

FIRST AID FOR CHOKING

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SCENE 1

The lights come up on an upper middle-class home. This is a small part of a large house that was once perhaps considered elegant, but the same people doing the same things in it for so long has left it feeling out of date, though by no means unkempt.

The stage is split between two adjoining rooms. Stage left is a tomb-like den, the centerpiece of which is a very comfortable looking armchair.

Any combination of a mantle, bookshelves, couches and so forth can garnish the rest. Stage right is a dining area that is the offshoot of an unseen kitchen to which a swinging door provides access. There is a sideboard with bottles of nice looking booze and a tasteful dining room table that seats four. Upstage of the table are two doorways - one leads to the rest of the house and the other leads to a foyer and out the front door.

There in his armchair is FATHER. He is over sixty, portly and well dressed, though coming untucked as the scotches disappear. He frowns at a fat novel through reading glasses. His chair is a kind of command post with a magazine rack on one side which contains any number of diversions and a side table with his drink and a reading lamp on the other. A TV remote balances on the arm of the chair.

It is possible to imagine not getting out of that chair for days.

MOTHER enters. She is a little younger than FATHER. Her clothes are perfect. She looks like she might actually go to the hairdresser once a week. She can barely hear, as will be discovered, is exhausted from being an insomniac, and a little tipsy. The result of these symptoms is the Good Housekeeping purple haze of a woman who lives in the perpetual afterglow of too many Doris Day movies. She leans in the doorway and seems to disapprove gravely of HIM.

MOTHER carries a cocktail.

FATHER

What is it dear?

MOTHER

Did the phone ring?

FATHER

No it did not.

MOTHER

Are you sure?

He looks up at her.

MOTHER

Well I just worry that's all.

FATHER

(back to his book)

You have been given good reason to.

MOTHER

What?

FATHER

YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN GOOD REASON TO.

MOTHER

You stop that.

Pause. She roams and fidgets.

He never takes his nose out of the book throughout.

FATHER

Sit down will you, you're making me -

MOTHER

I can't. I cleaned up the kitchen. I put everything away.

FATHER

I said I would dry.

MOTHER

Oh, I don't mind.

FATHER

Yeah.

MOTHER

Keeps me busy. Did you want dessert yet? Do you mind waiting til we're all together for dessert?

FATHER

I do not mind at all. After that gorgeous meal I am stuffed, just stuffed.

MOTHER

Thank you sweetheart. I was going to bring some leftovers to Mrs. Juliusburger in a bit.

FATHER

Go right ahead dear. As long as she doesn't feel like it's a hand out.

MOTHER

Oh, I hope she doesn't. I don't think so. I don't think I've ever made her feel like that.

FATHER

I'm sure you haven't.

MOTHER

The poor thing over there on a fixed income. Must be so scary. To live so close like that to running out. I don't know how she sleeps nights. And she's such a sweet, sweet lady.

FATHER

The sweetest.

MOTHER

And it's not her fault either, that stupid husband of hers, rest his soul...

FATHER

She could have sold that house.

MOTHER

And gone where? She's been here as long as we have. I couldn't imagine. Anyway, I'll bring her some dinner later.

(Still looking for a distraction.)

I wonder if there's anything on the TV.

FATHER

Turn it on if you want.

MOTHER

I don't want.

(pause)

I wish I knew where she was, that's all.

FATHER

She said she wasn't going to make it home for dinner, she's busy.

MOTHER

I know. It's just that I made her favorite. Yankee pot roast. With new potatoes.

FATHER

Well, why did you make her favorite meal when you knew she wasn't going to be home?

MOTHER

I just hoped I guess.

He finally looks up from his book. He smiles.

MOTHER

What?

FATHER

And we wonder why the girl is a drunk.

MOTHER

Don't say that. She's our daughter.

FATHER

That she is.

MOTHER

She is not a drunk, she is sober now. She's better now.

Are you saying it's my fault she did that to herself?

FATHER

Christ no Mother. I was making a joke. You're the reason I drink.

MOTHER

Oh, you.

FATHER

Speaking of which, if you're not too busy why don't you shake that little behind of yours and freshen me up?

(He shakes an empty glass at her.)

Silence as she goes to the sideboard and pours him a drink. She pours herself another as well.

MOTHER

I just don't know what could be taking her so long.

FATHER

Give her a break will you? She'll be home any minute.

MOTHER

Well, you of all people...

FATHER

I have all the faith in the world in my daughter's ability to turn over a new leaf.

MOTHER makes a face at him. He doesn't see it.

MOTHER

Look me in the eye and say that.

FATHER

Why whatever do you mean?

MOTHER

Whatever whatever.

FATHER

Give the poor kid a chance. They're getting married soon. Everything is going to work out just fine.

MOTHER

Just fine for you. As long as you get to read your book and play your golf everyday everything else is just fine.

FATHER

I earned the right to read as many books as I want. In peace and quiet! I spent thirty years building a company up from the ground to support my family and putting a roof over our heads - this roof over our heads - and now I would like a little goddamn peace! She'll be home when she gets home...

MOTHER

I just can't help but worry. What I wouldn't give for one night's sleep like you have snoring his brains out over there!

FATHER

Haven't you been taking your sleeping pills?

MOTHER

They don't do anything. And now I don't know how I'm going to sleep now that she's moving away. I'm going to worry, I just know it.

FATHER

You got over it the last time didn't you?

MOTHER

Yes. And look what happened.

FATHER

Well, now she's got Andy.

MOTHER

Yes, Andy, God bless him.

FATHER

Just get off her back for once.

(mother just looks off.)

I said LET HER BE.

MOTHER

I heard you.

(No she didn't)

FATHER

And put in your hearing aids will you?

MOTHER

I don't like wearing them. I don't like the way they look.

FATHER

Who's looking?

MOTHER

I just hope you're right. You know you rush to her side at the oddest times, you really do.

FATHER

What are you talking about?

MOTHER

What if she's out drinking or doing her drugs?

FATHER

She knows better.

MOTHER

You're right she knows better.

FATHER

She better not screw this up. Because she's not going to do a hell of a lot better than that guy - she's not getting younger.

MOTHER

The things you say.

FATHER

It's true and you know it.

MOTHER

Still.

FATHER

I didn't say it to their faces did I? I'm confiding in my wife.

MOTHER

She's only twenty-seven.

FATHER

And it's high time she and Andy moved out of here and got their own place. Clinton's Farmington River tax dollar give away ended a while ago.

MOTHER

Don't say that. I was proud of Andy working on the president's scenic river... act. Whatever it was called.

FATHER

Well, he didn't work on the bill. It was just my tax dollars funding a bunch of guys running around in the woods.

MOTHER

You were proud of Andy working on the presidents -

FATHER

I said if the money was going to go to anyone it might as well have been Andy. Besides it was just an internship anyway wasn't it?

MOTHER

What ship?

FATHER

I SAID IT WAS AN INTERNSHIP FOR THE SCENIC WILDLIFE ... whatever the hell it was...

MOTHER

I heard you.

FATHER

It's not like he was Secretary of the Interior.

Pause.

MOTHER

It's been nice having them around though, don't you think?

FATHER

Yes it has.

MOTHER

And a good chance for them to get on their feet. Save some money.

FATHER

That too.

MOTHER

God knows they're going to need it.

FATHER

Don't start that again.

MOTHER

I just mean a forest ranger or whatever he wants to do - I just don't know. What kind of a life is that? We have spoiled her.

FATHER

We have not spoiled her. And if we did I'm glad.

MOTHER considers the drink in her hand.

MOTHER

We probably shouldn't drink in front of her do you think?

FATHER

She says she doesn't mind. Says she has to learn to live in the world again and in the world people drink.

MOTHER

Heres to that.

A sound off stage.

FATHER

Here she comes.

MOTHER

What? Where?

FATHER goes back to his book.

After some more rustling off stage DAUGHTER enters. She is on this side of plain and has a gruff demeanor which barely conceals a lifetime of frustration at living with these people.

She carries several boxes like you would get from the store. These, MOTHER immediately notices are wine and liquor boxes.

DAUGHTER

Hey.

MOTHER

How'd ya do?

DAUGHTER

Who knew that was going to be so complicated.

MOTHER

Yeah?

FATHER

Hi hon!

DAUGHTER

Hey Dad.

FATHER

Did you get all the boxes you needed?

DAUGHTER

Eventually.

MOTHER

I see you got your boxes.

DAUGHTER

YEP. SURE DID.

MOTHER

Where did you get them?

DAUGHTER

Fairway Liquors.

(Mother is silent. Too silent.)

What?

MOTHER

I didn't say anything.

DAUGHTER

I know that. What are you thinking?

MOTHER

We were starting to worry, that's all.

DAUGHTER

"We" were?

Father laughs.

MOTHER

Quiet you.

DAUGHTER

What do you want to ask me, mother?

MOTHER

Well I was hoping you might still make it home for dinner.

DAUGHTER

I TOLD you I had errands to run. It was my last day at work and I have a lot to do before Andy gets here with the van.

MOTHER

Why couldn't Andy stop and get the boxes?

DAUGHTER

Because I said I would do it.

MOTHER

Fairway Liquors though... That's awfully far.

DAUGHTER

Liquor stores have the best boxes mom. It's a universal truth.

MOTHER

What?

DAUGHTER

Just ask me so I can scream and get it over with. Do you really think I bought booze while I was there? Is that what you were going to ask?

MOTHER

No of course not.

FATHER

Don't yell at your mother.

DAUGHTER

And I don't need getting boxes as an excuse to drink!

MOTHER

I can't help it if I worry. I know what you went through and I'd hate to see you have to go through it again.

DAUGHTER

But you're okay to stand there with a drink. You're not that worried.

FATHER

That's not fair!

MOTHER

I'll put it down. I don't need it.

She sets it on the counter.

DAUGHTER exits.

MOTHER picks the glass back up again.

DAUGHTER reenters with packed boxes.

MOTHER quickly sets the glass back down, but not before DAUGHTER noticed.

MOTHER

Do you need a hand sweetie?

DAUGHTER

(trying to be nice once again)

No, thanks Mom.

MOTHER

Let me fix you a plate. I made you pot roast.

DAUGHTER

Not right now thanks.

MOTHER

You should eat.

DAUGHTER

I ate at the party.

MOTHER

Oh your going away party at the office?

DAUGHTER

Yep.

MOTHER

How was it?

DAUGHTER

There was a stripper - a male stripper and we passed him around amongst the girls - and Gary too of course. He brought the oil and ass beads...

FATHER

Don't be such a smart ass!

MOTHER

What did you say dear?

DAUGHTER

Nothing. It was nice. There was food. Everybody gets to get up from their desks early and mill around with little paper plates. What's not to like.

MOTHER

No doubt they'll miss you.

DAUGHTER

Funny thing is, I really liked the girl I trained to replace me. I was so sick of the rest of them. Everybody in that screwed up, inbred place can kiss it goodbye. But Emma - my replacement - her I got along with. Whatever. They'll snatch her soul from her body soon enough. They bought me a cake which everybody else ate..

MOTHER

I made pineapple upside down cake for dessert.

FATHER

Sounds delicious!

Okay.
DAUGHTER

Don't be sarcastic.
FATHER

How is Okay sarcastic?
DAUGHTER

It's your tone.
FATHER

What tone Dad?
DAUGHTER

You're snotty. Your snotty tone.
FATHER

Well after tomorrow you won't have to listen to it.
DAUGHTER

Looking forward to it.
FATHER

Everyone's in a lovely mood tonight I see.
DAUGHTER

What?
MOTHER

I said I DON'T EVEN HAVE MY COAT OFF AND YOU TWO -
DAUGHTER

I am sorry sweetheart, I can't hear you when your back is to me.
MOTHER

Why aren't you wearing your hearing aids Mom?
DAUGHTER

I really don't need them around the house dear, you know that.
MOTHER

DAUGHTER

You can't hear.

FATHER

Leave your mother alone ferchrissakes!

MOTHER

(Sudden venom. Right in her face.)

Wait til you get old, just you wait.

DAUGHTER

I will. I'm going to start bringing stuff down.

MOTHER

(sniffs)

I wish you wouldn't smoke.

DAUGHTER

One thing at a time.

MOTHER

Have you thought about cutting back?

DAUGHTER

Have I thought about cutting back.

MOTHER

You know I read in an article that people who smoke should get more vitamin C. That it depletes the bodies -

DAUGHTER

I know, you told me.

MOTHER

Do you want a vitamin C hon?

DAUGHTER

Not right now...

She leaves with some of the boxes.

MOTHER looks after.

Father takes off his glasses, closes his book.

FATHER

I don't know why you bother, Mother.

MOTHER

What?

FATHER

In the year since they've moved in here you have not stopped trying to get her to change.

MOTHER

Who's trying to make her change?

FATHER

Just let them get out of here in peace before anybody gets their feelings hurt.

MOTHER

Fine, I'll just mind my own business then.

MOTHER exits to the kitchen.

DAUGHTER enters carrying some suitcases. She drops them with a tired thud.

DAUGHTER

No, no, really I got it Dad.

FATHER

Honey, come over here for a minute.

DAUGHTER

What?

FATHER

Just sit down with your old man for a minute.

She does.

DAUGHTER

Yes?

FATHER

Look. I know your mother can be a real fucken pain in the ass pardon my French, but you gotta give her a little leeway tonight -

DAUGHTER

You see the way she gets in my face the second I walk in the door.

FATHER

She can't help it. Believe me, there's times I'd like to wring her neck myself. Plenty. Now she made your favorite - even though she knew you weren't going to be here - that goddamn pot roast, cause that's just her way and these things mean a lot to her, though I have no idea why, and she's torn up inside because you're leaving the nest and all that. So please don't be so goddamn snotty all the time. Just til you leave. Then when you come over for dinner you can raise all the hell you want. But I have to live with her til one of us drops dead. You wanna bitch, bitch at me.

DAUGHTER

You're a charmer Dad, I'll give you that.

FATHER

(goes back to his book)

Great. Now go get the hell outta here will ya? Go pack... and eat the pot roast.

With that, he returns to his book.

She rises. Starts to leave and turns back.

DAUGHTER

Dad...

FATHER

Yes dear.

DAUGHTER

Have you thought any more about what I asked you?

FATHER

What's that?

DAUGHTER

You know what.

FATHER

No dear I am sorry but I don't.

DAUGHTER

About Andy maybe getting a job at the company.

FATHER

Well...

(closes book, takes off glasses.)

If you really think this is a good idea then we can talk about it.

DAUGHTER

Trust me.

FATHER

This is not one of your fly by night schemes. I stick my neck out for the kid, he better deliver.

DAUGHTER

Andy's not fly by night.

FATHER

I'm talking about you.

DAUGHTER

I'm talking about my future husband. You know Andy. The nature thing is great, but I just want him to have all the options he can. We're not moving so far that he couldn't drive to the office if he wanted to or... I don't know. I'm just thinking.

FATHER

I can talk to Ira anytime.

She gives him a little kiss that is just on this side of weird for a father and daughter.

MOTHER enters at the other side of the stage, notices all of the boxes and starts to poke around.

FATHER is half listening throughout:

MOTHER

Oh, look at all this. I remember this.

DAUGHTER crosses to her.

DAUGHTER

Mom, please I just packed it -

MOTHER

Oh, your old Star Wars toys. You were such a tom boy.

(MORE)
DAUGHTER

Yep.

Pause.

MOTHER

You can leave this stuff here if you like sweetie, there's plenty of room in the basement.

DAUGHTER

I know. I want to bring all my stuff with me.

MOTHER

Why? There's plenty of room in the basement.

DAUGHTER

I know there's plenty of room in the basement. But they're my things and I want to have them all in one place. My therapist says I need to make a clean break. I did leave all those games and that pink bookshelf from my room if that's okay...

MOTHER

Oh... Do you want us to keep that? Okay.

DAUGHTER

Is that okay?

MOTHER

Of course, didn't I just say it was okay? That bookshelf is so cumbersome. Where did you put it?

DAUGHTER

In little the corner where you said there was room for -

MOTHER

Of course dear that's just fine.

(DAUGHTER fumes.)

MOTHER(cont'd)

MOTHER can't seem to keep her self out
of the box.)

Look at all this stuff. All this Star Wars - Star Wars - Star Wars - remember? It must be worth a fortune.

DAUGHTER

It's not really.

MOTHER

Oh it must be. They're collectors items. There are people who collect these things you know. I bet if you sold them you could make a mint.

(holding up one of the figures.)

Now was this, Luke?

DAUGHTER

No mom.

MOTHER

That's not Luke?

DAUGHTER

That's Lando, he's black. Remember him? You liked him. Billy Dee Williams...

MOTHER

Oh yes! Billy Dee Williams. I always thought he was such a handsome black man. I used to tell your father - if I was ever to run off with a black man it would be Billy Dee Williams.

FATHER

That I'd like to see.

MOTHER

What was that movie about the singer...

FATHER

Lady Sings the Blues.

MOTHER

Lady sings the Blues. My oh my. Who played the girl in that?

DAUGHTER

Diana Ross.

FATHER

She was no Billy Holiday let me tell you that.

MOTHER

Don't you think these would be worth something some day?

DAUGHTER

Yes I do. That's why I still have them. However, every other kid in the world thought they might be worth something someday, so they saved theirs too. Now only toys in unopened boxes have any value at all.

MOTHER

Well who bought a toy and didn't open it?

DAUGHTER

Ah ha.

MOTHER

Where's the one that poor little boy almost choked and died on?

DAUGHTER

Is that what you were looking for? You could have just asked.

FATHER

Did she bring up the Bubba Fat incident?

DAUGHTER

You know that's not his name Dad.

FATHER

Bubba Fat. Sounds like an old black trumpet player.

DAUGHTER

You make that joke every time Dad.

MOTHER

No, no no, it was little Jenny's baby brother - what was his name?

DAUGHTER

Chip.

MOTHER

Chip. Right. You saved his life.

(pulls out a figurine)

Ooh is this it?

DAUGHTER

You know damn well it is.

MOTHER

What dear? Speak up.

DAUGHTER

YOU KNOW DAMN WELL IT IS. YOU KEPT IT IN A JUICE GLASS IN THE CABINET FOR A YEAR.

MOTHER

No I don't know what it is, it was years ago!

DAUGHTER

I never understood why you did that.

MOTHER

In case there was any confusion later, I wanted to know right where it was.

DAUGHTER

Confusion about what?

MOTHER

The world is a funny place dear, I hope you never have to know some of the things I know.

DAUGHTER

Yeah . . . me too.

FATHER

You saved that kids life.

DAUGHTER

I did not save his life, I almost killed him. And we're not going back over it.

FATHER

Bullshit. That mother of theirs tried to pull that shit with me and I told her to go to hell.

DAUGHTER

Little Chip almost choked to death on Boba Fett's rocket. It was my toy. Left it right there on the kitchen floor for him to pick it up and shoot the damn thing right into his mouth.

FATHER

Ungrateful bitch.

DAUGHTER

DAD!

MOTHER

Whatever happened to Jenny?

DAUGHTER

She's married. Has a kid.

MOTHER

Oh, Jenny got married? To who?

DAUGHTER

I told you this back when they got engaged. Some guy she met at Brown. He's some kind of media guy. Owns a cable network.

MOTHER

Oh, my. Good for her.

DAUGHTER

Yep. Good for her.

FATHER

They can all go to hell.

MOTHER

Did you go to the wedding?

DAUGHTER

No.

MOTHER

Why not?

DAUGHTER

We hadn't spoken for years. Our parents trying to sue each other put a strain on our friendship.

MOTHER

You girls were inseparable.

DAUGHTER

She was my best friend since the first grade.

MOTHER

You should call her.

DAUGHTER

It's been a lifetime Mom. And where we left things wasn't very nice. She lives in Manhattan and has a couple kids I think.

MOTHER

We'll give her our best if you do.

DAUGHTER looks at figurine sadly.

DAUGHTER

You had to send away special to get one of these. They weren't in stores. The movie hadn't come out yet. Nobody even knew who he was. Just that he was cool and you had to get one. That summer, some kid choked on some tiny piece of plastic from a Battlestar Gallactica toy - of course - and everybody panicked and they never sent them out.

FATHER

That little fat kid was giving them away -

DAUGHTER

Bobby Bocce's dad worked for the toy company. He snuck a bunch of them out before they started melting them down at the factory and gave them to all the neighborhood kids.

FATHER

The Oskar Schindler of Star Wars dolls.

DAUGHTER

You're goin' to hell Dad.

FATHER

Maybe then your mother will finally be warm.

DAUGHTER

At the time it was like whatever, cool, but now it turns out, they are the most sought after toy of all time.

MOTHER

I must be getting old, I don't remember this.

DAUGHTER
(MORE)

By the time they came out in stores the rocket thing was glued in.

MOTHER

Well now, that's got to be worth something, then.

DAUGHTER

Why does everything have to be worth something Mom? God.

MOTHER

Believe me...

DAUGHTER

There are less than ten to be known in existence.

FATHER

And you have one. Good for you.

She drops it back in the box.

DAUGHTER

Yeah well, this one's worthless.

MOTHER

What?

DAUGHTER

IT'S NOT WORTH ANYTHING.

MOTHER

I don't understand.

DAUGHTER

The rocket he was choking on! I gave Chip the Heimlich maneuver and he upchucked it across the room in streaking stream of puke. I thought it went under the refrigerator, but with all the crying and puking I decided to let it slide.

DAUGHTER(cont'd)

The thing he choked on is what would have made it valuable. I was too young at the time to realize that it was a metaphor for the rest of my life.

MOTHER

What was he doing with it in his mouth anyway?

DAUGHTER

Little kids put things in their mouths.

MOTHER

I never let you kids just put any old thing in your mouth.

DAUGHTER

Well, we were the lucky ones Mom.

FATHER

You've had all the luck anyone could want in this life, young lady.

DAUGHTER

I didn't say I didn't Dad.

FATHER

The way you talk sometimes, it sticks in my craw. Your brother is doing just fine out there in San Diego.

MOTHER

What's he saying?

DAUGHTER

HE SAYS BRENDAN IS HAPPY AND SUCCESSFUL AND I AM A DISAPPOINTMENT.

FATHER

I said no such thing!

He gets up.

DAUGHTER

I'm just kidding Dad. No need to get up.

MOTHER

Leave her alone.

FATHER

Fine.

MOTHER

Where are you going?

FATHER

To the men's room if that is okay with everyone.

He exits.

Pause.

MOTHER

How about some pot roast honey?

DAUGHTER

I AM NOT HUNGRY THANK YOU.

MOTHER

You don't have to yell, I am right here.

DAUGHTER

Yes I do have to yell Mother. BECAUSE YOU WON'T WEAR YOUR HEARING AIDS.

MOTHER

Well, you can just go to hell, you know that?

DAUGHTER

That's nice.

MOTHER

You got mean when you quit drinking.

DAUGHTER

Well, maybe I should just take it up again, how would you like that?

MOTHER

I didn't say that! I never said that!

DAUGHTER

Why don't you take a couple days off, see how fucken cheerful you are?

MOTHER

Don't you use that kind of language with me!

DAUGHTER

Sorry.

MOTHER

I know we had you late - too late my mother said. She was psychic you know -

DAUGHTER

Grandma wasn't psychic.

MOTHER

Believe whatever you like dear, she knew the moment my father died in that railroad accident...

DAUGHTER

I know...

MOTHER

And she told me, she said, having a child this late, there's going to be trouble. She is going to give you a lot of trouble.

DAUGHTER

Grandma said that?

MOTHER

Yes she did. Now, I'm not saying I regret my decision to keep you for one minute...

DAUGHTER

KEEP me?

MOTHER

But you were a handful from day one. And I think you like being a handful. I just don't know why you love to poke and prod at me. My mother was right. It has been the biggest challenge of my life - dealing with you.

DAUGHTER

Even more than dad?

MOTHER

Your father - well...

(She looks toward his chair with venom.)

Yes well, he has his moments.

DAUGHTER

Mom, I am truly sorry to have inconvenienced you and that I was born and that I was a challenge and that I ruined your figure and your golf game and your LIFE - but well, in that department why don't we call it even!?

MOTHER

Just tell me what I did! Tell me what I ever did to you!

DAUGHTER

Nothing mother. Nothing. You have been a saint. A saint and a martyr! Long suffering poor old lady, what she put herself through for a beach house and a place at the country club.

MOTHER

I stayed with your father for you kids.

DAUGHTER

We didn't ask you too.

MOTHER

I never hear Brendan complain.

DAUGHTER

He got out in time.

MOTHER

Well it's good enough when you got no place to go.

She starts to leave

DAUGHTER

Mom...

MOTHER

I'm going upstairs.

DAUGHTER

Andy will be here in a bit.

MOTHER

Fine.

She exits.

DAUGHTER

(alone, she recovers, talks to her self.)

My fucking God, get me out of here.

Like it's no big deal, she goes to the sideboard, gets a glass, grabs a bottle of vodka, pours some, tosses it back with cringe-worthy ease, wipes the glass off on her shirt and replaces it.

She looks at the glass and bottle, thinks about it and starts to pour herself another as...

Lights fade.

SCENE 2

It is no more than a half an hour later.

Lights up on - FATHER seated in his chair, with a revolver on the ottoman in front of him.

He appears to be cleaning it. A fresh scotch at his side.

He whistles.

MOTHER enters in a lovely bathrobe tied modestly around herself.

MOTHER

What a nice bath I had.

FATHER

That's nice.

MOTHER

I could have stayed in there all night.

FATHER

You should have.

Pause. She sits and frowns at him and at the gun.

MOTHER

Why in God's name are you doing that now?

FATHER

I'll put it away if she comes in.

MOTHER

You're trying to start trouble.

FATHER

It was time to clean it. I'm in my own home, I will do what I damn well please.

MOTHER

You know damn well how she gets around that thing. She hates it.

FATHER

The past is the past, mother.

MOTHER

I don't know if she sees it the same way.

(pause)

She's going to get very upset if she sees that gun!

FATHER

I'll be done in another minute.

MOTHER

You're trying to start trouble.

FATHER

Leave it alone! I'm almost done - if you would stop your yapping at me...

MOTHER

Her generation, or maybe it's just her, I don't know. They hold a grudge. They don't get over things. Not like us.

FATHER

It's the nineties now Mother. Just blame your parents for whatever ails you.

MOTHER

Where is she, anyway?

FATHER

Off somewhere packing I guess.

MOTHER

I hate the way we fight, I just hate it.

FATHER

She's a tough cookie, you both are.

MOTHER

She gets it from you.

FATHER

Oh, I think it's a little more complicated than that, Mother.

MOTHER

Mm hm... I'm sorry what?

FATHER

I'm saying she may have gotten her thick skin from me - and her temper - but she was always a bad seed.

MOTHER

OH!

FATHER

She's a tough pain in the ass. She always was and she always will be.

MOTHER

What kind of thing is that to say?

FATHER

I've heard you say a lot worse.

MOTHER

(still nervous about the gun.)

You and your silly toys.

FATHER

If I don't clean it properly and I fire it, it will back fire and blow my goddamn hand off.

MOTHER

Who are you going to shoot?

FATHER

Those deer that eat my bushes. Have you seen it out there?

MOTHER

Well, be careful.

FATHER

I always am.

MOTHER

Bad seed . . .

FATHER

I love her but that girl came screaming into this world hell bent on making our lives as miserable as possible and she has for the most part succeeded.

Quiet.

He finishes reassembling the pistol and sets it aside in a magazine rack next to his chair.

MOTHER

I'm just afraid she's not going to be happy.

FATHER

What? With Andy?

MOTHER

Yes with Andy what do you think?

FATHER

Well, that's between them isn't it?

MOTHER

I'm asking you a question.

FATHER

You are?

MOTHER

Do you think they're going to be happy?

FATHER

Of course I do. Andy is a damn fine kid and a straight shooter.

MOTHER

Really? Good, that's good.

FATHER

I give it five years.

MOTHER

What?

FATHER

(laughs)

Come on mother! She'll eat him alive. He has no backbone. Marriage is a strange new town you move into.

MOTHER

You don't have to tell me about marriage, darling.

FATHER

She knows what she's getting herself into. And so does he, heaven help him.

MOTHER

I have to wonder sometimes what they even see in each other.

FATHER

Our daughter is a beautiful girl and smart and she comes from a good family.

MOTHER

Okay then, what does she see in him?

FATHER

A ticket out of here.

MOTHER

Oh you.

FATHER

She's used up her good luck and all of her second chances and whatever the hell else. She's got to get it together and fast while there is still time, and along comes Andy.

MOTHER

But a forest ranger?

FATHER

He intends to become a tree surgeon. What's wrong with that?

She purses her lips at him.

MOTHER

You're just trying to get my dander up.

FATHER

I'm TRYING to have a positive outlook. Stop picking fights where there aren't any.

DAUGHTER enters, UNSEEN by them.

MOTHER

What kind of job is a tree surgeon? What does that even mean? Is he going to spend his life climbing trees like some kind of a monkey!? Christ like the men at the club? In overalls? Cutting the grass like a Mexican!?

FATHER

Yep.

MOTHER

How much is he going to make? Have you thought of that? How are they going to live? You think he is going to afford a home like this one?

FATHER

Probably not.

MOTHER

Well?

FATHER

Well what?

MOTHER

What kind of life is that? I guess it's admirable, what he wants to do, but that is just not the life she is used to.

FATHER

He may surprise us all.

MOTHER

She had such potential. When I think what you went through to get her into Princeton to have her drop out -

FATHER

Don't remind me.

(laughs)

I've got a gun over here.

MOTHER

(laughs)

Stop it, you. And then that time you had to drive all the way into New York City and pick her up next to a Times Square phone booth, smashed out of her mind. Another minute and she would have become some kind of prostitute I swear.

DAUGHTER takes a bottle of vodka and swigs from it - silent as a ninja and replaces it.

FATHER

My daughter was never about to sell her body for drugs ferchrissakes! Lucky I was in sales for so long in the city that I knew how to get in and out of there in a hurry. West Side Highway all the way.

MOTHER

Thank God for that at least. Makes me worry. What kind of a man Andy is. I mean really is. A man ought to be a Man. When it's time to take care of a family.

FATHER

What do you mean?

MOTHER

Something about him seems a little soft. Doesn't he seem a little soft to you?

FATHER

I ever tell you what he said to me a while back? I was complaining about those goddamn deer eating all my lilac bushes. I asked him nicely if there was anything I could do, I mean help me out with all these deer in my yard. Do you know what he said? "Maybe you built your house in the middle of their salad."

MOTHER laughs at this, somewhat to the consternation of FATHER.

MOTHER

You and those deer I swear to God.

(pause)

He can't handle her.

FATHER

So she found someone she can manipulate and control. Isn't that what all you women want, honestly?

MOTHER

Oh you know so much.

FATHER

Do you know she asked me to find him a place at the company.

MOTHER

And what did you say?

FATHER

I said of course I would. I have no idea what he is qualified to do.

MOTHER

That's very sweet of you. I think it's the right thing. He's going to be family now anyway. Keep it in the family.

FATHER

He's the best she can do and I think they love each other...

MOTHER

Love doesn't pay the bills.

DAUGHTER steps into the room.

MOTHER

Who's the prostitute mom!? Who sold her ass for a country club membership, a nice house a few vacations?

FATHER

Son of a bitch!

DAUGHTER

KEEP IT IN THE FAMILY!?! Is that what's been happening here all these years?

MOTHER

What are you doing? Were you eavesdropping?

DAUGHTER

PROSTITUTE!?! GOD when am I going to live that down? I would not have ended up on a Times Square sidewalk bombed out of my mind if I hadn't grown up in this house in the first place!

FATHER

Here we go!

MOTHER

Don't you blame us for your problems!

DAUGHTER

Who chose getting date-raped in her own bed over taking her kids out of an abusive home and starting her life over!?

MOTHER

My god, I never!

FATHER gets up.

FATHER

You little bitch...

DAUGHTER

Cause God forbid we be broke for a day -

He stalks toward her, her hand raised.

MOTHER

Don't you hit her..!

FATHER

I'm not going to hit her. Your mother and I went to therapy and that is all behind us...
how dare you even -

DAUGHTER

I grew up here Dad!

FATHER

GET OVER IT!!!

MOTHER

Your generation lives in the past! You rehash and rehash things and feel sorry for yourself. Move on! Grow up!

DAUGHTER

Andy and I may never have a home like this, but I will not be so miserable that I grind my teeth in my sleep my whole life until it has made me go deaf.

MOTHER

TMJ is a medical condition.

DAUGHTER

You never once came to family weekends at rehab or came to therapy. . .

FATHER

I paid for it...

DAUGHTER

You paid for it.

FATHER

So I can sit there and be told what bad parents we are?

MOTHER

We gave you everything you could want!

DAUGHTER

That you did. You bet your ass Andy is the best I could ever do. And just you wait til I'm done with him!

The door bell rings.

They all look at each other.

DAUGHTER

That's him.

MOTHER storms off toward the kitchen. FATHER goes to his chair and DAUGHTER goes to the door.

Lights down.

SCENE 3

Lights up on DAUGHTER and ANDY.

They stand in the dining room.

He is physically wrong for her somehow; younger seeming or shorter or something that immediately makes one sense that they do not belong together.

Her demeanor is drastically different than when she is with her parents. She is silly and childlike. She dances around from time to time.

FATHER is in his erstwhile chair and has for the time being, nodded off, book in hand.

ANDY seems distracted.

DAUGHTER

Talk to me in one of your funny voices.

ANDY

What?

DAUGHTER

Do one of your funny characters for me.

ANDY

I don't know, I don't wanna. Where are they?

DAUGHTER

She's upstairs and he's in there. You can stop sucking up to them now, we're leaving tomorrow morning.

ANDY

I have never sucked up to your parents.

DAUGHTER

They love it, don't worry about it.

ANDY

Oh I'm not.

DAUGHTER

Tomorrow we are out of here forever!

ANDY

Are you alright? You're acting really strange.

DAUGHTER

Yes, please - not you too.

ANDY

What do you mean?

DAUGHTER

They've just been in my face all night.

ANDY

Oh?

DAUGHTER

Hey,

(doing a voice)

_____ .

ANDY

(Does something back half heartedly)

DAUGHTER

You're not doing it right.

ANDY
I'm sorry, I'm just tired.

DAUGHTER
You suck.

ANDY
You suck.

DAUGHTER
You suck.

ANDY
You suck.

DAUGHTER
How does the van drive?

ANDY
It's fine. Radio sucks. Did you have dinner?

DAUGHTER
No. There's left over pot roast if you want.

ANDY
She knew you weren't going to be home for dinner so she made your favorite?

DAUGHTER
Yep.
(pause)
Did you miss me?

ANDY
Yes of course.

DAUGHTER
Don't ever leave me alone with them again for five whole days.

ANDY
Was it bad?

DAUGHTER
I'm so sorry I made you live under the same roof as them for a year.

ANDY

Never again.

DAUGHTER

Did you show your mom and dad the pictures of the new apartment?

ANDY

Yes.

DAUGHTER

It's better than anything we could have afforded on our own.

ANDY

My parents paid for the truck by the way.

DAUGHTER

That was nice.

ANDY

Yeah. Listen... So -

She wanders around.

DAUGHTER

Did you see Rodney?

ANDY

No. He didn't answer.

DAUGHTER

WHAT? What do you mean?

ANDY

I paged him twice from the road. I had to get here, I couldn't keep on waiting at every pay phone -

DAUGHTER

So you're telling me we have no fucking weed for the drive?

ANDY

I'm sorry. What do you want from me?

DAUGHTER

Shit! SHIT! I gave you one fucking thing to do.

ANDY

That and... move.

DAUGHTER

Oh fuck you. Call him. I'm calling him now.

ANDY

From your parents phone? You said never to do that.

DAUGHTER

We'll stop on our way out of town.

ANDY

That's what I was thinking.

DAUGHTER

No, here - we'll say - say you had to go out and - you forgot something at the store. Go find him!

ANDY

Are you serious?

DAUGHTER

Are you fucking kidding me? You haven't been here all week! You were up at your parents house hanging out with your friends. I just kept telling myself, get through this and - I need to have some fun.

ANDY

Whatever. We'll find Rodney, okay. Did you smoke all we had left?

DAUGHTER

There was like, nothing left.

(off HIS reaction)

Don't fucking judge me. This is supposed to be our last hurrah. I just wanted to get fucking high as shit. Because we're going to stop after this, remember.

ANDY

Yeah right.

DAUGHTER

What's that supposed to mean?

ANDY

What'd I say?

DAUGHTER

You're acting funny. What's going on?

ANDY

Am I?

DAUGHTER

Is there a lot of room in the van?

ANDY

What? Yeah.

DAUGHTER

Cause I have a lot of shit. I mean my therapist says to bring everything. Clean break.

ANDY

Yes. Clean break. What a week I had up at home.

DAUGHTER

Yeah? You want something to drink or something?

ANDY

No thanks.

DAUGHTER

I have three suitcases of just clothes, plus I want to bring my dresser, Mom says it's mine if I want it. And with my stereo and desk and stuff - Better let me pack the truck. Three colleges in four years I know how to pack a van.

ANDY

Can we just chill out for a second maybe? You know what? I will have something to drink.

DAUGHTER

Like drink drink?

No. Juice is fine.

ANDY

She exits.

He is left alone. He looks around, seems more and more distressed.

He looks around the corner at the old man in his chair.

She reenters with two glasses.

Let's leave tonight.

DAUGHTER

What?

ANDY

Let's just fucking go!

DAUGHTER

Right now?

ANDY

Let's just do it - I'm all packed. We'll just shove it all in the van and we'll drive all night - your stuff's already packed - Your suitcases are right there by the door, we'll get big coffees and stop for sandwiches get fucken high... take turns driving...

ANDY

Are you serious?

DAUGHTER

Come on!

ANDY

I just drove five hours. It's nine o'clock at night.

Pause, wounded child -

DAUGHTER

So what you're saying is you're a pussy.

ANDY

What are you talking about?

DAUGHTER

This is the beginning of our life together and I want to do something spontaneous and FUN and you poo-poo my idea.

ANDY

Who's poo-pooing anything? Why do you use that expression? It's fucking childish.

DAUGHTER

Why are you being like this?

ANDY

What am I being like?

DAUGHTER

They've been in my face all night. I don't need it from you. Please. I'm sorry. Let's just go.

ANDY

I don't think your parents would like that.

DAUGHTER

What do you care?

ANDY

It would seem rude. To slip off in the middle of the night like that.

DAUGHTER

Yeah, you don't suck up to them at all.

Sleeping FATHER's book falls out of his hands and onto his lap which wakes him up. He looks around, groggy and hears voices.

ANDY

Can we just chill out for a second?

DAUGHTER

Fine, we'll chill out. How was your time home?

ANDY

It was really amazing. A lot happened. I saw a lot of old friends and -

DAUGHTER

Oh? Who was there?

ANDY

Jeff and Brian and Steve.

DAUGHTER

How are they doing?

ANDY

The same. Great. Jeff still lives in the same house we all shared on Worcester Street. It's still awesome. He pulled up the carpet with the beer stains on it! The place looks so grown up now. Oh! They closed The Acapulco! Can you believe that?

DAUGHTER

Is that the place that made me sick?

ANDY

The food at the Acapulco did not make you sick.

DAUGHTER

So you say.

ANDY

We lived at that place in high school. Steve works at some computer - I don't know - but he seems bored if you ask me...

DAUGHTER

Was SHE there?

ANDY

Who? Kelly?

DAUGHTER

Do you have to say her name like that?

ANDY

Like what?

DAUGHTER

You're so gross about her still. Did you talk to her?

ANDY

Yes I did.

DAUGHTER

What did she look like?

FATHER CALLS in from other room...

FATHER

Is that Andy?

ANDY

Hi!

FATHER

Why don't you come in and say hello? Where's you kid's manners?

They cross into the living room.

ANDY

Hey.

FATHER

How was traffic?

ANDY

Fine. Light.

FATHER

Did you take Ninety One like I told you?

ANDY

Yes I did, thanks for the advice.

FATHER

That's what I'm here for.

(Toward daughter)

This one's been packing up a storm. Damn near throwing her stuff on the lawn waiting for your return.

ANDY

Is that right?

FATHER

She can not get out of here fast enough.

DAUGHTER

That's right.

FATHER

She's packing up the whole house. I'm going to go through my underwear drawer before you all leave.

DAUGHTER

Dad, that's disgusting. What are you talking about?

FATHER

Christ I didn't mean it like that, I was just making a joke.

DAUGHTER

Jesus Christ, your underwear?

FATHER

Fine. My sock drawer. Are you happy? You are going to pack up my SOCK drawer...

DAUGHTER

You never know, maybe I will take a pair of your tightee-whitees..!

FATHER

Oh, it's okay for you to make jokes about my underwear.

DAUGHTER

Yes it is. I make the rules when it comes to your underwear drawer.

She exits. ANDY is alone with the strangeness of that exchange. FATHER flips back through his book like he is going to read it.

ANDY is drawn to the box with the Star Wars toys. He picks out a few and looks at them.

He picks out a toy -

ANDY

I used to have this one. The LAND SPEEDER!

DAUGHTER reenters with a box.

DAUGHTER

Put down Luke's land speeder.

ANDY

That is so cool.

FATHER

Show him Boba Fat.

DAUGHTER

Every fucking time.

FATHER

Nice language.

DAUGHTER

Are we going to go over this again? I told him the story.

ANDY

Oh, the kid who choking on the missile? I know! I always thought the whole Boba Fett missile legend was like Mikey and the pop rocks.

FATHER

My daughter saved that boy's life by giving him the Heimlich Maneuver and those sons of bitches tried to sue me.

DAUGHTER

Will you ever get over it?

FATHER

Oh, I'm well over it.

DAUGHTER

I lost my best friend because of that.

FATHER

(to ANDY)

Do you know she went on to become certified in first aid - CPR and what have you. Lifeguard at the club. I always thought you would be some kind of E.M.T or something.

DAUGHTER

I can't stand blood.

ANDY

Me neither, that's why I'm a tree surgeon.

Awkward silence.

FATHER

Then you went and lost the piece of the damn toy that made it worth something.

ANDY

You should have sued them for that.

FATHER

Now you're talking. Should have let the little bastard choke to death.

DAUGHTER

DAD!

FATHER

"Dad." I'm just kidding around.

(laughs)

What was it Bob Mulrooney said? They should leave off all the safety warnings for a year or two. Thin the herd.

ANDY

Sounds like a genius.

FATHER

If I make hammers, do I have to go around making sure people don't smash each other in the head with them?

MOTHER enters.

MOTHER

Is that my future son in law?

ANDY

Hi.

She rushes over to him and kisses him. He seems to cringe.

MOTHER

Did you have dinner?

ANDY

I ate on the road.

MOTHER

Well there's plenty of left over pot roast if anyone wants it.

FATHER

I think I may have a piece of that pineapple upsidedown cake before long.

MOTHER

Speaking of leftovers, honey...

(to DAUGHTER)

I'm going to bring Mrs. Juliusburger some dinner, did you still want to go over to say goodbye? I know it would mean so much to her.

DAUGHTER

Oh. Yeah, I should.

MOTHER

I was going to bring her some of the pot roast. I made so much and she could use it the poor thing. And the macaroni. We'll go together.

DAUGHTER

I can bring it to her.

MOTHER

That's okay I feel like a little walk.

DAUGHTER

...Okay!

MOTHER

I have it all ready to go, it's in the fridge.

Mother dashes off to the kitchen.

DAUGHTER

(to ANDY)

I really want to see Mrs. Juliusburger before we leave, do you mind?

ANDY

Of course not why would I mind?

FATHER

I'll keep Andy company.

DAUGHTER

What are we going to do about that sweet old woman, Dad?

FATHER

She got a bum deal when her old man kicked the bucket.

(to ANDY)

I pay my guy a little something extra to go over there and mow her yard.

DAUGHTER

She's been like a guardian angel over there all these years.

MOTHER enters with a shopping bag.

MOTHER

Here we go.

(to daughter)

Are you ready dear?

(She gives ANDY a kiss and they head across
the stage)

DAUGHTER

Sure.

MOTHER

She'll live off of this for a week. There was so much!

FATHER

Don't cut through those woods. Stay on the street. Go around the block.

DAUGHTER

Yeah this part of Greenwich gets real dicey this time of night.

ANDY

(hopeful)

You want me to come along?

DAUGHTER

That's okay we'll be fine.

FATHER

And you wanted to buy over there on Maiden Lane remember?

MOTHER

I always thought it had such a nice ring to it 'Maiden Lane.' Like a princess.

FATHER

Yeah, take a drive down Maiden Lane now and see who's living there.

(Pause.)

Don't everyone thank me at once.

THEY EXIT.

FATHER

Have a seat. Hey get yourself a drink and get me one while you're at it.

ANDY goes to the sideboard and does just that

ANDY meanders over during the following.

FATHER

Well, the wife and I are sure going to miss having you kids around.

ANDY

Yep. Us too.

FATHER

Christ you know what this all reminds me of? When I finally got Gigi away from that old man of hers. Her folks were, well, not to be disrespectful, the man was a goddamn idiot. He was a butcher. Did you know that?

ANDY

Yes.

FATHER

A butcher, and I'll tell you what, he was a damn good one. She still over cooks every piece of meat she can get her hands on - well, I came along, this was a long time ago now, we had HER late...

ANDY

Not so late...

FATHER

You're a good kid. Look I got nothing against an honest trade like that. And we sure didn't mind it when we were first married, all that meat; I never would have thought I could eat so much meat. When I die of a heart attack you'll know why. But her old man - he couldn't manage his affairs. They were broke.

ANDY

Oh?

FATHER

That's what she saw in me. Oh it wasn't my money not at the time. No sir. But I had the fire in the belly. I was in sales. And let me tell you I was the best goddamn sales man you ever saw.

ANDY

So I've heard.

FATHER

She saw that I had potential. She didn't want that kind of life.

ANDY

You sold typewriters.

FATHER

Business machines. Typewriters at first. I carried them - one in each hand - up and down Madison Avenue up and down all those stairs and I would go into the offices there and I would ask the secretaries to let me show them my new machine. Of course they would say no at first and I would ask them what they were typing, and why not type just a line or two on mine. A lot of them told me to fuck off, pardon my French, but I was a good looking guy then, and I could lay on the charm and if I could just get them to try it, most of them would order the new typewriter from me on the spot.

ANDY

Really?

FATHER

Damn right. They were good machines. I worked for a Jew. Good man, fair. Well I talked him into moving onto cash registers and time clocks and all that sort of stuff.

ANDY

... Furniture too right?

FATHER
(MORE)

Right, that's right. Office furniture. I discovered the plastic mat that they put under office chairs so you don't ruin the carpet.

ANDY

I know...

FATHER

Met the guy at a trade show, didn't know what he had on his hands. We were the first east coast distributor. Made bushels of money. Look around. All this paid for by some goddamn piece of plastic.

ANDY

That's right. I know.

FATHER

Gotta be in the right place at the right time. You got to see opportunity before the other guy. The old Jew sold me the business for probably half what he could have gotten for it from some schmuck, but he knew I wouldn't run the business into the goddamn ground. You've heard me talk about my friend Bob Mulrooney?

ANDY

Yeah, sure.

FATHER

Well Bob Mulrooney may have more money than I ever will the old S.O.B...

(laughs fondly)

But I wouldn't trade places with him either. He has that big old boat over there in the marina he never even puts the damn thing in the water. He's a terrible sailor - I'd never say that to his face. Bob worked twice as hard as I had to. Ten times the stress, that hedge fund bullshit. You can see it in his face, the pressure. The way he drinks - Jesus Christ. This is between you and me - he drives around with a child's - one of those sip cup things - full of Famous Grouse. Doesn't spill! Just tosses it in the back seat. Isn't that something? I almost admire the guy for that. I said to him, "Bobby how are you going to explain it to the cops?"

FATHER(cont'd)

You should get a car seat do it right” He told me to go fuck myself. We kid around all the time. Guy can’t bring himself to retire, I say to him,”Bob ferchrissakes when are gonna relax and enjoy all you’ve worked so hard for?” He just wants to get out of the goddamn house. Bob’s wife, Priscilla is a vicious cunt but I’d never say that to his face. A man can’t always help who he has married. How a man plays the hand he is dealt, well... This is between you and me now - but Bobby’s been seeing a woman in the next town.

ANDY

Really?

FATHER

This is strictly between you and me, you understand. They met on the train. She’s one of these divorcee career women types. I met her once. What a piece of tail.

(whistles)

She knows it too. That’s the problem with some women. Let me tell ya, you’re gonna try something like that, you better have something to say to the guy staring back at you when you’re shaving. That’s who you answer to. No one else.

ANDY

So you would agree that the important thing is to marry the right person in the first place?

FATHER

(laughs)

You better believe it.

Pause.

FATHER

You do any fishing when you were home?

ANDY

Yeah, yeah, did some fly fishing with the guys. Caught a bunch of trout. Couldn’t even cook it all. Had to bring it home to the wives and the girlfriends.

FATHER

Cooked it out there on a fire?

ANDY

Built a nice fire right on the bank of the river. Head and tail on, one of the guys, Wolfie, he’s a chef, he had the corn bread cooking in the coals and he brought along this thing to grill vegetables. We had some whiskey. Best meal I’ve had in a long time.

FATHER

Christ that sounds nice.

ANDY

It sure was.

FATHER

You didn't do any hunting?

ANDY

No.

FATHER

Hey your old man's a cop. You'll appreciate this.

(Reaches into the magazine rack and pulls out
the handgun he was cleaning earlier.)

I ever show you this beauty?

ANDY instinctively rises.

ANDY

No.

FATHER

You know what this is?

ANDY

It's a snub nose .38.

FATHER

Very good. Relax, sit down will ya?

(He does.)

My wife and daughter hate this thing.

ANDY

I think she's mentioned it.

FATHER

(looks at him warily)

Oh she has, has she?

ANDY

... That you have a gun in your night stand or something like that.

FATHER

(after another look)

That's right. I sleep with it by my bed. Piece of mind. Son of a cop you must understand that. Bob Mulrooney didn't believe in guns either. Then sure enough, couple years ago, some... Some kids... broke into his house. Middle of the night. He went at them with the fireplace poker. Put one of the bastards in the hospital. He got a nine millimeter automatic after that. Most people who get a gun aren't prepared to use it.

(Points it, looks down the sight.)

I used to go to the firing range quite often.

In an absurd demonstration of his prowess - he jumps up and clicks off rounds downstage. He sits down and begins to load it.

ANDY

Any cop will tell you most people are shot with their own gun.

FATHER

Never tell me the odds, kid. Your old man has a gun to protect his house I'm sure.

ANDY

He keeps his service revolver in a safe somewhere.

FATHER

Here hold it.

ANDY

I've held plenty of guns. You really sleep with a loaded gun next to your bed?

FATHER

Have you met my wife?

(laughs)

I'm just kidding. Don't tell her I said that. Just wait. Just you wait til you have something worth stealing - and don't take that the wrong way - then we'll see how you feel.

ANDY

I used to hunt with my father and his friends til I was in high school. It never made much sense to me to shoot something that wasn't shooting back.

FATHER

When I catch that deer eating by bushes, he's gonna wish he was armed. Here, here you go, here.

(Holds out the gun to him which he finally takes.)

Did your old man want you to be a cop?

ANDY

If I did I think he would have been glad, but it was just as important to him that I get an education, make a difference that sort of thing. I mean he was a New Hampshire state trooper, he spent more time with his radar gun drawn.

FATHER

I used to drive through New Hampshire a lot on business. I've probably met him already!

ANDY

(Considering gun in his hand.)

The last time I went hunting was with my dad and his friends - a bunch of off duty cops. We were hunting quail. There was this guy, Walter. He had a dog, Gus. Beautiful golden retriever. I had found through the sight on my rifle, a tiny little fawn. I hate to sound like a tree-hugger which I guess technically I am, but this little guy was so innocent just sitting there eating the grass and I have him right in my sights and I can think of people I would shoot before this little fella. So I was spying on him for a little while when out of nowhere, BAM! The deer falls down and I hear Walt say, "Too slow." He shot it. Walt was good and drunk and a lousy shot on his best day but he had managed to blow most of it's leg off. Everyone started saying the humane thing to do was to kill it, put it out of it's misery. The Humane thing would have been not to shoot it in the first place. Everyone was pissed at Walt, he shouldn't have shot the deer, turns out they weren't even in season. But big macho Walt - he was so happy to put the thing out of it's misery. He walked right over to it, and with no visible thought or emotion, puts his hand-gun right between the poor little guys eye's and blew it's brains out. "Looks like he had more brains than you Walt." My dad said. Well later in the day, some shots ring out and a second later we hear Walt yelling and screaming and carrying on. We all ran over to where he was, everyone thinking the worst. Gus had gotten shot. Someone had shot his dog. There were other hunting parties around, it wasn't necessarily one of us though it could have been. Could have been me for all he knew. Gus was bleeding bad, he was crying and whimpering and we all knew what we would have to do.

FATHER

What?

ANDY

We would have to put it out of it's misery.

FATHER

That's a damn shame.

ANDY
(MORE)

Why is it more of a shame than when the deer was shot for no reason?

FATHER

Well, that's different.

ANDY

How? That same man who happily killed that little deer was so broken up over another animal lying there in the woods a few hours later.

FATHER

Dogs are man's best friend. We don't eat dogs.

ANDY

Some places they do.

FATHER

They're savages.

ANDY

You and Walt would have gotten along great. I had hoped that would make him see that it is all the same thing, but of course it didn't.

FATHER

So what happened to the dog?

ANDY

I shot it.

FATHER

You did?

ANDY

No one wanted to murder Gus right there in front of Walt, but, number one it was the right thing to do and number two, as much as I hated to put down the dog, I wanted to be the one who did it in front of Walt. Just like he shot that deer.

ANDY(cont'd)

I wanted to look him in the eye when I pulled the trigger. And that's exactly what I did. Walt shuddered and cried out once. It felt good to hurt him.

He sets the gun down on the table.

FATHER

Listen, Andy, I want to say something to you here and it's not about guns or any of this bullshit. You want to marry my daughter and I'm glad. Hell if you can live with her, there's a special place for you in ~~(MORE)~~ but... My wife gets a little worried about how much you're going to be making in your uh - field.

ANDY

Excuse me?

FATHER

Hey it's not me. Don't get me wrong. A man has to do what he has to do. Just so you know, she has gotten used to a certain lifestyle.

ANDY

She's gotten used to quite a bit.

FATHER

What's that supposed to mean?

ANDY

... I don't think I have ever kept my career a secret and if anyone wishes that I was some kind of a stockbroker - well, it's good that's come up.

FATHER

Nobody's asking you to become a stockbroker. Like Bob's boy, Bob junior. Bob Junior had his eye on your future wife in there wife a while back. She didn't have her act together then. Anyway to hell with all that. I talked to your future wife, and she wants me to offer you a job. A place at the company. We both know you don't want it and I would hate to see you go in there and try to fake it when you don't give a shit and embarrass yourself and me and everyone else, but she asked me so the offer stands.

Smiles at his benevolence. ANDY is struck silent by his arrogance.

ANDY

I have a degree in botany. I'm not some ten dollar an hour landscaper - I'm certified by the fish and wildlife commission. I am starting a horticultural care and consulting - no. You know what? Never mind.

ANDY(cont'd)

(pause)

She really said that?

FATHER

It's an opportunity.

ANDY

That it is.

FATHER

Keep it in mind.

MOTHER and DAUGHTER have entered from the hall, quietly enough that they don't hear them at first.

ANDY

I don't think that's going to happen.

FATHER

I'm just doing what I'm told.

ANDY seems comfortable with the silence that has ensued.

FATHER picks up the gun, looks at it, aims it at nothing.

DAUGHTER comes around the corner.

DAUGHTER

That woman is a saint.

Too late FATHER tries to hide the gun.

DAUGHTER

DAD!?

FATHER

Just calm down it's going away.

DAUGHTER

WHAT THE ARE YOU DOING?

ANDY rises.

ANDY

He was just showing it to me.

DAUGHTER

Why were you showing it to him Dad?

ANDY

We were just talking.

DAUGHTER

Talking about what?

MOTHER

(trailing in finally)

How are my boys?

DAUGHTER

Dad's waving that fucking gun around in here, Mom! You had to! You just had to!

MOTHER

Honestly!

ANDY

He was asking me about being a cop - about Dad being a cop.

FATHER

Relax will ya?

DAUGHTER

But you had to take out your little pistol tonight and wave it all around didn't you?

FATHER

This is my house I will wave around what ever I damn well please.

MOTHER

I asked you not to start trouble...

(to DAUGHTER)

Hon, let's have a nice last night. Lets have a nice visit. Mrs. Juliusberger sends her best and ... Andy do you want some pineapple upsidedown cake?

ANDY

...Sure

DAUGHTER

Andy knows, Dad. He knows the story. I've told him everything. Every last little thing.

FATHER

I went through two years of anger management -

MOTHER

Your father is a different person now...

DAUGHTER

I'm the one who got sent away to a camp for troubled teens - those places are a great idea. I learned things in there I would have never thought of on my own. He did get help though. They went to counseling. And they lived happily ever after. Don't everyone thank me at once.

She walks out of the room and the lights fade.

SCENE 3

ANDY stands in the doorway to the kitchen anxiously.

They are alone for the time being. More boxes and things have piled up at the door to the foyer

DAUGHTER carries some luggage in.

ANDY

LISTEN. I have to tell you something.

DAUGHTER

Talk and walk.

ANDY

No. Stop. Listen to me for a minute.

DAUGHTER

What?

ANDY

I've been going through - some stuff.

DAUGHTER

Stuff? What stuff have you been going through?

ANDY

Well, when I was back home...

DAUGHTER

Because I have been going through some stuff also.

ANDY

I know you have.

DAUGHTER

Can I just say something here? Because tonight has been - such a revelation for me. Packing and going through all this shit has been like reliving my life and there is one thing that keeps echoing in my head. I can not become my mother. It's something I say to my higher power over and over again - "Don't make me her! Please don't let me end up like HER." I know all women say that and yet do anyway. But you can see how I can't become her right?

ANDY

Then why did you want me to ask your father for a job?

DAUGHTER

What?

ANDY

Because he offered me one.

DAUGHTER

Oh?

ANDY

Oh don't act innocent.

DAUGHTER

I'm just asking you to consider it. It's easy. It's right there...

ANDY

It's easy? Easy for who? Easy for you? You want me to give up doing the thing I love and put on a suit and go work for your father's company?

DAUGHTER

If you like it, you can take over the family business Andy! You can run my Dad's company.

ANDY

I'm glad this happened, you know that? It illustrates my point.

DAUGHTER

What point?

ANDY

If you don't want to become your mother, why are you trying to turn me into your father?

DAUGHTER

God, when did you become so stupid?

PAUSE.

ANDY

Do you think I don't know "drunk you" by now?

DAUGHTER

Excuse me?

ANDY

I'm pretty sure you're drunk right now and it's - it shouldn't surprise me.

DAUGHTER

How DARE YOU!

ANDY

How dare you! Wow! Does your sponsor know? WOW!
(paces, lost in the moment)

DAUGHTER

Fuck you!

ANDY

You're drunk.

DAUGHTER

What do you know?

ANDY

(to no one)

I've been torturing myself.

DAUGHTER

What are you talking about?

ANDY

I was ripped in two coming back here tonight!

DAUGHTER

What do you mean?

ANDY

Do you remember a minute ago I said I had something to tell you?

DAUGHTER

Yes, I remember a minute ago.

ANDY

Well, I Have Something To Tell You.

DAUGHTER

... What?

ANDY

I can't do this.

DAUGHTER

What can't you do?

ANDY

I don't think we should get married.

DAUGHTER

You want more time?

ANDY

No.

DAUGHTER

(pause)

What do you mean? What are you saying? Are you breaking up with me?

ANDY

Yes.

She rushes to him, suddenly tender. Tries to hold his hands.

DAUGHTER

No! Oh my god, no! We can talk about it! Whatever you want! If you don't want to work for my Dad, forget it baby!

(Kisses his face. He writhes away.)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry. I'm so sorry. Talk to me. Let's just talk and you can tell me everything. And we'll get this all out in the open. I've been so selfish. I didn't even realize you had all this going on.

(hits herself a little too hard.)

God, I'm so stupid!

ANDY

Take it easy now, it's not you...

DAUGHTER

(grabbing him and trying to kiss him.)

Will you just talk to me? Will you just talk to me...?

MOTHER ENTERS.

MOTHER

Look at the love birds!

They break apart. Put on some attempt at pretense.

MOTHER sits down

MOTHER

So how are your parents, Andy?

ANDY

Fine thanks.

MOTHER

I have been meaning to call your mother. You know the mothers-in-law.

DAUGHTER

Mom... If you don't mind.

MOTHER

What dear?

DAUGHTER

We're kind of in the middle of something here.

MOTHER

Where?

DAUGHTER

WE'RE IN THE MIDDLE OF A CONVERSATION.

MOTHER

I can hear you just fine dear.

(pause.)

You kids have got the rest of your lives together. I'm going to miss you both. Is anybody hungry? Andy would you like some pot roast?

ANDY

No thank you. I'll hold out for dessert.

MOTHER

You love my pineapple upside down cake.

ANDY

That I do.

DAUGHTER

I'm going out for a cigarette.

ANDY

Oh... Okay.

DAUGHTER

Be right back!

(She gives him a little kiss on the cheek and
whispers as she goes out;)

Don't you dare. Don't you dare.

She exits.

MOTHER

Don't you dare what?

DAUGHTER (O.S.)

THAT YOU HEAR!

MOTHER

I wish she wouldn't smoke. Would you like a drink?

ANDY

Yeah. I'll get us one.

MOTHER

Scotch and soda for me. "Scotch and three bubbles!"

ANDY

I'll have four bubbles then.

MOTHER

Ah! Ha ha! Yes!

Makes drinks. She is thoughtful, introspective and
slurring her words a little bit.

MOTHER

I am going to miss you kids.

ANDY

Well, hopefully not.

MOTHER

Oh, it was nice, but it won't be the same. Everything changes.

ANDY

I guess it does.

MOTHER

I envy you two starting out. Good Lord she's had a hard time of it.

(Takes ANDY'S hand)

You'll take care of her won't you? Don't let her get to you with her ways. You call me if she starts up. I couldn't handle her, but I can now. I know her tricks. She's like HIM... But you - you're all she has. Promise me.

ANDY

(gulp.)

Now, now. I'm not all she has. She's a strong... independent woman who - who doesn't need anybody.

MOTHER

... Yes... Yes that's right.

ANDY

There, you see?

MOTHER

She is her own person. My daughter.

ANDY

Of course she is. She sure as hell is.

MOTHER

(takes a drink.)

You know my mother was a psychic. One day when I was pregnant she pointed at my belly - "That one is going to break your heart," she said. Oh God! What a thing to say to a mother to be. Especially after she was so right about - other things.

ANDY

Other things?

She nods toward the father. Finally with a thumb...

MOTHER

Him.

ANDY

Oh.

MOTHER

I should have listened to my mother about that one.

ANDY

Oh!?

MOTHER

She thought he was a brute - a boar - like the pig, not boring -

ANDY

Yeah, I -

MOTHER

Of course he was. She said he's going to hurt you every way a man can hurt a woman. Well I was going to prove her wrong of course.

ANDY

Did your mother have any good news?

MOTHER

(laughs too hard at this. Holds his hand.)

Not when it came to me. She was a cold woman and hard as nails. Her hands were always cold come to think of it. Probably where I get it. She kept it cold in the house too.

(Drinks.)

She told me not to marry him. Came right out and said it. But we were poor and I knew that man was going to make something of himself, that he would not rest until he had something to show. I swore that I was not going to live like a poor person my whole life like my parents. By the time we were married, he was already doing quite well for himself. But the truth was, I was in love with another man. He worked for daddy. But I was not going to be a butchers wife like my mother. In that tiny apartment above that butcher's shop. The heat never worked. The walls were paper thin. I swore I would have more, I would see the world. I would have nice things and my kids would have nice clothes to wear to school. David was his name. David Altobelli. He was so handsome. His big hands were so strong, yet so gentle. What a piece of meat he was! The first time I saw what he had to work with, I didn't know if I should run out of there or grab hold of it and - well... He was the first man I ever took in my mouth. Oh, the hell with it. Every generation thinks they invented sucking and fucking. Well believe me you didn't.

ANDY

(clinging to sanity)

Um. So your mother liked ... David?

MOTHER

She would have found something not to like about him too in time. I broke his heart. Maybe we would have all been happier if I had married him. I wanted different things. Nice things. That's not wrong is it?

ANDY

No, everyone wants nice things.

MOTHER

Yes, well. Some more than others I guess. I was there when my mother died you know. I watched her take her last breath.

ANDY

I didn't know that.

MOTHER

We had put her in assisted living. It was a very nice place. A nice place and we were glad to do it. There was just no room here. The kids were both home still and even if there was room I don't know if I would have exposed them to that. I went to see her every Sunday even though half the time she didn't know I was there. She was cruel with me right up until the end. I usually went by myself of course. I had brought her some sweaters from the storage where we kept her things. I was only there a few minutes and I had to use the bathroom so I did, and when I came out she was half standing up and holding on to the chair in the funniest way and grabbing her chest. Before I could act - before I could do anything, she plopped back down into the chair. She was having a heart attack and her lung function was shutting down. It was as if she had waited for me to be there. She waited to do it right in front of me. I could have gone and gotten the medics and they might have even revived her. But what on Earth for? An unwanted, unloved old woman in an empty room. Ooh, I just gave myself a chill. No, I watched her die right there. I let her take center stage. I went up to her, I looked in her eyes and I asked her, "What is it like?" I don't think she heard me. She had this surprised look on her face.

(pause)

Of course I told the nurses that I found her that way. I never told the kids that story. I didn't want to scare them.

ANDY

That might have done it.

MOTHER

(laughing)

Do you think so?

Daughter enters.

DAUGHTER

Andy - we have to talk.

MOTHER

Who wants cake?

FATHER enters from hall. Having just showered he is wearing a too small bathrobe. He still carries his book.

FATHER

I do!

DAUGHTER

Dad, put some clothes on.

MOTHER

Would you like some?

FATHER

I think I am perfectly reasonably attired. Don't you Andy?

ANDY

Stately.

DAUGHTER

We can see your balls in that thing Dad.

FATHER

You shouldn't be looking. Did you ever hear a daughter talk to her father in such a way?

DAUGHTER

You love it.

MOTHER

What are you two going on about? Hon would you like your dessert?

FATHER

Just a sliver. Then I'm off to bed. Got a seven AM tee time with Bob Mulrooney.

FATHER pads off to his chair where he sits and reads and waits for his cake.

MOTHER heads into the kitchen.

FATHER

And bring me my pills!

DAUGHTER and ANDY alone:

DAUGHTER

What is going on?

ANDY

I'm sorry.

DAUGHTER

“YOU'RE SORRY!?” Why are you doing this?

ANDY

I've been doing a lot of thinking. A lot happened when I was home.

DAUGHTER

You came here to break up with me?

ANDY

Would you have rather I called?

DAUGHTER

Why? What happened? Why didn't you tell me you were unhappy?

ANDY

I am NOT happy. And you didn't even notice.

DAUGHTER

Why didn't you say something?

ANDY

What would you have said if I did? You walk through life swinging a hammer and all I can do is duck. You would have yelled and screamed and begged until I gave in like I always do.

DAUGHTER

So you have been at home planning this?

ANDY

Yes.

DAUGHTER

(beat)

Please, just don't tell me it's her.

ANDY

It is not. Not entirely.

DAUGHTER

Are you fucking serious? KELLY !?

ANDY

It's not just her.

DAUGHTER

Oh fucking bullshit.

ANDY

Listen.

DAUGHTER

Get away from me! Did you fuck her? Get away from me!

She paces, he watches, uncertain.

ANDY

Fine whatever. I just - I would like to explain.

DAUGHTER

Is this real? Is this really happening? You are leaving me forever? Leaving me here?

(pause.)

I should have come with you. I could have prevented all of this.

ANDY

All of what? You think you just -

DAUGHTER

You're going back to Kelly!

ANDY

I don't know that yet. I really don't.

DAUGHTER

What is this hold she has over you?

ANDY

Nobody has a hold over me!

DAUGHTER

Oh please you're weak. You're fucking weak.

ANDY

Whatever.

DAUGHTER

Oh God, and I asked my father for a job for you!

ANDY

That's what I mean! This isn't me! None of this is me! I'm not who you want me to be. You just don't want to be alone!

DAUGHTER

I was trying to help you.

ANDY

No you weren't. You were trying to turn me into your father.

DAUGHTER

Just don't leave me for Kelly. If you're not happy, or you don't want to get married or you hate my parents - fine, but just don't say her fucking name around me.

ANDY

I'm sorry but this isn't easy for me either.

DAUGHTER

You can just go run off to your other girlfriend! I thought you loved me!

ANDY

I do love you. But maybe not the way a husband ought to love his wife.

DAUGHTER

Get away from me! You want to go? Go!

He sees his bags by the door and begins to carry them out.

DAUGHTER picks up some of her stuff, starts to bring it back into the house, but can not bear to do it.

MOTHER passes through with the cake for father.

After another moment DAUGHTER disappears into the hallway.

ANDY enters, gets more of his stuff, makes uncomfortable eye contact with MOTHER and ducks back out with the bags.

She pretends not to notice the tension in the room and hurries into the den.

She whispers.

Darling...

MOTHER

Yes dear.

FATHER

I think something's happening.

MOTHER

How do you mean?

FATHER

I think something's happening with Andy! I think they're having a fight! I think they're breaking up.

MOTHER

What? Breaking up?

FATHER

MOTHER

Keep your voice down!

(He rolls his eyes.)

Don't roll your eyes at me!

FATHER

I didn't roll my eyes. You should mind your own business.

MOTHER

What?

FATHER

I said MIND YOUR OWN DAMN BUSINESS!

MOTHER

They're having a fight! They're breaking up.

FATHER

What makes you say that?

MOTHER

She's upset and he's moving his things out to the van.

FATHER

They're moving out.

MOTHER

He's only bringing out his bags.

(pause)

He never gave her a diamond.

FATHER

He doesn't believe in them. "Blood diamonds," remember?

MOTHER

It always seemed suspicious to me. You want to marry a girl you give her a diamond ring, that's just the way it's been since time immemorial.

FATHER

Why do you think they're breaking up?

ANDY enters the dining room.

MOTHER

I know when my daughter is upset. And he couldn't even look me in the eye just now.

FATHER finally rises and crosses toward door. He sees ANDY.

MOTHER loiters trying to eavesdrop but can't hear what they are saying.

FATHER

What the hell is going on?

ANDY

Well, a lot.

FATHER

You've got my wife a little concerned.

ANDY

I'm sorry. I don't know what to say.

(pause)

This is really awkward. But, I think we're not going to be getting married or moving in together right now.

Pause.

FATHER

I know it's not always easy. Come on now, let's not do anything rash.

(gestures to table)

Why don't you tell me what she's done this time?

ANDY

She hasn't done anything.

MOTHER enters from living area.

MOTHER

Is everything all right?

FATHER

Just leave us alone mother.

DAUGHTER enters.

DAUGHTER

OUT! Everybody out!

MOTHER

(to ANDY)

What did you do?

ANDY

I'm moving home. I have to go.

MOTHER

What do you mean, 'you have to go?'

ANDY

This is not how I wanted this to happen.

FATHER

The horse is out of the barn now, kid.

DAUGHTER

He's leaving me.

(pause.)

For an ex-girlfriend.

ANDY

That's not true.

DAUGHTER

He doesn't want to marry me.

MOTHER

An ex-girlfriend?

ANDY

That's not entirely true.

FATHER

You better start talking fella.

ANDY, meanders toward the living space, feeling a little surrounded.

DAUGHTER

Tell them about her. Tell them about Kelly.

MOTHER

Who?

FATHER

Don't tell me.

ANDY

It's not about Kelly.

MOTHER

Who's Kelly?

DAUGHTER

HIS EX GIRLFRIEND!

MOTHER

I can hear you!

DAUGHTER

I think we all deserve an explanation. My parents took you into their home. Treated you like family.

ANDY

Kelly is somebody I knew growing up. We were high school sweethearts. We were THAT couple. We tried to stay together when we went off to separate colleges. That didn't work out. Maybe one does need to go out and live and explore the world a little. Other places. Other people. I would hear about her from friends. I saw all those friends this past week.

DAUGHTER

And she was there.

ANDY

But I am not leaving because of Kelly. She was there, everyone was there. It was home.

FATHER

My daughter may not be a saint - but she deserves better than this.

ANDY

You can never just say anything nice about her - you always have to say something mean first, then something nice.

FATHER

I do not do that.

MOTHER

I don't want to hear this.

FATHER

Some old girlfriend.

MOTHER

You were happy enough here until you had someplace else to go.

ANDY

I don't really have any place to go. Except back home. I don't belong here. I don't belong in this town with people like -

FATHER

Like who?

MOTHER

What the hell is going on?

ANDY

(to DAUGHTER)

You're sick still and you're unhappy and I fear you always may be.

DAUGHTER

I'M TRYING TO GET BETTER!

ANDY

A young man's contempt for where he comes from is just that. Later, if you're lucky, you realize you are where you come from. For better or worse. And there is good there. I've been trying to fit myself into your life. Into this town and these people.

DAUGHTER

You don't love me anymore.

ANDY

... I think someone else may be able to love you even more.

MOTHER

Oh for -

FATHER

This guy's a regular politician.

ANDY

I've been lying to myself. Out of some sense of politeness maybe, or fear of the truth. I left home because I wanted to change. I wanted to rebel against the small town ways I grew up around. I considered myself so lucky to be keeping this company in Greenwich Connecticut and all of that. Day trips into New York City - all this money. But this is not who I am.

(to DAUGHTER)

But this is who you are. It's one hundred percent where you are from. And you are never going to change that. I'm sorry.

(off her rejection)

Would you rather find this out later?

(to FATHER)

After a big expensive wedding...

(MOTHER)

Or kids?

MOTHER

I'm tired of this song and dance. This is about some girl. Some girl from back home.

ANDY

Some people are dug from the same earth, and they grow in the same way. We grew up together in the same tiny town. Our folks bump into each other at the supermarket. Things that are important like what a home should be like and-

DAUGHTER

What about me?

ANDY

Be honest. We had something in common. We needed each other for a while, but that time has passed hasn't it? We met in college we were drunk and crazy together. We had fun and we laughed. The only thing we have in common now is -

DAUGHTER

We can start all over again. We're grown up! I do want a family! It's going to be so good...

(breaks down)

ANDY

You're young and you are smart and you can do anything you want with the rest of ...

MOTHER

Get out!

DAUGHTER

Mother!

ANDY

What?

MOTHER

GET OUT OF MY HOUSE! I've had about enough of you!

FATHER

Mother, stop!

MOTHER

You know when I first met you I thought you were a fag?

(ANDY has to suppress a laugh.)

You think that's funny?

ANDY

Um, I - no. Yes, Sure. I do think that's funny.

DAUGHTER

Mom! Dad! Please go in the other room! Please.

MOTHER

I'm not going anywhere.

DAUGHTER

Do I have to get dumped in front of my parents!? Does my life have to suck this much!?
COULD WE HAVE A LITTLE PRIVACY PLEASE?

FATHER

Come on Mother, come on into the other room...

MOTHER

Get your hands off me.

She stomps toward the kitchen. ANDY is blocking her way.

MOTHER
(MORE)

Excuse me.

She exits.

FATHER walks almost sadly into his den.

ANDY and DAUGHTER seem to circle each other.

DAUGHTER

Did you ever cheat on me?

ANDY

No.

DAUGHTER

Did you ever love me?

ANDY

Maybe not.

(off her reaction)

We like each other. A lot. We had a lot of fun. We both had nobody else for a while.

DAUGHTER

Is there anything I can say to make you realize that this is a mistake?

ANDY

I don't think so.

DAUGHTER

You need me.

(He doesn't respond)

Why? Why?

(She starts to break down. She goes to him, cries on his shoulder.)

DAUGHTER(cont'd)

He comforts her with awkward guilt.)

No! You're not here anymore. Don't do that!

ANDY

Okay. This is my fault. My fault for letting it get this far.

DAUGHTER

Is it them? Is it my family?

ANDY

I wanted to see you get back on your feet and stand up to them. I still hope that happens.

DAUGHTER

My dad paid the security on that apartment. I'm getting out of here anyway. You don't know what I'm capable of.

ANDY

Good for you.

DAUGHTER

Oh, fuck you.

Pause. She wanders, her mood shifts yet again.

DAUGHTER

You're going to go on that Alaska cruise without me now.

ANDY

No. I won't.

DAUGHTER

Don't just say that.

ANDY

I'm not. That was our thing.

DAUGHTER

Kelly get sea-sick?

(beat)

I'm going to miss going to the movies with you.

ANDY

Talking shit during the previews.

DAUGHTER

Sneaking in beer.

ANDY

The time you dropped your bottle and it rolled all the way down to the front row.

DAUGHTER

It was my last one. It was full too.

ANDY

And sneaking into the neighbor's pool at night.

DAUGHTER

They were gone all summer.

ANDY

Except the dog wasn't!

They both smile warmly.

DAUGHTER

I drove you away didn't I?

ANDY

No.

DAUGHTER

Was it living here with them?

(beat)

Let's start over...

MOTHER enters, defiantly with a steaming plate of pot roast.

She sits down at the table and starts to eat.

MOTHER

Don't mind me.

DAUGHTER

What are you doing?

MOTHER

I was hungry so I heated up a little pot roast for myself.

DAUGHTER

DO YOU MIND?

MOTHER

Why would I mind?

(to ANDY)

Oh, are you still here?

ANDY

I'm sorry I'll go.

DAUGHTER

Daaaad!!!

FATHER rises and heads to the dining room.

FATHER

What is it?

DAUGHTER

Help me with her please.

MOTHER

I don't need to be helped!

DAUGHTER

I didn't SAY...

FATHER

Look kid - I can't say I entirely blame you for what you're doing but I really don't like the way you have gone about this.

MOTHER

(with a slam of the fork, she rises.)

Am I the only one on my daughters side?

(to Andy)

Settling for the likes of you? She could have married a doctor or a businessman or Bob Junior - men like you - common men - you see a girl like her with breeding and you see she's weak and - sure she can't hold her liquor, maybe you were part of the problem, Mister Party Boy! You think I don't know what went on at that school!?

DAUGHTER

MOM! You make everything worse!

MOTHER

“You can’t go home again.” Remember that.

DAUGHTER

He’s not breaking up with you!

FATHER

She’s upset now - come here Mother.

MOTHER

Nobody marries the person they really want to! Something always gets in the way. “The one that got away!” That’s what they call it. You take what you get and you swallow it. But Andy here is going to go back and get her, well good for him.

FATHER

I married the girl I wanted to.

MOTHER

Tell us another one.

FATHER

You’re drunk and you’re embarrassing yourself. You should just shut up.

DAUGHTER

Yes please! This is not about you.

FATHER

Let him go. Our daughter can stay here as long as she likes.

MOTHER

Oh I bet!

DAUGHTER

Mother!

MOTHER

I just bet! You’d love nothing more!

DAUGHTER

Mom!

FATHER

Why can't you get that out of your sick head?

MOTHER

Who's sick? Who's sick?

ANDY

What is she talking about?

DAUGHTER

She's wasted.

MOTHER

We've all wasted everything.

FATHER

My wife gets this idea in her head..!

DAUGHTER

Could we please...

FATHER

I will not stand here in MY OWN HOUSE and be accused of this kind of...

ANDY stares at DAUGHTER.

DAUGHTER

What?

ANDY

Is everything ... okay?

FATHER

Everything is just fine.

MOTHER

Leave! Leave and take her with you. He's my husband!

DAUGHTER

Oh my god what are you talking about? You think I fuck my own father? Is that it?

MOTHER

I think you'd love nothing more.

DAUGHTER

Oh my God!

FATHER

You need to get help! You need to be put away somewhere.

MOTHER

You're a pervert. Forty years in your bed you think I don't know? With your lubes and your vibrators and your magazines!?

ANDY

Ho . . . (ly shit)

He looms over her with murder in his eyes. He seems to get control.

DAUGHTER slips off to the den and goes to her father's chair.

FATHER

That's it, good-bye. I'm finished. I'm calling first thing in the morning, and I'm getting a divorce. I've reached the end of this.

(to Andy)

She got the wrong idea in her head once and she can't let it go.

(to MOTHER)

Why do you have to make up delusions and blab them out in front of the whole damn world? What kind of woman is jealous of her own daughter and imagines such shit?!

DAUGHTER has the gun and walks slowly back toward them.

MOTHER

You want a divorce? Go ahead Mister. Try me. You think I'm Abigail Juliusburger around the corner?

FATHER

I never laid a hand on her!

ANDY sees DAUGHTER.

ANDY

What are you doing?

DAUGHTER

STOP!

DAUGHTER FIRES the gun into the floor.

MOTHER screams.

FATHER

Son of a bitch!

DAUGHTER

(to FATHER)

Remember this? The last time you really listened to me was when I had this pointed at your head. After you beat Mom black and blue. We all remember that night. So, what Mom? I wanted some kind of connection to my oh-so distant father and I learned a long time ago that I could make him notice me like that? So I flirt with him and say things and wear too small towels coming out of the shower. What woman wouldn't notice that? But you're so small - you're such a proprietary little bitch - you think it's some kind of competition.

ANDY is inching closer.

ANDY

You don't need the gun.

DAUGHTER

You shut up! You've abandoned me! You shouldn't keep a gun in the house Dad. It really hasn't worked out for you.

ANDY

She's been drinking. She's been drinking all night.

DAUGHTER

FUCK YOU!

ANDY

You guys don't even seem to notice. You don't want to.

MOTHER

Is that true?

DAUGHTER

What? Is what true Mother? ... Lube? Really?

FATHER

Are you drunk?

DAUGHTER

The apple doesn't fall from the tree... Far from the tree does it?

FATHER

Give me that gun! I told you if you took one more drink you were not welcome in this house!

ANDY suddenly grabs DAUGHTER, gets hold of the gun hand and - not without some struggle and reaction from the parents, he gets it away from her.

DAUGHTER

Asshole!

She nurses a hurt shoulder that is the result of their scuffle.

ANDY

ENOUGH! My God!

FATHER

I'll take that.

ANDY

Hold on a minute.

FATHER

Do I have to call the police or are you going to give me my gun?

ANDY unloads the gun slowly, puts the bullets in his pocket and hands him the gun.

ANDY

Self made men are the worst.

FATHER brings the gun back to the magazine rack near his chair.

MOTHER

I suppose you blame me for this too.

DAUGHTER

One more word out of you Mom and I swear to God!

MOTHER

Oh, of course, there we go! I made him leave you. How can you blame the poor kid!

ANDY quietly heads over to where his bags are.

DAUGHTER

He's not leaving me!

FATHER reenters the dining room space.

During the following, ANDY quietly walks out the door.

FATHER

I have one more thing to say and then I'm done with both of you. I may not have been perfect, in fact I may be a real son of a bitch, but I provided for this family. I have done everything you've asked - therapy and everything else and you won't let bygones be bygones. Neither one of you.

DAUGHTER looks for ANDY, realizes he is gone.

MOTHER

I'll take you for everything - I'll take this house and burn it down and toast marshmallows while I wait for the fire department.

FATHER

I only hope I'm in it when you do.

DAUGHTER

(returns from hallway or looking out
window.)

He's leaving. He really left.

FATHER

You're better off without him, sweetheart.

FATHER pours himself a drink.

Well...

MOTHER

I never thought he'd do it.

DAUGHTER

FATHER approaches DAUGHTER.

FATHER

You okay kiddo?

SHE WINCES. Suddenly, she lets out a terrible, gut wrenching scream.

Both parents watch her horrified.

Not even hiding it, DAUGHTER pours herself a drink.

MOTHER sits at the table, starts to cry.

MOTHER

How could you let him talk to me that way?

FATHER

I'm sleeping in the guest room.

He exits toward the hallway.

DAUGHTER exits toward the front door.

Alone, MOTHER picks up the fork and begins to eat.

She seems to eat with almost a vengeance, she is so upset, shovelling forkfuls of the meat into her mouth.

Suddenly she stops. Eyes wide.

She grabs her throat.

DAUGHTER enters, returning from the front door.

DAUGHTER

He's gone...

MOTHER stands up now beginning to panic. She didn't hear her and doesn't know she is there.

She clutches her throat, pounds her chest. Panicking, she slams a hand on the table, reaching for a glass of wine, she knocks it over.

DAUGHTER moves to help her - but then stops.

MOTHER continues to choke to death in horrified silence.

Face reddening, eyes bulging, she turns around looking for help.

DAUGHTER ducks into the hallway before she can see her.

MOTHER spins back out, and drags the table cloth off the table with her as she falls to her knees.

DAUGHTER comes out of hiding and moves closer, watching her mother's final moments.

MOTHER finally succumbs and falls over, dead as her daughter watches impassively.

The lights fade.

THE END