

Unsafe

a two-act play

by
Jim Dalglish

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Unsafe

Characters

- Lisa** Attractive 40-year-old professional pianist.
- Georgie** Lisa's 8-year-old daughter. Georgie has Williams Syndrome, a rare genetic disorder caused by the deletion of 26 genes in the long arm of chromosome seven. Williams People tend to be socially garrulous and musically gifted, yet have over-sensitive hearing and cognitive difficulties with spatial relationships and numbers. They have facial features often described as "Elfin" and tend to have heart disorders.
- Yvonne** Lisa's mother, early 60s. An upper-class woman who knows her way around New York.
- Guy** Lisa's father and Yvonne's husband, late 70s. Rather imperious.
- Nathaniel** A neurologist, mid 30s. He is the author of a best-selling book concerning the role of the senses in the perception of reality. He is currently conducting research for a new book on genetic disorders. He's brilliant with neuroscience, yet awkward with people.
- Will** A young man, 21. A charismatic storyteller.

Setting

- Place** Manhattan. Lisa's loft in Tribeca. Yvonne & Guy's Upper East Side co-op.
- Time** The play begins on the evening of February 5, 2003 – the day that Colin Powell testified before the United Nations about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. It ends six months later.

Scenic Design

The three settings – Lisa's loft, her bedroom and Yvonne and Guy's study – may be suggested with minimal set pieces. The plan should be open and evocative rather than literal.

Act I

(Lights up.

February 5, 2003; 7:00pm.

The open living room of a spacious loft in Tribeca. The room contains a bar, a sofa, a few chairs, a bookshelf, a coffee table and a grand piano. A large bouquet of flowers sits on a side table. The entrance to the loft is an elevator. Doorways lead to the kitchen and a hallway.

New York is in the icy grip of a blizzard. Falling snowflakes can be seen through the loft's large windows. The lights of the city are also visible – they look like stars.

At rise Lisa and her eight-year-old daughter, Georgie, are sitting on a rug on the floor. Strewn about the floor are a bunch of colorful, multi-shaped tiles. On the floor directly in front of Lisa, a set of ten tiles is arranged in a pattern. Georgie busily sorts through the other tiles on the floor in an effort to find matching shapes and colors and arrange them in the same pattern in the space on the floor in front of her. This is not an easy task for her to complete. As she tries to arrange the tiles, she hums a melody, an unrecognizable, yet pleasant tune. Her mother observes her efforts, occasionally drinking from a bottle of water and absently gazing at the snow as it gently falls outside the large casement windows of the loft.

Georgie finishes arranging the tiles. She stops humming and looks to her mother.)

LISA

Done?

(Georgie nods. Lisa examines the tiles. Four of Georgie's tiles don't match the shape or color of the set in front of Lisa. She points to each of the four and smiles encouragingly to Georgie. Georgie removes the four offending tiles and searches the rest to find the correct matches.

After a moment, Georgie gives up, stands and runs to the large casement windows.)

Georgie?

GEORGIE

It's not fun anymore.

(Georgie stares out through the window and watches the snow as it falls. Lisa abandons the matching exercise and crosses to the window. A beat passes as they both stare out at the falling snow.)

Can we go outside?

LISA

It's nighttime.

GEORGIE

I'm not afraid of the dark.

(Pause.)

LISA

Ready for the party?

(Georgie stares at her mother.)

Your new dress?

(Georgie runs off toward her bedroom.)

GEORGIE

(As she exits:) It's a party. It's a party. It's a party, party, party.

(Lisa crosses back to the tiles. She gathers them and places them in a box. She takes the box and places it on a bookcase shelf. She crosses to the bar and transfers the bottle of vodka sitting on the top shelf to the cupboard below. She thinks for a moment. Then places the rest of the liquor bottles in the cupboard and closes the door.

The door buzzer rings. The noise startles Lisa. Georgie runs back on stage in her panties, undershirt and socks. She's almost wearing a pastel party dress – it looks as though she's just thrown it on over her head before re-entering. Georgie runs to the elevator. Lisa wants to say something to stop her, but doesn't go through with it. She returns to tidying up.)

GEORGIE

(Into the door phone:) Hello? This is Georgie. May I ask who is speaking? (To her mother:) Nonnie and Poppa.

LISA

Buzzer.

(She presses the door buzzer.)

Elevator.

(She presses the elevator button. The down arrow turns on with a *ding*. She crosses to the center of the room as she continues dressing. Lisa turns her around, kneels on the floor and tries to zip up the dress. The dress is a little too young for Georgie and

doesn't fit her very well. It won't zip all the way without ripping the fabric.)

LISA

I think it's time for a new party dress, honey.

GEORGIE

Surprise!

(The up arrow on the elevator turns on with a *ding*. Lisa gives up and ties the ribbons in a bow on the back. She pulls Georgie's hair back into a ponytail, wrapping it with an elastic band.)

Can I show Poppa Goldie's babies?

LISA

Of course.

GEORGIE

Can we go outside tomorrow?

(The elevator doors open with a *ding* and Guy and Yvonne enter. She wears a fur coat and is in high spirits. He wears an overcoat and suit.)

Surprise!

YVONNE

Hope the snow doesn't scare people off.

GUY

Kitten.

GEORGIE

Meow.

GUY

Woof!

YVONNE

Why you insist on living so far from everything, honey.

LISA

It's Tribeca, Mother. Not the South Pole

YVONNE

Could have fooled me tonight.

GEORGIE

Hello, Poppa. How are you doing this evening?

GUY

I'm fine. How are you this evening, Kitten?

GEORGIE

Purrrrrfect! How are *you* doing this evening, Nonnie?

YVONNE

Take my coat like a big girl, Georgie.

(Yvonne takes off her fur with a flourish. Georgie takes the fur offstage.)

Party time!

(Yvonne shows off her expensive dress.)

Red. To match today's terrorism threat level.

(Neither Guy nor Lisa pay attention.)

GUY

Happy Birthday, Princess.

LISA

Thanks, Dad.

(He kisses her cheek. Yvonne has crossed to the bouquet of flowers and checked the card.)

YVONNE

You got them. Good. Where are the favors?

(Lisa looks at her blankly.)

Party favors?

(Lisa gestures to a box lying next to the bookcase. Georgie re-enters as Yvonne crosses to the box.)

GEORGIE

Goldie had babies, Poppa.

GUY

How many?

GEORGIE

They swim so fast I can't tell.

GUY

Let's go count, shall we?

(They exit.)

YVONNE

Isn't that dress a little young for Georgie?

LISA

Yes.

(Yvonne starts to remove birthday hats, streamers, paper napkins, etc. from the box. Many have "Happy Birthday, Lisa" printed on them.)

YVONNE

Your father got you a present. Won't tell me what it is. Too busy getting worked up over Colin Powel.

LISA

Weapons of Mass Distraction?

YVONNE

You've talked to him?

LISA

This afternoon.

(Yvonne dumps the party favors on the table.)

YVONNE

Haven't even started...

LISA

Mom, you don't have to...

YVONNE

...They got rid of our doorman. That's what everyone in the building thinks. (Stage whisper:) *Pakistani*. What's next? Taxi drivers? Can you imagine this town without Islamic taxi drivers? They're up to something.

LISA

Who?

YVONNE

We've elected a bunch of lying sons of bitches who know the power of fear. *See something? Say something!* I guess suicide bombers are surprisingly easy to spot. *Homeland Security*. Is it just me, or does that have a faintly fascist ring to it? *Homeland*. *Vaterland*. (Singing:) *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*. (Referring to the party supplies:) I got these online. Bet you didn't think your stupid old mother could do that.... (Holding up a napkin:) Personalized.

(She rips open a bag of balloons and begins to blow one up.)

LISA

You don't have to...

YVONNE

Nonsense.

LISA

I'm turning forty not ten.

YVONNE

It's deliberately ironic.

(She blows more on the balloon.)

LISA

I wanted a low key party... Relaxed... (Under her breath:) Where you don't drink too much.

YVONNE

(Laughing:) Help me, honey. I'm getting lightheaded.

LISA

Mom...

YVONNE

It's a party, Lisa. It's what people expect.

LISA

People?

YVONNE

From the list I gave you?

YVONNE

It's only family.

YVONNE

Only family? I saw Tina... Terry... Tallulah... the... bucktoothed flautist in your ensemble this morning and said I'd see her tonight. She must think I'm insane.

LISA

I wanted it to be ... the people who matter the most to me. I should have told you. My fault.

(Yvonne let's go of the balloon. It flies around the room. Then falls to the floor.)

YVONNE

I'm hideously overdressed.

LISA

You can save it for a more important occasion.

(Yvonne crosses to Lisa and holds her face.)

YVONNE

What's more important than my daughter's birthday? Of course you can have your own party. Without any interference from your meddling hag of a mother.

(She kisses her forehead.)

Remember that pony in the park on your 10th?

LISA

Oh, god.

YVONNE

(Laughing:) I've never seen such a terrified look on a child's face.

LISA

(Laughing:) It tried to bite me!

(She reaches out and smoothes a strand of Lisa's hair back into place.)

YVONNE

Of all the things in my life, I'm proudest of you.

(Lisa smiles.)

Where's the food?

LISA

The kitchen?

(Yvonne exits. Lisa begins to put the party favors back in the box. But then gives in and puts on one of the birthday hats. She smiles and shows it off as Yvonne re-enters holding two large paper bags.)

YVONNE

Should we arrange it on platters or transfer it to smaller bags stenciled with each of our names?

(Lisa takes off the hat.)

This all they brought?

(Lisa opens a bag and takes out the receipt.)

LISA

Shit.

YVONNE

What?

(She hands it to Yvonne.)

(Reading the receipt:) *Edelstein Bris*. Guess that rules out ham sandwiches. Where's your phone?

LISA

I'll take care of it.

(Lisa exits with the bags.)

YVONNE

(Yelling after her:) They don't get it here in five minutes, total refund. Hear me?

(Door buzzer rings.)

I got it.

(She crosses to the door phone.)

Yes? ... Who?

(Surprised by the name, she pauses for a moment. Then presses the door buzzer. She presses the elevator button. Down arrow lights – *ding*. She crosses to the window and looks out. She shudders. Then crosses to the bar. She needs a drink, but can't find the liquor. She opens the cupboard and removes the bottle of vodka. Up arrow lights – *ding*. She takes a swig from the bottle and puts it on top of the bar. Then crosses to a spot a short distance from the elevator doors, where she poses and waits. The doors open with a *ding* and Nathaniel enters. He's an attractive man in his mid thirties.)

NATHANIEL

Hello.

YVONNE

Dr. Nathaniel D'schommer. As pretty in person as on your book. You know how rare that is?

(She crosses to him.)

That is you. Right?

NATHANIEL

Yes.

YVONNE

Welcome to the Edelstein Bris.

(He doesn't react.)

Little joke. Yvonne Whittemore. Lisa's mother. I'll take your coat if you get me a drink. (Pointing to the bar:) It's right over there.

(He crosses to the bar.)

Vodka martini. On the rocks. Let's ignore the vermouth altogether, shall we?

(She exits with his coat. He crosses to the bar.)

NATHANIEL

There's no ice.

YVONNE'S VOICE

(From offstage:) Improvise.

(He pours the vodka into a glass. When Yvonne re-enters, he hands it to her.)

YVONNE

Just what the doctor ordered.

(She raises the glass to him. Then drinks.)

The Man Who Lived in a Cave. My book club couldn't get enough – three whole sessions. I even got to chapter four. Which is a big compliment. Huge success. For a neurologist. *Neurologist*. That's it. Right?

NATHANIEL

Yes.

YVONNE

So... you know Lisa.

NATHANIEL

Yes.

YVONNE

She's never mentioned it to me. Knowing you. You being... a friend.

NATHANIEL

She hasn't?

YVONNE

No.

(Pause.)

We don't have to rush to explanations. I don't mind suspense.

(Pause.)

I'm sure it's an interesting story.

NATHANIEL

She asked me here to celebrate her birthday.

(Pause.)

YVONNE

I guess I'll have to settle for that. For the time being.

(She takes a stiff drink.)

Your book. I've got some questions. This man... The one you followed around....

NATHANIEL

...Peter...

YVONNE

So... he has this brain... thing... where he can't rely on his vision. Visual amnesia.

NATHANIEL

(Correcting her:) *Agnosia*.

YVONNE

Imagine waking up every morning and not recognizing your own face in the mirror. God knows there are days when I could kill for that. The part of the book where you take him to Disney World? Hilarious.

NATHANIEL

He had a great time...

YVONNE

... and really quite tragic. We keep turning pages... What ridiculous thing is this likeable guy with a brain tumor going to do next? Like living in a fun house. But when you think about it, it's really no more than a freak show. The whole book. A cruel joke. And it's on him. How's he doing?

NATHANIEL

It was a degenerative condition.

YVONNE

So...

NATHANIEL

I was fortunate to have been invited into his world for a few short years.

YVONNE

Very fortunate. National bestseller. When's the movie coming out?

NATHANIEL

I'm not supposed to talk about that.

YVONNE

You're not here for Lisa.

NATHANIEL

Her birthday.

YVONNE

You're here for Georgie.

(Pause.)

NATHANIEL

I met her at the Williams Syndrome camp in the Berkshires last summer.

YVONNE

What? Down Syndrome wasn't exotic enough?

NATHANIEL

From a neurological standpoint...

YVONNE

... and with Lisa in the story imagine the advance.

NATHANIEL

Georgie was at the piano, improvising tunes the audience...

YVONNE

Do you think this particular disability has legs?

NATHANIEL

I don't think of Williams Syndrome as a disability.

YVONNE

A novel idea

NATHANIEL

In certain ways Georgie's gifts surpass her disabilities.

YVONNE

Gifts?

NATHANIEL

Sunny disposition, outgoing personality, sociable...

YVONNE

That social veneer? *Hello, Nonnie. How are you doing this beautiful evening?*
Paper thin and kind of creepy.

NATHANIEL

Her musical abilities...

YVONNE

You've seen the thirty-year-olds who go to that camp. If that's Georgie's future, it's a sad one.

NATHANIEL

New gene therapies are being...

YVONNE

Fix her, what will become of her gifts?

(Lisa enters from the kitchen.)

LISA

Nate.

NATHANIEL

Happy birthday, Lisa

LISA

I see you've met...

YVONNE

Surprise. Where have you been hiding him?

LISA

Nate has been helping with Georgie.

YVONNE

And if he can write another best-seller in the process, who's to complain?

LISA

No one is being taken advantage of.

YVONNE

Honey, where's the ice?

LISA

The freezer?

(There's a stand-off. Yvonne wants Lisa to leave the room so she can continue to grill Nathaniel. Lisa doesn't want to leave. Yvonne gives up.)

YVONNE

I'll get it. (To Nate:) We'll continue our discussion later, Doctor.

(She exits into the kitchen.)

LISA

She comes out of the gate pretty fast.

NATHANIEL

You warned me.

LISA

Some people are passive aggressive. My mother is aggressive aggressive.

NATHANIEL

You didn't tell her about me?

LISA

My father was supposed to handle it.

NATHANIEL

Should I be worried?

LISA

She's already hit the bottle and that means it can go one of two ways. Let's pray for the high road.

NATHANIEL

I've got a surprise.

LISA

Yeah?

NATHANIEL

For Georgie.

LISA

My birthday and Georgie gets the surprise?

NATHANIEL

A sled. Delivered here tomorrow. Let's take her to the park. A snow day of sorts.

LISA

Okay.

NATHANIEL

You look beautiful.

LISA

Oh. Um. Thanks. Not as pretty as you.

NATHANIEL

I don't know what to say to that.

LISA

That makes two of us.

(Yvonne re-enters with ice in her glass.)

YVONNE

So. What's the verdict from the caterer?

LISA

We'll eat what we have.

And the Finkelsteins? YVONNE

They'll replace it. LISA

They gave us a refund? YVONNE

...We're paying for what we got.... LISA

...I don't believe it. YVONNE

It's no big deal. LISA

No big deal? YVONNE

No. Big. Deal. LISA

(Georgie and Guy re-enter.)

GEORGIE
We counted three blue fish, two striped fish, five snails, and one big gold fish.

GUY
Too many tiny little babies to count. Though we tried.

GEORGIE
We tried real hard.

GUY
Nathaniel.

NATHANIEL
Good evening, Sir.

YVONNE
(To Lisa:) Oh, so your father's in on this too?

NATHANIEL
Georgie.

(Georgie is less than enthusiastic about seeing Nathaniel.)

GEORGIE
Good evening, Dr. D'Schommer.

NATHANIEL

You can call me *Nate*. Remember?

GEORGIE

Why are you here, Dr. D'Schommer?

NATHANIEL

Your mother's birthday.

LISA

Let's get the food.

(Lisa steers Georgie into the kitchen.)

YVONNE

Anything else I'm not aware of, husband darling?

GUY

Turn it down, Eve.

YVONNE

How? It's already like a morgue in here.

GUY

Eve?

YVONNE

Husband darling?

GUY

This isn't your party.

YVONNE

Obviously.

GUY

Why don't you go and help Lisa? How about you do that. Now.

YVONNE

Yes, beloved.

(Yvonne starts to exit into the kitchen, but then crosses back to get her drink. She begins to cross back to the kitchen door.)

GUY

Pace yourself.

(She walks slower as she exits.)

How are you tonight, Nathaniel?

NATHANIEL

Fine. And you, sir?

GUY

My cardiologist is less than enthusiastic, but I can't complain.

NATHANIEL

Anything to be concerned about?

GUY

At my age, what isn't?

(Guy crosses to the bar to get himself a soda water. He lifts the bottle up to Nate as if to ask him if he wants a glass of water.)

Club soda?

(Nate nods.)

Did you hear from my lawyers?

NATHANIEL

I got the package on Friday.

GUY

No real names. No details that will give away their identities – neither in the book nor the marketing. And limit your story to Georgie. Lisa's been through enough.

NATHANIEL

My agent is reviewing them now.

(Guy hands Nathaniel the drink.)

GUY

Sign and you can have your book.

(Georgie re-enters with a platter of food. Lisa follows with two more. Yvonne, clutching her drink, brings up the rear.)

GEORGIE

We have Jew food! Jew food! Jew Food!

LISA

Enough, Georgie.

GEORGIE

That's what Nonnie called it.

LISA

I don't care what your self-loathing bobeshi calls it. We don't call it that.

GEORGIE

What do we call it?

LISA

Finger food.

GEORGIE

(Shocked:) Those aren't fingers, are they?

NATHANIEL

It's called that because you eat it with your fingers. See?

(He eats an appetizer.)

Try one.

(She does.)

GEORGIE

Next we can have toe food and eat it with our feet.

YVONNE

Isn't this fun? Just like the Sizzler. Come on, Guy. Let's line up and pretend we're at an early-bird special in Boca. It'll be good practice.

NATHANIEL

It looks delicious.

YVONNE

Since the birthday girl ruled out serving at the table, I guess I'll have to stand.

GUY

We could hang a meal bag from your ears.

NATHANIEL

Take my place.

YVONNE

How 'bout if I sit at your feet and look up adoringly into your soulful eyes? Like a starry-eyed co-ed at a book reading.

(Yvonne sits on the floor next to Nathaniel. Guy raises his glass.)

GUY

To my beautiful and brilliant daughter on her birthday.

(Nathaniel raises his glass. Yvonne does not.)

YVONNE

You call that a toast? Honestly, Guy.

(Yvonne struggles to her feet, grabbing Nathaniel to pull herself up. Her grasping is a little excessive. She grabs her glass.)

(To Lisa:) Forty years ago today....

GUY

Eve, we've all...

YVONNE

I don't care... This is *my* toast. Forty years ago today... this very day... I was beside myself. You were a week and a half overdue. Even in the womb you were stubborn and willful, Missy. This was before they started giving out oxytocin like candy. A week and a half and nothing I did – deep knee bends, the twist, jumping up and down – would convince you to come out.

LISA

(To Nathaniel:) My mother and I had issues from the start...

YVONNE

Finally I got so fed up I strapped on my best Farragamos and waddled all the way to Bendals. I may have been as big as the Queen Mary, but there was no way I was going to miss the mid-winter previews. And that's where my water broke.

YVONNE

Between Lingerie and accessories.

LISA

Between lingerie and accessories.

GUY

Between lingerie and accessories.

YVONNE

Right in front of the elevators. You had decided it was time and when you make up your mind... whoa... stand back! If I hadn't pretzled my legs together you'd have been born in the back of a cab.

GUY

Most blood-curdling scream...

YVONNE

...She was ten pounds...!

GUY

...heard it all the way to the waiting room...

YVONNE

Ten pounds! After all that... drama. When they cut the cord and placed you in my arms...

(She begins to tear up.)

LISA

(To Nathaniel:) Here it comes...

YVONNE

When I looked down and saw you. So beautiful. I knew there would never be anything more... important. In my entire life. This was it. This little bundle in my arms. So tiny and defenseless and needy. And I was terrified.

(She laughs.)

What had I gotten myself into?! But I closed my eyes, threw my head back, took a deep breath and made a decision. The most important decision of my life. From that moment on, no matter what happened... no matter where this amazing new and frightening adventure lead... I would always be there for you. To protect and love and guide you. No matter what. And we would take that journey together.

(Lisa is surprised that her own eyes have teared up. Yvonne raises her glass.)

To my special girl on her special day. Happy 40th birthday, Lisa.

(Lisa crosses to her mother and embraces her. When Lisa pulls back, they both wipe their eyes.)

LISA

Thanks, Mom. I guess I needed that.

YVONNE

(Changing gears:) Time for presents.

GEORGIE

Birthday presents!

YVONNE

Hand over the loot, guy.

GEORGIE

Birthday presents!

YVONNE

Start with mine.

GEORGIE

Birthday presents!

(Guy hands Lisa an envelope. She opens it and removes two plane tickets and a brochure for a Caribbean resort. Georgie takes it from her.)

Let me see.

YVONNE

Two weeks in St. Barts. All expenses paid... for two.

GEORGIE

Look at the beach.

YVONNE

Fresh air. The ocean. You and Georgie. You'll forget everything back here.

LISA

Where you went on your honeymoon.

YVONNE

I want you to be as happy as I was then.

GEORGIE

Are you going with, Nonnie?

YVONNE

Do you want me to?

GEORGIE

No.

LISA

(Sincerely:) Thanks, Mom.

GUY

Next.

(Guy hands Lisa a jewelry box.)

A little something that'll come in handy during one of your concerts.

(Lisa opens the box and removes a diamond necklace. As she holds it up, Yvonne unconsciously touches the bare space on her own neck.)

LISA

Daddy, it's....

YVONNE

...a little old-fashioned...

LISA

...beautiful.

YVONNE

We can always exchange it.

(Lisa looks at her mother.)

Well... We can. I mean... it's perfectly nice, but if you don't like it...

LISA

I love it, Dad.

(She kisses him on the cheek.)

NATHANIEL

One more.

(Nathaniel nervously hands Lisa a ring box. She looks at it with disbelief.)

YVONNE

What the hell?

GEORGIE

What is it, what is it, what is it?

(The door buzzer rings. This startles Lisa. Georgie runs to the door.)

LISA

Georgie.

(She presses the buzzer. Then quickly presses the elevator button before her mother can get there. Down arrow – *ding.*)

Georgie!

GEORGIE

What?

(Lisa picks up the phone.)

LISA

Hello?

(She hangs up.)

You know better.

GEORGIE

I forgot.

LISA

No, you didn't.

GEORGIE

Georgie's stupid.

LISA

No, she's not.

YVONNE

Who is it?

LISA

We'll find out.

GEORGIE

Surprise!

YVONNE

Lisa, I don't like it....

LISA

...I know, Mother....

YVONNE

How hard is it to find a building with a doorman?

LISA

...I don't want a building...

YVONNE

...God I hate downtown. Dirty, unsafe, bohemian bullshit.

LISA

...this is my home...

YVONNE

All the pretensions with none of the comforts.

GUY

Next.

(Pause.)

NATHANIEL

(Pointing to the ring box:) Aren't you going to open it?

(She does. Inside the ring box is a key. The elevator up arrow turns on – *ding.*)

NATHANIEL

I've turned the bottom two floors of my townhouse into an apartment. Plenty of room for you and Georgie. I'll be upstairs – if you need me.

GEORGIE

I don't like stairs.

NATHANIEL

(To Georgie:) You can play in the garden. All those flowers and trees? (To Lisa:) What do you say?

LISA

This is a surprise.

(The elevator doors open with a *ding* and Will steps into the room. He is 20 years old and has the scruffy look of a skater boy. He wears a dirty jean jacket, a bulky sweater, and cargo pants with numerous pockets. He looks cold, but there is a glimmer in his eyes that is very bright and warm. Georgie sees him and screams.)

GEORGIE

Ahhhh!

WILL

Ahhhh!

GEORGIE

Willy! It's Willy!

(She runs to him and jumps into his arms.)

WILL

(Half singing:) Hey there, Georgie Girl.

GEORGIE

(Singing:) Walking down the street with panties on.

LISA

Will.

WILL

Hi, Lisa.

GEORGIE

It's Mommy's birthday, Willy.

WILL

Oh... yeah... yeah, I know. That's... why I'm here.

GEORGIE

What'd you get her?

WILL

What did I get her?

GEORGIE

For her birthday.

WILL

Oh... a present...

GEORGIE

Where is it?

WILL

Well... I'm afraid I didn't...

(Georgie reaches into his jacket pockets. He tries to stop her...)

Hey!

(...but she pulls out a watch with a cluster of gems circling the dial.)

GEORGIE

A watch!

LISA

Georgie.

WILL

Uh...

LISA

Give it back.

GEORGIE

Why?

WILL

I... I didn't have time to wrap it.

LISA

Are you sure?

WILL

I thought you'd like it.

LISA

It's beautiful.

(She puts it on.)

WILL

Happy Birthday, Lisa.

LISA

It's been a while.

WILL

Yeah.

LISA

I was hoping to see you at...

WILL

...the memorial. Yeah. I got the... I couldn't make it.

LISA

It's okay.

WILL

Going through something, I guess.

LISA

It wasn't much. I mean it's not like we had.... You moved?

WILL

New place. I should have told you.

LISA

We were worried.

WILL

Needed a change. I didn't.... I should have let you know. Then I was afraid... after a few months. What do you do? You know? Hit me hard.

(She doesn't respond.)

I... I'm sorry. Really sorry, Lisa. Even though I didn't know him like I should have. I... I miss him. You know? Horrible, Lisa. Horrible.

LISA

You're okay?

WILL

Me? Yeah. Sure. Yeah. Better. Why I'm here. How's the piano going? That group...

LISA

I'm not playing as much these days. Join us.

(Georgie begins to take off his jacket. At first this upsets him, but he quickly suppresses it. She exits with the jacket.)

WILL

I can't stay long.

LISA

Will, this is Dr. Nathaniel D'Schommer.

WILL

(To Nathaniel:) Hi. (To Yvonne and Guy:) Mr. and Mrs. Whittemore.

GUY

Hello, William.

YVONNE

Will you look at that. Our Dakota farm boy returning to the trough.

LISA

Help yourself.

YVONNE

Welcome to the Finklestein Bris.

GUY

Next.

LISA

You've killed that one, mother.

(Yvonne tips her empty glass upside down.)

YVONNE

I agree. Be a dear, doctor baby.

(He gets up to pour her another drink.)

LISA

Mother....

YVONNE

Last one, honey. I promise. Let me see what you got there.

(She looks at Lisa's watch as Georgie re-enters. Lisa withdraws her hand before Yvonne gets too good of a look.)

LISA

Where are you living now, Will?

WILL

Where?

LISA

Not in Hell's Kitchen?

WILL

133rd. West Side.

YVONNE

Near Fairway?

WILL

Next door. Rent. A lot cheaper up there.

(He looks at the platter of food.)

LISA

Have more.

WILL

Thanks.

LISA

What are you doing for work?

WILL

Waiter. Midtown. Just came from my shift.

YVONNE

The job George set up wasn't interesting enough?

(Will stares at Yvonne. It is a cross between a dare and a come-on. There is something appealing and arresting about the way he stares – and a little frightening.)

GEORGIE

I'm a little birdie! I'm a little birdie!

(Georgie puts her hands under her arms and flaps.)

WILL

(Standing:) *Underdog!*

GEORGIE

Underdog! Underdog! I want an underdog!

(She runs behind Will, who reaches between his legs and pulls her through. She spins and he lifts her over his head. Lisa watches nervously.)

LISA

Will... um...

(Georgie puts her hands out like Superman. She's too big for him to do this lift smoothly, but she doesn't seem to notice.)

GEORGIE

Underdog!

(He puts her down.)

WILL

Such a big girl. I almost dropped you.

GEORGIE

Willy?

WILL

What?

GEORGIE

Daddy died.

WILL

I know.

GEORGIE

Bad men killed him.

WILL

Yes.

GEORGIE

Have you ever killed anyone, Willy?

LISA

Georgie.

YVONNE

(Laughing:) Thank God she didn't ask you, Guy, or we'd have to listen to another one of your goddamned Korean War stories. What about you, Doctor? Any malpractice suits we're not aware of?

NATHANIEL

No.

YVONNE

You're still young.

WILL

How's school?

GEORGIE

I'm not going.

WILL

You're not? Shocking, Georgie. Shocking!

GEORGIE

I know! Mommy teaches me from home now. With Dr. D'Schommer. Willy, guess what?

WILL

What?

GEORGIE

I can count up to ten, now.

WILL

Really? That's twenty more than me.

GEORGIE

I know.

NATHANIEL

Georgie, come over here and show everyone which of these crackers is shaped like a triangle.

GEORGIE

No. (To Will:) He gives me a bizzilion tests every day. I don't like tests.

WILL

Tests are horrible.

GEORGIE

I missed you, Willy.

WILL

I missed you too, Georgie Girl.

(Awkward pause.)

YVONNE

Well. We're a lively bunch. How about some party games?

LISA

Why don't we play for Willy?

(Georgie looks at her mother blankly.)

Come on, honey. It will be fun.

GUY

Show William what you can do, Kitten.

(Georgie crosses to the piano and lifts the keyboard lid. Lisa joins her on the bench.)

YVONNE

(Showing off to Nate:) Lisa uses the Mitsubishi Method.

LISA

Suzuki, Mother. And I don't. We'll start here. Look at my hands.

(She plays a major triad. Georgie repeats it an octave higher. Nate has gone to the bookshelf and taken down a small, hand-held video camera. He begins to record Lisa and Georgie.)

Listen again.

(Lisa plays the triad again and then hums a few notes that suggest a melody.)

Got it?

(She nods. They play the repeating motif. Georgie nailing the melody on the first try.)

Close your eyes.

(She closes her eyes. Lisa sees Nate with the camera. He shakes her head. Nate stops recording. Over the next few lines, he repositions himself behind Lisa and begins to record again.)

Keep playing. Think of a place. Far away. A beautiful place. Got it?

(Georgie nods.)

Open your eyes. Where have we gone?

GEORGIE

Nonnie's island.

LISA

Okay. Let's add this.

(Lisa improvises a repeating pattern.)

What is it?

GEORGIE

Waves?

LISA

Crashing on the beach. Listen closely. Now you do it.

(Georgie stumbles a little, but Lisa helps her get it right. Lisa returns to the original theme while her daughter plays the wave motif.)

Got it?

(Georgie nods.)

Add some sea gulls. *Caw, Caw, Caw!*

(Georgie adds some notes that sound like a seagull call.)

Add more birds.

(Georgie continues to add more bird sounds as she plays the wave theme.)

Let's put some seashells in our bucket.

(Lisa adds a repeated plunking sound to the theme. Georgie follows.)

Who else is there?

(Georgie stops playing. Lisa continues her part.)

GEORGIE

I don't know.

Tourists this time of year.

YVONNE

Mermaid.

GEORGIE

With a big fish tail.

WILL

Like Goldie's, Willy!

GEORGIE

(Lisa alters the accompaniment to a minor key. She strikes a few piano keys with more emphasis for Georgie to use. She picks it up quickly.)

Beautiful.

YVONNE

What happens next?

LISA

(They continue playing under the dialog.)

He wants the little girl to go in the water.

GEORGIE

Who?

LISA

The mermaid.

GEORGIE

He's a boy?

LISA

But her mommy won't let her.

GEORGIE

The waves are too high.

LISA

So he comes out of the water.

GEORGIE

What happened to his tail?

LISA

Underdog!

WILL

GEORGIE

Underdog! Underdog! I want an underdog!

LISA

(Laughing:) Okay.

GEORGIE

But he can't stay or he'll die.

LISA

He can't breathe?

GEORGIE

Like when I tried to get Goldie to watch TV with me.

LISA

What does he do?

GEORGIE

Gives up and swims away.

WILL

And the little girl doesn't see him. For a very long time.

(Georgie runs her hands down the piano keys and crosses to Will.
Lisa stops playing.)

GEORGIE

Goldie had babies, Willy.

YVONNE

What happened? It's not over.

LISA

It's over when it stops being fun.

(When Guy applauds, they all join in.)

GUY

Brava, Georgie!

(Lisa closes the keyboard lid and crosses to the window and looks out. Nate stops recording and sits on the piano bench.)

NATHANIEL

Georgie, you're a very special little girl.

GEORIANA

Do you think I'm special, Willy?

WILL

Do you want to be?

(She makes a face and sticks out her tongue. Nathaniel is concerned when he notices Lisa staring out the window.)

NATHANIEL

I've cleared a spot for your piano, Lisa. The bay window in the front. I think you both will be so happy there.

(Lisa doesn't respond. She can't stop staring out the window. She doesn't appear to hear the rest of the party.)

GUY

Lisa?

(She doesn't respond.)

Come back to the party, honey.

(She doesn't move. Yvonne crosses, unsteadily, to the piano, trips the short prop and accidentally slams the lid. This startles Lisa out of her frozen state at the window.)

YVONNE

My turn.

(She pushes herself up onto the piano – this takes some effort – and sits cross-legged on the lid. She affects the posture of a torch singer.)

GUY

Eve.

YVONNE

And now... direct from the wrong side of the tracks. The self-loathing Jewish girl who made good... Little Evvy Goldman! Hit it, Doctor Baby.

NATHANIEL

I can't play.

YVONNE

Is okay. I can't really sing.

LISA

Mother, do we really have to listen to "I'm Still Here" one more time?

GUY

Next.

(Yvonne adjusts her décolletage to reveal more cleavage. She crawls seductively across the piano toward Nathaniel. She is showing more leg than she should. This upsets Lisa.)

Do you know "The Man I Love?"

GUY

Which one?

LISA

Bedtime, honey. Get into your pajamas.

GEORGIE

I want to watch Nonnie.

YVONNE

Let her stay for my song.

LISA

Mother.

YVONNE

(To Lisa:) Honey, you must know "The Man I Love." We can fake it together.

LISA

Bedtime.

GEORGIE

Can't I stay up?

LISA

Bedtime.

YVONNE

It's not like she has to run off to school in the morning.

GEORGIE

You'll stay. Right, Willy? Tomorrow we can go to the park. And go sledding! Mommy. Willy can stay. Can't he?

LISA

P.J.s.

GEORGIE

I don't want to go to bed.

LISA

It's bedtime.

GEORGIE

Willy's back.

LISA

Now.

YVONNE

Let her stay up for Christ's sakes.

LISA

Mother.

(Georgie begins to sniffle.)

GEORGIE

I don't want to go to bed!

LISA

Don't be a baby, Georgie.

GEORGIE

Retard! (Chanting:) Georgie's a stupid retard!

LISA

We don't use that language here.

GEORGIE

Retard! Can't stay up because she's a retard! Retard!

LISA

Pajamas. Now. One. Two. Three. I'm counting. Four. Five. If I get up to ten...
Six. Seven. Eight. Nine....

(Georgie stands still, closes her eyes and inhales.)

Don't....

GEORGIE

(Screaming:) Ahhhhhh!

(She yells as she runs around the room. She finds the box with the streamers and party supplies. She runs around the room ecstatically throwing the streamers and blowing the noisemakers.)

Happy birthday!

LISA

Georgie!

GEORGIE

Happy birthday!

(Lisa tries to stop her, but Georgie escapes and tosses more of the party favors around the room, laughing and shrieking as she runs. Lisa pursues her, while the rest, not knowing what to do, freeze in place and watch.)

LISA

Pajamas.

GEORGIE

Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday to you! Happy birthday, happy birthday....

GUY

Georgie!

(Guy's voice makes Georgie stop.)

GEORGIE

Yes, Poppa?

(Lisa grabs her.)

LISA

If you're going to act like a baby, I'm going to spank you. Do you want that?

GEORGIE

I wanna stay at the party.

LISA

Party's over.

GEORGIE

(Getting upset again:) I don't want to go to bed.

YVONNE

No one does, honey.

LISA

Knock it off, Mother!

(Georgie collapses on the floor and starts crying.)

GEORGIE

I don't want to go to bed. You can't make me!

LISA

Stop it!

GEORGIE

You can't make me! You can't make me! You can't make me!

(Lisa has been trying to pick Georgie up, but she won't let her.)

WILL

Georgie?

(She stops abruptly and sits up.)

GEORGIE

(Suspiciously:) Yes, Willy?

WILL

I'll tell you a bedtime story.

GEORGIE

Like you used to?

WILL

Would you like that?

(She thinks for a moment. And then nods.)

Get into your pajamas first. Okay?

(She runs into the hallway.)

LISA

Thanks, Will.

(Lisa exits after her. They are all uncomfortable with what they have just seen.)

YVONNE

Doctor honey, lend me a hand. I'm not as heavy as I look. Or so I've been told.

(Nathaniel helps Yvonne off the piano.)

Oooohhhh... Your hands are cold. Yet oddly refreshing.

(She crosses to the bar and refills her glass.)

GUY

Enough, Yvonne.

YVONNE

Just a nightcap, Dearest. A nightcap to cap off a marvelous night ... cap....

(Lisa re-enters. She no longer wears her new diamond necklace.)

Everything okay?

LISA

Thanks, Mom.

YVONNE

For what?

LISA

Just what you want your eight year old to see.

YVONNE

Huh?

LISA

Dad, can you carry that into the kitchen?

(Lisa carries a tray out to the kitchen. Guy follows her with a platter.)

YVONNE

What did she mean by that?

(No one answers.)

WILL

(To Yvonne:) What's happened to Georgie? Is something wrong?

YVONNE

Besides the obvious?

WILL

She didn't used to act like that.

YVONNE

Maybe you haven't figured this out yet, but the past year hasn't been easy for Lisa and Georgie.

NATHANIEL

She's making progress.

WILL

(To Nathaniel:) That why you're here? To fix her?

YVONNE

This visit a one-time event, or is it going to become a habit, Willy boy?

(Will stares at Yvonne. Awkward pause.)

NATHANIEL

So... You're from South Dakota.

WILL

North Dakota

WILL

I've never met anyone from North Dakota.

NATHANIEL

I've never met anyone from North Dakota.

WILL

You New Yorkers don't get out much.

(Yvonne has crossed back to the piano.)

YVONNE

Doctor Baby, Guy's all thumbs in the kitchen. Why don't you check how things are going.

NATHANIEL

Excuse me.

(He exits. She strikes a few notes of "The Man I Love.")

YVONNE

I've forgotten the rest. I guess it's been a while since I've been in love. How 'bout you, Willy boy? How are things in the romance department?

WILL

I've had no complaints.

YVONNE

Rare for a boy your age. Still Hungry?

(He doesn't answer.)

They don't feed you at your restaurant in... Midtown, is it? You didn't mention a name.

(He doesn't answer.)

Where did you say you're living? Which street again?

WILL

Next to... Parkway.

(Yvonne pours herself another drink.)

YVONNE

A lot of nerve. Disappearing like that. Then walking back in out of the blue.

(Georgie runs back into the room. She is wearing her pajamas. Her eyes are a little red.)

WILL

Georgie Girl.

GEORGIE

Ready for my story, Willy.

WILL

Promise to go to sleep?

(She nods and then exits. He begins to follow.)

YVONNE

Looking for a little windfall, Willy Boy? That why you're here tonight?

WILL

Lisa's birthday.

YVONNE

Nice watch.

(He stares at her intently – the same stare he used before.)

You know, there's something in your eyes. Something different. I've seen that look before. In the eighties I used to volunteer at a needle exchange.

WILL

I always took you for a museum lady.

YVONNE

My Wednesdays were free.

WILL

You got the wrong idea about me.

YVONNE

George settled up with you three years ago. Set you up nice and pretty. Little apartment. Starter job. Teller? What happened to that?

(He doesn't answer.)

I called the bank.

WILL

You never liked me.

YVONNE

I adored you. Everyone did. From the minute you got off that bus... like a frightened little orphaned puppy. Which is saying a lot, because you weren't the most pleasant of surprises. Why is it that all the simple, beautiful things that look so innocent and pretty on the surface, always have a way of growing deep and twisted and ugly underneath?

WILL

A lot of that going around tonight.

YVONNE

Hint for the future. When you give a woman jewelry, it doesn't need to be wrapped, but it should always come in the box they give you at the store. Know why?

WILL

Yes.

(Lisa re-enters with Guy.)

YVONNE

Lisa's been through hell. If that gift comes back to haunt her... If it causes her any pain or embarrassment... If you hurt her in any way, I'll come looking for you... If I have to search each dishwashing station in every rat hole in Hell's Kitchen. And

when I find you, I'll arrange to serve you something special. On a silver platter. And it won't be finger food you'll be eating, Willy boy.

(Nathaniel re-enters.)

WILL

It's a knock-off. From a cart in Times Square. Now you know.

(Will exits toward Georgie's room. They stare at Yvonne.)

YVONNE

Little miscalculation. Your mother isn't perfect. Surprise.

(Guy exits.)

What?

(Lisa takes Yvonne's glass.)

Time for my song?

(Guy re-enters with Yvonne's fur and presses the elevator call button. Up arrow goes on with a *ding*.)

Going someplace, dearest?

GUY

Home.

YVONNE

Oh?

GUY

With you. Now.

(He holds out her fur. She doesn't take it.)

YVONNE

We just got here.

GUY

We old folks surrender the floor to the young.

YVONNE

Speak for yourself.

GUY

Good night, Nathaniel.

NATHANIEL

Goodnight, Sir.

GUY

Papers. Signed. On my lawyer's desk by the middle of the week?

NATHANIEL

Yes, Sir.

YVONNE

What's going on?

(Guy kisses Lisa's cheek.)

GUY

Happy birthday, Princess.

YVONNE

Papers?

LISA

Thanks, Dad.

GUY

Yvonne.

YVONNE

We haven't even sung "Happy Birthday." Where's the cake? No pin-the-tail-on-the-jackass? I'll be a good sport. I'll even hold still.

LISA

Let's call it a night, okay?

YVONNE

You two always gang up on me. It isn't fair.

GUY

Say goodnight, Eve.

YVONNE

I'll say goodnight when I feel like it, goddammit!

GUY

One tantrum a night is enough. We are leaving. Now.

YVONNE

(Flatly:) Yes, lover. (With expression:) Doctor Baby.

(She cradles Nathaniel's face in her hands. This makes him extremely uncomfortable.)

We never finished our little chat. Did we? And it was going so well. I'm going to take a leap. A leap of faith and trust my senses. I have a feeling about your book. And the feeling is that it will be a raging success... if... and only if... you devote at least one chapter to me. Call it *Eve in the Dark*. Can you do that?

GUY

Enough.

YVONNE

So beautiful and cool and oddly flavorless. Kind of like spring water in a desert oasis. Or maybe you're just a mirage. I don't care. If she doesn't come to her senses, honey, you can slip me that key. I'll give you something to write about.

(Elevator door opens – *ding*.)

GUY

Eve.

YVONNE

Joke, for Christ sakes. (Back to Nathaniel:) You'll make sure our young friend makes it back out onto the street?

NATHANIEL

Yes.

YVONNE

Promise?

GUY

Now.

YVONNE

(To Lisa:) I've fucked it up again, haven't I? And on your birthday.

(She holds Lisa and looks into her eyes.)

So talented. So beautiful.

LISA

Dad's waiting.

YVONNE

You've been dropped from the ensemble?

GUY

Eve.

YVONNE

Tina Terry Tallulah said you gave them no choice. When were you going to tell us?

(She doesn't answer.)

YVONNE

Have you stopped taking your antidepressants?

LISA

I'm doing great.

YVONNE

When was the last time you saw your therapist?

LISA

Things are fine, Mother. Nothing to worry about.

YVONNE

It's been a year and a half. I miss my daughter. I don't know where she's gone. It breaks my heart. Anything you want. Tell us what will make you happy and we'll...

LISA

This isn't your next wild adventure, Mother. This is my life. This is who I am now. I know you mean well. But you ruin everything. It's what you do. You can't help it. I've accepted that and it's okay. Thanks for the party. We both tried really hard. And we almost pulled it off this time. But it's time to go home. Please.

GUY

Enough, Eve.

(She stumbles as she crosses back into the elevator.)

YVONNE

The piano. Tonight. Didn't you feel it? It was like everything was good again. And then it was gone.

(Elevator doors close. Down arrow – *ding*.
Uncomfortable pause.)

LISA

Nate. The key. In front of them? Uh... Wow.

NATHANIEL

I...

LISA

No. I mean... wow.

NATHANIEL

If you want to think about it...

LISA

No.

NATHANIEL

What?

LISA

The answer to your question.

NATHANIEL

Don't you think you should...

LISA

...It's a generous offer...

NATHANIEL

... think about it?

LISA

...I don't know where it came from or what you expected, but no thank you.

NATHANIEL

This isn't going the way...

LISA

You probably don't know this, because you're so used to... I mean... what you study. But what you did wasn't... normal. Okay? I barely know you. In fact... Oh, my god. No. Just... no.

(She exits with some glasses. He doesn't know what to do, but remembers his promise to Yvonne. He exits down the hallway.

Lights up on Georgie's bedroom. She is seen in her pajamas under the bedclothes. Will lies next to her on top of the bedspread.)

WILL

Once upon a time....

GEORGIE

...When, Willy?

WILL

A long time ago.

GEORGIE

How long ago?

WILL

Last week.

GEORGIE

Last week.

WILL

Once upon a time last week...

GEORGIE

...in a city with tall buildings...

WILL

There lived two twins.

GEORGIE

Identical twins?

WILL

They were exactly alike – except for the fact that they were completely different. Know what I mean?

GEORGIE

Yes.

WILL

I knew you would.

GEORGIE

How were they alike?

WILL

They looked exactly alike. They talked exactly alike. They were so identical, no one could tell them apart.

GEORGIE

How were they different?

WILL

One had blonde hair. The other was a brunette. One had green eyes. The other brown. One sang very high...

GEORGIE

...The other sang low.

WILL

You knew them too?

(She nods.)

Can you remember their names?

(She looks puzzled.)

Abigail and Norma.

GEORGIE

Which was which?

WILL

That's the most important part. Norma was very, very normal. But Abby was very, very, very special.

GEORGIE

How was she special?

WILL

She was a great number counter.

GEORGIE

Did she count to ten a lot?

WILL

Way beyond. She could count up to *five squillion*. She knew all her multiplication tables by heart and she could even divide.

GEORGIE

I hate Abby.

WILL

Why?

GEORGIE

Because she's special.

WILL

She couldn't help it.

GEORGIE

Why?

WILL

Because she could play the piano.

GEORGIE

A lot of people can play the piano.

WILL

She could play it standing on her head. But because Abby was special, for every thing she could do brilliantly, there was something that she couldn't do at all.

GEORGIE

Like what?

WILL

She was afraid of stairs.

GEORGIE

Stairs are scary.

WILL

I remember. When she was counting or playing the piano on her head, no girl on the entire planet could be happier. But when she had to walk up or down stairs no little girl in the entire galaxy could be more miserable.

GEORGIE

What about Norma?

WILL

She wasn't special at all.

GEORGIE

Why?

WILL

She could count, but only up to *two* squillion. She could add, but only one or two-digit numbers. She couldn't play the piano. And sometimes – if the numbers were small and even – she could almost subtract. Everything Norma wanted was what she already had. So she was never disappointed or frustrated. She was never sad. And she never changed. She was always just plain old Norma.

GEORGIE

She wasn't special?

WILL

The only thing special in her life was Abby.

(Nathaniel appears at the door.)

GEORGIE

What happened to them?

WILL

Something horrible. Worse than sleeping under a spell for a hundred years, or being devoured by a whale, or fattened up by an evil witch. Do you really want to know?

(She nods her head.)

I warned you.

(He notices Nathaniel at the door.)

WILL

One day an evil doctor kidnapped the girls and dragged them back to his cave.

GEORGIE

They didn't like it there, did they?

WILL

He made them take tests.

GEORGIE

He wanted to fix them.

WILL

Morning, noon, and night in order to figure out how they could be exactly alike and completely different at the same time.

GEORGIE

Norma tried to escape.

WILL

He would only set them free if they took one final test. The most difficult of all.

GEORGIE

What was it?

WILL

They had to count all the stars in the night sky. And if they skipped any, he threatened to kill their favorite pet fish....

GEORGIE

...Goldie....

WILL

...and feed it to them on a sterling silver platter. The street lights were too bright to see the stars, so the girls had to find the tallest building in the world. But there was a problem.

GEORGIE

What?

WILL

Abby couldn't climb the tower because she was too afraid of stairs.

GEORGIE

Norma could.

WILL

Yes. But do you know how many stars there are?

GEORGIE

Five squillion?

WILL

Way too many for normal Norma to count. The girls thought about poor Goldie on that silver platter and they started to cry because they loved that fish as much as they loved each other even.

GEORGIE

What did they do, Willy?

WILL

Because Abby was special, she had a plan. That night at midnight Norma climbed to the top of the tallest tower in the world. She looked into the black velvet sky, *"There's one! And there's another!"* she called down to Abby, who stood on the

ground below. And Abby kept track of all the stars Norma could see. They had just counted up to four squillion, when Norma saw a strange light in the night sky.

GEORGIE

What kind of light?

WILL

It was moving.

GEORGIE

A falling star?

WILL

It was red.

GEORGIE

An angel?

WILL

And flashing.

GEORGIE

A plane.

WILL

Are you sure?

GEORGIE

Yes.

WILL

Where was it heading?

GEORGIE

At the tower.

WILL

Yes.

GEORGIE

It crashed into the tower, didn't it?

WILL

Yes.

GEORGIE

And the building fell down.

WILL

Yes.

GEORGIE

And Norma died.

WILL

Abby... Special Abby saw the whole thing happen and there was nothing she could do. It was all her fault. And because she was so special no girl in the entire galaxy was more miserable.

GEORGIE

She cried.

WILL

For days. Right there in the middle of the steel and concrete rubble. And her tears flowed across the glass and wood over the empty dusty streets all the way to the river where they flowed out to the sea. Abby should have been at the top of that tower counting the stars, not Norma.

GEORGIE

What happened to her?

WILL

She decided she would never be special again. Why would you want to suffer for all the things that make you so special? If only she could be normal – like Norma. And suddenly she was. She was no longer afraid of stairs. She couldn't count beyond 2 squillion or play the piano. She forgot every special thing she ever learned. And she never grew a day older or went on to the next grade level. She was Norma. So very, very normal Norma. And she was no longer afraid or lonely or frustrated or sad. But... and this is the most important part... she was never happy again either.

GEORGIE

Is that the end?

WILL

I hope not.

GEORGIE

I saw the building fall down. From the window. Mommy saw it too.

(Pause.)

I miss Daddy.

WILL

So do I.

GEORGIE

Don't go away again, okay?

WILL

I'll come back, Georgie. And everything will be good again. Just like before.

GEORGIE

You'll finish the story?

WILL

Of course.

GEORGIE

Happily ever after?

WILL

I promise.

(He embraces her for a moment. Then tucks her in. She rolls over and closes her eyes.

Nathaniel follows as Will crosses out the door.

Lights out on Georgie's bedroom. Lights up on living room as they enter from the hallway.)

NATHANIEL

What the hell was that?

WILL

What she needed.

NATHANIEL

Nightmares?

WILL

You're the one she's afraid of.

NATHANIEL

You're full of shit.

WILL

She likes you about as much as she likes that old bitch.

NATHANIEL

You think so?

WILL

It's not gonna work.

NATHANIEL

What?

WILL

I've seen rich guys like you who think they can get whatever they want. And they usually do. But I know Lisa. And I knew my father. The doctor thing is a nice touch, but you don't got it.

(Nathaniel grabs Will by the shirt. This freaks him out. He pushes away and ends up falling to the floor. Lisa enters as he falls. Will covers his head and trembles.)

LISA

What did you do to him?

NATHANIEL

Nothing.

LISA

Will?

WILL

(Pulling himself together:) The good doctor didn't like my bedtime story.

NATHANIEL

Time for the farm boy to say goodbye.

(Nathaniel crosses to the elevator and hits the call button. The up arrow light goes on – *ding*. He exits down the hallway.)

LISA

You okay?

WILL

Yeah.

(He stands.)

LISA

You sure?

WILL

Yeah... I... (Laughing self-consciously:) Sorry. I kind of....

LISA

Is everything all right?

WILL

Yeah. Sure, Lisa. Don't worry. (Cautiously:) Do you like the watch?

LISA

It's beautiful.

WILL

But... if you didn't... If you change your mind. I could take it back and get you something better... you know... at that cart... in Time's Square... if it's still there.

(Elevator door opens – *ding*. Nathaniel re-enters from the hallway with Will's jacket. Will takes it from him and reluctantly crosses toward the elevator.)

Happy birthday, Lisa.

LISA

Wait.

(She exits down the hallway. Nathaniel holds out a business card.)

WILL

Sorry, dude. Not my type.

NATHANIEL

I know a place where you can get clean.

WILL

You got the wrong idea about me.

NATHANIEL

I checked your pockets.

(Willy quickly checks the pockets in his jacket. Nothing is missing.)

I'm giving you a break.

(Will doesn't take the card. Lisa re-enters. She throws Nathaniel's coat over a chair and crosses to Will. She puts a stocking cap on his head, wraps a scarf around his neck and hands him a pair of gloves.)

WILL

George's?

(She nods.)

You miss him?

(She's taken aback.)

I do. So much.

LISA

Willy.

WILL

That summer. When I first came to the City.

LISA

You got off that bus at Port Authority.

WILL

I think about that a lot. Are you going to be okay?

LISA

Me?

WILL

Yeah. Something's... Sad. Not like before.

LISA

I'm just getting old, Willy. How about you? How are you doing?

WILL

Me? Oh... Don't worry. Lots of plans.

LISA

So many plans.

(They both smile.)

WILL

You remember. I... I better...

(He crosses into the elevator.)

LISA

Will. Do *you* remember?

WILL

Only the good stuff.

(Doors close. Down arrow – *ding*.)

NATHANIEL

Who is he?

LISA

George's son.

NATHANIEL

Previous marriage?

LISA

They didn't get married.

NATHANIEL

I don't think you should see him again.

LISA

You're telling me who I can have in my home?

I'm looking out for you.

NATHANIEL

This is out of line.

LISA

I don't trust him around...

NATHANIEL

...Georgie loves him.

LISA

What do you know about him?

NATHANIEL

Plenty.

LISA

How long did he live with you?

NATHANIEL

Half a year.

LISA

He's a crystal freak.

NATHANIEL

(She doesn't react.)

Did you hear what I just said?

LISA

I know.

NATHANIEL

And you let him in here?

LISA

I let all kinds in here.

NATHANIEL

Your mother's right. This place is not safe for you and Georgie. That's why I...

LISA

It's time for you to leave, Nate.

(This surprises him.)

I'm not sure this was a good idea. Any of it.

NATHANIEL

What?

LISA

Last summer you told me you could help with Georgie. You would come here four times a week...

NATHANIEL

...Yes...

LISA

...and you might use your experiences for a book.

NATHANIEL

Yes.

LISA

I shouldn't have asked you here tonight. I broke the rules.

NATHANIEL

Rules?

LISA

I think you've got the wrong idea. About what this is about.

NATHANIEL

I didn't mean...

LISA

...This is about helping with Georgie...

NATHANIEL

...I don't think we...

LISA

...I mislead you somehow...

NATHANIEL

...I'm not asking you to...

LISA

It's more than just a book for you, isn't it? Be honest with me, Nate.

NATHANIEL

I think I can help you.

LISA

I don't need it.

NATHANIEL

I've seen you look out the window. It can't be good for you to stay here.

LISA

I want to do this my way.

NATHANIEL

Okay.

LISA

I can do it. On my own. Do you understand?

NATHANIEL

I understand. Giving you the ring was out of line.

LISA

It was a key, Nate.

NATHANIEL

(Blushing:) Right. It was stupid. I did a stupid thing. I'm sorry. You'll let me... I can come back. Right? After tonight. You'll let me come back?

LISA

Do we have an understanding?

(He nods his head.)

NATHANIEL

Sorry.

(Awkward pause.)

LISA

I bet your place is beautiful. You said you have a garden behind your townhouse?

NATHANIEL

Nothing much to look at now. All the flowers are under three feet of snow.

LISA

Let it get warmer and we'll come and visit... maybe hold a few classes a week out there.

NATHANIEL

I'd like that, Lisa.

LISA

You're right. I need to get out more often. Get out of my rut.

(She fetches the key and tries to give it back to him.)

NATHANIEL

Keep it. Just in case. No pressure.

(She puts it in her pocket then crosses to get his coat.)

LISA

Was the party what you were expecting?

NATHANIEL

No.

(Lisa laughs.)

LISA

God. She walks through that door and I become a 14 year old again. Is that what's going to happen to me? Please say *no*.

NATHANIEL

I think she's kind of funny.

LISA

Are you queer, Nate?

NATHANIEL

No.

LISA

Only a gay man would get a kick out of my mother.

NATHANIEL

Are you joking?

LISA

Yes.

(Lisa presses the call button on the elevator. There is an awkward pause as they wait for the elevator.)

NATHANIEL

When Peter died. I wasn't expecting... He was my patient... the subject of my book. I thought that was all. But when it happened. When he died... I had the book, but that was all. And he was gone. Maybe that's why I gave you the key. You understand. What that's like. You're right. I probably had it all wrong. Maybe I'm the one... the one who needs you. I'm sorry.

(The elevator door opens with a *ding*. He picks up his coat and enters the elevator.)

LISA

Tomorrow?

NATHANIEL

Yeah?

LISA

Sledding in the park?

NATHANIEL

What time?

LISA

Noon?

NATHANIEL

Deal.

(He presses the button. Down arrow lights – *ding*. Elevator door closes. She gathers more plates and exits into the kitchen.

She re-enters with a garbage bag and crosses to the bar. She puts the liquor bottles in the garbage and is about to throw the vodka bottle out. Instead, she takes a swig. She takes another. A third. She tosses the bottle into the bag and carries the garbage off-stage.

She re-enters carrying the bottle. She begins to cross to the hallway, but stops and detours to the piano, where she sits and plays the triad from before. She plays it again and adds notes. She quickly adds more notes and begins to play the piece. Then she pounds on the keys harshly and closes the fingerboard cover. She sees something in the bookcase. She grabs the vodka and crosses to a shelf and picks up a miniature tape recorder. She opens a drawer and removes an answering-machine tape cassette. She crosses to the sofa, sits, and stares at the tape recorder. She puts the tape into the recorder, places it on the coffee table and takes a swig of vodka. Then reaches out and presses the play button. We hear a beep, followed by Yvonne's voice.)

YVONNE'S VOICE

Honey. It's your mother...

(Lisa growls and quickly presses the fast forward button. We hear Yvonne's voice speed up. Then a beep. Lisa releases the button.)

MAN'S VOICE

(Speaking quickly:) *Lisa. Listen.*

(She smiles as she listens.)

I'm sitting at my desk looking out the window.

(We can hear someone else's voice on the tape, but it's indistinct.)

What? Yeah... On the chair... I'll be there in a minute.

(His voice comes back full strength.)

Back. Anyway... In two seconds I gotta bullshit my way through a meeting. After, what say you and I and Georgie head out to the shore. I know what you're going to

say. *But yes, we can, Lisa. We can because we want to. What other reason do we need...?*

(Voice in the background again.)

Cancel it.... Got a toothache.

(He laughs.)

Tell him to knock it off, will you? Give me a second...

(He laughs again. His voice returns.)

Let's do it. Get Georgie out of school. Ask Will too. You decide. (Singing:) By the sea, by the sea, by the beautiful sea. (Laughing:) Yeah, I know. I suck worse than your mother...

(Lisa laughs.)

...I'll call when I'm on my way.

(Click. Another beep. We hear a loud repeating fire alarm siren. The same man's voice as before.)

(Panicking:) *Lisa... It's George. Call my cell as soon as you...*

(She lunges for the recorder and turns it off. She removes the cassette from the recorder and looks at it. The sound of an airplane flying low is heard. It ends abruptly in a loud crash. Sirens. She closes her eyes and covers her hands with her ears. The sound effects build as she begins to hyperventilate.

The door buzzer rings. The sound effects end abruptly and she opens her eyes. The door buzzer rings again. She comes back to the present and looks toward the door phone. The buzzer rings a third time. She puts the cassette into her pocket and crosses to the phone. The buzzer rings again. She hesitates. Then lifts the receiver and listens. She puts the phone down and thinks. Finally, she presses the door buzzer. Then sends the elevator down. Down arrow lights – *ding*. She crosses to the center and turns and stares at the elevator doors.

Elevator up arrow lights – *ding*. As she waits, she composes herself. The elevator door opens – *ding*. Will is revealed. He wears the scarf, gloves, and cap. He enters. They stand on opposite sides of the piano. By this time she has calmed down.)

LISA

Cold.

WILL

Yeah.

(She shows off the watch on her wrist.)

LISA

Hot?

WILL

Unexpected development.

LISA

You should have said something.

WILL

Sometimes you gotta improvise.

LISA

Then you won't mind if I keep it.

(He stares at the watch. She relents and takes the watch off and places it on the piano. He places his cap, mittens and scarf on the piano. He pauses for a moment before he removes a jewelry box from a pocket in his cargo pants and places it on the piano. He opens the box, revealing her new necklace.)

(Disappointed:) Willy.

WILL

Things haven't been going my way lately.

LISA

Any of it true?

WILL

What?

LISA

Once upon a time there was a boy who came to the big city.

WILL

Those three months...

LISA

Only three?

WILL

(Smiling:) Fucking amazing. Weren't they?

(She smiles in spite of herself.)

I love it when you smile.

LISA

How do you do it?

What? WILL

Get inside? LISA

What do you mean? WILL
(She waits.)
I'm good at being grateful.

And that works? LISA

When they know it's all you got. WILL

Show me what you got, Will. LISA

What? WILL

Start there. LISA
(She points to the breast pocket of his jean jacket. He doesn't move.)
You're back on it. The stuff. Aren't you?
(He doesn't answer.)
You need a place to stay. That's why you're here. Right?

Cold out there, Lisa. Real cold. WILL

You can stay. One night. I just have to know what I'm getting. Show me, Will. LISA
(He reluctantly removes a small rectangular baggy from the breast pocket of his jean jacket. She makes a gesture. She makes it again. He tosses it to her.)

What is it? WILL

Something that keeps you warm at night. LISA

Tell me.

WILL

Tina.

LISA

Which is?

WILL

Meth.

LISA

Go on.

WILL

What?

LISA

Everything.

WILL

Didn't know you were into...

LISA

...You'd be surprised.

WILL

Doesn't sound like you, Lisa.

LISA

I've changed. Show me.

(He removes a small vial filled with liquid from his jacket and tosses it to her.)

WILL

G.

LISA

What's it do?

WILL

Makes everything possible.

LISA

Give me the jacket.

(She gestures, but he doesn't move.)

Part of the deal, Willy.

WILL

You can trust me.

LISA

Necklace?

WILL

I brought it back. If you gave me the watch, I was going to return it.

LISA

That's why you kept it in the box?

WILL

I'm in a little over my head. There these guys. Total assholes. They're waiting.

LISA

You need money.

WILL

Maybe George said something in his will about me?

LISA

He gave you the money already.

WILL

Nothing?

(She shakes her head.)

Not even...

LISA

Willy...

WILL

He didn't...?

LISA

No.

WILL

It's not fair.

LISA

He barely knew you.

WILL

I was his son!

LISA

Yeah? Where have you been for the past year?

WILL

I need money, Lisa. Real bad.

LISA

Then give me the jacket.

(He reluctantly takes it off and tosses it to her. She removes a baggie of pills and holds them up. Pause.)

WILL

X. (Pause.) Ecstasy.

LISA

I don't approve of your new friends, Will. Sweater.

WILL

What?

LISA

Take it off.

WILL

There's nothing...

LISA

Sweater.

WILL

You'll help me out?

(Her expression softens. She holds out her hand.)

LISA

Sweater.

(He takes the sweater off and tosses it to her. He is now bare-chested. His body is sinewy and very pale. He shivers.)

WILL

I haven't changed, Lisa. Not really...

LISA

Pants.

(He's surprised.)

Pants.

(He doesn't move.)

Pants.

WILL

Lisa, this is kinda weird.

LISA

Give them to me and I'll give you what you want.

(He takes off his shoes and throws them aside. He slowly takes down his pants and hands them to her. He stands wearing only his underwear and baggy socks. She goes through the pockets in his cargo pants and removes a vial with a screw top.)

WILL

K.

LISA

All the letters of the alphabet.

(She pulls out a bottle of Visine.)

Keeps the red out?

WILL

Easier to get through airports.

LISA

Clever.

(She removes a small glass pipe.)

Crack?

WILL

I'm not a crack whore.

(Lisa laughs.)

(Embarrassed:) It's for the meth.

(She goes through each pocket and removes a bunch of other vials and baggies. Some syringes. A lighter. A disposable cell phone. She removes a watch.)

LISA

Thing for watches?

WILL

They're easy.

(She removes a hunting knife.)

Wild world out there.

(She places it beside everything else on the piano. She pulls out a small photograph in a picture frame.)

LISA

The four of us.

WILL

Like a real family.

LISA

Why did you take it?

WILL

Why do you keep it on your night table?

(She doesn't answer.)

I know what it looks like, but I'm back, Lisa. And now everything's going to be... everything's going to be good again. I can make it better.

LISA

How?

(He thinks for a while. Then he kneels, spreads his arms wide and gives her his most magnificent smile. The smile knocks the air out of her lungs. She turns away from him.)

Don't.

(He is confused by her reaction. This upsets him and he becomes self conscious.)

WILL

I'm sorry. That was wrong. I'm... God, I'm fucked up. The stuff. I didn't mean. Forget that happened. Okay? It didn't mean... (A little panicked:) You didn't tell him did you? About the stuff? I was clean those three months. I swear. I should never have told you.

(She turns back to him. He looks at her with a shy smile.)

What I meant was. I'm back. If you give me what I need, I can make everything better again. I swear.

(She thinks for a moment. Then gathers his clothing and begins to exit.)

Where you taking that?

LISA

They're filthy, Willy.

WILL

What am I going to...?

LISA

Part of the deal

(She exits.)

WILL

Lisa?

(He shivers as he wanders around the living room. Crossing back to the piano, he takes the cap off one of the vials and snorts it. Then crosses to the sofa, where he sits clutching his knees. Once the hit has its effect, he calms down. His cell phone rings. He crosses to the piano and answers it.)

Yeah?

(He crosses away from where Lisa exited, cups his hand to the phone and tries to keep his voice down.)

Gonna take longer... No.

(He crosses to the window and looks out.)

Stay away from the box... You don't like it out on the street, you and your boys can go get coffee and wait it out.

(Lisa re-enters holding men's pajamas. His back is to the doorway, so he doesn't see her.)

Tomorrow... In the morning... Yeah? Well, fuck you... Don't fuck with me... Don't fuck with me. I said don't fuck with me... Because I'll... you won't like it. Okay?

(He pauses to listen. He doesn't like what he hears. Watching Willy's transformation has clearly upset Lisa. She sees the drugs on the piano.)

Come on, guys. That...

(He kneels on the floor.)

I'm a fuck up, okay? But I'm good for it... Come on, guys...

(Lisa crosses to the piano and uses the pajamas to quietly gather all the drugs and paraphernalia. She leaves the knife, photograph and jewelry before exiting.)

(Near tears:) I'll get it back, plus what I owe. Okay? An hour.... Because that's how long it'll take... A lot... I said *a lot*...

(He calms down as he listens.)

Yeah... Okay... (Signing off:) Fuck you.

(He hangs up. He gets up and starts to pace between the elevator and the middle of the room. He begins to tremble – another reaction is coming on. He sits on the floor, clutching his knees to his chest, and shivers for a few beats. After it passes, he crosses to the piano to take another hit of meth. Lisa re-enters. He can't find his drugs)

Where is it?

(She throws the pajamas at him.)

LISA

Take a shower first.

WILL

Where's my stuff?

LISA

The clothes? Down the chute...

WILL

...No....

LISA

...Incinerator...

WILL

The drugs?!

LISA

Down the toilet.

WILL

What?! You didn't.

LISA

Can't have that in my house, Willy.

WILL

I'm fucked!

LISA

It's part of the deal.

WILL

That stuff wasn't all for me.

LISA

We're going to do this my way.

WILL

(Enraged:) It's theirs. They're waiting for me.

LISA

I'll take care of you.

WILL

One foot out there and I'm dead!

LISA

Stay, Willy. Here. With me. You'll be safe.

(Black out.

End of Act I.)

Act II Scene 1

(Lights up.

Twenty minutes after the close of Act I.

Lisa's bedroom. Lisa sits on the bed, holding the bottle of vodka, which she drinks from occasionally as the scene plays. Will sits on the floor, wearing only the pajama bottoms. He has taken a shower and his hair is wet. He looks cleaner, but still strung out.)

I'm fucked.

WILL

You can't coast for a while?

LISA

You think all that stuff was for me?

WILL

They'll have to find their own.

LISA

One foot out on that sidewalk and I'm fucked!

WILL

You're safe here.

LISA

They're going to fucking kill me.

WILL

Just a bunch of punks.

LISA

Yeah. Right. This is something you know about.

WILL

I can't have that in my house.

LISA

You shouldn't have done that, Lisa.

WILL

You'll get used to it.

LISA

Don't want to get used to it.

WILL

Shower help? LISA

No. I knew it wouldn't. WILL

...You look better... LISA

Shouldn't have done that. WILL

I did you a favor. LISA

You don't know what you're talking about. WILL

We're going to do this my way. LISA

Five minutes. WILL

Five minutes? LISA

I can feel it. I got about five minutes. WILL

And then? LISA

Everything goes to hell. You think that's funny? I didn't come here to rip you off... WILL

...Necklace? LISA

I brought it back. WILL

...You've done it before... LISA

...And you... WILL

...Stopped flat... LISA

...you rip *me* off... WILL

...That's what you told me... LISA

...You take my clothes... WILL

...When you first got here... LISA

...My stuff... WILL

...When you told me... LISA

...I can't even walk out that door... WILL

...You said you did it all by yourself... LISA

...I never lied to you... WILL

...Cold turkey... LISA

...I don't care what that old bitch says. I never wanted anything from you and George. Never. And now you fuck me over. You know what kind of fucking shit I'm in? WILL

You'll wake Georgie. LISA

I need my stuff. You gotta time it like a Swiss watch or you're fucked. WILL
(He shudders.)

Four minutes.

And then? LISA

You don't want to find out. WILL

(She offers him the bottle of vodka.)

That shit's poison.

LISA

Water?

WILL

Meth. Can you get me some meth, Lisa? I need another hit right now.

(He begins to pace.)

LISA

(Firmly:) You've done it before.

WILL

I had a reason.

LISA

You can do it again.

WILL

I don't want to.

LISA

You said you wanted it back the way it was.

WILL

You don't get what I was saying.

LISA

Only way, Will.

WILL

You're wrong.

(He paces.)

LISA

I'll take care of you.

WILL

Yeah? Well, what the fuck am I going to tell them? I've fucked up before. This was my last chance. And you...

LISA

Wait it out.

WILL

(Laughing:) Right.

LISA

We'll call the cops. They'll leave.

WILL

You don't know what's out there, Lisa.

LISA

You're safe here, Willy. Trust me.

WILL

Three minutes.

LISA

You can sleep here.

WILL

Twelve hours of hell before that can happen.

LISA

What kind of hell?

WILL

Eat your own hand kind.

LISA

You can do it, Will.

WILL

I can see it.

LISA

What?

WILL

The bottom. You've fucking pushed me off the ledge and it's coming up fast.

LISA

I'm helping you.

WILL

Got any pseudofed?

LISA

Why?

WILL

One minute.

LISA

No.

WILL

Any kind of cold medicine?

LISA

I'm not letting you build a meth lab here, Will.

WILL

You don't know what's next. You're not going to like it. You gotta have something in this fucking place.

(He becomes more agitated.)

LISA

Like what?

WILL

Something to take the edge off.

LISA

Edge off.

WILL

To keep me from jumping out the fucking window.

(No response.)

(Building with intensity:) Ten seconds.

WILL

One.

LISA

I heard. The phone. I'm doing you a favor.

Two.

Stop it! You'll wake Georgie.

Three.

You've done it before.

Four.

You can do it again.

Five.

That stuff is bad, Willy. Bad.!

(He closes his eyes and shudders as he continues the countdown.)

Six.

Okay. I fucked up. I admit it. I fucked up. It was stupid. I'm a retard. A stupid retard! Okay? What do you want from me?!

Seven.

Eight!

LISA

Xanax?

WILL

Where?

(She looks to the beside table. He lunges for it, opens the drawer and removes three prescription bottles.)

LISA

They don't work. Trust me. Just make you sleepy.

(He chooses one of the bottles, but has trouble opening it because his hands are shaking. After she opens it, he pours the pills on the bed and picks up three, swallowing them without water. This calms him down a little – more of a psychological reaction than anything. She scoops up the spilled pills and takes the other bottles and begins to exit.)

That was fun.

WILL

Stay.

LISA

And watch you sleep?

WILL

Not likely.

LISA

I'll be on the couch.

WILL

Stay.

LISA

Why?

WILL

You got to make sure I don't crash.

LISA

Crash.

WILL

(Angry:) Pass out and stop breathing.

LISA

Christ.

WILL

(Holding the empty pill bottle:) I don't know this stuff very well.

(She grabs the phone.)

What are you doing?

Calling Nate. LISA

Prince Charming? This is your fault. WILL

No, Will. It's not. LISA

You let me back in. Gave me the pills. How you going to explain that? WILL

Hospital? LISA

No fucking way! WILL

What the hell am I supposed to do? LISA

I'll be okay. You just got to watch me for a while. WILL

(She puts the phone down and stares at him angrily. This makes him nervous.)

How could you hook up with that guy, Lisa? I mean... after George? LISA

Knock it off, Willy. WILL

(Pause.)

What's going to happen? WILL

All goes well, we'll just float back down. LISA

And then? WILL

Give me what I need and all will be forgiven. Don't look at me like that. LISA

We already gave you money. WILL

Thirty thousand doesn't last long. LISA

We found you a place. A job.

WILL

Couldn't make it stick.

LISA

You disappeared.

WILL

Sometimes you got to improvise.

LISA

Didn't even show up for your own father's...

WILL

It hit me hard, Lisa.

LISA

It hit everyone hard, Will.

WILL

You wouldn't have liked what you saw.

LISA

Now you're back looking for more.

WILL

Only what I deserve.

LISA

And what's that?

WILL

How bout all that money you read about? See on TV? That people gave. Million... two million to each family. What about that money? I deserve it as much as you. I need it Lisa. Where's my share?

LISA

Why did you leave the farm, Will?

WILL

There was no farm. What is it with you fucking New Yorkers? Say any state west of New Jersey and you automatically live on a farm. She died. I had no one. Nowhere else to go. What the hell was I supposed to do? Where's the money?

LISA

George made a stupid mistake when he was twenty....

WILL

...Yeah. I'm a stupid mistake....

LISA

...It doesn't mean he was your father. If your mother had wanted that, she wouldn't have run all the way to South Dakota...

WILL

...North Dakota...

LISA

...and kept you to herself for eighteen years. She didn't need George when you were shitting your diapers... when you caught your first grounder in T-ball... when you picked up your high school diploma.

WILL

Give George *father of the year*.

LISA

She didn't want him to be a part of your life when she was alive. It's too late now.

WILL

He got rid of her.

LISA

She took off.

WILL

After he gave her 500 bucks for an abortion.

LISA

That's a lie.

WILL

He had bigger plans. Do the math, Lisa. He made his decision. He chose you.

(Pause.)

LISA

What do you want, Will?

WILL

My fare share.

LISA

You had it. You shoved it up your nose... pumped it into your veins... however you take all the shit you're on.

WILL

I've made some mistakes.

LISA

I call and tell you about George and you disappear.

WILL

...I told you....

LISA

...And now you come back. Fucked up out of your mind.

WILL

What have *you* done since then, Lisa?

(She doesn't answer.)

I miss him too. More than you'll ever know. Because now it's too late. Things I'll never know. About him. I never had a chance. Did I?

LISA

You come here. All pathetic. Like a lost puppy left out in the cold. You tell your sad story and I write you a check for another thirty thousand. That it?

WILL

Lisa...

LISA

I knew why you came here tonight, Willy. I knew the second you walked into the room.

WILL

Then why did you let me back in?

(She doesn't answer.)

It wasn't supposed to go this way.

LISA

How was it supposed to go?

WILL

You've always understood. When I got off that bus at Port Authority. So scared. What was he going to think? You know? A fuck up like me? But you, Lisa. I could say anything to you.

(He closes his eyes and shudders.)

LISA

Will?

WILL

Might be a rough for a little while.

LISA

What's going on?

WILL

Tina puts up a good fight before she goes down.

(His cell phone rings off stage.)

Where is it?

LISA

Piano.

WILL

(Agitated:) They want in.

LISA

They'll go away.

(Cell phone stops ringing.)

WILL

I'm sorry, Lisa. I didn't want... You of all people. So good to me. This is... I didn't mean to... I didn't have anywhere else to go. You're right. I fucked up. I'm sorry.

LISA

(Gently:) Underdog. Underdog. I want an underdog.

(He closes his eyes and trembles slightly.)

(Trying to distract him:) Tell me something, Willy.

WILL

What?

LISA

Anything.

WILL

Anything.

LISA

Like you used to.

WILL

When?

LISA

Night. Georgie in bed. George on another business trip. I can't sleep.

WILL

Yeah?

LISA

You'd tell me about your day.

WILL

What about it?

LISA

Farm boy in the big city.

WILL

I didn't grow up on a...

LISA

You saw more of this town in three months than I had in my whole life.

WILL

Lisa.

LISA

Your eyes would light up and you'd make this whole city new for me. Do it again.

WILL

The things I've seen?

LISA

Yeah.

(As the scene continues, he gets less agitated – the pills are having their effect. The vodka is having an effect on her too.)

WILL

Way up high. The buildings. The tall ones.

LISA

Yeah?

WILL

You've got to get higher to see it.

LISA

What?

WILL

Shiny and sleek. Like crystal. But you get high, you can see inside. From the top.

LISA

What do you see?

WILL

Wooden water towers. Like the rotten ones they pull down back home. Shiny from the outside. You get high. You can see. Rotten on the inside.

(He closes his eyes and sighs.)

There... There... There we go...

LISA

You're sweating... Fever?

WILL

(Giggling:) Fingers are tingling. This stuff is good, Lisa. Fast. Sure it doesn't work for you?

LISA

Tell me another, Willy.

(He closes his eyes.)

Like old times.

WILL

Good times.

LISA

Yeah.

WILL

Yeah.

(He pauses to think. Then smiles as he opens his eyes.)

Big hotel in Times Square. Whole block. Construction across the street. I know how to get in. When the workmen leave. Go up high, maybe the twentieth floor. Wait for dark... for the lights to come on and you can see inside.

LISA

The hotel?

WILL

Huge grid. Eight hundred rooms. Fifty stories. Every one with a picture window. Like eight hundred movies going at the same time. Stare at it for hours. So high. So clear. See right inside.

LISA

What do you see?

WILL

Kids jumping on beds... watching pay-per-view porn while their parents are out. Unpacking. Dressing. Late night meetings. People loving...

LISA

...Fighting...

WILL

Just a few details, Lisa. That's all you need.

LISA

Like what?

WILL

The clothes in a suitcase. If they leave them or put em in drawers. Who gets ice from the machine in the hall. What they do with it. The way they arrange the covers. How they sit on the bed. What they order from room service. How they tip the bellhop. Just a few details and you can make up an entire life. You know what a woman does when she enters a hotel room alone?

LISA

Tell me.

WILL

She checks the bathroom. Then goes to the window and looks out to see who might be watching. Draws the sheers and peeks from the side. You can still see her. Her shape. Through the sheers. Can't hide.

LISA

And men?

WILL

Kick off their shoes, untie their ties, throw their pants on the bed. On the phone... order room service... go to the window in their boxers. King of the world surveying their domain.

(She laughs.)

The funniest are the lie-a-sons.

LISA

...Liaisons...

WILL

You can always tell when a man is cheating. So excited he can barely dial. Cups the phone like someone is listening through the walls. Goofy look on his face. Practically hear his heart racing. Poor straight bastards. Marriage is really fucked up. Not natural. Gay boys have it easy. They either share or it's open or it's *don't ask, don't tell*. Makes a lot more sense. Don't you think?

(She smiles.)

My favorites are the honeymoons... or maybe anniversary and they're from Pennsylvania or Arkansas or Queens. They're kissing at the window. In the bathrobes they let you take, then charge you 200 bucks. He's kinda short. A gut. She has big hair. Three kids back home staying with her mother. They just called to

make sure everything is fine. Back from a show. Musical with gondolas and a chandelier and shit. The program is on the desk. They're kissing at the window. He turns her back against the glass and pushes her down. The robe parts. He puts his hands up. Against the window. And her big hair throbs against the glass. He looks out. And it's like Times Square... all of New York... the entire world giving him a blowjob.

(He closes his eyes.)

A few details... and you can create a world...

(She smiles. He is back to "normal" – a sleepy normal. She is feeling the warmth of the vodka.)

LISA

Doing better?

WILL

Yeah. That was fucked up.

LISA

I missed you, Willy.

WILL

You did?

(She nods. He smiles.)

This stuff is good. Have any more?

LISA

How long will it last?

WILL

You can fool the bitch for a few hours.

LISA

Tina?

WILL

She's hungry... so hungry... insatiable.

(Off-stage cell phone rings four times. She hears it. He pretends he doesn't.)

LISA

What was she like? Your mother?

WILL

Yvonne.

LISA

God.

WILL

The good parts. You would have liked her.

LISA

Why did it take her so long to tell you?

(He shrugs.)

Didn't you ever wonder?

WILL

When I was a kid, I pretended he was an astronaut... sailor... That he was far away and couldn't come back. That kind of dumb-assed thing.

LISA

When you were older?

WILL

That he was dead. Or there were a few and she didn't know which one. Or maybe he beat her or it was rape and every time she looked at me, that's the face she saw.

(Pause.)

LISA

How did you find out?

WILL

Her last trip to the hospital.

LISA

Almost ended our marriage. When you called.

WILL

I came out of that bus. And there he was. Waiting at that gate. And I knew... it didn't matter who he was or what he had done or didn't do... if I loved him... like I had known him all my life... Like he hadn't wanted me gone... Like he had been there every time he should have. Every time I needed someone to look out for me. Every time she had to go to the hospital and I didn't know what to do. Every time I had to go home alone and hungry. If I could love him like he had been there for me all my life. Then he would love me too. You all would love me. So I forgave him and I loved him like that. And it worked. It felt like... It felt like the most beautiful... The most amazing... Remember? Those three months?

LISA

Yes.

WILL

(Indicating the pajama bottoms he is wearing:) George's?

(Lisa nods.)

He'd wear these while he did the crossword puzzle. Sunday mornings. (Smiling:)
The time he made waffles.

(They laugh.)

He was special. Wasn't he? I hardly knew him. But I could tell. Right away. He
was special.

(She nods.)

That's why she fell in love with him. Maybe that's why she took off when she was
too chicken to go through with it. Why she kept me. Because she knew he was
right. She wasn't special. She was like me. That's why she left. Why she wouldn't
tell me. She didn't want some stupid shit-head kid... some fucked up loser to get in
his way.

LISA

Maybe she just wanted you all to herself.

(This calms him down.)

Where have you been, Will? The past year?

WILL

You wouldn't have liked what you saw.

LISA

Why did you get back on the stuff?

WILL

You know why, Lisa.

LISA

Yeah?

WILL

Only difference between you and me... I'm not afraid to go out and get the stuff.

(She doesn't respond.)

You think about it. Don't you. What you and Georgie saw through the window.

(She doesn't respond.)

And when you think about it, you see the holes. In this town. People. Who they
think they are. Where they think they're going. You can fool yourself for a while.
You step off a bus and you think you're worth something. But then the whole thing
falls down. And you're a fuck up again. And when you're a fuck up, you either got to

settle for what you got... know that it's gone and it's never coming back. Or... or you dream in a different way.

LISA

It isn't real.

WILL

It is for me.

LISA

Where are you living?

WILL

Everyone has a story. Sometimes it's simple. Cartoon with the same panel over and over. Other times... five-hundred-page novel and you got to know where to fit in, know all the details. Make it perfect all the way to the end... or maybe just till the next chapter. Or until morning. Like when I got off the bus.

(She nods.)

I got really good at that.

LISA

Getting off busses.

WILL

Walking through doors. If you do it right...

LISA

How do you find them?

WILL

Just need to get inside once.

LISA

Tell me.

(He pauses. This is difficult for him.)

WILL

You meet someone. He says he has something you might like... something that takes the edge off of being a fuckup. He has a camcorder. And you start fucking around with it. And you start acting tough and maybe you answer a few questions. And he gets you to... do stuff. And then it's online and you... You get known as someone who can take them there. For a night. A weekend. A week. Out to the Island or the Cape or they have a place upstate... in the mountains. Maybe they just want you to hang around. Like you're their little lost brother. That skater boy in the park they saw on their way to work. If you know the story they're looking for. What they want. If you can take them there. If you can do that. You feel like it's who you

are and where you're from and you are a part of something beautiful. Immense. Enormous. As big... as old as the universe. Like it's sacred.

(Cell phone off stage rings four times.)

LISA

Who are they?

WILL

Scum.

LISA

What happened to heaven?

WILL

Sometimes the stuff doesn't bring out the best. Sometimes it stays that way for a while and it gets a little rough. They get a little tired of your face. Or someone notices a few missing twenties...

LISA

...a watch...

WILL

...and you gotta find a new set of friends. Your judgment gets a little fucked up. It's cold as hell out and you fall in with some guys who don't have your best interest at heart. Who have a little more at stake. It's snowing like a bitch and you got to figure out another way. Things'll get better. Just gotta walk through the right door.

(She takes the cassette out of her pocket and hand it to him.)

What is it?

LISA

I was walking Georgie to school. Bright, sunny morning. She tripped and cut her knee. I got napkins from the deli on the corner, but it wouldn't stop bleeding. So I brought her back. A message on the machine. George wanted to take the day off and drive us to the beach.

(She thinks about the message and smiles. Then her expression changes.)

Then another message.

(Pauses.)

I dialed. I couldn't get through. Not the office number. Not his cell. I dialed again. I kept on dialing. I heard the sirens. Fire trucks. Then I saw Georgie. Staring out the window, watching a singed piece of stationary float by. *Memorandum*. I walked to the window. And there it was. The smoke... flames... The burning paper exploding

out of the tear. I dialed. I stood there at the window and I kept on dialing. Until they came down. Do you think he jumped? Or did he wait?

(He can't answer.)

In just a few seconds. All those people. Crushed into a million pieces. Ground into a cloud of white dust. They're everywhere. Little pieces of all those people. On the buildings... the leaves of the trees... on the soles of your shoes. In the air we breathe. Everywhere.

When you go out, do you see him?

When you're buying coffee at Starbucks. In line at the bank. Walking down Fifth Avenue. Out of the corner of your eye. You see... the millions of little things. The cowlick on the back of his head. His black briefcase from Tiffany. The way he cups his cell when he walks His laugh. The pink tie you bought him for father's day. Your heart pounds. He's back. But it's only a little piece. Blown there for you to find. And then it blows away... that little piece... and he dies all over again. Every time you walk down the street. It happens to you. Right?

(He nods.)

Then you understand... Why I can't leave here. It's one of the pieces.

(He nods. This is a great relief to her.)

Where were you? I called. I went to the bank. I went to your apartment. You were the only one I knew would understand.

WILL

I'm back, Lisa.

(She pushes the cassette to him.)

LISA

Want to listen? Now. Together. I can't... I can't sleep at night, because when everything is quiet. It's all I hear. No matter what I do.

(He snaps the cassette in two. She is shocked.)

Why did you do that?

WILL

It's not the good stuff.

LISA

Good stuff? Where is the good stuff?

(He can't respond.)

(Angry:) Where, Willy! Show me the good stuff! Where the fuck is the good stuff?

(She grabs the broken cassette from him and slaps him across the face quite hard. He is shocked.)

Fuck you! Fuck you, Willy. Fuck you!

(She looks at the cassette and starts to cry. This upsets him. He tries to reach out, but stops short.

She continues to cry.)

Lisa... WILL

You promised. LISA

What? WILL

What are you waiting for? LISA

Don't know what you mean. WILL

Make it better. LISA

Lisa... WILL

Do it now. LISA

How? WILL

You promised. LISA

No. WILL

When I let you back in. LISA

I can't. WILL

All just talk? LISA

I can't. WILL

Bring it back. LISA

Not without the stuff. WILL

You have to. Willy. That's why I let you back in. LISA
(He reaches out, holds her by the arms and tries to get her to look at him.)

Let's get out the fuck out of here, Lisa. WILL

No. LISA

Look at me. WILL
(She won't look into his eyes.)

The shore, Lisa.

What? LISA

Let's go to the shore. WILL

It's snowing. LISA

The shore. WILL

No. LISA

Look at me. Go ahead. What do you see? WILL
(She looks into his eyes and stops crying.)

Blue. LISA

WILL

Yeah?

LISA

Blue.

WILL

What kind of blue?

LISA

Sky blue.

WILL

The color of the ocean.

LISA

Not a cloud in the sky.

WILL

Let's go there.

LISA

Where?

WILL

Look at me.

(She looks deeper into his eyes. He cups her head gently in his hands. She responds to his touch. She closes her eyes.)

LISA

The beach?

WILL

Let's go now.

LISA

Blue...

WILL

Ocean blue.

LISA

I see it.

WILL

How could you miss it?

(She looks at him again and smiles.)

Tell me.

(He continues to stroke her shoulders and neck. She relaxes more with each touch.)

The beach? LISA

What do you see? WILL

Georgie... LISA

Yeah? WILL

She has a bucket... LISA

...and a little shovel. WILL

Dropping seashells into the bucket. LISA

Underdog. Underdog. WILL

I want an underdog. LISA

(She has started to respond to him by gently stroking his face, neck and shoulders. She is losing herself.)

I hold her way up high. WILL

(Laughing:) You're wearing George's old suit. LISA

Swim team. WILL

Skipping stones. LISA

Showing off. Are you watching, Lisa? WILL

From where I sit on the blanket. LISA

The sun is hot. WILL

So hot. LISA

Can you feel it? WILL

Yes. LISA

The gulls. WILL

(Sound effect of gulls calling begin softly.)

The waves, Lisa. LISA

(Sound effect of waves.)

So hot. LISA

Melting the ice in the cooler. WILL

The sun. LISA

Smell the sea breeze? WILL

Suntan lotion. LISA

What do you see, WILL

You. LISA

What am I doing? WILL

Walking back to the blanket. LISA

Hey. WILL

LISA

Your hair is wild from the sea breeze.

WILL

Any water left?

LISA

The tops of your shoulders red from the sun.

WILL

Hand me a water, Lisa.

(She hands him the vodka. He drinks.)

LISA

The sun-bleached down on your arms....

WILL

...Cool water on a hot late summer day...

LISA

You smell delicious. Like drug store cologne inside a high school letter jacket.

WILL

(Laughing:) Lisa...

(He smiles at her.)

LISA

Lie down on the blanket, Will. Next to me. Go on. Lie back.

(He slowly leans his head back against the foot of the bed and closes his eyes. She kneels on the bed, looking down at him, combing her hands through his hair. The piano piece from earlier in the evening can be heard.)

WILL

So hot.

(He has broken out in a sweat from the combination of drugs he has taken. He wipes his face with his hand.)

LISA

You're sweating, Willy.

WILL

Yeah?

LISA

The drugs?

WILL

The sun.

The hot sun. LISA

Can you feel it? WILL

(He gazes up at her.)

What are you looking at, Lisa?

A bead of sweat... LISA

Sweat? WILL

On your chest. LISA

Okay. WILL

A tiny drop of water... LISA

...on my chest... WILL

...inching down your chest... LISA

(Laughing:) Where is it going, Lisa? WILL

Think about it, Willy. LISA

What? WILL

What it's been. LISA

What? WILL

The drop. LISA

Tell me. WILL

Rain... snow... a cloud. LISA

Same drop of water? WILL

... glaciers... LISA

...spit... WILL

(They laugh.)

...oceans... LISA

...blood... WILL

...rivers... LISA

...cum... WILL

Now a drop of sweat... LISA

All the way back to the beginning... WILL

Swapped by a billion kisses... LISA

...cried by a billion tears.... WILL

The billions of people we touch every day... LISA

...Who touch us... WILL

Since the beginning of time. LISA

Everything. WILL

LISA

All in a drop.

(She reaches down and touches his abdomen. He flinches. They look into each other's eyes for a moment. She holds her hand up as though the drop were on the end of her fingertip.)

LISA

Then it's gone.

WILL

The drop of water.

LISA

One chance. That all we get?

(She peers down at him – as though she is looking at him from the edge of a still pond and he's looking up at her from beneath the surface. She reaches down and smooths a strand of his hair back in place.)

WILL

Lisa?

(She smiles at him.)

What do you see?

LISA

Blue. The sky. The ocean.

WILL

...Blue...

LISA

You've stolen a universe of blue. There it is. I see it.

WILL

You see it.

LISA

The turn of his lip.

WILL

Whose?

LISA

The curve of the back of his head.

WILL

Who are you looking at, Lisa?

LISA

His eyelashes. The stubble on his chin. That smile. His eyes. Your eyes.

WILL

My eyes?

(She nods.)

His eyes?

LISA

All the little pieces. Coming back together. Only he's twenty years old... and fresh... and beautiful. Like when we first fell in love.

(Will is overcome with emotion.)

WILL

George?

LISA

George.

(Will smiles his enormous, beautiful smile. She sees it and it knocks the wind out of her. She looks away. This upsets him. He stops smiling.)

WILL

What's wrong?

(She pauses. Then slowly looks into his eyes.)

LISA

Smile again.

WILL

Lisa...

LISA

Smile.

WILL

Lisa...

(She reaches down – caressing his face. His neck. His chest. He is upset by this.)

LISA

Do it again.

WILL

Lisa....

LISA

Bring it back.

WILL

This isn't right.

LISA

The way it was.

WILL

Don't.

LISA

What else is left?

(He looks up at her and smiles.)

LISA

(Whispering:) Blue. Big as the ocean..

(She closes her eyes and kisses him. He freezes.)

WILL

(Whispering:) Lisa.

(Keeping her eyes closed, she kisses him again with more passion.)

LISA

George.

(He gives in and reaches up and holds her. They continue to kiss. He gathers her in his arms and slides her off the bed. They embrace tenderly and continue to kiss at the foot of the bed. He kisses her passionately. They are in the world they have created.

The door buzzer rings from off-stage. The music and sound effects end abruptly. We hear footsteps running away from the bedroom door. Lights up on the living room. Georgie runs in from the hallway and crosses to the door buzzer.)

GEORGIE

Hello, this is Georgie? May I ask who this is?

(Lisa hears Georgie. She breaks from Will.)

LISA

Georgie?

GEORGIE

Okay.

(Georgie presses the door buzzer. Lisa staggers to her feet.)

LISA

Georgie!

(Georgie presses the elevator call button - *ding*. Lisa runs out of her bedroom. Will tries to stand, but the Zolofit has had its effect.)

WILL

Lisa?

(Lisa enters the living room from the hallway.)

LISA

What did you do?

GEORGIE

Willy's friends.

LISA

Will. Come here. Will!

WILL

Lisa!

(Will stumbles toward the door. Lights out on the bedroom as he exits. Lisa is beginning to have a panic attack.)

LISA

Will!

WILL'S VOICE

Lisa. Don't let them in...

LISA

Go to your room.

GEORGIE

They're Willy's friends...

LISA

Will...!

(Will staggers into the living room from the hallway.)

WILL

...They want their stuff...

GEORGIE

AHHHHH!!!! It's Willy! It's Willy! It's Willy!

(She runs to him. She tries to jump into his arms, but he holds her back.)

LISA

Georgie, go to your room...

GEORGIE

...You've come back, Willy! Just like you promised!

(The light on the elevator turns on – *ding*. It is coming up. They all stare at the light for a second. Lisa starts to hyperventilate.)

WILL

...We're fucked.

GEORGIE

Naughty Willy!

LISA

...The phone...

WILL

Where's my knife...?

LISA

...Piano...

(Lisa crosses to the phone cradle on the shelf, but the cordless phone is missing. She searches for it.)

Phone!

WILL

...oh, god...

(Will grabs the hunting knife and takes it out of its sheath.)

GEORGIE

...What are you doing with the knife, Willy...?

LISA

...Georgie. Bed...!

WILL

...Oh, god...

(Georgie runs to the piano and begins to play the music she played earlier. Lisa tries to lift her off the bench, but Georgina struggles.)

LISA

...Now...!

GEORGIE

...No...!

LISA

...Georgie...!

GEORGIE

...I want to stay with Willy...

(They struggle.)

LISA

...Hold still!

(Georgie breaks free and returns to the piano.)

GEORGIE

No!

(Georgie starts playing again. Lisa grabs her and slaps her face. They both freeze for a second. Then Georgie starts crying.)

LISA

(Very upset:) I'm sorry, baby. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Please... Please do as I say...

(Georgie's crying becomes hysterical. She runs around the room, throwing things. Lisa chases after her. She throws things at her mother and screams.)

GEORGIE

Ahhhhhhhhhh!

WILL

...Oh, god...

(Lisa finally catches up with her.)

LISA

Do as mommy says!

GEORGIE

Ahhhhhhhhhh!

LISA

(To Will:) Get them out of here!

(She exits, carrying the screaming Georgie down the hallway. Will crosses to the elevator and stares at the door. Wearing only his pajama bottoms, he holds the hunting knife in his right hand.)

WILL

...Oh, god... Oh, god...

(The elevator bell dings. The door begins to open.
Blackout.)

Act II Scene 2

(Lights up.

Six months later. The study in Yvonne & Guy's Upper East Side co-op. Windows – if there are any – are shuttered. Perhaps a mirror is covered with black cloth.

Yvonne sits at a desk. She is placing a newspaper clipping into an envelope. She wears black clothing. Nathaniel enters in a black suit. Something about his appearance should indicate that time has elapsed. He looks thinner. Yvonne is more subdued than when we last saw her, though she is not morose.)

YVONNE

Everyone gone?

(He nods.)

Caterers?

(He nods.)

You gave them the check?

(He nods.)

I think we pulled it off, don't you? Two in six months. We're getting good at this. Maybe we should take it on the road. *Funerals R Us?* What do you think?

NATHANIEL

I don't think I can do this anymore.

YVONNE

But you're so good at it. My very own Doctor Death.

(He doesn't react.)

Joke, Dr. Baby.

(He still doesn't react.)

There isn't an ironic bone in your body, is there? Such a talent. To be so sincere. How do you do that?

NATHANIEL

That joke wasn't funny.

YVONNE

Yeah. But I can get away with it. Say whatever I want. One of the many perks we white, upper-class New York women enjoy.

NATHANIEL

Lisa wasn't like that.

YVONNE

Sometimes it doesn't take.

NATHANIEL

Maybe you get away with it because no one takes you seriously.

(This hits home. He instantly regrets what he has said.)

YVONNE

After six months of you acting like a saint. I've finally done it.

NATHANIEL

I shouldn't have...

YVONNE

...Opened my big, fat, ugly mouth one too many times.

NATHANIEL

I guess I don't have much of a sense of humor.

(Pause.)

I should... It's time for me... I better....

YVONNE

How's the book coming along?

NATHANIEL

How...? That's over. I returned the advance. I'm not... probably never again.

YVONNE

You'll come back to check on us, won't you?

NATHANIEL

(Unconvincingly:) Sure.

YVONNE

The world is a lonely place.

(He looks as though he wants to leave, but doesn't know how to say good-bye. She pauses to think for a moment. Then makes a decision.)

YVONNE

Could you mail this for me?

(She hands him the envelope.)

Read it first. Go ahead.

(He opens it and removes the clipping.)

NATHANIEL

Guy's obituary?

(He reads from a sheet of stationery included with the clipping.)

I thought you should know. Sincerely, Mrs. Gerald "Guy" Whittemore.

(He reads the name on the envelope.)

Sarah Jane Warner...?

YVONNE

Why do women all have three names these days?

NATHANIEL

Who is she?

YVONNE

Guy's plaything for the last couple of years. I'd have more envelopes, but I wasn't fortunate enough over the decades to catch all their names. Ever given a blowjob to a man who's just come from his mistress's bed?

(He doesn't respond. She laughs.)

Probably not. That's what you do. To keep it all together. Everything you worked so hard for. You fight. Tooth and nail. Below the belt, if you have to.

(She takes the envelope and clipping back.)

Survived by his loving wife of 46 years, Yvonne. I may have lost a few of the battles. But I won the war, Doctor Baby.

(She crosses to the bar and pours vodka into two glasses.)

Bet you thought you'd figured me out. Could read me like a book.

NATHANIEL

This isn't any of my business.

(She turns and offers him one of the drinks. He stares at her.)

YVONNE

Such a good boy.

(She tosses back one of the drinks. Then sips from the other.)

Before you go. Maybe you could give me a little doctorly advice. Now that I've gotten this far, what do you think... what... what should I do next? Do you know? Any ideas?

(He doesn't answer.)

Maybe I should behave like one of those little women you see on TV. In the Middle East. You know... a bomb has landed on her living room sofa. They have sofa's over there don't they? Or do they all just sit around on Persian rugs? Doesn't matter. A bomb lands on her sofa and she was in the kitchen whipping up some baba ganoush or tabouli or maybe washing one of her trusty burkas... Iraq's answer to the little black cocktail dress... and she comes back into the living room with a platter of whatever and her entire family has been wiped out. She can see little bits and pieces of them smeared on the rug, splattered on the walls. Her husband is still breathing... but he's in shock... and his heart can't take it and she cradles him in her arms as she watches him die. It takes six months, but she's there every nasty step of the way.

(She takes another drink.)

These widows. What do they do? Do they just take it? Buck up? Look brave and noble for the cameras? No. They pull their hair out. They stumble down the street and scream and howl and cry. They wail. For their neighbors. They wail for their towns and cities. They wail against the curse that's descended like a black veil over their entire civilization. For a week they wail... for the whole world to hear. And then it's over. Do you think they're onto something? What do you think? Think it will help? I think.... Yes. That's what I'm going to do. Right here. Right now. For you. So that I can get it all out... in the open. Share it with the world. So that you'll all know what I'm feeling.

(She closes her eyes and inhales as though she will scream. She stops. Then laughs.)

Another joke, Doctor Baby.

(She takes another drink.)

I used to fool myself into thinking that I was connected to everything in this city. Everything good and wonderful. As if New York were a huge constellation of beautiful shining stars. That's the trick to living in this town. When you look out, you keep looking up... at the stars... so that you don't see that everything below is just so... rotten.

(She closes her eyes.)

All those stars. When you're young, there are so many. After awhile they start to burn out. A restaurant closes. An invitation doesn't arrive like it did the year before or the year before that. A planeload of 200 screaming passengers slams into a skyscraper. Your daughter is slaughtered by a new breed of terrorist. Your husband slips away before your eyes. One day you look out and an entire constellation has fallen to earth. The whole story. The beautiful story that you handled with such care... that you told with such relish and love. Because that's what you do. You

make up the story. You make it a good one. *Newark girl conquers the big city*. A comedy of sorts. Bedroom farce? Anyway that's how I played it. And you stick with it. No matter what corner of hell it drags you through.

(She crosses to the table, seals the envelope.)

Survived by his loving and faithful wife of 46 years. And now all that's left is...

(She hands him the envelope.)

(Sincerely:) Is this really it? What comes next? Do you know? Help me, Dr. Baby?

(He can't answer.

She pulls herself together.)

Fuck it.

(She thrusts her glass into the air.)

(With bravado:) To Evvy Goldman... the pride of Newark.

(She laughs and drinks the rest of her vodka. Then looks down. Her bravado has evaporated almost as quickly as the rest of her drink. She's afraid to meet Nathaniel's eyes.)

Maybe... maybe... you'd like to meet Evvy sometime. Take her out on the town? She can be fun. A pain in the ass. But fun. She promises not to sing.

NATHANIEL

Okay.

YVONNE

Yeah?

NATHANIEL

I'd like that.

(They both smile.

Georgie enters the room. She is dressed in clothing that is more mature than the clothes she wore before. Her hair is pulled back tight into a ponytail. Her manner is subdued – as though she's been medicated. She carries a suitcase.)

NATHANIEL

Hey!

GEORGIE

Hello, Doctor D'Schommer.

NATHANIEL

What you got there?

(She holds up the suitcase.)

What's that for?

GEORGIE

Things Nonnie's not allowed to touch.

YVONNE

Georgie.

GEORGIE

Goldie died. We found her this morning.

NATHANIEL

I'm sorry.

GEORGIE

Nonnie flushed her down the toilet.

YVONNE

Play with your toys, honey.

GEORGIE

I'd rather play with Grandpoppa.

YVONNE

You can't.

GEORGIE

Why?

YVONNE

We've been through this.

GEORGIE

Why?

YVONNE

No more games.

GEORGIE

Why?!

YVONNE

Because he's dead.

GEORGIE

Did you flush *him* down the toilet?

NATHANIEL

I've got an idea. Why don't you and your Nonnie come over and visit my garden. I'll show you all the beautiful....

GEORGIE

I hate flowers.

NATHANIEL

Then let's go into the living room and you can play the piano for me.

GEORGIE

I don't know how.

NATHANIEL

Sure you do.

(She turns from him and crosses a short distance away. She opens the suitcase. Inside is some clothes and a few dolls.)

Georgie?

(She ignores him. She sits on the floor and picks up a doll.)

YVONNE

Georgie?

GEORGIE

(Yelling:) My name's Norma. Norma!

(She goes back to her dolls. This has upset Nathaniel.)

NATHANIEL

(To Yvonne:) I better... (To Georgie:) Good-bye.

(Yvonne stops him.)

YVONNE

Write it. Your book. Exactly the way it happened. All of it. You have to.

NATHANIEL

Why?

YVONNE

Because we've been asleep too long. Centuries. All the world's troubles have always been over there... in the dirty places we think are so inferior. We were wrong. And even when the damn planes... when 5,000 people die in a single day less than two miles from here... Even that didn't wake us up. It's here. In our own back yard. That's your story. Don't you dare turn away from it like everyone else. You have to tell it. Promise me.

(Pause as he thinks.)

NATHANIEL

Okay.

(Awkward pause.)

I better...

YVONNE

(To Georgie:) When I come back, we're going to have a little talk, young lady.

(Nathaniel and Yvonne exits.

The light narrows in on Georgie. She arranges her dolls in a semi-circle. She picks up a little girl doll and pretends that it is speaking. She does the same with the other dolls throughout the scene.)

GEORGIE

(Male doll voice:) *I'm back, Lisa.*

(Little girl voice:) *You're back, Willy.*

(Male doll voice:) *Stupid dumb-assed kid. Fuck up. Shit. Fuck. Shit. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck. Fuck.*

(Female doll voice:) *The beach, Willy!*

(Male doll voice:) *The beach, Lisa!*

(Female doll voice:) *Retard. Sitting outside your mother's room like you're not supposed to. Only retards don't go to bed when their mothers tell them. Only retards listen when they're not supposed to.*

Buzzzz!

(The sound effect of a loud buzz is heard at the same time as she makes the sound. She picks up a male doll. She says her line at the same time as the sound-effect voices play.)

GEORGIE

(Boy Voice:) *We need to see, Willy.*

MALE VOICE

(As though heard through a handset:)
We're friends of Willy. We gotta talk to him.

GEORGIE

Buzzzzzz. Ding!

(The real sound effects play.)

GEORGIE

(Women's Voice:) *What have you done? Georgie, what did you do? Georgie! Bad girl! Go to your room!*

LISA'S VOICE

WILL'S VOICE

(Boy's voice:) *Don't.*

...Don't let them in. Lisa...

GEORGIE'S VOICE

(Little girl's voice:) *It's Willy! It's Willy!
It's Willy!*

...AHHHHH!!!!

(Georgia shakes the little girl doll.)

GEORGIE

(Woman's voice:) *Stupid girl! Go to your room!*

(She slaps the little girl doll. Sound effect of the slap. Sound effect of Georgie crying.)

GEORGIE

(Woman's voice:) *Do as Mommy says!
Go to your room!*

LISA'S VOICE

I'm sorry, baby. I'm sorry! Oh, God...

WILL'S VOICE

... oh, god... oh, god...

(Sound effect of elevator door bell - *ding.*)

GEORGINA

Ding!

GEORGIE

(Scary male doll voice:) *Where is it,
Willy? Where's our stuff?*

MALE VOICE

Hey there, Willy. Gonna make us stand out there all night?

WILL'S VOICE

(Boy doll voice:) *I don't have it. Go
away!*

I don't... I don't... I don't have it. I fucked up... Okay? I'll make it up to you... I...

(She screams and smashes the two male dolls together and makes them fight. The sound effects of a fight are heard. They grow in intensity. She adds her own noises. We hear Lisa's voice as she tries to stop it. We hear Georgie screaming and crying hysterically.)

GEORGIE

(Woman's voice:) *Go away!*

LISA'S VOICE

Get the hell out of my house or I'll call the police.

LISA'S VOICE

(Woman's voice:) *Get out of my house!* Get them out of here!

(Boy's voice:) Stay away, Lisa! Lisa, don't. WILL'S VOICE

(Woman's voice:) *The knife!* Give me the knife. LISA'S VOICE

(We hear a scream. The sound effects end abruptly. Georgie picks up the female doll and mimes stabbing it several times. She lays it on floor and picks up the boy doll. She stabs it once in the chest.

The lights come up and reveal Yvonne. She has re-entered and has been watching from a distance. She is upset by what she has witnessed.)

(Cautiously:) Georgie? YVONNE

(Georgie sees Yvonne. She stops and her face changes to a glower. She begins to shove the dolls back into the suitcase.)

Honey?

(Georgie slams the suitcase shut and begins to exit.)

Georgie, wait.

(Yelling:) My name's not... GEORGIE

...Your name is *Georgie*. YVONNE

Is not! GEORGIE

Honey... YVONNE

Is not! GEORGIE

Georgie! YVONNE

is not is not is not is not is... GEORGIE

YVONNE

(Losing control:) Stop it!

GEORGIE

I hate it here!

YVONNE

So do I. You think this has been a party for me?

(This surprises Georgie.)

You've been walking around with that ugly old suitcase for days. If you hate it so much, why are you still here? What's taking so long?

(She doesn't answer.)

Bet I know why.

GEORGIE

Do not!

YVONNE

Do to!

GEORGIE

Do not!

YVONNE

Then go ahead. Leave.

(Georgie stares at her.)

You have no place to go. Do you?

GEORGIE

Do so.

YVONNE

You're stuck here like everyone else.

GEORGIE

Am not.

YVONNE

Okay. Where are you going?

GEORGIE

Someplace.

YVONNE

Where?

GEORGIE

None of your business.

YVONNE

Where?!

GEORGIE

I'm going to find Willy!

(Yvonne sighs.)

You lied to me.

YVONNE

I've never...

GEORGIE

You always lie to me. You don't really know where he is. You don't. But I do.

YVONNE

I haven't lied.

GEORGIE

Have so!

YVONNE

Listen to me...

GEORGIE

I'm going to find him.

YVONNE

Find him? (Pause.) Find him?

(She nods.)

How you going to do that?

GEORGIE

None of your business.

YVONNE

Tell me, Georgie.

GEORGIE

No!

YVONNE

Go on...

GEORGIE

I'll follow the footprints.

YVONNE

What footprints?

GEORGIE

The red ones... I know where they went. You don't. But I saw them and I know...

YVONNE

...Georgie....

GEORGIE

...they ran out the door and over the snow...

YVONNE

...stop it....

GEORGIE

... and they lead all the way to the river...

YVONNE

...enough....

GEORGIE

He was hurt and he couldn't breathe. That's why he had to go back. To the water. That's why he climbed a big rock and jumped into the river and swam away. All the way to the sea. That's what really happened.

YVONNE

He swam away?

GEORGIE

You lied to me.

YVONNE

That's what you think happened?

GEORGIE

You lied!

YVONNE

If that happened, how are you going to find him?

GEORGIE

I'll go down to the river and call his name and he'll hear me and he'll come back. He'll swim up and he'll say *Hey there, Georgie Girl* and he'll come up out of the water...

YVONNE

...I've told you a hundred times...

GEORGIE

...And he'll take my hand and we'll fly up...

YVONNE

...They found him, Georgie...

(Georgie covers her ears and squeezes her eyes shut.)

GEORGIE

...Higher than the tallest tower in the city even...

YVONNE

...The night your mother was killed....

GEORGIE

...Way up above the stars and there will be Pappa and Daddy and Mommy and...

(Yvonne pulls her hands down and forces her to listen.)

YVONNE

They found him huddled in the corner of a gate in Port Authority. Lying in a pool of blood.

GEORGIE

...He's coming back...

YVONNE

(Anguished:) Willy's dead.

GEORGIE

Liar!!!

(Georgie takes her suitcase. Yvonne tries to stop her from leaving.)

YVONNE

He's dead, Georgie!

GEORGIE

Liar!

YVONNE

He's dead!

GEORGIE

Don't touch me!

(Georgie fights back. She pushes Yvonne away. Yvonne comes back at her. Georgie starts shrieking.)

Ahhhhhhhh!

YVONNE

He's dead! They're all dead! And they're not coming back!

(They both completely lose their composure and begin to fight. Georgie continues to scream.)

Stop it! You'll do as I say for once, Goddammit!

(During the struggle the suitcase opens and the dolls and most of the clothing fly out. Georgie gives Yvonne one final push and she falls to the floor. She falls quite hard. She lies, surrounded by the dolls and clothes. Georgie stands a short distance away completely enraged.)

GEORGIE

(Yelling:) I hate you!

(She runs to one of the dolls on the floor, kneels and mimes stabbing it several times.)

I hate you I hate you I hate you! I hate you! I hate you!

(Yvonne grabs another one of the dolls. She imitates Georgie and stabs it repeatedly, letting out a long, loud, gut-wrenching cry.)

YVONNE

Ahhhhh...

(She stops and looks at the doll, shocked by what she's done. She hugs the doll tightly and begins to cry. She sobs uncontrollably.

As she observes this from a distance, Georgie is taken aback. She has never seen her grandmother act this way. As Yvonne continues to cry, Georgie's expression changes from anger to disbelief and from disbelief to compassion. After another moment she becomes concerned. She kneels a short distance from her grandmother.)

GEORGIE

Nonnie? Don't cry. He'll come back.

(Yvonne looks up and sees Georgian's look of compassion.)

He'll come back and make everything better. He promised.

(Yvonne stops crying. They gaze into each other's eyes. For a moment everything stops as they both see something for the first time. They see each other.

This is the beginning of their life together.

The music Georgie played the last night they were all together returns. Yvonne reaches out and smooths a strand of Georgie's hair back into place. Georgie reaches out and embraces Yvonne. She hugs her tightly, burying her face in the folds of Yvonne's black dress. For a moment, Yvonne doesn't know how to respond. Then

she remembers. She places the doll on the floor and embraces her granddaughter. She looks down at Georgie in her arms. Inhaling deeply, she tilts her head back and closes her eyes. She exhales.

As the lights fade, the set falls away and the backdrop is transformed into a thousand shining stars.

End of play.)