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## Testing

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Gordon: Testing

## **Testing**

John Gordon

The music stops.

A disclaimer blares from the radio. This is a test...had this been a real emergency...this is just a test.

He slumps, head buried in hands, convinced the room is spinning.

No word since she stormed out three days ago. Their last scene strobes in his brain, a maddening repetition like a phonograph needle condemned to track the grooves of a broken record.

She had never hurled such vile accusations: You were a terrible...
You cheated...
nor breached carefully crafted boundaries of propriety:
I should have married...
I never really loved...
Then she was gone.

In deepening darkness cryptic visions of their children invade his agony: toddlers run off, look back to make sure they are being watched; adolescents defy authority, challenge curfews; young adults reject conventional mores of sex and drugs. They push limits, test Mom and Dad, careful to avoid severing family ties.

Severed ties.

The thought jolts him back.

This may not be just a test.