

## Catherine and Robert

Start

CATHERINE. — expressible as the sum of two cubes in two different ways.

ROBERT. Twelve cubed plus one cubed equals 1,729.

CATHERINE. And ten cubed plus nine cubed. Yes, we've got it, thank you.

ROBERT. You see? Even your depression is mathematical. Stop moping and get to work. The kind of potential you have —

CATHERINE. I haven't done anything good.

ROBERT. You're young. You've got time.

CATHERINE. I do?

ROBERT. Yes.

CATHERINE. By the time you were my age you were famous.

ROBERT. By the time I was your age I'd already done my best work. *(Beat.)*

CATHERINE. What about after?

ROBERT. After what?

CATHERINE. After you got sick.

ROBERT. What about it?

CATHERINE. You couldn't work then.

ROBERT. No, if anything I was sharper.

CATHERINE. *(She can't help it; she laughs.)* Dad.

ROBERT. I was. Hey, it's true. The clarity — that was the amazing thing. No doubts.

CATHERINE. You were happy?

ROBERT. Yeah, I was busy.

CATHERINE. Not the same thing.

ROBERT. I don't see the difference. I knew what I wanted to do and I did it.

If I wanted to work a problem all day long, I did it.

If I wanted to look for information — secrets, complex and tantalizing messages — I could find them all around me: in the air. In a pile of fallen leaves some neighbor raked together. In box scores in the paper, written in the steam coming up off a cup of coffee. The whole world was talking to me.

If I just wanted to close my eyes, sit quietly on the porch and listen for the messages, I did that.

It was wonderful. *(Beat.)*

CATHERINE. How old were you? When it started.

ROBERT. Mid-twenties. Twenty-three, four. *(Beat.)*

Is that what you're worried about?