

START

# JARELYN

Nothing Will  
Ever Be The Same  
by Zakiyah Alexander

#1

SARAH

I was, um. I was hoping I could copy your math homework. I had it, I did, I just left it at home, and-

JACKIE

Whatever.

SARAH copies JACKIE'S work as lights come up on DARYL.

DARYL

There's this girl. She's so cute, I mean she is like beautiful. Really. She's so smart and pretty, and she, man, I think about her all the time. See this? Tagged her name all over my book, I can't help it. She sits in front of me in science and I watch the way her hair curls on the back of her neck. Sarah. Sarah. Sarah. She writes poetry and reads it sometimes in English, she doesn't think anyone gets it, but I do. Sarah. I wish I could talk to you. I wish that you would want to know me. That we could know each other. But, the things is, you don't even know I'm alive. If only I could tell you, I see you. I do.

## SONG

#2

SARAH

You know things aren't easy for me, either. My parents, they got me on lock down. They keep thinking I'm gonna make their mistakes. My father, he doesn't think I'm old enough for a boyfriend. I had one once, Eddie Jiminez, he was so sweet, he used to send iam's to me and download songs for me to play, until my parents found out

#3

SARAH

and made me end it. See, that's what I want, a little freedom, you know? I'm old enough to handle it. But, no one understands that I'm responsible.

END

JACKIE

No one understands how hard I work.

DARYL

No one understands that I'm someone, too.

The 3 SONGS somehow meld into one. CAT and MAIA are listening to this together, they give each other a high five.

Monologue for  
**AHMSA** ①

SCENE XVI

Martha watches other happy students as they make their way to class. She addresses the audience.

Cade

MARTHA: I spend a lot of time just hangin' in the halls, checkin' out some of the kids in this school. I start thinkin' about what it would be like to be them, to live their lives. And I wonder what it must be like to live in a house that has plenty of room. In a neighborhood where helicopters don't fly overhead all night long. I wonder what it would be like to have both a Mom and a Dad. To not worry about my little sister gettin' hit with a stray bullet because somebody's fightin' over a street they don't even own. To have my own bedroom where I have my own things that no one will mess with. To not have to watch my brother racing to the grave with a never-ending need for twenty dollar pieces of rock. And I wonder what it's like to go places—like the beach, another state, another country. To go somewhere...anywhere. To not worry about the electricity bein' turned off, or the car bein' repo'd. I wonder what it's like to have dreams instead of nightmares and to know that those dreams someday may actually come true. To look through brochures of colleges and universities and know that I have a choice. To see myself living long enough to become an adult. *(She watches several more students as they walk past her.)* And as I watch the lucky ones, I wonder most of all, what it would be like to have hope. To have just a little bit of hope.

*(Martha exits.)*

SCENE XVII

Kyle sits very still on a cube.

KYLE: What I really want to know is if anybody has a videotape of the game. Anybody? You see, everything was so confusing that I don't remember much about it. All I really remember is the pass...Diggs always throws too far, so I had to kick in the afterburners to reach the ball. I know I beat the man that was coverin' me, 'cause I saw his red shirt behind me. The ball was just out of my reach so I had to leap like a bullfrog to grab it. I remember hittin' the ground and a bunch of people on top of me. And

by Brad Slaughter

JACK: Somethin' like that.

JONI: I had him last semester.

JACK: I know.

JONI: You have to write a paper on one of those arty paintings.

JACK: Right...

JONI: *(Imitating Kelsey.)* "What do I see in this picture?" — go to picture

JACK: You really got him down.

JONI: You know I always did pretty good in Kelsey's class, 'specially with stuff like this. Let me look at it...

*(Joni takes the book from him, studies the picture.)*

JONI: Hmmmm, well, I see a clown...eating cotton candy. And this line here is like a tightrope. Look there *(Points.)* that could be an elephant. So write about that. Tell him you think it looks like a circus.

JACK: *(Looks at picture.)* A circus?

JONI: Pretty good, huh?

JACK: Yeah, I didn't see that in there.

JONI: I have a real eye for stuff like this. Guys just don't have much imagination when it comes to art. Geez, if I left it up to you you'd probably just see cars, hot babes, and baseballs.

JACK: You're probably right.

JONI: Trust me, the circus thing is the way to go with this one. *(Looks at watch.)* Gotta run. See you later.

JACK: Thanks Joni...see ya.

*(Joni exits. Jack opens the book back up to the picture.)*

JACK: "What do I see in this picture?" *(Studies the picture; he stands and is obviously inspired.)* I see an intergalactic clipper ship sailing across the windswept seas of uncharted space. *(Building.)* The massive sail billows with a strong gust from the constellation Orion. *(Stands on cube; louder, more dramatic.)* The Captain stands at the bow. His only map is the parchment woven from the fiber of his soul. He embraces the impending journey, the pilgrimage. Ready to sail into the electrifying abyss of discovery!

*(Another Student, enters and spots Jack, who becomes self-conscious. Jack makes a quick exit.)*

in darkness. When I came to I heard a guy say, "Some sort of fluke." I thought he was talkin' about my great catch, but then I hear 'em talkin' about my head and neck. Then bright lights. More people. But we weren't on the football field anymore. And then... (Thinks.) Well, the rest is all kinda fuzzy. Not quite sure. (Pause.) The doctors say I'll never walk again. That this chair will be part of me for life. But I know I'm gonna get out of this thing. No matter what, I am gonna walk again. (Pause.) I hope somebody has a tape. 'Cause I really want to see myself making that game winning catch. Running like the wind and making that catch!

END.

## SCENE XVIII (US)

*Felicia enters and spots Nate.*

FELECIA: Where were you last night?

NATE: Uh...like I told you, I was fishing.

FELECIA: (Sings.) I know, Nate. Karla told me...she saw you at the restaurant. With some lady...a blonde. You obviously like older women.

NATE: It's not what you think. I wasn't on a date... That woman is my... mother.

FELECIA: Gimme a break. I know your mother, she has black hair and happens to be in Europe on vacation. I'm outta here... (Felicia starts off)

NATE: I was adopted. (Felicia stops.)

FELECIA: You never told me you were adopted.

NATE: I never told anybody.

FELECIA: And the blonde is your real Mother?

NATE: Yes...and last night was the first time I've ever seen her. She called me a few days ago...really caught me by surprise. Wanted to meet me.

FELECIA: I thought if you give up a baby...they won't tell you where it goes.

NATE: She has a lot of money. Married some rich guy. When you have money you can find out just about anything you want.

FELECIA: So you agreed to meet her?

NATE: I was curious. On the way over I thought about the questions I had for her: Why did you do it? Why couldn't you have found a way to keep me? I was pretty angry when I got to the restaurant. I was just gonna tell her off and then go.

FELECIA: So why didn't you?

NATE: When she introduced herself, she kinda fell apart. Started crying and hugging me. So I calmed her down and suggested we eat dinner. I figured it would be easier to talk to her if there was people around. (Pause.) She told me she was only seventeen when she had me. That she didn't even know who the father was 'cause she slept with several guys. Then she apologized for five minutes. Said she was gonna keep me, but her parents woulda kicked her out of the house if she did. She gave me up so I would at least have a good home.

FELECIA: Which you do.

NATE: Yes I do...and I told her that. Anyway, after she married the rich guy a few years ago she started lookin' for me. It didn't take long. She's known about me for awhile, but it took her some time to get up the courage to call me.

FELECIA: Sounds like she had a pretty rough life.

NATE: I know, even though that doesn't make up for what she did. Then, the more I talked to her...she became a person to me, instead of some stranger. Not a mom or anything, but not a stranger either. It's weird, but I started feeling sorry for her.

FELECIA: So then what happened?

NATE: We finished dinner and she gave me her number. Told me that she wouldn't call me. That she would stay away unless I wanted to talk to her. It's all my choice.

FELECIA: Are you going to tell your parents...I mean the ones you live with?

NATE: Not right now. I don't want them to worry about me. They'd probably think I don't love them as much now. But the truth is...I think I love them even more.

FELECIA: Nate, I'm sorry I was mad at you. Do you want to be alone for awhile?

NATE: Not really.

FELECIA: Why don't we go over to my place? Kelly's got band practice so we'd have the pool all to ourselves.

NATE: Alright.

(They start to head out.)

FELECIA: There is one major downside to all of this.

NATE: What's that?

FELECIA: (Gentle.) Mother's Day is sure gonna be expensive for you. (Quickly.) Sorry, bad joke.

# ASHLEY

TABITHA: Be strong, don't give in.  
 SCOTT: Hi Tabitha.  
 TABITHA: Hi Scott.  
 SCOTT: Wanda...

WANDA: Scott, I don't even want to argue about it.  
*(Wanda looks to Tabitha who gives her a nod of encouragement.)*  
 SCOTT: I'm not here to argue, I wanted to give you your CD's back...they were in my locker. *(He hands her several Compact Discs.)*

WANDA: Oh...well, thank you.  
 SCOTT: So, I guess we won't be going to the Cobra's concert this week-end.

WANDA: I think you know the answer to that.  
 SCOTT: Even though I already bought the tickets for us.  
 WANDA: *(looks to Tabitha)* Uh...No. It wouldn't be right.  
 SCOTT: How about you, Tabitha: You want to go?

TABITHA: Sure. *(Tabitha stands and crosses to him.)* What time you gonna pick me up?  
 SCOTT: Early, so we can get some dinner first.  
*(They start walking away.)*  
 TABITHA: How about that new Chinese place that opened in the mall?  
 SCOTT: Sounds good to me.  
*(They are now gone, leaving a very confused Wanda sitting alone.)*

SCENE 16  
*Annie Yeager sits nervously waiting to see the Principal, she is surprised when Denise Louell enters and sits next to her.*

ANNIE: Denise? What are you doing here?  
 DENISE: Mr. Kelsey kicked me out of class.  
 ANNIE: You were kicked out of class? Miss National Honor Society, Miss Class President. Miss everything, except Miss Behave.  
 DENISE: Well, today I crossed over to the other side...way over.  
 ANNIE: What happened?  
 DENISE: *Into the World Came A Soul Named Ida.*  
 ANNIE: Ida who?

DENISE: It's a famous painting of a homely woman...some say she's a prostitute.

ANNIE: Wow, I'm taking the wrong classes here.  
 DENISE: <sup>STAY</sup>It was question #5 on our midterm final. "Explain the meaning of the painting *Into The World Came A Soul Named Ida.*"

ANNIE: And he got mad because you called Ida a prostitute?  
 DENISE: He got mad because I didn't. I didn't see her that way and I told him he had no right marking my answer wrong, just because I disagreed with him.

ANNIE: What did you disagree on?  
 DENISE: He saw Ida as a common whore, who painted herself up and struck out into the night in search of quick money.

ANNIE: How did you see her?  
 DENISE: I saw her as a symbol of what being a woman has always been about. The fact that we are forced to become something other than what we want to be. Ida was homely, and was looked down on by society. She was a victim of her own insecurity, but that didn't make her a whore. She was struggling in a world that imposed its values on her, just as Mr. Kelsey was imposing his views on us. And he told me I was wrong! It was my interpretation. How can I be wrong? He can expose us to paintings, but how dare he insist that we agree with what he says they mean. Suddenly something inside of me just kinda snapped. And then I told Mr. Kelsey that he could never understand what Ida represented because he was a chauvinistic pig who will still living in the 19th century with his macho head up his butt. I guess it was at that point that he sent me here.

ANNIE: You really said that to him?  
 DENISE: Yes, I did.  
 ANNIE: Whoa, and you're not even a Senior yet.

*(pause)*  
 DENISE: What did you get in trouble for?  
 ANNIE: I'm embarrassed to say after what you told me.  
 DENISE: Don't be embarrassed, we all have our causes.  
 ANNIE: I skipped out of 3rd period History class and went to 7-11 for a Slurpee.

*(pause)*  
 VOICE OF PRINCIPAL: *(offstage)* Miss Yeager...Annie!  
*(Annie gets up and starts to exit. She stops and turns back to Denise.)*  
 ANNIE: But...uh...*(proud)* I did it to protest how we women have been

# ARMANDS

ANNIE: (*Jingles keys.*) I still get to drive your car... I've never driven a Mercedes before.

MARIA: You got it...  
(*Annie and Maria exit.*)

## SCENE VIII

*Leon enters and looks around as if he hears something.*

LEON: If you listen closely... you can hear the past. The voices of my ancestors. My people. (*Pause.*) Most of the kids here call me Leon, but my Indian name is Suyeta [Soo-yay-ta], which means "The Chosen One." I may not look it, but my father is part Cherokee, and my mother has some in her as well. They moved to this area right before I was to start school because they wanted me to be brought up on the land that once was the home of my people. Before the concrete and metal, before the malls and the minimarts, this was all open space. My ancestral tribe lived, hunted, played, and dreamed on this very ground. (*Pause.*) One time I saw an Indian Warrior walking in this hall. His face was painted with bright colors, his clothes made of animal skin, his eyes burned with life. He turned and waved to me, as if to invite me on his journey. (*Pause.*) I don't talk much about this with my friends because they don't understand the ways of my people. They don't understand that my blood flows with such history. But in the quiet moments I feel near to those who came before me. And I have a connection to the past. Their spirit lives on. Even here. Even now.  
(*He thinks about that for a moment and then exits.*)

## SCENE IX

*An angry Cheryl enters and spots Karen, who is deep in thought; crosses to her and takes her aside in private.*

CHERYL: We have to talk.  
KAREN: What's your problem?

CHERYL: You're my problem. I can't believe you would just leave that thing in our locker! Do you know how much trouble we could both get in if they saw that?

KAREN: You found it?

CHERYL: It practically fell out on me. Right during break. With teachers walking all over the place. What if they had seen it?

KAREN: It was in a bag.

CHERYL: A paper bag. Real smart, Karen.

KAREN: I just got it this morning... it's not like I was going to leave it in our locker or anything.

CHERYL: Why, Karen? Why do you need... (*Looks around.*) a gun?

KAREN: I have my reasons.

CHERYL: Reasons?

CHERYL: Is somebody after you?

KAREN: Sorta.

CHERYL: Who?

KAREN: I don't want to talk about it.

(*Karen crosses and sits, Cheryl follows.*)

CHERYL: Well you can talk to me. I'm your best friend.

KAREN: I don't want to get you involved.

CHERYL: You already have.

KAREN: I don't think there's anything you can do.

CHERYL: Well, maybe not. But I have a lot of pull with the front office... you know that. We can really fix the kid who's terrorizing you.

KAREN: That's not going to help. He doesn't go to this school.

CHERYL: What school does he go to?

KAREN: He doesn't go to any school. (*Pause.*) He lives in my house.

CHERYL: Your house? (*Pause.*) Jerry? Your Stepfather?

KAREN: Yes.

CHERYL: I thought you said he's a nice guy.

KAREN: I thought he was.

CHERYL: Jekyll and Hyde, huh? What happened? Bad temper? Did he snap? (*Pause.*) Did he hit you?

KAREN: No... it's not like that.

CHERYL: Well, then what's the problem. I mean, if he didn't hit you then what... (*Suddenly realizes.*) Oh my God... Karen. He didn't.

KAREN: Not yet. But it's gonna be soon. I can tell. Every time he pushes things a little further. (*Pause.*) It started out with little looks and comments. Then last night we were sitting on the couch watching a movie

LAILA



NWERTS

"Nothing Will Ever Be

Jackie:

Excuse me, Mr. Cruz, could I speak to you for a minute? Um. I wanted to talk to you about this. My paper. An 87. I really thought, I mean I hoped was going to get at least a ninety, cause see, the thing is I tried, I really did. No, it's not that it's a bad <sup>grade</sup> great, I mean it's a fine grade, it's just....The thing is my parents, they wouldn't understand why I got such a low grade. See, they're not from here, and they have this thing about grades. I mean I work really hard, I <sup>mean</sup> really, really, really hard and its important because they want the best for me, at least that's what they say. And, if I don't get good grades they're not going to let me go out, they're not going to let me go to dance class and take singing lessons and hang out with my friends or watch television. You have no idea how hard, how incredibly hard it is to be perfect, cause see that's what I'm trying to do. I am trying to be perfect, and like my mother says, 'we got no room for failure in this house.' And, I'm

The Same  
by  
Zakiya  
Alexander

JACKIE (cont'd)

trying, I'm trying so hard, but they don't see, they don't understand. The only thing they get is a perfect grade. So, what I'm trying to say is, can I please do a rewrite? Please. I promise that this time...it'll be perfect. //END

Bell rings.

LOUEY holds his camera on JEROME.

JEROME

Yo, I'm ready for my close up, dawg.

LOUEY

Come on, be serious.

JEROME

I am serious, cause you know I'm a star. What you want me to spit a rhyme for you? Or, you just want to look at my pretty face?

LOUEY

Clearly, you are not seeing what I'm seeing.

JEROME

Hey-

LOUEY

Kidding. Okay, seriously, tell me something about you that I'd never know by looking at you.

JEROME

You mean how fly I am?

Monologue for

want that name no more. 'Cause my little brother didn't call me that. He didn't know who Cougar was. My little brother...he knew me only as Mike.

# EMMANUEL

## SCENE 20

CHRISTIAN: When I was a kid, my teachers told my parents that I had a bad temper. It was so much easier to deal with then. But now things have changed. Now I have a Psychiatrist who says that I suffer from "Spontaneous Emotional Episodes", which basically means...I have a bad temper. And what did this Genius, who gets paid \$100 an hour, suggest I do to overcome my disorder? *Socks*. He said that I should put a sock on my hand, and have it represent the person I'm upset with. I'm supposed to tell that sock everything that bothers me about our relationship and not hold anything back. So I took his advice and focused on one person that made me angrier than all the rest. *(He puts a bright red sock on his left hand.)* I call him Dr. Shaffer, my Psychiatrist. *(To sock)* Listen you overeducated, lay-down-on-my-couch, blame-everything-on-my-Mother, \$100-an-hour, out-of-shape, frustrated Freud, long-word-using, can't-get-your-own-act-together dork! I'm sick of going to your office just because I happen to get a little mad at people once and awhile and having you make me feel like I'm some sort of serial killer. *(Makes sock talk)* "But Christian, you have to learn to control your anger before you enter the real world." *(To sock)* By wearing a stupid sock on my hand and talking to it like it was a person? Is that what they do in the real world? Are you trying to heal me, or train me to be a ventriloquist? You jerk! *(Pause; takes sock off his hand)* You know something . . . maybe he's right. I do feel a lot better.

CLASS ACTION (83)

by Brad Slaight

# JANINE

~~Yakovlev~~  
"Nothing Will Ever  
Be the Same"

-by Zakiyah  
Alexander

CAT

Look, I'm sorry they were-

LYDIA

No, whatever.

CAT

They can be really mean, sometimes, but you shouldn't-

LYDIA

Forget it.

CAT

No, Lydia. I don't want to. I mean. Back in the day we used to be friends.

LYDIA

I didn't even think you remembered.

CAT

Of course I remember. In third grade you were my best friend.

LYDIA

That was a long time ago. Look at you, you're all cool now, and me, I'm the laughing stock. It's not fair. I mean I walk in these halls day after day and I pretend like I don't hear what people say. I pretend like it doesn't hurt. But, I hear them, I see the way they look at me. They say, that girl looks busted, she don't got no money just cause I don't have the latest style. That girl's trying to be something she's not. They call me emo, just cause I don't wear the coolest clothes. Who cares about looking cool, you know? There's other things that are more important. There's a lot people don't know about me. But, nobody cares what's underneath, you know? They can't see my dreams. They don't know that sometimes I'm scared. They don't know that just once I want somebody to see me, the real me underneath it all.

CAT

...You know what? Forget them.

LYDIA

Yeah, right. Easy for you to say.

CAT

I'm serious. They're my friends, but...can I tell you a secret? Sometimes I hate them. I hang out with them because everybody expects me to. To tell you the truth I think I used to have more fun hanging out with you.



# KATHRYN

Maia

“Nothing Will Ever Be The Same”

By Zakiyyah Alexander

To be honest sometimes I really hate New York. It's too smelly and dirty, there's garbage everywhere, and rats and roaches, man I really hate roaches. Plus, there's always crowds and sometimes it feels like there's no room to breathe or think, you know? But, I guess, at the same time, I like it here, in New York I mean, cause when you think about it we got everything here. We got all the different people and foods and music, you know I love music, and I never realized till this year how many opportunities I really had here. And, there's this beautiful thing that happens to me when I get lost in the crowd, it's like you could just be swimming in this sea of people. Thing is, I'm the youngest kid at home everybody notices every step I take. They keep saying, don't be like your brother (cause he's always in trouble). That's why school is good, here I just get to be me. Don't have to pretend. And the streets can be nice, you know, to just be a part of all the people; like for a second they become your family – sometimes you hate 'em but most times you love 'em. So, I guess when I really think about New York, well I wouldn't change it, you know? New York is...home. It's me. Loud and crazy and sometimes trying to be noticed

# ANGELINA

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK

by Frances Goodrich and Albert Hackett

Anne

In this second speech, Anne talks with the Van Daan's son, Peter, about the need for each person to have faith in something.

ANNE: (*Looking up through skylight.*) Look, Peter, the sky. What a lovely day. Aren't the clouds beautiful? You know what I do when it seems as if I couldn't stand being cooped up for one more minute? I *think* myself out. I think myself on a walk in the park where I used to go with Pim. Where the daffodils and the crocus and the violets grow down the slopes. You know the most wonderful thing about *thinking* yourself out? You can have it any way you like. You can have roses and violets and chrysanthemums all blooming at the same time.... It's funny...I used to take it all for granted...and now I've gone crazy about everything to do with nature. Haven't you?

[PETER: (*Barely lifting his face.*) I've just gone crazy. I think if something doesn't happen soon...if we don't get out of here...I can't stand much more of it! (*Warm change. Curtain light on. Warm* £54.)]

ANNE: (*Softly.*) I wish you had a religion, Peter.

[PETER: (*Bitterly, as he rolls over.*) No, thanks. Not me.]

ANNE: Oh, I don't mean you have to be Orthodox...or believe in heaven and hell and purgatory and things...I just mean some religion...it doesn't matter what. Just to believe in something! When I think of all that's out there...the trees...and flowers...and seagulls...when I think of the dearthness of you, Peter...and the goodness of the people we know...Mr. Kraler, Miep, Dirk, the vegetable man, all risking their lives for us every day...When I think of these good things, I'm not afraid any more...I find myself, and God, and I... [PETER: (*Impatiently, as he gets to his feet.*) That's fine! But when I begin to think, I get mad! Look at us, hiding out for two years. Not able to move! Caught here like...waiting for them to come and get us...and all for what?]

ANNE: (*Rises and goes to him.*) We're not the only people that've had to suffer. There've always been people that've had to... sometimes one race...sometimes another...and yet...

[PETER: (*Sitting on upstage end of bed.*) That doesn't make me feel any better!]

ANNE: I know it's terrible, trying to have any faith...when people are doing such horrible... (*Gently lifting his face.*) but you know what I sometimes think? I think the world may be going through a phase, the way I was with Mother. It'll pass, maybe not for hundreds of years, but some day...I still believe, in spite of everything, that people are really good at heart. // END.

# MELANIE ROSE

43

ribbon. Aren't you Dad?  
 PHIL. That hasn't been determined.  
 HANNAH. (To Judy.) Did he invite you to come? (Pause.)  
 JUDY. I will be there. (Beat.) Hannah, more broccoflower?  
 HANNAH. I've consumed quite enough.  
 JUDY. Phil?  
 PHIL. Yes. Thank you. (He doesn't take any. Lights shift.)

## Scene 15

An abandoned schoolyard. Laura and Leslie run in.

LESLIE. Nobody.  
 LAURA. Did you run around the back again?  
 LESLIE. Four times!  
 LAURA. Me too!  
 LESLIE. I looked under rocks! I looked under leaves! There's no one here.  
 LAURA. What happened?  
 LESLIE. Let's look at the brochure again. Maybe we got it wrong. (Laura looks at the brochure.)  
 LAURA. Where did you get the brochure?  
 LESLIE. I found it.  
 LAURA. Where?  
 LESLIE. In the library. I went to the mag rack at recess to put on some perfume from a *Mirabella*. And I saw it poking out of a shelf.  
 LAURA. When?  
 LESLIE. A while ago.  
 LAURA. Do you see what this says at the bottom? Right here? In solid black ink? (Beat.) Copyright 1971. 1971! See how the print's all weird? How the letters are like, all, flared at the bottom?  
 LESLIE. I thought it was retro.  
 LAURA. Oh my God. (Long pause.)

LESLIE. My mom says everything comes back. Shoulder pads, everything. She says you just keep it in your closet and you hold on tight. Cuz everything comes back! My mom says it does!  
 LAURA. No, it doesn't. In 1971, my mom was alive, and she's dead now. In 1971, my mother was alive, and today, she's gone.  
 LESLIE. But she's always in your heart.

STAY!

LAURA. ~~Is that all there is to say? Cuz that doesn't mean anything.~~ (She stares at the brochure) In 1971, I wasn't even around yet. But that's when she was really alive, I think. She had a grey streak in the front of her hair. Premature grey. She had it for years until she finally got sick of the giggles and stares and she dyed it like the rest of them. I don't even remember barely. I was so little. She used to tell us things, but I barely remember and I can't ask her again! I can't say, "Hey, Mom, tell me things I never listened to! Tell me how to do things! Tell me how to bake sugar cookies so they're soft in the middle! Tell me how to sweep my hair up so it holds with just a pin. Tell me what it feels like when your water breaks and a baby comes out! I don't have anybody to tell me that! (Laura starts to tear the brochure.) I hate my dad! I'm sorry, but I hate him so much! How could he just keep going? I don't understand how he could just keep going! (Beat.) Is that what happens? You're young, and you believe in things, and then you, what? You get married, you have kids, you move into a Spanish stucco ocean view unit and you forget? One day you wear your white streak like a peacock's tail, and the next day you're letting them paint it with bleach and toner and wrap it in tin foil and sitting under a hair dryer to cook for an hour while you learn lip-lining tips from a beauty magazine! Like everybody else! When you sit under those dryer domes, you can't see or hear a thing. You just have to sit there quietly and let all that stuff soak into you. (Beat.) She's really kind of been gone for a long long time. (Laura finishes tearing the brochure and starts to scatter the pieces.) I don't want to be a dead girl. I want to be a person who's alive. (She turns and starts to slowly walk away.)

LESLIE. Where are you going? (Laura turns. A beat.)  
 LAURA. I'm going home. (Lights shift.)

LAURA BY ANNE WILSON  
 67

# LIZBETH

by Neil Simon

## 94 BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS

with my friend Louise, in Manhattan Beach until I can find a job. Then I'll send for you and Laurie.

NORA. I can't believe it. You mean it's alright for you to leave *us* but it wasn't alright for me to leave *you*?

BLANCHE. I was never concerned about your leaving *me*. It was your future I was worrying about.

NORA. It was *my* future. Why couldn't I have something to say about it?

BLANCHE. Maybe I was wrong, I don't know. I never made the decisions for the family. Your father did. Everyone always took care of me. My mother, my sisters, your father, even you and Laurie. I've been a very dependent person all my life.

NORA. Maybe that's all I'm asking for. To be independent.

BLANCHE. (*sternly*) You *earn* your independence. You don't take it at the expense of others. Would that job even be offered to you if somebody in this family hadn't paid for those dancing lessons and kept a roof over your head and clothes on your back? If anyone's going to pay back Uncle Jack it'll be me—doing God knows what, I don't know—but one thing I'm sure of. I'll *steal* before I let my daughter show that man one ounce of ingratitude or disrespect.

NORA. So I have to give up the one chance I may never get again, is that it? I'm the one who has to pay for what you couldn't do with your own life.

BLANCHE. (*angrily*) What right do you have to judge me like that?

NORA. *Judge* you? I can't even talk to you. I don't exist to you. I have tried so hard to get close to you but there was never any room. Whatever you had to give went to Daddy, and when he died, whatever was left you

## BRIGHTON BEACH MEMOIRS 95

gave to—(*She turns away.*)

BLANCHE. What? Finish what you were going to say. NORA. . . . I have been jealous my whole life of Laurie because she was lucky enough to be born sick. I could never turn a light on in my room at night or read in bed because Laurie always needed her precious sleep. I could never have a friend over on the weekends because Laurie was always resting. I used to pray I'd get some terrible disease or get hit by a car so I'd have a leg all twisted or crippled and then once, maybe just once, I'd get to crawl into bed next to you on a cold rainy night and talk to you and hold you until I fell asleep in your arms . . . just once . . . (*She is in tears.*)

BLANCHE. My God, Nora . . . is that what you think of me?

NORA. Is it any worse than what you think of me?

BLANCHE. (*hesitates, trying to recover*) . . . I'm not going to let you hurt me, Nora. I'm not going to let you tell me that I don't love you or that I haven't tried to give you as much as I gave Laurie . . . God knows I'm not perfect because enough angry people in this house told me so tonight . . . But I am *not* going to be a doormat for all the frustrations and unhappiness that you or Aunt Kate or anyone else wants to lay at my feet . . . I did *not* create this Universe. I do *not* decide who lives and dies, or who's rich or poor or who feels loved and who feels deprived. If you feel cheated that Laurie gets more than you, than I feel cheated that I had a husband who died at thirty-six. And if you keep on feeling that way, you'll end up like me . . . with something much worse than loneliness or helplessness and that's self-pity. Believe me, there is no leg that's twisted or bent that is more crippling than a human being who thrives on his

# KEYANNA

## Joe Pintauro

**POP:** That's nonsense.

**JULIE:** Obviously you feel that way since you're the one who kills the animals .

**POP:** Now I am not a murderer...

**JULIE:** Animals have a right to live you know. They survive out there through thick and thin. They have their babies in the snow. Oh, if we were out there we'd grow hair too. They're just like us. They're friends under that fur—and they mind their own business. What do they ask from us? Nothing. Nothing. They don't even want our help and we kill them...

**POP:** We kill vegetables when we eat them.

## JULIE: Huh?

**POP:** I've heard carrots' scream. Yeah, and string beans and broccoli weeping.

**JULIE:** (*Hands over ears.*) I wasn't meant for this world. I'm wasting away, worrying about the elephants getting shot by poachers so some narcissic bimbo could wear an ivory bracelet. I go to sleep each night wondering: how does that poor elephant feel? She's got her trunk up in the trees grabbing fruit for her baby and BAMMMMM! Mother is hit. Mother is dizzy. Run my darling child. Mother is falling to her knees. Oh the pain. I'm bleeding to death. Goodbye tree, goodbye clouds, BOOOOOM! I've fallen in a heap. My eyes are glaring—my trunk is swinging wildly. Oh no. They're coming closer. They're going to shoot again. The gun is touching my skull. BAMMMMM! In the brain. Goodbye light! The last thing I see is the giraffes running. The eagles soar up and away. They look down and see the cities covered in pollution...where will we go? The condors too. They swear to the god of all flying creatures they will never lay their eggs again. And how many people eat chickens each day? Twenty million? A hundred million? All those chickens murdered each day. All that blood all over the world. I think I'm going to faint. And now you tell me that stringbeans and broccoli feel it too. I just won't stand for it another minute. I'd rather...I'd rather...

## Reindeer Soup

**POP:** Well the pill's working and I'm your Pop now so let's make sure you're warm enough.

**JULIE:** I would love it if somebody explained to me why you need a pill just to be a normal father.

**POP:** (*Thinks.*) The chemicals in my brain get messed up and I go flyin' off the track...(*He leaves her to go to table. She follows him.*)

**JULIE:** What track?

**POP:** My track. The track of who I am.

**JULIE:** When you have to be tied up, it's like not only Mom is gone but you are too.

**POP:** I feel very foolish but I didn't ask to be this way.

**JULIE:** I'm too young to be the mother around here...

**POP:** Oh yes. You're too young. You stay the twelve year old. Julie, that's exactly what your Mom would want. You're still a child. Pop'll take care of you and protect you.

**JULIE:** Do you have enough pills for that?

**POP:** Well...just remember you don't have to be grown up before your time. Now do Pop a favor and try to eat some of the things we do.

**JULIE:** That stupid soup is just filthy hot water.

**POP:** It has some nourishment now.

**JULIE:** Road pizza. I'd rather die.

**POP:** Where am I going to get vegetables in this wasteland up here?

**JULIE:** Why didn't you think of that six months ago? You're a horrible man. Eating meat is murder.

**Reindeer Soup**

**POP:** Shhh.

**JULIE:** Why didn't God make us so we didn't have to eat?

**POP:** If people didn't have to eat, they wouldn't work.

**JULIE:** Why did God make it so adults have to work, work, work. What are we slaves?

**POP:** No people want houses and fancy cars and boats and...

**JULIE:** Why aren't all those things free?

**POP:** You know, work, work is good.

**JULIE:** Yeah.

**POP:** Work can make you happy. Work is what you do with other people.

**JULIE:** I feel sorry for that poor whale and shark under Klute's bed. There's death in this house.

**POP:** Now that's not true.

**JULIE:** It reminds me of what happened to Mom and I get scared.

**POP:** But Julie, if you don't eat something...you might...you might even...

**JULIE:** Pop, wake up. We're starving here. We won't have food for another month. You made us be trapped up here with a beautiful truck that has a teeny bit of gas left and one continuous blizzard outside. No other kids, just Eskimos and reindeer. Pop, we're going to die.

**POP:** If you go to sleep, I'll think of something. How's that?

**JULIE:** Don't strain yourself. (*She goes back to bed.*)

**POP:** Maybe I could...maybe I could....(*Trying to get out of it, he goes to Chrissie's bunk.*) tuck in Chrissie. Hi, Angel.

**Joe Pintauro**

**CHRISIE:** When is my mother coming back?

**POP:** You're who? Oh, well, hm...it's the rules of heaven that once you go in you can't come out.

**CHRISIE:** Don't tell me God keeps people prisoner there, that's absurd.

**KLUTE:** The kid is smarter than you Pop.

**POP:** People in heaven are so happy, they just can't bring themselves to leave.

**KLUTE:** Don't believe him.

**CHRISIE:** Mom wouldn't stay. She would look down at what we're going through and she'd come get us.

**POP:** Then you tell me where she is...you tell me.

**KLUTE:** She's dead, she's dead.

**POP:** She may, glimpse...she may, you know, glimpse what's goin' on here and she's stayin' up there...Because she figures we ain't all that bad off down here—things are pretty good.

**KLUTE:** I don't know if you're worse when you think you're Our Miss Brooks or when you think you're the Pope.

**CHRISIE:** I know. Mom up in heaven figures, the sooner we die the quicker we'll be able to join her in heaven and Mom made Vince fall in the stream.

**POP:** Now just forget about your mother. Klute is right. We said goodbye to her. And she's gone from us. Now Klute, I'll tuck you in.

**KLUTE:** Get away from me. Don't you touch me.

**POP:** You better say your prayers son.

**KLUTE:** I knew I should have stayed behind. The whole time I

1

# DECLAN

Bo. But one time... this one night... when she was up reading her brains out because she was so determined to get to college... I said... When you get into college, Mary, you're going to have to read even more. And she said... "That's okay by me, Bo, I burn with a blue flame."

PATTI. She said that?

Bo. Yeah. Weird, huh.

PATTI. They were just sitting in the car. Talking like we are now. Only about life. And that carbon monoxide was coming in without any warning. "Odorless gas." Odorless gas. It's such a stinking cheat. I know you loved your sister, Bo. I know how bad you feel. I could hardly bear to look at you at the funeral. But I miss Kenny so bad I can't even... They were just on a goddamned date. I keep playing it back and I roll their windows down so the air can get in. Pardon me, lovebirds, I say; but I'm just giving you some air. Some clean air so you won't have a death that makes no sense to anybody. Bo, we've gotten so used to crazy violent deaths but not the cheating of carbon monoxide. They didn't even know they were going down and I'll never hear him laugh again. Never. He never knew how much I loved him.

Bo. Course he did.

PATTI. I keep playing it back and I roll down the windows. I mean if the windows were just rolled down a crack Bo, they'd be okay wouldn't they. Bo? Even just one window rolled down a crack with clean air coming in. Bo, Christ, he's the only one who ever talked to me and now I'll never see my brother again. (PATTI is crying uncontrollably now, Bo has his arms around her and she cries against him as he comforts her)

Bo. We're all rolling down the windows, Patti.

PATTI. I loved him so much.

Bo. I know, I know. (Lights fade on "Patti and Bo" They rejoin group. Lights up on another GROUP MEMBER)

GROUP MEMBER. Some of us have died in worse ways. We're not strangers to guns or knives or cars going too fast and out of control. In a world of toys and tempers we've had out losses too. Even natural diseases take some of us away. But death is not really a part of us. We're still on the other side of plans. Our hopes are things that we'll make real. Life is all ahead of us. We got years to go. We're ready to work.

(A member of the group moves out and becomes: "TEEN SANTA")

TEEN SANTA. I got this job to make extra money for Christmas. Working in a big department store downtown. The shipping room. You know, all these boxes come in: shirts, socks, jewelry, perfume—tons of perfume—and garbage like that. All coming in for the Christmas-shopping crush. So I carry stuff to the different departments, run the ticket machine sometimes that makes the prices for all the junk. Some of the girls from school got jobs too. Selling crap upstairs. So we fool around. The two guys in the shipping room are career men. They tell me corny jokes between giving me advice on how to live. Anyway, the store manager comes in on Christmas Eve. She's about ten feet tall. Bigger than anybody else in the store. Looks and talks like John Wayne used to. She's okay. So she comes in and says, "I don't know how this happened but we don't have a Santa Claus today. Christmas Eve and the company hired the guy up to yesterday. Now there's a bunch of mother's and kids out there and an empty chair where Santa should be. Then she stands there, her head scraping the ceiling. Old John—keeps

KEEP IT!

1

2

OBLIVIOUS: Is to let your

friend know that sometimes ridiculous things can turn out to be great

unpacking the merchandise and Joe, the other guy, sort of nods his head in sympathy with her as he winks at old John and nods toward me and I'm finally mastering the ticket machine. I got perfume prices with the right department code flying out at a hundred miles an hour. "So what are we going to do?" She says again, casual; one hand on her hip, not her holster. "Peter'd be a great Santa," says old John as he keeps stacking up beautiful plaid Arrow shirts. She looks me over. "He's too skinny." "Not as skinny as Joe," says old John. "True," she answers. "You know I'm no Santa Claus," John continues, "and you're a little too tall." "Right," she says with a grin and they all turn and look at me. "Wait a minute," I say, "there's no way I'm gonna..." "pillows," says Joe. "We'll stuff him with pillows." "Have him up on the chair in five minutes," she says, "there's a line building." And she turns around and rides off into the sunset. Next thing I know nobody's listening to me and I'm in this red suit, stuffed up with pillows and I got this white wig on and a red hat with a bell on the end of it and Joe and old John are laughing their heads off and calling all the sales ladies in from the men's department, which is right outside the door, to check me out. One of them, Mrs. Parnasus, puts my beard on and says she hopes I won't get stuck in her chimney that night. They give me this big red bag full of empty boxes to throw over my shoulder and shove me out in to the store. "What am I going to say to these kids?" I'm thinking, I know they're going to pull my beard off and stick their fingers in my eyes. I sure don't believe I'm Santa Claus. Why should they? I'm going to be responsible for wrecked illusions. The mothers will probably sue the store. Well they stuck me out here, full of pillows from the houseware department, so it's not my fault. I'll do what I can. [Off I go to my throne

which is on the landing between the two floors. I lumber up the stairs with my big stuffed pack of empty boxes, sit down, mutter a couple of mild ho, ho, ho's and wait for the worst. [Pause] Well let me tell you something. Everybody should be Santa Claus once in their life. I don't think I've ever seen belief like I did that day. I never took a break. Kid after kid after kid comes down the stairs to me, up the stairs to me. Fingers in their mouth, fingers in their nose, eyes wider than anything you ever saw. Sitting on my lap, looking up at me, hardly able to speak. Not one of them touched my beard. My voice kept getting deeper and deeper. A lot of them brought something for Rudolph and I said he'd share with the other reindeer. I mean I really felt like I'd just come in from the North Pole and had a lot of traveling to do that night so none of these heavy believers would be let down. I didn't even touch my beard. So it was really great. [Pause] Oh yeah though. Something did happen to bring me back to reality. [Pause] See, I'd really been sitting there a long time, over three hours, I think, in really intense continuing raps and negotiations with a lot of kids who knew what they wanted when they could finally talk. So what I didn't realize was that my Santa tummy pillows had all risen up into my chest. So when I finally got off my throne and started downstairs to go back to the room, I got to take about two steps when my red pants were down around my ankles. There was Santa Claus in his underpants and skinny legs standing in the middle of his hometown department store with the whole town doing last minute shopping. Talked about wrecked illusions. I reached down and grabbed my pants back up, held on to them and my falling pillows and ran as fast as I could to the shipping room. I couldn't help it that my big red bag of empty boxes kept banging customers on the head as I made tracks.



# MICHAEL

the store of your choice? Free phone calls? You name it and me and my little computer can create it.

LINDA: You are one sick puppy.

GERALD: You know, you're different than the rest. I didn't enter your attitude into the equation. I really thought I had you figured out.

LINDA: Gerald, you don't even have yourself figured out. *(She exits.)*

GERALD: So does this mean you aren't going to go out with me?

## SCENE 18

*Sue Powell enters.*

SUE POWELL: *(smug)* I was picked as the Homecoming Queen, and you weren't. *(She exits.)*

## SCENE 19

~~MIKE: My name is Mike. Some of you know me as Cougar, 'cause that was the name given to me by the gang. Well, it wasn't given to me, I had to earn it by doin' crimes. Like robbin' some guy over on 7th Street. He was walkin' on our sidewalk. It was like he was askin' for it. I showed him my loaded 9...and he gave up his cash. 'Cause nobody gonna disrespect me on my own turf when I got my gun. Nobody. *(pause)* And then the school here put in those damn metal detectors and I had to leave my gun at home during the day. At home where my little brother found it and decided to play with it. He must have seen me put it under the mattress when I wasn't lookin'. Jesus, he was too young to know what that thing could do—to him it was just a toy. *(pause)* I was the one that found his body. The ambulance took a long time to get to him. Ambulances always take a long time in my part of town. But it didn't matter anyway. Oh God, how did he get in my room? I locked the door. I mean I really thought I locked the door. What the hell was he doin' in there anyway? *(long pause)* Look, don't call me Cougar. I don't~~

want that name no more. 'Cause my little brother didn't call me that. He didn't know who Cougar was. My little brother...he knew me only as Mike. //

*Perick?*

## SCENE 20

~~CHRISTIAN: When I was a kid, my teachers told my parents that I had a bad temper. It was so much easier to deal with then. But now things have changed. Now I have a Psychiatrist who says that I suffer from "Spontaneous Emotional Episodes", which basically means...I have a bad temper. And what did this Genius, who gets paid \$100 an hour, suggest I do to overcome my disorder? Socks. He said that I should put a sock on my hand, and have it represent the person I'm upset with. I'm supposed to tell that sock everything that bothers me about our relationship and not hold anything back. So I took his advice and focused on one person that made me angrier than all the rest. *(He puts a bright red sock on his left hand.)* I call him Dr. Shaffer, my Psychiatrist. *(To sock)* Listen you overeducated, lay-down-on-my-couch, blame-everything-on-my-Mother, \$100-an-hour, out-of-shape, frustrated Freud, long-word-using, can't-get-your-own-act-together dork! I'm sick of going to your office just because I happen to get a little mad at people once and awhile and having you make me feel like I'm some sort of serial killer. *(Makes sock talk)* "But Christian, you have to learn to control your anger before you enter the real world." *(To sock)* By wearing a stupid sock on my hand and talking to it like it was a person? Is that what they do in the real world? Are you trying to heal me, or train me to be a ventriloquist? You jerk! *(Pause; takes sock off his hand)* You know something... maybe he's right. I do feel a lot better. //~~

# SHARON

---

"LAUREN" #1  
from  
BFF  
by  
Anna Ziegler

Liza, what do you think it'll be like to be grown up? I mean, do you think it feels different than this? I mean, I just got this feeling, while I was swimming, that the years are gonna pass so quickly. This feeling that everything happens at once, you know? That we're already grown up and walking around somewhere and doing some job and we just don't know it. Let's make something up. Let's tell the future. Like where are we gonna live in the year 2000? New York City? We could have, like, apartments next to each other. Do you think we'll get married? Not to each other! How will we know when we want to? And who will the right person be? Eliza, he's got to be hot. And funny. What do you mean "he should have a secret"? "Something he only tells me"...I guess. Yeah. Hey, did you know that Jason Priestley lost twenty-five pounds? Jason Priestley's so hot.