

The Eroding Dream
a play in 3 acts
2004-5
by Mark Noonan

Characters:

Matt Mooney – father, fifty-seven, second oldest
Sarah Mooney – mother, mid-fifties
Sam Mooney – son, twenty-one
Mallory Mooney – daughter, eighteen
Gertrude Mooney – grandmother, eighties
Suzanne Mooney – aunt, mid-fifties, middle child
Claire Davis – aunt, late forties, youngest
June – nurse, forties
Tim Mooney – uncle, around sixty, the oldest
Kate Mooney – his wife, mid-fifties
Jack Geiger – Matt’s best friend, same age
Maggie Geiger – his wife, likewise
Al Mooney – uncle, around fifty, second youngest

Setting: The living/dining room of an upper middle class home. Some might call this a “great” room because it is a large space with high ceilings and an entire side of big bay windows that look out on the grassy backyard and, further on, the lake. Lake is misleading term because anyone who has ever looked out on one of The Great Lakes knows it is closer to an ocean than a dimpy lake.

Back left is the front door, shielded by a set of stairs that lead to the second floor. Left, a hallway leading to more bedrooms, a study, etc. Left of center in the great room are two couches along with coffee tables and end tables facing the downstage television. Against the left wall is an upright piano with stool and more chairs. Behind the living room, but mostly unseen because of the white wall, is the white kitchen. There is a cubby hole in the wall, roughly four feet by three, so someone in the kitchen can see the living room and vice versa. The kitchen is recently renovated (last five years) and has a small breakfast nook/table that comfortably seats four. Right of the kitchen, in the big open great area is the dining room table, currently set up to seat eight but by adding another leaf and the two chairs against the wall right that bookend a china cabinet the table can seat ten. Up right another hallway leads to the basement and garage. Down right is a screen door, and then outside a brick patio: a glass table, four white metal chairs, a matching chaise lounge. Above the great room, following the kitchen wall up, is an open walkway that leads to a pair of double doors right that is the master bedroom. Therefore it is possible to stand above and look down to the living room and about half the dining room.

It should be stated that the house was originally a modest three bedroom ranch that underwent extensive additions (second floor) and renovations (kitchen, bay windows, patio) in the past ten years.

Act I: Waiting

(A piano sonata plays softly as lights come up on the house. Summertime. Friday. 1:30 PM.

The dining room table is half covered with newspapers, books, real estate magazines and newspapers, and maybe a clothesbasket with clean laundry neatly folded. Sarah is busy in the kitchen chopping up nuts and messing with dough as she bakes a loaf of nut bread while she prepares to bake some chocolate chip cookies. All the while she cleans simultaneously. Matt paces behind the couch, cordless phone to his ear, TV remote in the other hand.)

(It is a sunny hopeful blue-sky day. Seventy-five degrees with a cool breeze off the lake coming in through the open windows and screen door.)

Scene 1:

Matt: (on phone) I know, can you believe it? Who knew? I knew, that's who... Three seventy-eight right now—Nope, three eighty—three eighty—two. It's pretty wild... Yeah... Since nine-thirty this morning, up a dollar... fifty-five—no, fifty-eight. It just keeps going. (covers phone) Can you believe this?

Sarah: (through cubby hole) I know, it's pretty amazing.

Matt: (back into phone) Really? You're going to... At what? I don't know, I'm in this sucker for the long haul, it's been good to me, so far (he knocks on wood). Yeah, thirty-eight... No problem, I think it's a ten dollar stock... Yeah... Who knows... It could hit five today. Yeah... Okay... Yeah... Get back to work... Right... Okay... Bye. (presses end) (louder) Three ninety-two! Three ninety-four! This is crazy.

Sarah: What did Jack say?

Matt: (mesmerized by the CNBC ticker) He said uh... And... There it is! Four dollars! Unbelievable. Four dollars. Wow. What was that?

Sarah: What did Jack say?

Matt: Oh. He said he's putting in a sell at five.

Sarah: Oh yeah?

Matt: Yeah. He thinks once it hits five one of two things'll happen: someone'll buy them out, which would mean you'd then get stuck with a whole bunch of Comcast stock or Viacom stock; or it'll level off and stay at five for a while—which it might—Four o eight. I can't believe this thing.

Sarah: Or it could go down...

Matt: (mesmerized) What's that?

Sarah: Or it could go down.

Matt: Well, yeah, sure. It could go down. It could go down right now, who knows. But, uh, the reason it's so crazy today is that they announced Mercedes and Honda, which is also Infiniti, and Kia. But—

Sarah: What?

Matt: Kia.

Sarah: What's Kia?

Matt: They're Korean.

Sarah: Oh.

Matt: But, I say, wait 'til they announce GM and Toyota—then—and that's why I think it's a ten dollar stock. When they announce that, then we'll really see what this stock is made of because those are the big boys, so... (watching) Four sixteen. It just keeps going, it might hit five dollars today.

Sarah: That would be something.

Matt: No kidding. I've got to call Pivcevic and see what he thinks of this. (dialing)

Sarah: Did he buy some?

Matt: Yeah, but he sold it early on at like two dollars but I think he kept some. He really wasn't big on the idea that it could take—Ed. Yeah, it's Matt. Well, have you been...Yeah...Four twenty-four now...Yeah. That's something, isn't it?

(Enter Sam from off left. He's in shorts and a t-shirt. Unshowered, bedhead, he just woke up. He wanders through the living room, looks outside, looks at the TV, then meanders into the kitchen)

Matt: (as Sam enters) So you still have what, some, yeah?—Ah! Sleeping beauty! Good morning. Good afternoon, actually.

Sam: (used to this) Yeah, good morning.

Matt: (back into phone) Yeah, Sam. Yeah, I know. I hear ya...So what do you...Really!?!...That's what I think, but...You think that soon?...Wow...that would be great...Yeah...Right, 'cause it's not geared for you and me...It's for the younger generation...Four thirty-seven, yeah...I don't know...Let me...Yeah...I'll check...

(Matt exits off left to go get online. Sam has gotten a bowl of Frosted Mini Wheats and plops down at the dining room table so he can see the TV. Sarah remains in the kitchen.)

Sam: What's going on?

Sarah: What time did you get home last night?

Sam: Uh...It was about one thirty or two. Maybe one forty-five.

Sarah: It's one forty-five right now.

Sam: Yeah.

Sarah: That's twelve hours sleep.

Sam: Yeah, well, I was reading for a while. (Sarah enters and places a sliced plate of nut bread down next to Sam, along with some butter.) Did Emily call?

Sarah: No. I don't think so. He's been on the phone off and on all morning. Are you expecting her to call?

Sam: No, I was just wondering. What's going on?

Sarah: Oh, well...

Sam: What?

Sarah: No. I'll let him tell you. He'd want to tell you, he knows more about this stuff than I do.

Sam: What? Is it about (he moves to the couch so he doesn't have to squint to see the TV ticker) Up a dollar eighty-five! Wow. Man, that's huge.

Sarah: (looking through real estate newspapers) Mm hm.

Sam: How did this happen? Wow.

Sarah: Well, I don't know the specifics but some announcement was made this morning and since then it's just been going up, up, up.

Sam: Hun... Well that's great.

Sarah: Yes.

Sam: Who's he talking to?

Sarah: Uh, I think it's Mr. Pivceovich now.

Sam (nods his head and thinks): I'm thinking of going to San Francisco.

Sarah: Un hun. What? When?

Sam: In like three weeks or so. Neil's got a place out there—he's been living there for the summer—and I could go out, stay with him maybe for a few days, maybe a week—before I go back to school.

Sarah: Un hun. How do you plan on paying for this?

Sam: All it would really be is airfare. Maybe a couple hundred bucks. And food. I need to get out of here.

Sarah: What happened at Westwood?

Sam: Mr. McClain said he could use me but because I haven't been there for two summers I'd be a C which means I'd be relegated to carrying little Mrs. Moneybags bags and it's just—doesn't pay all that great—and I'd have to spend all day, twice a day, watching these little old ladies with their hundred yard drives all day, every day.

Sarah: It would be some cash.

Sam: Yeah, I suppose. Oh. Neil's going to see if his dad can't get me some work for the next few weeks at AMG, which, if that works out, that would pay pretty well.

Sarah: Un hun.

Sam: Which, would then make the trip to San Francisco not such a big deal.

Sarah: You need to get a job first—

Sam: (testy) Yes. I'm aware I need to get a job.

(Enter Matt.)

Matt: Woo hoo! (laughing, rubbing his hands together) What's it at now? This is a good day. Not even two yet and it's a good day—Four thirty-eight. Up a dollar ninety-six. Can you believe it?

Sam: Yeah, it's something else. What was the—

Matt: Four fifteen this morning?

Sam: What?

Matt: You don't think I can hear you when you try to sneak in here at Four Fifteen in the morning—

Sarah: Four fifteen? What were you doing out—

Matt: Trying oh so hard to silently slide the screen door shut, and then tiptoe across the family room—I know your tricks—

Sam: What? You're crazy. You must have been dreaming.

Matt: Oh no—

Sam: I'm surprised you can hear anything over that foghorn of you snoring.

Matt: I don't think so—

Sarah: You heard him?—I didn't hear him.

Matt: Well you're dead to the world. A freight train could come through here you wouldn't even move.

Sarah: That's not true. Watch it. At least I don't wake up the whole house—

Matt: All right—

Sarah: You really should go see somebody—

Matt: I know—

Sam: Yeah, dad, you should—

Sarah: Get one of those sleep apnea machines that Father Ned has—

Sam: That's a great idea—

Matt: Okay—

Sarah: You'd probably feel so much better—

Sam: You'd sleep so much better, like a baby—

Matt: All right. All right. Thank you from the peanut gallery.

(Sarah and Sam laugh. She returns to reading; he goes to the kitchen to put his bowl in the dishwasher.)

Matt: Pivceвич was saying that he read somewhere that the GM announcement could come possibly as early as Tuesday.

Sarah: Really?

Sam: (from kitchen) Okay, now, so what happened?

Matt: This morning, just before the session opened, they came out and announced Mercedes and Honda which is Infiniti too and Kia.

Sam: Wow. That's Korean, right?

Matt: Yeah. So, right off the bat, the stock opened up forty cents. And now it's up almost two dollars.

Sam: That's crazy. (buttering a piece of nut bread, drinking OJ)

Matt: I know. It is. So...who knows, it could reach five dollars today.

Sam: What does Mr. Pivcevich think?

Matt: He thinks it'll hit five and then level off.

Sam: Would you sell at five?

Matt: I don't know, maybe some. I think it's a ten dollar stock.

Sam: (to Sarah) What are you reading?

Sarah: (lost in magazine) Just perusing.

Sam: You know, you should just go get your license again.

Sarah: Maybe I will.

Sam: Yeah, you know more about the houses around here than Buddy Kane.

Sarah: I hate that man.

Sam: Why? Why do you hate him?

Sarah: Because. He builds these cheap houses—four beds, two baths—young families move in, because he makes the neighborhood look so pretty and the fronts of the houses all look so pretty, then six months later, what happens?

Sam: Wetwinds.

Sarah: That's right. A summer storm, just one little storm and there's three feet of water in the basement.

Matt: That man is such a crook. He builds these crappy cheap three hundred thousand dollar aluminum siding homes, and somebody keeps buying them because new developments just keep popping up, farther and farther out. Four ninety.

Sam: Britannica.

Matt: Saddlebrook.

Sam: Legacy Point.

(Phone rings: Sarah goes and answers it.)

Matt: Four and five hundred thousand dollar houses. A half a million dollars for that...But...the lawn needs cut.

Sam: Oh, yeah?

Matt: Yeah, wiseguy.

Sam: I'll get my people right on it.

Matt: Your people.

Sam: I just cut it, what? Three days ago—on Monday.

Matt: Yeah. Well it needs it again. It's long.

Sam: It's shorter than the Warren's.

Matt: Nice try. Today, please.

Sam: All right. All right.

Sarah: Matt, it's for you.

Matt: (into phone) Yeahhlo...Oh, hi, how are you? (exits left)

Sam: I'm going to go to Huntington for a while, I'll cut the grass later. Who was that?

Sarah: Doctor Happe.

Sam: Who?

Sarah: Doctor Happe. Grandma's doctor.

Sam: That's his real name?

Sarah: Yeah. Isn't it a riot?

Sam: It's ridiculous. I've gotta go see grandma.

Sarah: You should.

Sam: I've been meaning to, I just keep forgetting.

Sarah: You should.

Sam: I will. I know, I will.

Sarah: Four fifteen in the morning?

Sam: (smiling) What? No way. He's crazy. The old man's losing it in his old age.

Sarah: Right...

Sam: I'll be back in a little bit. Tell him I have every intention of cutting the grass later on today. Okay?

Sarah: What should I tell Emily if she calls?

Sam: Tell her I'm at our spot, she'll know what that means.

Sarah: Will you be back by six?

Sam: Why, what's at six?

Sarah: (incredulous look)

Sam: Yeah, I'll be back in time for dinner. What are we having?

Sarah: I haven't decided. You want burgers or chicken divan?

Sam: I feel like cheeseburgers but whatever he wants is fine with me. Oh, hey, look. It just hit five dollars. Dad! Hey, Dad! It's at five! Five o one! All right, I'll see you later. (he exits right via screen door)

Sarah: All right. Bye. You have sun block?

Sam: (from off) Yeah...

(Enter Matt)

Sarah: What was that about?

Matt: Where's Sam?

Sarah: He wanted to tell you your stock hit five dollars.

Matt: Hun. Look at that. Uh, he wanted to tell us that Mom's terminal.

Sarah: Really?

Matt: Yeah. Uh...

Sarah: What do we do?

Matt: Can you call Suzanne. And then I'll call Tim and Kate.

Sarah: Sure.

Matt: Where's Sam?

Sarah: He went to Huntington.

Matt: Okay. We'll have to swing by and pick him up.

Sarah: Okay. What are we going to do?

Matt: I don't know. We'll see what she wants to do, which I think I know what it is.

Sarah: That's fine.

Matt: Yeah?

Sarah: Absolutely.

Matt: Okay. Five o five—five o six...

(Lights fade. Piano music returns.)

Scene 2:

(Lights come up full. It is a few hours later. Afternoon. Sarah and Suzanne pick up around the family room. Grandma center, in a wheelchair, looks out at the lake. Sam fusses with CD's.)

Grandma: It's beautiful.

Sam: What's that? Oh. The Lake. Yeah, it is beautiful. Today's a really nice day. Not too hot. Sunny. Nice breeze. (fumbling with CD's) I'll just put on some music. Let's see here.

(Enter Matt from off left.)

Matt: Okay. Sorry, Mom.

Grandma: That's okay.

Matt: Have we made a decision?

(Everyone stops and looks at each other.)

Suzanne: I think the spare bedroom'll be fine. What do you think?

Matt: We could do that—

Sarah: Or Mallory's room—

Matt: Uh, sure. I don't think she'll have a problem with that. Which one?

(More unsure looks to each other.)

Suzanne: Let's go with the spare and then we can—Yeah, let's just do that.

Matt: Okay. Mom, we're going to set you up in the spare bedroom, okay?

Grandma: (wasn't really listening) Hm?

Suzanne: We're going to get you all set up in the spare bedroom.

Grandma: Oh...no, here is fine.

Suzanne: You can stay out here for a while, Mom, that's okay, we just thought you'd be more comfortable in a bed—wouldn't you be more comfortable in a bed?

Grandma: Um...Oh no no no. Right here is good. I want to stay out here.

Suzanne: But there's no bed out here, Mom, there's only couches. You see?

Grandma: Oh...So, bring me a bed.

Suzanne: Uh...

Matt: Well...

Sarah: Sure, we can do that?

Sam: In the middle of the family room?

Matt: You want to stay out here, Mom?

Grandma: Absolutely.

(They all look to each other.)

Suzanne: Okay, okay.

Sarah: It's fine.

Matt: We can do that, Mom. Whatever you want. Can you figure that out?

Suzanne: Sure.

Sam: Dad!

Matt: What?

Sam: Um, well, come here. (crosses to the patio)

Suzanne: (covers cross) Mom, I'm going to call the hospice lady, what's her name?

Sarah: June.

Suzanne: I'm going to call June and have them bring a bed—it's going to be a hospital bed, is that okay? Or do you want us to bring the spare bed out here?

Grandma: Oh, no, the hospital bed's fine.

Sam: You sure this is such a good idea?

Matt: What's that?

Sam: You know, here...In the family room.

Matt: What?

Sam: Well, it's kind of morbid, isn't it?

Matt: Boy do you have a lot to learn.

Sam: It just seems...kind of tacky. Out in the open.

Matt: Sam, your grandmother has come home here, to our home, to...you know. This is it. Okay? Now if she wants to be in the family room or the basement or out on the front lawn waving to cars, I don't care. Whatever she wants...Okay?

Sam: Yeah.

Matt: I know this a lot really fast.

Sam: No...

Matt: Just, you know, enjoy yourself. Now that sounds weird. She probably wants to be able to see the lake and the lawn and the trees, and the sunshine, okay?

Sam: Yeah, that makes sense. Perfect.

Matt: Remember, she spends all her time cooped up in that stale home—this—all of this—is great for her. We take it for granted ‘cause we roll out of bed everyday and—bang, there it is. She doesn’t chill at the beach every day.

Sam: No.

Matt: Isn’t that the lingo?

Sam: Yeah, sure.

Matt: Okay?

Sam: Yeah, cool. Cool. That’s fine. I don’t know what I was thinking.

Matt: All right. (turns to go back inside)

Sam: Oh, hey, Dad.

Matt: Yeah?

Sam: Enthios closed at six o two.

Matt: Really?

Sam: Yeah.

Matt: Wow. (turns)

Sam: Oh, hey, Dad.

Matt: Yeah? (turns back)

Sam: You want me to cut the lawn?

Matt: Uh...Why don’t you hang out with your grandma for a little bit while we get situated; then you can cut it later.

Sam: Okay.

Matt: (turns, turns back) Anything else?

Sam: No. That’s it.

(They re-enter)

Grandma: Where’s Mallory?

(Sam looks away; Matt and Sarah look at Suzanne, then each other; Suzanne is engrossed in the phone call but she heard her niece's name but acts like she didn't.)

Matt: Oh, she'll be here. She's kind of away at camp this summer.

Grandma: Oh, how nice.

Matt: Yeah, it's great...But she'll be here soon. Definitely. (Awkward silence except for Suzanne on the phone.) Are you in pain right now, Mom?

Grandma: No. I'm okay.

Matt: Is there anything you need?

Grandma: Well, eventually Father Ned.

Matt: Oh, sure. No, he knows. He'll be here—he said he'd stop by to see you later on tonight.

Grandma: Oh. Okay.

Sam: Would you like something to drink, Grandma?

Grandma: No, thank you.

(Sarah meets Sam in front of the kitchen by the dining room and explains to him that she has stopped all eating and drinking. Sam gives a, "Really?" Sarah nods. Sam: "Oh, I didn't know." Sarah: "It's okay.")

Matt: Nice day out, isn't it?

Grandma: It's beautiful.

Matt: You want to go out on the patio—while we can, before your bed gets here.

Grandma: Uh, sure.

(Matt wheels her over to the patio; Sam works in the kitchen; Suzanne finishes her call.)

Suzanne: That's great. Thank you so much. No, I appreciate it. Okay, it's all set up. Mom, Mom? Oh. (she sees them on the patio then crosses to the kitchen.)

Grandma: What happened to the tree?

Matt: Which tree? Oh, the big oak tree...(Grandma nods) The erosion got so bad around it that finally the roots couldn't hold it up anymore—it was just hanging over the edge—a real balancing act, until finally it got so bad that instead of letting it—before it fell down into the lake, or the beach, our stone beach—have you ever been down there?

Grandma: (shakes head) No.

Matt: I didn't think so. But before it fell we had to have Jim and his crew—you know he owns a whole landscaping, tree removal, mulch whatever, service—they had to come and uh, chop it down.

Grandma: Oh, no.

Matt: Yeah...I wasn't real happy about it either, and then I saw their bill, whoa...But when they came here that tree was so big, you know—

Grandma: Oh, yes—

Matt: It had been there for years and years, I don't know how long—hundreds of years—well maybe a hundred years—and it was huge, just enormous and still in good shape, it's not like it was dying, all dead wood, no, it was still a big green canopy, really—

Grandma: Beautiful.

Matt: Yeah, beautiful. So...I didn't want to chop it down but we had no choice, it would've fallen down into the lake, or the beach and just been stranded there, so we would've had to get a crane and chop up the trunk and then hoist the pieces out, it would've been a real mess and you're talking a lot of bucks so we had to get it cut down but...Oh, yeah! When they brought it down, fell it, they had to make it fall this way, towards the house, and Jim and I were standing here and they tried to measure it out and estimate as best they could, you know, would the tops of the tree, the branches, hit the house, 'cause it's all glass back here and that would be bad. So Jim looked at me and I looked at Jim and he said, what do you think? And I said, well, you've got insurance. And we laughed and laughed. And he said, I think we'll be okay—and you know, that oak was, I don't know, a hundred feet, a hundred twenty feet high—

Grandma: It was tall.

Matt: Yeah, it was tall...And so they cut away at the base, had their ropes all hooked up and finally it teetered, it teetered, then you heard a snap, a loud snap, like its neck broke, and then down it all came, fast, and there was a big thud, it bounced, dust in the air, then somebody yelled all clear and Jim and I looked and, I'm not kidding you, the branches missed these windows here by maybe a foot, at most.

Grandma: Wow.

Matt: Oh, it was unbelievably lucky. Two more feet, all these windows scratched and probably broken. They're good, strong Anderson windows but they're not that strong. It was really lucky, but I think, that tree was here—it saw us move in, do all these additions and renovations, basically saw Sam and Mallory grow up, and I think this was the tree's final way of saying thanks or you're welcome.

Grandma: A blessing.

Matt: Yes, a blessing. But, I don't know, I still feel bad we had to chop her down. If I'd been that tree I'd've been pissed and I would've—sorry—I'd've crashed on through into the middle of the living room and said, hey, thanks for chopping me down, I thought I was a member of the family but I guess not. So...I don't know...We had to chop it down...but it was sad.

Grandma: Well, you had to. It would've just fallen into the lake anyway.

Matt: That's true. And now, ironically, our view of the lake is much better. Unobtrusive. Unob—what's the word I'm looking for?

(Grandma gives a “beats me.”)

Matt: Undisturbed? No. Unob...I'm drawing a—Unobstructed. That's it. We have an unobstructed view.

Sarah: Honey!

Matt: Yeah?

Sarah: Do you want to cook?

Matt: Oh...Sure, I can cook—

Sarah: If you don't want to—

Matt: No. I can cook. Just a minute. Are you okay? Is the sun too much?

Grandma: No. It's fine.

Matt: Do you want a blanket or anything?

Grandma: No, I'm fine.

Matt: Okay, be right back. Holler if you need anything. (opens screen door, sticks head out) Just kidding.

Grandma: Oh, okay.

(As Matt crosses, Sam re-enters from off left.)

Matt: Hey! I'm making burgers. You want one?

Sam: Sure. I'll have a cheeseburger.

(Incredulous look from Matt)

Matt: Go keep your grandma company.

Sam: Oh? Okay.

(Matt enters kitchen.)

Matt: I smell potato salad.

Suzanne: Bingo.

Sarah: Suzanne's making some.

(While this short conversation goes on Sam stands a moment in the living room in a space where no one can see him through either the kitchen cubby hole or screen door trying to figure out what to do and most likely thinking about what to talk to his Grandma about.)

Matt: What are you baking?

Sarah: Shut up. Just an apple pie.

Matt: Unbelievable.

Sarah: (laughing) Shut up.

Matt: Can you believe this?

Suzanne: Oh, I'm sure you hate eating it. I'm sure it pains you—

(Enter Sam on the patio.)

Grandma: There you are.

Sam: Hey.

Grandma: So, how's school?

Sam: Uh, it's good, yeah. I've got one more year to go, then, that's it. (Grandma nods. Long pause.) I might be going to San Francisco in a couple weeks.

Grandma: Oh, really?

Sam: Yeah, I have some friends out there—have you ever been?

Grandma: No.

Sam: Me neither. But it should be fun.

Grandma: What are you doing this summer? Do you still work over at Westwood?

Sam: No, no, not this summer. I've actually been looking for a job, but uh, haven't found anything yet. It's kinda tough now because no one wants to hire somebody for a month or five weeks or whatever it is.

Grandma: Oh, I see...

Sam: Yeah...Um...

(Awkward pause: Sam blanks out.)

Grandma: I haven't seen your sister yet.

Sam: Yeah. I'm sure, uh, she'll be around—I mean, definitely. She's just kind of not staying here this summer. But I'm sure you'll see her soon. Probably tomorrow. She works during the day. Long hours, over at the vet hospital—

Grandma: Oh!

Sam: Yeah, that big vet clinic, brand new, out in Sheffield. She works there, you know, with her whole love of animals, and horses, and dogs. It's good. It's right up her alley. Well it's always been her thing. So I'm sure she'll be by tomorrow.

Grandma: Oh, good.

Sam: She's always been like that, you know. Taking in stray dogs and spending all her time over at the barn—which I hate, that smell, of manure, but she loves it. When I came back from school last summer I went into my room and there was this cage on my bed. On my bed! And inside was a baby possum that she found somewhere, on the side of the road, or at the barn, and she was nursing it back to health in my room! So we had words about that. And then the possum died and she buried it over there under the willow...But, yeah, she's crazy, about animals at least...Even if I'm eating tuna, a tuna sandwich, she'll give me, uh, a hard time about it because the nets that they use to catch the tuna, they kill a lot of these big endangered turtles, I don't know what kind, but big turtles, like Gallopagos Island big I assume. And so I shouldn't eat tuna, ever, because of that. I guess...But I like tuna...It used to be dolphins, now it's turtles. She's shifted...Yeah...She's nuts, about animals at least...

(Enter Matt carrying a plate of burgers, tongs, etc.)

Matt: Okay. Mom, I'm going to cook some burgers out here, would you rather be inside?

Grandma: Um, uh...

Matt: It gets kind of smoky.

Grandma: Oh. Actually. I'll stay out here.

Sam: You sure?

Grandma: Yes.

Sam: Okay.

Matt: You sure, Mom?

Suzanne: (entering) Mom, you want to come inside?

Grandma: No, I'm—

Sam: She wants to stay out there.

Suzanne: Kind of a lot of sun, don't you think?

Grandma: I'm okay.

Sam: Do you want me to put up the umbrella?

Grandma: Oh—

Suzanne: Yes, why don't you—

Sam: Or a hat—

Grandma: Yes!

Sam: What's that?

Suzanne: Why don't you put it up.

Grandma: I'd like a hat. A straw hat.

Suzanne: Are you sure, Mom?

Grandma: Yes, a hat.

Matt: Sam, go get—

Suzanne: Sam, go get—

Suzanne: —your grandma a hat.

Sam: Okay.

(Exit Sam to the kitchen to consult Sarah about where to find a straw hat. Suzanne sits; Matt fires up the grill and waits for it to heat up. He sits.)

Suzanne: What a nice day out.

Grandma: Oh, it's beautiful.

Suzanne: Oh, shit.

Matt: What?

Suzanne: Sorry, Mom. I forgot to call Father Ned.

(Suzanne exits inside and gets on the phone. Sarah and Sam already exited left to go find a hat. Suzanne stays in the kitchen. Sarah will return to the kitchen and Sam will take Grandma a big floppy straw hat.)

Grandma: Mallory works at a vet hospital?

Matt: Yeah, yeah, she does.

Grandma: I didn't know that.

Matt: Yeah, this is her second summer there...So, I told you Tim and Kate are driving up tomorrow and Claire's flying in, I think she might be bringing Katie but I'm not sure.

Grandma: What about Albert?

Matt: Uh, well, I made some calls, and Suzanne made some calls, we'll try some more tomorrow, uh...(Sam exits inside and plops down on the couch, watches TV) He, um, doesn't have a phone—his phone was disconnected—but...I'll try, that's all I can do, I'll try.

Grandma: That's fine.

Matt: You know, it's been a while.

Grandma: I know.

Matt: But...I think it's hot enough now.

Grandma: But I do want to see my grand daughter, tomorrow...

(A moment of eye contact between them.)

Matt: Okay. I'm sure she'll be here. I will.

(Sam runs on with a big floppy straw hat and stops at the screendoor. Matt places the burgers down on the grill and they sizzle and smoke as we fade out. The Piano music returns.)

Scene 3:

(Saturday: early afternoon. Grandma is now set up on a bed in the middle of the room, right of the couches, left of the dining room table (if needed, one of the couches can be pushed back against the wall). She lies in a hospital bed, meaning she is at an angle, propped up. She wears comfy pajamas and has a brightly colored poplar quilt on top of her other sheets and blankets. The only machine in the room is one

for oxygen but at the moment Grandma breathes freely on her own. On her bed is a framed picture of Grandpa, and in her hands will remain a rosary which she continually prays.

Claire sits at her bedside in one of the extra dining room chairs pulled over. Suzanne sits on the couch. June, the hospice nurse, stands between them. Sarah, as always, is in the kitchen baking.

Matt and Sam are out on the patio drinking iced tea and eating off of three platters laid out: a veggie (with dip), some sort of little cracker sandwiches (cheese and bacon melted), and a shrimp cocktail plate. A covered cherry pie cools in the shade.)

Claire: Katie really wanted to come but she's been so sick lately that it would've been awful to bring her all the way here—

Grandma: It's fine. I understand.

June: If you want, if you feel up for it, and if you don't, that's fine too, when the time comes, I can show you how to change Gertrude and clean her and maybe also how you can move her, in different positions to best avoid discomfort—

Claire: Absolutely.

Suzanne: Sure.

Claire: That would be great. Whatever we can do.

June: And also maybe, how to administer the medication: what sort of doses and things like that—

Claire: Great, no, that would be great—

Suzanne: (simul) Yes, we can do that—we should handle that.

June: Okay? Great, great.

Claire: Thanks, no, great.

Suzanne: Yes.

June: Thank you.

(June exits to the kitchen.)

Suzanne: What's Katie have, kind of the flu?

Claire: You know, we don't know. Ray seems to think it's a viral thing but, I don't know, I think it might just be a bad summer cold or something she ate.

Suzanne: What did the doctor say?

Claire: Oh, we haven't taken her to the doctor—we're trying, when at all possible, not to give her any medicines, any antibiotics or anything, just treat it all naturally, holistically, because a lot of the reason all these kids nowadays develop hyperactivity, or ADD, or crazy food allergies is because they grew dependent on the antibiotics when they were younger, and now, because of that dependency, they don't work anymore, as they should. No, it's best to only give medicine when it's absolutely necessary, otherwise I wouldn't take anything, even a tylenol. I don't take anything anymore. (mouths to Suzanne) Except birth control.

Suzanne: Ah...

Sam: (mouth full of shrimp) You want me to cut the lawn today?

Matt: What?

Sam: Should I cut the grass today?

Matt: Oh. Well, yeah, it needs it. I mean, look: it definitely needs it.

Sam: It gets kind of loud up near the house—you know what I mean—I didn't want to scare, or disturb Grandma.

Matt: I think it should be okay. I don't know. Ask your mother what she thinks.

Sam: Okay.

Matt: But you can at least cut the front.

Sam: Okay. So, did, uh, somebody tell Mall what's going on?

Matt: Your mother did. Go easy on the shrimp, there's other people.

Sam: Doesn't she have more?

Matt: I don't think so.

Sam: Oh.

(Sam exits right to go cut the lawn.)

Sarah: How many of these do you do a week?

June: Oh, it varies. This week?

Sarah: Sure.

June: This week I've got four...No, five families that I'm assisting.

Sarah: Oh. That seems like a lot.

June: No. That's about standard. Pretty much a normal week.

Sarah: Is it—You must—Would you like a cookie?

June: Sure. I'll have one.

Sarah: It can't be easy, necessarily, dealing with so much, uh, death, on a daily basis.

June: Well you get used to it. And we're not dealing with death per se, there's a lot of hope and a lot of life—

Sarah: Oh sure, I know—

June: —going on.

Sarah: I didn't mean that. That way. (Pause) Can I ask how long you've been doing this?

June: Sure. I've been with hospice now for seven years.

Sarah: And prior to that?

June: I was an RN at West Shore.

Sarah: Oh. Okay. For—

June: For eleven years.

Sarah: Oh. And so you like this better?

June: It's different. I think it suits me better. I like being able to be hands on with the family and the patient and this allows that. Plus, you get to help during usually a very stressful, difficult time. So you feel like you're really accomplishing something, and not just moving around paperwork.

Sarah: That's what I hear.

June: What's that?

Sarah: That it's gotten bad for nurses because they spend most of their time dealing with paperwork instead of patients.

June: That's true. It is. I wish it wasn't. And I got out seven years ago. Believe you me it's only gotten worse.

Sarah: I'm sure.

June: It's terrible. The whole system. They need to figure out—Well, don't get me started. I don't want to get into it. (Small Pause)

Sarah: Now as far as pain goes, I mean is there, what can we really do, is it just morphine?

June: There are different things I can show you to do that will help her, not just morphine.

Sarah: But we will probably use morphine at some point.

June: If she asks for something, sure, we will. We want to make this experience as pain-free for her as possible, that's really our main goal.

(Sarah offers her another cookie.)

June: Thanks.

Claire: (at Grandma's bedside looking through a photo album) Look how handsome dad was.

Suzanne: Oh, yeah.

Claire: He was one handsome dude.

Grandma: Well, sure.

Claire: You really caught yourself a looker there, Mom.

Grandma: I sure did.

Suzanne: A studmuffin.

Grandma: A what?

Suzanne: A stud—

Claire: A studmuffin! (bursts out laughing)

Suzanne: What? (she starts laughing)

Grandma: What's a studmuffin?

Claire: (through laughter) I don't think I've ever heard dad referred to as a studmuffin.

Suzanne: (through laughter) No, probably not.

Grandma: What is it?

Matt: What are you two doing in here? Cackling on like a bunch of hens.

Claire: Check this out. (hands him photo)

Matt: Yeah...When's this from?

Suzanne: Late forties.

Claire: I don't know, but Dad sure was a studmuffin, don't you think?

Matt: (small laugh) A studmuffin? Why sure. He was a big studmuffin. A huge studmuffin. But not only was he a studmuffin but Mom was one righteous babe. Look at that. (points)

Grandma: I was not—

Matt: Sure, Mom. Look at that. You were one righteous babe.

Claire: Oh that's a babe—

Grandma: I was not—

Claire: —if I ever saw one.

Suzanne: Yeah, Mom, you were a babe.

Matt: Oh, I mean look at those legs, those shins, I mean you can almost see a knee—

Grandma: (teasing) Oh stop it.

Claire: Those are some hot ankles, Mom.

Grandma: Please.

Matt: Yeah, Mom, you were one babe. What happened?

Grandma: I got old.

Matt: Well—

Claire: It happens to the best of ‘em, Mom.

Suzanne: That’s true.

Grandma: It does. Wait ‘til you’re my age.

Matt: That’ll be a miracle.

Suzanne: Yeah, the Mooney men are not exactly known for their longevity.

(Small awkward silence.)

Matt: No, that’s true.

Claire: They’re more known for their strong livers.

Matt: Yeah, that’s true. We all know about that one.

Sarah: (from the kitchen) I see a car! Tim and Kate are here.

(We hear car doors open and close. Claire moves to the liquor cabinet and fixes herself a drink, her first. Suzanne stays with Grandma. Matt goes to answer the front door. Lawn mower stops.)

Matt: (Offstage) Well look what the cat dragged in!

Tim: (Offstage) Ha. Ha. Very funny.

Matt: (Offstage) You need some help?

Tim: (Offstage) No, we’re okay.

Kate: What’re you making this kid cut the lawn—

Matt: Good exercise. Hiya, Kate.

Kate: Hi, Matt. (they kiss) Boy, what’s somebody got to do to get a service—

Matt: That’s against our religion.

Kate: Oh, yeah? How’s that?

Matt: The eleventh commandment: thou shalt not hire a lawn service unless both your legs are broken.

Tim: It’s in there somewhere.

Matt: Oh, I'm sure of it. (They hug.)

(Everyone is now inside the house, Sam included. All the basic pleasantries of families continue: the hugs, the kisses, the hellos, good to see you, you look good, it's been too long, etc. Once all that is over with, Tim and Kate go to Grandma and say hi.)

Kate: Hi, Mom. (kiss)

Grandma: Oh, hello.

Tim: Hi there, Mom. (kiss)

Grandma: Hi.

Tim: How are you feeling?

Grandma: I'm okay.

Kate: Do you need anything? Can we get you anything?

Grandma: No, I'm fine.

Kate: Okay. (walking off) I need to use the bathroom.

Suzanne: It's the second door—

Kate: I remember. (she exits)

(Claire goes out on the patio to get some air. June hovers in and out of rooms. Sarah bakes in the kitchen. Sam gets some iced tea then sits at the dinner table.)

Matt: How was the drive?

Tim: Ugh. (Smiles, gives stressed out look in eyes)

Matt: Really? Why?

Tim: Just lots of traffic for some reason—and construction, everywhere, you'd think they're building the Panama Canal some of these places.

Grandma: Well you're here now.

Tim: Yes, that's true. And glad to be.

Grandma: Me too.

Sarah: Tim, do you want something to drink?

Tim: Uh, sure. What've you got?

Sarah: There's soft drinks, water, juice—

Matt: Iced tea.

Tim: Iced tea would be great.

Sarah: Do you know what Kate might want?

Tim: She'll probably just have a diet something. Like a diet coke.

(Sarah scurries around getting these drinks.)

Suzanne: Did you get checked in?

Tim: No. Not yet. We have to do that. We came here first.

Matt: You know you're more that welcome to stay here.

Tim: No—

Suzanne: I've got an extra bedroom at my place—

Tim: No. Thanks. Really. I think it'd be best for Kate—she likes to have her own space, you know. She's picky about these things. But thank you. Really. Where's Claire staying?

(Suzanne and Matt look to each other.)

Matt: I think she's going to stay here. To be close to Mom.

Tim: That makes sense.

Grandma: How are Libby and Kelly?

(Suzanne gets up and crosses out to the patio.)

Tim: They're great. Both of them are just doing great. Lib's going to fly in tomorrow, and Kelly should be up later tonight.

Grandma: Oh, good.

Sarah: Here you go. (she hands him a glass of iced tea)

Tim: Oh, thanks, Sarah.

Matt: If you want something to eat, there's all sorts of stuff out on the patio or in the kitchen.

Tim: Great, yeah. Maybe in a little bit.

(Enter Kate.)

Kate: Sarah, I love those little towels you've got in there, so cute.

Sarah: Oh, those were like two bucks at Marc's.

Kate: Really? Hun. Did you tell them about Elisabeth and Kelly?

Tim: Yeah, I just did.

Kate: Kelly, the poor girl's been sick as a dog, but her and Jim are driving up from Louisville today. Get a flight, I told her. But no, they insisted on driving. And Elisabeth, well, she's been swamped with her concerts and having to deal with Jennifer and Daniel, who they just discovered, has all these food allergies—like peanuts and milk and—

Sam: I had those—

Matt: Yeah, he did—

Kate: Oh, it's just horrible. Not to mention all these smog alerts they've been having which doesn't help. (she plops down in a chair) Oh, it's just awful.

Sarah: Can I get you something to drink?

Kate: What's that?

Tim: Iced tea.

Kate: Ooo. That sounds good. I'll have that. Is it sweetened?

Sarah: Uh, no.

Tim: No.

Sarah: But I can put some sugar—

Kate: Sure, that'd be great. Maybe four spoonfulls or something like that. I really like what you've done to this room, it feels so airy and uncrowded, and yet still you have all this stuff in here: a piano, a TV, an armoire—that armoire's beautiful.

Sarah: It was my great Aunt Grace's.

Kate: There's an heirloom for you.

Matt: You look good, Kate. Have you lost some weight?

Kate: (devilish smile) Yes! I was wondering when someone was going to say something. Twenty-seven pounds, thank you very much.

Matt: Wow, that's great.

Tim: Yeah, isn't it? We go on long walks every morning, like five miles or so, depending on how we feel.

Sarah: Here you go. (Iced tea)

Kate: Oh, bless you.

Sarah: Well did you have to give up running?

Kate: Mmmm. (mid-sip)

Tim: Yes, I did.

Kate: It's those poor Mooney knees.

Matt: And backs.

Tim: Right.

Kate: Oh. I felt so bad when he had to stop running. It was so sad. And he was depressed but he wouldn't talk about it—What? Well you were. But now we're able to go walking together—'cause I could never go running with him, no way—and they say walking is better for you anyway, which it is, in my opinion. And I've lost twenty-seven pounds and we get to spend those early morning hours together, doing something together. No, I thought I would hate the walks, and to tell you the truth, at first I did, but now, now I think I love them more than anything else in the world.

Matt: So it's just been all the walking that took the weight off?

Kate: Well, that, and I starved myself like a rabbit.

(Laughter.)

Tim: But, while we're up here you can indulge yourself.

Kate: Absolutely.

Tim: It smells great in here, Sarah.

Grandma: Yes, it does.

Sarah: Oh, does it? (basically to Grandma) It's not too much, is it?

Matt & Tim & Kate: No, no, it's fine.

(Sarah stays focused on Grandma.)

Grandma: It's fine, really.

Sarah: Oh, okay.

(Kate puts on her glasses.)

Kate: Are those shrimp I spy with my little eye?

Sarah: Oh, yes, they are.

Matt: There's some in the kitchen too.

Sarah: No there aren't.

Matt: No?

Sarah: That's it.

Kate: (been crossing) I'll have to sample them. Do you want any?

Tim: No, I'm fine.

Kate: Mom, I'll be right back.

Grandma: (not caring) Oh, okay. Where's Sam?

Matt: Sam?

Sam: (mouth full) Right here, Grandma. What can I do for you?

Grandma: Can you play something for me?

Sam: Oh. Uh. Well, I would but—

Matt: Go on. Play something.

Tim: Go on, Sam.

Sam: I really haven't played—it's been a long time—I don't really know anything anymore—

Tim: Oh, just go ahead.

Matt: Come on, I'm sure you remember something.

Tim: For your Grandma.

Sam: Well, I'm not being difficult, it's just I don't know any—

Tim: Oh, come on (grabs Sam by the shoulders, takes him over to the piano) I'm sure you can—

Sam: I don't know—

Tim: —come up with something stuck back in the memory banks of that big head of yours.

Sam: Uh...

Claire: (from patio) What's going on?

Matt: Sam's playing the piano.

Sam: No! I mean, uh, Mall's the one who plays. I really haven't touched this thing in years—

Claire: Oh, go on, Sam. You rock!

Sam: Uh, Mom?

Sarah: Go on...

(Sam pans across the room to all the eager faces focused on him. He turns his back to them, shuffles the music left out, finds something, realizes it's hopeless, turns them all around, sighs, makes the sign of the cross, and then places his hands over the keys and plays: Mary Had A Little Lamb. After playing that simple piece he remembers the one cool move he still knows, the glissando, and plays it ascending and then descending. He pauses, then plays again, this time from the high keys on down to the low. And finally he does it a third time, ending with a deep dramatic chord. Stupified silence for a couple beats, then Sam slowly turns around.)

Matt: How many years did you take piano lessons?

Sam: Uh...(looks to Sarah)

Sarah: Five? Six?

Sam: Something like that.

Matt: That was money well spent.

Claire: (bursts out laughing) Man, did that suck. Sorry, Mom.

Sam: What? I stopped like six years ago—seven years ago.

Claire: (laughing) I like the dramatic ending.

Sam: (laughing) What?

Tim: You've got quite a future ahead of you, maestro.

Sam: What?

Kate: Where's Mallory? Get her to play something.

Claire: (still laughing) We can say we knew you when.

Sam: I'm gonna go cut the grass. Sorry, Grandma.

Tim: Oh, Sam! Come back.

Matt: Oh! Now I know how to get him to cut the grass. Finally!

Tim: Come back. Your fans want more.

Claire: Encore! Encore!

(Sam has exited out the front door. Claire and Suzanne clap daintily like they are at the opera. Kate eats shrimp.)

Matt: Sorry about that, Mom.

Grandma: It's okay.

Tim: I'm going to go use the bathroom.

Matt: You know where it is.

Tim: Second door—

Matt: Right.

(Exit Tim left. Sound, in the distance, of a lawn mower re-starting.)

Kate: Is this new?

Claire: I don't think so.

Suzanne: Not since the last time you were here, no.

Kate: Hm. Something's different.

Suzanne: They painted it all white.

Kate: That must be it.

Claire: There was also a big-ass oak back there that they had to cut down.

Kate: Oh, yeah. There's the stump. It sure does open up the view, doesn't it?

(Suzanne and Claire look at each other.)

Suzanne: Yes.

Claire: Absolutely.

Kate: Oh, yeah. They should've had that removed years ago. This is much better. It really is nice, isn't it?

Claire: What's that?

Kate: Living on the lake. A nice breeze. Water. Calming. I like it.

Suzanne: It's nice. Except for the erosion.

Kate: Well, that's one of the trade-offs, isn't it? Need a good strong breakwall. And even so, either way, in fifty years the house'll probably be in the water anyway.

Claire: Well we've got time.

Kate: No. Absolutely. I'm not saying that that's a reason not to live on the lake, if you have the ability, by all means...So, Claire, you look good.

Claire: So do you, Kate.

Kate: And you too, Suzanne.

Claire: Have you lost some weight?

Kate: Actually. Yes, I have. I was telling Matt and Mom, I've lost twenty-seven pounds.

Suzanne: Wow.

Claire: That's great.

Kate: Thanks. I want to lose about thirty more, so...(crosses fingers) How's Ray?

Claire: Good, good. He's good. He hurt his back for a while there so he was laid up.

Kate: Oh, no.

Claire: Yeah, he pinched a nerve.

Kate: Ooo, that's awful.

Claire: Yeah, it was really painful for him but he was hopped up on the good stuff, percocet, and codeine, so he was flying high on cloud nine for a while. And so was I. One night, that is.

Kate: When I had my operation I was on those and boy, whew, it was something else. Just wiped all my cares away.

Claire: Absolutely. But he's better now. Doing backflips and handsprings.

Kate: Really?!

Claire: No, I'm just kidding.

Kate: And how's little Katie?

Claire: Good.

Suzanne: I'm going to go get some more iced tea, does anyone want anything?

Kate: See if Sarah has more shrimp. I really shouldn't but they're so good.

Suzanne: Anything else?

Claire: No. I'm good. Thanks.

Kate: Katie's what, four now?

Claire: Four, yep.

Kate: So cute.

Claire: Yep, she's a bundle of energy, that one.

Kate: Do you want to have more?

Claire: Uh, I don't know. Maybe. My old clock is getting pretty well up there.

Kate: Well...

(Tim walks over.)

Tim: Howdy.

Claire: Howdy, pardner. Why don't you take off yer spurs and stay awhile.

Tim: Don't mind if I do.

(Matt, Sarah, and June talk quietly to Grandma. Suzanne returns out to the patio with iced tea.)

Kate: Try these little sandwich thingies Sarah made—

Tim: Don't mind if I do—

Kate: —they're real good. Suzanne went to get more shrimp.

Claire: Have a seat.

Tim: Don't mind if I do.

Claire: (quietly) Has anyone brought up Al?

Tim: Matt said that she asked about Al.

Claire: Well what are we going to do?

Kate: Does anyone know where he is?

Tim: I don't.

(Enter Suzanne.)

Claire: Me neither. We're talking about Al.

Suzanne: Oh.

Claire: Has anyone heard anything from him since the last time you guys went down there?

Kate: No.

Tim: (eating) I don't think so. Matt got a call once, and Al actually left a normal coherent message but when Matt called him back the number was disconnected. (laughs) Typical Al.

Claire: Well is there any way to get a hold of him—anyone we can contact?

Suzanne: I don't think so.

Tim: I tried a couple of his buddies in San Antonio but all their numbers were disconnected. Good bunch those guys Al hangs out with—

Claire: (put off, sigh) P—Yeah.

Tim: (eating) So I don't know. I know Matt talked to Dally but he wants nothing to do with his dad.

Kate: And rightfully so—

Tim: Sure. I don't blame him at all.

Claire: There's got to be someone we're forgetting.

Tim: I don't think so.

Suzanne: I can't think of anybody.

Claire: Matt! Matt.

(Matt walks over.)

Claire: What have you done concerning the AI situation?

(Matt opens the screendoor, walks out.)

Matt: Not much, really. I made some calls, to disconnected numbers. I talked to Dallas, he knows about Mom. Kevin, who knows? Dally said he would relay the message to Kevin.

Claire: There's got to be someone we're forgetting.

Matt: (thinks) I don't think so. If you want to try, I'll give you all the numbers I've got and you can try but they're all disconnected.

Claire: I just know that Mom would want to see him before...

Matt: Yeah, I know. But to be perfectly honest with you, I've done everything I can, so has Tim, so's Suzanne, so've you. At this point, I really don't care.

Claire: No, I know what you—

Matt: I know that sounds harsh, but...(shrugs)

Tim: (eating, careless) Yeah...

Claire: No, I know. I just know that Mom would want...Shit!...I know...What an asshole.

Tim: Pretty much.

(June appears at the screendoor.)

June: Hi. Sorry.

Claire: It's okay.

June: Could I borrow Suzanne and Claire for a minute?

Claire: Absolutely.

(Claire and Suzanne go to Grandma with June. Sarah drifts outside to the patio for the first time. She lights a smoke. Awkward silence.)

Kate: How's retirement treating you, Matt?

Matt: Good. Good. Can't complain.

Kate: How long has it been?

Matt: Uh...(looks to Sarah) Eighteen months? Almost two years?

Sarah: That's right. Two long years.

Kate: Uh oh. Looks like someone's had enough of you being around the house.

Sarah: All day.

(Kate laughs.)

Kate: Would you consider unretiring?

Matt: If the right thing came along. Sure.

June: Now, Gertrude, what we're going to do is change you. And we want to do this with as little pain to you as possible, so anything that hurts too much you just let us know. Don't try to hide, we want to make you as comfortable as possible but we can only do that if you let us know what hurts and where. Okay?

Grandma: Okay.

Claire: We're right here, Mom. Your two girls.

Suzanne: That's right. Just hold my hand.

Grandma: Okay.

June: Okay, Gertrude, are you ready to do this? We're going to have to turn you but we want to do this as gently as possible, okay?

Grandma: Okay.

Claire: You're doing great, Mom.

Suzanne: Yes, great. Just squeeze my hand.

Grandma: Okay. Let's do it.

(The sound of the lawn mower increases in volume as they turn her onto her side and the lights fade. The lawn mower fades out as the piano music returns.)

Scene 4:

(11 PM. The house is quiet and cool. A few lamps are dimly lit around the room, a couple of kitchen lights are on, as are the patio lights. Grandma has an oxygen mask over her nose and mouth: she sleeps peacefully. Wind whooshes through the trees. Matt, Tim, Kate, and Suzanne are on the patio. Sarah smokes in the kitchen. Claire burns incense in the living room.)

Kate: I'm exhausted.

Matt: Well you've had a long day.

Kate: It's true. I can't believe this is still the same day. Doesn't that drive feel like four days ago?

Tim: Sure.

Kate: What time is it anyway?

Matt: Eleven thirty-seven.

Kate: Woo, it's late. What is she doing?

Tim: Who?

Kate: Claire.

Matt: I think she's burning incense.

Kate: Incense? Why?

Matt: I have no idea.

Kate: Suzanne, you should head home. You look wiped.

Suzanne: Yeah. I am. I should. I have to let Winnie and Cedar out anyway.

Kate: That's true. We should get going too.

Tim: (eyes closed) In a minute.

Matt: I don't think there's anything more we can do here tonight, I think Mom's out for the count.

(Small pause: quiet, crickets. Not awkward. Everyone's tired. Claire prays the rosary next to Grandma.)

Kate: Do you have to work, Suzanne?

Suzanne: No. I got a friend to cover my shifts this weekend.

Kate: Well that's good.

Suzanne: Yes.

Kate: (breathes in deeply) The air smells really clean out here, doesn't it? It must be the lake...All the oxygen...I like it; it's nice. Matt, when did you get that tree removed?

Matt: Oh...It must've been, what? Last spring?

Suzanne: Yeah.

(Sarah enters with a tray and coffee.)

Sarah: Here you go.

Kate: Oh, bless you. Thanks, Sarah.

Matt: The spring storms, one night the tree was getting blown all over the place. It thought it was going to fall into the lake and take half our yard with it.

Kate: Oh dear.

Matt: So we had to cut her down. But keep the roots.

Kate: Do you have a big erosion problem, if you don't mind my asking?

Matt: No, I mean, every house on the lake has an erosion problem. There's just no way to stop it. You can try—

Kate: A breakwall—

Matt: A breakwall, sure. Or some dump this special mixture of something like earth and concrete over the side. But none of it really does any good. A breakwall is the best bet—we need to get ours fixed, it's been getting battered and is kind of falling apart. But some of these houses—we've got this big backyard—some of these houses you see—and they build them, they keep building them, they're teetering right over the edge. Makes no sense to me.

Tim: What's a breakwall cost?

Matt: Nowadays?

Tim: Sure.

Matt: I don't know. When we put ours in fifteen years ago, it was what? (looks at Sarah) Thirty-five, forty...

Kate: Thousand?

Matt: Oh yeah.

Suzanne: Oh yeah.

Sarah: I think when all was said and done it was forty-five or fifty.

Kate: Wow.

Tim: It's not cheap. I mean think about all you have to do, with cranes and trucks and everything just to get the slabs, and these slabs are what, two tons?

Matt: Something like that.

Tim: And you need, I don't know, a lot of them, I'm sure. This is a big, wide yard. Fifty thousand doesn't surprise me.

Matt: Now I'm sure it would be more like eighty or a hundred.

Suzanne: Oh, sure.

Sarah: Easy.

Tim: Yeah, I'm sure you're right.

Kate: Well...Just roll a few rocks over I say.

Matt: That's what a lot of people do.

Sarah: And they have no yards in five years.

Suzanne: Excuse me.

(Exit Suzanne to the bathroom with a quick Claire check in pit stop.)

Tim: (stands) We should get going too.

Kate: Can I finish my coffee first.

Tim: (sitting back down) By all means.

Kate: Have you guys thought about traveling?

Matt: I don't know. Maybe.

Kate: Did Tim tell you we're going to Europe in a, two weeks—

Matt: I think he might have mentioned it.

Kate: We were supposed to leave Tuesday, as you know, but we had to push it back a couple weeks. Obviously.

Matt: Obviously.

Kate: You should go. Just the two of you. We're going for two and a half weeks: Paris, Prague, and...what's the third one?

Tim: Pittsburgh.

Kate: No, it's not Pittsburgh—Petersburg. Saint Petersburg.

Tim: The three P's.

Kate: That's right. The three P's. That's so easy to remember, why do I forget it? Our PPP trip. (laughs) But it's mostly Paris. Have you ever been to Paris, Sarah?

Sarah: No.

Kate: Oh, well you have to go. Really, Matt, you should. Just take two weeks and go. Go. You'll love it.

Matt: Maybe. I don't know about those French, though.

(Tim laughs in agreement.)

Matt: You know what I mean?

Kate: Oh, no, no. Everything's fine. They're great people. And all the culture, and history, and the great cheeses and bread—I'm going to have to starve myself for the next two weeks—No. You should go.

Matt: Maybe. We have our place down at the Vacation Club we like to go to.

Kate: Oh, but that's for the kids. You got that because of all the times you went down there with the kids—I'm talking a more adult experience.

Matt: Well we like it, don't we?

Sarah: What can I say? I like Goofy. (laughs; lights smoke)

Kate: Well that's fine. Who doesn't? Ya know? Really? Who doesn't like Goofy?

Matt: I don't know.

Tim: Me neither.

Kate: Everyone likes Goofy. But anyway—

(Suzanne appears at the screendoor.)

Suzanne: I'm going to get going.

Kate: And we should too.

(They all go inside.)

Kate: Well, Sarah, thanks for everything. Everything was delicious.

Tim: And tomorrow night I'm picking up the tab.

Matt: Well, we'll see.

Tim: Oh, no. I insist. If I have to arm wrestle you for it.

Matt: Well, maybe.

(A general hubbub ensues: all the kisses, hugs, kissing Grandma, etc. This takes a short while, as it always does with families, even though they're going to see each other again in less than eight hours. While this is happening, Sam walks onto the patio, he notices all the goodbyes, hides himself so he doesn't have to go through all the motions. He smokes. As he hides, a Girl appears.)

Mallory: You shouldn't smoke.

Sam: Fuck! (whisper-shouts) Jesus! Don't do that. (sarcastic) Good to see you.

Mallory: Is that Aunt Claire?

Sam: Yeah.

Mallory: I like her.

Sam: She's crazy. But I like her too.

Mallory: Aunt Kate's crazy.

Sam: That's true.

Mallory: How's Grandma?

Sam: (cold) How do you think?

Mallory: Can I come in?

Sam: I don't know, can you? How's what's his name?

Mallory: (stern) Jay.

Sam: Whatever. (he enters)

Mallory: Sam. Sam!

(As the others leave, Matt walks over towards Sam and the screendoor.)

Mallory: Shit.

Matt: What was that?

(Mallory exits.)

Sam: What? Oh, nothing. Emily.

Matt: Is she here?

Sam: No, she's gone.

Matt: You're early.

Sam: No problem. Hey, Aunt Claire. How is she?

Claire: Just sleeping, hon.

Sam: Cool. You going to bed?

Matt: Yeah. I'll see you at five fifteen.

Sam: I'll be here.

Matt: If anything happens don't be afraid to come get me.

Claire: Or me, I'll be right down the hall.

Sam: Like what?

Claire: Anything with— Matt: If she—

Claire: Sorry.

Matt: No, go ahead.

Claire: I think what your Dad meant was anything like in breathing—if anything happens with that.

Sam: Oh. Okay.

Matt: Goodnight.

Sam: Goodnight.

Claire: ‘Night, Matty.

Sam: I’m going to use the bathroom. You going to be up for a while?

Claire: I’ll hang for a while.

Sam: Cool.

(Exit Sam.)

Claire: Can I help you, Sarah? (Sarah cleans the kitchen, then crosses to the patio.)

Sarah: No, I think it’s all set. Dishwasher’s running. Thanks.

Claire: Okay. Just let me know. I’m here.

Sarah: Okay. Thanks.

(Sarah is on the patio. She lights a smoke, takes a drag, half closes the glass door, and then is quickly overcome with emotion as she covers her eyes as she cries quietly to herself.

Fade to black. Piano sonata returns.)

Scene 5:

(Lights come up. Sunday. Midday. Another beautiful sunny day. June is checking Grandma’s vital signs with a stethoscope: heart, breathing, etc. Suzanne sits on the patio but eyes June intently. Claire stands next to June. Tim and Kate are on the patio. Sarah is in the kitchen. Sam eats in the kitchen. Matt is seated on the couch looking at the piano.)

Kate: I thought that service that Father Ned performed was so nice. And such a nice thing for him to do, to come and say mass—I don’t know about the last rites, though. It’s kind of morbid, don’t you think?

Tim: (incredulous look) It’s not like Mom’s going on a cruise.

Kate: No. I know. It’s just—

(June appears at the door.)

June: Sorry.

Kate: That’s okay.

June: It appears that Gertrude has slipped into what we technically classify as a coma, but I don’t want to alarm you or give you the wrong impression—this is a very normal occurrence for a situation like this. The important thing is that she is not experiencing any pain.

Tim: Will she come out of it?

June: (shrugs concernedly) It’s hard to say.

Kate: I thought she was just sleeping.

June: No, technically she is. I mean, technically she's in a coma but basically she is just asleep—at this stage oftentimes the loved one sleeps a lot. That's not uncommon. It's also not uncommon to come in and out of a coma.

Tim: Hun.

Kate: That's good to know.

(Claire appears.)

Claire: Hey. Thanks, June. We were going to all gather around Mom and maybe say a prayer, just because...well, it seems the right thing—she'd want us to do that.

Tim: Absolutely.

Kate: That's a nice idea.

(Suzanne is stunned. Everyone goes to Grandma who sleeps with oxygen. They all join hands around her, June included.)

Claire: Matt...

Matt: No, you can...

Claire: Okay. Mom... We're all gathered together here. Your children, and your grandchildren—well, one of them anyway—but the others are floating around here someplace. We just want you to know that we love you and want you to know that if you feel it's time, you can let go—you don't have to hold on anymore—and go to Dad, who I'm sure is waiting for you and looking quite handsome I'm sure...(small pause)

From Others: Thank you, Claire. Thanks. That was nice, Claire. Yeah, Aunt Claire. Etc.

Claire: If anyone else wants to say anything...(small pause)

Tim: Uh...Mom, we just want you to feel at peace, and if you feel it's time...uh, that's fine with us...that's not what I mean—you know what I mean. If you're ready, go. It's okay. We all love you...(small pause)

From Others (again): Thanks, Tim. Etc.

Claire: Anyone have anything else?

Matt: No, that was fine.

Suzanne: No...

(Sam nods No; Sarah also.)

Claire: Okay...Why don't we say...a Hail Mary?

Matt: Sure.

Tim: Good. That's good.

(Mallory walks onto the patio during the prayer and watches. Then, unseen, she leaves.)

All: Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee
blessed art thou amongst women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus
Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners
now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Tim: Glory be...

All: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

(They drop hands and hug or touch each other, some kiss, etc. As they disperse, Suzanne remains standing over Grandma stunned. Idle chit chat, no one notices Suzanne at first (do they ever?) Kate returns to the patio with Tim and Matt. Sarah and Sam go to the kitchen. Claire goes to kitchen, then crosses to patio, then sees Suzanne, looks, walks over.)

Claire: Suzie Q, you need anything? You want some iced tea?

Suzanne: I think I killed her.

Claire: (laughing) What?

Suzanne: I think that the dose, I wasn't sure at the time, I think I gave her too much, I wasn't sure but I think I might've given her too much.

Claire: I think you've been sitting out in the sun too long, plus the stress—

Suzanne: I gave her too much, I'm almost sure of it, I know I did, what was I thinking—

Claire: Suze, you didn't—

Suzanne: No, I did, I did, I know I did—How would you know? I gave her the shot. (June re-enters) I went one line too many—I know I did—what was I thinking—why didn't I—why wasn't I more careful?

Claire: Suze—

Suzanne: No! (sobbing) I'm sorry. I'm sorry. Mom, I'm sorry.

(Claire goes to her and hugs her.)

Claire: It's okay, it's okay Suzanne: I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry...

Sarah: (entering) Suzanne, are you okay?

Claire: Yeah, we're fine. We're fine. We're just gonna—could we—Sarah—could we get some water?

Sarah: Oh, sure. Sam.

Sam: I got it.

(Sam runs in with a glass of water and hands it to Sarah, she takes it to Claire.)

Claire: Here. (Suzanne drinks) Why don't we—you want to go for a walk?

Suzanne: Sure.

Claire: We're going to go for a walk. We'll be back.

(Claire and Suzanne exit out the front door.)

Matt: (to June) What was that about?

June: Uh, I don't know for sure but I think Suzanne thought she gave Gertrude too high a dose of morphine and that's what caused...

Matt: Oh. Could that have?

June: (secretively, quietly) Yes, but I don't think she did.

Matt: No?

June: No. This is very common.

Matt: The coma?

June: Well that too, but the guilt.

Matt: Oh. Oh. I see.

June: She didn't cause your Mom to go into a coma, it's just the natural course of these final stages.

Matt: That's good. I mean—you know what I mean.

June: Yes.

Matt: Could you make sure you tell Suzanne that when they get back.

June: I absolutely will.

Matt: Thanks.

June: Thank you.

(Sarah walks up.)

Sarah: (quietly) Don't you think—should someone stay with her—in the room.

Matt: They could.

June: It's entirely up to you. It's not a bad idea—although she is basically just sleeping. But still, holding her hand, or saying the rosary—

Sarah: Yeah, yeah, I think so.

Matt: I can.

Sarah: No. It's okay, I will.

Matt: You sure?

Sarah: Yeah.

(Sarah goes to Grandma and continues the rosary vigil. June exits left. Matt enters the patio.)

Kate: What was that all about?

Matt: Oh, it's just the stress.

Tim: Did Annie think she gave her—

Matt: Yeah. But she didn't. June said it's just—it's not uncommon to blame yourself when this happens.

Kate: Poor thing.

Tim: Where'd Claire take her?

Matt: They just went for a walk, it'll be fine.

Kate: I don't even know—what do they give her? Morphine?

Tim: (same time) Morphine—that's right.

Kate: What an awful thing to deal with. I'm sure she didn't give her too much—that's what she thinks, doesn't she?

Matt: Yes.

Kate: That's not like Suzanne at all. She's always—she's always the one who's the most together, the most organized, the most...What's the word I'm looking for?

Tim: Meticulous?

Kate: Yes. Meticulous. She's meticulous. About everything. I just don't believe it. I won't. (Kate sits, small pause.)

Tim: Uh, I don't know how to—I don't mean to—but, are we all set with everything?

Matt: You mean, like, the funeral?

Tim: The funeral, the wake, the burial...uh, what else?

Matt: The obituary?

Tim: Yeah. The obit. The...

Matt: I think that's it. Basically.

Tim: So we're all—

Matt: I think so. Actually (laughs a little) Suzanne did most of the preparations. (Tim laughs) I'm just kidding. I don't know why I find that funny. No. I'm sure it's all fine, she took care of it.

Tim: Let's just hope there isn't an organ grinder at the funeral—(Matt laughs)

Kate: Tim.

Tim: (laughing) What? I'm just kidding.

Kate: That isn't funny.

Tim: So you say.

(Sam appears at the screendoor.)

Sam: What's so funny?

Kate: Sam!

Tim: Oh, nothing.

Kate: Come join us.

Sam: What?

Matt: It's nothing. Just a joke.

Sam: Oh. Okay.

Kate: Come here, Sam. I want to hear about this San Fran trip—

Sam: Oh, that's nothing. It might not even happen.

Tim: What's this?

Matt: We'll see.

Sam: No, uh, actually, I was going to go out for a while—is that okay?

Tim: Depends. Where you going?

Kate: That's right. We might want to come.

Sam: Oh, no, nothing like that—

Tim: If you're going out on the town, Sam, we might want to come.

Kate: That's right.

Tim: We might be old but we still—

Kate: Hey! We're not old—

Tim: —know how to cut loose.

Sam: No, uh—

Matt: Where are you heading?

Sam: I was just going to go out, maybe to Huntington for a while, meet up with Em.

Matt: It's Sunday, it'll be packed.

Sam: I know, I just, uh, wanted to get some air, get out of here for a little while—

Kate: Let him go, Matt—

Matt: Yeah, that's fine. Tell your Mom. And call us in a while. Are you taking a car?

Sam: Okay. Yeah. Sure. No. I was just gonna bike over. I will.

(Sam enters inside, walks over and talks to Sarah.)

Kate: Is Emily his girlfriend?

Matt: (zoned out for a second) What's that? Oh, yeah, I guess.

Kate: How long has this been going on?

Matt: Oh. I don't know. They've known each other since high school—they were friends in high school. So Kelly looked good—

Kate: (simul) I'm wondering if we're ever going—

Matt: I'm sorry.

Kate: No. Go ahead. About Kelly.

Matt: No. She looks good. And so does Jim.

Kate: No, they are. They are. They're good. But, I mean, they're living in Louisville—outside of Louisville, and I think maybe they need a change of scenery. It's kind of...

Tim: Dead.

Matt: Oh really?

Kate: Yeah. I mean, I don't know, if they're happy that's fine. But, you know, she went to school in New York and when she lived there she just loved it 'cause there's so much culture and so much to do, all the time. But, if they like it, it's fine for now I guess.

Tim: Kelly got a job offer to move back to New York—

Kate: It was more money—

Tim: It was more money and would have put them back in New York, well put her back in New York—and they could have done it but, you know, Jim is trying to get his business off the ground and it's just—

Kate: It's just not a good time for them to move. But, she didn't really even consider it, and I think might of actually, could've been a good thing.

Tim: Maybe.

Kate: Right. But what do I know? No, but they're happy. They're doing fine. She's lost some weight—they've gotten into this yoga—what's it called—they go into the—

Tim: Bikram.

Kate: That's right. Bikram Yoga. I'd never heard of it either—but what it is is they do yoga, standard yoga—but they go into the room that's all heated up, like a sauna, it's like a hundred ten degrees or whatever it is, and they do yoga inside of this room and just—well, I mean she lost thirteen pounds in a week. A week!

Matt: Wow.

Tim: That was when they first started.

Kate: But still. That's pretty remarkable. I'm here eating carrots and twigs and she's shedding pounds like there's no tomorrow.

Matt: And Jim does it too?

Kate: That's right.

Tim: Yeah. They both do it.

Kate: They go together. I mean, they might as well, they can. They don't have any kids, they've got those two Jack Russells.

Matt: That's right.

Kate: Yeah. Bogey and Puck. They're cute. You want to talk about high energy.

Tim: Non-stop.

Kate: It's like—You remember that cartoon—what's he called? The guy that spins.

Matt: Oh...Uh...

Tim: The Tasmanian Devil?

Kate: That's it! They're like two Tasmanian Devils—all over the place.

Tim: But they're nice dogs.

Kate: That's true. They are very nice, they're just really...friendly...all the time. Now...does Mallory still work at that vet hospital?

Matt: Yep, she does.

Kate: That's good.

Matt: Uh hun. (Awkward pause.) Would you excuse me for a second I'm just going to check—make sure Sarah doesn't need anything.

(Matt goes inside; Kate gives a knowing look to Tim.)

Kate: See what I mean.

Tim: Well...I don't know.

Kate: It's crazy. It's very bizarre.

Tim: Well what do you want him to do?

Kate: I don't know. I just wish...If it was...I mean, there has to be a way to knock some sense into her.

Tim: It's beyond that.

Kate: Suzanne said she's been over there for what now like, since Christmas.

Tim: I think so.

Kate: There has to be some way—the whole thing makes me so angry, and sad.

Tim: I'm sure Matt has thought about different options.

Kate: Well, it's just...Someone needs to say something.

(Matt takes over the rosary; Sarah goes to the kitchen where June is.)

Tim: Now is not the time.

Kate: I know...I know...these little cheese things are really good.

Tim: They are.

Kate: Maybe I should take a turn with Mom and say a decade or two—

Tim: If you want.

Kate: I just hate saying the rosary—it's so monotonous and boring. I really don't get anything out of it—it does nothing for me.

Tim: Well it would be a nice gesture.

Kate: Oh, no. Sure. I mean, I will. I'm just bitching, venting.

Tim: You?

Kate: Watch it, buster, if you don't want a head full of veggie dip. (Enter Suzanne and Claire from off right.) Hey! How was your walk?

Claire: We had a great walk. We went all the way down Huntington.

(Phone rings, Sarah gets it.)

Suzanne: And back.

Kate: Oh good. Are you feeling better, Suzanne?

Suzanne: Yes, much. Thanks.

Claire: What another gorgeous day.

Tim: It's nice.

Claire: I think, it's almost like God said, "Mom, for your last few days, hey, fuck it, I'm pulling out all the stops."

Kate: No, it's true.

Claire: I mean look at that sky: so blue. So perfectly blue. Not a cloud anywhere. And I'm from Cali—but I can tell you, that is one gorgeous blue sky.

Tim: How was the beach?

Suzanne: Crowded.

Claire: Yeah, we didn't stay long. Just gave it the old once over: okay, that's nice, time to go. I couldn't believe all the people.

Tim: Yeah, well, it's a nice day.

Claire: To the point where there were people laying out on—you know they've got those stone piers that go out—I don't know, four or five of them—and people are laying out on them catching some rays.
Crowded.

Suzanne: Well it's tough too because that beach in particular has lost a lot of beach in the last few years—

Claire: Oh, yeah.

Suzanne: —to the point where it's like there's only so many places for people to go.

Claire: Totally. No. I remember, and this is way back now, what like twenty-five, thirty years ago, that beach was massive compared to what it is today.

Tim: Really?

Claire: Oh, yeah. Man...it's incredible.

Tim: I'll have to go over there and check it out—I don't think I've been to that beach in oh...twenty-five or thirty years, at least.

Claire: It'll blow your mind, man. How's Mom?

Tim: Still the same—

Kate: No changes to report. (secretively) Suzanne, where's Mallory? Have you talked to her?

Claire: I was meaning to ask you that myself.

Suzanne: No. I haven't talked to her—I mean since all this, with Mom happened.

Kate: Well then, where is she?

Suzanne: I don't know.

Kate: Is she not allowed here?

Suzanne: I don't—

Kate: Did something happen we don't know about?

Suzanne: I...(shrugs)

Kate: Hm. Something's going on.

Claire: (also secret) Well, you know she's staying elsewhere, right?

Kate: Oh, yeah. We know all about that.

Tim: Okay. That's good.

Kate: What?

Tim: I don't feel it's right that we should talk about this.

Kate: Why not, it's family.

Claire: No, Tim's right.

Tim: Yeah, okay?

Kate: I don't see what the big deal is. I would just like the opportunity to see my niece and think Mom would like—

Claire: Kate. Hi, Sarah.

(Sarah appears at the screendoor.)

Sarah: Hi. Can I get anyone anything? Does anyone need anything?

From All: No. We're good. Thanks. Appreciate it. Etc.

Sarah: Suzanne, would you like—I just made a fresh pot of decaf.

Suzanne: Oh, sure. I'll be right in.

Sarah: Okay.

(Exit Sarah. Awkward pause. Then Suzanne rises, goes inside.)

Suzanne: Well...I...Does anyone need anything?

From All: No. Good. Thanks. Etc.

Kate: Well...

Claire: I think Suzanne might have given her too much.

Kate: Really?

Claire: Yeah. Because we weren't really certain about the dosage.

Tim: Well...

Claire: But don't tell her that.

Kate: No!

Tim: No, let's not. Please. She has enough to worry about.

Claire: What do you mean?

Tim: Well, nothing. You know how Suzanne is, she worries over every little thing—she's a control freak, and the last few years haven't been easy for her, what they did to her.

Kate: Awful.

Claire: Just awful.

Tim: Exactly. Terrible. And so, just let it go.

Claire: No. I will.

Tim: Good.

Claire: I hate that she has to work out at that booth.

Kate: Awful.

Claire: I'd love to—just put me in a room there with those dudes in their sharp little suits. Consulting, Ha! I'd tear them a new asshole. Oh. Sorry.

Tim: No, I know. I wish there was something I could do.

Kate: Well...

Tim: It just...sucks.

Claire: That's right. It sucks.

(Sarah approaches Matt.)

Sarah: How's it going?

Matt: Good. Fine.

Sarah: How's she?

Matt: Same.

Sarah: You want me to take over for a while?

Matt: No, I'm good. For now.

Sarah: Your daughter called.

Matt: Oh, yeah?

Sarah: Yeah.

Matt: What did she want?

Sarah: She wanted to know if she was allowed to come over.

Matt: I never said—(lowers his voice) I never said she couldn't. Those words never came out of my mouth.

Sarah: Okay. What more can we do?

Matt: Absolutely nothing. Just wait.

Sarah: Okay. You should eat something.

Matt: I will.

Sarah: There's a new pot of decaf.

Matt: Okay.

(Sarah walks to the kitchen; Matt returns to the rosary.)

(Lights fade. Piano music returns.)

Scene 6:

(1 AM. Sam seated bedside. Claire collapsed on couch. Sam is, if reluctantly and haphazardly, saying the rosary.)

Claire: (exhausted, eyes closed) You know the significance of that quilt...

Sam: Well, she made it, right?

Claire: Yeah, but your Grandma made lots of quilts. Lots and lots of quilts. Probably enough quilts for all of Cuba.

Sam: Un hun.

Claire: That quilt, though. That poplar quilt. That's Al's quilt. She knitted it while she was pregnant with him. That's the only one she kept for herself.

Sam: I didn't know that.

Claire: Yep.

Sam: Has anyone been able to, uh...

Claire: Who knows?

Sam: Yeah?

Claire: No idea.

Sam: Oh...I always liked Uncle Al.

Claire: Yeah?

Sam: Yeah...

Claire: Me too...

(Sam turns, looks at Claire; she looks asleep.)

Sam: You should go to bed. (no response) Aunt Claire?

Claire: Mm?

Sam: Aunt Claire, you should go to bed.

Claire: Yeah. I should go to bed. (getting up)

Sam: Yeah, you should get some sleep.

(She exits left.)

Claire: Goodnight.

Sam: 'Night.

(Sam turns back, returns to the rosary. A couple beats pass. Grandma then opens her eyes, he doesn't notice, wrapped up in the rosary. She puts her hand over Sam's which startles the hell out of him.)

Sam: Jesus! Don't do that. You scared the hell out of me. Sorry.

Grandma: Hi.

Sam: Hey there.

Grandma: Francis?

Sam: No, Sam.

Grandma: Oh. (smiles)

(Grandma dozes off again.)

Sam: Grandma? Grandma? Hello? Grandma? Hey?

(Sam sits back in his chair. Then he stands, walks over to the screen door, looks all around, listens, pulls out his cigarettes, thinks for a moment, lights a smoke, walks out onto the patio and then disappears right. Wind whooshes through the trees. A beat passes. Suddenly, Mallory appears at the patio door. She quietly opens it and walks inside. There is only Grandma. She slowly crosses the room and approaches Grandma. She holds her hand, kisses her forehead. Grandma does not wake up.)

Mallory: (whisper to her) Grandma, it's Mallory. I'm here. I wanted to see you.

(A couple beats pass, then Mallory walks over to the piano. She delicately raises the key protector, looks through the music, finds the piece she wants and then plays, starting delicately, trying to be super quiet by using the pedals. She plays a beautiful, simple piano sonata that lasts for maybe two minutes at most. Something like one of Bach's Preludes for piano. A simple quiet piece.

While Mallory plays, the upstairs door opens, Matt stands above in the shadows looking down. Then Aunt Claire barely appears in the hallway shadows left. Somewhere in the piece Grandma opens her eyes and sees Mallory playing. When Mallory finishes she turns and sees Grandma looking back at her.)

Mallory: Hey.

Grandma: Hey yourself.

(Grandma dozes off again. Mallory goes over and kisses her on the forehead. She feels another presence, looks up and sees her dad. Long beat. She kisses Grandma once more, walks to the screendoor, turns, looks back up at him, he peers down at her, then she leaves. Claire, arms across her chest, tears in her eyes, walks into the living room and looks up at Matt. Matt looks down at her.)

Fade to Black.

End of Act I

Act II: Goodbye

Scene I:

(Music plays in the darkness. Lights come up full. It is Monday. Late Morning. The entire family: Matt, Sarah, Sam, Mallory, Tim, Kate, Claire, Suzanne, and June are in the room. Grandma's lifeless body lays on the bed. It is five minutes after her passing. All gather around Grandma.)

Suzanne: What should we say?

Claire: I don't know.

June: Some families find it a helpful part of the grieving process to bathe the deceased loved one's body prior to removal. Just so you know.

(Tim especially, but also Matt, Sam, and even Mallory turn their heads slowly and look at June.)

Claire: Well that's a definite poss—

Tim: Yeah, I don't think that's going to happen. Let's pray.

Matt: Right, let's pray.

Suzanne: Yes.

Tim: Claire, please.

Claire: Right. Uh, well, do we know who was the last one to talk to Mom?

(They look to each other.)

Sam: I think it was me. I talked to her last night.

Sarah: (surprised) You did?

Suzanne: She was awake?

Sam: Yeah.

Kate: Why didn't you say so sooner?

Sam: Um, (looks around room) I don't know. No one asked?

Sarah: Sam!

Suzanne: What did she say?

Sam: "Hey."

Kate: And...

Claire: That's it?

Sam: She said "hey" I said "hi there." No. Scratch that, reverse it. She said "hi there"—No. She said "hi," then I said, "Hey there." That's it.

Tim: Good thing we got that straightened out.

Kate: Tim! Really. Go on, Claire.

Suzanne: That was all?

Sam: It was pretty short: she woke up, she smiled, said hi—she thought I was Grandpa—she called me Francis.

Kate & Suzanne & Claire: Really!?

Sam: Yep. Grandma was hallucinating. Definitely.

Matt: She was not hallucinating. She had alzheimer's, she probably—what?

June: If I could interrupt just for a second: it's not uncommon for a terminally ill patient, on morphine, to "see things."

Claire: Really?

Kate: So you've seen this before?

June: Well, yes, it happens. I mean—I don't...Let me put it to you this way, a patient, an older gentleman, a few months ago, as his time grew closer, well, he thought his wife was Cleopatra.

Around the Room: Really? Wow. That's something.

Tim: See Sam, being mistaken for Dad—your Grandpa, that’s nothing.

Sam: Apparently.

Mallory: I talked to her last night.

Kate: Really?

Suzanne: I should have stayed here.

Tim: And what wisdom did she impart on you?

Mallory: She just said “hey”. “Hey there.”

Kate: Was that it?

Mallory: Yep. That’s all. She smiled.

Tim: Boy, Mom really went out with a bang.

Kate: (not meaning it that way) Hey.

Tim: Exactly. “Hey.” “Hey.” “Hey.” “Hey there.” “Hey.” “Yo.”

Claire: I don’t think Mom said Yo.

Tim: No?

Sam: No.

Tim: No yo?

Mallory: Not that I recall.

Tim: That is the lingo nowadays though, right?

Claire: Yeah. Sam: I guess so.

Mallory: Whatever you say, Uncle Tim.

Matt: Should we pray?

Claire & Kate: Yes!

Tim: Yeah, let’s pray.

Claire: Okay. Well. Sam, Mallory, you want to lead us?

(Sam and Mallory look at each other, then they laugh, give each other a “go on” “no, you first.” Finally, Mallory says, “okay.”)

Mallory: Uh...In the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy Spirit...In all seriousness. We gather together for Grandma, Gertrude, Mom—(Tim suddenly bursts into tears)

Tim: I'm sorry. Excuse me. (He exits left to the bathroom.)

(All are unsure for a few seconds.)

Kate: (at hallway) It's okay. Continue. We'll be okay in a minute. (She exits left.)

Mallory: Should I...

Matt: (exasperated at how long they've been dragging this out) Hail Mary...

All: full of grace, the Lord is with thee
 blessed art thou amongst women
 and blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus
 Holy Mary, mother of God, pray for us sinners
 now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

(As they break Kate returns.)

Claire: How's Tim?

Kate: Oh he'll be fine. He's fine. Really.

(Mallory stays by Claire and Suzanne. Matt moves to June. Sam goes to the patio. Sarah joins him to smoke (Sam doesn't smoke).)

Claire: She looks peaceful.

Suzanne: Yeah. (Small pause.)

Mallory: She looks old.

Suzanne: Mallory.

Mallory: What? She does.

Claire: Well she was old.

Mallory: That's what I'm saying.

Sam: You should quit. (Sarah ignores him) You should.

Sarah: Are you going to talk to your sister?

Sam: What? Why?

Sarah: She won't listen to us, maybe you can get through her thick head.

Sam: Yeah, right. You know how she is. She's stubborn. Just like dad.

Sarah: Ugh, they're both bears.

Sam: That's true. (Small pause) I don't know what I can do?—She won't listen—I don't think she'll listen to me.

Sarah: How do you know until you've tried?

Sam: Yeah, that's true. I don't even know how I'd go about it—when? She won't meet me because she knows what I'm going to say and she doesn't want to hear it. You guys—you've been more patient but maybe I need to take the high ground. Take a stand. I'm not going to back down. It's not going to be pretty—but there are certain things she needs to hear—

Sarah: And maybe coming from you she'll listen?

Sam: Yeah, maybe. It's worth a shot. But it's not going to be pretty. I know that already. I'm not going to be nice and pretend everything's fine and just act like we're talking about the weather. No. I won't do that. If, I'm going to do this I'm going to get it all out in the open. No bullshit this time around. Because I've got a lot of things inside me that I want to say—air out—get out in the open—and she's not going to just walk away, I won't permit it.

Sarah: Okay, calm down. That's enough.

Sam: (needs a smoke) Yeah...But when?

(Suzanne and Claire have moved to Grandma. Mallory is cornered by Kate.)

Kate: Your Dad was telling us you're working at a vet hospital.

Mallory: Well, a clinic. But, yeah, it's basically a hospital. We do most surgeries in house.

Kate: That's great. And you worked there before, last summer too?

Mallory: Yeah, this is my second summer.

Kate: That's great. Just great. And how's school going for you?

Mallory: Good. Fine. It was good.

Kate: Now you're at...

Mallory: I start at Michigan in the fall.

Kate: That's right. Well, that's great.

(Enter Tim, looking haggard. Mallory is so relieved.)

Mallory: Uncle Tim!

Tim: Hey.

Kate: There you are. I was just talking to Mall—

Mallory: How do you feel?

Tim: Oh, I'm okay. I don't know what—(he looks at Grandma again and bursts into tears, obviously he simply has no control over these outbursts). Excuse me. (He exits.)

Claire: Tim! It's okay. Let it out. Express yourself. Wasn't that a Madonna song?

Suzanne: Uh...

Mallory: Yeah, it was.

Claire: I thought so.

Kate: So Mallory, anything new and exciting going on this summer—

Mallory: Aunt Suzanne, did I tell you I played a song last night?

Suzanne: No, but actually, Claire did.

Kate: A song?

Mallory: Oh. You heard it?

Claire: Yeah. I was up. Well, it woke me up.

Mallory: Sorry.

Claire: No. No. Don't be ridiculous. It was fine.

Kate: What was the song?

Mallory: It was Bach.

Kate: (she has no idea but acts like she knows what she's talking about) Oh...

Claire: It was beautiful.

Mallory: Well, it's been a while, I'm a little out of practice.

Claire: No, it was really great.

Mallory: I wanted to play that for her because it was Bach which is kind of church related and she loved—and well—

Suzanne: Wasn't—

Mallory: Yeah, that old upright piano at her place on Laurel was where I first started playing.

Kate: That's the same piano?

Suzanne & Claire & Mallory: No, no, no...

Kate: I didn't think so.

Claire: No, that piano was ancient. It was a piece of crap.

Mallory: It wasn't that bad.

(Claire and Suzanne look at each other and laugh; they look at Mallory.)

Mallory: What? It wasn't—

Claire: It was bad.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Mallory: Really? I don't remember it being that bad.

Claire: You were what, seven?

Mallory: Yeah, that's true.

Claire: It could've been a Steinway you wouldn't have known the difference.

Mallory: I do remember there was a dead key. It think it was...(she checks the piano) Yeah, it was the G (she presses the key).

Claire: It was a real shitbox.

Kate: Claire!

Claire: What? It was.

Kate: Well, there's a place, and a time.

Claire: What? We're surrounded by family. I don't know about you but I feel pretty comfortable. Comfortable enough to Express Myself. (she is staring Kate down. Then she does some Madonna Vogue-esque move. Mallory and Suzanne laugh.)

Kate: (over laughs) That's not what I mean. That's not what I mean. Don't be so childish. Where's Ray?!

(That stops the laughter.)

Claire: Don't—...What's that—...You know what, Kate—...Fuck You! (long staring match)

(Everyone stops everything.)

Suzanne: Let's just take it easy. Everyone.

(Claire exits to the patio. Suzanne and Mallory go after Claire. Kate stands, looks around, then exits left.)

June: I hope everything's all right.

Matt: It's just Kate. Don't worry about it. They don't like each other to begin with.

June: Oh, that's too bad.

Matt: Not really. Kate's a bitch and Claire's crazy. Excuse my French.

June: Sure.

(Doorbell rings. Slowly people trickle back inside.)

June: Oh, excuse me.

Matt: June.

June: Yes?

Matt: I'm sorry. Could you do me a favor?

June: Sure.

Matt: When they, uh, remove Mom, could they not put her in a, uh, body bag—

June: Oh, sure, absolutely—

Matt: It's just—

June: I wasn't planning on anyway. I wouldn't do that—

Matt: Good. Thanks. I think for all of us that would be best.

June: Absolutely. Excuse me.

(June nods and then walks to the front door. Two Men enter and slowly remove Gertrude's body as Music comes in and the lights fade.)

Scene 2:

(Lights up. Tuesday. Late Morning. Another beautiful summer day. Enter Sam in a suit with a drink of soda. He flips on the TV and surfs through channels, finally stopping on one. He lights a cigarette, takes a drink, and then notices something on the TV—he chokes on his drink, almost does a spit-take, and then has a coughing fit. He goes to the phone, dials, waits a short while.)

Sam: (into phone) Hey, it's me. I realize you probably have the phone off while at the wake but I just wanted you to know that Enthios opened down a dollar fifty. Right now it's at four twenty-three, down a dollar eighty-one. So...I don't know if they made some announcement today or what but, that's what's up. Okay? That's it. Bye.

(Sam walks over to the patio door and pulls on it: the door barely budes, he locks it. Enter Mallory through the front door. She walks right inside dressed in green scrubs.)

Mallory: You shouldn't smoke.

Sam: Yeah, I know. I'm putting it out. (he goes to the kitchen)

Mallory: I don't mean in here. I mean in general you shouldn't smoke.

Sam: Yeah.

Mallory: What is this—You're watching stocks. My brother is watching (Sam walks over, pulls out a key, and quietly deadbolts the front door) the stock market. Are you feeling all right?

Sam: (returning) Nice green.

Mallory: They make me look fat. Huge.

Sam: (preoccupied) Yeah. What do you have work?

Mallory: No. I dress like this when I'm going to the beach. Yes, I have work. Did you figure that one out all by yourself? I have work, unlike someone else who spends the whole day at the beach mooching off Mom and Dad's generosity—

Sam: All right. Enough.

Mallory: Do you plan on working at all this summer?

Sam: Watch it. You have no idea what you're talking about.

Mallory: What'd you want?

Sam: I wanted to know when you plan on coming home.

Mallory: We're not getting into this. I don't have to talk to you.

Sam: Do you plan on coming to the wake—or the funeral—or is that—oh, wait, that would mean accepting responsibility for one's actions—growing up—

Mallory: You are so naive.

(She moves to leave, exit the front door, we hear a put-off laugh “ha”, then she returns. Sam lights another smoke.)

Mallory: Could you please unlock the front door?

Sam: Mm mm (No).

Mallory: Okay...(she moves to the patio door. It is locked. She unlocks it. Pulls. It moves a little. She looks down at the wooden rod in the track.) (under her breath) This is ridiculous. (She removes the rod. Pulls. Still the door won't open. She looks outside.)

Mallory: What the fuck is that—bungee cords?

Sam: Yeah, they're handy. Like duct tape.

(She pulls and pulls but cannot open the door.)

Mallory: Mother-fucker! I have work!

(She exits right. Then we hear:)

Mallory: Fuck! (She kicks the door. She returns.) I'll go out my window if I have to.

Sam: I don't think so. Wouldn't be the first time though, would it?

Mallory: Fuck you, Sam. Fuck you! You arrogant fuck! You are such a baby. Such a fucking baby!

(She moves to exit left.)

Sam: Sit down. Sit down. Sit Down! Now! I'm through with the bullshit. We're going to talk about this. Sit.

(She sits on the couch. When he isn't looking she sticks her tongue out at him.)

Mallory: Okay. So, what should we talk about—hmm...Let's see...How about unemployment. Collecting unemployment. I think you're eligible. I mean you're not working. After all, and you tried to find a job, you put forth the effort, real effort, so I'm pretty sure you could collect food stamps and other stuff.

Sam: Very funny.

Mallory: I'm not kidding. You could. You should look into it. That way—ah, here you go, you've got what five weeks 'til you go back? You could apply, get unemployment, then spend all your days at Huntington, which you do now anyway, but! When you buy a softserve cone, and another one for Emily, you can pay for it in food stamps. It's perfect. You get a tan and free ice cream, And! A check every week. Awesome. Awesome. You can definitely do this.

Sam: You know you're killing Mom and Dad. Absolutely killing them.

Mallory: Oh don't be so melodramatic. They're fine.

Sam: No, they're not. I don't just mean with Grandma—

Mallory: Which, by the way, I wasn't invited over, not once, to see my own grandmother.

Sam: You don't have to be invited. No one's invited.

Mallory: I wasn't welcome.

Sam: You were welcome.

Mallory: Oh no. What, are you kidding me? I was most definitely not welcome.

Sam: Well maybe not, but still, you could've come.

Mallory: It's not my fault.

Sam: Ah! And we've arrived at our first point: not my fault.

Mallory: Fuck off.

Sam: Not my fault. Pas ma fault. Interesting.

Mallory: You shouldn't smoke in here. Dad'll know.

Sam: Well then, who's fault is it? Mom's? Dad's? Mine?

Mallory: No. Maybe. Partially.

Sam: Perhaps—there's something that I'm missing here. You know you're being used, right? You're aware of that—

Mallory: That's it. I'm out of here—

Sam: Oh, no. I don't think so. You're not going anywhere. (Sam grabs her arm.)

Mallory: Let go. Come on. What? I don't like that.

(Sam walks her around the room, going at her.)

Sam: Why's that? Does he grab you like this—

Mallory: No. Let go.

Sam: Does he hit you?

Mallory: No. C'mon. Let go.

Sam: No? Does he tell you what to do—what to think?

Mallory: Let go of my arm!

(She goes to knee Sam in the crotch. Sam flinches, then lets go of her.)

Sam: There.

Mallory: Ow. Asshole.

(Sam keeps tracking her.)

Mallory: Get away from me.

Sam: No, we're going to talk about this.

Mallory: Stop it. Get away. You're freaking me out.

Sam: Don't walk away. We're going to talk about this, where're you going?

Mallory: Get away from me.

Sam: You're being used and you don't even know it. Can't you see that?

Mallory: Fuck you.

Sam: This guy's got you so programmed: what to think, how to think—that you don't even realize it. Don't you think it's a little strange, seventeen year old girl and—

Mallory: I'm eighteen.

Sam: —a forty year old—but you were seventeen when this whole thing started.

Mallory: He's not forty. He's thirty-seven.

Sam: Ah, big difference there.

Mallory: It is.

Sam: And what does this guy do, what is he a roofer.

Mallory: What does that matter—you're such a snob.

Sam: He's a roofer, and he rides motorcycles, and he hunts stuff, and he has two kids—one who's fourteen, I believe.

Mallory: Stop! You don't know what you're talking about. What we have. You only see what you want to see—looking down judging people. Judging. What's so great about you anyway? You have no job, you live at the beach, you're a bum. A bum. You might think you're so much better than everyone else because you go to school on the East Coast and us lowly midwesterners don't know nothing. But you're just a snob—why're you so great?

Sam: You know, I appreciate you trying to turn this around on me and avoid the subject at hand, but it's not going to happen. Okay? Got that? I know you hate me. For some strange reason that I don't know, you hate my guts, hate everything I represent—because I'm not tough, I don't drive a truck, I don't work with my hands—there's no grime and grease under my nails, and that's fine. You want to hate me because I'm not macho and butch and tough—

Mallory: I don't hate you.

Sam: —that's fine. But you better think long and hard about why you're wasting your life away with this guy instead—

Mallory: He has a Name! His name is Jay! You know that.

Sam: Fine...He's got you so brainwashed and you don't even know it. Now, I realize he's everything I'm not—

Mallory: It has nothing to do with you.

Sam: But to go through all this to prove a point, for spite.

Mallory: God! You're so self-centered. Unbelievable. What about you and Emily?

Sam: Yeah? What? What's your point?

Mallory: She looks awfully young, don't you think? She looks a lot younger than me.

Sam: She's twenty-one.

Mallory: I'm just saying she can still pass for fifteen, easy. I'm sure she gets carded for cigarettes all the time—

Sam: She doesn't smoke.

Mallory: Neither do you...(Long stare)

Sam: I have no idea what your point is.

Mallory: All I'm saying is she looks awfully young.

Sam: Yeah? And? So...that's a compliment.

Mallory: Okay.

Sam: What—what are you trying to say—insinuate?

Mallory: I'm insinuating nothing. I'm just saying, just pointing it out.

Sam: She's twenty-one. Almost twenty-two.

Mallory: I know.

Sam: (laughs) You're crazy. Your mind is really—it's sick. You're sick. You need help.

Mallory: All I'm saying is glass houses...

Sam: Yeah, right. Nice try. I'm not the one with the forty year old boyfriend. Yeah, that's right, forty. That's the number I'm sticking with, nice and round.

Mallory: You're a child. A fucking child.

Sam: That's right, swear. Swear your head off. When you've got no argument, what do you do: swear, that's all. It shows real class.

Mallory: Fuck off.

Sam: Hey, all right. Very lady like. I like that. Like a trucker. Nice.

Mallory: I have work. Give me the keys.

Sam: Why don't you come home?

Mallory: Can I have the keys?

Sam: Just come home—no one'll bother you—come home—

Mallory: I have to go—

Sam: Even Dad, if you just come home, that's all they want.

Mallory: I have work.

Sam: If you were home everything would be fine again—

Mallory: I was kicked out.

Sam: I know.

Mallory: I didn't leave. I was kicked out.

Sam: Well...You know why.

Mallory: It doesn't—I was kicked out. There was no discussion. I have to go. Can I have the—can you open the door for me, please?

Sam: It doesn't matter. Mom and Dad don't care anymore—they just want you back, that's all—I know that's all—

Mallory: Sam, I've got to go.

Sam: Please, please. Look, I'm begging you. Me. Please, just come home. I'll be nice. We'll smooth it over and it'll be fine—

Mallory: I'd have to leave him.

Sam: Well, yeah. If you want to come home—it would have to be a clean, full break.

Mallory: I can't leave him—I'm not leaving him—I have to go.

Sam: But why? It's time—you've made your point—your independence. Come home. It's time. It will all be forgotten, in time—

Mallory: I can't leave him. I'm not. No—I've got to go—

Sam: But why—you have to—now's the time—don't worry about Dad, I'll smooth it over—

Mallory: He'll kill himself.

Sam: (laughs) What? What? Is that what he says?

Mallory: He will.

Sam: Oh...What an asshole.

Mallory: You don't know him. He will.

Sam: Oh, that's such crap. Is that what he tells you?

Mallory: He will. I know he will.

Sam: Oh, Mall, that's such bullshit. That's crap. I can't believe—Oh, what a dick!

Mallory: I can't. Keys, Sam. I need to go. I'm late.

Sam: And that's your reason for not leaving him? Oh, what a manipulative fuck! I can't believe this guy.

Mallory: You don't know him—I shouldn't have even told you that—I have to go.

Sam: Believe me, look, he's not going to kill himself. He just says that to make you stay—I can't believe he plays that card.

Mallory: (angry) I have to go! I have work! Give me the keys!

Sam: Look, just come home. I guarantee he's full of shit. Come home. Go back to school. Everything'll be fine.

Mallory: Yeah, fine. Whatever. Keys. Now!

Sam: That's such a load of crap, to say that, to someone—can't you see that? Man, this guy has his meat hooks so deep into you—

Mallory: I'm out of here.

(Mallory goes to leave, Sam grabs her arm.)

Sam: No, Mall, wait a second—

(Mallory turns fast, with venom in her eyes, and kicks him square in the groin. Sam goes down hard. Beat. He tosses the keys on the floor.)

Mallory: (coming down) Oh, Sam...I...Sorry...

(She exits out the front door then throws the keys back inside.)

Sam: (in fetal position) That went well.

(Lights fade. Music.)

Scene 3:

(Later that day. Around 9 PM. A couple small lights are left on in the house. Suzanne is in the kitchen fixing coffee. Claire is collapsed in the family room. They are dressed nicely and exhausted.)

Claire: Mom looked good, don't you think?

Suzanne: Yeah, they did a nice job.

Claire: Yeah, I think she'd be happy with it at the end. But she had it all planned out, didn't she? Way ahead of time.

Suzanne: Yeah, I think so.

Claire: She looked very...peaceful. And I think—did she pick out that outfit—the blue jacket and blouse?

Suzanne: Yeah, that was her favorite outfit—she saved it for all the big holidays: Christmas, Easter, uh...what are the other ones?

Claire: (laughing) I can't remember.

Suzanne: (laughing) Me neither.

Claire: Christmas, Easter, and Death—the big three.

Suzanne: (laughing) Yeah, that's true.

Claire: She nailed the big three.

Suzanne: The Holy Trinity.

Claire: That's right.

(Suzanne brings the coffee over.)

Suzanne: Here you go.

Claire: Thank you. (drinks) Oh, that's nice. Sarah always has the best coffee.

Suzanne: It's all she drinks.

Claire: That's probably why. Oh, that breeze is nice.

Suzanne: Yeah, one of the perks of the lake.

Claire: Absolutely...I really liked what they did with the pictures—who did that?

Suzanne: Sarah and I put that together—Did you see the family portrait—

Claire: Was that really the last time we were all together?

Suzanne: I think so. All of us and then Sam and Mall, and Libby and Kelly, Dallas and Kevin. Yeah, all of us.

Claire: Wow. I guess it's been awhile.

Suzanne: Yeah, now you've got Katie.

Claire: Yep. Boy, back then could you imagine me with a kid?

Suzanne: No.

Claire: No. Of course not. I was a mess. Jumping from job to job. Man to man. Getting drunk every other night. Partying hard, man. Boy...(laughs) That sounds like a lot of fun.

Suzanne: Yeah, it must've been.

Claire: Oh, well, ya know, it was, but now, now is so much better: more stable, more emotional—the good emotional, though, ya know? Not crying your eyes out over some stupid doofus of a guy. No, now I make beds and read bedtime stories, I cook waffles and bake bread—Me! Baking bread. I clip coupons—Can you believe I clip coupons? Mom clipped coupons. But no, now I do it. And yeah, it's...nice. It's no longer grab life by the balls, go full throttle 'til you crash and burn. And that's fine by me.

Suzanne: That's good.

Claire: Yep. Mm! I just remembered—I tried to make a mental note—remember to tell Suze about the picture remember to tell Suze about the picture—but that never works—

Suzanne: What's that?

Claire: Where—I'd never seen—that picture with Mom and Al. Where did that come from—when was it taken—I can't remember—

Suzanne: That was taken at the last reunion. The same one as the big portrait. And Mom—

Claire: Oh! I've never, no never, I don't think, ever, seen her with a smile that big plastered on her face.

Suzanne: Yeah, it's a great picture. One of those times—Al must have said something witty or kidded her about something because there was—she was totally relaxed.

Claire: And let's be honest: Mom wasn't a big smiler.

Suzanne: No.

Claire: (sign of the cross) Sorry, Mom, but you weren't.

Suzanne: It was—It took something rare to get her—Al could. He always had the ability—the golden touch.

Claire: But there her smile is huge.

Suzanne: Enormous.

Claire: Like the Cheshire Cat.

Suzanne: Uh hun?...

Claire: In Alice in Wonderland.

Suzanne: Right.

Claire: No. You're right: Al could. He always was the one who could, that asshole.

(Suzanne starts crying quietly)

Claire: Oh, Suze, what? What's wrong?

Suzanne: (through tears) No, I don't know. Just Al, and...I'm sorry.

Claire: No, it's fine. I know. I've cried so many times about him I think I've got nothing left. I've used up all my Al tears. You reach a certain point you just get numb to the whole thing.

Suzanne: I'm so alone.

Claire: What? No, no you're not.

Suzanne: I am. I've got no one. No one no how.

Claire: What about Winnie and Cedar?

Suzanne: They're dogs!

Claire: How can you say that—you of all people should know that dogs aren't (imitates Suzanne's voice) just dogs. They're family.

Suzanne: (crying) They don't touch you. They don't hold you.

Claire: No...They lick you.

(Suzanne laughs through her tears.)

Claire: Oh, Suze, I know. Yeah, I know. It's not easy.

Suzanne: You've never been alone.

Claire: What? Well sure I have.

Suzanne: No you haven't.

Claire: (thinks) No, I guess not. Not like you. (Suzanne cries) Sorry. I'm sorry.

Suzanne: (through tears) It's okay.

Claire: (holds her) Oh, Suzie Q. I know it's hard. Okay, I don't. But I can imagine it's hard. You've had some bad luck, kiddo. But you're due for a good spell. Things always turn around. I know the last few years have been rough but these things always go in circles and cycles. Cycles and circles...like menstruation and geometry. Flows and counterflows and we always at some point come full circle, well not full circle—but a hundred eighty degrees is what I mean—and then, no, I guess it is full circle, that's what I meant. But it's tough—

Suzanne: (head pops up) What in God's name are you talking about?

Claire: I have no idea.

Suzanne: Geometry and menstruation?

Claire: I don't know what that means.

Suzanne: Nobody knows what that means.

Claire: Yeah, you're right. I was—

Suzanne: —talking out of your ass?

Claire: Yeah. Whoah. There you go.

Suzanne: Fuck Al.

Claire: Yeah—Fuck him!

(Sound of Jack's booming voice from the front door. Followed by Maggie's cackle. Then Sarah laughs. Suzanne and Claire stand, Suzanne heads off left. Claire motions, "Go on, go on, it's fine." Suzanne heads off left wiping her eyes. Claire looks around, bounces back and forth, then decides to clear the coffee mugs. Enter Jack, Maggie, Matt, Sarah, and Sam. All are well dressed having just come from the wake. It might as well be stated right off that Jack and Maggie exist in a constant state of intoxication, from the steady stream of Coors Light, Busch Light, Michelob Light, and Bud Light (any light beer basically) that they drink all day everyday. The free hand always holds a cigarette.)

Jack: (laughing) Sarah, how is it the house still smells like somebody's baking cakes when there's nobody home?

Sarah: (laughing) Oh shut up.

Matt: I swear it could be a hundred degrees out she'd still have that oven fired up.

Maggie: And I'm sure they hate every bit of it.

Sarah: Yeah, right? I don't hear them complaining.

Maggie: I don't think so. Ungrateful.

Matt: Ungrateful?

Jack: Whoah!

Matt: Ungrateful?

Maggie: That's right.

Sarah: You heard her.

Matt: Moi? I don't think so. Sam, you want to back me up—

Sam: (unsure) Oh...

(Sarah laughs during all this)

Jack: He knows when to keep his mouth shut! He knows—

Matt: —that's right—

Jack: —this is not a battle worth fighting.

Sam: Uh...

Maggie: Not if he likes eating.

Jack: You got that right! There she is. (sees Claire in the kitchen)

Claire: (playful, not sexual) Hey there, big boy.

(Jack goes and hugs her.)

Sarah: Where's Suzanne? (entering living room)

Claire: Bathroom.

Jack: I thought it was a really nice wake.

Claire: Yeah it was. I thought so. Small.

Maggie: Well...

Matt: All her friends are dead.

Sarah: Matt!

Matt: What? It's true.

Sarah: Where are you going?

Sam: To change. I'm so sick of being in a suit. (exit Sam)

Jack: So, Claire, when did you get here?

Claire: Uh...What was it? Friday? Saturday? Saturday. Three days ago. Boy, it feels like three weeks ago.

Matt: We have that effect on people. (Jack laughs)

Claire: No—

Matt: No. I know. Why don't we—should we move to the family room, or the patio?

Jack: Sure.

Claire: Sounds good. Would anyone like some coffee?

Sarah: Oh, Claire, I can get that.

Claire: (confused) Okay?

Maggie: Sarah, why don't you sit down—

Claire: I'm right next to the machine.

(Matt gives Claire a “don't worry about it” look.)

Maggie: —you've been on your feet all day.

Claire: Does anyone want coffee? Decaf?

Sarah: I'll have some, but I can get it.

Claire: Okay?

(Claire pours the coffee.)

Matt: Jack, you want a beer? Maggie?

Jack: Oh, okay, you twisted my arm. (he laughs and enters the living room)

Maggie: I think that arm's been permanently twisted for the last twenty years.

Jack: Twenty? More like forty. Way before I knew you, lady.

Maggie: Oh, is that so?

Jack: May God strike me dead on the spot if it isn't.

Sarah: (laughing, aghast) Jack!

Claire: You and me both, Jack.

Jack: What's that? That's right.

Claire: Permanently twisted, that was my motto.

Jack: You got that right.

Claire: Sarah, here's your coffee.

Sarah: Oh, you didn't have to—

Claire: (give me a break) Please.

(Matt brings out cans of Coors Light or Busch Light and gives them to Jack and Maggie.)

Matt: Here you go.

Jack: Thanks, Matty.

Maggie: Thanks.

Matt: Claire, you want a beer?

Claire: (thinks for a couple seconds) Sure, I'll have a beer.

Matt: What would you like?

Claire: Whatever. Whatever they're drinking.

(Maggie fires up a smoke. This reminds Jack to and he joins in.)

Sarah: Oh!

Maggie: What? What is it?

Sarah: Oh, nothing. I was just going to get an ashtray.

Maggie: Oh, don't be silly. Sit your butt down. Matt can get it.

Jack: I got it.

Sarah: Okay. Thanks, Jack.

(Jack pokes his head in the kitchen.)

Jack: Matty.

Matt: (head in frig) Yeah?

Jack: Ashtray, Stat.

Matt: Oh, yeah. Try that cupboard right there.

(Enter Suzanne, looking much better, barely traces of red eyes.)

Suzanne: Well, hello.

Maggie: Hello there yourself.

Sarah: Hey, Suzanne.

Suzanne: I didn't know you were coming over.

Maggie: Neither did we.

Jack: (entering) We overstayed our welcome and had to go somewhere.

Sarah: That's not true.

Maggie: And if you can believe it, it's not the first funeral home we've been kicked out of.

Jack: (laughter) No, that's true.

Matt: Suzanne, you want something to drink?

Suzanne: Oh. (thinks) I'll just have some decaf.

Sarah: I'll get it.

Maggie: Sit! Matt's got it. Right, Matty?

Matt: I think I can handle pouring from pot to mug.

Claire: Where's Tim and Kate?

Sarah: They wanted to go back to the hotel to freshen up.

Jack: We scared them off.

Sarah: Jack!

Matt: (entering with coffee) Apparently our bathroom isn't good enough for freshening.

Claire: Why do you say that?

Matt: What?

Claire: Freshening?

Matt: That's what she said.

Claire: Did she? Kate?

Matt: Yeah.

Claire: Who says that?

Matt: I don't know.

Maggie: It really was a nice wake.

Jack: Absolutely.

Matt: Everybody was raving about the pictures.

Maggie: Oh, those were great.

Claire: Yeah, they seemed to be a big hit.

Matt: That was all Sarah and Suzanne.

Maggie: It was really great. 'Cause it covered so many years in just that what, four by two square?

Sarah: Oh, well, Suzanne did most of it.

Suzanne: That's not true. It was a team effort.

Claire: It was great.

Matt: Yeah, everybody liked it.

Jack: I liked that, uh, one with the whole family.

Suzanne: The one in the middle?

Jack: I think so. It was bigger—

Suzanne: Yeah, that's the one.

Jack: Yeah, that was nice. You could see everybody—

(Enter Sam)

Claire: —even little Sammy with his big mop of blond hair—what happened?

Sam: Uh, I don't know. Puberty?

Matt: You mean you've gone through puberty?

Sam: (looks around, confused about the conversation he walked in on) Yeah, I think so. Pretty sure.

Maggie: How's the summer treating you, hon?

Sam: (uncomfortable being the center) Good. Good. It's going fine.

Matt: Of course it's going fine, the boy doesn't have a job.

(Sam laughs it off, heads for the kitchen.)

Sarah: Matt!

Maggie: Oh, no?

Matt: No, he's got bupkus.

Jack: Well—

Sam: Yeah, I'm a bum.

Jack: You're not a bum.

Sarah: (quietly) He had a job fall through at the last minute.

Maggie: Oh!

Jack: What about caddying, Sam?

Sam: (from kitchen) Yeah, I might do that.

Matt: We'll see.

Jack: You should. Your dear old dad here used to caddy over at Westwood, you know that.

Sam: Oh, yeah.

Jack: What you don't know is that not only was he the worst caddie you ever saw...(laughter)

Matt: (playful) Hoold on a second.

Jack: —but he was single handedly the one and only reason they started using carts.

Matt: There's some exaggeration going on here—thanks to the booze—

Jack: —for eighty years they stuck to a strict policy: no carts. For years other places had them, they were available, but they refused. After one season of Matthew Mooney carrying bags—(laughter)

Matt: Now wait a minute—

Jack: —all you saw that next season were carts—carts—carts everywhere. As far as they eye could see: carts. Like mushrooms. They popped up everywhere.

Matt: There's a certain exaggeration going on—

Jack: Oh no!

Matt: Don't believe a word he says.

Jack: It's all true. I swear it. As sure as I'm sitting here drinking this beer—

Matt: You got it. (They both laugh.)

Sam: If it's all right I think I'm going to go out for a little while.

Sarah: Oh?

Suzanne: Aren't you tired?

Claire: Yeah, Sam, you look tired.

Maggie: Let the boy go. He doesn't want to spend his night hanging out with us old farts. Do you, Sam?

Sam: (deer in headlights) No, I...

Jack: Go. Have some fun. You need some money, here (pulling out bills).

Sarah: Jack! No. Matt...

Sam: No, that's all right, I've got some.

Matt: Yeah, it's okay.

Jack: Here. (hands him a twenty) Now, I expect you to spend that wisely: alcohol, firearms—fireworks, I mean. And loose women.

Sam: Okay. That could be tough on twenty bucks.

Claire: At least firearms, Sam.

Sam: Yeah, right.

Claire: If you don't come back here with a pistol, magnum of some kind I'll be very disappointed in you, nephew.

Sam: I'll do my best.

Jack: (joking, maybe ruffle him) Get out of here.

Sam: Okay, bye, everyone. See you later.

(Bye Sam, etc. Exit Sam via patio.)

Matt: Should we adjourn to the patio?

Jack: Yeah, sure.

Maggie: I've heard enough of you, Buster, I'm staying right here.

Jack: That's fine by me, lady.

Matt: Anybody else?

Suzanne: No.

Sarah: Uh...

Claire: We're going to have some girl talk. You boys go gab about glocks and motorcycles.

Matt: Oh, you know us so well.

Jack: Not a bad idea, Claire.

Claire: I try.

(Matt and Jack move to the patio; the women remain inside.)

Matt: Did you see Enthos closed below four today?

Jack: Yeah, yeah, I did. Minute it hit six I had a sell on.

Matt: So you sold it all?

Jack: I kept a few shares, but for the most part, yeah, I'm out. But remember I didn't get in 'til it was almost two dollars. Unlike someone else who snatched it up at what, forty cents?

Matt: Something like that.

Jack: (you sly dog) Forty cents...

Matt: Yeah but that's—this stock has been a lucky one—it's not the norm, at least for me—usually it's the opposite.

Jack: I hear you. TBR.

Matt: Oh, yeah. Well, I think everybody lost on that one.

Jack: No kidding.

Matt: No, this one—Enthios—it's been a real, uh, it's been good, I'll just say—it's been a good one. I don't want to jinx it. (knocks on wood)

Jack: I'll say. You didn't sell when it hit six—any?

Matt: Nope. I'm in this baby for the long haul.

Jack: Well when you get in at forty cents you can do that.

Matt: Yeah, I suppose. No, I really do think it's easily a ten dollar stock—it's just going to take a little time.

Jack: Well, we'll see.

Matt: What, you don't think so?

Jack: I don't know—We'll see what happens—I think it's definitely a five dollar stock.

Matt: Well, we'll see.

Jack: Yep... Would you sell at ten?

Matt: If it hit ten I'd sell most—I'd keep some—but yeah I'd sell—that would be more than enough of a profit.

Jack: I'll say: forty cents to ten bucks, in the course of what, a year? Year and a half?

Matt: Yeah, we'll see.

Jack: That's not a bad profit.

Matt: No, I'd say so.

Jack: You're not going to do any better than that.

Matt: I don't think so.

Jack: No. No way.

Matt: Well, we'll see.

(They keep talking but unheard. We shift to the women, pick them up mid-conversation.)

Maggie: —believe me, there are worse things in this world.

Sarah: No. I know.

Claire: Absolutely.

Maggie: Yeah, I know. Where is the lost Mooney?

Sarah: (tense) What do you mean?

Claire: You talking about Al?

Maggie: Bingo.

(Sarah is relieved.)

Claire: Who knows?

Suzanne: That's a mystery.

Maggie: Nobody knows—no one's seen him?

Claire: No.

Suzanne: Un un.

Claire: Matt and Tim were the last ones to see him.

Maggie: He just went off the deep end, eh?

Suzanne: Um...

Claire: They really know more about it than I do. Sarah?

Sarah: Yeah, I don't know the whole story.

Maggie: Hm. That's a shame. I always liked Al—what a character.

Suzanne: That's a nice way of putting it.

Maggie: Yeah, well, this stuff (her beer) can creep up on you—I assume that's what happened to him.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Maggie: Yep. You have to be careful. Luckily I've got Jack keeping an eye on me, like a hawk, and then I keep my eye on him, we're like two hawks.

Claire: That's funny, I was thinking more like fish.

(Maggie, cold serious, a little drunk, stares Claire down a long few beats—silence—then Maggie bursts out laughing and the tension is all gone—everyone laughs.)

Maggie: That's a good one, Claire.

Claire: I thought you'd like that. Here's to ya. (holds up beer can)

Maggie: Right back at ya, sister. (holds up can, they drink)

Claire: Maggie, how is, uh...it's been too long...your youngest?

Maggie: Wally.

Claire: Yeah, Wally, that's right. I heard he's flying helicopters now?

Maggie: That is a constant source of nothing but...well, terror in our house.

Suzanne: I'd imagine.

Maggie: He's flying these Apache helicopters—they're the ones that, in the event of a war, they're the first ones in. Right...I know...Talk about crazy. They have two guys in them: the pilot—which is what Wally does, and then the uh...what is it? Guy that works the guns?

Claire: Gunner?

Maggie: Right. No. He called it something else. Artillery man. I don't know. But, two weeks ago—two weeks ago, okay? Down in Texas, at Fort Hood where he's stationed—two of the these things, in training exercises, just training exercises, they accidentally collided and killed four of them—

Claire: Oh no.

Suzanne: Oh my.

Maggie: —both pilots and both, uh, gunners.

Claire: That's terrible.

Maggie: I know. So...And that's just training, not even in war, which, they are the first ones in...It's...It's really too much.

Claire: I'd imagine.

Maggie: We told him—even Jack told him, you know, when he came out of West Point, you know, why not go in to intelligence gathering or military planning or something like that—something more using your brainpower—not that flying these things doesn't use brainpower—it's really difficult, you know, but just—

Claire: That's completely understandable.

Suzanne: Yes.

Maggie: But no, he wanted—he's so stubborn, just like him. (points to Jack)

Claire: They all are.

Maggie: He wanted to get his wings, learn to fly—and helicopters of all things. But...what can you do?

Claire: Nothing.

Maggie: That's right. Absolutely nothing. Once they get their mind set on something, that's it.

Claire: Yep.

Sarah: Here you go, Maggie.

Maggie: Oh, thanks, Sarah. You're a saint. (hands beers)

Sarah: Claire...

Claire: Thanks. (hands coffee to Suzanne)

Suzanne: Thanks, Sarah.

Maggie: I really thought the wake was nice. I did. What happened to Tim and Kate, did they fall off a cliff?

Claire: Well, they just had to freshen up.

Maggie: Oh, that's right.

Claire: Haven't you ever freshened, Maggie? Don't you know it takes a good, what Suzanne? To freshen up?

Suzanne: Oh, I don't know. I assume it takes a while.

Claire: It must.

Maggie: Well, this is my freshening up. (takes a long drink)

Claire: I thought—it was good to see Libby.

Suzanne: Yeah, she was very warm and friendly.

Sarah: Well she's always been that way—

Claire: It's true. But given the circumstances I thought she handled it really well.

Maggie: Were her and your Mom close?

Claire: Oh, uh, yes they were. It was Mom who taught her to play the piano.

Maggie: Oh!

Claire: But that's not what I was referring to—they haven't exactly, her and her Mom and Dad—

Maggie: Tim and Kate.

Claire: Yeah. They haven't been on, uh, very good terms but—Suze, you know more about this than I do.

Suzanne: Uh, well, they just... They... Well, things were said about Libby's husband, Michael.

Maggie: Have I met him?

Sarah: I don't know. You might have.

Claire: They said some things—well, it was mostly Kate—

Suzanne: Yeah, I think so.

Claire: And so they haven't been on speaking terms for a while—what's it been?

Suzanne: Over a year.

Maggie: Really?!

Claire: Yeah.

Sarah: It's sad.

Maggie: What was said?

(Beat: they look to each other.)

Claire: It was mostly a lot of badmouthing of Michael. It was very ugly.

Maggie: Like what?

Suzanne: Uh, just that he wasn't a good husband, he didn't—

Claire: They never liked him. From day one. Mike's not exactly the alpha male type, they thought Libby could do better; so all this stuff is basically, it all comes back to that.

Maggie: What'd they say he was cheating on her?

Claire: (trying to be discrete) Uh...Along those lines but worse.

Maggie: Oh. Really?

Claire: And there is absolutely no proof of anything. They just don't like him.

Maggie: Really?

Suzanne: Yeah.

(Cut back to Matt and Jack.)

Jack: Well, he doesn't want to speculate but from the preliminary information it seems that it was pilot error—it was nighttime, they were practicing a new maneuver and...that's it. No room for error when you're in one of those things.

Matt: No. I guess not.

(Matt slides the glass door closed. They look at each other.)

Jack: You don't want to go this way.

Matt: I'm out of options. What else can I do?

Jack: I don't know. We only had boys. This situation, I don't know what I'd do.

Matt: What do you know?

Jack: I know a lot of things. I know a few guys who could help you but I wouldn't recommend it.

Matt: Why?

Jack: Well, it's illegal for one—not that I care. This is one of those situations that rules don't apply.

Matt: No, that's true. How much?

Jack: I don't know. I'm sure for a few thousand they'd put the scare of his life in him. (laughing) Boy, he won't be able to piss straight.

Matt: What if we wanted to go more.

Jack: Like what? What do you mean?

Matt: I mean beyond scare. Let's actually do something.

Jack: Break something?

Matt: Snap a leg or break an arm.

Jack: I don't think that's—it's not even—not at the beginning.

Matt: This is a one shot deal. I don't think we can be putting in multiple hits or scares or whatever this is.

Jack: No.

Matt: It's a one-time only, blue-light special, so we've got to make this count.

Jack: Oh, I think they'll make it count.

Matt: Yeah?

Jack: Yeah. These guys are pretty...they're scary as hell, they're big boys.

Matt: And these are friends of yours from the force?

Jack: They're friends of friends. They're not cops. But they're not thugs. They're good, they know how to get things done.

Matt: So you think—Do we have to be specific or can we just say “put the fear of God in him.”

Jack: Yeah that's all you need to do. There's no reason—You don't have to be specific.

Matt: They know what that entails.

Jack: They'll put the scare—like I said, they'll scare him—believe you me, he will not be sleeping soundly at night.

Matt: Okay. Uh... We should do it. I want to do something. I'm so sick of feeling helpless. There's nothing worse. There's nothing I can do. There's no legal action I can take.

Jack: What about when she was seventeen?

Matt: No. I talked to Pivceovich, under the state statute if she chooses, of her own free will, to live with him there's nothing I can do.

Jack: That's unbelievable.

Matt: I know. I can't do anything. He brainwashes her and there's nothing I can do about it.

Jack: Well, if you want to do this, I'll take care of it. All you'd have to do is take care of the money, I'll handle the rest.

Matt: I appreciate that.

Jack: Please. Look who you're talking to.

Matt: A cop.

Jack: Well...Retired.

Matt: Yeah.

Jack: The key word there is retired.

Matt: It's not—you're sure you don't mind getting involved?

Jack: Come on. Please. Matty. Mallory's my god-daughter.

Matt: That's true, I forgot that.

Jack: I've been involved since day one. This is no big deal at all. And if we can take care of that bastard—as simple as that—then it's worth it.

Matt: I just hope it works—we should try to do it soon.

Jack: Yeah. If that's what you want.

Matt: Well what do you think?

Jack: Yeah, the sooner the better. Wish I could do it myself.

Matt: No. About the whole thing?

Jack: I don't know. It's a risk.

Matt: Yeah. You mean if it'll work.

Jack: Well, yeah, but, no, I meant—I mean, he'll know—unless this guy just has tons of enemies.

Matt: I don't know.

Jack: You know what, maybe you should hire an investigator first.

Matt: To see if he has any enemies?

Jack: No. Just to check him out: check his past, check for anything suspicious, any skeletons.

Matt: Well he's divorced.

Jack: I'm sure that there's dirt to be found. There always is.

Matt: That's not a bad idea.

Jack: And if you want to go that route I know the best guy in the whole city. And! It's not illegal. There'd be nothing wrong with it.

Matt: Yeah...(thinking) maybe we should go with that first.

Jack: Whatever you want. But at least with this, you'd know all his background, which maybe you don't want to know.

(Tim and Kate have entered from the front door.)

Matt: No...I don't know...Oh, Tim and Kate...I think it's a good idea.

Jack: We don't have to decide right now: think about it, sleep on it. We can talk about—there's no reason—in fact, the funeral's tomorrow, you need to let all this breathe a little. A few days, then we can figure it out.

Matt: Yeah...(watching: Kate talks in the living room like she's in charge) What a bitch.

Jack: What's that?

Matt: Nothing.

(The go inside, as they do, everything in the living room comes up full. Kate, in mid-sentence.)

Kate: All the flowers—it was like the garden of Eden in there—Matt, I was just telling—Jack, my, it's been—Wow.

Jack: Yeah, it's been a while, hi ya, Kate. (they hug)

Kate: It's good to see you—you look good.

Jack: So do you.

Maggie: Not that good.

Kate: And I think you were in this same exact position last time I saw you.

Jack: What's that? Oh, yeah. Probably. Timmy.

Tim: Hey, Jack. How are you?

Jack: Good. Good.

Kate: And how is...now, you know, I can't remember, I'm drawing a total blank.

Suzanne: Ryan and Joe and—

Kate: Wally! That's right. Of course I remember. Mind like a steel trap. Wally. How's Wally?

Jack: He's good.

Maggie: I think it's time for another. Anybody?

Jack: He's, uh, down in—

Kate: He's not over—

Jack: No, no—

Kate: Oh, good—

Jack: No, he's down in Texas. Fort Hood. He's uh, a Captain.

Kate: Well that's great.

Jack: Un hun.

Kate: Do you think he'll be going—

Jack: He already did a tour but he (quieter) most likely he'll go back.

Kate: Oh...Well...

(Tim, Jack, and Matt talk quietly to each other.)

Kate: Well, uh, what about...

Claire: Ryan?

Suzanne: Joe?

Kate: Yes. Maggie, how's Ryan and Joe?

Maggie: They're fine. Getting old and fat.

Kate: Ah...

Maggie: You're lucky you had only girls. After three boys and him over there our house smells like BO and beer. It's seeped into the walls.

Claire: Somehow I don't think the boys were responsible for the beer.

Maggie: Well...Mm...Maybe not completely. But they contributed, that's for sure.

Claire: I'm sure they did.

Maggie: And we contributed too.

Claire: That's what I'm talking about.

Maggie: (kidding) Oh. Hey. Watch it.

Kate: (taking over) Libby and her husband, Michael, they live in California, and not San Francisco or San Diego. No. Neither San. They're right in the mess of it all, in L.A.

Maggie: Oh, how do they like that?

Claire: L.A.'s okay.

Kate: They love it. They're young. But give them a few years, we'll see.

Claire: It's just no San Diego.

Maggie: I wouldn't mind warm weather all year.

Kate: Well, sure, but there's also smog, and earthquakes, and fires, and mudslides, and locusts!

Maggie: Locusts?

Kate: Well not really. I made that one up.

Claire: —and it's a terrible place to live—

Kate: —that's not what I meant—

Claire: —let alone raise a family—

Kate: —that's not what I meant—

Claire: It's full of crazy patchouli pot smoking nut jobs.

Kate: That's not what I meant. Not at all. There are some fine fine places in L.A.—our friends, the Blevins's live in Santa Monica. Great area. Lots of culture. Nice homes. Nice neighborhoods.

Claire: Well I don't live there.

Kate: I'm sure you live in an equally nice neighborhood in San Diego, Claire.

Claire: Whatever.

Maggie: What's, um, doesn't she play the uh—now I'm drawing a blank.

Suzanne: The violin.

Maggie: Right, the violin.

Claire: Yes.

Kate: Yes. She's played since she was seven. Aunt Izzy taught her.

Maggie: But she's really good, right?

Sarah: Oh yeah.

Kate: She's played with some symphonies, most notably the Denver, Chicago—so she's pretty good but she doesn't play as much as she used to or should.

Maggie: That's too bad.

Kate: Yes, it is. But she's a big girl, she can decide—

Maggie: Oh, has she gained some weight?

Kate: What? No. She's like a stick. She's always been like that. I didn't mean it...(look from Maggie) I see...

Maggie: Gotcha.

Claire: Maggie's a sneaky one.

Kate: Apparently.

Claire: I forgot that.

Maggie: I have impeccable, uh, what is it, Jack?

Jack: (in stride) Timing.

Maggie: Yes. And how's Katie?

Kate: Oh! Now there's a girl who's put on some weight.

Sarah: Kate!

Suzanne: Goodness.

Kate: What? It's true.

Claire: Why don't you just say she's a whale?

Kate: No, she's not that big.

Maggie: Oh. Did she have a baby?

Kate: No. She's just lazy.

Sarah: Kate!

Claire: (laughing to herself) Unbelievable. (crossing to the kitchen)

Suzanne: She's been laid up with injuries.

Kate: Injuries?! She broke her arm. How does that effect her weight?

Suzanne: It's a stress.

Kate: Sure it's a stress but one can still get on a treadmill with a broken arm, can't she?

Sarah: She's been laid up.

Maggie: (laughing) A little tough love.

Kate: I mean, really. It comes to, you reach a point where, she's young, the girl's only twenty-seven years old, to allow herself to go like this, it's unacceptable, it's unbelievable.

Sarah: Well that's kind of harsh.

Suzanne: (simul) It's not that cut and dry.

Maggie: Tell us how you really feel—

Claire: (from kitchen) Look who's talking.

Maggie: Don't hold back.

Kate: What's that? No, it's the truth. What'd you say, Claire?

Claire: What? I said Look who's talking.

Kate: Un hun. Well. It's true. Exactly...

Maggie: Well there are certain things you can't control: taxes, death, money, love, weight...sense of humor.

Kate: Did you mean because of my weight, right?

Claire: What? Well, yeah.

Kate: People who live in glass houses, that's what you meant.

Claire: Bingo. Exactly.

Kate: That's what I thought.

Claire: Yep.

Kate: Okay.

Jack: We were saying before you guys got here that, I thought, the Zabors do a really nice job.

Kate: Oh, yes. They were great. Very classy. Not at all tacky like most funeral homes—except for the carpeting. Why do all funeral homes have such lousy carpeting—is it just because people are always traipsing all over it wearing it down they figure why spend big bucks when after two years we're just going to have to replace it all anyway.

(Everyone looks to each other.)

Jack: I don't know. I never thought about that.

Claire: (crossing) Why would you?

Jack: I don't know, well, different strokes for different folks—

Suzanne: I thought the carpeting looked okay.

Kate: Really?

Suzanne: Yeah.

Sarah: I thought it was fine.

Maggie: I didn't even notice—what color was it?

Kate: Oh, that awful orangish-brown.

Maggie: I don't know.

Jack: I like those boys—they're good kids.

Tim: They seemed like it. Really nice.

Kate: No, they were fine. Sweet boys. It was great. All of it was great.

Claire: (under breath) Except the carpet.

Kate: What's that?

Claire: Hm?

Kate: What's that?

Claire: Oh, nothing.

Kate: No, what did you say—you said something and seeing as I think it was directed at me—

Tim: Kate—

Kate: Don't Kate me!

Claire: It was nothing. I said except for the carpet.

Kate: Except for the carpet...and what's that supposed to mean?

Claire: Nothing. It was a joke.

Kate: Okay, a joke—

Tim: Kate, why don't you—

Kate: —and it was a real funny one too which is why everyone's laughing and why you said it under your breath.

Claire: You're right. I should have said it straight to your face: Except for the Carpet. There.

Matt: All right, everybody calm down.

Jack: Yeah, Kate.

Maggie: Matty's right.

Kate: I don't understand where all this anger towards me comes from.

Claire: Well you're in the eye of the storm.

Kate: What's that supposed to mean?

Claire: It's hard to see—it's peaceful in the eye of the hurricane.

Kate: Honestly, Claire, you've lost me with these crazy metaphors, I don't know where you're going with this.

Claire: Well, I didn't think that you would. (crossing)

Kate: What? Does anyone—can anyone tell me—explain to me, what in the world she's talking about?
Maggie?

Maggie: Oh, I don't know.

Tim: Okay, that's enough, Kate.

Kate: Really? I'm at a loss, a total loss—how long have you guys been drinking before we got here because maybe, hon, I think we've got some catching up to do.

Sarah: No, it hasn't been—

Maggie: I don't know, Jack, when did we start?

Jack: Well first we'd have to figure out when did we stop.

Matt: Nineteen eighty-two, I think.

Jack: What's that? Oh, yeah.

Maggie: Nice one, Matty. Watch it, wiseguy—

Kate: I don't know. (to Sarah and Suzanne) How many beers has she had?

Claire: (from kitchen, loud) Look Who's Talking! You are unbelievable—

Tim: Claire—

Claire: No. You're going to hear this.

Kate: What's that?

Claire: You know what...No. No, I'm going to...I walk away...Okay...Tim, I love you...I walk away...(crosses to patio)

Jack: Claire, come on—

Maggie: (simul) Claire—

Tim: (simul) Kate—

Matt: (simul) It's—I'll—

Kate: People deal with grief in many different ways. I'm going to get her a copy of A Grief Observed. It's by C.S. Lewis. It's a wonderful—

Claire: You haven't read C.S. Lewis. You might say you have but you're so full of shit. So don't even—

Kate: Here we go—

Claire: Don't even pretend you have. Don't even bother putting on the pose because I see right through you—

Kate: Have a few beers—

Claire: And don't interrupt me! And no, I had one beer—two beers if you count this one so, no, I'm not drunk—if there's one thing we know in this family it's how to hold our booze.

Matt: Okay, Claire—

Claire: Matt, don't.

Kate: I wouldn't say that's something to be commended for—

Tim: Kate—

Maggie: Oh, I don't know, it's not an easy—

Jack: Maggie—

Maggie: What?

(Jack shakes his head No)

Claire: Well it's a stone cold fact. Like the fact that your daughter hates your guts—

Tim: Claire!

(Beat of stunned silence. Then,)

Kate: How dare...I can't believe that you...That is evil; that's an evil thing to say.

Tim: It's okay.

Kate: And you're talking about something you know nothing about. Nothing about. I can't believe—You know nothing about. What did I ever do, I didn't (crying by now), I didn't...I can't...

Tim: It's okay...(hugging her)

Claire: I'm sorry. Kate, I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. It's been a long day, I'm sorry. Tim...

Tim: It's okay.

Sarah: Why don't—Matt, could you get a glass of water?

Matt: Sure.

Kate: I can't believe you, Claire.

Claire: I know.

Kate: I've known you all these years. Where is all this anger for me come?

Claire: No, I'm not angry with you.

Kate: Well you could've fooled me.

Tim: Why don't we just let it go.

Kate: You're right; you're right. I'm sorry.

Claire: And I'm sorry too. Really, I am.

Kate: I know. And I accept. (to Tim) I'm fine. I feel better now. Thank you, Matt. (takes sip) I'm just wondering where—well, there are secrets in this family and obviously everyone knows everyone else's secrets so why don't we just get it all out in the open, hun?

(Everyone looks around to each other: "Uh..." "I don't know..." Etc.)

Kate: Oh, come on. Obviously Suzanne, you talked to Kelly and she told you about our "situation" with Libby—

Suzanne: No, I didn't—

Kate: Come on, Suzie, I'm not an idiot. I'm sure she told you some story about how we hate Michael and think that he's bad for Libby, and that Libby could do so much better—

Suzanne: No, no, no—

Kate: Suzie?

Tim: Suze, come on?

Suzanne: I mean, she mentioned how you weren't getting along but it wasn't—

Claire: She said you accused Michael of hitting her. That's what she said. When I talked to her.

(Small silent beat.)

Kate: You see, that's what I'm talking about... Thank you, Claire, for at least telling the truth.

Claire: (stoic) You're welcome.

Kate: And of course none of this is true—it's all been blown way out of proportion. With emotions running high these things are always bound to happen.

Claire: Well I don't know anything about that.

(Jack and Maggie are trapped in the room)

Kate: No? But these things always happen, they're bound to happen. It's gossip. Without a first person account it's all just gossip like that untrue rumor that you married Ray just because you wanted a kid.

Claire: What?

Matt: Okay, Kate.

Suzanne: That's not—

Tim: Hey, wait a second—

Kate: What? You didn't hear that one: well, Jack, Maggie, there was this nasty rumor, oh, it must've been—Katie's what four now—four or five years ago—actually probably about four and a half years ago, that Claire felt the old biological clock tick tick ticking away and that's the reason why she got hitched. Shotgun style. In Vegas, wasn't it? (Claire's laughing wildly) But it's untrue. Isn't it? All untrue. Just a rumor that got out of control. That no one felt strong enough to bring up and get it out in the open—

Claire: Well now it's out in the open.

Kate: Yes it is.

Jack: Matty, I think maybe—

Tim: Why don't we go for a walk—

Claire: You know what, Kate? You're funny.

Kate: Oh, yeah, how's that?

Claire: Yeah, you're a regular comedian—isn't that what dad used to say: you're a regular comedian.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Matt: That's right.

Tim: Come on, hon.

Claire: —it's just that underneath all that pose, that position you assume, up in your fucking ivory tower—there's a metaphor you shouldn't have trouble with—

Matt: Claire, come on—

Tim: Claire—

Claire: —it's awfully fucking lonely up there all by yourself—high up and above everybody—it must be nice—so enjoy it—nice and cold.

Kate: Claire, there's too many years between us for you to be jealous: don't worry, you have plenty of time still to be successful—you won't be, what is it, a paralegal forever.

Matt: All right! That's enough. Jesus H. Christ. You two are like a couple of hyenas. Everyone chill.

Jack: Can I get anybody a drink?

All: Yes!

Matt: I mean, look, this is ridiculous, can we all agree upon that?

Tim: I think so.

Suzanne: Yes.

Sarah: Absolutely.

Matt: Everyone's just—it's been a tough week and everyone's exhausted, spent emotionally, like you said, so for God's sakes, let it go.

Tim: Yes. You two got it out of your systems now let's just forget about it. This kind of arguing—this is insane—especially considering Mom isn't even in the ground yet. (he wells up; Kate holds his hand.)

Kate: It's okay.

Tim: Excuse me. (exits to the bathroom)

Claire: I'm going for a walk.

Matt: Where?

Claire: Anywhere.

(Matt looks at Suzanne, motions to Suzanne with his head for her to go with her.)

Suzanne: Do you want me to go with you?

Claire: (crossing to the patio) I don't...(shrugs) Sure.

Sarah: Would anyone like coffee?

Kate: I'm fine.

Jack: (simul) No. Thanks, Sarah but I think I'll have another beer.

Maggie: Me too. Me three.

Matt: Me four. Me five.

Kate: Me too.

Jack: Kate, you want a beer?

Kate: Absolutely. Line 'em up.

(Jack crosses to the kitchen.)

Jack: Okay. What about Timmy?

Kate: Bring him one. He'll drink it.

Maggie: Where's Sammy?

Matt: He went out. Remember?

Maggie: That's right. Well where's Mallory?

(Sarah drops something in the kitchen.)

Jack: She went out. (quieter) Let me help you with that, Sarah.

Matt: Kate, you think he's okay?

Kate: (blank stare at Matt, then she snaps out of it) What's that? Oh, yeah, I'm sure he's fine. Just give him a minute.

(Jack pops open four beer cans fast: 1,2,3,4. He hands them out.)

Jack: Over the lips, over the gums, look out belly, here she comes.

Matt: A-men.

(Blackout.)

Scene 4:

(Lights come up. Later that night. Drunkenness has set in.)

Jack: Not that I know of. Maybe I was sick that day.

Claire: Matty, is the Shepard house still over there?

Matt: No, they finally tore it down.

Claire: That's a shame.

Kate: You mean Sam Shepard—that doctor—

Tim: The one armed man.

Jack: Played by Harrison Ford.

Matt: The Fugitive.

Sarah: Oh! Is that what that's based on?

Matt: Yes, Sarah.

Claire: That was a beautiful house—

Jack: Oh, yeah, it was one of the last dinosaurs. One of the big old wood houses on the lake—that big blue behemoth.

Claire: Why'd they tear it down?

Matt: Progress. Don't you know that's how it works. We don't save things anymore, or refurbish them, or renovate them—

Kate: Was it falling apart?

Jack: No!

Matt: No. It was just old. An old house.

Jack: Yeah, it got too old. Past its expiration date.

Claire: It was great, though—

Tim: Oh yeah—four stories—that house was huge—and sharp.

Jack: Oh yeah.

Tim: It looked like something out of the roaring twenties like it belonged in an Agatha Christie book.

Claire: I always like that house—

Matt: Oh, it was a great house—

Kate: Why'd they tear it down?

Matt: Who knows?

Jack: Out with the old in with the new.

Kate: So they just tore it down to build another house?

Tim: Exactly.

Maggie: Bingo.

Claire: But there was nothing wrong with it—

Jack: No, not really.

Matt: Not that I know of.

Sarah: It was just old.

(Small beat.)

Jack: Yeah, it was old.

Tim: Lakefront property—

Kate: So they tore down a perfectly good house just to build another one on top of it?

All, Matt: Yeah.

Kate: Who are these people?

(Jack doesn't know.)

Matt: They were a young couple, I think?

Sarah: Oh, yeah. They had beaucoup bucks.

Kate: I guess so if they could tear down a whole house just to put up another.

Sarah: It doesn't matter—

Suzanne: Yeah, it doesn't—

Maggie: Yeah, it's just about the plot. That's basically all you're paying for—just to get that Lakefront plot.

Claire: Which is nice.

Maggie: Oh, yeah, sure.

Claire: I mean...yeah.

Kate: No, this is great. But you guys didn't bulldoze a perfectly good old Victorian—was it a Victorian?

Jack: Uh...

Matt: No. I think—

Maggie: It was a Tudor.

Matt: Yeah, that's right, it was a Tudor.

Kate: —just to build some new post-modern piece of glass and concrete—piece of shit, pardon my French—you guys earned it, added on, which makes it—

Claire: Well it makes it more earned.

Kate: Yeah, exactly. Thank you, Claire. And makes it well, you know, it feels like there's some history there—there's some old and some new. It's nicer, more tasteful, and actually I love those napkins, Sarah.

Sarah: Oh, thanks, I got those at Costco. (laughs)

Tim: Yeah, no, this is much better.

Jack: Yeah, I think so too.

Claire: It's just a shame they tore that down—it was a great house.

Sarah: Maggie's right, it was just about getting the plot—they didn't care about the house.

Matt: Yeah...

Kate: Well, it's a shame.

Jack: Yes, it is.

Maggie: But what can you do?

Matt: There's nothing you can do.

Sarah: No.

Matt: You can't stop it. It's like the erosion. In a few years there won't be any of those big old houses left—

Sarah: —they have such history behind them—

Matt: —and there's only a few left now.

Kate: It's a shame.

Jack: Yeah, it's a shame.

Claire: Well it's just the younger generation has no sense of history or, or—

Suzanne: Working your way up—

Claire: Right. Or, so, it's just fast money—boom, boom, boom.

(Enter Sam quietly by the patio.)

Matt: Speaking of which.

Sam: (oblivious) What? (innocuous)

(Laughter)

Jack: Sammy!

Maggie: Sam!

Claire: You see, that's what I'm talking about.

Matt: Oh, I know. (laughter)

Sarah: You're home early.

Sam: What's that?

Suzanne: Did you—

Claire: Oh, nothing. It's nothing.

Kate: What were you up to this evening?

Jack: (simul) So what's up?

Sam: Nothing. I was at Huntington.

Jack: Sammy, you want a beer?

Sam: Uh...Sure.

Tim: I'm beat. Where did the day go?

Maggie: Well when you spend all day at a wake it kind of does that to you.

Kate: Yes, that wore me out. But Mom looked good.

Tim: She would've been...very happy (he breaks down, runs off again)

Claire: What is wrong with him. I've never seen Tim this emotional.

Jack: It's all the stress.

Sarah: That's true.

Kate: Plus, he hasn't been sleeping lately.

Suzanne: Oh, no?

Kate: No. He's really a mess. (whispered) He won't admit it but he's taking this real hard.

Maggie: Matt, what ever happened to Al—if you don't mind my asking.

Matt: No, I don't, I thought you knew—

Claire: Booze, that's what happened.

Kate: So sad—

Jack: You don't have to—this isn't really the time, hon.

Matt: No. It's all right. I don't mind. But I think everybody's already heard this.

Kate: Which one is this?

Matt: The last time we went down there.

Kate: You know what, I never got the full story.

Maggie: You don't have to if you don't want to, I was just curious and never got the full story.

Matt: No, it's no big deal.

Claire: Matty, I think you're going to need a drink before you start—

Matt: —well I guess so—

Claire: If for nothing else than to set the mood.

Matt: Yeah, well—

Suzanne: I think you'd need to start doing whiskey shots to really set the mood.

Matt: No. Vodka. It's vodka. Vodka's cheaper. That's why they drink it, that's why Al drank it. Whiskey's too expensive. Which is actually kind of a side story but, when Aunt May died—(to Maggie and Jack) she was Dad's sister. (Claire laughs, knowing where the story is going) Small woman. Like a bird. Never married. No kids. Worked at the library for, I don't know, forty years? When she died, uh, what was it, ten years ago? All the little pennies, nickels, and dimes she'd been saving up all those years—'cause she never married—well, the most of it went to her brothers and sisters—Slim and Mary, and Dad—but, she set aside an amount in her will to go to her favorite nephew—

Claire: Albert the Great.

Matt: Yes, Al. Now, it wasn't a lot of money but it wasn't a hundred bucks either, she'd squirreled away over the years, somewhere around thirty, thirty-five thousand, for Al.

Jack: Not bad.

Claire: No, not at all.

Kate: If only the woman knew better—

Suzanne: Well she was old.

Kate: Yes, but someone could have told her, advised her—you know, give it to Tim for Al, or Matt for Al, or you for Al—and we'll keep it for him until he's back in the world.

Claire: Well that didn't happen.

Suzanne: No.

Matt: No, all the money—and it was only thirty-five thousand dollars—not a huge amount.

Claire: But it's a nice chunk.

Jack & Maggie: Sure it is.

Matt: Right, but it's not like it's three hundred fifty thousand.

Kate: No, that's true.

Matt: So, anyway—(enter Tim)

Suzanne: How are you—

Kate: How are you feeling?

Tim: Oh, I'm okay.

Jack: Would you like a beer, Tim?

Tim: No, I'm good. I've still got mine.

Matt: We're telling the AI story. It just started.

Tim: Hm, which one?

Matt: The last time we went down there.

Tim: (dry, sarcastic) Oh, great.

Matt: Feel free to jump in.

Tim: (same) This is a real uplifter.

Maggie: So he blew through all of it.

Matt: Yep.

Sarah: And it only took him, what—a year?

Matt: Not even.

Maggie: Well thirty-five grand doesn't go as far as it used to.

Matt: That's true. But he wasn't spending it on rent or food, no.

Tim: No, he was blowing it on booze—and not the good stuff either—he wasn't drinking Johnny Walker Blue. No, it was cheap vodka.

All: Cheap vodka—

Tim: Yeah. How'd you—

Kate: We talked about it—Matt explained the deal with the vodka to us.

Tim: No, but that's not the good part.

Matt: No—

Claire: No—

Matt: He would—

Tim: He—No, you go ahead.

Matt: Okay. He would give one of his buddies—

Claire: And Al was hanging with a real high-class group—

Tim: Oh, yeah. You had your—really the low-lives of the world—

Matt: The dregs of society—he was hanging with what we used to call the wrong crowd—well, no, not really the wrong crowd, these guys—they were bums basically. He was hanging out with bums.

Tim: And then Al shows up in town with his newfound fortune and now everybody's his friend.

Matt: Oh yeah. He's the big spender. Everybody's long lost best friend—and that blew through a lot of cash. But what really cost him was he would send one of his buddies out—and Al would take the cash out in hundreds—ten at a time—and then, (laughing, others too) what he'd do—he'd get all stirred up and he didn't have a car—couldn't drive—and didn't want—well, couldn't walk because of his leg, so he'd stay—

Maggie: Whatever happened with that?

Matt: What, his leg?

Maggie: Yeah.

Claire: A bus ran it over.

Maggie: Really? Ooo (grimace).

Matt: Yeah, a city bus.

Maggie: Was he—How?

Claire: He was drunk. Passed out on a curb. Nighttime. It was dark. Bus came by—

Maggie: Oh—

Kate: All right, Claire—that's enough—

Claire: Ran it right over.

Maggie: How did he—

Kate: All right, that's enough!

Matt: The driver saw him at the last second, but it was too late.

Kate: That's good. Thank you.

Tim: That was before the last time we went down there. That was before Aunt May's money.

Matt: Yeah. Hm (nose exhales, smiles). Unbelievable.

Tim: Yeah. (same nose thing) Crazy.

Maggie: Why? What happened?

Jack: Honey.

Matt: It was...Something else.

Kate: That's it. I'm leaving.

Tim: We won't tell it—

Matt: I didn't know it upset—

Kate: No. It's fine. I'm going to get some air.

(Kate crosses. Heads motion to Suzanne again.)

Suzanne: (lets out put-off exhale) Would you like me to come with you?

Kate: Why sure, Suzanne, I'd love your company.

(They exit to the patio.)

Kate: Sam, would you like to join us?

Sam: Uh...Well...How about in a minute?

Kate: Whenever. Suit yourself. We're going to go for a walk so you'll have to find us.

Suzanne: We are? (follows her out)

Sam: Okay...(they're gone) I don't think it'll be hard.

Matt: Last time we were down there—and this was the last time. When I say last, I mean last. We got down there and we checked his old haunts—places he'd last lived—a series of rundown, crappy apartments—but they were apartments—with a bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, not very glamorous places—but, you know, kind of low income-style places. We checked those out first—

Tim: No sign of Al.

Matt: No. No sign. Which really didn't surprise us. We expected as much.

Tim: Yeah.

Matt: So then we hit the bars: “Have you seen this one legged man?” Strange experience.

Tim: The good thing is that there aren't that many one legged men running around.

Matt: Although you'd be surprised. So we found this bartender—in this absolute shithole of a bar—

Claire: What a surprise.

Matt: —in the middle of, I guess, the projects. And it was so hot down there—it was like now—and it must've been ninety-eight in the shade—

Tim: At least.

Matt: And I'm—well, we're both slathered in sunblock—and wearing pants and hats—

Tim: Those didn't do anything.

Matt: No. And so, this bartender, we explained to him our situation: we're looking for our brother, etc—here's what he looks like which really didn't matter 'cause it was such an old picture—the main point was the leg—

Tim: Yeah—

Matt: And he acted like it was as normal as rain. Like every other day somebody shows up looking for a long lost brother—but he did say that he'd seen a real skinny guy with a metal leg and a cane around. But not in a while.

Tim: And so this other guy, real abruptly, gets up and walks out. And it's pretty obvious—it's two o'clock in the afternoon on a Tuesday, I think. During the week. And so the bartender tells us we should follow that guy. So we walk outside—and it is so hot, just baking us—and we see this guy walking down the street smoking a cigarette. Skinny guy, real tan, two legs. And he kind of tries to slyly look over his shoulder without making it obvious but it is obvious and we know and he knows that we know he's up to something. So he picks up the pace—he's not running but he's definitely fast walking, so Matt and I look at each other and decide to follow him. (he takes a drink)

Matt: Yeah, so we follow him. And he keeps chugging along and it is so hot—and we're walking at a good pace—sweat, just sweating buckets. And we follow him for a few streets: he turns left, we turn left, he turns right, we turn right. And this goes on for a little while. And now we're basically in the middle of nowhere. We're on the outskirts of San Antonio, it's a lot of rundown houses, buildings, shacks—overgrown grass everywhere—just a real shithole of an area.

Claire: Only the best for our Albert.

Matt: We follow this guy for, I don't know how long, five, six blocks?

Tim: Something like that.

Matt: Then suddenly when we make a turn he's gone—nowhere to be seen—totally disappeared. So we figure, all right, he must be around here somewhere, so we decide, we each take a side of the street and start walking. After three houses, I guess you could call them houses—each and every one looks like it's either been abandoned or a strong breeze might blow it over—but since there is no breeze, they're fine. And there's children's toys, old, dirty children's toys in the front yards—grass just knee high—but in almost every front yard without exception are kids toys.

Tim: And trucks.

Matt: That's right. Old Chevy Silverados, Longbeds, Ford F150's—those kinds, abandoned, left rotting, stripped of most everything. And furniture too: crappy, smelly couches and chairs seemed to be lying everywhere, for no real reason. So we start going door to door.

Maggie: You didn't.

Tim: Oh, yeah—

Sarah: I know, can you believe it?

Matt: We just go down the street on opposite sides, rapping on screendoors, have you seen this man.

Tim: Like bounty hunters.

Matt: Basically. And, of course, no one says anything. Even if they knew, we're not really in the neighborhood where anyone's going to tell us anything. After, I don't know, how many houses—about twenty maybe?

Tim: Yeah, that's about right.

Matt: I'm walking up to one—same deal, rundown, smells like, well BO and piss—

Sarah: Matt!

Matt: What? It did.

Tim: That's true.

Matt: I walk up to this guy—he's just sitting there in the middle of the couch, in the front lawn—ratty baseball cap on, head down—in pants and a flannel shirt—it's a hundred degrees out—this guy's sitting out there half awake, drunk. I could tell, I could smell it as I walked up. I start talking to him, he's pretty well out of it, from the sun and the booze—he's really tan, dark tan, scraggly beard—and can't get a good look at the guy—I ask him if he knows anybody named Al—Al Mooney—he looks up looks at me and tells me to fuck off. Okay. I back away, walk back and mosey on to the next house, then something weird strikes me and I walk back over to this guy. I say, hey buddy. Again he tells me to fuck off. I say hey look at me. Asshole, look at me. He looks up, totally confused—squinting at me, his mouth open—and I think he had three teeth rattling around in there—it's Al, that's our brother. I half-kick his leg—hit steel. It's him. He's just hanging out on his front lawn. Of his house that had no electricity, no working plumbing, and basically you can imagine, smelled like a latrine. Just the pits. But, that was him.

Tim: It sure was.

Claire: That's our brother.

Sam: (small) Wow.

Jack: That's a...a shame.

Claire: Yes it is.

Maggie: It is.

Matt: Oh! Maggie. I got totally off track. The thirty-five grand. How he blew through it.

Maggie: Oh, yeah.

Matt: He'd be so blitzed out of his mind—and he couldn't drive, well, didn't have a car anyway, and he couldn't walk—he'd give one of his good old buddies a hundred, send him off to get him a bottle of vodka. Al'd get the vodka, keep drinking, and forget to get his change back. (laughter)

Tim: You can blow through thirty-five grand pretty quick.

Matt: At a hundred bucks a pop you can, sure.

Claire: That's our Al.

Sarah: Unbelievable.

Jack: Man...

Maggie: That's unreal.

Matt: Oh, yeah. That money financed Al and all his good buddies—kept them well-stirred for a good, well, almost a year.

Maggie: Never asked for the change.

Matt: No, he was too messed up to even realize it. So then he'd whip out another hundred and, there you go.

Maggie: (laughing) Well at least he had fun.

Claire: Yeah, that's the important thing.

Tim: Oh, he had a lot of fun.

Jack: If you can call it fun.

Matt: Are you going to—

Claire: I was going to—

Matt: Go right ahead—

Claire: Propose a toast to...what should we drink to?

Tim: To Mom?

Claire: To Mom, sure.

Maggie: To Al.

Claire: All right. A little—

Matt: Yeah—

Claire: I don't know if we should be toasting—raising a glass to Al but...what the hell, he's not here.

Matt: How 'bout: to Mom and Dad?

Claire: That sounds good.

Tim: More like it.

Sam: I like that.

Maggie: That's good.

Claire: To Mom and Dad, together again. Forever, we hope, or pray.

All: To Mom and Dad, Mom and Dad, Grandma, Etc.
(They all drink. Small recovery silence)

Jack: Well, we should get out of here—

Tim: Yeah, we should too—

Jack: Let you guys get some beauty rest.

Matt: Well—

Claire: (playful) Just what are you insinuating?

Jack: Whoah, watch out. That was meant for Matty.

Claire: Well I'd hope so.

Jack: Of course.

Sarah: Thanks for coming over.

Maggie: Thanks for having us.

Claire: No, it was good to see you guys, catch up.

Kate: We'll see you in a few hours.

Matt: That's true.

(Small chit-chat covers as Suzanne, Tim, Kate, Jack, and Maggie exit out front.)
(While the focus is upstage left, Mallory enters on the patio. Sarah starts to pick up around the house.)

Claire: Sarah, let me help you.

Sarah: No, Claire, it's okay.

Matt: (at patio door) Would you like to come in?

Mallory: Can you come out?

Matt: (opens door) You just missed Jack and Maggie.

Mallory: Yeah, I saw them pull out. (stern) They really shouldn't be driving around like that—

Matt: Well,

Mallory: No. They shouldn't. It's irresponsible.

Matt: Well, what would you have me do, Mallory? Call the police?

Mallory: No. It's wrong. It's wrong.

Matt: Yes it is...But then again, nobody's perfect, you know.

Mallory: Yeah, I know.

Matt: You want something to drink?

Mallory: Like beer?

Matt: Juice? Pop?

Mallory: Oh, no...

Matt: We'll see you at the mass tomorr—

Mallory: (not looking at him) Can I stay here tonight? I know Aunt Claire's in my room but I don't care, I'll sleep in the basement or the spare bedroom or...wherever.

Matt: Um, well, you know the rules, I've made them very clear—

Mallory: I know—

Matt: So I don't see how I can—

Mallory: Just for tonight—

Matt: That would be going back on what I said—and I don't want you to think—

Mallory: Please.

Matt: All you have to do is—

Mallory: (desperate, firm) Please...(Pause)

Matt: Does this mean—

Mallory: I don't know.

Matt: That's not good enough.

Mallory: Well, I don't know. What do you want? I said please. I asked.

Matt: I won't allow—you know where I stand on this.

Mallory: Yes.

Matt: I've been clear.

Mallory: Yes.

Matt: All you have to do is one thing.

Mallory: Yes.

Matt: And you're telling me you haven't done that.

Mallory: No.

Matt: Well, that's all you have to do. It's pretty simple.

Mallory: Yeah.

Matt: It is.

Mallory: I know.

Matt: So...

Mallory: I'm not perfect, you know.

Matt: (joking) Really?

Mallory: (playing along) No.

Matt: Could've fooled me.

(Mallory laughs through tears. Pause.)

Matt: I want to...but I can't. I'm sorry. (turns)

Mallory: Dad...(first time she's used that word in months) You're not...I'm...(urgent) Please...

(Matt locks eyes with Claire across the living room who has been trying to act like she's not eavesdropping but she obviously is. Sarah remains in the kitchen. Claire's look also says Please.)

Matt: (over his shoulder) See what your Aunt Claire wants to do.

(Matt walks to the kitchen without looking back. Mallory enters, Claire hugs her, they talk briefly.)

Mallory: I can sleep in the spare.

Claire: Don't be ridiculous.

Mallory: No, really. I don't mind.

Claire: I think we should both sleep in Sam's bed.

(Mallory laughs)

Mallory: Two women in his bed.

Claire: Somehow I don't think he'd be thrilled.

Mallory: No.

Claire: Let's do it.

Mallory: No.

Claire: Why not?

Mallory: It smells.

Claire: Really?

Mallory: Oh, yeah. Like the lake. And BO. (Claire laughs, they exit left.)

Matt: Where're you going?

Sarah: Make sure those sheets are clean.

Matt: You know they are.

Sarah: Well Claire might need help.

Matt: Go to bed.

Sarah: I will. Just let me—

Matt: Sarah, go to bed.

Sarah: All right. (she moves to lock up)

Matt: I'll lock up.

Sarah: Okay. Goodnight.

Matt: Goodnight.

Sarah: If Claire needs anything—

Matt: Goodnight.

Sarah: Goodnight...(pause) That's good.

Matt: Yeah?

Sarah: I think so.

Matt: Well, don't get your hopes up. It's a one shot deal.

Sarah: Yeah. We'll see.

Matt: Yeah, goodnight.

Sarah: 'Night. (she pauses on the stairs, looks left, listens, then,) Matt.

Matt: Yeah.

Sarah: What're we going to do?

(Matt is tense—long pause, he thinks.)

Matt: (sounds confident but body language betrays him) We'll figure it out.

Sarah: (pause) Goodnight.

Matt: Get some rest.

Sarah: Don't forget to lock up. (Matt laughs.)

Matt: Goodnight.

Sarah: Goodnight.

(She exits to their bedroom. A figure enters the patio, lights a smoke. Matt finishes up, locks the front door, turns out lights, etc. He hears someone on the patio, assumes it's Sam, a normal assumption to make. Matt walks over to the screen door.)

Matt: Your sister, against my better judgment—Jesus! You scared the hell out of me.

Al: What happened to the tree—what'd it fall in?

Matt: You know, we have a front door; that's how most people come, they show up, ring the doorbell. Normal. The only people who enter from the back are burglars and teenagers, and you're not a teenager, are you?

Al: Where's Mom?

Matt: She's gone.

Al: Where'd you guys put her now?

Matt: Zabor's.

(They share a long look.)

Al: Oh...

Matt: I'm sorry.

Al: Fuck you. When?

Matt: Two days. We had the wake today.

Al: (thinks, smokes)

Matt: There's couches in the basement.

Al: I don't need a couch.

Matt: I can get you some towels.

Al: Don't worry about it.

Matt: There's blankets—

Al: I can fend for myself.

Matt: You're a real asshole.

Al: And you're what we can in Texas a real superior Sonumabitch.

(Matt walks to the cabinet, opens Whiskey, pours a stiff drink, returns.)

Matt: Here you go, Al. Afraid we're all out of vodka.

(Al looks at the drink, then looks at Matt, stares Matt down and downs the drink.)

Matt: Goodnight. (turns)

Al: Sweet dreams.

(Matt climbs the stairs, crosses above as Al smokes.)

Fade to Black

End of Act II

Act III: Penance

Scene I:

(Wednesday. Post-Funeral. Mallory is in the living room on the phone. Sarah is up in the master bedroom.)

Mallory: (into phone) Yes, no, I told you... Yes... It's just... I don't know... Look, calm down. Will you please—No. I'm not--... I don't know... I know. Don't—

(Enter Sarah from above, she looks down, Mallory looks up. Sarah crosses above and comes downstairs. Mallory crosses to the patio, closes the screendoor, then when she sees her Mom downstairs she also closes the glass sliding door.)

Mallory: (cont.) I know. I'm sorry. No, don't be ridiculous. It's—I'm just—Can you for one second—No, don't—My grandma—Yes! So could you—

(Sarah turns on the TV, flips through channels, waits a few seconds, and then her face appears worried. She turns the TV off and crosses to the kitchen, lights a smoke. Enter Matt and Sam.)

Matt: Hello?

Sarah: Where's Al?

Matt: Oh, he went with Suzanne and Claire. What are you making?

Sarah: Oh, it's just some of that brunch stuff.

Sam: I'm starving.

Matt: You're always starving.

(Sam plops down, turns on the TV, then Matt supercedes him.)

Sam: Hey!

Matt: Hold yer horses. (flips to CNBC) I just want to see something.

Sam: There it is. Down—Whoah. That's not good.

Matt: No, no it isn't. (He sees Sarah in the cubby hole)

Sam: What's going on?

Matt: I don't know. Well, it had to give some back. I mean you don't go up—it couldn't go up that much that fast and not take a hit.

Sam: Yeah, but man—

Matt: Where's the phone? She's on it, of course. Back, what? Not even a day and I can't get the phone—Some things—Who's she talking to?

Sarah: You know who.

Sam: Can you believe the shit this guy pulls?

Sarah: Hey!

Sam: What? I said shit. Relax.

Matt: Well, I won't put up with this.

Sam: He's probably threatening to kill himself.

Matt: He knows how to manipulate her.

Sam: What a cheap-ass move. That's so low.

Matt: It works.

Sam: Yeah.

Matt: Everytime.

Sam: Well, she has to realize he's full of shit.

Matt: Easier said than done.

Sam: Yeah...

(The screendoor slides open.)

Matt: Ah, are you off?

Mallory: What?

Matt: Can I use the phone?

Mallory: What? Yeah. I'm off.

Sam: I'm going to change.

Mallory: Me too. Here. (she hands him the phone)

(Enter Suzanne, Claire, and Al.)

Al: Something smells pretty damn good in here and it must be Sarah's doing because I know old Matty's idea of cooking is a bowl of Shredded Wheat.

(Matt dials the phone.)

Matt: It's me. What's—

Claire: Hello all. We return.

Sarah: Are you hungry, Al?

Al: Am I hungry? Does the Pope shit in the woods?

Suzanne: That would be a Yes.

Al: Oh yeah. Now where's Matty going?

(Matt exits to the patio, closes the screen door, then the glass door.)

Al: Man, what, did I forget deodorant today—Is it me? I'm beginning to think I'm not wanted around here.

Claire: Still know how to clear a room.

Al: Yeah and I didn't even fart.

Suzanne: Let's keep it that way.

Sarah: Anyone want some OJ? Coffee?

Claire: I'd looove some coffee.

Suzanne: I would too.

Sarah: Al?

Al: Sure.

Sarah: How do you—

Al: Some milk and sugar, if you've got it.

Sarah: Half and half or skim—

Al: I don't care. Whatever, Sarah. Whatever's easiest. I'm not difficult. Look at old Matty over there. Wheelin' and dealin'. Probably closin' some big deal right now we don't know about. Quick, somebody take a picture, I want to see the salesman in his natural environment—It's like watching cheetahs.

Claire: Cheetahs? What are you talking about?

Al: On the hunt. On the prowl. Calm, calm, quiet—then, Bam! Zero to sixty in four seconds flat. Just like Matty over there. Waiting, waiting, then when they least expect it, he strikes.

Claire: I don't think that's how he operates at all.

Al: Well... You don't know much about the business world. That's how it works. Comin' at you when you least expect it. (Sarah enters with juice and coffee.)

Sarah: I think he's talking to Jack.

Al: Oh, well—

Claire: Then maybe he isn't going in for the kill.

Suzanne: No.

Al: How is old Jack?

Sarah: Good. Retired. Now he's just got a new job for the American Legion.

Al: He put in his thirty years already?

Sarah: Uh, yeah. Thirty-one actually.

Al: I'll be damned. We're getting old, sisters.

Suzanne: Hey, speak for yourself.

Claire: I get better with age.

Al: Yeah, like a fine wine.

Claire: Or a case of beer.

Al: Well I hope it's not like that.

Claire: No. (Enter Sam)

Al: Hey, Slammin' Sammy.

Suzanne: That didn't take long.

Sam: What?

Claire: Look at you: all changed and ready to party.

Sam: Well, no. Not really—

Al: Damn straight, I hope so. No sense sitting around moping over something there's nothing you can do about. Get changed and get going.

Claire: What's that, your motto?

Al: More like a philosophy. Minus the getting changed part.

Claire: I see.

Sarah: You're not going anywhere.

Sam: What? No.

Al: Good. We've got catching up to do. Last time I saw you you were what? Fifteen?

Sam: Probably.

Sarah: Something like that.

Al: Well...you don't look any different.

Sam: No?

Claire: Yes he does.

Al: No. Taller maybe. That's it.

Suzanne: You're crazy.

Al: Probably, but I'm telling you he looks the same.

Claire: Maybe in your mind.

Al: Well...fair enough. But, I'm telling you, he looks the same. You do. It's good.

Sam: Okay, well, I don't know.

Suzanne: You look young, I think is what he's trying to say, Sam.

Sam: Oh, well.

Al: It's a compliment. Jesus. Enjoy it while it lasts. Sarah, can I smoke in here? Is it all right?

Sarah: Oh...Uh...Sure.

Al: If it's a problem.

Sarah: No, go ahead. Let me get you an ashtray—

Al: Thanks. So when did you guys do all this?

Sam: What?

Claire: What's that?

Al: This—

Suzanne: I think Al means the addition.

Sam: Oh!

Sarah: Has it been that long?

Suzanne: I guess so.

Sarah: Yes. We must've—I guess it must've been right after the last time you were here—which was, uh...

Suzanne: Five or six years ago.

Sarah: Right.

Al: Well, man, it looks good. What a view, hun?

Claire: It's nice.

Al: Yeah. Look at all that blue blue water out there. It's relaxing. I don't think I've seen water like that in years.

Claire: Oh, come on.

Al: No, I haven't. Where would I?

Claire: Uh, I don't know.

Al: No, it looks good, Sarah.

Sarah: Thank you.

Matt: (entering) Sorry about that.

Al: Well it's about time.

Matt: Sorry.

Al: Here I am. I'm here, what, once every ten years and he's spending all his time on the phone. (English-accent) How uncivilized.

Matt: Yes, yes, I know. I'm a bad host. (Supplicant) Can I get you anything, Albert? Are you all right? Is there anything you need? I'm here to serve you as best I can—

Al: Well, actually, now that you mention it, I could use a leg. (Al takes a drag)

Matt: Is that all? Oh, I think we've got one in the freezer—an extra—

Sarah: Matt!

Claire: (laughs)

Matt: Sarah, do we still have that extra leg—We had one—Oh, wait, you know what, Al? It's a leg of lamb. Sorry.

Al: Just my luck.

Matt: But you know where you can go to get one—

Al: Oh, I know where you can go—

(Enter Mallory)

Claire, Suzanne, Sarah: Mallory!

Al: Here's another one all dressed up.

Mallory: What? Oh.

Al: She, though. She does not look the same. No. Sam, you do. But Mallory, no, you look older. Not old. Just older.

Mallory: Okay? (Matt, behind Al, performs a circle to his own head indicating "crazy")

Claire: Don't mind him, Mall—

Al: What? No. She does.

Mallory: Are you off?

Matt: Yes, I'm off. Amazing. Is there some sort of sixth sense that only teenage girls possess that tells them when the phone is free?

Claire: It's called PMS.

(laughs)

Sarah: Claire!

Suzanne: (laughs)

Al: That's good, I like that.

Matt: And true.

Claire: Yeah, it's called Phone Menstrual Syndrome. It's a chick thing.

Matt: Apparently.

(Enter Tim and Kate.)

Kate: Hello?

All: Hey!

Al: What took you so long?

Claire: (to Sam, discreetly) She had to freshen up.

Mallory: Can I have that? (Matt hands her the phone)

Matt: Keep it short.

Mallory: Yeah, yeah.

Kate: We were driving around the neighborhood.

Tim: The old neighborhood.

Kate: And my, it's been—

Tim: Hadn't done that in years.

Al: Did you find Jimmy Hoffa?

Kate: What? (confused)

Tim: No, no we did not.

Kate: What a lovely service. Sam, your friend—

Sam: Sean—

(Exit Mallory to patio.)

Kate: What a voice!

Sam: Yeah, he's really talented.

All: Yeah, Sean's great. Oh, fantastic. So nice of him. Like an angel, etc.

Kate: And Father Ned with that homily—eulogy—oh, it was so beautiful.

Al: It was all a bunch of horseshit if you ask me.

Suzanne: Well nobody asked you.

Claire: That's right.

Kate: No, I thought it was great. Moving. Very inspiring and thoughtful.

Al: I've had bowel movements that were more moving.

Tim: What is your problem?

Al: And inspiring—

Tim: What?

Al: What? I'm just kidding you. Of course it was a nice service. But that doesn't mean I feel like sitting around gushing over it.

Tim: What are you drinking?

Al: This stuff? This is what they call black vodka. Juan Valdez grows it. Gets you fucked up.
(Sam laughs. The others are not amused.)
Claire: You know, you're a real asshole.

Al: I try.

Claire: No you don't. You just are.

Kate: Anyway, I thought it was a lovely funeral.

Suzanne: So did I.

Tim: Me too.

Claire: Mom would've been happy.

Al: Happy? Why? Because she looked good. Her dead body look good. Who cares? I'm so sick—I don't understand this whole open coffin thing. I don't need to see that. She's dead. The woman's dead. I don't need—I don't want my final image of her—that final image stuck in my head—I don't need it.

Matt: I hate to say it but, Al, I completely agree with you. When I go—and you're all here so you can all say you heard me say it: no open casket, no casket period, no body. I want to be cremated right off the bat.

Al: Exactly—

Matt: Don't need you guys gawking at my dead body.

Claire: Well, you know, for some people it helps.

Al: And how is that? How does seeing your loved one laid out like a slab of meat help—where's the help?

Claire: With some people it helps with closure.

Al: Are you one of those people?

Claire: Me? No. I'd just as soon cremate Mom right off the bat—

Tim: I am. I like the tradition. Certain traditions I don't like. But this one I do.

Al: But what's the point?

Kate: There's plenty—

Al: I mean in the old days, medieval times, the idea of a wake was to sit around and make sure the person didn't wake up. But now, don't you think we have enough high tech gadgets and gizmos—

Tim: Yes, but—

Al: Cardiograms and defibrillizers that we know, without a doubt, when someone is dead, so—

Tim: No, but you're missing—

Al: —It makes the whole original purpose of the wake a complete waste of time. She's not gonna wake—

Tim: I know—

Al: She's not getting up. There will be no miraculous recovery so—

Tim: No, I know—

Al: So—

Tim: What I'm saying is, still, I think it's good to see her body—her lifeless body—to visually see it—so that—

Al: Visually see—how else are you going to—

Tim: So that, yes, I know—

Al: What? Aurally see?

Tim: No. But just seeing it, we're a visual people—it helps us cope with the death—

Al: Not all of us—

Tim: No, not all of us, but some of us—

Al: So the rest of us have to suffer—

Tim: Yes! Yes, you have to suffer for fifteen minutes because it helps some of us and if you can't handle that—

Al: Timmy's getting all riled up.

Tim: Well tough shit. Okay, Al.

Kate: Honey.

Tim: Those words plain enough for you? You can suck it up for ten minutes and close your trap because, because—

Kate: All right.

Tim: No one cares what you have to say. Okay? No one cares. We all, all of us, stopped caring a long time ago.

Al: (calm, appeasing, let it go) Fair enough...

Sarah: OJ?

Tim: Yes, thank you.

Claire: Nice day out, isn't it?

Al: It sure is. Beautiful. Purty. Sam, tell your buddy, though, that he sings like an angel.

Sam: Okay. I will.

Al: I want him for my funeral.

Sam: All right?

Claire: Planning it out early?

Al: You never know. But no arias. Only Hank Williams. Senior. Or George Jones.

Matt: White Lightning. That could be your song.

Al: (grin) White Lightning... That's a good one, Matty. Remember that. My buddies'll get a kick out of that.

Kate: I'm sure that they will.

Suzanne: Who are—

Al: Oh, they're a rowdy bunch, Kate. Why if they showed up in your neighborhood you'd call the cops and lock your windows.

Kate: That's nice.

Al: But there's no B.S. in' about with these guys. No. They know who they are, and what they are. That's why I fit right in. I know fully well who I am, and what I am. Not like family where it's all B.S.

Claire: Good to know you care.

Al: Except Sarah. There's no B.S. with her.

Kate: Look at all these books, full of houses—is this just around here?

Sarah: Oh, that—

Kate: Are you thinking about getting your license again, Sarah?

Sarah: What? No. No. Those're just—

Kate: My Lord, that's a lot of houses.

Tim: It's incredible. We were driving around here and I didn't recognize anything—well, not much.

Matt: No—

Suzanne: It keeps changing—they keep adding on—

Tim: I mean it's really amazing.

Al: Is Bearden's still there?

Tim: I don't know—we didn't go—

Matt: Yes, it's still there. One of the only places still—

Al: Are their burgers still good?

Matt: Still the same as always.

Tim: Really?

Matt: Oh, yeah.

Al: Well that's good. How much?

Matt: For a burger?

Al: Yeah. And fries. And a beer.

Matt: I don't know. Probably ten bucks.

Al: Ten bucks? Jesus, I remember—you remember when it was—you could get all that—and a sundae too for a buck and a quarter—

Tim: Ninety-five cents.

Al: Well that's going way back, before my time, our time, Claire and me—you three don't include us in your reminiscing because you're from a different era—pre-Kennedy.

Matt: Oh, okay.

Suzanne: Oh, sure.

Tim: Hey—

Al: We're post-Kennedy. Right, Claire?

(Mallory returns from patio somewhere in here.)

Claire: Humphrey, baby, all the way.

Al: Humphrey? No, McGovern was all right.

Tim: Bearden's is still there, that's good to know.

Matt: Yeah, some things last.

Claire: Not many, but there are some.

Tim: What they are, I can't think of any?

Suzanne: What's that?

Claire: I don't know.

Kate: Uh...

Al: A mother's love...that lasts. That's one of the only things in this world that does.

(Exit Tim teary-eyed.)

Kate: Honey...

Tim: Just a minute.

Claire: You asshole.

Al: What?

Claire: You're a real asshole sometimes—

Al: All the time—

Claire: Yeah, all the time—Where do you get off—Where do you pull—You always do—that never changes.

Suzanne: No. That's true.

Claire: Makes me hate you so much.

Al: Join the club. We're making t-shirts later.

Matt: Full of thrills, chills—

Claire: And bullshit.

Al: Well, nobody's perfect, Claire.

Claire: There's different degrees of imperfection, though.

Al: Well, probably. How goes the—Well, what—God, I don't know where to begin—it's been—you're so big.

Kate: No she's not.

Suzanne: I think he means—

Al: Well since the last time I saw you—

Mallory: Yeah, it's been a while.

Al: So, how goes it?

Mallory: It's good?

Al: Yeah? School. Where are you now?

Suzanne: She just—

Mallory: I just graduated from Mags.

Al: Oh, yeah. Good. That's good. Where're you heading?

Mallory: You mean now?

Matt: College.

Claire: He means college.

Al: Yeah, college.

Mallory: Oh, well, uh...I'm going to Michigan.

Suzanne: Their pre-vet program.

Al: Oh, yeah? That's good. You wanna be a vet?

Mallory: Yes, I think so. I do.

Al: Fantastic. Where—don't you guys have a dog?

Matt: No—

Sarah: Not—

Mallory: I do. Huck.

Al: Well, where is he?

Mallory: He's um—

Matt: He's staying with a friend.

Kate: (put off laugh)

Al: What kind of dog?

Mallory: He's a Golden.

Al: Ah. They're nice enough. Pretty dumb, though, hun?

Mallory: What?

Matt: No, no—

Mallory: They're not dumb dogs.

Al: Well comparatively. I had an Australian Shepherd for a while there and there's a smart dog.

Mallory: Yeah, they're smart—but Golden's aren't dumb.

Matt: No, Huck's not—

Al: Maybe not dumb. Maybe that's the wrong word. But they're simple.

Mallory: I don't think you know—

Claire: No, I don't think he has any idea what he's talking about.

Al: They have a one track mind, those dogs. They've been trained—bred to do one thing: fetch.

Mallory: Goldens are not stupid.

Al: Okay. Maybe not. Maybe just the one I knew.

Claire: Probably.

Mallory: Yeah, that could be.

Al: So, do you have a boyfriend?

(Phone rings, Mallory answers it, exits left. A look passes between Matt and Sarah.)

Al: So much for that.

(Tim returns.)

Claire: Timmy, you all right?

Tim: I'm fine.

Al: What's that thing up at Bradley?

Sarah: The Promenade.

Matt: I call it the Pandemonium.

Kate: What's—

Matt: It's an upscale shopping mall. You know, Gap, Borders, Banana Republic—

Sarah: Ann Taylor, Eddie Bauer—

Suzanne: Galyan's, J. Crew—

Matt: For, you know, the younger generation—

Suzanne: I don't know, there's an awful lot of older people running around there.

Sarah: That's true.

Matt: Well, it's designed for I guess Sam and Mallory's age and, you know, the retirees.

Al: Like you.

Matt: What's that? Well. I might be—I was talking about the older retirees, like seventy-five plus.

Al: Re-tired. Hey, good for you, Matty. Retired at fifty-six. Not bad.

Matt: Yeah, it's all right. But, this whole neighborhood, the whole area has changed.

Al: Un hun.

Matt: There's just new shopping malls popping up—but they don't call them shopping malls, they call them shopping villages—

Suzanne: Or experiences.

Matt: That's right, it's a lifestyle experience. And they're all over the place—

Tim: I remember when that whole area was farmland.

Matt: Yeah. Wasn't that long ago.

Tim: And then they built Lakewood—

Matt: Right—

Tim: And now—

Matt: Now it's all just housing developments—

Sarah: Young families.

Matt: Yeah, young families who somehow have the money—I can only imagine what they're mortgages are like: eight, ten, twelve—

Tim: Well Cincy's the same way. Just sprawl and sprawl. They keep going farther and farther out—

Matt: And they'll just keep it up until, I guess, until we hit Detroit. And Detroit's, you know, sprawl, connects with ours.

Tim: And that'll just keep up until the two sides of the country meet somewhere in Iowa.

Matt: Des Moines.

Tim: Yeah, Des Moines is in for a rude awakening.

Matt: And downtown: it's dead. Remember Higbees?

Al: Oh, yeah.

Kate: Sure.

Suzanne: Halle's.

Matt: Long gone. They've been gone for, oh, ten years—

Suzanne: At least.

Matt: Macy's. Gone. Sterling Lindner. Gone. The old arcade. Shut down. Galleria'll be gone soon. Tower City, where they put in all those J. Crew's and Banana Republics just, what? Ten years ago? Sam, you were down there—

Sam: They've all left—

Matt: They've all moved out here. Downtown, nobody goes downtown. Why would you? It's just incredible. Nobody works downtown anymore. We lost, you know, all those steel mills: LTV and Republic and Bethlehem—they shut. But you know, downtown's the same way. It's just going to be a bunch of empty skyscrapers. BP, gone. TRW, gone. Keycorp—they won't be here much longer.

Al: (to Suzanne) What about, what's your—

Suzanne: St. Martin's Group?

Matt: St. Martin's—gone. Ten years ago we had you know how many fortune five hundred companies were—had their headquarters here—or within, you know, fifty miles?

Tim: A lot.

Matt: Twenty-three. You know how many there are now?

Al: Under ten.

Matt: Four. Four. That's it. And you better believe American Greetings is getting ready to leave Dodge.

Al: So, wait, Suzie—where're you working now?

(Tension. Matt runs out of steam. Suzanne stands to go get a drink.)

Suzanne: Oh, you know, the turnpike, the toll booth out at Route eighty-two? I collect the tolls, take change. How 'bout that, hun?

Al: For how long?

Suzanne: (looks to Sarah) Oh...about ten—a year in October.

Claire: Those bastards. I still can't believe—

Tim: Claire—

Al: They just...

Matt: (to Al) Yeah.

(Suzanne in the kitchen.)

Suzanne: I think I'm going to go for a walk. Would anyone like to join me? (Small pause)

Sarah: I'll go with you.

Matt: (confidentially) She wants to smoke.

Sam: I'll go for a little bit.

Suzanne: Okay. Let's go. We'll be right back.

Tim: Okay.

Kate: See you soon.

Al: (confidentially to Claire) What the hell happenend?

(Exit Suzanne, Sarah, and Sam.)

Claire: They, uh...It gets me worked up just talking about it. (she shakes it out)

Kate: It's awful.

Claire: I...I can't. (she stands, paces)

Tim: Basically, after what? Twenty-some—

Matt: I think it was twenty-three.

Tim: After twenty-three years they let her go.

Al: Just like that?

Tim: Just like that.

Claire: (pacing) The bastards.

Matt: They had—a consultant—an outside consultant come in and, that was it.

Al: But she was like an executive—I mean, she wasn't like a secretary—

Matt: No, no. Suzie was in charge of uh, regional distribution for, I don't know, this region.

Al: Fucking corporate motherfuckers.

Claire: Bastards. White bred soulless bastards.

Kate: It's terrible. I can't believe they can do that—

Al: What'd they give her?

Tim: It was like, what—six months severance or something?

Matt: Something like that.

Kate: I still don't know, what was the reason?

Matt: There was none.

Al: See, this is why I don't have a job.

Claire: Yeah, this is why you don't have a job.

Al: Well these corporations—after twenty years—they can just axe you, like that. Why should I become part of that?

Claire: And your, uh, detour, that's a—

Al: It's a protest. You're goddamn right it is.
(laughter)

Claire: What?

Al: Of course—

Claire: Your detour has lasted—

Al: My detour lasted a little longer than perhaps it should, but, I'm taking a stand here—I'm like the last man at the Alamo.

Claire: Sure you are.

Tim: Keep telling yourself that.

Al: I'm a drunk. That's what I am. That drink I had last night—the one you practically poured down my throat for me—that was the first drink I've had in ninety-six days. Yeah. That's the truth. No bullshit. But you know how I know I'm a drunk? After that one drink last night, if I didn't have this bum leg and if the stuff was in front of me, I would've drank everything you put in front of me. Whatever. I don't care...but what they did to Suzie, that's worse than anything I've ever done to myself. Including this. (taps his leg with his cane)

(Enter Mallory, she has to go.)

Tim: Hey, Mall.

Claire: How you doing, kiddo?

Mallory: (flustered) I have to go out.

Kate: Is everything all right?

Mallory: Yeah. It's fine. Fine. I just have to go out for a little while.

Al: Who's the boy?

Mallory: What?

Al: You've been on the phone, now you're rushing out of here, it's gotta be some boy.

Mallory: Oh. No. No boy.

Al: All right. Well...You drive safe, honey.

Mallory: I'll be back in a little while. (She exits out the front door)

Al: Man...She's turned into quite a little spitfire. Who's the boy?

Matt: What's that?

Al: The boy? Some boy. She's not running out of here to see a girlfriend; unless there's something I don't know.

Matt: What? No—

Al: No, I'm just kidding.

Matt: The uh...The boy, well, he's um...A friend of her's from school...(pause)

Al: Un hun.

Matt: Shit... You all know anyway... She's been seeing a man. An older man. For a while now.

Al: How old?

Matt: Almost forty.

Al: Shit, how'd that happen?

Matt: It just did.

Al: I'm always the last to know about these things.

Matt: You guys have all known—how long have you known? (he looks to each of them) You can't keep a secret in this family, as hard as you try it gets out. Always does.

Kate: I don't know. A while.

Claire: For a while.

Matt: She met him at the barn. He rides horses too. And motorcycles, and trucks. He's a tough rugged dude.

Al: Kind of like me.

Matt: (sarcasm) Yeah. Exactly, Al. Like you. Exactly like you... No. He's uh... the thing that he has is total complete control over her. He's somehow managed to manipulate her—almost brainwash her—well, she's infatuated, and she doesn't know any better. And there's nothing we can do about it. No, sir. She is set in her ways. And I had to put my foot down—you all know she hasn't been living here. We tried to keep up that act—that she was, which probably made it all the more obvious.

Al: So she's living with him?

Matt: She has been.

Al: How long?

Matt: Oh... since before Christmas.

Tim: There's nothing you can do?

Matt: I'll be damned if I know. I've tried. She's a big girl. She's eighteen. She can do whatever she wants.

Al: She's just showing off her independence. That's all it is. She'll come around. Mallory's too smart.

Claire: Yeah, it's an independence issue. It's her wanting to show she's a grown up.

Kate: But she's not.

Matt: No, that's the thing.

Kate: I mean, Matt, I don't mean to stick my two cents in, but I know, if it was Elisabeth or Kelly I'd feel the same way.

Claire: It's tough to deal with.

Al: Thank God I only had boys.

Tim: No, girls are different. They're designed to drive you crazy.

Kate: Me too.

Tim: Yes, but it seems we get the share of the anger—the girls rebelling against.

Claire: No, there's definitely that rebelliousness directed at the dad, especially if they're close. I mean, I was the same way—don't you remember all the grief I caused dad?

Tim: No.

Claire: Well you were older—Al does.

Al: I seem to recall someone being a little bitch.

Kate: Al!

Claire: (laughing) That's right. I was. I was a supreme bitch—

Al: I remember more to mom—

Claire: She got a lot of it too, but dad bore a lot of the brunt—I made sure he knew what I was drinking and smoking and the boys I'd bring around 'cause I knew—I knew exactly what I was doing. Man, those were fun summers.

Al: You came in so drunk one time you fell asleep on the ping-pong table—

Matt: I don't remember this—

Claire: You guys were gone—

Al: Long gone. Then two o'clock in the morning there's this enormous bang in the basement. I swear I think it shook the whole house. I hear Dad go running down the stairs, I follow at a distance behind him. Get down to the basement. And there she is: curled up in a ball on the ping-pong table—the whole table collapsed from her weight and crashed to the concrete—and Claire's fast asleep. The Kruegers and the Gaffneys are wide awake—kitchen lights snap on—but Claire's out for the count...

Claire: (giddy) What did Dad say? Tell 'em what Dad said, I love this, I heard this later.

Al: Oh, yeah. He turns around, sees me on the stairs, shakes his head, walks by me to go back to bed—and this was a man who never swore—rarely—you'd drop a piano on his foot, he wouldn't swear—

Matt: Hardly ever—

Tim: Well, Mom fined him—

Claire: That's true.

Al: It's the strict Irish-Catholic upbringing, using the Lord's name in vain, you might as well rape and kill Sister Aloyishes.

Kate: Oh, Al—

Al: He didn't look at me—he just muttered—so that I'd hear it, to me: “fucking daughters.”

Claire: (says it deep, imitating Dad, slightly behind Al's words) Fucking daughters.

Tim: That sums it up best.

Al: Fucking daughters.

Matt: Well you were a handful.

Al: I think that was probably the fifth time in his whole life he said fuck—but it came out as natural and flowing as Our Father.

Claire: Woo, what a character.

Tim: And he was right. Now I know what he means: fucking daughters.

Kate: Tim.

Tim: What?

Al: And some things don't change.

Matt: (breaking through laughter) I almost hired a hit man.

Kate: A hit man, what for?

Claire: Oh, Matt—

Al: Now you're talking my language.

Tim: That's—Although—

Matt: Not to kill him.

Kate: Oh, good—

Claire: Matt—

Tim: No, of course not—

Al: People have died for less reasons.

Matt: No. Come on. Not to kill him. I'm not crazy.

Al: You know, Matty, I once shot a man in Reno just to watch him die.

Claire: Just to kind of—

Tim: To scare him, or what?

Matt: Yeah. I don't know. I decided against it, though.

Kate: I think that was a wise choice.

Al: What, just like break a leg or something—snap an elbow?

Kate: Al!

Matt: No, I don't know. Just a scare. Let him know—do something—to show that I'm not helpless. Do something.

Claire: Well once you go down that road, you know—

Tim: I don't know—I look at this—if it were Libby or Kell—I'd do the same thing—I would seriously consider it—

Al: Look, but then you open up a whole can of worms—what are you going to do pay some guys to go beat him up—she's a smart girl—she's just messing with you—give it a little time.

Matt: How do you know? Why in the world would I—you know absolutely nothing about this situation—you haven't even seen her in what, five, six years? She was what, twelve last time? And you are going to tell me—no thanks, Al—why in the world—I should take advice from you—you're going to dish out advice—to me? This is surreal.

Tim: Matt, let it—

Claire: Matt—

Al: How's retirement treating you, Matty? Retired at fifty-six, is it? Must be nice. Of course, I myself have been retired now for, oh, a good ten years—but that's not the same. Not the same tax bracket. Of course, my retirement was kind of involuntary.

Matt: You want we should just cut you a check right now, Al?

Al: (laughing) That would be nice—

Matt: Yeah, we'll get Suzanne in here—everybody present—

Al: Lord knows I could use it—

Matt: Get you your cut of the pie—it's not a big pie anymore, mind you, but it'll be a nice chunk—probably, when all's said and done thirty or forty grand. Now, do you take a check, or would you prefer hundreds?

Al: (laughs) I'm not picky. (under his breath) Fifty-six...

Matt: What are you getting at?

Claire: Matt.

Matt: No, if you've got something to say by all means spit it out—don't dance around the subject—oh, but that might be kind of hard to do—

Tim: Matt, don't let him get to you.

Claire: Yeah, he's drunk.

Al: Oh, wait just a second there, sister! I might be a drunk but I most assuredly am not at this point in time drunk in any way, shape, or form—No, I am merely seeking the truth—like a preacher on a Sunday morning I want the truth—

Matt: (starts)

Tim: Oh, Al, shut up. The only thing you want is the collection plate.

Al: I will also take some of that wine before it becomes blood—but what I want most is the truth—I might be a lot of things but I am not a fake. I am the black sheep of this family. I am the circus freak. But one thing I am not—I'm a drunk—but I am not a liar—

Matt: Oh, come on—

Tim: He's serious—

Claire: Al—

Al: I am not a liar. I am not. What you see is what you get. My shortfalls and my fuck ups for years have given you guys laughs—and that's good—and in comparison to me, you all look pretty damn good lined up against me—makes you feel good about yourselves—feel successful—

Matt: Oh, my Lord—

Tim: Ah, where are the violins—

Claire: This is quite a performance.

Al: Claire, shut your fucking mouth! Kate, don't even think about it—

Claire: (laughing it off) Fuck you. This is pathetic. Matt, don't waste your time.

Al: What's a hit man cost these days? Five? Ten grand? Twenty?

Matt: Why, Al, you offering—

Tim: Al, you want a drink?

Kate: Tim—

Al: Why, Timmy, are you having one?

Tim: Yeah.

Al: Claire?

Claire: Sure.

Al: Matty?

Matt: Whatever you say.

Al: I don't know, Tim. Do you have any cheap vodka?

Tim: How 'bout rubbing alcohol?

Kate: Tim!

Al: Even better.

Claire: So, Al, what are you doing here? Really.

Al: Well...correct me if I'm wrong but I do believe there was a death in the family—

Tim: How'd you know?

Al: I find things out. The important things.

Claire: No, that's bullshit—How did you know?

Al: A magician never reveals his sources.

Tim: Come on.

Claire: Round and round we go—

Matt: And still never a straight answer.

Al: All right. I'll tell you...

Tim: Okay...

Al: But I want to know something. It's a two parter: first, I want to know why Libby's husband wasn't here.

Kate: Well that's easy: he had to take care of Jennifer and Daniel.

Al: Right. Well, surely, someone somewhere could've been found to take care of the tikes.

Claire: Al, let it go.

Kate: No, he—

Tim: Kate—

Al: I mean the man is family now after all and I would've thought—

Claire: Al—

Al: During this difficult time when Libby's burying Grandma, someone could've been found—

Tim: It's incredible—

Matt: Al, why don't you—

Al: I only ask because—

Claire: Al, you don't know—

Matt: Do you want your money? That's why you're here, Al. You came to collect. And now I know you want to tell us what's wrong with our lives and our families—because you don't have a family anymore. Do you? You fucked that one up—

Kate: Matt—

Matt: So what's it going to take, Al? Hun? Thirty? Forty? Fifty? How much?

Al: How much you got?

Matt: That's why you're really here, your cut? All this, all this is just gravy—go up, be an asshole, collect my check and head back into some third world shitbox—

Al: Dally told me. That's how. You called him, he called me. First time I'd spoken to him in—years. He called to tell me Mom was dying. Thought I'd like to know. Didn't offer to help me. Or do anything. Called up, said Mom's dying. Said, goodbye, Dad, and hung up...

Matt: I'm sorry—

Al: Don't you have pity on me! I don't want it. Do you know how hard it was for me to come up here—Do you? For Mom, that's the only reason why—

Claire: Bullshit—

Al: Think whatever you want. I hate this town. I hate being in this town. You want to give me my cut and take me to Greyhound, let's do it, let's go... But you know something, Matty, something tells me you don't have enough to cut me a check, big brother—something tells me that—and now I might be wrong—but if you want me out of here—go ahead—one little check—that's all it takes—I'm easy—I'm not going anywhere.

(Matt pours Al a drink, takes it to him. Al drinks, then under his breath.)

Al: Fifty-six.

Matt: (furious, throws glass) What do you want?

Kate: Matt.

Al: I want my money.

Matt: No, no, no—what do you really want?

Tim: Matt—

Al: I want the truth. (laughs)

Matt: You want your money.

Al: Ha, ha, ha. Did you see that movie. Now you say: you can't handle the truth. Come on.

Claire: Al, shut the fuck—

Matt: You're trying to put me down. You? You're trying—to make me feel bad? You? What the fuck have you got? Nothing.

Al: That's right.

Matt: And you want to make me feel bad?

Al: I am calling your bluff. Everybody around here's too pussy to do it—Well, shit, I got nothing to lose.

Tim: I'll write you a check, Al.

Kate: Tim—

Al: No, no, no. I want Matty here to cut me one—and one that won't bounce—

Matt: What is your problem? (maybe just laughs to himself)

Tim: Matt, let it go—

Claire: Yeah, he's just drunk—

Matt: What is it—

Al: Yeah, sure. Blame it on the booze. Easier that way. He's a drunk, he's a drunk. He's a moron, must not know what he's talking about—I have a P.H.D. How 'bout you, Claire—

Claire: You piece of shit—

Kate: Claire, honey—

Claire: I'm gonna break your other leg—

Al: Go ahead! I'm a drunk! Won't feel a thing. Never felt that bus either.

Tim: Shut up! I'll give you a check, just shut up.

Matt: I was fired. Is that what you wanted to know, Al? Satisfied? I hope you are. And now somehow I'm supposed to feel worse about my life than you. A bum. That's all you are. A fucking bum. I did something—at least I did something. What'd you ever do? Run away? Run away from everything. From your job, your wife, from your kids. What'd you ever do that was so great, hun? You're the—...

Al: Nothing.

Matt: That's right. Nothing. You want your check. Sure, we'll get you your check. We'll get you one of those big golf checks, you can parade it down the street—Better yet, why don't we just get you a wheelbarrow of cash—a windy day—there you go, you're all set—or, we could just take it all out back and burn it—invite the neighbors over, old friends—tell 'em it's a barbecue—they get here—where's the burgers? The hot dogs? Oh, no, instead we have a pile of Al's money—forty grand—Yeah, we're going to burn it, 'cause that's basically the same thing.

Al: You underestimate me, Matty.

Matt: Oh, yeah. I, underestimate you. More like overestimate.

Al: Why I was gonna buy some stock. Buy a computer. Start day trading. I hear there's some hot stocks out there. (Long pause: staring) But, nah, that's too much effort. Vegas. That's more like it. Like that movie, what's the name of it—

Claire: Fear and Loathing?

Al: No. The other one. Written by that Cleveland guy—drank himself to death—

Tim: Oh—

Al: Leaving Las Vegas. Yeah. That's the one.

Matt: I'm sure you could do it.

Al: Oh, I know I can.

(Phone rings: Matt goes to it.)

Al: I could use a refresher there, Timmy. What do you say?

Tim: Sure thing, Al.

Kate: Tim.

Tim: What?

Claire: Let it go. Let's finish this, we all know where it's going.

Al: You got it, sister. Let's not beat around the bush. There's work to be done here: get me my check, get me a bottle and I'll never bother you, any of you again—

Claire: What's wrong?

Matt: That was Mall. Her guy, um, Jay...he killed himself.

Claire: What?

Kate: No.

Tim: Oh, Jesus...

Al: How'd he do it?

Matt: What?

Al: How?

Tim: Does it matter?

Claire: No—

Kate: Of course not—

Matt: In the garage. In the car.

Al: At least it wasn't a gunshot.

Matt: No, it wasn't—why's that?

Al: 'Cause you never get that image out of your head.

Matt: All right, well—

Tim: What can we do?

Al: You can have an open casket.

Matt: Why don't you come with me.

Tim: Sure.

Matt: Um, can you guys go find Sarah?

Claire: Yes.

Kate: Absolutely.

Matt: Okay...(caught with too many confused thoughts streaming through his mind at once)

Al: I'll hold down the fort.

Matt: Okay. Good job. Let's go.

(Exit all, save Al.)

Al: (singing to himself) Well I shot a man in Reno / Just to watch him die / When I hear that whistle blowin' / I hang my head and cry...

Scene 2:

(Post-Wake. Sarah and Sam.)

Sam: What time was the funeral?

Sarah: Eleven.

Sam: They should be home soon.

Sarah: Yes...(pause)

Sam: I still can't believe what he said—

Sarah: I know—

Sam: To lay that kind of guilt trip on somebody—the last thing you say—

Sarah: It's awful—

Sam: Thank you for making me have to kill myself? Who does that? Who says that?

Sarah: I don't know.

Sam: What a disturbed—I can't believe—what a bastard—

Sarah: Hey.

Sam: What? He was.

Sarah: Don't say bad things. It's over. It's not right.

Sam: Well, he was. You're telling me you're not happy that he—

Sarah: All right. That's enough.

Sam: I was thinking—I need to get away—all this—now might be a good time—before I go back—

Sarah: How do you plan to pay for this?

Sam: I don't know. I thought, given all we've been through, the last few weeks, Dad would let me go.

Sarah: What about a job?

Sam: I know...But no one's going to hire me now—not for such a short period—I mean that's just a fact.

Sarah: Well, we'll see—

Sam: I need to know if it's okay with you—if I go. Just for a week or so—I can stay with Neil, he's got a place.

Sarah: Do you just choose to ignore it, or do you really not see?

Sam: See what?

Sarah: See this. See what's going on, here. With your father—you have no idea?

Sam: What? The stock? I know it's fallen but Dad knew that was coming—these things—it'll turn around—it's a good—

Sarah: There's no money.

Sam: What are you talking about? He sold?

Sarah: No. I don't know. There's no money. Here.

Sam: What are you talking about?

Sarah: We have no money. There's no money.

Sam: Where?

Sarah: Here!

Sam: Dad's retired. He wouldn't retire—(long pause)

Sarah: He didn't retire.

Sam: I know.

Sarah: You do? Then how, why have you been so—

Sam: I don't know. I thought he had it all figured out. Dad always does. What about Paget? I thought he was just waiting for the right thing to come along.

Sarah: There's nothing coming along. There's nothing. The man's fifty-seven years old, nothing's coming along.

Sam: But he's playing the stock market. He's trading. That's his thing.

Sarah: Do you even know why he does that?

Sam: I thought he liked it—gives him something to do—he seems to know how to pick ‘em—Enthios—forty cents up to—

Sarah: He’s trying to get some money back.

Sam: From where?

Sarah: From...from our poor choice, a bad decision—he picked the wrong guy to go with and he feels terrible about it—

Sam: What do you mean to go with?

Sarah: With all our money. It’s dropped.

Sam: But he must’ve gotten severance—or some sort of—

Sarah: They gave him six months severance. After twenty-one years that’s what they gave him. That’s it. ‘Cause he was making too much money...

Sam: Well...Um...What do you mean there’s no money—Enthios alone—

Sarah: Why do you think he watches that stock—ten times a day he checks it—that’s his last hope. To get some of it back.

Sam: But...He just needs to get back to work. Back to selling—that’s the problem.

Sarah: Yeah, it’s that easy.

Sam: What? He has connections. He knows tons of people in the industry—

Sarah: Who wants to hire a fifty-seven year old salesman—

Sam: But he has experience—I mean he ran the whole—

Sarah: Nobody, that’s who.

Sam: No, he just needs to get back in the saddle—

Sarah: It’s not that easy, Sam.

Sam: Well have you told him—

Sarah: The man has his pride! What am I going to say to him—he’s worked all his life—since he was twelve years old delivering papers—you think I’m going to tell him to get a job? You think he doesn’t know that? It’s tearing him up inside—and your sister—it’s just too much—

Sam: (goes to her) All right, all right. I’ll stay. I’m not going anywhere. I’ll get a job.

Sarah: (laughs)

Sam: What? I will. I’ll really look this time—

Sarah: I don't know if we're to blame for the way we raised you two—always giving you whatever you wanted—

Sam: No, look. I will. Okay?

Sarah: You've been running with a pretty high rolling crowd—and that's fine. Skiing, Montreal, shoot over to London for a weekend—discount airfare, of course, you know how to play us—and we never said no. We could have. But we didn't. Pride. Appearances. But you have no idea—you just have no idea—either of you—no concept—but that's our fault—at least now you'll know.

Sam: I'll go out tomorrow—

Sarah: No, you'll go to California. You'll go, he'll let you—keep up appearances—see your friends, have a big old party—you don't think I know the crowd you run with? And then you'll go back to school and that'll be that.

Sam: No, I'll take care of this. Starting—

(Front door slams. Enter Matt and Mallory.)

Mallory: I'm going to go lie down.

Matt: Okay. Hey.

(Exit Mallory left)

Sarah: How was it?

Matt: (looks off left, then) Not easy. For her. Didn't really know what to say in a situation like this so I didn't say much.

Sarah: Lots of people?

Matt: No. No, not at all.

Sarah: It's been a rough couple weeks.

Matt: Yes, it has been.

Sarah: We were just talking about California.

Matt: Oh, yeah? How's that?

Sarah: Should we let him go—

Sam: No, I don't need to—

Matt: No, I think you should. This has been a rough time for all of us. You should, you should go and take it easy before school starts—

Sam: No, I don't need to—

Matt: No, it's all right. You can. You've done a lot the last few weeks—this has been a lot—it's okay. All right, buddy?

Sam: All right. Yeah.

(Phone rings.)

Matt: I should probably eat something. I haven't had anything all day.

Sarah: Sam, it's Emily.

(Sam takes the phone.)

Matt: God, it's a nice day. All these nice days wasted on funerals and wakes—then in January there'll be nothing going on.

Sarah: That's how it works.

Matt: Seems to.

(He turns on the TV, sees Enthos is way down, shock registers in his face. He sits. Then Sarah sees it, gets upset. He looks at her – hold a moment. He turns the TV off. Sam hangs up and re-enters.)

Sam: How's Enthos?

Matt: What's that?

Sam: What's it at?

Matt: Oh, it's down twenty.

Sam: Well that's not too bad.

Matt: No.

Sam: I mean, you said yourself it had to give some back.

Matt: Yes.

Sam: So that's not bad.

Matt: No... Who was that?

Sam: Oh, Em.

Matt: Are you meeting her today?

Sam: Well just for a little bit if that's all right?

Matt: Sure, sure. That's fine. She should come over here some night for dinner. We haven't done that in a while.

Sam: Yeah, we should do that. (Sarah flips through magazines) You should really just get your license again.

Sarah: Maybe I will.

Sam: You should. (at screen door) Anyone need anything?

Matt: What? No. I'm fine.

Sam: Mom?

Sarah: No, I'm okay.

(Sam shuts the screen door, turns back, opens it, pokes his head inside.)

Sam: Oh, Dad.

Matt: Yeah?

Sam: This lawn's looking pretty long.

Matt: Well we just cut it like, what, three days ago?

Sam: Doesn't matter, it's looking long, shabby.

Matt: Well, I'll get my people on it right away—

Sam: (laughs) No, no. That's okay. My people are already on it.

Matt: Oh yeah?

Sam: Yeah...Later.

Matt: Later...(exit Sam)

(Sarah moves and sits next to Matt on the couch. She holds his hand. They look out.)

Matt: I miss that damn tree.

Sarah: Me too.

(Pause)

Sarah: What are we going to do?

Matt: I don't know.

(Slow Fade. Piano music returns. The wind whooshes through the trees.)

Fade to Black

End of Play