beat] Well if you don't tell him, I mean...somebody probably will, right? Probably better coming from you...

FRED

That's what my wife, you know, Tammy, said. But she doesn't wanna do it. She wants *me* to do it, of course. She says she'll tell the next one, but we both know it's gonna be me!

TONI

Sounds like she knows what she's doing.

FRED

Ain't that the truth. [*somewhat lost in thought*] Unless, you know, he is real. And I'm not saying he is or anything, but

maybe...like maybe he's real but as we get older we just convince ourselves he's made up. And then he stopped coming because we stopped believing or something like that.

TONI

Yeah, uh, I guess Journey said it best.

FRED

Don't Stop Believin'! That's some funny shit, sweetheart.

TONI

Thanks for the package, Fred.

FRED

'Course! [beat] Then there's the whole Easter bunny business, huh? [beat] We'll cross that bridge when we get to it! I've got to be on my way now. [*Toni shuts the door in Fred's face and this next line is from behind the door?*] Have a great day, darlin'!

Toni takes a moment to lean back against the door, exhausted from Fred.