

**Your main commentary should be focused on *the expression of the future*. Other topics may also be addressed.**

What are we going to do? she says. My God, Owen, we can't just sit around here and wait for them to come back. I don't want to die. It's too stupid to die when you're twenty-seven years old. I know... maybe we can run away and hide somewhere.

- 5 It wouldn't do any good. Wherever we went, they're bound to track us down. Then maybe you have to kill that old man after all. We've already been through that. You were against it, remember? I didn't know anything then. Now, I know. I don't see how that makes any difference. I can't do it, and even if I could, I'd only wind up in prison.
- 10 Who says you'll be caught? If you think of a good plan, maybe you'll get away with it. Leave it alone, Flora. You don't want me to do it any more than I do. Okay. Then we hire someone to do it for you. Stop it. We're not killing anyone. Do you understand me?
- 15 What then? If we don't do something, we'll be dead one week from tonight. I'm going to send you away. That's the first step. Back to your mother in Buenos Aires. But you just said they'd find us wherever we go. They're not interested in you. I'm the only one they're after and once we're
- 20 apart, they're not going to bother with you. What are you saying, Owen? Just that I want you to be safe. And what about you? Don't worry. I'll think of something. I'm not going to let myself be killed by
- 25 those two maniacs, I promise. You'll go down and visit your mother for a while, and when you come back, I'll be waiting for you in this apartment. Understood? I don't like it Owen. You don't have to like it. You just have to do it. For me. That evening, they book a round-trip flight to Buenos Aires, and the next
- 30 morning Brick drives Flora to the airport. He knows it is the last time he will ever see her. But he struggles to maintain his composure and gives no hint of the anguish roiling inside him. As he kisses her goodbye at the security entrance, surrounded by throngs of travelers and uniformed airport personnel, Flora suddenly begins to cry. Brick gathers her into his arms and strokes the
- 35 top of her head, but now that he can feel her body convulsing against his, and now that her tears are seeping through his shirt and dampening his skin, he no longer knows what to say. Don't make me go, Flora begs. No tears, he whispers back to her. It's only ten days. By the time you come
- 40 home, everything will be finished.

And so it will, he thinks, as he climbs into his car and drives home to Jackson Heights from the airport. At that point, he has every intention of keeping his word: to avoid another encounter with Rothstein and Frisk, to be waiting for Flora in the apartment when she returns- but that doesn't mean he plans on

45 being alive.

*So now it's a suicide*, he remembers saying to Frisk.

In a roundabout way, yes.

- Brick is approaching his thirtieth birthday, and not once in his life has he ever thought of killing himself. Now it has become his sole preoccupation, and in the
- 50 next two days he sits in the apartment trying to figure out the most painless and efficient method of leaving this world. He considers buying a gun and shooting himself in the head. He considers poison. He considers slitting his wrists. Yes, he says to himself, that's the old standard, isn't it? Drink half a bottle of vodka, pour twenty or thirty sleeping pills down your throat, slip into a
- 55 warm tub, and then slash your veins with a carving knife. Rumor has it that you barely feel a thing.