

# Knots

By Lindsay Price

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## CHARACTERS

### **5 Brothers and sisters**

Opal Godfrey (widowed, mid forties)

Graham Brown (married, mid forties)

Bella Brown (single, early forties)

Walter Brown (divorced, late thirties)

May Samuel (married, early thirties)

### **1 Outsider**

Ann Quinlan (single, early twenties)

## SETTING

The play takes place in the family room of the Brown Household. It is a large, comfortable space with well worn but good looking furniture. There are two exits stage right. The upstage exit leads to the front door and the stairs. The downstage exit leads to the kitchen, back staircase and driveway. The door to the kitchen is a swing door.

ACT ONE

Late Saturday Afternoon

*The space is covered with the aftermath of a baby shower. The recipient of the shower, MAY sits on the couch centre stage surrounded by baby things and wrapping paper. OPAL is just off stage at the front door seeing off the last of the guests.*

OPAL: *(offstage)* Call me when you decide all right? You have my number? All right.

MAY: *(reading the tag on a baby shirt)* Hand wash only? They have got to be kidding.

OPAL: *(off)* Good bye! Have a safe drive!

MAY: Opal look at this, the cleaning instructions are almost as long as the shirt.

OPAL: *(coming into the room)* What a day.

MAY: Did you make a sale?

OPAL: She has to "discuss it" with Ben. The child is seven; he's not going to care who caters his birthday party. They never do. If I had known Alice was looking for a caterer for her son I would have made something more...at a more appropriate time.

MAY: The food was fabulous. You did a wonderful job.

OPAL: It was rushed.

MAY: How did you manage to keep Mom out of the kitchen?

OPAL: Bribery. Where is she?

MAY: *(with a smile and nodding her head towards the kitchen)* Where else?

OPAL: The shower hasn't even been over five seconds.

MAY: *(holding up a hat and booties)* Do you remember who gave these to me?

OPAL: Mary Jane Ferris.

MAY: And who is she?

OPAL: We are in the same tai chi class.

MAY: *(with a sideways glance toward the kitchen)* You did call Bella right?

OPAL: I called her three times. She's never there.

MAY: Something might have come up.

OPAL: Doing what?

MAY: She's got a lot on her mind. As long as she's here by tonight. It was a lovely shower. Thank you.

OPAL: Were you surprised?

MAY: Very.

OPAL: I couldn't believe you hadn't had one yet.

MAY: I didn't want to press my luck.

OPAL: It's bad luck not to have a shower.

MAY: I should tell that to my doctor. Maybe she'll stop worrying so much now.

OPAL: Brown women have always had to be careful. Miscarriages run in the family.

MAY: You're the only person I know who can say 'miscarriage' without whispering.

OPAL: I still think you should see Beth's Doctor. He was very good and...

MAY: No, no. I like my doctor, I want her to be cautious. I'm just tired of sitting. *(she laughs)* Listen to me, "I'm tired" whine, whine, whine.

OPAL: *(she absently runs her finger along the window ledge)* Look at all this dust! This won't do at all.

MAY: *(holding up another present)* This mobile is beautiful. I almost want it for myself.

OPAL: Grace picked it out. *(surveying the room)* What a disaster. Do you know where Mom keeps her garbage bags these days?

MAY: Broom closet.

OPAL: *(wiping her hands)* Broom closet. *(heading towards the kitchen door)* She's always changing that kitchen around. I get lost looking for forks and knives.

ANN: *(entering as OPAL goes by)* The guys want to know if it's safe to come out.

GRAHAM: *(offstage in kitchen)* Don't ask like that!

ANN: Those were his exact words.

OPAL: *(talking to the guys as she goes into the kitchen)* I can't believe you two spent the whole time in the kitchen!

GRAHAM: *(offstage in kitchen)* Showers are for girls!

MAY: *(calling out)* Very dangerous girls! I wouldn't come out here yet. It's pretty unstable! I could blow at any moment! *(in a lowered voice to ANN)* He'll be through that door in 10 seconds, tops.

ANN: Why?

MAY: Opal's in cleaning mode. She'll make him do something if she sees him just sitting there and my brother would rather do volunteer work in Bosnia than help clean.

ANN: See, when you're an only child volunteering in Bosnia is not an option. The mess is still there when you get back. I'm also supposed to be subtly finding out how you're doing.

MAY: When I decide to get off this couch, I may need a shovel.

ANN: So you don't need a drink or a pillow or....

MAY: You can tell mom I'm a-ok.

*GRAHAM dashes out of the kitchen.*

OPAL: *(offstage)* Graham!

GRAHAM: (*calling out behind him*) It's my duty as the eldest boy to check out the safety of all the rooms in the house. (*turning to MAY*) Looks pretty safe to me.

MAY: This mobile is beautiful.

GRAHAM: Grace bought it.

MAY: It's still beautiful.

GRAHAM: She really wanted to come today.

MAY: I'll call her tonight.

WALTER: (*peeking out behind kitchen door*) Is it safe to come out?

MAY: Yes Walter, all the nasty women are gone.

WALTER: Good. No more tai chi demonstrations.

MAY: It's supposed to be very relaxing.

WALTER: Mary Jane Ferris wanted to kick my head in. How relaxing is that?

MAY: People wind down in different ways.

GRAHAM: (*play fighting*) A kick in the head always does me good.

WALTER: (*playing back*) I'll give you a kick in the head.

MAY: Boys, no fighting in front of the womb please.

GRAHAM: (*like an announcement*) No fighting in front of the womb!

WALTER: Only love in front of the womb.

*WALTER and GRAHAM simultaneously attack MAY,  
showering her with hugs and kisses.*

MAY: Augh! Get off me. (*they do so*) Eww Gross. Now I've got cooties.

GRAHAM: You wear them well.

MAY: *(to ANN)* Count your lucky stars you don't have brothers.

ANN: They don't seem so bad.

WALTER: Ah ha! You see, we're not so bad!

MAY: Betrayed! I've been betrayed!

*OPAL yells from the kitchen.*

OPAL: *(offstage)* Ann!

ANN: Coming!

MAY: Don't let her run you ragged.

ANN: I won't.

GRAHAM: If she asks you to dust, run to the hills.

MAY: Or Bosnia.

GRAHAM: That's not a bad idea.

*ANN exits.*

GRAHAM: All right young lady, you got some 'splaining to do.

MAY: What's the matter? Did someone touch your car again?

WALTER: I already apologized for that.

GRAHAM: *(pointing after ANN)* Why, did mom hire her?

MAY: Why, don't you ask mom?

GRAHAM: I did. Now I'm asking you.

MAY: She needed help.

GRAHAM: That's what she said.

WALTER: What's wrong with mom getting some help in?

GRAHAM: Mom has been railing for years on the evils of paying someone to "help" and now all of a sudden...

WALTER: So maybe she changed her mind.

GRAHAM: She barely lets Ann lift a finger.

MAY: Ann does lots of stuff.

GRAHAM: Like what?

MAY: I don't know. She lifts things. It doesn't matter, I think she's good for mom. She's good to talk to and I like her so shut up.

WALTER: How long has she been here?

MAY: A month or so.

GRAHAM: She is too young for you.

WALTER: I didn't say anything.

GRAHAM: She's too young.

WALTER: I said nothing!

MAY: She's twenty-two.

WALTER: It wouldn't be illegal.

GRAHAM: She's too young for you.

WALTER: Say dad, can I have the keys to the car tonight?

GRAHAM: All I'm saying...

WALTER: I know what you're saying, and I'm saying I didn't say it.

GRAHAM: All right, all right.

*ANN enters from the kitchen but before she can speak,  
OPAL'S voice calls her back*

OPAL: *(offstage)* Use the backstairs!

*ANN vanishes back into the kitchen.*

WALTER: Although it would kill Kathleen.

GRAHAM: Good point.

MAY: Graham!

GRAHAM: Well, it would.

WALTER: *(holding up a bootie to MAY)* Were you surprised?

MAY: Very.

GRAHAM: And how's...*(he goes to touch MAY'S stomach and stops himself)*

MAY: Good. I think.

WALTER: Everything's going to be all right, right?

MAY: I'm a-ok. *(holding up sweater)* What do you think of this?

GRAHAM: It's... a baby sweater.

WALTER: It's ugly.

GRAHAM: Geez Walter.

WALTER: What?

MAY: It's from Aunt Ellen. She made it herself. I think the pom pom strings make the outfit don't you?

GRAHAM: You're supposed to cut those off baby clothes. Otherwise, they'll wrap the strings around their necks and die.

MAY: That's awful!

GRAHAM: They don't do it on purpose.

OPAL: *(entering with garbage bags)* No, no, no, these aren't going to be large enough. Mom, I need big ones! Big ones!

MAY: Opal did you cut the strings out of your kids clothes?

OPAL: *(on her way back into the kitchen)* Of course.

WALTER: Strings make Kathleen foam at the mouth.

GRAHAM: Does she still send out those “why are you trying to kill my children” notes?

MAY: I got one of those when I tried to sneak Violet a slinky.

WALTER: Did the girls come downstairs for the shower?

MAY: *(shaking her head)* Sorry.

WALTER: Oh.

MAY: Give them time.

WALTER: It's been a year.

MAY: Give it another shot before dinner. We'll go up together ok?

GRAHAM: The twins hardly ever talk to me. This is just a prequel to what they'll be like as teenagers.

WALTER: Uh huh.

GRAHAM: I hear when kids hit their late thirties they're a joy to behold.

WALTER: I'm in my late thirties.

GRAHAM: And aren't you a treasure?

MAY: They can't stay in that room all weekend. They have to eat. And pee.

WALTER: Wouldn't that be a great life. Just eatin and peein. I need another drink. Graham?

GRAHAM: No thanks. (*WALTER goes into the kitchen*) I need at least five. He's a very depressing person to talk to.

MAY: I thought things were going well.

GRAHAM: I've talked to him more today than I did in our entire childhood. The Ins and out of an ice rink just doesn't make for interesting conversation. And he chews funny.

MAY: Think of all the brownie points you're chalking up.

GRAHAM: With whom?

MAY: Me!

GRAHAM: Oh, of course. I thought it was someone who was going to give me a winning lottery ticket or a trip to Bermuda. You didn't tell him Bella was coming did you?

MAY: I didn't know things were so bad with his girls. They returned Mom's Christmas presents.

GRAHAM: That Kathleen is something else.

MAY: Go keep an eye on him ok?

GRAHAM: Why?

MAY: Because I asked you to.

GRAHAM: He's a big boy. A large man. I'll even go out on a limb and call him a grown-up.

MAY: I'm worried about him.

GRAHAM: How come you never worry about me?

MAY: Who worries about Superman?

GRAHAM: I wish.

MAY: How are the twins?

GRAHAM: Twice the fun.

MAY: Buck up. I hear that when kids hit their late thirties....

GRAHAM: They have to live to their late thirties. *(on his way back to the kitchen, WALTER walks back in the room)* Walter!

WALTER: Let me have your keys.

GRAHAM: Why?

WALTER: Mom wants someone to go to the store and your car is the last in the driveway.

GRAHAM: I'll move it.

WALTER: I don't want you to move it. I want to drive it.

GRAHAM: No, no, no and no.

WALTER: Why not?

GRAHAM: You drive a cheap crapola hunk of junk. You have no concept of how to drive an expensive car.

WALTER: Give me the keys.

GRAHAM: It'll get away from you.

WALTER: Is that why you drive at two miles an hour? So the car won't "get away?"

GRAHAM: I drive the speed limit.

WALTER: Old ladies with walkers move faster than you.

GRAHAM: It's an expensive car.

WALTER: Why did you buy the thing if you're not going to drive it right?

GRAHAM: Fast does not equal right.

WALTER: I just love your dad impression. Do you do any movie stars?

GRAHAM: I do not sound like dad. I drive the speed limit.

WALTER: "Fast does not equal right."

GRAHAM: Shut up!

MAY: Why don't you both go? Reacquaint yourself with the neighbourhood.

GRAHAM: I'm driving.

WALTER: Let me drive.

GRAHAM: No.

WALTER: Please?

GRAHAM: No.

WALTER: Please?

*The two exit towards the kitchen. The doorbell rings. MAY tries to get up but she is trapped under all of her presents.*

MAY: Hey, somebody, come and get the door. I can't get up.

*The doorbell rings again. MAY tries to get up and can't.*

MAY: Somebody's at the door!

*Someone leans on the doorbell*

MAY: I NEED A SHOVEL!!!

ANN: On my way!

*ANN comes running out of the kitchen and runs to the door. MAY rolls ungracefully off the couch and on to the floor.*

BELLA: *(calling from offstage)* Hello?

MAY: Hells Bells!

*BELLA enters with a present. ANN follows behind.*

BELLA: What are you doing?

MAY: You made it!

*BELLA and ANN rush over to help MAY up.*

BELLA: What are you doing on the floor?

MAY: You know you're too pregnant when the couch wins.

BELLA: *(to ANN)* On the count of three: One, two, three.

*They help MAY up. As soon as MAY is up, ANN moves away.*

MAY: *(holding her arms out)* Give us a hug.

BELLA: It's so good to see you. *(hugging MAY)* Did you start without me?

MAY: It doesn't matter. I'm just glad you came.

BELLA: What are you talking about? It's quarter to four. I'm early. *(she turns to hang up her coat)*

ANN: I can take your coat.

BELLA: I can hang up my own coat. *(to MAY)* Go sit down.

MAY: Sitting.

*BELLA exits out of sight to hang up her coat. OPAL peeks her head out of the kitchen.*

OPAL: Ann, where are those boxes from Gran's house?

ANN: I put them in the basement.

OPAL: Get them will you? Mom wants to show me something.

*OPAL disappears and BELLA re-enters the living room.*

BELLA: *(to ANN, referring to OPAL)* Is she bugging you?

ANN: Of course not.

BELLA: My sister isn't bugging someone? You must have nerves of steel.

MAY: Don't be mean.

BELLA: Whenever I want to get rid of her, I start talking about working in the shelter.  
Homeless people give her the creeps. She has to wash her hands.

MAY: *(laughing)* You are so mean.

*OPAL enters with BIG garbage bags.*

BELLA: Hey Ope.

OPAL: Nice of you to show up.

BELLA: "Hello Bella, how are you?" I'm just fine, thank you for asking.

ANN: I'll just get those boxes.

*ANN exits upstage.*

OPAL: The shower was at two.

BELLA: It is not. You told me four o'clock.

OPAL: I told you two.

BELLA: You told me four. You told me three times, four o'clock.

OPAL: It's not my fault you got it wrong.

BELLA: My fault?

MAY: It doesn't matter so -

OPAL: *(over top)* I know I said two.

*BELLA pulls out her cell phone.*

BELLA: *(still trying to contain herself)* My fault.

MAY: We've got a lot to catch up on and -

OPAL: What are you doing?

BELLA: I kept the first of your four thousand messages.

MAY: Why don't we all sit down and -

OPAL: I left three messages and if you had bothered to call me back -

BELLA: How was I supposed to know you were going to give me the wrong time.

MAY: It doesn't matter what time it -

OPAL: I didn't give you the wrong time.

MAY: Can we just -

BELLA: *(overtop)* Ah ha! Ah ha! Ah! Ha! *(she waves the phone at OPAL)* Listen to that will you! My fault, my eye!

*OPAL grabs the phone from BELLA. She listens for a moment and then closes it. There is a pause as OPAL will not look at BELLA.*

BELLA: Well?

OPAL: I said four.

BELLA: And here it is four o'clock and here I am. Right on time. *(she blows a raspberry)*

OPAL: There is no need to be....

BELLA: *(to MAY)* Where's mom?

MAY: Where else?

BELLA: I'm just gonna go say hi, ok? I'll be right back.

*BELLA leaves. As soon as she does, OPAL has a little temper tantrum with an all over body scream and shake, stamping her feet. It stops almost as soon as it started. OPAL then fixes her hair and goes back to tidying.*

MAY: That's new.

OPAL: She should have called me back.

MAY: It's good that you can push that anger out and move on.

OPAL: Angry? Who's angry?

MAY: Well. It's very healthy.

OPAL: *(she bangs the mantle piece)* It would have taken two seconds. Pick up the phone and talk for two seconds. Is that so hard? No. Would it have taken forever? No. Two seconds.

BELLA: *(entering)* Wow, is she cooking up a storm in there. *(To MAY)* Mom wants to know if....

OPAL: If you had the decency to call me back and confirm I would have known I gave you the wrong time.

BELLA: But there was nothing to talk about! You gave me all the information I needed and more and it's not my fault you screwed up.

OPAL: You should have shown up early to help. I had to do everything by myself.

BELLA: You would have regardless.

MAY: It doesn't matter!

OPAL: You should have been here.

MAY: Hello, anyone remember me? Shower girl? Birthday girl? Pregnant girl with a womb that is very susceptible to loud noises?

OPAL & BELLA: *(very humbly)* Sorry.

MAY: Much better.

BELLA: *(she takes a deep breath)* Why don't we start again? Ok?

OPAL: Ok.

*BELLA leaves the room.*

OPAL: Where is she going?

*The doorbells rings.*

BELLA: *(offstage)* Anyone home?

MAY: Come on in!

OPAL: Honestly.

*BELLA enters*

BELLA: Hello!

OPAL: Hello.

BELLA: Opal! Thanks for letting me know about the shower. How are you?

OPAL: Fine.

BELLA: Listen, I'm sorry I didn't show up early to help.

OPAL: It's all right. I apologize about the mix-up with the time.

BELLA: Apology accepted.

MAY: That was wonderful!

*GRAHAM enters*

GRAHAM: Hey we bought everyone...*(he sees BELLA)* Jesus Christ! *(he turns around and high tails it back to the kitchen.)*

BELLA: What's up with him?

MAY: Don't get upset.

WALTER: *(walking into the room)* What's up with Grah-... *(sees BELLA)* Jesus Christ!  
*(turns and goes back to the kitchen)*

BELLA: What the hell is he doing here!

MAY: Don't get upset.

WALTER: *(calling from the kitchen)* May get into the kitchen!

MAY: You come out!

BELLA: You told me he wasn't going to be here this weekend.

MAY: *(to BELLA)* I know. *(to WALTER)* Come out here!

*MAY ends up doing a dance, which is between yelling at the kitchen door and trying to keep BELLA in the room.*

WALTER: *(calling from the kitchen)* I am not moving. May, you are a dirty rat fink.

OPAL: You didn't tell them?

BELLA: I'm not staying. I was prepared for a quiet get together and I am not prepared for this.

*ANN enters from upstage with a box. She cautiously heads to OPAL.*

MAY: Don't go. Give me a chance to explain. *(turning and talking to the kitchen door)*  
Walter, give me a chance to explain! *(to BELLA)* Don't you walk out that door.

ANN: Where should I...

OPAL: *(to ANN)* I am not going to sit around and watch those two fight. Not on your life.  
Isn't there another box?

BELLA: *(to OPAL)* I take it back. Your apology is not accepted.

WALTER: *(calling)* Double crossing rat fink!

MAY: Sticks and stones Walter. Sticks and Stones!

WALTER: Triple crossing rat fink!

OPAL: Honestly.

BELLA: Why are you being snotty to me? He's the one acting like an idiot.

MAY: Come out here and say that Walter!

WALTER: You can't make me.

OPAL: I am not snotty.

*BELLA snorts at OPAL.*

OPAL: That's disgusting.

BELLA: I learned it at the shelter. *(she snorts again)*

MAY: Act your age, not your shoe size!

OPAL: I have to wash my hands. *(she exits upstage)*

MAY: *(to BELLA)* Just sit down for a second all right? I can explain.

BELLA: You can't spring this on me.

MAY: If I had said anything, you wouldn't have come.

BELLA: Damn straight.

WALTER: *(calling)* I wouldn't have come either.

MAY: *(to WALTER)* Don't eavesdrop Walter, it's rude. *(she starts to bang on the door to the kitchen)* Why don't you join the conversation.

BELLA: *(to ANN)* Do you think it's fair to spring something on an individual when you know full well that they wouldn't want this thing sprung on them?

ANN: I'm going to leave this box on the windowsill.

MAY: Leave her out of it.

BELLA: I'm just asking a question.

ANN: I'll be in the basement if anyone needs me.

MAY: *(to BELLA)* Sit down. We'll talk. How is that going to hurt you?

*OPAL enters, surprising ANN as she's trying to leave.*

OPAL: Where's the other box?

ANN: *(exiting)* Probably still in the basement.

MAY: Please Bella?

BELLA: Where am I supposed to sit?

MAY: Dump those clothes on the floor.

OPAL: Don't dump anything. Give them to me. I'll start putting things in the crib.

MAY: Thank you. *(turning back to the door)* Walter! Walter?

OPAL: We don't want them to get dirty now do we?

*MAY opens the door to the kitchen. WALTER is not there.*

MAY: Where'd he go?

GRAHAM: Up the back staircase.

MAY: Why?

GRAHAM: He said he was going to check on the girls.

MAY: And why didn't you stop him?

GRAHAM: Who am I to get between a man and his kids?

*MAY gives a whimper of frustration, and turns to BELLA.*

OPAL: Well.

MAY: Well.

BELLA: It's a regular family shindig.

MAY: I told you that's what I wanted.

BELLA: I didn't think you meant everybody.

MAY: When I said "the whole family" that should have tipped you off.

BELLA: I have selective hearing. However, I specifically recall you saying he wouldn't be here.

MAY: Really? I don't remember.

BELLA: Must be your selective memory. Why are you standing? Get your butt in a chair.

MAY: I've been sitting all day.

BELLA: You have explicit instructions...

MAY: I know, I know, I'm sitting.

BELLA: Here. (*she hands over her present*) Open this.

MAY: You're avoiding the subject.

BELLA: I am not.

MAY: We're going to have to talk about it eventually.

BELLA: Open the damn present.

OPAL: You shouldn't swear in front of the baby. They can hear things in the womb you know. (*to MAY*) Don't rip the paper!

BELLA: Please rip the paper.

MAY: Did you make the paper?

BELLA: Yes.

MAY: Then I'm saving it.

BELLA: I can only handle one crisis at a time, May.

OPAL: (*perking up*) What crisis?

BELLA: Nothing. (*to MAY*) This isn't going to work.

MAY: You don't know that.

BELLA: You told him I wasn't going to be here either.

MAY: Lies all around. Oh Bella.

*MAY holds up a beautiful hand painted T-shirt.*

BELLA: Do you like it?

OPAL: That's too big for a baby.

BELLA: It's for May. There's a little one in there too.

OPAL: A baby will ruin that in no time flat. You'll never be able to wash it.

BELLA: I'd be honoured if your baby vomited all over the shirt.

MAY: (*hugging BELLA*) Thanks.

GRAHAM: (*peeking around kitchen door*) Is it safe to come out?

BELLA: There isn't any blood.

GRAHAM: Not yet anyway. You look different.

BELLA: Doesn't anybody say hello in this family anymore?

MAY: Hells Bells, you're growing your hair! You called Dr. Bachlauder.

BELLA: I did.

OPAL: Another psychiatrist.

BELLA: How do you know? Maybe I'm getting a tattoo removed.

OPAL: It's a waste of money.

BELLA: I'll keep that in mind.

MAY: Who wants to see my loot?

GRAHAM: I do! I do!

MAY: Bella? (*holding up a pair of booties*) What do you think?

BELLA: I'm so sorry I missed the festivities.

MAY: You're here now.

GRAHAM: (*holding up a bra made out of bows*) You didn't really wear this did you?

MAY: I wore it with pride. It was fun. There's a hat to go with it. And they took pictures.

GRAHAM: Sounds like a lot of fun.

BELLA: Not in my lifetime.

OPAL: Well dear, your ovaries aren't in tip top condition any more are they?

BELLA: I don't know. I haven't asked them.

*ANN enters with another box.*

OPAL: Thank you Ann. Bring it here. Graham, get that other box will you?

GRAHAM: Is Mom trying to move out without telling us?

BELLA: What is all this stuff?

OPAL: It's from Gran's house.

BELLA: I can't believe she's in the rest home for good.

MAY: What are you looking for?

OPAL: Mom told me there's a picture in here of Dad's family. I want to get it framed.

BELLA: Why is Mom stuck with cleaning out Gran's house? What about Uncle Fred?

MAY: Says his arthritis is too bad.

GRAHAM: Mom is the only one I know who got along with her mother in law.

OPAL: Richard's mother hated me. *(looking through the boxes)* I don't see it anywhere.  
Ann can you ask Mom to come in here?

ANN: Sure. *(she exits)*

BELLA: Do you have to order her around like that?

MAY: I get along with Paul's mom.

OPAL: Like what? Isn't she getting paid to help?

BELLA: Never mind.

GRAHAM: Doesn't Paul's mom make those casseroles that turn into rock sculptures if you don't eat them within twenty-four hours?

MAY: Never criticize the casserole; you don't know who might be listening. *(holding up a picture)* You look just like dad.

GRAHAM: I have better looking knees.

BELLA: *(looking at another picture)* Oh my God. Look at those legs. Graham, look.

OPAL: Bella she's your grandmother.

BELLA: That doesn't mean I can't appreciate great legs.

GRAHAM: She certainly wears those tights well.

MAY: Did you know dad took tap lessons when he was a kid?

BELLA: I would kill to have thighs like that.

GRAHAM: Dad? In tights?

MAY: I don't think he wore the tights,

BELLA: Apparently he was quite the hooper. *(she sighs)* What a shame.

GRAHAM: See that would have been very useful information when I was seventeen.  
You just end every argument with: but you took dance lessons. Case closed.

MAY: What's wrong with Dad taking dance lessons?

OPAL: Tap lessons aren't dance lessons.

GRAHAM: What are they scuba lesson?

OPAL: Tap is more dignified for a boy.

BELLA: Yeah that's exactly what Dad used to say about boys who took dance.

*ANN enters.*

OPAL: Ann! Fill these garbage bags for me, will you dear? I don't think we'll worry about recycling today, just stuff everything in.

BELLA: Opal, she's not your maid. Fill your own garbage bags.

ANN: It's ok. I don't mind.

BELLA: Better watch it Ann, you'll get sucked into domestic service for life. Make sure you find time to volunteer at the shelter...

MAY: Is Mom coming?

ANN: Actually she...

OPAL: *(to ANN)* Not the ribbons! Not the ribbons!

GRAHAM: The ribbons! The Ribbons! Oh my God save the ribbons!

*GRAHAM and ANN reach for the same piece of ribbon.  
They stand up right beside each other. BELLA looks at the  
two of them and gives a gasp.*

BELLA: Shit on a stick! (*realizing she's spoken aloud, slaps her hand over her mouth*)

OPAL: Language Bella, language!

MAY: What's the matter?

BELLA: Nothing. (*she starts to fake a hacking cough*) Something just went down the wrong way. I got something caught in my throat.

OPAL: But you're not eating anything.

BELLA: (*still coughing*) I took in some bad air. I'll just go get some water.

ANN: I'll get it for you.

BELLA: No, no, I'm fine. Really. I'll be right back.

*BELLA exits into the kitchen*

GRAHAM: What was that about?

OPAL: Ann, I didn't just see you throw out a \$10.00 bow did I?

ANN: (*retrieving bow*) Sorry. It was an accident.

GRAHAM: (*aside to ANN*) That's what they all say.

*ANN giggles.*

OPAL: What are you two giggling about?

GRAHAM: Nothing.

OPAL: Where's Mom? (*starts heading out to the kitchen*) Mom?

ANN: Actually, she just went upstairs to lie down for a bit.

MAY: Migraine?

ANN: Ah, no, she said she just needed to lie down.

MAY: I knew she didn't look good. *(MAY starts to get up)*

OPAL: And where do you think you're going?

ANN: She said she's fine. She's doesn't want you to worry.

MAY: I should see if she's ok.

OPAL: I'll go.

*BELLA enters.*

MAY: Bella, go check on Mom will you? She has another migraine.

BELLA: I'm on it. *(She starts to exit upstairs)*

GRAHAM: Isn't Walter upstairs?

*BELLA stops.*

MAY: Thanks bigmouth.

BELLA: I think I'll use the backstairs. *(she exits through the kitchen)*

MAY: You have such a big mouth.

GRAHAM: I didn't know you planned for mom to have a migraine so you could send Bella upstairs to run into Walter.

MAY: I didn't plan...I'm working on my feet here.

ANN: Off your feet.

MAY: Off my feet. I hate being fragile.

ANN: Before you know it, the baby will be born and you'll never sit down again.

MAY: I can't wait.

*MAY and ANN fall into a comfortable conversation with each other. OPAL sneaks up beside GRAHAM. MAY and ANN don't really notice.*

ANN: Have you heard from Paul?

MAY: Yesterday. The meeting went beautifully.

ANN: That's great.

OPAL: *(whispering)* Did you talk to Paul?

GRAHAM: Geez, don't scare me like that.

MAY: Listen, I meant it about the job. When will you know how long you'll be in town?

ANN: By the end of the weekend, actually.

OPAL: *(still whispering)* Did you talk to Paul?

GRAHAM: You are so subtle.

MAY: We need all the help we can get. Especially if I have to keep this immobility up.

OPAL: *(aside)* Is he coming tomorrow or not?

GRAHAM: *(aside)* It's all settled.

OPAL: *(to ANN)* Don't throw that paper away it's so pretty.

ANN: Are you nervous?

MAY: A little.

OPAL: She's not nervous; she's been on the baby train since the day she was born.

MAY: It's different when it's your own.

OPAL: You'll be a fine mother.

MAY: But what if I'm not?

GRAHAM: You can always send it back.

MAY: Smart ass.

*BELLA enters.*

MAY: How's Mom?

BELLA: She has the routine down pat. The room is dark, there's a cool cloth over her eyes, she's resting, and all she has to do now is bring it home.

OPAL: You were hardly up there five minutes.

BELLA: Mom and I have been through migraines before.

MAY: Did you talk to Walter?

BELLA: I sure did.

MAY: You did?

BELLA: I talked to Santa Claus and the Easter Bunny too.

MAY: I come from a family of smart asses.\

BELLA: I need a drink.

GRAHAM: Me too please!

BELLA: Are your legs broken? Get your own drink.

*She exits into the kitchen. ANN has finished with the garbage and heads towards the kitchen.*

OPAL: Honestly.

MAY: Shoot!

OPAL: Ann dear would you.... *(she pauses)* Am I ordering you around too much?

ANN: I don't mind. That's what...

OPAL: Good. Don't leave those bags in the kitchen; take them right out the back door.

ANN: Sure.

*ANN exits through the kitchen.*

MAY: Graham, help me up will you? I'm going to go talk to her.

OPAL: You're supposed to...

MAY: I know. I promise, as soon as I get to the kitchen, I'll sit.

GRAHAM: You won't get the two of them together you know. Not in one weekend.

MAY: It's my birthday and I'll do what I want.

GRAHAM: Not till tomorrow.

MAY: Shut up.

*She exits to the kitchen. GRAHAM rattles the ice in his drink and drains his glass.*

GRAHAM: I can't believe I have to go all the way to the kitchen to get a drink. I don't suppose...

OPAL: You must be joking.

GRAHAM: I must be. Girls used to line up to get me things. *(he sighs)*

OPAL: *(banging her hand on the mantle piece)* She is so infuriating!

GRAHAM: Who Bella? Yeah well, what do you want? Bella is as Bella does.

OPAL: Brian says she's going back to school in the fall. At her age? Honestly.

GRAHAM: What's she taking this time?

OPAL: Art. Not exactly the same as nursing is it?

GRAHAM: Is she going to do those T-shirts again?

OPAL: I have no idea.

GRAHAM: *(muttering as he stands)* Must be driving you crazy.

OPAL: Pardon?

GRAHAM: *(as he starts to exit towards the kitchen)* Nothing.

*GRAHAM exits into the kitchen for a drink. WALTER peeks his head around a corner.*

WALTER: Where is she?

OPAL: In the kitchen. She's talking to May.

*WALTER enters warily and slinks into a chair with a big sigh.*

OPAL: Where are your girls Walter? I haven't seen them all day.

WALTER: They've locked themselves in their room. I figure Kathleen told them to do it. The court says I have to have visiting rights but it doesn't say the kids have to be nice about it.

OPAL: They used to be such nice girls.

WALTER: They haven't spoken to me for months. I've been having very long conversations with myself.

OPAL: I remember that recital we went to. Lilly moved so beautifully.

WALTER: I'm not allowed to go to those any more. It upsets Lilly, and she can't perform. If I go, I have to wear a wig and sculk in the back.

*GRAHAM enters. BELLA'S voice is heard. WALTER reacts to BELLA'S voice like a cat that has had water dumped on it.*

GRAHAM: *(speaking to the kitchen)* I'm leaving. I'm leaving.

BELLA: *(offstage)* Good!

OPAL: You were so happy when you got married.

WALTER: *(settling back into chair)* For a couple of seconds.

OPAL: Are you just going to leave them up there?

WALTER: What else can I do? If I break the door down, the lawyers will get involved faster than spit. I can't involve my lawyer. I'm broke as it is. So....

*There is an awkward pause. OPAL begins sorting through one of the boxes.*

GRAHAM: Kelly says you came to her play last week.

WALTER: She sent me a ticket. Front row Centre, Godfather special. Did you see it?

GRAHAM: Grace went.

WALTER: She was really good. She could be a great actor someday.

GRAHAM: Someday? You should be at my house when she shows up after curfew. I could sell tickets.

OPAL: Graham, pass me that other box.

WALTER: Anyway, we made a day of it. I took her out to lunch, the team was practicing, introduced her to a couple of players, she had a good time.

GRAHAM: I know. You're her new idol.

WALTER: How mad do you think May would be if I skipped out?

GRAHAM: She's only been planning this for months. It probably won't affect her at all.

WALTER: That's what I thought.

OPAL: *(holding up a picture)* That should go on the wall. *(showing GRAHAM and WALTER)* What do you think?

GRAHAM: We look happy.

WALTER: We were never happy.

OPAL: That's not true.

WALTER: I never said a truer thing.

OPAL: Well maybe if you just talked to Bella.

WALTER: I don't want to talk to Bella.

OPAL: The whole thing is so childish.

WALTER: And you would know because you spend so much time with us.

OPAL: You can't deny that not speaking to someone for twenty years is childish!

WALTER: It's been twenty-two years and nobody asked for your opinion!

GRAHAM: Hey! Hey! Hey! So, Opal, uh, how's Brian? He's finished this year isn't he?

OPAL: He's writing his last exam next week.

GRAHAM: I'll bet he'll be glad when that's over. Does he have a summer job?

OPAL: You think you're really funny don't you?

*OPAL exits to the kitchen*

GRAHAM: What did I say?

WALTER: Brian's doesn't want to law school and be like Richard. He wants to work at the mall and save enough money to go backpacking across Europe.

GRAHAM: Oops.

WALTER: And Richard isn't here to make Brian go to law school, and Opal doesn't want to force him because he took Richard's death so badly, but she wants him to get a real job, so she won't end up like "you-know-who" and run away to the west coast to open a T-shirt business.

GRAHAM: When did you become such a font of information?

WALTER: You should talk to your daughter more often.

GRAHAM: She know anything about me?

WALTER: Er, I only ask about the really juicy gossip.

*BELLA and MAY enter the room. There is a frozen pause.*

WALTER: I think, I'll go try with the girls again.

*WALTER exits upstairs on the run.*

MAY: Walter, you get back here! *(to GRAHAM)* Why didn't you stop him?

GRAHAM: I gave up tackling people a long time ago.

BELLA: See it's not me.

MAY: Sit. Don't move, don't breath. I have to pee. But I'll be back! With Walter. *(she exits upstairs)*

BELLA: Do you think May would like earrings for her birthday?

GRAHAM: So. Brian isn't going to law school huh?

BELLA: I had nothing to do with that.

GRAHAM: But you are encouraging him.

BELLA: Richard and Opal never left town. I think it's bad for the brain to stay in one spot so long. That's all.

GRAHAM: So if this place is so bad, why did you come back?

BELLA: I have got to go. I'm spending too much money on therapy as it is.

*BELLA gets up and ANN enters.*

ANN: *(peeking in through the kitchen door)* I'm supposed to ask if anyone wants any tea. Opal is going to make some.

BELLA: Ann! Come here for a second, I wanted to ask you....do you like this work?

ANN: Sure. I guess. I'm saving to go to school.

BELLA: Oh. Where are you from?

ANN: Vancouver.

BELLA: Is this your first time out east?

ANN: Uh huh.

BELLA: Really? You don't have any family from around here?

ANN: No.

BELLA: No grandparents or anything?

ANN: No. There isn't anybody. Why are you asking?

BELLA: You look like someone I know.

ANN: *(with a gleeful laugh)* Really?

*ANN'S joy at BELLA'S comment comes and goes instantaneously as if she is trying to hide her joy. ANN tries to cover up her laughter with a hacking fake cough.*

BELLA: Are you all right?

ANN: I'm fine. Something just went down the wrong way.

BELLA: But you're not eating anything.

ANN: *(still coughing)* I took in some bad air. Did you want some tea?

BELLA: No thanks.

ANN: Graham?

GRAHAM: Never touch the stuff.

*ANN exits coughing into the kitchen.*

GRAHAM: What was that?

BELLA: Hmm?

GRAHAM: Been working for the Spanish Inquisition long?

BELLA: I can't believe she's here... (*BELLA sits*) Don't you see it?

GRAHAM: See what?

BELLA: I'm pretty sure it's her.

GRAHAM: Her who?

BELLA: For God's sake Graham, didn't you look at her face? She's a walking..... (*calling out*) Ann! (*whispering to GRAHAM*) Look at her face, the nose!

*ANN bursts through the door with a grin and yet trying to contain herself.*

ANN: Yes?

BELLA: Sorry, I changed my mind. Tell Opal I'd love some tea.

GRAHAM: (*spurting out in the middle of a drink*) Jesus Christ!

ANN: Did you want some tea too?

BELLA: He never touches the stuff.

ANN: Ok. (*she doesn't leave*) Is there anything else you'd like, besides the tea?

BELLA: Nope.

ANN: Oh. Ok.

BELLA: Sorry to be so bothersome.

ANN: That's what I'm here for. (*she leaves*)

BELLA: Thank you! (*To GRAHAM*) Well?

GRAHAM: I never really looked at her before.

BELLA: Obviously. What's she doing here?

GRAHAM: I don't know. I wrote to Nina a couple of times...

BELLA: You did?

GRAHAM: Of course I did. But that was years and years ago. She (*gesturing towards the kitchen door*) couldn't have been more than a baby.

BELLA: What did you say?

GRAHAM: What could I say? Thanks for leaving town? It was all fluff. And then she died and I thought about writing to...

BELLA: (*referring to ANN*) Do you think she knows?

GRAHAM: Why else would she be here?

BELLA: Let's go find out.

GRAHAM: No!

BELLA: Why not?

GRAHAM: ....I... I.....need some air. I need to get...

BELLA: Graham?

GRAHAM: I 'm just going to step outside. Just for a minute...I'll be outside.

*He exits out the front door; OPAL enters with tea.*

OPAL: Here you go.

BELLA: What?

OPAL: You asked for tea.

BELLA: Oh, right. Aren't there any mugs?

OPAL: I don't know.

BELLA: I hate cups and saucers.

OPAL: If you want a mug, go find a mug!

BELLA: All right, all right no need to get pissy. You know I never use a cup and saucer.

*OPAL turns away. BELLA exits to the kitchen as ANN enters from upstage with OPAL'S car keys. Not seeing ANN, OPAL gives a full body shudder and scream, stamping her feet in frustration. This makes her feel much better. She turns to see ANN staring at her.*

OPAL: Are those are my car keys?

ANN: Uh huh. *(she hands them over)*

OPAL: Thank you for getting them for me.

*OPAL heads back out towards the kitchen. ANN stares for a moment and then follows into the kitchen. WALTER and MAY enter from upstairs.*

WALTER: You're expecting too much.

MAY: I'm not looking for miracles. All I want you to do is sit in a chair.

WALTER: May, Kathleen would sooner give me custody of the kids than Bella and I would have a civil conversation.

MAY: I've seen you sit. Watch me. *(she sits)* See. It's easy. *(WALTER sits)* Good. Now. Promise me, the next time Bella comes in the room, you won't leave.

WALTER: May.

MAY: Promise.

*BELLA walks into the room and freezes.*

BELLA: I'm just going upstairs to check on mom.

MAY: You just did that.

BELLA: Migraines are tricky things. I'll be right back.

*She backs up and exits, running over OPAL.*

OPAL: Bella! Honestly.

WALTER: Please note, I am still sitting.

*MAY sits herself. OPAL holds large plastic bags, filled with birthday decorations.*

OPAL: Is there anywhere else you can sit?

MAY: Why?

OPAL: You can't stay here.

MAY: Why not?

OPAL: Because.

WALTER: What's in the bags?

OPAL: Nothing.

WALTER: *(trying to look in the bags)* Are those decorations?

OPAL: No.

MAY: You're not trying to decorate for my birthday are you?

OPAL: I...

WALTER: That's not till tomorrow.

OPAL: It's supposed to be a surprise. I wanted to surprise you.

MAY: That's so sweet.

WALTER: But she's sitting in the room.

*OPAL looks like she wants to strangle WALTER. MAY jumps in.*

MAY: Why don't I help?

OPAL: You can't help; it's your birthday.

WALTER: Not until tomorrow. So the reason you're decorating now is...

OPAL: I have a time line to consider. Tomorrow morning I have to go to church and then I'll be helping with the brunch. There is one hour left until dinner. It's the perfect opportunity to decorate.

WALTER: What's happening after dinner? Aren't we all staying the night?

OPAL: I have to go home and check on Emily. So there's no time to do this tomorrow, it has to be right now.

MAY: I would love to have the room decorated.

OPAL: I wanted it to be a surprise.

MAY: I'll make those little Kleenex flowers you like so much. The ones I did for Beth's wedding? I saw pink and yellow Kleenex in the kitchen cupboard.... it will look really nice with those streamers.

OPAL: *(to WALTER)* Go get the Kleenex.

MAY: And some scissors.

OPAL: And some scissors.

WALTER: Aye, Aye sir! *(he exits)*

OPAL: And find your brother. He might as well help too.

*The phone rings. OPAL goes to answer it, but the phone is not where she expects it to be.*

OPAL: Where's the phone?

MAY: Someone will get it.

*The phone stops ringing.*

OPAL: It used to be by the window. Why does Mom always have to change things?

*WALTER walks back into the room*

WALTER: *(to OPAL)* The phones for you. It's Emily.

OPAL: Where are the Kleenex boxes?

WALTER: I couldn't find them.

OPAL: *(on her way to the kitchen)* You didn't even look.

MAY: *(calling after OPAL)* I saw them in the cupboard by the fridge.

ANN: *(entering with Kleenex boxes)* Is this what you're looking for?

MAY: Fabulous. Walter, go find me some scissors.

ANN: I'll get them.

MAY: Walter can go.

WALTER: Why do I have to go?

MAY: Because I'm asking you to.

WALTER: But she knows where they are.

MAY: Make it an adventure.

WALTER: *(as he exits)* White water rafting, finding a pair of scissors.

ANN: I should get them.

MAY: It's good for him to be busy. Besides, you haven't sat down all day.

ANN: I'm not supposed to sit.

MAY: But I'm dying to know! Did you call your father's family?

ANN: No...

MAY: Ann.

ANN: Almost though.

MAY: Tomorrow. You'll call. I'm going to dial the number myself.

ANN: Are you ok?

MAY: I'm fine.

OPAL: *(offstage)* Walter! Hold those scissors right!

WALTER: *(offstage)* I'm gonna start running with scissors in a moment.

OPAL: *(offstage)* Don't you dare!

MAY: This just isn't what I pictured.

OPAL: *(offstage)* Walter!

*WALTER enters with scissors.*

WALTER: Scissors pour vous.

MAY: Oh, not these ones.

WALTER: What's the matter?

MAY: These are her good sewing scissors. How did they get in the kitchen?

WALTER: You're asking me? I have trouble finding forks and knives.

MAY: Go look in the junk drawer. There should be a really ratty pair in there.

WALTER: Ok. *(as he exits)* Here I come Opal! I'm running in your direction!

OPAL: *(offstage)* Walter!

*MAY gives a sigh.*

ANN: They'll come around. They seem really friendly to me.

MAY: To you, of course. You're not family. You're a human being.

ANN: You know May, that's kind of funny cause...

*MAY feels a twinge and places a hand on her stomach.*

ANN: What's the matter?

MAY: I'm fine. Too much chasing. I never thought my main problem would be keeping everyone in the same room.

*WALTER enters with scissors.*

WALTER: One pair of ratty scissors held in the appropriate position.

MAY: Thank you.

WALTER: You made those flowers for my wedding.

MAY: It's my specialty.

WALTER: How the hell do you manage to make works of art out of the same material that's sole purpose is to hold people's snot?

MAY: *(laughing)* You have such a way with words.

ANN: I should get back to the pot roast.

MAY: Stay.

ANN: I'm not supposed to...

MAY: Help me fold flowers. You can work and sit at the same time.

WALTER: You might as well. Nobody says no to May.

*OPAL enters*

MAY: How's Emily?

OPAL: She hasn't left me alone since I said she could help tomorrow. She wants to make radish roses.

WALTER: Who does she take after I wonder?

OPAL: She's showing off. She wants me to hire her for the summer because she overheard me saying I might need some help.

MAY: So why don't you hire her?

OPAL: She's too young.

WALTER: I had a job at her age.

OPAL: This is a real job, not a paper route. Did you find Graham?

WALTER: Do you see him?

OPAL: *(calling out)* GRAHAM!

*GRAHAM enters through the front door.*

GRAHAM: *(entering)* Who's bellowing my name?

OPAL: Help Walter.

GRAHAM: Doing what?

WALTER: Don't ask, just help. *(he takes a deep sniff)* Were you smoking?

GRAHAM: Of course not. I haven't smoked in years.

WALTER: You must have walked right by a smoker and sucked in all his air.

*The two of them start putting up a sign. WALTER is right by the exit to the stairs. BELLA enters and the two are face to face. They freeze. Then WALTER turns to continue putting up the sign. BELLA enters and sits beside MAY. The air is somewhat thick.*

MAY: Ok. This is perfect. Now. Let's all remember I have a womb which is highly sensitive to loud noises.

ANN: *(to MAY, not fully comprehending the situation)* Have you decided on a name?

OPAL: Yes, have you?

MAY: We're waiting.

ANN: For what?

OPAL: You are?

GRAHAM: You are not.

WALTER: And Paul went for it?

ANN: For what?

GRAHAM: She's doing the labour thing.

MAY: What's wrong with that?

GRAHAM: Aside from the fact it's the loopiest way ever to choose a name for a baby?  
Nothing.

MAY: I like it and Paul likes it and that's that.

GRAHAM: Grace hated it.

WALTER: So did Kathleen.

ANN: What's the labour thing?

MAY: All our names were based on whatever Mom was doing the instant she went into labour.

ANN: That's different.

GRAHAM: Such a diplomat!

OPAL: Except for me.

WALTER: Opal was an accident.

OPAL: I was not. I was fully planned and expected.

WALTER: Not you, your name.

OPAL: Oh. Go blow up balloons.

ANN: So what's the story?

OPAL: I was supposed to be born in November. And it was about the middle of October and Mom was walking down town. She went by a jewelers and was looking at all of the birthstones and thinking about how ugly the birthstone was for November.

ANN: What's the birthstone?

MAY: Topaz.

OPAL: And she was thinking how was she going to give me any Jewelry with such an ugly birthstone.

WALTER: That's not exactly how Mom puts it.

OPAL: And she lifted up her stomach to show me the topaz in the store window and I was dead set against it.

ANN: And she went into labour?

OPAL: Right there in front of the store.

MAY: Opals are so pretty. I've always wanted to be born in October.

WALTER: Good thing you didn't wait around till November. You might have been stuck with the name Topaz.

MAY: You tell that joke every time someone tells the story.

WALTER: I think it improves with age.

*BELLA makes a nearly inaudible noise at this.*

MAY: Bella?

*The room is silent for a moment, as everyone looks from WALTER to BELLA, but neither one says anything.*

OPAL: Walter, get the ladder so you and and Graham can start putting up balloons.

MAY: Bella?

*She says nothing nor looks up. During the following, WALTER exits and returns with the ladder. He and GRAHAM put up balloons.*

OPAL: Then for Graham....

GRAHAM: Don't look at me. I can never remember anything.

OPAL: This is family history. What do you do when your kids ask you about us?

GRAHAM: Lie.

OPAL: Mom was on the phone with our Aunt Margaret and she was nagging Mom because she hadn't picked out a name for the baby.

GRAHAM: Are you sure you're not Aunt Marge's kid?

OPAL: Balloons, Graham.

MAY: Like the baby will be scarred for life if it doesn't have a name before it's born.

OPAL: Aunt Margaret had her names picked out the day she was born.

GRAHAM: Don't go there. Don't do it!

OPAL: If she wasn't so set on Harold, Elliot might have had his proper name.

GRAHAM: There is nothing wrong with his name.

OPAL: He doesn't look like a Harold.

GRAHAM: That guy has a huge complex because of you.

OPAL: Is it my fault Elliot comes out of my mouth when I look at him?

ANN: What about Graham?

GRAHAM: Mom was on the phone and Aunt Marge was nattering on and her water broke.

OPAL: She barely made it to the hospital.

ANN: So where does Graham come in?

GRAHAM: Alexander Graham Bell. Ha. Ha. Ha.

ANN: Why didn't she name you Alexander?

GRAHAM: Don't ask me the hard questions. Opal?

OPAL: Because of her second cousin Betty.

GRAHAM: There you go. Doesn't she live somewhere weird now?

OPAL: The Netherlands. You see, Betty, she had a boy two weeks before Mom did and she named her boy Alexander and there couldn't be two Alexanders.

ANN: But what if Graham hadn't looked like a Graham. Like Harold.

GRAHAM: That's what I say. The whole thing is complete nonsense.

OPAL: *(sniffing close at GRAHAM)* Have you been smoking?

GRAHAM: *(moving away)* Of course not.

MAY: I like the idea. It means something. Bella's story is great. It was in the summer and...

ANN: I thought Kelly was next. *(There is a shocked silence among the siblings)* I'm sorry, did I say something wrong?

GRAHAM: How would you know about Kelly?

ANN: Your mom.... told me.

BELLA: She did?

GRAHAM: What do you want to know about him for?

ANN: I'm sorry. I didn't realize I wasn't supposed to ask.

MAY: Of course you can. *(to GRAHAM)* What's the matter with you?

GRAHAM: Nothing. This whole name thing story thing completely annoys me.

ANN: I should check on the pot roast.

MAY: Opal would you please tell Ann how Kelly got his name?

OPAL: Mom was watching Singing in the Rain.

GRAHAM: Nobody called him Kelly.

MAY: Even mom called him Bones.

ANN: Why Bones?

OPAL: He broke his arm four times.

MAY: I didn't even know his name was Kelly. At the funeral the priest kept talking Kelly this and Kelly that and I'm thinking, who is Kelly? We're at the wrong funeral. Some other priest somewhere is talking about Bones. I tried to drag mom out of the pew. Remember Bella?

BELLA: *(not looking up)* Why don't you ask Walter? Oh, I forgot. He wasn't there.

*WALTER makes a noise. BELLA turns around.*

BELLA: *(to WALTER)* Did you say something?

WALTER: No.

BELLA: It sounds like you did.

WALTER: Nope.

MAY: Ok, this is great, you guys are talking.

BELLA: You made a noise.

WALTER: I was clearing my throat.

BELLA: I said something and you made a noise.

WALTER: So I said something and you made a noise.

BELLA: We're not talking about my noise. We're talking about yours.

WALTER: You're over analyzing the moment.

MAY: Walter, why don't you come and sit down. That way I can...

BELLA: And it has nothing to do with Bones.

WALTER: Why should it?

MAY: Why don't we'll go on with the names. Bella, tell your story.

BELLA: Not now. Walter and I are talking.

WALTER: Now we're talking?

BELLA: If you have something to say to me, why don't you say it out loud instead of hiding by the window, making noises.

WALTER: You're accusing me of hiding?

BELLA: It's your specialty.

WALTER: Running away isn't hiding?

BELLA: There is a difference between getting away and running.

MAY: Guys, you don't have -

WALTER: So when you missed Richard's funeral that was getting away.

BELLA: Everyone knows I was flat on my back and couldn't -

WALTER: So I guess you really needed to get away when dad was dying.

BELLA: What did it matter, you're the one who was so buddy buddy with dad.

WALTER: You don't know what you're talking about.

GRAHAM: Oh God this is going to be a long one.

WALTER: Shut up Graham.

ANN: I should check the pot roast. *(she exits)*

OPAL: You shouldn't talk that way in front of strangers.

BELLA: You want to throw stones. Fine. Let's start with the fact that you couldn't even pick a mistress who could keep her mouth shut.

GRAHAM: Hey, Hey, hey!

WALTER: Bones never loved that girl. He was just using her for cover.

MAY: *(overtop of previous)* That's enough.

BELLA: *(overtop of WALTER'S previous line)* You haven't changed at all.

WALTER: Neither have you.

MAY: Stop it.

BELLA: You are the same narrow-minded pig headed maniac.

WALTER: And you're the same self-centered brat.

GRAHAM: Take a break guys.

WALTER: *(to GRAHAM)* Do me a favour, all right? Stop telling me what to do.

GRAHAM: All I'm saying is. -

OPAL: You should listen to him. You're behaving like children.

WALTER: Stop saying things. Don't say anything!

BELLA: *(to OPAL)* Don't I always though?

GRAHAM: What the hell does that mean?

OPAL: You said it, not me.

WALTER: I can fight my own fight.

*During the following MAY absorbs the fight and tries to block it out. None of the others, pay any attention to her. She eventually gets up and goes into the kitchen.*

BELLA: Same old Bella.

GRAHAM: I never said you couldn't.

OPAL: You said it, not me.

WALTER: You never do, you just jump on in.

MAY: This isn't helping.

GRAHAM: Maybe if you were more successful I wouldn't have to jump in.

OPAL: Stop feeling sorry for yourself. Just because you can't get your life together -

WALTER: I don't need rescuing, not by you.

BELLA: You don't know anything about me.

GRAHAM: Fine. I won't say anything ever again.

WALTER: Fine.

OPAL: That's because you don't tell anyone!

BELLA: Why do you need to know every detail?

OPAL: Excuse me for being interested...

BELLA: You're not interested. You want to know so you can spread it across the whole eastern seaboard. You're a snitch.

OPAL: How dare you accuse me of -

GRAHAM: Come off it Opal, you've been one for years.

BELLA: Dad would never have know about Bones if it weren't for you.

OPAL: So it's gang up on Opal is it? Do you think I like telling people who my brothers and sisters are? A cheating husband, a father who can't control his kids for one second-

GRAHAM: There's nothing wrong with the way I raise my kids.

OPAL: and a woman who wouldn't know real work if it hit her in the face.

BELLA: At least I didn't spend 28 years of my life getting beat up by a temperamental alcoholic.

GRAHAM: That's not fair.

OPAL: You shut up! You shut up!

BELLA: He put you in the hospital four times!

OPAL: I told you never to bring that up.

BELLA: No one is supposed to talk about Richard. King Richard!

GRAHAM: For God's sake the man is dead.

WALTER: That's what you don't understand. People don't have to talk about every blasted thing!

BELLA: I hate this family! I hate it!

*MAY has entered in the climax of the fight. She has a small bucket of water which she throws on her brothers and sisters. They are stunned into silence.*

MAY: Sit on the couch.

*They do so.*

ANN: *(entering slowly)* Your mother wants to know if she should call the police before the neighbours do.

MAY: They're finished. Right?

OPAL: Yes.

WALTER: Yes.

MAY: Graham? Bella?

BELLA: We're finished.

ANN: What should I tell her?

MAY: Tell her we're fine.

*ANN leaves.*

MAY: I know I was treated differently. Because I came so late. I know I missed a lot of the problems, or I was too young to see them. I know I have a version in my head of how we used to act as a family.

OPAL: It's not me. I'm not doing anything. It's Bella and....

BELLA: Why is everything my fault!

OPAL: I am the only one who tries.

WALTER: Tries to do what?

MAY: Opal, how many times did you try and cancel on me? How many times did you all try and weasel your way out of this weekend?

OPAL: I had a lot of commitments...

MAY: Did you honestly forget the shower was at 2 today?

OPAL: I...

MAY: I am not a referee. And there is no way this madness is going to happen around my baby. I refuse to let your petty squabbles into my house, do you hear?

BELLA: It's not petty.

MAY: It's been twenty-two years!!! Twenty-two years. But if that were the only crisis in this family I could probably live with that. But no, you're all running and making jokes and snide remarks and backstabbing and gossiping and snitching over things that make no difference. All this junk, clogging up everything you say and do. And

it all gets heaped on me. Bella did this. Opal said that. What is Walter doing. Where is Graham going. I don't care. I am tired of being the keeper of your secrets. Burden someone else with your kids and your wife and your husband and Uncle Roy and I am sick sick sick of being the pack horse for this family. I have.....*(she stops mid speech and grabs her middle to combat a sharp pain)* Oh God.

WALTER: May? What's the matter May. You're all...

MAY: Something. Oh my God. *(she doubles over)*

OPAL: It's the baby.

MAY: It's too soon.

GRAHAM: Are you sure?

MAY: It's too soon.

*BELLA throws her cell phone at OPAL.*

BELLA *(going into nurse mode)* Opal call the hospital.

OPAL: It's too early.

BELLA: Move Opal!

OPAL: Sorry.

BELLA: Graham, help me get her up. Slowly, slowly.

WALTER: I'll get the car.

GRAHAM: We'll take mine it's faster.

BELLA: *(calling)* Mom!!!

ANN: *(entering)* What's the matter?

BELLA: It's the baby. We're going to the hospital. Get mom there will you?

*ANN runs off stage.*

BELLA: Come on Maysie.

MAY: God, please let the baby be alright. Please let it be all right.

*They all act together to get MAY out the front door.*

## ACT TWO

Sunday Morning

*It's eight am, the next day. WALTER talks on the phone. BELLA sits on the couch. Everyone wears the same clothes as yesterday and no one has slept at all.*

WALTER: *(on the phone)* Kathleen. I know it's early - do we have to discuss this over the phone? It was an emergency. I had to send them home and - yes I know you have a life.

BELLA: Where are they? *(She gets up and goes to the window)*

WALTER: *(on phone)* No, I wasn't trying to be funny.

*OPAL enters with two cups of coffee.*

OPAL: *(Speaking softly)* Bella. *(Bella is still looking out the window)* Bella.

BELLA: Huh?

OPAL: Coffee.

BELLA: Thanks.

*OPAL gives the other cup to WALTER and exits back to the kitchen.*

WALTER: Kathleen. May lost the baby. Yes. She wasn't able to... I don't know. I'm not trying to make you look like a fool.

*OPAL enters with a coffee.*

OPAL: Was that the car? Are they here?

BELLA: No.

OPAL: We left at the same time. You don't think they had an accident, do you?

BELLA: No.

WALTER: Ok. Ok. See you then. Bye. *(He hangs up the phone)*

BELLA: Is she coming?

WALTER: I think so. Thanks for the coffee.

OPAL: You're welcome.

BELLA: She sounded almost civil.

WALTER: Sure, she did. After this, I'm never gonna see my kids again. She can be civil all day long....

BELLA: *(looking out the window)* They're here.

OPAL: Finally.

WALTER: Where's he parking? Front or back?

BELLA: Front. He's on the street.

*BELLA, OPAL and WALTER, move just offstage to wait by the front door. The door opens. The moment takes place offstage.*

GRAHAM: *(offstage)* Here we are.

BELLA: *(offstage)* What took you so long?

WALTER: *(offstage)* Here mom, let me take your coat.

OPAL: *(offstage)* Do you want anything?

MAY: *(offstage)* No.

BELLA: *(offstage)* Let me help you get settled.

OPAL: *(offstage)* Yes, let's get you upstairs.

MAY: *(offstage)* No thank you.

BELLA: *(offstage)* Are you sure?

MAY: *(offstage)* Ann can help me.

BELLA: *(offstage)* Oh. Ok.

OPAL: *(offstage)* Wouldn't you like.....?

MAY: *(offstage)* No.

*MAY brushes past her and walks into the space. She looks like she doesn't quite recognize the room. The others slowly come into the room.*

GRAHAM: *(opening his phone)* I'm going to try Paul again, ok?

MAY: *(distant)* Fine.

BELLA: May? *(MAY doesn't answer)* May?

*MAY crosses the stage to the pile of baby clothes. She picks through the pile till she finds the one she wants.- it is the ugly pom pom sweater. MAY then exits back up the stairs with ANN (and mom) without a backward glance.*

WALTER: We'll be up later!

*OPAL crosses to the pile of baby clothes and starts to refold them. Everyone else is at a loss of what to do.*

GRAHAM: *(dialing phone)* What are you going to do with those?

OPAL: I don't know.

WALTER: They should be put away.

OPAL: All these little things. So precious.

BELLA: Maybe she wants them.

GRAHAM: For what?

BELLA: I don't know.

GRAHAM: *(closing phone)* He must still be in the air. *(he sits on the couch, stretches and rubs his eyes)* I guess it's too early to start drinking.

BELLA: We should try and get some sleep.

OPAL: I couldn't sleep if I tried. I feel nauseous.

GRAHAM: *(taking out a pack of cigarettes)* I know it's not too early to start smoking.

WALTER: Start? Ha!

GRAHAM: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Just don't tell Grace, alright?

OPAL: Not in the house.

GRAHAM: If I smoke outside people will see me.

BELLA: You don't even live here.

WALTER: You smoked outside yesterday.

GRAHAM: Once is a specific occasion, which I can easily defer and deny. Twice is a habit.

OPAL: Not in the house.

GRAHAM: Is the coffee hot?

OPAL: Yes.

GRAHAM: Anyone else want some?

WALTER: No thanks.

BELLA: I'm fine.

*GRAHAM exits.*

OPAL: I knew he was smoking again. *(she holds up a sleeper and sighs)*

WALTER: What do we do?

BELLA: We be supportive. We be positive. She's going to need us.

OPAL: I'm going to clean the kitchen. The pot roast has been sitting in a pan all night.

BELLA: She looks so pale.

WALTER: I can't believe the hospital discharged her.

BELLA: Welcome to the wonderful world of medicine.

OPAL: It'll be better for her here.

BELLA: I wish I had gone away this weekend. I was this close *(holds up thumb and finger)* to not showing up.

WALTER: She would have hunted you down.

BELLA: I guess.

*GRAHAM enters. He's on his phone, is holding a cup of coffee and has a cigarette hanging out of his mouth. OPAL waves at the air.*

OPAL: Graham!

GRAHAM:....So I'm going to stay at Grandma's for awhile. Sure, I'll tell her. So everything is all right? Are you sure? Where's Kelly?

WALTER: Mom looks terrible.

OPAL: How do you expect her to look?

BELLA: She has another migraine.

OPAL: She didn't say anything.

WALTER: She never says anything. It was a month before we knew about the cyst.

GRAHAM: *(taking the cigarette out of his mouth)* There's nothing wrong with my voice.

BELLA: I knew.

WALTER: What, you had a psychic premonition or something?

BELLA: I took her to the hospital.

OPAL: But you were living in San Francisco.

BELLA: I came back.

WALTER: Why?

BELLA: She asked me to.

OPAL: But I practically live next door.

GRAHAM: *(still on phone)* I will. I will. All right. Bye.

WALTER: Is the house still standing?

GRAHAM: So they say. I wish Grace wasn't away this week.

WALTER: You left them alone?

GRAHAM: Thankfully, they adore May so things should remain intact for a few more hours. Allan didn't have the giggles. When he gets the giggles I know, something is on fire or lying in a heap. *(He collapses on the couch)* I think Brad started to cry.

WALTER: See your kids aren't all bad.

GRAHAM: Either that, or he's been shoving jalapenos up his nose again.

OPAL: *(more to herself)* She told me she went to the Garden Show!

*ANN enters. They all turn towards her.*

BELLA: How is she?

GRAHAM: What's she doing?

WALTER: Does she want to see us?

ANN: (*clearly disturbed*) She's...I couldn't find any aspirin in the upstairs bathroom. She wants an aspirin and some water.

BELLA: I'll get it.

ANN: Actually she said...

BELLA: I want to check on mom's migraine too.

*BELLA enters into the kitchen.*

ANN: Ah...ok ...

WALTER: I thought May was supposed to be all right. Wasn't she doing everything she was supposed to?

OPAL: Sometimes it happens.

WALTER: I've never heard of it.

OPAL: The next time you have a baby you can tell us how it's supposed to go.

WALTER: She's supposed to be all right.

GRAHAM: I think it was our fault.

OPAL: What?

GRAHAM: If we hadn't had that stupid fight.....

WALTER: A fight can't cause a miscarriage.

GRAHAM:....then May wouldn't have got upset and if she hadn't got upset.....

OPAL: Bella and Walter started it.

WALTER: This is not our fault.

GRAHAM: We were supposed to make sure....

*There is the noise of shouting offstage. MAY and BELLA are having a conversation upstairs.*

MAY: *(offstage)* I asked Ann to get me a glass of water, not you.

BELLA: *(offstage)* I just thought...

MAY: *(offstage)* Did you rip it from her hands?

BELLA: *(offstage)* Of course not.

MAY: *(offstage)* Go downstairs and give it back to her.

BELLA: *(offstage)* May...

MAY: *(offstage)* GO!

*There is the sound of a door slamming. Everyone is silent as BELLA comes down the stairs holding a glass of water and a bottle of aspirin. She holds them out to ANN.*

*ANN takes the glass and bottle. She looks very uncomfortable as everyone stares at her. ANN exits.*

*BELLA sits with her head in her hands.*

GRAHAM: What was that?

BELLA: I don't know.

WALTER: It didn't even sound like her.

BELLA: She's been crying.

GRAHAM: Did you see mom?

BELLA: May wouldn't let me in the room.

WALTER: This is not good. This is...

OPAL: Normal. It's perfectly normal. She needs to lash out right now. She asked us to let her be and we should just...

GRAHAM: She shouldn't have to lash out at all. She should be sitting that chair blowing out candles and laughing and watching Paul come through the door. She should be happily blissfully pregnant!

WALTER: It's not our fault.

GRAHAM: All May asked from us for her birthday was for us to get along.

WALTER: You can't change a lifetime in an afternoon.

GRAHAM: I feel responsible.

OPAL: She has a history Graham. It's her third miscarriage.

GRAHAM: I feel...goddamn!

OPAL: She'll come back. She's a strong person.

GRAHAM: It's not fair, it's just not...

BELLA: Even if we were to blame...

WALTER: It's not our fault.

BELLA: For argument's sake, it's our fault. What do we do about it? Get along?

GRAHAM: Why not?

BELLA: Getting along won't bring the baby back.

GRAHAM: I know that.

BELLA: That's what you really want. You couldn't have cared less about getting along yesterday.

GRAHAM: I've changed my mind. We could do it, couldn't we? *(there is silence from the rest of them)* We could do it for May. We've been getting along all morning.

BELLA: It's a special circumstance. We're totally sleep deprived, and, it's May. We're

slaves for May. In a couple of weeks when things start to slide back to normal, as normal as they can be, do you think you and I will start having lunch? Do you think Walter and I are going to become best friends?

GRAHAM: Why not?

BELLA: *(to WALTER)* You know what I mean, right?

WALTER: Sure. We'll go back to how we were before.

BELLA: And I accept that. *(to OPAL)* Do you think we'll start talking because of this?

OPAL: Not really no.

BELLA: You see?

GRAHAM: But why does it have to be that way?

OPAL: You always were too much of a romantic for your own good.

WALTER: You want us to like each other just like that.

GRAHAM: Why can't we?

WALTER: Even though the ins and outs of an ice rink don't make for interesting conversation? Even though I'm a depressing person to talk to and I chew funny?

GRAHAM: I thought you gave up listening to doors.

WALTER: You can't patch up the Grand Canyon.

BELLA: I think we'd all be better off if we went back to our corners and left it at that. We see May separately and we don't try this again.

GRAHAM: But....

OPAL: I think she's right.

WALTER: Me too.

*GRAHAM's phone rings. ANN enters hovering at the edge of the space. She holds a letter. .*

GRAHAM: Hello? It's Graham. Paul?

BELLA: Paul!

GRAHAM: Listen Paul,

OPAL: (*hissing*) Don't tell him over the phone!

GRAHAM: What?

OPAL: Don't you say a word!

BELLA: We can't just let him think everything's ok.

OPAL: And how do you think he's going to react if he hears it on the phone?

GRAHAM: (*to PAUL*) I can hardly hear you.

OPAL: We'll explain it to him in person.

WALTER: Who's we?

BELLA: That's not fair! You're going to let him walk in here thinking everything's fine?

WALTER: Who's gonna explain?

GRAHAM: Would you people shut up! Hello? Paul?

BELLA: What's he saying?

GRAHAM: Hello? He's gone. The connection was terrible.

WALTER: Where is he?

GRAHAM: He just left the airport.

BELLA: That's just great.

OPAL: How long is it going to take him to get here?

GRAHAM: Bout an hour.

WALTER: I just want to know, who's going to tell him.

OPAL: We should all be involved. A family front.

BELLA: I'll tell him.

OPAL: Why do you get to tell him?

WALTER: This isn't a contest.

GRAHAM: May should tell him, don't you think?

WALTER: Maybe she doesn't want to.

GRAHAM: He's her husband.

WALTER: Maybe it's too hard.

OPAL: Why don't we ask her?

BELLA: She's not in a chatty mood.

GRAHAM: But it's about Paul. She'll talk to someone about Paul.

BELLA: I don't know.

WALTER: *(overtop)* We better find out because we'll look like idiots if he walks through that door and...

OPAL: You can stay here and fight amongst yourselves. I'm going to ask her.

*OPAL moves to head upstairs, the rest follow. ANN is in their way.*

ANN: Actually, that's not a good idea.

BELLA: Why not?

ANN: *(pulling out the letter)* I'm supposed to read you this letter.

OPAL: Dear, we have more important things to worry about right now.

ANN: It's for all of you. From May.

GRAHAM: But we're right here. All she has to do is come downstairs.

BELLA: What's wrong?

ANN: Nothing. I didn't...Maybe you should sit.

WALTER: But what about Paul?

ANN: She's really upset...I tried to get her to wait but...she's...

OPAL: Ann, What does the letter say?

ANN: Ok.*(she takes a breath)* Ok. *(reading)* Opal, Graham, Bella and Walter. I am not yours. I do not belong to you and you have no right to claim me as you do. You have no right to pick me apart. You can't have me. *(ANN pauses and clears her throat)* The burden of you has worn me through, has spilled my blood and I want retribution.

BELLA: Oh God.

WALTER: What is she talking about?

ANN: I will not see you. I will not speak to you and you will not speak to me.

BELLA: What?

ANN: I... I have no brothers. I have no sisters. I disown you all.

*Following fast and furious, all talking at once and overlapping till ANN'S lines.*

WALTER: What the...?

BELLA: *(grabbing the letter)* Give me that!

GRAHAM: I knew this was our fault. I knew it.

OPAL: She's in shock, that's all.

WALTER: She can't be serious. May wouldn't do this to us.

BELLA: It doesn't even look like her handwriting.

OPAL: She's in shock. She's upset over what she's been through

GRAHAM: I knew it! I knew it!

BELLA: I don't believe this.

*BELLA scrambles over the couch.*

OPAL: Where are you going?

BELLA: I gotta go talk to her.

*The others scramble towards the stairs as well. Not in the style of slapstick, but in desperation.*

WALTER: No I do!

OPAL: This is a mistake!

GRAHAM: I do!

*They start toward the stairs and are stopped by ANN.*

ANN: May said to tell you that she and your mother are sleeping. If you all go running up the stairs like a pack of elephants, you'll disturb them both.

*They come back into the room.*

WALTER: Ok. Ok. Ok.

BELLA: We can't do nothing. This is...someone has to talk to her.

OPAL: She doesn't mean it.

WALTER: Ok. We can do this. Ok. Ok. Ok.

GRAHAM: All right.

BELLA: Quit that!

WALTER: Get off my back. If you hadn't gone busting up there with the aspirin.

BELLA: Hey! What the -

GRAHAM: ALL RIGHT!

OPAL: This is a misunderstanding. If we go up there and talk to her, rationally and calmly - She's just lashing out. She doesn't mean it.

BELLA: We can't all go up, it'll be too much.

GRAHAM: So the rational thing to do would be to send one person.

OPAL: And they'll get the truth straight from May.

WALTER: So who goes?

ANN: She won't listen to any of you. Not like this.

WALTER: How do you know?

ANN: Because I...I tried to talk to her...

OPAL: You're not family.

ANN: Yes but...

WALTER: Besides, if May won't listen we can talk to mom.

GRAHAM: And Mom can talk to May.

WALTER: Exactly.

GRAHAM: Who's the most calm?

WALTER: I am.

GRAHAM: You have to be kidding.

BELLA: Why don't we draw for it?

OPAL: What, straws?

GRAHAM: Or flip a coin.

WALTER: No coins! I have bad luck with coin tosses.

OPAL: What about drawing cards? I know I saw a deck around here somewhere.

WALTER: Rock Paper Scissors.

BELLA: What?

WALTER: Rock Paper Scissors. We'll do it in pairs, the winners play each other and one person goes up stairs. No cards or coins necessary.

GRAHAM: Whatever.

WALTER: Here, you play Bella, I'll play Opal.

BELLA: Fine. Ann, you count us in.

ANN: She won't listen. You need to...

OPAL: Wait. *(to WALTER)* What if you practice?

BELLA: Come on, come on!

WALTER: Why would I?

OPAL: You have young kids. What if you practice and you arranged it to play with me cause you knew I haven't played in thirty years and you are counting on my rustiness to win.

BELLA: Can we not get side-tracked? Just play!

*Everyone gets into position. They wait for ANN who just stares at them.*

OPAL: Count will you!

*ANN thinks to say something and doesn't. As ANN counts, the four players pump their fists.*

ANN: One, two, three, go.

BELLA: Damn!

GRAHAM: Paper wraps stone.

OPAL: What is that?

WALTER: It's dynamite.

OPAL: I don't know anything about that!

BELLA: Exactly where in the words Rock, Paper, and Scissors, do you see Dynamite?

WALTER: Lilly uses dynamite all the time.

GRAHAM: My god. You do practice.

OPAL: That's not fair! What's supposed to beat dynamite?

WALTER: Scissors. Scissors cut the wick.

OPAL: I demand a rematch!

GRAHAM: No way!

OPAL: Rematch! With no dynamite!

GRAHAM: There's always a rematch when I win.

*Everyone gets set up again to repeat the process.*

ANN: One, two, three, go.

*The following four lines are said at the same time.*

BELLA: Aha!

OPAL: Shoot!

WALTER: Winner!

GRAHAM: I knew it!

OPAL: I'm sure you fixed this.

WALTER: How?

OPAL: I don't know, but you did. You threw everyone off with that dynamite.

BELLA: Let's go!

*BELLA and WALTER square off.*

WALTER: Care for a thumb wrestle?

BELLA: You're going down, Brown.

*They look at ANN.*

ANN: One, two, three, go.

*WALTER wins, BELLA groans.*

WALTER: Rock crushes scissors.

BELLA: You do cheat.

WALTER: Wish me luck.

*He exits up the stairs.*

GRAHAM: Be tactful. And calm!

OPAL: And don't run up the stairs!

BELLA: Damn.

*The adrenaline of the moment is gone. They desperately listen, but hear nothing. Everyone reluctantly settles. GRAHAM takes out his pack of cigarettes.*

OPAL: Outside.

GRAHAM: (*imitating her*) Outside.

OPAL: And if you don't want people to see you smoking, go out back. And make sure you find an ashtray. And don't leave the butts on the ground!

GRAHAM: Anything else?

OPAL: Yes. Give me one.

GRAHAM: Excuse me?

BELLA: Opal Mackenzie Brown!

OPAL: I'm supposed to do my yoga today. It helps me to de-stress and I...haven't had a cigarette in a long time....

GRAHAM: Come on, we'll get lung cancer together.

*GRAHAM and OPAL go out through the kitchen.*

ANN: She won't listen. I said I didn't want to read the letter. I couldn't read it. I tried to stall her till tomorrow but...you didn't see her.

BELLA: Why couldn't you read it?

ANN: It doesn't matter. (*she gets up*) I should....I don't know what I should do. (*she sits*)

BELLA: I've been thinking about how to bring this up and I know this would be the absolute worst time to have this conversation.... but.... what are you doing here?

ANN: Huh?

BELLA: What are you doing here?

ANN: I don't know what you're talking about.

BELLA: Yes you do. Why did you leave Vancouver, travel to my mother's door, present yourself as a housekeeper or whatever, and why did my mother accept you as a housekeeper or whatever when she is not all that frail and has often talked about never having someone in her house in such a capacity. And why do you two talk so much, particularly about the family seeing as you're in an employer, employee relationship.

ANN: I...

BELLA: Just to make your answer easier, I know who you are and I have my suspicion as to the "why" but I'm pretty confused about all the secrecy. That's mostly what I've been wondering about. So despite the lousy timing....

ANN: We decided not to tell any of you.

BELLA: Obviously.

ANN: She said, your mother said, it would be better that way. I wanted to, I really...She didn't want to get anyone upset.

BELLA: She never does. Did she know you were coming?

ANN: No. I didn't even call. She hugged me right away. The past couple of weeks have been so different from everything I've ever known. Just being in a house, and yesterday before...well.

BELLA: Does May know who you are?

ANN: We were going to tell her today.

BELLA: For her birthday. *(She expels air and puts her hand to her head)* I have such a headache.

ANN: How did you guess?

BELLA: When Graham and Bones stood beside each other, people used to think they were twins. There's no mistaking who you are.

ANN: *(referring to the others)* And do they....

BELLA: Graham does, but he'd rather not know. The others have no idea.

ANN: I have Graham's letters. When mom was ill, before she...she used to read them aloud. They were all she had.

BELLA: They were?

ANN: Did he make her happy? My dad.

BELLA: Bones? Argh, I...I think so. He was so... buoyant. He made the air lighter and whenever anyone was around him they felt lighter too. I think that's what he did for Nina. Your mom. He made her feel light. He made us all feel that way. Do you know what happened?

ANN: I know he called off the wedding two weeks before the date and still wouldn't marry mom when she found out she was pregnant. I know there was an accident, he was drinking and drove into a transport. And...Mom used to say that Dad loved her enough not to marry her.

BELLA: I guess that's one way of putting it.

*WALTER enters and sits*

BELLA: We'll talk later ok? Would you go get Graham and Opal?

ANN: Sure. *(She exits to the kitchen)*

WALTER: Was she talking about what I think she was talking about?

BELLA: Old habits die hard?

WALTER: It's the only way I ever find out anything. Was she?

BELLA: Uh huh.

WALTER: I'm gonna take up smoking too.

*GRAHAM and OPAL enter.*

GRAHAM: What did she say?

WALTER: I didn't talk to her.

GRAHAM: What did you do?

OPAL: You upset her!

WALTER: I knocked on the door. Mom answered. I asked mom if I could talk to May - very rational, very calm - Mom asked May, May said no. What was I supposed to do, throw mom aside and knock the door down?

BELLA: Did you talk to mom?

WALTER: I talked to mom.

OPAL: And? What is she going to do?

WALTER: Nothing.

GRAHAM: She can't do nothing.

WALTER: She said, she wasn't going to take sides.

GRAHAM: That's what mom's do!

WALTER: *(not looking up)* She said, she took sides once before and has regretted it ever since.

OPAL: Oh dear.

BELLA: I think we're sunk.

GRAHAM: But she was in the room with May, isn't that taking her side?

WALTER: I don't know.

BELLA: I'm supposed to be a nurse. I should have made her sit. I should have kept my mouth shut for once.

GRAHAM: I think we should try again. She might listen to someone else.

BELLA: To you? Why, are you not listed in the note? *(picking up the note)* That looks like Graham to me.

GRAHAM: So what do we do?

WALTER: Exactly what you suggested ten minutes ago.

GRAHAM: I was only bluffing.

OPAL: You're not serious.

WALTER: We have two choices. One, we leave this house and never see each other

again, we never see...or two we prove we're not dysfunctional and can spend five minutes together without yelling.

BELLA: We are dysfunctional.

WALTER: Do you love May?

BELLA: Of course.

WALTER: Do you think you can live the rest of your life without seeing her?

BELLA: But what if we get worse. I can't handle worse.

WALTER: We can do this. We used to do things together. We used to....Graham! We used to come to your football games, every one of them, through rain or sleet and who had a better cheering section than you? And Opal? Who helped you when you needed all those posters for the church bazaar, year after year? Who stayed up all night, singing to the piano, every Christmas? And when I was so sick I couldn't get out of bed, who moved the piano upstairs so that I could be part of the family?

BELLA: That was Bones' idea.

*There is a pause. WALTER turns to BELLA.*

WALTER: Do you think she's serious?

BELLA: I do.

OPAL: She'll change her mind in a couple of days.

WALTER: I need her. Without her I lose everything. What do you lose?

BELLA: Everything.

*WALTER grabs BELLA by the shoulders.*

BELLA: What the hell are you doing?

*WALTER plants a big kiss on BELLA'S forehead.*

WALTER: We're making up.

*WALTER kisses her forehead again and hugs her*

BELLA: You just can't...stop that!

WALTER: We need to be in this together. And if that mean making up with you, then I'll kiss your head till the cows come home. Now who's with me?

GRAHAM: You're not going to kiss all of are you?

WALTER: Who's with me? Opal?

OPAL: She just needs a couple of days....

WALTER: We need a plan now, and this is my plan on the table. What's the worst that could happen? We could actually get along? Are you with me?

OPAL: I don't know. I guess so.

WALTER: No! No I guess so. I want a qualified yes.

OPAL: Yes.

WALTER: Louder.

OPAL: Walter, I said yes.

WALTER: Good enough. Now Grahamie boy. Do I hear two, do I hear two Browns, Gimme two Browns. Are you my number two?

GRAHAM: I'll do anything you want, if you promise not to call me Grahamie.

WALTER: Two Browns, I have two Browns, do I have three Browns?

BELLA: You're insane.

WALTER: Come on Bellamissimo, are you in or out?

BELLA: I don't -

WALTER: In or out?

BELLA: Ok.

WALTER: Yeah Team! Team Brown! Downtown family Brown!

BELLA: I just have one question.

GRAHAM: What?

BELLA: While we're becoming a family, how do we stop from fighting?

WALTER: Oh. I don't know.

GRAHAM: That was quick.

OPAL: Things we going just nicely there, and you had to go and spoil it.

BELLA: I'm being realistic.

OPAL: You couldn't keep your thoughts to yourself for one minute.

BELLA: There you see! You see?

WALTER: Where's Ann?

OPAL: I told her to stay in the kitchen.

WALTER: Go get her.

OPAL: She doesn't have anything to do with this.

WALTER: If May is not going to talk to us, I'll bet you dollars to donuts she'll talk to Ann. We need her to witness us behaving like civilized human beings

GRAHAM: Which is what she reports back to May.

WALTER: Kapeshe?

OPAL: Ok.

WALTER: *(pacing and thinking)* Now... I got! I got it!

*WALTER dashes out as OPAL and ANN enter.*

ANN: Are you sure you don't want to be alone?

OPAL: Ann, you are more than welcome to be in here with us. We're going to need all the help we can get.

ANN: Maybe I should go back in the kitchen.

OPAL: *(false and cheery)* No, no, please stay.

GRAHAM: Do you think this is going to work?

OPAL: *(false and cheery)* Of course I do.

BELLA: Why are you talking like that?

OPAL: I think this is going to work and I know we're all going to give it our best shot.  
*(whispering)* We have to look positive.

GRAHAM: You're so subtle.

OPAL: *(whispering)* We have to look good.

BELLA: So you don't think this is going to work.

OPAL: Not a hope in hell.

GRAHAM: As long as your optimistic.

*WALTER enters holding a bicycle horn. WALTER gives the horn a squeeze and it emits a loud honk.*

WALTER: I took it off mom's bike.

OPAL: For what purpose?

WALTER: Ann, you sit over here.

ANN: What's going on?

WALTER: Take the horn. Now, as we're all talking here, if we get into anything that sounds like a fight, squeeze the horn.

BELLA: WHAT?? *(she starts to laugh)*

OPAL: Honestly.

GRAHAM: Couldn't you have found something more dignified? Like wind chimes?

WALTER: *(to ANN)* Don't listen to them. This is a great idea.

BELLA: I won't be able to fight. I'll be too busy laughing my ass off.

WALTER: Ah ha!

GRAHAM: Walter, you're a genius.

WALTER: Janitor makes good. Now. Let's practice.

OPAL: A pretend fight?

GRAHAM: That takes timing, skill and co-ordination. We'll never be able to do it.

WALTER: *(to ANN)* Ok. We're going to fight and you use the horn *(he squeezes the horn)* to stop us.

BELLA: And we're supposed to stop?

WALTER: Yes.

GRAHAM: Isn't that like spitting on a three-alarm fire?

WALTER: When she honks the horn, we stop, no matter what. That's the deal.

BELLA: No matter what the topic?

GRAHAM: Bella you're not helping.

WALTER: Ok, ok. Maybe if we didn't approach topics we know are going to cause unstoppable fights then we don't have to worry about stopping them.

BELLA: Wouldn't that be missing the point?

WALTER: It's just practice! We're faking it!

*ANN honks the horn*

WALTER: We haven't started yet.

ANN: Sounded like a fight.

GRAHAM: She's on to us. Everything sounds like a fight.

WALTER: Let's start again. We'll go slow at first and then perhaps build up to certain topics and we'll see what happens, all right?

BELLA: Fair enough.

WALTER: Thank you.

OPAL: I'm going to clean the kitchen.

WALTER: You can't go! We have to do this together! Yay team!

OPAL: I am not going to subject myself to having a horn honked in my face every -

WALTER: If you have a better suggestion....

OPAL: She's not going to disown us! She's in shock. My god, she just .... and here you are making fun.

WALTER: We are making an effort. And if we don't make an effort -

OPAL: She's in shock. We'll try to talk to her in a couple of days. She'll come around.

ANN: I don't think so.

OPAL: And how would you know? You've only been here a few weeks! You don't know a thing about May. Well, let me tell you....

*BELLA grabs the horn and honks it in OPAL'S face.*

OPAL: Don't do that!

BELLA: You gotta be on the ball Ann.

GRAHAM: How are we supposed to get through a fake fight when we keep breaking out

into real ones?

OPAL: I refuse to be a part of this.

*She starts to exit to the kitchen.*

WALTER: Why don't you play along, Opig opig, where'd you get that hairy wig!

BELLA: Opig! Holy Shit! *(she clamps a hand over her mouth)*

OPAL: What did you call me?

WALTER: Nothing.

OPAL: I heard you.

WALTER: Guys, did I say anything?

GRAHAM: Nope.

BELLA: Uh uh.

OPAL: Don't you dare bring that up.

WALTER: I'm just trying to start a pretend fight in a controlled environment *(he turns his back and says in a very quiet voice)* Soooooo.

OPAL: Don't you dare! It took me long enough to get rid of that name in the first place.

WALTER: It's not my fault you're so cranky.

*GRAHAM snorts like a pig*

OPAL: Stop that.

WALTER: Opig, Opal, we're trying to accomplish something here.

BELLA: Sooooo.

OPAL: Stop that.

WALTER: We all have to be involved, Opig. Would you like another fig?

BELLA: Or a swig?

WALTER: At the dig.

*GRAHAM snorts.*

OPAL: Cut it out! *(to ANN)* Go! Honk the horn will you!

ANN: It's more name calling than fighting.

OPAL: This is no time to be picky!

GRAHAM: Actually it's only name calling on one side which isn't exactly fair.

OPAL: That's right.

WALTER: Hey.

BELLA: To be fair, it should be reciprocal.

OPAL: That's right....

GRAHAM: That would be fair.

WALTER: That would be fighting.

*BELLA starts to cluck like a chicken.*

WALTER: Hey, hey...

OPAL: You started it, chicken baby.

WALTER: There's no need...

GRAHAM: Whatever you say, chicken baby.

WALTER: Oh man.

OPAL: What, you can call me names, but I can't call you names?

BELLA: He's not just a chicken baby, he's not just a baby. He's worse!

OPAL & BELLA & GRAHAM: He's a chicken baby! Chicken baby pudding pie, kissed the girls and made them cry, when the boys came out to play, chicken baby ran away!

WALTER: Oh man.

BELLA: Come on chicken baby...

WALTER: I don't want to.

*BELLA starts to poke WALTER which turns into a tickle*

WALTER: Stop that!

BELLA: Come on, what do you have to say?

GRAHAM: And chicken baby is rounding second, he's got the signal to head for home, he's rounding third, he coming back with the zinger, it's.... its...

WALTER: Hells Bells got stinky smells!

BELLA: Did you say something chicken baby?

WALTER: Hells Bells is stuck in a well and nobody's come to save her!

BELLA: I can't hear you.

WALTER: Hells bells....oh just fuck off.

BELLA: You never did have a talent for rhyme.

WALTER: Isn't it Graham's turn?

BELLA: With pleasure. *(she turns to GRAHAM and stops)* What did we call you?

WALTER: Golden Boy.

OPAL: That's hardly a reproach.

WALTER: Depends on how you say it.

BELLA: We must have tormented and demeaned you in some way.

OPAL: I don't think so...

GRAHAM: I never had a nick name.

BELLA: Sure you did.

WALTER: Maybe you had one and didn't know it.

GRAHAM: I tried to start one a couple of times.

OPAL: You tried to get your own nickname?

WALTER: That's pretty sad.

GRAHAM: I tried to get people to call me Mac or Zac or Buddy or Flash... Nothing.

BELLA: I can call you Chicken baby if you like.

GRAHAM: I never would consent to a loser nickname like that.

WALTER: Thanks.

GRAHAM: Walter is it my fault you never did anything about it?

WALTER: What was I supposed to do?

GRAHAM: I'm sure there were a million things -

WALTER: Name one.

GRAHAM: We called you chicken baby cause you acted like one.

WALTER: I did not.

GRAHAM: At the first sign of trouble, you were always running -

WALTER: I did not run anywhere.

GRAHAM: Well you sure as hell never stood up for yourself. You never did anything

to... (*ANN honks the horn.*) Oww. I think we're warmed up. What do we do now?

WALTER: Right. Ok. What do we do? We need to be a tight knit supportive family unit.

GRAHAM: Easy.

WALTER: We never see each other, never spend any time together and when we do get together, we fight. Why?

BELLA: We don't like each other.

WALTER: You're not helping.

BELLA: It's the truth isn't it?

OPAL: Do we need to hear the truth right now?

ANN: Can I say something?

WALTER: Sure.

ANN: You have a problem.

GRAHAM: She's good.

WALTER: I'll bet she went to university too.

GRAHAM: I'll bet.

ANN: Hey! I realize you wisecrack your way out of everything but I wasn't raised that way. I was....(*she takes a deep breath in and comes to a decision*) I was raised in a one parent home without any brothers and sisters because my mother fell in love with someone who "loved her too much to marry her" and then conveniently died and she never got over him.

GRAHAM: We're getting into this now?

BELLA: Uh, Ann...

ANN: And my mom talked all the time about this family. His mother. His father. His brothers and sisters. A house that was always filled with noise and she loved being in that house. I came all this way to be in that house.

OPAL: What is she talking about?

ANN: And I did go to university but only because I worked like a dog with two jobs in high school and I earned the right to be treated with respect.

OPAL: What is she talking about?

GRAHAM: Not now.

BELLA: Why not?

ANN: *(to OPAL)* Perhaps the next time you think of referring to me as “outside the family,” you could not. That has been driving me crazy all weekend.

OPAL: What is she talking about?

GRAHAM: Please not now.

OPAL: Now what?

GRAHAM: Now nothing!

BELLA: Opal, I'd like to introduce you to Ann, your niece.

OPAL: My niece? In what way?

WALTER: The usual way.

BELLA: She's Bones' and Nina's daughter.

OPAL: He never had a child; he never married her, unless she was...when she left.

BELLA: She was.

OPAL: Jesus Christ.

WALTER: I don't think he had much to do with it.

ANN: Hey, Hey, hey! I'm not finished.

BELLA: There's more? Please go on.

OPAL: Oh my Heavens! The nose! She has his nose!

BELLA: That's what I saw.

OPAL: Do you remember when Bones tried to sneak on stage at the church Christmas pageant as one of the sheep and he got caught because his nose gave him away?

*GRAHAM laughs*

WALTER: It was only three times the size of the rest of them.

ANN: May I continue?

GRAHAM: Who could stop you? *(ANN turns to look at GRAHAM)* That wasn't a wise crack. I was expressing a genuine belief.

ANN: You people are so frustrating! What am I doing here? You make me laugh and I want to hate you and I am so scared about May, I'm supposed to be thinking about May except, right now, right now, all I want to do is hear about my dad's nose, which is completely reprehensible. Makes me sick! I've only been here three weeks.

BELLA: Congratulations.

ANN: What.

BELLA: You're part of the family.

ANN: *(touching her nose)* Do I really have his nose?

GRAHAM: I'd think twice about sneaking into any Christmas pageants.

ANN: Ok. Ok. *(she takes a deep breath)* I... you have a problem.

WALTER: She's back.

ANN: My mother had the same problem. She couldn't...she spent all of her days looking back. No matter how hard she tried, she couldn't let go. You have to get your past, your past crap on the table, get it out of the open. That's the only way this family unit happy thing will work. And I... really want it to work. I... I've got the horn and I'm not afraid to use it. Put your crap on the table.

WALTER: Ok.

*WALTER stands. He pours himself a drink.*

OPAL: Walter it's not even nine o'clock.

*WALTER holds out his hand. He pours another drink, drinks again, slams the glass down and sits beside BELLA.*

WALTER: Ask me.

BELLA: What?

WALTER: Go ahead. *(he slaps the coffee table)* I'm on the table. Ask me.

BELLA: *(genuine shock)* Now? Here?

WALTER: Yes.

BELLA: I can't. I...not just like that. Without warning? I can't.

GRAHAM: Bella, haven't you been going to therapy for years just so you'd be prepared for this moment? He's asking you to ask him.

BELLA: I can't do it. I...just wait a minute, ok?

OPAL: I'll ask it.

WALTER: You can't. It has to be Bella.

BELLA: Believe me, she can ask it.

WALTER: Uh uh.

BELLA: What does it matter?

WALTER: Because I've always wondered why you never asked me that question. You accused me. You berated me. You yelled at me. You never asked me. And then you left. What was I supposed to do, chase you across the country? Why should I?

GRAHAM: You haven't spoken in over twenty years because she didn't ask you a question?

WALTER: *(thinking about it)* Ah.....yes.

GRAHAM: And when she asks this question, is there going to be more to your answer than, "standing behind Dad?" Cause since we're putting crap on the table, I have to say that I wasn't impressed with you either.

WALTER: I was just living up to everyone's opinion of me.

BELLA: Why did you refuse to go to Bones' funeral?

WALTER: I didn't go because.....*(suddenly it's no so easy)* Whoa. The Sahara just arrived in my mouth. *(he clears his throat)* I...had somewhat....being third son in this family is a pile of shit. Why should Dad ever talk to me when he's got sons to be proud of. An athlete, top of his class, valedictorian; everybody's friend, the champion of good times, a hit with the ladies. I am, and always have been a pile of shit. I know it. An all round disappointment. I know the way Dad looked at me. But when the sports hero wrecks his knees and the hit with the ladies turns out not to like ladies after all, a pile of shit suddenly doesn't look so bad. When Dad threw Bones out of the house he turns to me. He confides in me, for the first time and when he says 'Can you believe I used to have a faggot for a son,' I don't know what to do. I'm 15. This is the longest sentence he's ever said to me. And when he says 'I'm not going to the funeral, are you?' What do I say?

BELLA: You say, Yes I am going to the funeral.

WALTER: You don't know what it was like. You were off dying your hair and skipping school and selling t-shirts on Saturday. Dad's little cracker. I kept waiting for someone to ask me so I could explain my side of the whole mess. But you never did. No one did.

BELLA: You should have said something.

WALTER: In the end, a pile of shit is a pile of shit. Cause when dad was dying he didn't want me around. In you breezed at the last second leaving me in the corner again. He was the one who threw Bones out. He was the one who stood on the porch cursing as Bones stumbled away. But you didn't seem to have a problem talking to him. For Christ's sake, he never would have known if Opal hadn't told him and you can still stand to speak to her. Why is the brunt of our family's meltdown on my shoulders? Why did I get to be the scapegoat?

BELLA: You let him down. He loved you and looked out for you and you spat on his grave. You -

ANN: STOP!

*The others turn in surprise. They have almost forgotten that ANN was there.*

ANN: Don't say anymore. Don't...That's what she was talking about? That's what she meant? That's why he didn't marry her?

BELLA: You didn't know?

WALTER: Oh shit.

GRAHAM: Double shit.

ANN: I don't believe it! I don't!

BELLA: Ann, you need to breathe honey.

ANN: All these freaking years and that's the reason?

BELLA: Have a seat.

ANN: I don't want to sit. I gotta, I gotta, I have to...

BELLA: Breathe!

ANN: She should have told me. I've been....*(to BELLA)*You should have told me.

BELLA: I thought you knew.

GRAHAM: Where's she going?

ANN: This is, I, my god!

BELLA: Ann?

ANN: I need to talk to...talk to...

*She exits through the kitchen. The others listen.*

WALTER: She's going upstairs.

GRAHAM: What do we do?

BELLA: What can we do? We can't charge up there after her.

WALTER: What is she doing?

BELLA: Going to talk to mom maybe. I thought she knew. She sounded like she knew.

WALTER: There's nothing like hearing a positive story about your dad.

GRAHAM: You said it.

WALTER: She asked the question.

BELLA: I thought she knew.

GRAHAM: Does anyone else have any revelations or skeletons they'd like to shake out of the closet? I mean why not wreck some more lives here, we're on a roll.

*OPAL stands*

OPAL: I have some crap to put on the table.

*The others turn and look at her.*

OPAL: I want to say something.

BELLA: What about Ann?

WALTER: We should probably keep an eye out...

GRAHAM: I was only bluffing Opal, I don't really want to see your skeletons.

OPAL: You said yourself we can't go charging up there. I have something to say.

*She gestures for them to sit. They do. OPAL does a hangover, all over shake to prepare. She comes up and takes a deep breath.*

OPAL: I don't like the way I am treated in this family. I am insulted. I am ignored. I irritate. I can see it in your faces when I say things. I have tried to extend a hand to each of you, only to have it slapped away. What is it I do that is so loathsome? I've know you for all of your lives and yet I couldn't tell anyone what your favourite books were or what you like to eat. I wouldn't know what to make you anymore. Not that it matters because none of you have been to the house since the kids were small. I keep waiting for questions too. How are you Opal? How are you handling life on your own?

BELLA: How are you handling life on your own?

OPAL: I hate it. I hate being alone.

WALTER: But you've got the kids.

OPAL: I see them as much as I see you. I love my children and I think they love me, but I'd never know. I'm mom behind glass. They get close but never too close. *(to BELLA)* Why are my children so close to you? Why do they call you?

BELLA: Cause they like me.

OPAL: You don't know anything about raising children.

BELLA: That's why they call me. They can tell me stuff they can't tell you.

OPAL: Like what?

BELLA: I can't tell you.

OPAL: My children can tell me anything they know that.

BELLA: Then why did you ground Brian that one time he called you from that party?

OPAL: He was underage and drunk and he had the car.

BELLA: That's why he called you.

OPAL: I didn't ground him, Richard did.

BELLA: Only after you told him what Brian had done.

OPAL: Brian accepted his punishment and he respected his father.

BELLA: Ok.

OPAL: He had a great deal of respect for his father! He loved his father!

BELLA: Of course he did.

OPAL: I'm sorry. It hasn't been... I don't understand why they don't talk to me.

GRAHAM: When I was ten years old I was in the middle of stealing a magazine from Ripley's corner store. You caught me and I put it back and I promised I would never do it again. You promised not to tell mom and dad but then you did anyway. I wasn't allowed to go to the circus with my class. You were never one of us. You were always ready to sell us down the river.

BELLA: That's why I took mom to the hospital. She knew I wouldn't tell anybody.

OPAL: I don't do it on purpose. I'm not trying -

*A noise is heard, coming from upstairs. They look up.*

BELLA: What was that?

OPAL: Shhhh.

WALTER: Maybe they're coming downstairs.

GRAHAM: Why are we whispering?

OPAL: Shhh.

BELLA: I don't hear anything.

OPAL: That's because you're talking. Shhh.

WALTER: What do you think is going on up there? Do you think they're talking?

BELLA: And if they are talking, what are they saying?

OPAL: Does May know who Ann is?

BELLA: No, it was supposed to be birthday present.

GRAHAM: May would have loved it. She's always wanted a sister closer to her own age.

WALTER: That's it. That's how we get to May.

BELLA: What?

OPAL: Shhhh.

WALTER: We introduce her to the newest member of the Brown family. Ann. It'll be an emotional moment; we'll all be there, one big happy family.

BELLA: That's cheating.

OPAL: That is a great idea.

WALTER: We're looking at a desperate situation here. Can you think of anything else?

OPAL: I think we should do it.

GRAHAM: It would be a start.

WALTER: It would least get her to open the door.

OPAL: That's all we need.

WALTER: Then we'll be able to talk.

GRAHAM: Let's do it.

BELLA: All right. Can we warn Ann first?

GRAHAM: How do we get her down here, without disturbing May?

MAY: No need. She's already here.

*They all turn to see MAY and ANN standing in the doorway.  
During the previous MAY and ANN have come downstairs.  
MAY looks extremely frail, she is leaning on ANN.*

WALTER: May! We didn't hear you.

OPAL: What are you doing out of bed?

BELLA: We would have come upstairs.

MAY: I have something to say.

GRAHAM: Why don't you come sit down first?

OPAL: Ann, how could you let her get out of bed?

MAY: Be quiet! I want all of you to get your things and get out.

GRAHAM: What?

MAY: Get out. Leave. Get out of my sight.

OPAL: We're not going anywhere.

MAY: I don't want to look at any of you ever again.

WALTER: What did we...

MAY: One big happy family? How dare you.

BELLA: You don't understand.

MAY: What's there to understand? You didn't take me seriously before and I'm here now to make myself perfectly understood. GET OUT!

GRAHAM: We weren't trying to be cruel.

MAY: I need to sit down. *(everyone reaches to assist MAY)* Don't you touch me! *(ANN guides her to a chair)* So. Ann. Welcome to the family. How does it feel?

WALTER: If you would let us explain. We just thought....

MAY: That it would be an emotional moment. That I would fold like a house of cards.

BELLA: That's not what we were trying to do.

MAY: It wouldn't have mattered anyway - I already know who Ann is.

BELLA: How did you find out?

MAY: Mom told me. I wanted to know why Ann wouldn't read you my letter. I tell you Ann, any second you want to trade places with me, you just let me know. I would so much rather spend the rest of my days alone in Vancouver than spend one more moment with these thieves.

WALTER: You don't mean that.

MAY: Don't I? You've been stealing from me for years. All the best bits of me. Stealing

and thieving and plucking until I'm nothing but scabs. Do you want pieces of me? Something to tell your secrets too? Here! And Here! (*MAY starts to rip her dress into shreds, flinging the pieces at her siblings*) Take a piece and keep it close because it's the last thing you'll ever get from me. Take what you want!

GRAHAM: Please. Stop. We didn't mean it. Oh God we didn't mean it. Please don't send us away. I'll do anything. Please don't leave me.

MAY: There's nothing left of me. There's nothing left. I guess I'm just like all of you.

BELLA: Honey, you're sick. You should be in bed, you don't know what you're saying.

MAY: Bella, honey, I am not a child. I am an adult. I have all of my faculties. I am fully aware, particularly when I say that I want you all to get out of my sight. (*no one moves*) Are you people deaf? Listen, if you don't start moving, I'm going to scream bloody murder.

*Again no one moves. MAY gets up from her chair and stands in front of BELLA. MAY screams.*

OPAL: Oh my God.

ANN: Stop it!

*MAY screams again. ANN goes for the horn and honks it.*

ANN: Stop it.

*MAY breaths in and ANN honks the horn again. She honks it several times.*

ANN: You can't throw them out. You can't disown them. You can't scream at them. You can't be like them, I won't let you.

MAY: Why not?

ANN: You just can't! You throw around words - all of you - you toss out words like "I never want to see you again." You're so careless. You don't know what it's like to have nothing but words to cling to. I depended on words. Words told me your names and what you did and who you are. I've seen your faces. I have felt the rhythm of this house. I have slipped downstairs at three in the morning to hear it breath. And I am going crazy with the way you use your words. "Get out." "I never want to see you again." Who treats people like that? Please, May.

MAY: I don't know.

BELLA: We need you May.

MAY: Everybody needs me. *(she sighs)* When is Paul getting here?

BELLA: Any second.

MAY: Does he....

OPAL: No.

WALTER: We couldn't decide who would tell him.

MAY: *(she gives a bitter laugh)* You guys are the biggest bunch of jerks. *(She laughs again)* You wouldn't believe how terrified you look. You look like you're all about to wet your pants. *(She starts to laugh again. The laughs turn into huge heart breaking tears. She falls to the ground)* Oh. Oh. Oh. I miss my baby.

*BELLA kneels down beside MAY and places a hand on her knee. MAY lunges into BELLA'S arms. They hold each other. The others take this as a sign to get involved. WALTER, GRAHAM, OPAL, BELLA and MAY glom into a group on the floor. ANN watches.*

MAY: This is the worst birthday, I have ever had. Next year I want bread machines from all of you. Let me go please. *(the others move away so that MAY is alone. She sighs.)* Actually, I don't think I want anything from you next year.

ANN: *(to self)* Oh May...

MAY: Ann, would you like to go into the kitchen and share a pot of tea?

ANN: I...

BELLA: Can we come?

MAY: No.

ANN: Ok.

MAY: Good. Don't look so sad. They won't go away. They're vultures. Bloodsuckers.

WALTER: May, what do we do?

MAY: I don't know. I'm going to have some tea. Do what you have to do.

*MAY and ANN exit. The others are left standing in the living room. There is a long silence. OPAL bends over to pick up the shreds of MAY'S dress.*

OPAL: Such a pretty dress.

*WALTER turns to GRAHAM and sticks out his hand.*

WALTER: Hi. My name is Walter. I don't think we've met properly. How do you do?

GRAHAM: I've been better.

WALTER: Yes, well, *(extending his hand to BELLA)* I'm Walter.

BELLA: Nice to meet you Walter. My name is Bella.

WALTER: That's a lovely name. My sister's name is Bella. She was delivered on my Aunt Elizabeth's kitchen table in the middle of the country by their Italian housekeeper. Apparently there's an afterbirth stain still ingrained in the wood. *(extending his hand to OPAL)* I'm sorry I didn't catch your name.

OPAL: Walter I'm not in the...*(she stops herself, looks at her siblings, and clears her throat)* My name is Opal. Opal Godfrey. That's my married name, my maiden name is Brown.

GRAHAM: Isn't that a coincidence. My last name is Brown too.

BELLA: Mine too.

WALTER: Who would have thought that four people standing in their mother's living room would have the same last name?

BELLA: Do you think we're related?

*They all look at each other, weary but not defeated as the lights fade to black.*

*THE END*