

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”**

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

Paper Cranes
© Kari Bentley-Quinn
Trade Edition, 2014
ISBN 978-1-63092-035-7

About the cover

Mariëlle Coppes committed to making 1000 paper cranes and handed them out to 1000 strangers as part of her series of “Magical Daydream” feel-good projects designed to brighten people’s day.

You can follow her paper crane journey on her blog here:

<http://www.magicaldaydream.com/2013/07/1000-cranes-for-1000-strangers.html>

Enjoy the video result of Mariëlle’s journey here:

http://youtu.be/VgD22_rLw7E

Paper Cranes

A play by Kari Bentley-Quinn

Setting: A suburb

Time: The present, mid summer to mid fall

Cast of Characters:

MONA (F, young looking 40's)

DAVID (M, mid 30's)

MADDIE (F, 19)

JULIE (F, early 30's)

AMY (F, early 30's)

The World Premiere of PAPER CRANES was produced by Packawallop Productions and directed by Scott Ebersold. It opened on April 15, 2011 at The Access Theater in New York City. The original cast and crew were as follows:

CAST (In order of appearance)

MONA: Cynthia Silver
AMY: Susan Louise O'Connor
DAVID: Eric T. Miller
JULIE: Melissa Hammans
MADDIE: Sarah Lord

CREATIVE TEAM

Director: Scott Ebersold
Assistant Director: Kyle Fox
Production Stage Manager: Amy Francis Schott
Stage Manager: Justin Boudreau
Properties Manager: Danielle Schultz
Set Design: Jared Rutherford
Costume Design: Jennifer Paar
Lighting Design: Scott Bolman
Sound Design: Ryan Maeker
Assistant Sound Design: Chantel Pascente
Publicity: Lanie Zipoy
Casting: Judy Bowman Casting

Paper Cranes

ACT ONE

Prologue

(MONA is seated by a small desk in a small room, where hundreds of origami paper cranes hang by dental floss from the ceiling, stacked on top of one another. They are plentiful and overwhelming. Mona is forty-two years old, well dressed, elegant. Her grief hangs over her like a thick fog.)

MONA: There's a letter in the top drawer of our desk.

It is neatly folded into a neat little envelope, embossed with our initials.

The stationery was one of the first nice things I bought before our wedding.

I bought it to write thank you notes on.

Do you remember where I found it?

That amazing little place in the Village on our trip to New York?

That's where I saw the paper, perfectly square, clean right angles.

Cream colored linen with Wedgwood blue borders, woven together and sturdy, like we were.

It was perfect.

When I was a little girl,

I'd read a book about a little girl named Sadako who lived in Hiroshima.

She survived the atomic bomb, but got leukemia from the radiation years later.

When she found out she was sick, she began to fold paper cranes.

It is thought that anyone who folds 1000 cranes will
be granted a wish.
Her wish was to live.

When you started slipping away, I remembered Sa-
dako and her birds.
I went to the art store and bought packages and pack-
ages of paper.
I sat by your bedside and folded them for you.
I folded what seemed like millions, but I didn't fold
enough, I guess.
I wish you could have seen them.

All I have left of you now is your letter.
It's still in the top drawer of our desk
I still haven't opened it.
I don't know if I ever will.

For now I keep on folding and unfolding
As if the cranes will somehow take flight
As if they'll save you this time.

(AMY and DAVID are both in spotlight)

AMY: I couldn't tell you why I do it.
There are junkies, desperate and frothing on street
corners
Then there's me.
I guess there's really no difference.
I've grown weary of the setup,
Meeting in a public place, making awkward small talk
Deciding on the various implements, preferred brand
of latex, lube
When what we both want and need is just a moment
away.

I'm not looking for safety, I'm looking for the sick
rush of anticipation
The moment when I must give in, and then, then I am
not me
I am Lady Godiva on horseback, head thrown back,
hair aflame
I am the beautiful ingénue in a vampire film
I am in spygear, leather and latex
I know it's dangerous.
And yet, I need what they give me
I need to submit and they need to control
I need to change to stay the same.

DAVID: I couldn't tell you why I do it
It's never the same, and I always expect it to be
I set it all up, I go through the steps
I see what have become countless, faceless asses
Upturned, red handprints on white flesh
And I should feel what I felt then
And yet I am unmoved, unloved
A heroin addict placated with methadone
Empty substitutes for her, whose hands I'd kiss at din-
ner
Across the table, still sweet with perfume
Whose hands I bound with satin ties to the bedpost
The same hands that were thrown around my neck
when I untied her,
Cradled her, kissed her in extremities of gratitude and
love
I thought I'd never see such things again
Until, one night, late, I received a picture.

AMY: I sent him my picture, and his response was ex-
citing
I asked him what he wanted, what he liked
And his response was "I only request your silence".

DAVID: I opened her picture
I don't ever want to hear the sound I must have made
I don't want to think about it.
Oh god, I am a leech, I know this, a bottom feeder
A pestilence, and yet
There she was, an unanswered prayer.

AMY: My instructions were simple
I was to wear all black – undergarments, dress, shoes
And I wasn't to speak once it began
Not a word.
If I had to moan or cry out, I had to find a way to
muffle it or I'd be gagged
“What, you don't like it when a girl moans?” I asked,
playful
He didn't answer that.

DAVID: I promised I wouldn't hurt her.

AMY: I said I wanted him to hurt me.

DAVID: I meant it.

AMY: He said he wouldn't have to.

DAVID: I didn't know what I meant.

AMY: I was turned on.
What could he mean?

DAVID: I'm still not sure what I meant.

AMY: 8 o'clock, he said.
Don't be late, or else.
I turned the computer off, ran upstairs and made my-
self come

Twice, panting, screaming
And thinking, spent, in the dark
What's wrong with me?

DAVID: Alone, later, in the dark
I stared at the ceiling, and I thought
What's wrong with me?
What the fuck is wrong with me?

Scene 1

(Amy is standing outside of a loud bar. JULIE enters, fanning herself, sweaty. The music can be heard pounding in the background. MADDIE is by herself on the other side of the stage, drinking a beer. Maddie is young and what could best be described as very soft butch. Julie leans into Amy.)

JULIE: So hot in there...

AMY: You want another drink?

JULIE: I dunno. I'm pretty hammered.

AMY: Wanna beer?

JULIE: Yes! Beer!

AMY: Not vodka.

JULIE: No more vodka!

AMY: Just say no!

JULIE: No! Beer please!

AMY: Okay, drunkie. I'll be back.

(Amy exits. Julie walks out to where Maddie is standing. She fans herself.)

MADDIE: Hot in there, right?

JULIE: I'm sorry?

MADDIE: It's hot. Inside.

JULIE: Yeah...

MADDIE: I think they do it deliberately to make you drunker.

JULIE: I'm pretty drunk.

MADDIE: Are you?

JULIE: Hell yeah. \$3 vodka tonics? In July? Not good.

(Julie closes her eyes for a moment, scoops her hair up. Maddie is staring)

JULIE: What about you?

MADDIE: I could be drunker, honestly. My friend completely ditched me. She left with this girl...she was cute, but worth ditching me for? I think not.

(Maddie pulls out a pack of cigarettes)

MADDIE: Want one?

JULIE: Oh, I don't...

(Changes her mind)

...yes. Yes, I would. Thank you.

(Maddie hands her a cigarette, lights it for Julie, lights her own)

I'm Julie.

(Julie holds out her hand. Maddie takes it, flirtatiously)

MADDIE: Madison. But call me Maddie.

JULIE: Madison. Like the avenue?

MADDIE: Like millions of other white girls my age.

JULIE: Are you even old enough to be here?

MADDIE: You here with anyone?

JULIE: Oh...yeah...Amy. She's just a friend though...
not like you need to know she's a friend, cause you
didn't ask, but...well, I guess she's sort of my ex-
girlfriend, even though she's not even GAY, really...

MADDIE: If she's not gay, why is she at a dyke bar?

JULIE: I'd better go find her.

MADDIE: Am I making you nervous?

JULIE: What? No.

MADDIE: It seems like you're trying to get away. Do
you think I'm ugly or something?

JULIE: Of course not.

MADDIE: You think I'm cute, then.

JULIE: In the way teenagers are cute. The dangerous,
illegal way.

MADDIE: I'm nineteen. That's not illegal.

JULIE: It probably should be.

MADDIE: You're beautiful, you know.

JULIE: I bet you say that to all the girls.

MADDIE: Maybe.

(Beat)

JULIE: So what do you do for fun besides chase old ladies at gay bars?

MADDIE: I'm in school.

JULIE: Where? The university?

MADDIE: No. Not right now. Community college. Just for a year, or two...not really sure what I want to be when I grow up.

JULIE: You're never going to know what you want to be when you grow up.

MADDIE: That's what everyone tells me.

JULIE: You're probably smart. I'm an indentured servant to my student loan company.

MADDIE: What was your major?

JULIE: Sculpture.

MADDIE: Practical!

JULIE: Very!

MADDIE: So you're an artist?

JULIE: No. I'm a paralegal.

MADDIE: I won't hold it against you. You're sexy anyway.

JULIE: You think so, huh?

(Maddie leans in and kisses Julie softly, almost innocently. Her hands trace the small of Julie's back. Maddie smiles at her)

MADDIE: Wanna go somewhere quiet?

JULIE: I can't...my friend is--

MADDIE: Your friend is what?

JULIE: Coming back.

MADDIE: She's not here yet, now is she?

(Maddie pushes her up against the wall and kisses her again, not innocently this time. Amy enters, carrying two beers. Amy watches them for a moment, intrigued, and then clears her throat. Julie breaks the kiss off.)

JULIE: Hey...hi! Hey...oh, you got beer, fantastic...

(Amy hands a beer to Julie, who begins drinking it quickly)

AMY: Yes, finally. It's a mob scene in there...good to see you've been, ah, making friends...

JULIE: Oh, right...Maddie, this is my friend Amy. Amy, this is Maddie...Maddie is, uh—

AMY: Enchanté.

(Amy takes the cigarette from Julie, takes a drag, hands it back to Julie)

MADDIE: Nice to meet you.

JULIE: So, uh, yeah we were just talking about—

MADDIE: Sculpture.

JULIE: Yes. Sculpture.

AMY: I see.

MADDIE: I gotta pee. I'll be right back...you still gonna be here?

JULIE: Yeah. Yeah, I'll be here.

(Maddie exits. Amy and Julie crack up)

AMY: The last thing I expected to see when I came back was you getting felt up by a sixteen year old.

JULIE: She's nineteen. Or so she claims...

AMY: At least she's legal.

JULIE: Listen...we better go, right? This is a bad idea. This girl is trouble.

AMY: With a capital T. All the more reason for you to take her home.

JULIE: Oh come on!

AMY: You want to sleep with her. I can tell. I don't blame you, she's cute.

JULIE: You're just doing this so you can hold it against me.

AMY: Not true! Get down girl, what do I care? Besides, I'm hammered. I should get home.

JULIE: Please take a cab.

AMY: What did you think I was gonna do, walk? You're the one who drove here.

JULIE: Did I? Shit.

AMY: Don't drive.

JULIE: I won't.

AMY: Good.

JULIE: Don't leave me. This is bad decision making. Very bad.

AMY: I'll call you tomorrow.

(Amy downs the rest of her beer and exits. Julie waits alone for a moment, fighting with herself silently, until Maddie re-appears.)

MADDIE: You waited.

JULIE: I waited.

MADDIE: You got a car?

JULIE: I probably shouldn't drive.

MADDIE: I can drive. I'm not drunk.

JULIE: Where are we going?

MADDIE: Your place?

JULIE: I thought you wanted to go someplace quiet.

MADDIE: Is your place not quiet? Besides...I got a...
uh...roommate. Uptight.

(Julie takes her keys out of her pocket and hands them to Maddie.)

JULIE: All right. You win.

MADDIE: I always do. But that's a good thing. You'll see.

(Maddie walks off, flirtatiously. Julie follows.)

Scene 2

(It is early morning. Maddie tiptoes into her house. Mona is seated at her desk with the cranes.)

MADDIE: Mama? Hello?

MONA: In here!

(Maddie stands at the door but does not enter. Mona is writing. At her feet are countless crumpled pieces of paper.)

MADDIE: Whatcha doin'?

MONA: Working.

(Beat)

Out all night?

MADDIE: Yeah. Crashed at Nellie's house.

MONA: You most certainly did not crash at Nellie's house because I ran into her at the convenience store. At 1 am.

MADDIE: Why were you at the convenience store at 1 am?

MONA: Couldn't sleep.

MADDIE: Again?

MONA: Make sure you always have a condom with you.

MADDIE: You don't have to worry about that, Mama.

MONA: Next time, just text me something like “Not coming home tonight, not dead in a gutter...”

MADDIE: Next time. I promise.

(Beat)

You look exhausted. You should take an Ambien tonight.

MONA: I don't have Ambien.

MADDIE: I do.

MONA: Where'd you get them?

MADDIE: Dr. Casey.

MONA: She shouldn't be giving sleeping pills to a 19 year old.

MADDIE: They helped me sleep for finals. Don't need them anymore.

(Maddie takes the pill bottle from her purse, hands it to Mona)

MONA: Thanks.

(Mona takes a package of origami paper from her drawer, shows it to Maddie)

Look what Sheila brought me from Tokyo.

MADDIE: More paper.

MONA: Yes. It's the perfect size and weight. Clean, crisp folds. Perfection.

MADDIE: Aren't you running out of room in there?

MONA: I'm folding a thousand for the Children's Hospital.

MADDIE: You're gonna give yourself carpal tunnel.

MONA: It focuses me.

MADDIE: I think I'm gonna lay down for a little while.

MONA: Okay.

MADDIE: Maybe we should get dinner tonight? Just us girls.

MONA: I've got work to do. These deadlines aren't meeting themselves.

MADDIE: Oh. Okay.

MONA: Next week. Promise.

(Maddie begins to exit)

Sleep tight, cherie.

MADDIE: Bonne nuit, Mama.

(Maddie exits. The lights come back up on Mona's room. On the other side of the stage is David's bedroom. Amy's purse is on the floor near the bed.)

DAVID: Five minutes

All I need is five minutes to hold you again, to feel
the warm softness of you

To twirl a strand of your hair between my fingers.

She's an almost perfect replica.

Missing the birthmark

But almost exact.

(Amy enters)

DAVID: Are you ready?

AMY: Yeah. I'm ready.

(David stands behind Amy.)

DAVID: Undress.

(Amy starts with shoes - David stops her from removing them. Amy slides her black dress off. She is in very expensive and carefully purchased black lingerie – bra, panties, garters. The expensive shoes stay on. David wraps Amy's hair around his hand, pulls her head back gently. Amy turns to look at him, he pushes her face away)

DAVID: Don't look at me.

(Amy looks at David again. More violently this time--)

DAVID: I SAID don't look at me.

(David pulls a black satin rope from his pocket. He crosses Amy's hands in front of her and binds them with the rope.)

DAVID: Does this hurt? Shake your head yes or no.

(Amy shakes her head. No. David pulls them tighter. Amy winces)

DAVID: This?

(Amy nods her head. Yes.)

DAVID: Let's review the rules before we begin. Your safe word is "birdie". If it gets too much for you, at any time, you yell out "birdie" and I promise you that I'll stop no matter where we are. However, other than that word, you are not to speak. You are not to cry out unless you absolutely have to, in which case you should fully expect to be punished for your disobedience. If you speak or cry out frequently enough to give me cause to believe that you're doing it to deliberately irritate me, I will tie you to the bed and leave you there until you can learn to be an obedient slave. Understand?

(Amy nods again. Yes.)

(David sits on the bed, snaps his fingers, and motions for Amy to bend over his lap. She does so. He spanks her once, hard. She doesn't cry out. He spanks her again, hard. She doesn't cry out. He spanks her one more time, she almost cries out but manages to suppress it.)

DAVID: Good girl.

(David begins to caress Amy more lovingly now, almost as if to soothe the pain he has just inflicted. David walks Amy over to the bed. David kisses her passionately, but gently, and then ties her wrists to the bedframe above her head. He kisses her again. As he takes his clothes off and gets into bed. Lights up on Mona's room. Mona speaks.)

MONA: There are mornings I still reach for you
I turn over and sling my arm over what my heart re-
members as your sleeping body
And it falls with a thud on the mattress.

Five minutes.

I'd give it all to have five minutes with you

Five minutes to kiss you before illness took the light
from your face.

To see myself through your eyes, to look at you and
know I was loved.

You don't think of these things when you think of be-
ing alone

How suddenly you are meaningless.

How suddenly you have stopped existing.

Five minutes for...oh who am I kidding?

Five minutes for you to tear my clothes off, put your-
self safely inside me, away from strangers, away from
the world, away, away, away...

Love, I fear I am lost and am never returning.

*(Lights come back up to half on Amy in bed with David,
still in black bra and panties. David is sound asleep.
Amy gets her things, slips her dress back on. She checks
to see that David is asleep. When she's sure that he is,
she opens up a drawer in his bedside table, rummages
around for a moment. David stirs, Amy stays statue still.
When he is quiet again, Amy resumes her search and
finds a photograph. She looks at it, ashen and bewil-
dered. Amy slips the photograph in her purse and exits.)*

Scene 3

(Julie is sitting with Maddie at a café, holding two large iced coffees. She hands one to Maddie)

MADDIE: Thanks.

JULIE: So, I wanted to talk to you outside of like...my bedroom for once.

MADDIE: Why? Because you just can't stop thinking about me?

JULIE: Be serious, Madison.

MADDIE: Awww. Look at you and your cute serious voice!

JULIE: Look. —This has been great.

MADDIE: But..?

JULIE: I think it's best that we leave it there.

MADDIE: Why?

JULIE: First of all, I'm much too old for you.

MADDIE: Okay, how old ARE you, anyway?

JULIE: Thirty four.

MADDIE: Is that all? The way you talk, it seems like you're the crypt keeper or something.

JULIE: I'm old enough to think about what's best for you.

MADDIE: Well, what about what's best for you?

JULIE: I've never been good at knowing what's best for me. That's part of the problem.

MADDIE: Does it help if I tell you that I really, really, really like you?

JULIE: I sort of figured that out.

MADDIE: What's the worst thing that can happen here? Seriously. We date for a while and then break up? That doesn't seem so bad.

JULIE: That's a very young thing to say.

Maddie, are you out?

(Maddie doesn't respond)

I thought not.

(Maddie stays quiet)

That's kind of a dealbreaker for me, to be honest.

MADDIE: I'm not like, hiding it, or anything. I just haven't been super explicit.

JULIE: But your family doesn't know.

MADDIE: Shit, I don't know. Maybe. My mom might know. It's just that we've been going through some stuff--

JULIE: What about your father? Does he know?

MADDIE: My father's dead. Hence the stuff.

JULIE: Oh.

MADDIE: Yeah. Two years ago.

JULIE: I'm sorry.

MADDIE: It's okay. I mean, well, it's not okay. It sucked.

JULIE: My dad died too. A long time ago...but still. I know what you're going through. My mom was a disaster afterwards, for years.

MADDIE: Listen, I'll tell her eventually. Unless, of course, there's someone really, really special in my life and I just HAVE to tell her.

JULIE: There's nothing I can say that will convince you, is there?

MADDIE: Not likely.

(They kiss)

MADDIE: So can we see each other again then, right? Like maybe an actual date?

(Amy enters, harried. She walks over to Julie's table. She sees Julie and Maddie being close. Julie notices Amy and backs away from Maddie)

JULIE: Amy! Hi!

AMY: Hi.

JULIE: Amy, you remember Mad—

AMY: Maddie. Of course. Nice to see you.

MADDIE: You too.

AMY: Glad you finally let her out of the house long enough to hang out.

JULIE: Amy.

AMY: I thought someone had kidnapped her or something.

MADDIE: Lord knows I tried!

(Amy sits next to Julie and takes a sip of Julie's coffee. She looks at Maddie)

AMY: Listen sweetie, I don't want to be rude or whatever, but I kind of need to talk to Julie alone.

MADDIE: Oh.

AMY: Yeah. It's a grown up thing. Nothing that would interest you.

JULIE: Ignore her. She's being a bitch. She does it very well.

MADDIE: It's okay. I should probably be getting home anyway.

JULIE: I'll call you later.

MADDIE: Not good enough. I want to see you. When can I see you?

JULIE: Tonight? I'm not doing anything.

MADDIE: Dinner?

JULIE: Sounds good. I'll pick you up at 7, okay?

MADDIE: Okay.

(Maddie pulls Julie in for a lingering kiss, until Amy is visibly uncomfortable. Maddie looks at Amy and smiles)

MADDIE: She's all yours.

(Maddie exits.)

JULIE: Was that necessary?

AMY: What?

JULIE: "Grown up thing"? Really?

AMY: It was a joke!

JULIE: It's not funny. I like her, okay?

AMY: All right, all right! Jeez. Sorry.

JULIE: So? What's up?

AMY: Um...well...

JULIE: Let me take a wild guess – this is about the guy you're seeing, right?

AMY: Kind of. Well, we're not like, dating or whatever.

JULIE: It's just some weird sex thing, right?

AMY: Why the judgment?

JULIE: Sorry.

(Beat)

I'm listening.

AMY: It was crazy. I've never been with a guy who...I don't know. Who did to me what he did. Shook me up.

JULIE: So you like him?

AMY: He's nice. Whatever. It's just--

(Beat)

When he was sleeping the other night, I went through his stuff.

JULIE: What?

AMY: I know. Not my proudest moment, not by a long shot...

JULIE: And?

AMY: I found something...

JULIE: What?

AMY: I think there might be another woman. Or was one...

JULIE: Divorced, maybe?

AMY: No...I don't think so. Gone, though. Dead, maybe...

JULIE: Oh come on. Why on earth would you think that...

(Amy takes the photo from her purse and shows it to Julie. Julie is stunned, recoils.)

JULIE: Oh. Oh my god.

AMY: See?

(Julie puts the photo back on the table)

JULIE: Ugh. That gives me the shivers.

AMY: He wasn't fucking me...he was.....

(Beat)

Maybe I'm reading too much into it?

JULIE: Based on that picture? No. That woman is your twin.

AMY: It was the best sex of my life, Julie. I'm not kidding.

JULIE: Thanks a lot!

AMY: Sorry. It was though. I'm just being honest.

JULIE: Let's say you're right. Let's say that girl in the photo who happens to look exactly fucking like you is actually dead or missing and he's sleeping with you to...I don't know...fill a void. That's not healthy. In any way. That's just--

AMY: I think I want to see him again.

JULIE: I don't like this one bit.

AMY: Forget it. I shouldn't have told you.

JULIE: You wouldn't have told me if you didn't have a bad feeling about it. And you should. Because, TO REVIEW, you look exactly like some dead chick and that's fucking creepy.

AMY: Fine, okay. I won't call him. You're totally right. It was just...exciting.

JULIE: Dangerous things are always exciting. Do not call him. Ever.

(Amy and Julie get up to exit. They begin walking out as Mona and David enter. Amy sees David and freezes in place. David sees Amy. Julie exits. Mona walks in and claims a table. David and Amy lock eyes but say nothing even though Amy smiles slightly. David walks past her and goes to Mona's table. Amy exits, bewildered.)

DAVID: I'm gonna go order us coffees.
(Mona goes into her purse for money)
No, no, my treat.

MONA: Oh, thank you. I'll have a skim iced mocha. No whipped cream. Thank you!

(David exits. Mona takes out her phone and dials.)

MONA: *(on the phone)* Hey Maddie...it's Mama...I suppose I should have texted you rather than calling, but...anyway...I wanted to tell you I'm out having a coffee with someone from group. I thought you'd be proud of me for getting out of the house.... anyway, this friend is sort of...like me in a lot of ways. It's a friend, anyway...which is good. I haven't made new friends since...

(Beat. A moment.)

Okay, my darling. I'm sorry to ramble. Please text me later and let me know you're okay. I love you. Be safe...whatever you're doing.

(Mona flips the phone shut. After a moment, David returns with two enormous iced coffees.)

MONA: That looks so good. Thanks.

DAVID: Sometimes I think I might as well have a milkshake.

MONA: You okay? That was intense today.

DAVID: Ugh. I'm sorry about that. I kind of lost my shit.

MONA: Don't be. It was honest.

DAVID: Everyone says this is supposed to get easier with time. In some ways, I feel like it's gotten harder.

MONA: It only gets easier when you start to forget things. That's the only way we mortals survive, right? Forgetting.

(Checks her phone)

I have no idea where my daughter is.

DAVID: How old is she again?

MONA: Nineteen.

DAVID: You don't look old enough to have a nineteen year old.

MONA: Thank you. Some days I feel absolutely fucking ancient.

DAVID: Me too. It scares me sometimes, you know?
I'm thirty five and alone.

MONA: Try being forty two. And a woman, no less.

DAVID: You don't look a day over thirty. Seriously.

MONA: Well, thank you. I certainly work very hard at it.

DAVID: Most women wouldn't admit that.

MONA: I've resigned myself to a life of skim milk and injectables.

DAVID: Botox?

MONA: Can you tell?

DAVID: No!

MONA: When Maddie turned thirteen. I had a meltdown of epic proportions. I felt old and unattractive, and Richard, ever the pragmatist, said that if it would really make me feel better, he'd support it.

DAVID: Did it make you feel better?

MONA: Not really. But it got the crow's feet and wrinkles to slow down a tick. That's all I wanted, really. It's like a bag of chips, though. Once you get one thing done, well, you gotta eat the rest of the bag...or something.

(Beat)

I'm embarrassed now.

DAVID: Don't be. I like listening to you. It makes me feel less...well, less alone. I often feel like I'm from a different planet than everyone else.

MONA: I do too. I can't even hang out with my friends anymore. They're all married, and they keep telling me "It's been two years, you need to date, move on". And I'm always so confused by that. I mean, if they lost each other...would the first thing on their agenda be to date someone else?

(David doesn't reply)

MONA: Oh, are you dating? That was probably offensive if you are, I'm sorry.

DAVID: No. Well. No. Not exactly.

MONA: No?

DAVID: It's just--

MONA: Sex?

DAVID: Right.

MONA: How's that working out for you?

DAVID: It's uh...well, it's...this girl I'm currently uh, seeing is...well, she's--

(Beat)

All I can see is Ashley.

MONA: That's why I've just avoided it outright.

DAVID: There's been no one? Since Richard?
(*Mona shakes her head*)

Wow. That's—

MONA: Pathetic.

DAVID: No. It's kind of romantic, actually.

MONA: I just can't. I tried, once, with this friend of mine, and...I saw Richard's face. It felt like lying.

DAVID: I guess that's my problem. I just let myself lie.

MONA: I guess it's that I just feel so separate from my own body now -- like someone has torn me into pieces and tossed my limbs in the air. I'm just shimmying around with no arms or legs trying to find them, but I don't have any hands, and I can't pick them up.

DAVID: Humpty Dumpty, off the wall.

MONA: Exactly.

(*David raises his cup to Mona*)

DAVID: Well, here's to all the king's horses and all the king's men. For at least trying.

(*They clink cups*)

Cheers.

DAVID: Thanks for inviting me out. I'm actually having a good time.

MONA: Well, then we should make this a tradition. If we're going to suffer through group, there might as well be mochas involved.

DAVID: You think I can go back in there after all that?

MONA: Of course. You're *grieving*, poor dear. You know not what you do.

DAVID: Get Out of Jail Free.

MONA: Exactly.

DAVID: It's a deal.

(LIGHTS OUT)

Scene 4

(David is sitting on his bed. There is a knock on David's door. He answers. It's Amy, in the same black dress. She smiles.)

AMY: Hi, David.

(David puts a finger to her lips to hush her. Obediently, Amy wordlessly undresses and crosses her arms in front of her to be tied. David takes great sensual pleasure in tying her wrists together. He puts her into position on the bed and reveals a long, thin riding crop. Amy can barely conceal her fear and desire. He smacks her once, and then twice, and the lights go down on them for the third audible smack. Lights come up on Julie's bedroom, where Julie and Maddie are cuddling, half-dressed)

MADDIE: Jules?

JULIE: Hmmm?

MADDIE: Why don't you sculpt anymore?

JULIE: I dunno. What's it to ya?

MADDIE: I keep thinking about that piece you made that you showed me. It's so beautiful.

JULIE: You know what else is beautiful? Sleeping.

MADDIE: I could never make anything like that.

JULIE: Sure you could.

MADDIE: No. That requires talent. I'm not talented at anything.

JULIE: Everyone is talented at something.

MADDIE: Why did you quit?

JULIE: I realized there were about a million people who were younger and better than I was. Not saying I was totally unsuccessful, or anything. I had some shows. I sold some pieces. But I was a salmon swimming upstream, for years, and one day I just stopped swimming. Simple as that.

MADDIE: But you were good.

JULIE: Good has less to do with it than you think.

MADDIE: I can't even draw a stick figure.

JULIE: Come on. 'Fess up. What are you good at?

MADDIE: I dunno...

JULIE: There has to be something.

MADDIE: Math.

JULIE: See! That's something. Not everyone is good at math. I suck at math.

MADDIE: Math is boring though. I feel like a dork even telling you.

JULIE: Math is not boring. Math gives an answer to nearly every question it asks. Art is nothing but asking questions and there's never an answer.

MADDIE: Math can't answer why I'm gay.

JULIE: Do you wish you weren't?

MADDIE: Maybe?

JULIE: Really?

MADDIE: I dunno. Sometimes? It just makes everything really complicated.

JULIE: Everything is complicated.

MADDIE: I guess. But straight people come with instructions. Slot A fits into Slot B. Marry, procreate...

JULIE: Hang on there, missy. We can do both those things. Well...in a few states anyway. But babies? Babies we can do.

MADDIE: Yeah but...if you have your own, it's not both of yours, you know? And if you adopt, it doesn't belong to either of you.

JULIE: I cannot believe you think that matters.

MADDIE: I just...I guess I've never understood how you can look at a child and call it yours when you didn't create it, is all. Of course you can love it, and raise it, but you always know that it's not your flesh and blood.

JULIE: If you found out tomorrow that your dad wasn't your biological father, would he be any less your dad?

MADDIE: To tell me that wasn't true would be like telling me I don't exist. I'm not as sure of anything as I am sure that I'm my father's child.

JULIE: But he wouldn't be any less your father. He'd still be the man who held your hand crossing the street or gushing over some scribbly picture you drew him when you were little.

MADDIE: What if you found out your dad wasn't really your dad?

JULIE: I'd buy everyone a beer.

MADDIE: What do you mean?

(Julie shows Maddie a spot on her temple)

JULIE: See this scar? White, sort of moon shaped...

(Maddie nods)

Not everyone had what you had.

MADDIE: I'm sorry.

JULIE: Don't be. Ancient history.

(They fall silent)

MADDIE: I would never lay a hand on you, you know.

JULIE: Stay there.

MADDIE: For what?

(Julie takes out a pencil and notebook)

JULIE: I'm going to sketch you.

MADDIE: Like Jack and Rose in *Titanic*?

(Maddie lays on the bed like Kate Winslet in Titanic, arm over her head. She poses dramatically.)

JULIE: I hate that movie.

MADDIE: How can you hate that movie?

JULIE: Stay still.

MADDIE: I thought you were just a paralegal.

JULIE: I still draw sometimes. Only when I'm inspired.

MADDIE: I inspire you?

JULIE: Maybe a little.

MADDIE: "Draw me like one of your French girls,
Jack..."

JULIE: Hush.

(Julie sketches. A moment of quiet)

MADDIE: What's your favorite color?

JULIE: Why do you ask so many questions?

(Maddie pouts)

Blue.

MADDIE: Blue like the sky or blue like the ocean?

JULIE: The ocean – but not like the Caribbean, or the Pacific. Like the Atlantic...the Northeast...opaque and deep and mysterious. Almost grey, wild and endless.

(Julie puts the sketchbook down)

MADDIE: Can I see it?

JULIE: It's not done!

MADDIE: I want to see.

JULIE: You need to learn to be more patient.

(Julie puts the sketchbook away, distracts Maddie by touching her)

JULIE: Maybe one day I'll make a sculpture again.
Maybe it will be you.

MADDIE: A nude?

(Julie kisses Maddie, runs her hands over her body)

JULIE: I'm going to need to touch you some more. Easier to sculpt the curve of someone's hip when you've felt it with your bare hands.

(Maddie slides Julie's shirt off, kisses her stomach, her chest, her lips again)

MADDIE: I love how you get all red when I do that.

JULIE: I flush easily.

MADDIE: You're the most beautiful thing I've ever seen.

JULIE: And you're going to break my heart.

MADDIE: Never. Never ever.

JULIE: Never is a promise.

MADDIE: Isn't that a song?

JULIE: Yes.

MADDIE: Fiona Apple.

JULIE: Yes.

MADDIE: I love that song.

JULIE: Me too.

MADDIE: I love you.

JULIE: Don't say that.

MADDIE: I mean it.

JULIE: Sssh. Stop talking.

(Maddie begins to undress, their bed is obscured in darkness as lights come up on David's bed, where Amy is being untied from the bedposts. She is, again, only in black underwear and bra. We can tell that her legs have been whipped or spanked – angry red welts appear on them. When David has finished untying her, Amy involuntarily throws her arms around him. David holds her for a long minute, remembers, and then lets her go. The switch has flipped. David has turned himself off again).

DAVID: Are you okay? Nod yes or no.

(Amy nods)

DAVID: Are you hurt?

(Amy shakes her head “no”)

DAVID: Do you need a ride home?

(Amy shakes her head “no”)

DAVID: Okay. I’ll let you alone so you can get dressed.
Thanks for uh...I mean...

(Amy nods. David exits. Amy is emotional as she begins to put her clothes on – black skirt, black top. Amy slides the skirt over her legs, and smarts when it hits the welts. Amy examines them. Amy gets her purse, retrieves her cell phone. She dials. The lights come up softly on Julie and Maddie in bed, who are sleeping. Julie answers the phone after a few rings. Maddie sits up behind her, kissing her neck and back as she speaks)

JULIE: Amy?

AMY: Hey! Hey uh...can you meet me for a drink?

JULIE: It’s late.

AMY: I need to talk to you. Now.

JULIE: I’m busy.

AMY: You with her?

MADDIE: Baby, come on...

AMY: *(Mocking)* “Babyyyy come on...”.

JULIE: If I agree to meet you, will you shut up?

AMY: Yes.

JULIE: Fine.

AMY: 20 minutes?

JULIE: All right.

AMY: Text me when you're on your way.

(Amy hangs up. Alone, in the dark, she finishes getting dressed. Julie is getting dressed. Maddie is annoyed.)

MADDIE: You can't just do whatever she wants all the time.

JULIE: She's my best friend.

MADDIE: She's your ex girlfriend.

JULIE: Not really. We just slept together a couple of times. I was like her lesbian lab rat.

MADDIE: Do you still love her?

JULIE: I'm with you, Maddie. You're just going to have to trust that.

(Julie looks at Maddie, who is hurt.)

C'mon. You should get home anyway.

MADDIE: I don't have a fucking curfew.

(Maddie grabs her bag)

JULIE: What are you gonna do, walk?

MADDIE: I'll be fine.

JULIE: Maddie...come on.

MADDIE: Don't tell me what to do.

(Maddie exits. Lights fade on the bedrooms.)