

**ALL RIGHTS RESERVED**  
**Original Works Publishing**

CAUTION: Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this play is subject to royalty. It is fully protected by Original Works Publishing, and the copyright laws of the United States. All rights, including professional, amateur, motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, and the rights of translation into foreign languages are strictly reserved.

The performance rights to this play are controlled by Original Works Publishing and royalty arrangements and licenses must be secured well in advance of presentation. PLEASE NOTE that amateur royalty fees are set upon application in accordance with your producing circumstances. When applying for a royalty quotation and license please give us the number of performances intended, dates of production, your seating capacity and admission fee. Royalties are payable with negotiation from Original Works Publishing.

Royalty of the required amount must be paid whether the play is presented for charity or gain and whether or not admission is charged. Particular emphasis is laid on the question of amateur or professional readings, permission and terms for which must be secured from Original Works Publishing through direct contact.

Copying from this book in whole or in part is strictly forbidden by law, and the right of performance is not transferable.

Whenever the play is produced the following notice must appear on all programs, printing, and advertising for the play:

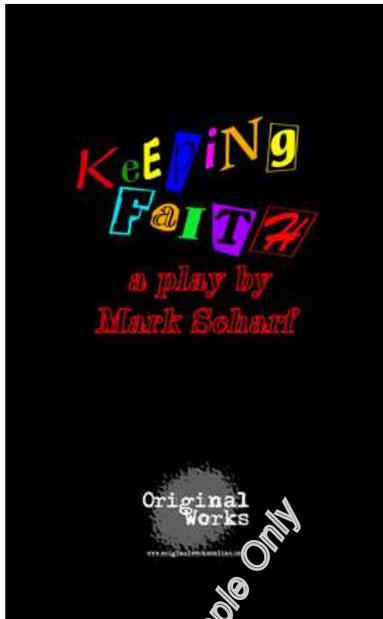
**“Produced by special arrangement with  
Original Works Publishing.  
[www.originalworksonline.com](http://www.originalworksonline.com)”**

Due authorship credit must be given on all programs, printing and advertising for the play.

Cover art courtesy of Lyndsay Lewman.

*Fortune's Child*  
© 2019, Mark Scharf  
Trade Edition, 2019  
ISBN 978-1-63092-120-0

*Also Available By  
Mark Scharf*



## **KEEPING FAITH**

**Synopsis:** Ed and Jane are not about to let their 18 year old daughter Faith marry 45 year old Hartsell (Hart) Edward Thomas Williams IV – even if he does own “Hartsell’s Patio Furniture.” So, on the day before the wedding, they do what any parents would do: they kidnap Faith and drive into the wilds of Arkansas to hide out until things cool down or Faith changes her mind. With Hart and the police in pursuit and Faith refusing to play victim, Ed and Jane have their hands full in this dark comedy which is part extremely-dysfunctional-family-fun and part political commentary.

**Cast Size:** 2 Males, 2 Females

# **FORTUNE'S CHILD**

**A play in two acts**

**By Mark Scharf**

*Sample Only*

For my best friend, Mike.

Sample Only

FORTUNE'S CHILD was first produced in 2015 under the auspices of the Actors' Equity Association Members Project Code presented by the *Fortune's Child* company members at the Baltimore Theatre Project in Baltimore, Maryland. The director was Yvonne Erickson. The lighting and scenic projections were by Terry Cobb and sound design was by Ann Warren. Choreography was by Sarah Olmsted Thomas and the dialogue coach was Leo Erickson. The production stage manager was Molly Raven Hopkins, the assistant stage manager was Chelsea Dove and the production manager was Iris Shih Kilmon. The cast was:

Mike/Sean	Lance Lewman
Sarah	Kathryn Zoerb
Susan	Marianne Gazzola Angelella
Brian/Patrick/Dude	Travis Charles Hudson

## Cast of Characters

(in order of appearance)

SUSAN—late 50's, MIKE's sister and SARAH's aunt; she is dying of ovarian cancer

MIKE/SEAN—MIKE is early/mid 50's, SARAH's father and SUSAN's brother, SEAN is an Irish stable hand

SARAH—18 years old. MIKE's daughter and SUSAN's niece.

BRIAN/PATRICK/DUDE—BRIAN is 18-20 years old and SARAH's longtime boyfriend, PATRICK is an Irish stable hand, and DUDE is an Hawaiian snorkeling instructor

TIME: Summer, the present

PLACE: various locations in a small town on the eastern shore as well as Ireland, New Zealand, and Hawaii

## FORTUNE'S CHILD

### Act One

*(The lights rise to reveal a Weeping Willow tree at the back of the stage represented in any way desired; e.g. as a projection on a scrim, or as a “real” tree. The stage floor around the tree is covered in sticks and branches.)*

*(The tree remains onstage throughout the play, as do all of the suggested locations including MIKE’s kitchen table, SUSAN’s bed, and a wingback chair in MIKE and SUSAN’s Mother’s room in an assisted living facility. If the tree is a projection, it can be used to help establish the location is MIKE’s house instead of an image of his house.)*

*(SUSAN and MIKE enter, SUSAN covering them with an umbrella, and stand CS looking up at the Weeping Willow tree. SARAH enters under her own umbrella and stands SR of MIKE and SUSAN and gazes up at the tree. BRIAN enters without an umbrella and stands SL of SUSAN and MIKE.)*

*(BRIAN turns to look at SARAH, who does not respond. SARAH and BRIAN exit on different sides of the stage. MIKE crosses down to where the graveyard scene will be played. MIKE and SUSAN share a look and then SUSAN exits.)*

*(The lights rise on a grave in a small rural cemetery; perhaps a photo of a rural cemetery is projected on a large screen at the back of the stage.)*

*(After a moment, MIKE crosses DS to the cemetery.)*

MIKE: C’mon, c’mon! Cover me – I’m getting wet...

*(SARAH enters holding an umbrella over her head.)*

SARAH: What are we doing here?

MIKE: Come here.

SARAH: It's freezing out here.

MIKE: That's because it's so early in the morning.

SARAH: Why couldn't you just let me go to bed?

MIKE: You'd still be in bed if you hadn't stayed out all night.

SARAH: Dad!

MIKE: Now, come over here like I asked you.

SARAH: You didn't ask me – you told me.

*(PAUSE as SARAH hesitates. MIKE turns and glares at her and SHE crosses to him and holds the umbrella out so that it covers them both.)*

MIKE: You just stand right there.

*(HE points to the US side of the grave.)*

SARAH: Why are you doing this?

MIKE: Stand right there. And don't you move.

SARAH: I don't want to walk on Mom's grave.

MIKE: Then come around me. I want you right there.

SARAH: You're going to get soaked.

MIKE: I'm already soaked. Now, move.

SARAH: Okay, okay...

*(SHE crosses behind and around MIKE to stand where HE points.)*

*(A cell phone in SARAH's pocket rings and SHE pulls it out from her pocket.)*

MIKE: Don't you dare answer that phone!

SARAH: Dad!

MIKE: They'll leave a message.

SARAH: Dad!!

*(The phone stops ringing.)*

MIKE: They'll call back if it's important. Right now this is important, so turn that thing off.

*(SHE turns her cell phone off and puts it back in her pocket.)*

*(Small PAUSE as MIKE stares at her, then turns his attention to the grave. HE slowly gets down on both knees in front of it.)*

SARAH: You're going to stain the knees of your pants.

*(HE ignores her and places his palms together in prayer.)*

MIKE: And you're going to get sick.

*(SHE awkwardly holds the umbrella out so that it protects them both.)*

MIKE: I've been sick to my stomach most of the night.

SARAH: You've made your point.

MIKE: *(To the grave)* Sweetheart... I've come here this morning to ask your forgiveness for my failure as a father. When I think about what a good mother you were I wonder what it is I didn't learn from you – what am I missing to have failed you and my daughter? I'm sure you know that Sarah has acted in ways I would never dream of. I don't know what I could have done or said differently to have earned the love and consideration she always had for you. Why would my only daughter lie to me – stay out all night – disappear somewhere so I don't know where she is or who she's with or if she's safe. Maybe I'm not as firm as you were – I don't know. And I'm sorry that I don't know, and I hope you will forgive me and help me to be a better father.

SARAH: I am eighteen years old.

MIKE: Shhhhhh!

SARAH: You really think Mom can hear you?

MIKE: Shhhhhh!!

SARAH: You think she's down there listening? Why don't you talk to her by yourself in your room or something instead of dragging me out here?

MIKE: I said, Shhhh!!

SARAH: You think she cares about me staying out?

*(MIKE stands.)*

MIKE: I care.

SARAH: Then talk to me about it. You don't have to put on a show. Am I supposed to feel bad now?

MIKE: You lied to me.

SARAH: Oh, and you never lied to your parents?

MIKE: Sarah...

SARAH: Be careful what you say now – *Mom’s listening. (Beat as THEY look at each other.)* I’ll tell you what -- if she is, I know she understands.

MIKE: Get in the car.

SARAH: Give me the keys so I turn the heater on.

MIKE: I’m not giving you the keys.

SARAH: I’m cold!

MIKE: Go!

*(Beat as THEY look at each other and then SARAH exits. MIKE watches her leave then turns and stares at the grave.)*

MIKE: What the hell am I going to do?

*(The lights crossfade to the kitchen of MIKE’s house. The kitchen table is covered in dirty cups, dishes, fast food containers, newspapers and a pizza box. Perhaps, a photo of the exterior of MIKE’s house is projected on the screen at the back of stage; if not, then the Weeping Willow should appear.)*

*(SUSAN enters dressed for church. SHE carries a purse and holds an open umbrella over her head. SHE crosses slowly to the tree angrily kicking sticks and branches out her path. SHE stands before it, staring at it with a hand on her hip.)*

*(After a moment, SHE brings both her hands to rest below her stomach, bending forward in pain. When the pain passes, SHE holds the umbrella over her head leaving one hand on her stomach, her back to the audience.)*

*(SUSAN turns and crosses from the tree into the kitchen. SHE closes her umbrella as SHE surveys the chaos. SHE notices a half-full coffee pot in a coffee maker. SHE pulls it out and sniffs the coffee then replaces the pot in the coffee maker.)*

*(SHE stares at the mess on the table, picks up a trash can and picks up trash from the table and drops it into the can until SHE picks up something particularly gross and stops mid-action to look at it. SHE drops the item back on the table then starts pulling things out of the trashcan and dropping them back on the table, finally dumping the remainder of the can's contents across the table.)*

*(SHE sets the trashcan down, then methodically picks up used cups, one at a time, which SHE inspects and then rejects.)*

*(When SHE finally finds a cup that is acceptably clean, SHE pours herself a cup of coffee and sits at the kitchen table.)*

*(SHE shoves some used dishes on the table aside to clear room for her coffee cup and purse and sets them down. SHE then picks up a stack of newspapers from a kitchen chair, places them on the floor and sits. SHE sips the coffee.)*

*(SHE then opens her purse and takes out three pill bottles and lines them up in front of her. SHE opens each bottle, one at a time, takes a pill from it, swallows it with coffee, then puts the lid back on each bottle and returns them all to her purse.)*

*(SARAH enters, cell phone glued to her ear, and waves to SUSAN as SHE rushes past her and disappears into another room.)*

*(After a moment, MIKE enters. HE and SUSAN silently look at each other and MIKE tosses his car keys on the table before picking up the first cup HE finds and pours himself the remainder of the coffee in the pot.)*

MIKE: Want me to make some more?

SUSAN: No thanks. *(Beat)* Take a shower in your clothes?

MIKE: Had to run out and got caught in the rain.

SUSAN: You said to come over for breakfast before Mass.

MIKE: I know... I had a little situation with your niece.

SUSAN: I didn't think teenagers were up this early on a Sunday morning.

MIKE: They are if they're just coming home from the night before.

SUSAN: She stayed out all night?

MIKE: Oh, yeah.

SUSAN: Did she tell you or did you catch her?

MIKE: I had no idea she wasn't in her bed until she marched in here just as normal as you please.

SUSAN: She's an eighteen-year-old girl...

MIKE: Who lives under my roof. (*SUSAN laughs*)  
What's so funny?

SUSAN: You should hear yourself. Sounds like an argument or two or twenty I used to witness between you and Mom.

MIKE: That was different.

SUSAN: Oh, really?

MIKE: Yeah, really.

SUSAN: Because you're a guy?

MIKE: Because she's my daughter.

SUSAN: Then she comes by it naturally.

MIKE: The human brain is not mature at eighteen years of age. The part of the brain that governs judgment and making good decisions doesn't mature until you're in your mid-twenties...

SUSAN: Thank you, "Doctor" Mike.

MIKE: It's true: the parts of the brain that deal with thinking ahead and controlling impulses are the last to arrive. (*Beat*) And for some people, they're also the first to go as they get older.

SUSAN: Surely, you don't mean me.

MIKE: Of course not. It's just what I read...

SUSAN: I wish you'd leave the psychology at work. If I had to listen to you go on like that I'd stay out all night too.

MIKE: Thanks, Sis... (*SARAH enters, cell phone still glued to her ear.*) (*to SARAH*) Who are you talking to?

SARAH: I'm listening to Voice Mail.

MIKE: You listened to your Voice Mail all the way home. How many messages do you have?

SARAH: Just one.

MIKE: One?

SARAH: Yeah. Never mix alcohol and cell phones.

MIKE: Get dressed for Mass!

SARAH: I'm not going.

MIKE: Yes, you are!

SARAH: I'm going to sleep. I can sleep in my bed or sitting in a pew. Which do you want?

SUSAN: Let her sleep, Mike. (*MIKE looks at her.*)  
C'mon. When did you get so religious?

SARAH: He only gets religious when he thinks something's wrong.

MIKE: That's not true.

SARAH: What's true is that I could fall asleep standing up. I also feel a little sick to my stomach.

MIKE: And whose fault is that?

SARAH: Yours if you don't let me go to bed.

MIKE: *(quietly)* Go. *(Beat as SARAH looks at him.)* Go!  
*(SARAH exits.)* When you wake up I want that mess in  
the front yard cleaned up. You hear me?

SARAH: *(From offstage)* I hear you. I hear you...

MIKE: *(To SUSAN)* Would you like me to make some  
more coffee or not?

SUSAN: Not for me.

MIKE: Well, I want some.

*(HE starts to make more coffee.)*

SUSAN: Then why did you ask me...

MIKE: I was being polite.

SUSAN: Ahhh.

*(Small PAUSE.)*

MIKE: So, tell me...

SUSAN: Please don't...

MIKE: Don't what?

SUSAN: Ask me how I am.

MIKE: All right.

SUSAN: And don't analyze me.

MIKE: I'm not analyzing. I'm listening.

SUSAN: You can't help it. At least when I leave work I  
don't bring it home with me. And I hate that question.

MIKE: Forgive me for caring...

SUSAN: I forgive you, Mike – just please shut up about it.

MIKE: Isn't it natural that I'd want to know?

SUSAN: These questions are taking over my life – what's left of it.

MIKE: Don't talk like that.

SUSAN: Why? Does it make you uncomfortable?

MIKE: Yeah. It does. I don't like it. I don't like any of it.

SUSAN: 'Guess what? Neither do I. But there's nothing I can do about it.

MIKE: That's not true...

SUSAN: Nothing that matters.

MIKE: Sue – you need to...

SUSAN: What? Stay *positive*? I'm sick of being positive. It takes all my time and energy to be positive and I'm sick to death of it. All of it. It's the only reason people call me any more. "How do you feel?" "You're in our thoughts and prayers" "How are you?" "Did you lose your hair?" "Can you still eat?" – "Should I bring you a casserole?" "We're praying for you." It's all anyone wants to talk about and I don't want to talk about it anymore.

MIKE: Then we won't.

SUSAN: Thank you. (*Beat*) Let's go out and get something to eat.

MIKE: There's no need for that. I can...

SUSAN: You can what? You can't cook in here – it's a disaster.

MIKE: I cook in here every day.

SUSAN: I'm dying, Mike. I'm not suicidal.

MIKE: It's not that bad.

SUSAN: Yes, it is. I don't need food poisoning on top of everything else. Honestly – how can you live like this?

MIKE: There's never enough time to take care of everything.

SUSAN: You can say that again.

MIKE: The important things are taken care of. I'll get everything else done when I can.

SUSAN: You're lucky you can do that. I don't have that luxury.

MIKE: I don't think there's enough time to go out to eat and get to Mass.

SUSAN: Then we skip Mass. I need to eat and that's what I'm going to do. If you don't want to go with me...

MIKE: I'll go with you.

SUSAN: Thank you. (*SHE stands, picks up his keys from the table and tosses them to him.*) You drive. I'll pay.

MIKE: Deal. *(HE rises)* Maybe we could go someplace where I can get a Screwdriver or a Bloody Mary or a Mimosa.

SUSAN: Now, you're talking.

*(SHE grabs her umbrella and THEY exit as the lights crossfade to the weeping willow tree.)*

*(After a moment SARAH crosses into the front yard carrying a large yard waste bag and holds out her hand to see if it's still raining. It isn't.)*

SARAH: Damn it.

*(SARAH then crosses to the weeping willow tree, kneels and picks up sticks from the ground and places them in the bag.)*

*(BRIAN enters and stops when HE sees SARAH. HE then carefully, quietly sneaks up behind her and grabs her. SHE screams as SHE rises and moves away from him. HE laughs.)*

BRIAN: I thought you'd be sleeping.

*(SHE crosses back to her yard bag, swatting him as SHE goes by.)*

SARAH: I was. And I still would be except my Dad will pitch a bitch if I don't get this done.

BRIAN: Sorry.

SARAH: Are you going to help or stand there and watch?

BRIAN: I think I'll just stand here and look at you.

SARAH: I thought you might be sick of me.

BRIAN: Never.

SARAH: That's what you say now.

BRIAN: I know what I want.

SARAH: What's that, Bri?

BRIAN: What makes me happy.

SARAH: I make you happy?

BRIAN: Oh, yeah. And I know I make you happy too.

SARAH: Pretty damn cocky.

BRIAN: Didn't you tell me last night I can make time stand still with my tongue?

SARAH: I was drunk.

BRIAN: So was I. So what?

SARAH: So, you're embarrassing me.

BRIAN: There's nobody out here but you and me.

SARAH: There are some things you don't...

BRIAN: Don't what? *(Beat as SHE doesn't respond.)*  
You're a funny girl. You'll do all kind of things. You just don't want to talk about it,

*(HE tries to kiss her but SHE pushes him away.)*

SARAH: Don't. My Dad'll be home soon.

BRIAN: So?

SARAH: So, he's already pissed off about last night.

BRIAN: You told me you weren't going to get in any trouble.

SARAH: I'm not. Not really.

BRIAN: Just a little bit.

SARAH: I told you, he's pissed off.

BRIAN: Did he *ground* you?

SARAH: Kiss my fat ass.

BRIAN: Your ass is not fat. Your ass is perfect. You have *the* most perfect ass it has ever been my pleasure...

SARAH: To *what*?

BRIAN: To hold.

*(HE moves to hold her and SHE pushes him away.)*

SARAH: Noooo.

BRIAN: You trying to give me a complex?

SARAH: I told you "no." *(SHE smacks the back of his head.)* Why won't you listen?

BRIAN: 'Cause I didn't think you meant it.

SARAH: You're just used to getting your way.

BRIAN: And you aren't?

SARAH: That's beside the point.

BRIAN: What is the point?

SARAH: Oh, for Christ's sake. Shut up and kiss me.

*(THEY kiss.)*

BRIAN: Oh, dear oh, dear... what if your Dad sees us?

SARAH: What if he does?

*(THEY kiss again.)*

BRIAN: You really are a damn funny girl.

SARAH: Then why aren't you laughing?

BRIAN: You know what I mean. *(HE stands behind her and wraps his arms around her.)*  
Where is he, anyway?

SARAH: I don't know. My Aunt Sue was here this morning. Probably over at her house.  
*(Beat)* Why?

BRIAN: I was just thinking if he wasn't going to be home for a while...

SARAH: Do you ever want to see me again?

BRIAN: What do you think?

SARAH: I think... *(SHE kisses him.)* ...maybe I should let my Dad... *(SHE kisses him.)*  
...catch us in the act... *(SHE kisses him.)*...so he'll kill you.

BRIAN: Maybe we should move into together so we don't have to worry about it.

SARAH: And live on what?

BRIAN: I've got a job.

SARAH: And I'm going to college.

BRIAN: I'll get a job close to your school.

*(Beat)*

SARAH: You're serious.

BRIAN: I said it, didn't I?

SARAH: Doesn't mean you were serious.

BRIAN: Well, I'm telling you. I'm serious.

SARAH: I know you, Brian. You don't know how you're going to feel in the fall. You don't know how you're going to feel next week...

BRIAN: Yes, I do.

SARAH: I thought you were going to enlist in the Air Force when you graduated?

BRIAN: I changed my mind, obviously.

SARAH: You are the one who's too funny.

BRIAN: I'm trying to tell you how I feel.

SARAH: But you don't mean it.

BRIAN: Stop telling me what I mean. Stop telling me what I feel. I know how I feel. Why the hell do you think I came over here? Why the hell do you I stayed here for you – waiting for you to graduate?

SARAH: Please tell me you didn't come over here to propose...

BRIAN: No...

SARAH: Oh, thank God.

BRIAN: Not yet anyway.

SARAH: Where the hell is this coming from?

BRIAN: It's how I feel.

SARAH: First I've heard of it.

BRIAN: I've been doing a lot of thinking. And then last night... Didn't you think it was perfect being together?

SARAH: Nothing's perfect, Bri.

BRIAN: Oh. I see.

SARAH: Don't get your panties all in a twist. You surprise me is all...

BRIAN: Haven't you thought about any of this?

SARAH: I've thought about it.

BRIAN: And?

SARAH: And that's it. I've thought about it. The two of us have always been good together. But we've got everything ahead of us. And I...

BRIAN: You what?

SARAH: You're not going to understand.

BRIAN: I can't if you won't tell me.

SARAH: I don't want to make any mistakes.

BRIAN: So, you think we could be a mistake?

SARAH: I didn't say that. I told you, you wouldn't understand.

BRIAN: Then explain it to me.

SARAH: We don't know what's going to happen.

BRIAN: We can decide that. We can decide what we want and make it happen.

SARAH: I'm talking about the future...

BRIAN: So, am I.

SARAH: It's not that simple.

BRIAN: I think it is. But you probably think I'm stupid. I'm not going to college...

SARAH: I never said that – I never said you were stupid. You're the one who didn't even apply to any schools. You're the one who was dead certain about what you were going to do. You were going in the Air Force and getting the hell out of here.

BRIAN: I changed my mind.

SARAH: Well, I haven't. I'm still going to college.

BRIAN: I'm not asking you not to! I'm asking you...  
(Beat) All I'm asking you... whatever it is you do...  
is to be with me.

*(Small PAUSE as SHE studies his face.)*

SARAH: *(Quietly)* You've never talked like this before.

BRIAN: You hadn't graduated before...

SARAH: I don't know what's going to happen, Bri!

BRIAN: What do you *want* to happen?

SARAH: I want us to be happy. Both of us...

BRIAN: Well, so do I! I want to know what you're going to do about that.

SARAH: Brian, I don't even know what I'm doing tonight...

BRIAN: Answer the question!

SARAH: Don't yell at me!

(PAUSE)

BRIAN: What do you want me to do?

SARAH: Why can't we let things just be for now?

BRIAN: That's not an answer.

SARAH: It's the only one I've got, right now, Ok?

BRIAN: Do you want me?

SARAH: I just said...

BRIAN: Do you want me in your *life*? Not just tonight and tomorrow – but in your life?

SARAH: You said you weren't ready to get married.

BRIAN: I'm not. And neither are you...

SARAH: How do you know? You never asked me.

BRIAN: Are you ready to get married?

SARAH: That's not how you propose to someone. *(Beat)*  
So, are you going to ask me?  
*(Small PAUSE)* I didn't think so.

BRIAN: You're not being fair, Sarah.

SARAH: Fair?

BRIAN: You know what I'm saying...

SARAH: You're saying you don't want to get married --  
you just want me to commit to you for the rest of my  
life. Is that what you're saying? *(Beat as BRIAN re-  
mains silent.)*  
Well?

BRIAN: You always twist things...

SARAH: That's right – I'm not fair and I twist things...

BRIAN: You can't stand to talk about anything hard.

SARAH: No – what I can't stand is the bullshit, Brian...

BRIAN: I'm not bullshitting you... I came over here to  
see you... to try and explain to you how I feel about  
things. Maybe I can't say things the way you want to  
hear it...

SARAH: Bullshit! You know exactly what you're doing.  
You dance around everything so you don't feel re-  
sponsible for anything you do or say.

BRIAN: Maybe I should go...

SARAH: Maybe you should.

BRIAN: Then I will!

SARAH: Fine! (*SHE turns her back to him and rakes up some sticks and puts them in the basket.*) I know you're still here because I can hear you breathing.

BRIAN: You really piss me off, sometimes. You know that? You really piss me off.

SARAH: Thanks for sharing.

BRIAN: Fuck you.

(*HE storms off.*)

SARAH: 'Bye!

(*SUSAN and MIKE enter and cross towards the house DS of SARAH who watches.*)

SUSAN: I'm not going to argue with you about it.

MIKE: I'm not arguing...

SUSAN: Yes, you are.

MIKE: I just think...

SUSAN: Stop.

MIKE: How am I supposed to stop?

SUSAN: Think what you want, Mike – but please keep it to yourself.

MIKE: I'm your brother, damn it.

SUSAN: And?

MIKE: And I'm not just anyone. I care! I have opinions!

SUSAN: Love the caring, not the opinions. Not about this.

SARAH: How was church?

SUSAN: *(to SARAH)* We didn't go to church.

SARAH: Dad didn't go to Mass on Sunday?! I guess the world really is coming to an end.

MIKE: Watch it, Sarah.

SUSAN: We went out for breakfast. Food is more important than Mass.

SARAH: Maybe for you it is. Maybe for me it is. But Dad?

MIKE: *(to SARAH)* You just... keep doing what you're doing.

*(HE crosses into the kitchen and slumps in a chair. SUSAN shrugs and follows him in and SARAH goes back to pick up a few more sticks and puts them in the bag. SHE then picks up the bag and exits.)*

SUSAN: *(to MIKE)* Don't pout. It's not attractive.

MIKE: I'm not pouting. I'm concerned...

SUSAN: You are pouting and your concerns are duly noted.

*(SHE sits in the chair across from him.)*

MIKE: And that's it? You don't even want to discuss it?

SUSAN: No. I'm not wasting any more time. I 'm taking all the rest of my vacation time and then leave without

pay if I have to so I can keep my medical insurance. I'll have to pay for it then but what the hell? I'm going to do what I want. I probably don't have a lot of time...

MIKE: Well, maybe you would if...

SUSAN: Have you heard anything I've said?

MIKE: Obviously – or I wouldn't be this upset.

SUSAN: How about the part where I said *I don't want to talk about it*?

*(Small PAUSE.)*

MIKE: Are you going to tell Mom?

SUSAN: She won't understand.

MIKE: She might.

SUSAN: She doesn't even know where she is... Half the time she doesn't know who I am. She thinks I'm her sister, Rose. I doubt she'll even notice when I stop coming to visit.

MIKE: You don't know that...

SUSAN: I will tell her, Mike

MIKE: Good.

SUSAN: Are we finished now?

MIKE: What do you want me to do?

*(Beat)*

SUSAN: Be there.

*(HE places his hand on top of hers.)*

MIKE: Anywhere you need me.

*(Small PAUSE.)*

SUSAN: I had started to think maybe it was really gone. Maybe that was my mistake – I let down my guard somehow and let it back in.

MIKE: This is not your fault.

SUSAN: All the chemo did was piss it off because it's back on a mission. It's in so many places now... And this one tumor where it started...

MIKE: If they can kill it once...

SUSAN: They didn't kill it. They just made it mad. It doesn't work anymore, Mike. It makes things worse.

MIKE: I know it makes you sick but...

SUSAN: The tumor got bigger.

*(Beat)*

MIKE: Bigger?

SUSAN: A lot bigger.

MIKE: The chemo made the tumor grow?

SUSAN: It got bigger after I started the chemo again. So, either it has no effect now or this cancer is a perverse little bastard. Well, perverse *big* bastard, now. Why should I make myself sick like that when I'm just helping it kill me?

MIKE: They can't operate?

SUSAN: No, Mike, they can't.

MIKE: You can't give up...

SUSAN: I haven't given up – I just... I've run out of options.

MIKE: Mind if I pray for you?

SUSAN: If that worked I'd be all right. Or maybe I'm not doing it right. Or maybe God is saying "No."

MIKE: Can't hurt.

SUSAN: Knock yourself out. I don't want to talk about it and I don't want to think about it anymore. At least, try not to. (*SHE slowly stands.*) I'm going home and take a nap. I hate the idea of wasting time being unconscious but I'm so damn tired all the time.

MIKE: I worry about you being alone in that big house of yours.

SUSAN: It's not big...

MIKE: Bigger than mine.

SUSAN: What has the size of my house have to do with anything?

MIKE: Sometimes I picture you wandering from room to room all alone and miserable.

SUSAN: I love my house. I'm not leaving it so don't even start down that road.

MIKE: What if somebody was with you there?

SUSAN: I'm used to being alone. I like it.

MIKE: Couldn't you use some help?

SUSAN: With what?

MIKE: Cleaning, laundry...

SUSAN: I don't need a maid. And I don't need a nurse.  
Not yet, anyway.

MIKE: I wouldn't worry so much if you had someone  
with you.

SUSAN: Yes, you would. You'd worry about who was  
with me. Are they treating me right? Are they making  
me miserable? Are they stealing from me?

MIKE: Not if they're related.

*(Beat)*

SUSAN: You are not moving in with me!

MIKE: I was thinking about Sarah.

SUSAN: Oh, no. I don't need a teenage girl in my house.  
I would like to live my last days on earth in peace.

MIKE: I thought you two got along.

SUSAN: We do. Especially since I live in my house and  
she lives here.

MIKE: She's very responsible. Most of the time. It would  
be good for her.

SUSAN: For her?

MIKE: For both of you. *(Towards the front yard.) Sa-  
rah!!!*

SUSAN: Jesus, Mike!

MIKE: Sorry.

SUSAN: Are you trying to give me a heart attack?

MIKE: Sorry. Cover your ears.

SUSAN: Cover my?

MIKE: Sarah!!

SARAH: *(off)* What?!

MIKE: Come in here!

SARAH: *(off)* I'm busy!

MIKE: Come in here! Now!!

SARAH: *(off)* Okay! Okay!

SUSAN: Please stop yelling, Mike!

*(SARAH enters the kitchen.)*

MIKE: Sorry, Sue.

SUSAN: You're going to give me a headache.

*(SARAH enters and stands between the MIKE and SUSAN.)*

SARAH: What?

MIKE: Aren't you going to say hello to Aunt Sue?

SARAH: I said hello this morning.

MIKE: Well, now it's the afternoon.

SARAH: Hello, Aunt Sue. Nice to see you again.

SUSAN: Nice to see you, too.

SARAH: Thank you. *(to MIKE)* So, what do you want?

MIKE: I have a proposition for you.

SUSAN: Michael, no...

MIKE: *(to SARAH)* How would you like it if I were out of your hair?

*(Beat as SHE studies him.)*

SARAH: Are you going somewhere?

MIKE: No, but you could.

SARAH: *(to SUSAN)* What's he talking about?

SUSAN: Just say "no," Sarah. I've already said "no" – maybe if we both say "no" he'll listen.

SARAH: No, to what?

MIKE: Moving in with your Aunt Sue for the rest of the summer.

SARAH: Why would I do that?

MIKE: To help her out...

SUSAN: I told you, I don't need any help...

SARAH: Dad, Aunt Sue doesn't need any help.

MIKE: Yes, she does.

*(SUSAN and SARAH speak simultaneously.)*

SUSAN: No, I don't. I just said so.

SARAH: No, she doesn't. She just said so.

MIKE: I think it's the best thing for both of you.

SUSAN: You don't decide these things.

MIKE: I'm not deciding – I'm asking.

SUSAN: And I said no...

MIKE: As a favor for me...

SUSAN: You're not going to let this go, are you.

SARAH: He'll have to when I leave for school.

SUSAN: *(to MIKE)* So, I just have to avoid you for the rest of the summer.

MIKE: You think you can do that?

SUSAN: No, I guess not. You are a major pain in the ass. You know that?

MIKE: I'm trying to help.

SUSAN: By ignoring what I want? You think you know better than I do?

MIKE: Maybe I do.

SUSAN: You're too much sometimes, you know that? You go too far...

SARAH: You should've heard him this morning.

MIKE: That's between you and me, Sarah.

SUSAN: Oh, secrets. I love secrets. *(To SARAH)* You can tell me about it later.

MIKE: Does that mean the answer is yes?

SUSAN: It means... It means I'll think about it.

*(SHE rises and begins to exit, but stops and stares at the Weeping Willow tree. MIKE follows her.)*

SUSAN: I thought you were going to get rid of that tree.

MIKE: I haven't gotten around to it.

SARAH: I like that tree!

SUSAN: Weeping willows do not belong in a neighborhood – they belong down by the river or out by Hearn's pond. Look, you can see the roots spreading across the lawn towards the house. Imagine what the roots you can't see are doing. Probably wrapped around your water and sewer pipes now. They'll crush those pipes to get to the water...

MIKE: I'll take care of it.

SUSAN: No, you won't. You won't do a damn thing until you wake up one morning without any water in the house. I don't know why you think you can run my life when you can't handle the mess in your own front yard.

MIKE: You're more important than that tree, Sue.

*(Small PAUSE as THEY look at each other.)*

SUSAN: I've never liked Weeping Willows. They're a pain in the ass. Just like you.

MIKE: They're also pretty, just like me. And they can't be stopped.

SUSAN: Unless you kill them. *(Beat)* I'm going home and take a nap.

MIKE: Sarah can drive you if you're too tired...

SUSAN: I'm not. Bye, Sarah.

SARAH: Bye.

*(MIKE and SARAH watch SUSAN exit. MIKE cleans up the mess on the table.)*

MIKE: So, would you do that for your Aunt Sue?

SARAH: Don't you ever stop? No, wait – I know the answer to that: It's "No."

MIKE: It would just be for the summer

SARAH: She doesn't want me over there.

MIKE: I do.

SARAH: I'd do it if she asked -- but she's not asking.

*(Beat)*

MIKE: You know that she's dying.

*(Beat)*

SARAH: No, I don't know that.

MIKE: The cancer came back and the chemo is not working and...

SARAH: Damn it. God damn it. It's not fair...

MIKE: Nothing is fair on this earth unless you make it fair. *(Beat as SHE stares at him.)*  
What?

SARA: I've never heard you talk like that before.

MIKE: She's going to need help.

SARAH: Won't she ask for it when she needs it?

MIKE: I don't know.

SARAH: So, you want me to show up on her doorstep uninvited?

MIKE: No – that's not a good idea.

SARAH: What do you want me to do?

MIKE: We'll wait a bit. I think as time goes by she'll need you.

SARAH: What if I have to leave for school first?

MIKE: I think that would be great. It would be great if she never needed help.

SARAH: But she will.

*(Beat as HE puts his arm around her.)*

MIKE: Yeah.

SARAH: Maybe I should stay home...

MIKE: What do you mean?

SARAH: Put off starting school.

MIKE: No, no, no...

SARAH: What will you do if I'm gone?

MIKE: I'll figure something out.

SARAH: I'm really sorry, Dad.

MIKE: Me too.

SARAH: Maybe I should drive over and visit her once in a while.

MIKE: That would be great. I'd appreciate that.

SARAH: Will she?

MIKE: Yes. I think she will.

*(MIKE and SARAH sit at the table as the lights crossfade to an empty wingback chair that represents MIKE and SUSAN's mother's room in an assisted living facility. Perhaps the image of the exterior of the facility is projected on the screen at the back of stage.)*

*(SUSAN crosses to the wingback chair and kneels in front of it. SHE addresses the empty chair as if her mother were seated in it.)*

SUSAN: Hey, Mom! Mom?... It's Susan... *(Beat)* No, Mom, I'm your daughter... *(Beat)* Your daughter, Susan. Rose isn't with us anymore, Mom. *(Beat)* That's right: Susan. I was just over at Mike's house and I thought I'd come by to see you on my way home. How are you feeling? *(Beat)* That's good, that's good, Mom... *(Beat)* Mike's fine. Sarah's fine. I'm sure he'll be coming by to visit... *(Beat)* Yes, Sarah too. He still hasn't gotten rid of that weeping willow in the front yard. You let him plant it and it took over the whole yard, just like I told you it would. Killed my crabapple tree... I don't think he's even tried

and he's going to have to do more than try. I have never seen a willow tree completely killed off by anything; bugs, disease, poison – anything! They can look terrible dropping dead branches all over the place but there is always some part of them that's still growing. *(Beat)* What's that? *(Beat)* Yes, they are tough. Wish I were a weeping willow tree sometimes *(Small PAUSE as SHE stands and looks away.)*

You've got a nice view from your window, Mom. I don't know that I've ever noticed it before. That's a nice view of the river. I've always liked looking at water – ponds, rivers, oceans... *(Beat. SHE faces the chair.)* There's something I need to tell you, Mom. There's something you should know...

*(SUSAN remains in place as the lights crossfade back to MIKE and SARAH, perhaps a photo of MIKE's house or the Weeping Willow is projected on the screen at the back of stage.)*

SARAH: I guess you expect me to stay home tonight.

MIKE: After what you pulled last night...

SARAH: You need to make up your mind.

MIKE: What do you mean?

SARAH: Either I'm old enough and responsible enough to take care of Aunt Sue or I'm not.

MIKE: You'd be with her – not out by yourself...

SARAH: I'm never out by myself.

MIKE: You're not helping yourself here.

SARAH: Look – if I stay with Aunt Sue, she wouldn't be watching me -- I'd be taking care of her.

MIKE: That's right. And she doesn't need any more stress.

SARAH: I think she trusts me more than you do.

MIKE: I should trust you to do the right thing after last night?

SARAH: Yeah – to do the right thing for me. Last night was the right thing for me – it had nothing to do with you.

MIKE: When you live under my roof you follow my rules...

SARAH: And when I'm not?

MIKE: Then you're on your own.

SARAH: I can't wait to leave here for college.

MIKE: Maybe that makes two of us.

SARAH: I'll be out every night running wild in the streets!

MIKE: I like to think that my daughter is an intelligent and responsible person who makes intelligent, responsible choices.

SARAH: I wish you wouldn't do that.

MIKE: What?

SARAH: Talk about me like I'm not right here. (*Imitates MIKE*) "My daughter is an intelligent, responsible person."

MIKE: I don't know why I should pay for you to go anywhere when you have such little respect for me.

SARAH: Then don't.

MIKE: Don't push me, Sarah.

SARAH: Living with Aunt Sue is looking better and better.

*(MIKE and SARAH remain in place as the lights crossfade back to SUSAN who addresses the empty chair. Perhaps a photo of the exterior of the assisted living facility is projected on the screen at the back of stage.)*

SUSAN: Do you understand what I'm saying, Mom?  
*(Beat)* What's that? *(SHE kneels in front of the chair.)*  
What's that, Mom? *(Beat)* No... No, I'm sorry I don't know what they're serving for dinner tonight. I can find out if you'd like...*(Beat)* I know you don't like Lima beans. You don't have to eat them just because they serve them... *(Beat)*  
Nobody's going to feel insulted, Mom. *(SHE stands and turns away and then turns back to the chair.)*  
Mom -- I'm going to be leaving you... I'm going... Mom, I'm going to die.  
*(Small PAUSE)* *(Laughs)* Yes, I know -- but it looks like I'm going to beat you to it. I don't know how much time I have left but... *(Beat)* Mom, Mom... Remember when they found cancer and I had the hysterectomy? Well, it came back. And they can't stop it this time and so... *(Beat)* You need to know. I need you to know because I miss you -- and I think... I believe that you're going to miss me. *(Beat)* Please say something... Please?

*(SUSAN remains in place as the lights crossfade back to MIKE and SARAH. Maybe a photo of MIKE's house or the Weeping Willow is projected on the screen at the back of stage.)*

MIKE: I don't want to fight with you.

SARAH: I don't want to fight with you either.

MIKE: I've got enough to deal with, you know?

SARAH: I know. It's just college, Dad. It's not like I'm never coming back.

MIKE: One day...

SARAH: I know, I know – I'll have kids of my own and I'll understand.

MIKE: As long as that doesn't happen any time soon.

SARAH: I'll let you know if it does.

MIKE: Don't even joke about that.

SARAH: I wouldn't worry right now. I'm through with Brian.

*(Beat)*

MIKE: I don't suppose you'd care to tell me what happened...

SARAH: No, I wouldn't.

MIKE: Should I say "I'm sorry" or "Congratulations"?

SARAH: I think you should not say anything.

MIKE: You know you can talk to me.

SARAH: I know.

MIKE: About anything. *(SARAH gives him a look.)* I mean it. I won't judge.

SARAH: Look... I know you like to think you're "the cool Dad" – that you're different somehow from all the other Dads out there, but you're not. You still think and act like a Dad. And that's fine; you're my Dad and I love you and I know where you stand. So, let's just leave it at that.

MIKE: Okay...

SARAH: I'm not trying to hurt your feelings.

MIKE: It's okay. That's how you see things.

SARAH: Sorry.

MIKE: Don't be. At least we talk.

SARAH: Most of the time you talk and I listen.

MIKE: Well, I know more than you do... One of the benefits of getting old.

SARAH: I hope to grow old. I'd like to become "Old Lady Sarah" – she done everything and been everywhere and she knows everything.

MIKE: Sounds like an admirable aspiration.

SARAH: I used to take that for granted. I don't anymore. Between the breast cancer that got Mom and now Aunt Susan's ovarian cancer there's probably some kind of trouble ahead for me, you know? Hiding in my DNA like a time-bomb waiting to go off.

MIKE: You don't know that. Look at your Grandma – she's 89 years old...

SARAH: And she doesn't remember anything. I don't know which is worse.

MIKE: You don't know what's going to happen. You can't worry about things like that – you can't live like that...

SARAH: I know, I know...

MIKE: Yes, you have family history. So, you watch out for things – you get check ups...

SARAH: Right.

MIKE: Nothing may happen to you at all.

*(Beat)*

SARAH: I'll drive over and visit Aunt Sue after dinner.

MIKE: I think that's an excellent idea.

*(MIKE and SARAH remain in place as the lights cross-fade to SUSAN. Perhaps a photo of the assisted living facility is projected on the screen at the back of stage.)*

SUSAN: I have to go now, Mom. Maybe you can get a nap in before they come to take you to dinner. *(Beat)* That's right. And if they *dare* to serve you lima beans, just push them to the side. Nobody here will care, all right? *(Beat)* What's that? *(Beat)* Yes, of course I'll be back. I promise. *(Beat as SUSAN backs away from the chair and out of the light.)* I promise I'll be back. I promise...

*(SUSAN exits.)*

*(The lights rise on MIKE and SARAH. Maybe a photo of MIKE's house or the Weeping Willow tree is projected on the screen at the back of stage.)*

SARAH: I'm going to make some iced tea. You want some?

MIKE: Would you think I was terrible if I had a beer?

SARAH: Why would I think you were terrible?

MIKE: It's not after five.

SARAH: What's that got to do with anything?

MIKE: Your Granddad – my Dad – never had a drink until after five in the afternoon.

SARAH: 'Guess that's better than five in the morning.

MIKE: He always had a martini when he got home from work. A gin martini. He made it himself until Susan and I got old enough to make it for him. We used to fight over who got to make him his martini. I let Susan win most of the time. But I know I made a better martini.

SARAH: Did he say so?

MIKE: Not in so many words. But I could tell.

SARAH: Who makes up these stupid rules? "No drinking until after five o'clock in the afternoon!"

MIKE: I don't know. I guess most people are finished working by then.

SARAH: Maybe that way you can be sure to hit a Happy Hour somewhere.

MIKE: What do you know about Happy Hours?

SARAH: Not a thing... *(SHE goes off stage the returns with a bottle of beer.)* It's always after five somewhere on this planet. *(SHE twists the top off and hands the beer to MIKE.)*

Here. Be wild, Dad – lose control. *(MIKE holds the beer bottle in his hand and looks at it.)* What's the matter? Afraid the alky police will come and take you away?

*(BRIAN enters from across the stage and crosses towards MIKE and SARAH. SARAH sees him.)*

SARAH: Oh, shit!

MIKE: What's wrong?

SARAH: Bye!

MIKE: Where are you going?

SARAH: Anywhere but here...

MIKE: Sarah...

SARAH: I'll be at Aunt Sue's later.

*(SARAH exits offstage in a direction opposite from BRIAN. HE stops and stares after her for a moment. MIKE stands, takes a long drink from his beer then looks out at BRIAN and raises the bottle in a toast. BRIAN exits hastily.)*

*(The lights dim on MIKE as they rise on SUSAN's bed.)*

*(MIKE exits while SUSAN enters and sits on the edge of her bed. SARAH enters from the direction MIKE exits, crosses to SUSAN and stands before her.)*

*(Maybe a photo of SUSAN's house is projected on the screen at the back of stage.)*

SARAH: Hey.

SUSAN: Hi.

SARAH: I should have called first but...

SUSAN: Did your Dad send you?

SARAH: Nope. I wouldn't have come if he had. I wanted to see you.

*(Beat)*

SUSAN: About?

SARAH: I thought maybe you'd like some company. I know you're not seeing that guy anymore...

SUSAN: Ohhhh! Don't remind me.

SARAH: Sorry.

SUSAN: It's all right.

SARAH: I thought maybe you'd like to talk to somebody – I mean, I don't know if you have somebody – you know, maybe you met some new guy or something. Or maybe you don't even want to talk to anyone. Maybe you'd rather be alone and if that's what you want I can go...

SUSAN: It's okay.

SARAH: Really?

SUSAN: Yeah, really.

SARAH: Good.

SUSAN: You want some dinner?

SARAH: I don't want to interrupt anything.

SUSAN: You're not.

SARAH: I'm not looking for an invitation.

SUSAN: You don't need an invitation.

SARAH: I know I should have called, but I had to get out of there and so... so I... I took off.

SUSAN: Fighting with your Dad?

SARAH: Dad... Brian – everyone.

SUSAN: Not me.

SARAH: I just got here. Give me time.

SUSAN: I know how you feel.

SARAH: You do?

SUSAN: Yeah. And I'm tired of it.

SARAH: I'm tired of it, too.

SUSAN: I've decided that I'm not going to do it anymore.

SARAH: How are you going to do that?

SUSAN: Run away.

SARAH: Some people will follow you, you know? Some people will stalk you.

SUSAN: Then I'll hide. I'll run far away and hide so they'll have to leave me alone.

SARAH: Dad says you can't run away from your problems. They always go with you.

SUSAN: I don't know about that. I think you can avoid a few. When you disappear, they disappear.

SARAH: I'd like to disappear.

SUSAN: Sounds bad.

SARAH: I know nothing I'm dealing with is as bad as what...

SUSAN: What I'm dealing with?

SARAH: Sorry.

SUSAN: Stop -- No more apologizing in my house, all right?

SARAH: All right.

SUSAN: I know what's happening to me.

SARAH: Maybe you don't want to be reminded.

SUSAN: Every breath I take reminds me. It's a part of everything I think and do and say.  
(*laughs*) You know, a lot of people go to great lengths to tip toe around it. So, it's nice to have it acknowledged.

SARAH: Okay.

SUSAN: Life's too short to pretend. (*a la Groucho*) Especially mine. (*Beat*) Oh, come on now. I was trying to be funny. (*Hamming it up.*) I don't want to waste any of the time I have left talking about cancer and dying. I am not going to waste my time being miserable -- worrying and crying.

SARAH: I don't know if I could do that.

SUSAN: You'd be surprised what you can do when you don't have a choice.

SARAH: You're not scared?

SUSAN: Hell, yes I'm scared! I just refuse to beat myself up. The universe is doing that quite well all on its own and I refuse to help. I'm going to only do what I want to do.

SARAH: Like what?

SUSAN: Like go places. See and do things. Things I've always wanted to do.

SARAH: Wish I could do that.

*(Beat as THEY look at each other.)*

SUSAN: Would you like to?

SARAH: Well, yeah but...

SUSAN: You went on the junior class trip to France last year, didn't you?

SARAH: Yeah. It was great. I'm still surprised Dad let me go... I'm even more surprised he paid for it.

SUSAN: So, you have a passport.

SARAH: Yea, sure...

SUSAN: Do you have it? Or does your Dad keep it somewhere?

SARAH: It's mine – it's in my room.

SUSAN: Go home and get it -- but don't tell your Dad.  
Tell him I decided that I liked his idea of your staying  
with me this summer.

SARAH: Why do I need my passport?

SUSAN: 'Cause I've decided to take a trip and I really  
want you to come with me. As a matter of fact, I'd like  
to take a few trips this summer...

SARAH: You really want me to come with you?

SUSAN: Absolutely. My treat. We'll have fun!

SARAH: Leave the country?

SUSAN: Yeah.

SARAH: Then I really should tell Dad.

SUSAN: Noooooo...

SARAH: He will freak out if I leave the country without  
telling him...

SUSAN: You'll be with me.

SARAH: Yeah, but...

SUSAN: I don't want to waste any time talking about it –  
explaining... or have to defend myself. I want to do it.  
You're eighteen now.

SARAH: He's still my Dad.

SUSAN: And he's still my brother. So what?

SARAH: You know what.

SUSAN: Hey, you're living with me now. It's not really his business what we do.

SARAH: He'll be really pissed.

SUSAN: He'll get mad at me -- not you. And he can't get mad at me because I'm dying of cancer. *(Beat as SARAH gives SUSAN a look.)* Having cancer has got to be good for something. Everything will be fine – I promise. C'mon. Let's do this. You and me. It'll be good for all of us.

SARAH: How is finding out we've left the country good for him?

SUSAN: Help teach him to let go. Wouldn't you say that he needs to learn to let go?

*(Beat)*

SARAH: Where would we go?

SUSAN: I have a list. I haven't decided what the order is yet.

SARAH: A list?

SUSAN: What else am I going to do with my money? It's not like I need to plan for the future.

SARAH: I wish you wouldn't say things like that.

SUSAN: Why not?

SARAH: It makes me... uncomfortable.

SUSAN: It's the truth, Sarah. It's my truth. If you're going with me, I don't want to have to watch what I say.

SARAH: I wish it wasn't true. It upsets me. It makes me sad – that's my truth.

SUSAN: Can you deal?

SARAH: I don't know... I mean, what if you need help? What if something happens?

SUSAN: Nothing bad will happen...

SARAH: What if it does? If something bad happens to you... I don't know if I could handle that – if I'd be able to take care of you. I might mess up... make things worse. Who's going to listen to a teenage girl?

SUSAN: Oh, my darling girl. I'll be fine – the doctors said I have some time before – well, before. Let me spend this good time with you.

SARAH: Why me?

SUSAN: Because I'm being selfish. I look at you and I see my self. And I see your Mom, too. Your Mom and I were like long-lost sisters – which really bugged your Dad; he felt left out sometimes. (*SHE touches SARAH's face.*) There will come a time when you will be all that's left of us. And that's all right, because I think you're the best of your Mom and me. I want to leave you with memories of us doing things you'll never forget. That way, I know that I won't completely disappear from this earth.

SARAH: Sometimes I dream about being with my Mom and I don't know whether these times really happened or if I'm just wishing in my sleep.

SUSAN: Let me give you memories you can always be sure of. I want you to always have this trip, this time together for the both of us. (*SARAH hugs her.*) I promise I won't die on you. If anything happens, we can deal with it together, okay?

*(Beat)*

SARAH: Okay.

SUSAN: So, it's "Summer with Susan?"

SARAH: Yeah. "Summer with *Sarah and Susan.*"

SUSAN: Go get that passport and come right back. If your Dad tries to hold you up you tell him I'm making dinner for us – and no, he is not invited; it's just us girls.

*(SARAH turns to go then stops and turns back.)*

SARAH: What kind of clothes should I pack?

SUSAN: Don't pack much. Just bring your favorite comfortable clothes. We'll go shopping after we get where we're going.

*(Small PAUSE.)*

SARAH: Are you sure about this?

SUSAN: *(Smiling)* Dead certain.

SARAH: I'll be back.

*(SARAH exits leaving SUSAN alone on the stage.)*

SUSAN: "A Summer with Susan"... *(Beat)* Maybe... "Summer *OF* Susan." *(Beat)* "*The Summer of Susan.*"

*(SHE pulls suitcase out from under the bed and places it on top of the bed. SHE opens it and pulls out a pair of riding boots. SHE sits on the edge of the bed and pulls the boots on as the LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.)*

**END OF ACT ONE**