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Adams was still holding the frozen pizza. A wet spot on the back of Christina's summer dress, where he had held her in his embrace, indicated the pizza was in the process of defrosting.

"Would you like to stay for dinner?" he asked, his face naturally framing a familiar boyish grin. That look had helped successfully clear a path through every difficult situation I ever had the privilege of watching him navigate. He held the pizza up for her to see. Moving the melting frozen pizza from one hand to the other, he wiped his wet palm on his jeans.

Christina gave the invitation more thought than it deserved. I had a front row seat at a performance where both actors, the only people on stage, seemed to have forgotten their lines.

“Sorry, I can’t tonight, Jonathan. Richard is here this weekend. He’s making dinner at my house for six of our—” She corrected herself. “Six of his friends. I have to get back. I wanted you to have these. I know how much you like peaches.” She passed the plastic bag to Adams’s free hand.

Adams looked like he had just walked out of a grocery store, frozen pizza in one hand, fresh produce in the other. He glanced around nervously for a place to put them. He set them on the nearby deacon’s bench, on top of my discarded jacket. Then he looked up at Christina, offering her a shrug of his shoulders.

“Well, I’m sorry. You’ll be missed at dinner. But that means more for us, Tom.” He smiled and brushed a wayward strand of blond hair behind her ear.

Christina gave Adams a frown that was probably meant for only him to see. Then she stepped beside him and reached for my hand. “I’ve really got to go. It’s nice to see you again, Tom. Make sure you and Jonathan come over to my house Saturday night for a drink or two, or five or six. You have it on your calendar, don’t you, Jonathan?”

As she spoke, she gently touched his arms just below his shoulders—a gesture of endearment she apparently felt to be inappropriate just as quickly as she

had made it. Christina's hands dropped to her side and she stepped back.

"We'll come to your party as long as Richard's not invited," Adams answered. His impish smile never left his face.

Christina smiled back, slipped past him, and was halfway down the driveway before Adams moved. Her soft good-bye and a gentle brush of his cheek with the back of her open hand hung behind her in the air for just a second, then left his house through his wide open red door and chased her home.

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