

*27 Ways to Say Goodbye*  
**By: Kamarie Chapman**

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**CAST**

Ari ..... The middle sibling. Mid forties.  
Joe ..... The once youngest sibling. Almost 40.  
Ocean ..... Youngest surprise sibling. Not quite 30.  
June ..... Ari's kid. Seventeen.  
Sophia ..... The oldest sibling. Mid fifties.  
Crash ..... A family friend. Maybe 40?  
Dolly Parton ..... Dolly Parton

*Note: These folx are family. Whatever that looks like. Don't be bound to race and gender. Cast the right human for the role and go with it. Dolly can be anyone also. She can be one actor or many. A great way to cast actors you really love working with but have no time to commit to a full rehearsal schedule. But go one way or the other; either the same actor or all five scenes with different actors.*

*The stage should be a fluid place where anything can take place with railroad tracks. I'm writing like this like it is on a thrust or maybe runway. Different levels and basic props can make it all happen. Projections are a must... Scene titles, video games, etc. Also there is a scene that is basically a projection recorded from cell phone. Sound designers are so amazing. Please hire one and let them work their magic. The oratory world of this play is real.*

***Content Warning: This play explores issues dealing with death, PTSD, child abuse, self-harm, and suicide. While none of these topics overtly happen on the stage, they are discussed and may be triggering to survivors.***

**Zero: Hello/Goodbye**

***Ari enters the stage. She does not look good. She finds a bucket and immediately pukes into it.***

***Cue up the song "Papa Don't Preach" by Madonna. Ari begins to dance to the music; as she get her bump begins to grow. It will get bigger and bigger til she is ready to pop.***

***Ari's belly is getting pretty uncomfortable. She sits on a big yoga ball that rolls into the space and rocks.***

*A doctor enters wearing scrubs, surgeons cap, and facemask. Ari starts going into labor. She leans back on the yoga ball and the doctor helps her birth the baby.*

*The music transitions to “Summertime”. Ari is given the swaddled bundle and the doctor leaves.*

ARI

Look at this little face. Kind of like a squished up old man... Well alright. Here we go. Everyone’s been waiting to meet you.

*ARI sniffs and kisses the little bundle. She sways it gently and dances singing with the music. She sees someone and waves.*

ARI

Dad! In here. Come meet the new peanut!

*The lights fade and the music turns into the sounds of an early spring night.*

### **Thirteen: By Pyre**

*The sound of frogs and maybe a owl. ARI sits alone at the fire, in one of those shitty, plastic lawn chairs. The fire is mostly embers now. She wears a Wisconsin Cheesehead hat... you know the ones; like a foam wedge of cheese. There is a small plastic table and two other chairs currently vacant. There is a bluetooth speaker on the table. Ari finishes the last of a white claw and throws the can into the fire; then cracks opens another.*

*JOE returns a bit tipsy. He sits in one of the other shitty plastic chairs. He wears a fez.*

JOE

You know that’s just malt liquor, right?

ARI

It’s made with real lime. “Delicately flavored, alcoholic, soda water.”

JOE

Right. Malt liquor alcoholic.

ARI

Pfffffffffffft.

JOE

Suit yourself. That is gonna be one really nasty hangover tomorrow.

ARI

First off, it is tomorrow. And B, I have been drinking water also. Because I'm not an amateur.

JOE

Well I found Dad's stash. Lookee here!

*He produces a half full bottle of scotch. It's really nice. They assume as much. Joe pulls small, unmatched glasses from his jacket pockets.*

ARI

Scotch. Yeuuuuck.

JOE

You just don't have a refined pallet.

ARI

No, I still have a pallet!

*The bluetooth suddenly begins to blast loud club hip-hop with extra bass. Something like "Start a Riot" by DUCKWRTH and Shaboozey is perfect. Ari and Joe do not seem phased by the sudden LOUD music. Ocean enters dancing. Ocean is a good dancer- a bit drunk- but real good. Ocean wears a legit pair of night vision goggles.*

*Ari and Joe watch the not-so-unusual entrance. Ocean flops into a chair.*

ARI

Whoa! Gimmee.

*She begins to grab at the night vision goggles.*

OCEAN

What's the magic word?

What? ARI

The magic // word? OCEAN

I can't fucking hear // you! ARI

THE. MAGIC. // WOOOOOORD. OCEAN

TURN DOWN THE MUSIC OCEAN! JOE

*Ocean takes out their phone and quickly turns it down.*

Shit. My bad. OCEAN

Where did you find those? ARI

In Dad's seabag. At the bottom. OCEAN

NICE! ARI

They're not that old though. I think he got them at a surplus store when I was in Scouts. OCEAN

*She hands them the Cheesehead hat.*

Trade me. ARI

You sure? OCEAN

Yeah. I want to have night vision. Like a fucking super hero. ARI

OCEAN

I knew you couldn't resist. AH-HA! I win!

I AM NOW THE **HEAD** CHEESE.

ARI

You know, most people find head cheese to be super nasty.

OCEAN

Touché.

ARI

These don't even work!

OCEAN

NO TAKE BACKS!

ARI

Whatever.

*She sits and drinks her white claw. A comfortable silence.*

JOE

I like your music Ocean.

OCEAN

Thanks man.

ARI

I like your jacket Ocean.

OCEAN

Thanks man.

...

Is this gonna be the last time we do this?

ARI

No way.

JOE

Nah.

OCEAN

Because it feels like- like we're finalizing something. You know? Like there's this...

Well doesn't get much more finalized.

JOE

I know.

OCEAN

And no one lives here in town anymore.

JOE

Except me and Ocean.

ARI

You LIVE here. Ocean's just here. They don't actually live here.

JOE

*Another comfortable silence.*

*A phone timer goes off.*

Time to switch!

JOE

*He grabs a duffle bag. Inside there are hats/caps/beanies/sportsball team hats/ridiculous headwear.*

Awww. I just got the Cheesehead!

OCEAN

Whoa. I forgot about this one!

JOE

*Joe pulls out the most amazing plastic hat (it looks like a red pig) from Arkansas Razorbacks. It's beautiful and ridiculous.*

Magnificent.

ARI

Indescribably beautiful.

OCEAN

*Joe tries it on. Ari grabs the fez.*

JOE

Where do you even get a thing like this?

OCEAN

Ar-kan-sas.... Duh.

Gimmee that bag.

*Joe obliges, Ocean roots through and eventually chooses a sweet old man, golf visor.*

JOE

No. Like who gave him this one?

ARI

I remember.

One of his buddies in flight school. I'm pretty sure he died in Vietnam, but- you know- they were all college graduates, so they had all this paraphernalia from their Alma Maters, and I'm pretty sure Dad won that one in a card game.

JOE

Hearts?

ARI

Nah. Those dudes played Uker. All from the Midwest.

OCEAN

It's pretty glorious. Looks good on ya, Joe. I think you should wear it to the funeral.

JOE

Sophia would kill me.

ARI

Pfffffffffffft. Who cares?

My plan is to stay at least this intoxicated and eat ALL the meats and fine cheeses.

JOE

You got meats and chesses plates?

ARI

CATTERED meats and cheeses. Shit's gonna be real.

OCEAN

Oh damn. Meats and cheeses sound real good right now.



Sure does. Whatcha think, Dad?

JOE

*From his pocket Joe pulls out a small 35mm film canister.*

Whoa. You put Dad in there?

ARI

Yeah I was gonna take him // to the top of...

JOE

What the hell is wrong with you?

OCEAN

*A not comfortable silence.*

That's my dad.

OCEAN

My dad too.

JOE

Your STEP dad.

OCEAN

Dude. Chill. Not like I'm // going to dishonor him.

JOE

You can't just do that.

OCEAN

Whoa, whoa, whoa. Let's just calm down here...

ARI

Lighten up man.

JOE

You can't just do that!

OCEAN

YOU CAN'T JUST TAKE HIM LIKE THAT.

YOU DIDN'T EVEN ASK.

JOE

Um....

*Ari rises and gently tugs at Ocean's arm.*

ARI

C'mon Ocean. Maybe it's time to go in. Fire's almost out anyhow.

OCEAN

NO. Shut up, Ari.

You both just don't get it. All this shit? These stupid hats and this house- all this junk everywhere... Take it. You want this fucking cheese hat?

*He takes it off and shoves it at Ari.*

ARI

No man. I don't--

OCEAN

TAKE THE FUCKING CHEESE HAT, ARI. Take the fucking pictures. Drink the booze. Sell the house and get the heck out of dodge. But don't touch my dad. He is the only family I really have. I HAD. And now there's nothing. The only evidence that I belonged to someone is left in photos and memories. And it's not fucking fair. Because I've known him my whole life and STILL don't have even half of the memories you have with him. These possessions mean nothing. It's just junk. The only thing that matters is what's left of him.

JOE

Ocean, I'm sorry. I wasn't trying to offend or // take him away.

OCEAN

Just gimme that.

*Ocean tries to take the canister from Joe.*

JOE

No way man. I'll put it back.

OCEAN

You aren't gonna do anything else!

JOE

Like hell I'm not!

GIVE. IT. BACK.

OCEAN

*The two begin to fight. It's not a well-choreographed- neither of them are good at this. They look like two young children fighting over a toy.*

*Finally Joe manages to hold the canister up out of reach of Ocean. Ocean tries a couple futile jumps to get it, but ends up defeated on the ground-hunched over.*

Give up?

JOE

Fuck you.

OCEAN

No take backs.

JOE

*This infuriates Ocean. They jump up again ready to fight for reals this time. Ari intervenes with a water bottle. She splashes water in their faces or dumps it on their heads- whatever works to cool them off.*

OCEAN  
Aw! Fuck off!

JOE  
Jesus! Why you have to go do that?

You both need to cool down.

ARI

*There is a bit of a last struggle, but Ari brandishes the water bottle threateningly. They both acquiesce with a few choice words.*

Joe. You need to quit fucking with Ocean.

ARI

I wasn't fucking with // them!

JOE

ARI

Shut it.

*He does. Reluctantly and plops into a chair pouting. Ocean meets the poutiness with a double down of patheticness and plops into their own chair.*

ARI

And Ocean. Ocean? Are you listening to me?

What. The. Fuck.

Are you even hearing to yourself? Need I point out the obvious?

*She frantically points at herself and Joe.*

OCEAN

Yeah, I know.

ARI

You know what?

OCEAN

I got family.

ARI

Yeah you fucking do. And a nibbling that LOVES their Barnacle. And what about Sophia too? You're lousy with siblings. So what? All living things die Ocean. Parents die. At least you have people still.

OCEAN

I'm just- I'm just kind of on edge. It's been three weeks. The box and death certificates just got here.

JOE

I'm sorry, Man. I really didn't mean to--

OCEAN

I know. It's okay.

*A comfortable moment.*

JOE

Here Ocean.

*Joe gently tosses the canister at Ocean over the fire. He doesn't throw far enough. The canister falls into the embers.*

*A moment of shock and utter silence. They all quickly get on their hands and knees and frantically try to go after the canister.*

*Joe tries first to fish the canister out of the red hot coal. No luck. Ocean tries too. Ow. Fuck. No good.*

*Ari begins to weep. Joe and Ocean wrap an arm around her. The weeping quickly turns into laughter. A bit manic, but laughter none the less. This is hilarious. They all think so.*

*They end this moment and Joe pours each a dram of really nice scotch. He raises a glass.*

JOE

To Dad... I feel like we're all the luckiest ones to have gotten to know you. Even if in our whole lifetime it wasn't enough. I'm sorry for the double cremation, but sometimes shit happens.

ARI & OCEAN

Shit happens.

*All three clink glasses and take the shot.*

#### **Four: Out Damn Spot**

*Ari carries in a bucket full of suds and a scrub brush with a small pile of neatly folded rags. She puts in her earbuds and picks up in the middle of a podcast. The audience hears this. Softly- nothing too on the nose. Probably whatever's popular (Dolly Parton's America is a good choice if nothing else comes to mind).*

*She finds a corner and begins to scrub. This is comfortable. Scrub, sop up water with a big ass sponge, then wipe off with rag. A ritual.*

*She moves back to cover more ground. There's a spot there that's being a fucker. She scrubs harder. Maybe she pulls a little pocket knife out of her back pocket to scrape it off. It's a sticker.*

ARI

Fucker...

*She holds it up and examines it. And it just happens. Tears. So many tears. Hot streams of water just coming out of her face. She involuntarily begins to sob.*

*She grabs at one of the cleaning rags and bites it trying to muffle the sound. She pops out the earbuds, the podcast goes silent.*

*Ari fights the sadness. It is overwhelming.*

*June enters backpack over shoulder. Lost in cell phone land, they don't notice Ari at first. Ari tries to stifle even more. June flops backpack on surface and begins to walk out, but then sees Ari. They rush next to her.*

JUNE

Mom?

ARI

...

JUNE

Oh shit! Mom! Are you okay?

*Ari says nothing- she really can't. June embraces her. Child comforting mother.*

JUNE

Shhhh. Breathe Mom.

All living things must die. All living things must die.

Deep breath.

*Ari breathes with them. The sobbing is a bit more under control.*

ARI

All living things must die.

JUNE

It's okay, Mom.

ARI

I'm so sorry. It just came out of nowhere. I don't even // know. I was just--

JUNE

Why are you apologizing? It's okay to be sad.

*Ari smiles and laughs a bit through tears.*

ARI

You sound exactly like you did at four years old. How did you ever get to be so fucking smart?

JUNE

Someone has to be in this family.

ARI

Yeah. That's true. Thanks Honey.

JUNE

Do you want me to finish this? I don't mind scrubbing the floor.

ARI

Nah. It's okay. I'm just gonna keep working some stuff out.

JUNE

You sure?

ARI

Yeah. I got it.

JUNE

Cool.

*June gets up and leaves. Ari puts her earbuds back in and begins scrubbing again.*

*June lingers, watching around the corner. You can see them counting down on their hands 5... 4... 3... 2... 1...*

***Ari abruptly stops what she is doing and screams. She sloshes the water. Grabs at anything to be thrown on the ground. Maybe it breaks. She yanks her earbuds out and the podcast cuts out quick.***

***Pacing the floor she holds her screaming/crying towel in her mouth to cover up the sound of wailing. She begins looking around frantically. For something. She whisper yells.***

ARI

Piss. Shit. Fuck.  
The fuck?

***She finds it. Her juul. She takes a couple pulls off it. June reveals herself to her.***

JUNE

Mom.

ARI

I'm fine. I told you. I'm just working some things out.

JUNE

Didn't your therapist up your dose?

ARI

How did you know about // that?

JUNE

You told me a few days ago when you got home.

ARI

I don't really think that has a lot of relevance // right now.

JUNE

How many times have you lost it today?

ARI

...



JUNE

Mom.

ARI

I don't think it's that bad yet.

JUNE

I don't either. But I think you need to call Sinclair.

ARI

Doctor Sinclair.

JUNE

Well if you won't then I will. I have her number.

ARI

Just... STOP.

I'm the parent here and the grown-ass adult.

JUNE

Yes and I'm the teenager whom you live with. The one who is old enough to know what is going on.

...

Are you going to call or should I?

... Again.

*Ari pulls out her phone and dials the number. It goes to voicemail.*

ARI

Joan. It's Ari. I'm having some side effects to the new dose. Please call and advise. I am not alone and June is ready to take me in if needed. Okay. Thanks.

*She ends the call.*

*There are no more words between June and Ari. June sits crisscross applesauce on the floor. Ari mirrors them. She pulls from her vape pen.*

*June rolls their eyes and begins to absorb themselves in their phone.*

ARI

Hey. It's not cigarettes.

*June shrugs. The lights darken in silence.*

#### **Four: Through the Looking Glass**

*From the dim the lights change to almost too bright. Something like “Thunder Thighs” by Miss Eaves plays. Ari rolls out a yoga mat and starts crunching/bicycles/leg lifts. She may get up and do some burpees or jumping jacks. She has been pushing it a while and girl is working.*

*On a separate part of the stage- a different part of town- Sophia sits looking through a vanity mirror. She applies makeup and dresses her hair. The process seems almost painful to her and tedious.*

*As Ari’s working out gets more intensified, Sophia’s application becomes more frantic. The music gets louder, the siblings get more flustered. This goes on a bit.*

*They both push themselves too hard and Ari ends up in a chair facing Sophia both with their heads in their hands.*

*Silence. A breath. A heartbeat.*

*Slowly they look at one another. They look like they are playing the actors’ mirror game. Breathing in at the same time, and out. At some point Ari breaks the mirror and reaches for Sophia. Sophia almost reaches back but then rejects Ari.*

*Lights fade to an almost dark.*

#### **Ten: Because...**

*Sophia stands waiting impatiently. She tries to look relaxed and at ease (the way many people who are impatient try). She looks at her watch again and adjusts her bone colored cardigan.*

*Ari enters a little flustered; slightly late as usual.*

ARI

Hey Sophia. I'm sorry. Just juggling all the things; all the things. Got out the door a bit late.

SOPHIA

It's fine. There's a twenty minute wait for a table anyway. So you didn't miss much.

ARI

Oh I'm sorry. Are you hungry? I just really love this place. They have real French croissants... like all buttery and flakey. // So delicious.

SOPHIA

I'm not eating wheat these days. Gluten intolerance.

Maybe we should // go somewhere—

ARI

Oh shoot. I had no idea. Would you like to go someplace else? 'Cause this is a bakery with lots of wheat and stuff like that.

SOPHIA

Yes.

*She abruptly starts walking elsewhere. Ari stumbles and catches up.*

ARI

Seriously Soph, I'm really sorry about. I would have picked some other place if I had known.

SOPHIA

It's Sophia. And we don't talk much these days, so...

ARI

I know.

There's a lot going on right now. June is going through that whole teenager thing, and I'm keeping it together but working sixty hours a week is tough. You know? // I've been busy.

*They stand on the sidewalk not really going to another place. Perhaps the sound of cars or downtownish things.*

SOPHIA

It's fine. I just wanted to talk to you about the funeral.

How is the planning going?

ARI

Oh. I mean it's alright. Dad had enough in his account to put together something nice. Got a charcuterie spread and some basic cocktails... beer. It's all coming together. Gonna do it at the VFW. There's a super pretty view of the water from there.

SOPHIA

Mmmmm. Well. Sounds like you have everything under control.

ARI

Yep. Just been talking to Ocean and Joe and we've been working // together to make it-

SOPHIA

Oh so nice of Joe to finally show up for the family.

ARI

Sophia I don't know how you can say that. Joe has been trying so hard for years now to make up for his missteps. Can't you give him a break?

SOPHIA

He doesn't seem to be able to afford me any breaks.

ARI

Uh no. No Sophia. No. I can't do this right now.

SOPHIA

Of course not.

ARI

So- you hungry? There's a few places here that you'd like.

SOPHIA

I know what's here. I'm not that interested in food right now. Thank you.

ARI

Okay... well I'm kind of hungry.

SOPHIA

Arianna, I am not going to be at the funeral.

ARI

What? I mean, it's still a few weeks out.

SOPHIA

Yes. I will be in the North Hamptons at the cottage with the McClains.

ARI

You hate those assholes.

SOPHIA

I do. But they are old friends of Frank's. We have rescheduled this visit once already. I really cannot back out. You can imagine Frank doesn't understand why I need to be at a funeral for someone who never really parented me anyhow.

ARI

Because you want to be there with your siblings who are all very much in mourning? Because of all the support Dad offered you after college?

SOPHIA

*(Mimicking Ari)* I can't do THIS right now.

ARI

*(Mimicking Sophia)* Of course not.

*Stalemate. Now what?*

ARI

Well I feel bad you driving all the way out to not even have lunch or anything.

*Sophia looks Ari up and down.*

SOPHIA

I'm fine. I'll go see Rachel... we don't get together much these days. Maybe go for a walk along the boardwalk and some salads after. Care to join?

ARI

Nah. I'm gonna go get a big-ass burrito from the taco truck and take a nap before my shift tonight.

SOPHIA

I don't suppose June wants some Auntie Sophia time?

ARI

I invited June.

SOPHIA

I see.

ARI

Sophie. You know we're all trying, right? You know that?

SOPHIA

Sophia.  
Yes. I know. You are all—trying.

*An exasperated sigh.*

ARI

Okay then. Well I love ya. I'll talk to you soon, okay? I promise.

*They awkwardly hug. Sophia walks away.*

*Ari pulls out her vape pen.*

ARI

The fuck?

*She puffs for a couple seconds then calls Ocean.  
No answer.*

Hey there Little Sibling I love you... She's gonna go have salads with her friends. I'm gonna get us a couple tofu burritos and head over. Extra jalapenos and cheese.

...

Dude. I really hope you are home. Because this whole Ari-has-to-deal-with-SOPHIA-shit is getting tired. And played out. So I'm just gonna... I'm just dealing with a lot right now. And I know you're sad. And I'm sad. And we're all fucking sad, but I kind of need you to step up a little. I can't be the only fly catching all the shit right now.

And I really need you to put on some big kid underoos right now and step up your game.

*Ari trails off. She catches her reflection in the window of a store. She pulls on her double chin and pats her belly.*

ARI

I'll just see you soon. Okay? Okay. Bye.

*Ari exits.*

## Nine: It's Complicated

*Suddenly we hear the sound of a video game. June, Ocean, and Crash are playing Overcooked on Nintendo Switch (A video game based on working as a line cook in a restaurant).*

*They sit around a coffee table focused on a television.*

*We hear the video game music. It's getting real. A projection of what they are looking at flickers behind them.*

OCEAN  
Get me the fish!!!  
GET ME THE FISH!

CRASH  
Washing dishes!

JUNE  
I'm getting there!  
Out of the way, Crash!

Oh shit! Someone's getting  
Pissed!

Okay that's three fish up!

I got the rice for two just  
Gimme a sec.

Crash get that out the  
order out!

You want plates or orders  
Out?

Everything is ready on my  
End. Get it Crash!

Aw shit.

Timer's moving faster!

No, no, no, no, no!

THE RICE IS BURNING!

We lost that tip! Dude was  
Was pissed...

I GOT IT!

Just focus on this last one.

CLEAN PLATE!

Okay, and it's good!  
THREE SECONDS!

GOT IT!!!!

*We hear the end music from the game.*

OCEAN

Still not enough stars.

JUNE

We can do it. The levels only get harder after this. We just have to be MASTERS of the kitchen.

CRASH

Oh man. Yeah, I dunno how you all play this. It's like actually being in a really popular kitchen during a fancy date night holiday or some crap like that.

OCEAN

That's why it's so good!

JUNE

Mom says they should use it as a training tool for anyone new coming into a restaurant.

CRASH

She's not wrong.

*June fishes around in their backpack and pulls out a couple pre-rolled joints.*

JUNE

I think we all just need a little more inspiration... anyone care to get toked?

*Ocean snatches the joints from June's hand.*

OCEAN

Where did you get those?

JUNE

If I told you my sources then I would not be able to purchase from them again.

CRASH

Last time you smoked from your "sources", you said you were zonked for dayz. You gotta quit buying that shit off the streets.

JUNE

Well you won't buy for me!

CRASH

Hey man. That's not my place. I'm not gonna deal with the wrath of your mom for scoring you some green. We got too much history for that.

OCEAN

You gotta quit smokin' this shit. Your frontal lobes aren't even developed yet.

JUNE

It helps with my anxiety.

OCEAN

Anxiety? We all got anxiety. Look at this shit.



*Ocean rips open the joint and spills the guts out on the table.*

OCEAN

What even is that?

*Crash and June lean in closer to examine.*

CRASH

Looks like coffee grounds and maybe dried dandelion leaves... Ah! There's a little nasty dried shake in there...

*Ocean affectionally chuffs June on the back of the head.*

OCEAN

Look kiddo. If I teach you nothing else in life, I'm gonna teach you how to not get scammed. First off, don't buy pre-rolls off the street.

CRASH

You know the double N rule... nuggets or nothing.

OCEAN

Second, if you do decide that you are gonna buy, make sure it's a dealer you know and--

JUNE

--Yeah, yeah. Check the product before you buy.

I know.

OCEAN

If you know, how come you're here trying to share coffee grounds with your family?

JUNE

Sorry Barnacle.

OCEAN

What is this self-diagnosing?

JUNE

Uh- It's not really- ummm...

*Crash can take a cue.*

CRASH

I'm gonna make a super green smoothie. Anyone else?

OCEAN  
Yeah, Man. Thanks.

CRASH  
Cool. June Bug?

JUNE  
I really don't love that name... Man.

CRASH  
Understood.

*Crash exits.*

OCEAN  
So. Anxiety?

JUNE  
I mean- yeah. Just something my therapist said I should keep track of. And it sucks because even talking about it I can start to feel it closing in...

*June starts to fake a panic attack. It's not impressing Ocean.*

OCEAN  
Don't be a punk. That shit's real. And complicated.

JUNE  
Duh.

OCEAN  
Have you talked to your Mom?

JUNE  
Duh again. What? You think we don't talk about our mental health?

OCEAN  
Okay. Well...?

JUNE  
She doesn't like the anti-anxiety meds. Says all that shit is the stuff we see on the streets and she's worried about my brain development.

OCEAN  
Frontal lobes, man. I told ya.

JUNE

Yeah.

*Crash returns with a pink tackle box. Inside is a plethora of weed, pre-rolls, treats, etc. They hand Ocean a gross looking green smoothie in a jelly jar.*

CRASH

The thing about marijuana is that it can be really useful. It can also be a little dangerous for patterning when you are younger.

*Crash pulls a joint out of their tacklebox.*

CRASH

So this right here is a bona fide cannabidiol joint. Made with the area's finest AC/DC, organically grown strain. It's only got about 9% THC, and has been found to help with anxiety, epilepsy, and Parkinson's tremors.

*Crash takes a hit then passes to Ocean.*

CRASH

It is NOT recommended that people under the age of 25 smoke any amount of THC.

*Ocean takes a hit, thinks about it, then passes to June.*

*June puffs and passes the joint back to Crash. Crash puts it out in an ashtray, then slides it into a glass tube (to save for later) and puts the tube along with a few other pre-rolls and some lozenges in a small paper lunch sack.*

CRASH

June you gotta understand how the stuff works that you are putting into your body.

JUNE

Okay dad. Whatever.

*A moment of silence.*

CRASH

June I know I'm not your dad. And I know you remember-

JUNE

-I'm sorry. It was a shitty comment.

CRASH

I can't be that.

JUNE

I know.

CRASH

But I can be your friend. And Ari's. And this is how I can help. So don't be flippant.

OCEAN

Don't fuck this up June.

JUNE

...

CRASH

Anyway, I'm sending this bag home with your Barnacle and they can pass it to your mom. It is for *your mom*. If she decides to share it with you then that's on her.

JUNE

Okay.

CRASH

I will call her later and give her the run down.

JUNE

Okay.

OCEAN

Thanks Crash.

CRASH

No problem. But pizza is on you tonight.

OCEAN

Understood.

JUNE

Now to reclaim our kitchen glory!

CRASH

I think I'm feeling like maybe we should embrace a more mellow zone, Man. How about some Yacht Rock Sunday?

*Crash hits a button on a remote. It turns on the daddest of yacht rock songs ever. Something like Seals and Croft or Crosby, Stills, Nash, and Young... Maybe they sing with it.*

*A moment passes and Ocean and Crash start to get into the zone. June is not having it.*

JUNE

It's SOOOOooooo bad. How can y'all even listen to this?

CRASH

Someday you'll appreciate the smooth sounds of the rock of the yacht.

JUNE

I think I'm just gonna go home and work on my homework.

OCEAN

Suit yourself. I'm gonna get pizza with pineapple on it.

*Crash and Ocean high five.*

CRASH

Oh yes. Maybe we'll go to the corner store and get some Juaritos. It's about to get tropical all up in here.

JUNE

Yeah. I'm good.

*June gives each a hug and grabs their jacket.*

CRASH

I'll see you for family dinner Tuesday Night?

JUNE

Yeah. For sure.

Bye Crash. Bye Barnacle. Love you.

OCEAN

Love you.

*June exits. Ocean and Crash enjoy a moment of mellow.*

OCEAN

I had no idea the reaction to yacht rock would be so strong.

CRASH

Yeah. Zoomers hate it. Definitely gets filed under the “old people” category.

*A moment.*

OCEAN

I wish you could have been that. For Ari. I really do.

CRASH

Me too. But you know...

OCEAN

I do.

CRASH

It's hard to love someone who isn't emotionally available.

OCEAN

Tell me about it.

CRASH

Please talk to her. About June. I really can't.

OCEAN

Yeah. Yeah I will.

CRASH

You know this is like a dangerous path to travel.

OCEAN

I know.

CRASH

Yeah you fucking do. Rehab sucks.

OCEAN

Don't have to tell me.

CRASH

So get on that.

OCEAN

Yeah. Yeah I will.

*Scene ends to the fade out of excellent jams*

#### **Fourteen: Irish Goodbye**

*It is very early. Ari wakes up awkwardly in a chair/couch/floor/whatever with a blanket thrown on top her clothes. She stretches. It hurts. Joe is sleeping in a pile close by snoring loudly like drunk people do.*

*She stumbles around (still pretty wasted) and grabs a Nalgene bottle full of water. She chugs it. Then slides her hands in her purse/pocket and retrieves her keys. She not-so-sneakily tip-toes out of the room.*

*As she crosses the stage she steps into beautiful sunlight. The space transforms into a clear spring day- flowers and birds chirping. The smell of lilacs is intoxicating.*

*Ari looks around in complete awe and notices a swing with flower ropes lowering itself into the space. Upon that swing Dolly sits dressed like a sparkling gemstone. She hums something familiar as she is lowered (enters) to the stage.*

ARI

Ummm...

*Thoroughly confused, Ari looks around for Joe and space she was in before. Dolly addresses her after laughing the most musical trill of a chuckle in the way only Dolly can.*

DOLLY

Well hey now, Sugar. Don't you think this is a little on the nose?

*Ari points to herself as if to say, "You talkin' to me?"*

DOLLY

Oh this? Ain't it great? I had one for my television show. I just love a good country swing.

ARI

Right. Um.

...

Do we usually do this? Like while I'm intoxicated? We don't usually do this while I'm drunk...

*Dolly gracefully slides off the swing.*

DOLLY

You don't usually drive either, but here we are! So let's get to it...

We don't have a lot of time right now. You are standing in the middle of some railroad tracks and there's a train on the way. So we need to figure out what's gonna happen here.

ARI

I am- huh?

DOLLY

Okay. Let me try and get you through this quick.

*A perfect garden chair appears. Ari sits.*

DOLLY

I'm gonna tell you a little story? When I was growing up in Tennessee you know- we didn't have a lot of money. We got new shoes once a year. Usually around the fall when school was gonna start back up because we had to walk a couple miles to get there. And they were always a good size too big at first because there needed to be room to grow into them. We'd wear the same pair of shoes all through the fall and winter and spring. Then in the summer, well we'd just go barefoot as much as possible because by then those shoes would start to pinch are feet and had holes in the soles anyhow.

You following?

*Ari is still quite tipsy but she is FULLY following.*

DOLLY

Now this system wasn't too bad for most of the year but I remember knowing that I was ready for a new pair every spring because by the last day of school I was practically walking to and from barefoot because having the shoes on hurt more than walking on rocks.

And right now, you are trying to walk in those shoes that you outgrew a long time ago. You're all pinched up and your toes are all red and purple... it's time to get rid of those shoes and get some new ones.

*Ari looks down at her feet, then back at Dolly, then back down at her feet.*



ARI

But I like these. They are my favorite.

*The sound of a train horn from off in the distance.*

DOLLY

Well, my dear, you gonna have to figure this out. You probably have about a minute and a half...

ARI

The problem is that I don't even know how I got here.

DOLLY

Doesn't really matter right now. Because you're here. And so you got to be thinking about right now. What has already happened. You can't change that.

ARI

That's true.

DOLLY

So now that we've established your current situation—

ARI

Right.

DOLLY

Sooo...?

ARI

Well I don't really want to be in the middle of anything.

DOLLY

Nothing you can do about that. You are a pretty vital little cog in your family situation.

ARI

Right.

DOLLY

And I don't even know what to say about June.

ARI

June. JuneJuneJuneJuneJune.

DOLLY

Don't get me wrong, you've been doing a good job, but you ain't done yet.

*The sound of the train horn gets louder. We can hear engine and other train-like sounds now. These sounds will increase slightly until the actors have to shout over them.*

ARI

So what you are saying is I'm at a crossroads.

DOLLY

No what I'm saying is that you are in the middle of a train track.

ARI

And it's time to make a choice?

DOLLY

Sooner would be better or you're not going to have much of a choice!

ARI

And I need to get some new shoes.

DOLLY

You've outgrown those ones.

ARI

Oh shit!

I am literally ON A TRAIN TRACK!

DOLLY

Now you're getting it!

*Lights shine on the two- like a train coming down a track on a dark night.*

ARI

I'm on a trestle. There's nowhere to go!

DOLLY

You're gonna have to be brave!

ARI

I'm so tired of that.

DOLLY

Well that's where we are at...

*The lights are brighter the sound is becoming deafening.*

NOW OR NEVER ARIANNA!

DOLLY

*Ari leaps into the air. As she does the massive train comes across the stage.*

*Then darkness. Dolly is gone. Ari is there in a corner. Seriously injured but alive. We hear the sound of an ambulance siren.*

*The scene fades out.*

**Eight: Just Words**

*Ocean and June sit together. Maybe in a park. Outside. They look to the sound of sirens now fading in the distance. Ocean holds a piece of crumbled paper in their hands.*

That was the BIG ladder truck.

JUNE

And a two paramedics.

OCEAN

*Another siren blazes by in the distance.*

And another truck.

JUNE

Probably training.

OCEAN

How do you know?

JUNE

Because I'm a genius.

OCEAN

Damn right you are.

Okay. I'm just gonna start over.

JUNE

Okay.

*A pause. A sigh. Then a deep breath.*

OCEAN

Gary Washington was born June 20, 1942; his family called him by his middle name, Jack. When he left us on February 21, 2019 he had acquired many different names in his lifetime: Jacky, Foreman, Coach, Scout Master, Captain, Best Friend, The Rat, Husband, and so many more. Perhaps the most important name bequeathed to him was Dad. He is survived by his four children Sophia, Arianna, Joe, and Ocean. He is also survived by one grandchild. He was very much admired for his dry wit, kind spirit, and patience. Jack was a champion of everyone doing their best in life. His awe for human achievements- be it athleticism, creation of music or writing, visual arts and performance- was a daily fascination for him- he watched ALL sports all the time.

He mentored so many people on the community basketball leagues in their endeavor to be their best. The ripple of his actions resonate far and wide and he will be sorely missed on this planet by his family, his extended Basketball-Family, and the greater community. There will be a Celebration of Life Reception held for Jack on Sunday, May 4<sup>th</sup> @ 1:00pm at The VFW in Bellingham, WA. In lieu of flowers a memorial scholarship has been set up at through the Parks and Recreation division of the city to give families in need scholarships for intermural activities; please make a donation to the “Jack Washington Scholarship” at the website below...

*A long moment.*

JUNE

I dunno. He liked flowers.

OCEAN

Yeah. But if people are gonna spend money on something, may as well be useful.

JUNE

It's good.

OCEAN

Yeah?

JUNE

I hate that they call it Celebration of Life.

OCEAN

We can call it a funeral.

JUNE

Nah. I hate that more.

OCEAN

...

JUNE

I hate that we are that family that now has an obituary for Grandpa. I hate that we're gonna have to spend holidays at a cemetery. And you know what we're gonna bring to the cemetery?

Fucking flowers.

*Ocean cannot say anything.*

JUNE

I'm sorry Barnacle. I'm so sorry.

*They embrace. Ocean holds June tight.*

OCEAN

He loved you. He loved you so much. But you know that. Every piece of art you made, every scribble and paper with colored macaroni pasted on it. Every soccer game. Every birthday party. Every school choir performance... He went. When he couldn't drive any more, he made your mom come get him so he could go. He took you to see your first basketball game. You were just a baby and fell asleep, but it counts.

I'm sorry June. I'm sorry that you are losing your grandpa. I'm sorry that he is gone. And I'm sorry your family has never gotten it together enough to make things better for you and your mom. I feel bad that none of us did. We're all just so screwed up- dealing with our own stuff. Our own grief.

And like- our own drama. You know? So much fucking drama.

JUNE

Yeah. We do put the fun in disfunction.

OCEAN

That was only funny the first 20 years.

*An alarm goes off on a phone.*

JUNE

Time to go get Uncle Joe.

OCEAN

Yep.

Hey. You okay? What's up?

JUNE

I've only met him like once or twice.

OCEAN

I know. And I'm sorry about that too. I dunno even know what to say about this family any more. What I can tell you is that I love you and your mom loves you.

JUNE

Yeah. I know.  
And Grandpa loved me too.

It's not like I have ever felt unloved. Just because half of us don't talk to each other and your mom kind of disappeared going to get some milk, doesn't mean I feel unloved. As a kid it kind of sucked, but I get it.

OCEAN

I don't really know how you get it. Because I don't.

JUNE

Well, I mean- // I try.

OCEAN

I don't get how my mom just abandoned me. ME. And how she- she like every now and again drops a postcard from some random place in the world. I don't get that at all.

JUNE

That's not what I-

OCEAN

I was three. And I've lived with it my whole life. So now you're just gonna tell me you totally get it and know.

JUNE

I didn't—

OCEAN

Jesus June.

There's just a lot. A whole lot.

JUNE

Okay.

OCEAN

I don't need the extra guilt you bring- WHICH I AM NOT SAYING is your fault. I'm just saying it's ever present.

JUNE

I don't know how- I don't know what to say.

OCEAN

We don't adult well June. None of your family. Well Sophie thinks she does, but the rest of us don't. That's why I always stay with Crash. Because I can't handle all the memories and stuff. Shit went down at that house. The walls hold the memories. And now Joe is coming home for the first time in years. I'm actually here in town for longer than six months. You know? It's a lot. And you are all fucking grown and dealing with this stuff and none of us can really be good role models for you.

And I don't even know what to do with that.

JUNE

I don't either.

I just wish everyone could take a step back. Be a little less selfish and realize that there's another human here. Seriously? Don't you get it? That human is me. ME. Who's got two thumbs and a family full of basket cases? THIS GUY!

I am so tired of being the adult for you all. Now maybe you should just get in the car so I can drive you to get Uncle Joe because you don't even have a license?

OCEAN

Don't get an attitude with me June.

JUNE

I'm not.

*A fucking moment.*

OCEAN

Good. Let's just go.

*Ocean huffs off. June sits a moment flabbergasted. They wipe away the beginning of some tears and follow Ocean off.*

**Twelve: Here's Looking at You Kid**

*The actor who plays Sophia enters the space with a creepy clear mask on. Something dated and trashy like Hole's "Celebrity Skin" plays. Her outfit suggests she trying to look much younger than someone her age.. She looks like she's been out all night and is doing the walk of shame home.*

*Each of the siblings run out at her pawing and pulling her off her path. Finally someone brings in chair with wheels (like an office chair) and they wheel her around in a kind of choreographed pulling- each wanting to keep her.*

*This goes on for a minute til she puts her feet down and stops the chair from moving. She pulls a dum dum lollipop from her purse and gives Ocean and Ari a treat, a kiss, and ruffle of their hair. Joe awaits his turn but it never comes. The other two are occupied with this and are quite pleased. Joe watches the woman.*

*She quietly gathers her things that have been strewn about and silently exits with one last look.*

*The music fades and the siblings are left in silence. The lights go brighter to a whiteout with Ari and Ocean remaining on stage.*

**Six: Adijo** (Pronounced: ah-dee-oh)

*Ocean and Ari sit facing each other. With their suckers in their mouth they clasp hands on the table and stare one another down intently.*

ARI/OCEAN

One, two, three, four...  
I declare a thumb war!

*It's on. An epic battle of thumb war begins. They struggle and shout at each other.*

ARI  
No! You have to keep your hand  
On the table.

OCEAN  
I'm not letting you win this.

NooooOOOOOoooo!

You can't change the rules in the middle  
Of a match!

You forget I have freakishly  
Long phalanges!

Naaaaaah- ugggggg

COBRA! COBRA!

BALLLLLLLLLLLLLLLS!



*The match is over. Ari is the victor.*

ARI

Pay up kiddo! That's the best five out of seven.

OCEAN

Are we basking in Ireland or heading over to Mexico?

*Ari contemplates a line of shot glasses lined in front of the two; a few are still full.*

*In response Ari hums the saxophone bar from the 1950s surf rock song "Tequila" by the Champs.*

OCEAN

Well Feliz Navidad to us!

*They take the shots. No training wheels.*

ARI

Ohhhh. You sprung for the Tres Generations. Very nice.

OCEAN

Only the finest for my big sister.

ARI

Muy Bien! Gracias.

Oh! I heard back from Joe today.

OCEAN

Yeah?

ARI

Yeah. He's really looking forward to coming. Plane tickets are just seriously stupid right now, but he's got a lot of vacation pay to burn through, so he's just gonna take the train in.

OCEAN

That's sounds like no fun.

ARI

Oh he's completely excited. And all the trains have internet and stuff like that now, so you can just hang out and look at the scenery while enjoy cocktails and podcasts.

OCEAN

I'm glad he can come.

ARI

Hey. What's wrong?

I know you aren't close, but you know, Joe's grown a lot. Sometimes you gotta give people a chance to figure out who they need to be. And Joe had kind of a rough start with that. But he's kickin' ass.

OCEAN

He's still working in that old peoples home?

ARI

Retirement community.

OCEAN

I'm not really sure where he's gonna want to sleep. Like there's my room (which was his), Dad's room, and the other two are just filled with piles of paper and crap.

ARI

Joe will be fine on the couch.

Or, ya know, you could actually start going through some of that shit and doing dump runs.

OCEAN

Ari. It's only been a couple of months. I've only been home that long. Just let me get my bearings.

ARI

Sure. No problem. You take your time with that.

OCEAN

We're not all like you, Man. We don't all have the ability to just shut off our feelings and empathy so we can throw away memories.

ARI

Dad's hoarder shit is not precious memories. There is absolutely no reason he needed to keep every Sunday crossword from the Herald for the last forty years. But he did.

OCEAN

Wednesday AND Sunday.

ARI

Right. And they are stacked up in a room with so much dust in it you have to wear something over your face and rat poop.

OCEAN

I just don't understand why this has to be on me.

ARI

Because that's the way it works, Man. You are the one he left in charge. You are the one who's name is on the house and all the other shit, so you gotta do it. I don't have room in my life to take on another part-time job helping you get your shit together.

I'm not your mom.

OCEAN

...

I don't really need a mom right now.

I just really need my big sister to love me as I am right now. I am a slacker. I know that. I've spent more time working on my four-year degree than anyone I know and finding any excuse to not be here. Because here is just too much. And maybe your cool with it because- you know- you like have friends and community and stuff, but I don't really. All my connection to this place is you and Dad. And there's not really much I can do for you, so I'm it's just Dad really. And June. But June doesn't really need me either. So now I'm just kind of here. Barnacle stuck to a stupid rock in this fucking town.

And what I don't need is a paternal figure that never wanted me in the first place. What I need is my sibling. A person I share blood with. A person who has known me all my life.

If you can't do that, I get it. But it sure would be nice- can we just make a pact? That we're gonna do this together? And not let anything tear us apart. Because I can't do this on my own and I'm pretty sure you could use someone to lean on too.

*Ari hold out her pinky for a pinky swear.*

ARI

I'm in.

*The two do whatever ritual for pinky swear they have always done. Ari picks up the shot glass of whiskey and holds it up for a cheers.*

## Twenty One: A Good, Old-Fashioned, Funeral

*Someone brings Joe a guitar. Ari, June, Ocean, and Crash are dressed in nice clothes for Dad's funeral. Ari wears a plastic-broke-your-foot-boot. None of the siblings wear black. Joe has on "the good" Carhardts and a shirt with buttons. Everyone cleans up nice. Even Crash has on a snazzy Hawaiian print shirt.*

*Joe plays a note on the guitar.*

*The group stands together. There is a tripod holding a tablet of some kind and it is pointed at the group. There is a wooden box urn, a picture, and some wildflowers on a small table next to the group.*

*This is the funeral. The audience is there but the screen shows us over zoom a bunch of people attending from a distance.*

JOE

Okay?

OCEAN

Yeah. We're ready.

*Joe plays a note again and hums it. He begins to sing. Ari, June, Ocean, and Crash join in. It's one of those old folk songs.*

*One that defines this family. Something like "Northwest Passage", "The Parting Glass" or similar. The actors playing the roles can decide what song represents their version of this family. (Pro tip: "Oh Shenandoah" seems like a natural choice but it's racist and creepy). I wouldn't pick "Amazing Grace". I can't imagine how a child would sing that at their parent's funeral...*

*At points in the singing people may drop out. In my story Joe mostly knows the words and carries the others in song (everyone knows the chorus).*

*The song ends. There is no clapping. Probably some tears.*

*The projected screen changes to a link. It is clicked on and we see a series of pictures.*

*The music underneath is a kind of obscure, lounge jazz from the 1960s. It plays quietly for a moment then all fades to almost darkness as the group leaves the stage.*

## Twenty Two: Drunk Dialing

*The images and music continue over the next as Sophia remains is on stage. She paces uncomfortably and looks at her watch. Finally she takes her heels off and pours herself a large glass of white wine.*

*She takes a big gulp. Maybe two. She tries to call someone. No answer. She fidgets, drinks, paces... finally comes to a stand still. She props her phone against the wine bottle and begins to record herself. We see this projection.*

SOPHIA

I'm going to record this and send it to you since you won't answer. Seems that's the way we are doing things these days...

You just turned off the live stream to the funeral. It was... fine. I was surprised to see Joe there. Still. Especially after everything that happened...

It's not that I resent Jack for dying. We've been expecting this to happen sooner rather than later- but it's just very bad timing. I have already rescheduled my vacation twice and I was going to lose a lot of money if I didn't just get on that plane. This is supposed to be a time of celebration and this "funeral" has overshadowed all of it. And I mean all of it.

You all tried. But it's just so-- uncouth. Because you didn't do it right away. Had you bothered to ask me I would have said wait longer... either do it right away or wait a long while. Put it off til the fall. Or whenever. It's not like he's going to get more dead. Then everyone could have actually been there. Funerals are not held over the internet.

And what does Joe get from being there? What do you all get? Aaaaagggggghhhh. I'm just so- I'm a bit frustrated.

*More wine.*

SOPHIA

You know, he was my Step Dad too. STEP DAD. I don't have to feel bad about this. I'm the oldest. We were never close. But he was such a stubborn, secretive, and- and- and a good father. He was a very good father- especially to all of you. To be just ignored though? To have my feelings not taken into account? I did make an appearance in the obituary though...

*More wine.*

You all seem to forget I AM THE OLDEST. THE FUCKING OLDEST SISTER.

But I guess that doesn't matter. I tried. I really tried- I mean it was a long time ago, but you all didn't want me. And you have been holding me responsible for years over that. But YOU didn't want me.

I am just so hurt. And angry. And I know I'm not there but I will be. And I will handle the cemetery and the plot. I will pay for it and handle it because that part will at least get done right. And it will happen in the summer because that's what's right. AND I WILL TAKE CARE OF IT.

*Finishes the glass or bottle. Whatever she needs.*

This is all to say that I love you. But I need you to know how hurt I am and that I very much need my family to be around me and with me. And today of all days when I can't hug you or even be in the same room. And you have to understand this is harder for me than anything else in my life. So that's all. I'm just very hurt, Arianna.

*Sophia stops recording. She sends it off. The lights, smooth jazz, and projections fade out from the funeral post-show as she stumbles out of the light.*

*This is a good spot for an intermission if one is needed.*

**Seven: Fly Away**

*Ari sits on a swing that has flower chains for ropes. She looks like a magical princess. She swings happily her toes brushing against the train track below as the swing hangs from the sky over the railroad trestle. Dolly Parton paints some graffiti down below on the arch of the trestle; it's a legit piece that says "Queen Dee" with a butterfly. A train can be heard in the far off distance.*

ARI/DOLLY

*Fly away from my window little blue bird  
Fly as far away as you can from here  
And let not your song fall upon my ear  
Go spread your blue wings and I'll shed my blue tears*

*For the one that I have loved  
He has left me and gone  
And I'm in no mood to hear your sad song*

*Hmmm, hmmm, hummm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmmmmm  
Hmmm, hmmm, hummm, hmmm, hmmm, hmmmmmm*

ARI

You know for such and upbeat person you sure did write a whole bunch of sad songs.

DOLLY

Well you know. Not everyone can be as happy as a dead pig in the sun.

ARI

Girl. What does that even mean?

DOLLY

Oh it's a real old saying in Tennessee. When a pig dies and you can't get to it right away, if it's in the sun it's lips will start to curl back away from its teeth and look like a smile.

ARI

That's fucking creepy.

DOLLY

Watch your mouth.

ARI

This is my fantasy world. I can cuss if I want.

DOLLY

Well not around me.

ARI

So you're saying you're a dead pig in the sun.

DOLLY

No Honey. I'm saying that not everyone can be that far gone. Sometimes you got to look this fabulous to balance out all the ugly.

Is sadness ugly?

ARI

*Dolly does not answer.*

*Ari peers down at Dolly's work.*

Dang Dolly! That looks good!

ARI

*Dolly replies with a musical laugh.*

Yeah. I suppose I've picked up a couple skills over the years.

DOLLY

Mad skills.

ARI

Don't sell yourself short. You've learned more than one way to skin a cat yourself.

DOLLY

Yes. The hard way mostly.

ARI

You think graffiti is easy?

DOLLY

I didn't mean that.

ARI

I'm just pulling your leg. Compared to raising a child on your own, pretty much everything is easy. You forged some new paths in your world and made things a little easier for the ones behind you following those same roads.

DOLLY

I think you are over-selling it.

ARI

Arianna. How many times are we gonna go over this? You got a full plate already and the only way to really start to clear it is one bite at a time. Once there's a little more room on that plate we can make room for dessert.

DOLLY



*Ari stops swinging abruptly. She jumps off the swing onto the tracks with utter certainty and screams. Not a shriek, but an exasperated, guttural, I've-had-ah-fucking-nough scream.*

*Dolly watches her patiently.*

ARI

GODDAMNIT! CANYOUJUSTSTOP??

STOP WITH THE STUIPD METAPHORS!

DOLLY

They are colloquialisms.

ARI

I don't give a shit what they are! They are not helpful. Not in any way.

There's a lot that I'm figuring out without the irritation on parsing through your little phrases. And I know you are trying to come at me in a supportive way but it's just not. Mostly all this rambling is driving me into a place of anger.

I don't want to be angry with you, Dolly. You're my hero.

DOLLY

I don't know what to tell you. You are the one calling the shots in this place, not me. So if it's bothering you that much, why don't you just leave?

ARI

Leave and go where?

DOLLY

I dunno, but you got those wings for some reason.

*Ari turns around and reveals beautiful wings folded up and hanging from her back.*

DOLLY

All you got to do is stretch them out and fly out of here.

*Ari is delighted and shocked.*

ARI

Whoa! WINGS!

This is great!

I'm like a fucking fairy!

DOLLY

Ari//anna

ARI

Oh come on! I just figured this out. It's exciting!

DOLLY

Well go on then little butterfly.

*Ari tries to spread her wings. She wiggles and strains. Maybe tries running back and forth along the trestle.*

*A train horn sounds in the very far distance.*

ARI

Got any hot tips on how to make these work?

DOLLY

No idea. That's the one thing I will never be able to have. And I'll tell you if there was some way to surgically attach wings to myself, I absolutely would.

ARI

Well I can tell you right now they are useless as tits on a bicycle.

*A moment. Was that a...? Both laugh.*

DOLLY

Ah-ha!

ARI

See? I got some good ones too!

DOLLY

Oh I'm gonna have to remember that one!

ARI

Well I guess as soon as I figure out how to flap these beauties we can both be free.

DOLLY

You gonna pick me up and take me with you?

ARI

I mean- I know what this is. I've been in therapy most of my life; so I get it. If I can just fly away from this then you'll be free of having to deal with me. Not that you- the real you- even knows you're here. But that doesn't matter. You'll be free and so will I.

DOLLY

And what does free mean to you?

ARI

I dunno. All better? Cured? No longer suicidal? No longer sad?

DOLLY

Not sure that any of us ever get out of being sad. Or that anyone gets to be all better. You're not four and this isn't a Care Bear bandaid covering a boo boo. You got a lot on the line here kiddo.

There ain't no education in the second kick of a mule.

*Ari groans slightly. Dolly waves her off.*

ARI

I know. I just-

I just need more time.

DOLLY

Well that you can have. For now. For. Now.

ARI

Don't worry. I'll figure it out. Always do.

DOLLY

Yes you do.

Now let's try that song again. I think we've almost got the harmonies down.

*The lights fade down as Dolly and Ari sing a haunting few bars from "My Blue Tears" by Dolly Parton.*

## **Two: A Remembrance**

*It's late. Ari jingles her key chain from her purse and juggles a couple bags of groceries. She wears the smock from her work as a checker at the WinCo. She looks tired. Before she can get to her car in the parking lot she stops dead in her tracks.*

ARI

Ahhhh shit. ShitShitShitShitSHITshitShit. Piss. Shit. Fuck.

Really? You've got to be fucking kidding me. **Shit.**

*Exasperated she puts the bags down and calls a road side service.*

ARI

Yes hello... I am safe. I mean, I'm in parking lot at 12:30 in the morning, but it's safe and well lit... yes... my membership number? I don't have it. Can you just look it up? Like from this number I'm calling from? ... That'd be great. Yes I'll hold.

*She pulls the phone away from her ear and puts it on speaker. Crackling yacht rock plays.*

*She rummages in her purse and pulls out a vape pen. She tires to take a pull but the battery is dead.*

ARI

Really fucking great...

Seriously? C'mon...

*Crash enters from somewhere. They too wear a WinCo smock.*

CRASH

Looks like someone is having a case of the Mondays...

ARI

JESUS! Fuck Crash! You don't sneak up on me in the dark like that!

*Ari brandishes her keys between her knuckles at Crash.*

CRASH

Sorry Man! I was just trying to be funny.

*Ari stares at them incredulously. The shitty yacht rock switches over to someone answering.*

ARI

Yes. I'm still here. Yes. Uh-huh... no I don't remember... Yes that is the address... I don't understand. Oh. I see. Yeah, no I don't have an extra ninety bucks right now. No. I didn't know it lapsed. My Dad had always gifted it to me for my birthday... No. I'll be fine. Thanks so much. No. Nothing else. Okay. Goodnight.

CRASH

Triple A?

ARI

Yeah. Membership lapsed.

Oh. I don't have a membership either...  
CRASH

You got a spare?

I dunno. Like a little one? A donut?  
ARI

Yeah.  
CRASH

Dunno.  
ARI

Open the trunk, Ari. Let's look.  
CRASH

Oh. Yeah. Right.  
ARI

*She pops open the trunk. There's a bunch of stuff in there that needs to be cleared out before they can get to the bottom. It's a little embarrassing.*

ARI  
I um... been kind of busy. Basically living out of the car. Lots going on...

CRASH  
Dude. Look at me. Do I look like I give a shit if you got junk in your trunk?

ARI  
I suppose not. Just- you know.

CRASH  
I'm just trying to help. Not here to judge.

ARI  
Thanks.

*After all that, Crash opens the compartment in the back of the trunk to find out there is no tire.*

CRASH  
Well shit. Guess it's time to get an uber.

ARI

Can't. That's like \$12 without the tip and I don't have that right now.

CRASH

I'll get you an uber-- Hey. What's this?

*Crash pulls out a small box (jewelry sized) from the inside of the trunk and hands it to Ari.*

*She looks at it and reads a small inscription on the top. "For Emergencies ONLY".*

ARI

That's my dad's chicken scratch.

*She opens the box. Inside there are two quarters.*

*That does it. She fights it but tears and that super painful feeling that comes up when you feel like your heart just cracked down the middle right inside your body. She sits on the ground with the groceries.*

CRASH

Aw shit, Ari. I'm sorry. What can I do?

*Ari waves Crash away. Just leave me alone.*

CRASH

What does it mean? Fifty cents.

ARI

It's just... you know- just happened. Sorry. Sorry.

Quarters. So you can- So you...

*Pause. Deep breath in. Deep breath out.*

So you can call home if you're in trouble.

*A moment. Silent crying.*

*Crash begins to cautiously laugh. Then giggle.*

CRASH

How fucking old are those quarters?

ARI

Crash! The fuck is wrong with you?

CRASH

Ari. C'mon. It's funny. He was fucking with you.

How old do you think that box and quarters are?

ARI

I dunno.

CRASH

Like we could even find a damn payphone if we wanted!

*Okay. Yeah. It is kind of funny.*

ARI

Oh. Right.

CRASH

Do you think he put this in a // long time ago?

ARI

I've only had this car for five years...

CRASH

Good one Jack.

ARI

*(Chuckling exasperated)* Oh Dad...

CRASH

Yeah. I still can't believe...

ARI

Oh he loved a good prank.

CRASH

Remember when he sent Ocean a letter on the university letterhead saying their graduation application // was denied?

ARI

Oh god that's right! Ocean called EVERYONE on campus. Like everyone.

CRASH

It was signed Marge Bouvier.

Marge Simpson's maiden name.

ARI

Dead giveaway.

CRASH

That was one of his better pranks.

ARI

Poor Ocean. Didn't even think to look at the date being April 1<sup>st</sup>.

*They chuckle a moment and hold some space to just be.*

He was a good dad.

CRASH

He really was. I really miss him.

ARI

I know man. I know.

CRASH

*A hug. A sigh.*

*Crash starts shoving all the crap back in the trunk.*

Well we know in all this shit one thing you don't have... a spare. Let me give you a ride?

CRASH

I can just walk.

ARI

Don't be ridiculous, Ari. You're right // on the way...

CRASH

I can take care of myself.

ARI

*Silence.*

Okay. Fine.

CRASH

*Crash starts to exit.*



Uggg. C'mon Man. You know.

ARI

Oh I fucking know, Ari.

CRASH

It's not you! It's me.

ARI

*Too late. Crash exits.*

ARI

*Ari cusses and puts shit back in the trunk and gets the groceries as the lights dim.*

### **Three: Rejection**

*Softly we begin to hear a quintessential 1980s prom song... Think along the lines of "The Promise" by When in Rome. The lights become magical like in a high school gym on a warm spring evening of prom. The smell of crappy perfume and aftershave.*

*Crash reaches a hand out to Ari. She accepts and they pull her in. They move well together. Taking turns leading and spinning. Genuine laughter and smiles.*

*Another spin in. This time Crash holds Ari close to their body. They giggle into each other's air. Crash kisses Ari. It's met timidly but no unwelcoming. The kiss ends gently.*

*The music shifts into the sound of a canned studio audience clapping.*

### **Eleven: In the Morning and In the Afternoon**

*The audience sound begins to fade and June sits next to Ari. They wear something that makes them look younger.*

*We hear the sounds of Bram, Lois, and Sharon's voices as Ocean plops down next to Ari and June with a snack of some kind (big pretzel and a coke?). The music picks up to something like "Skinamarinky Dinky Dink" and Ari and June are elated. They do the hand gestures and sing along.*

*Ocean is delighted as well. In their delight they somehow spill something on June. June immediately starts crying and kid-hits Ocean. Ari tries to calm down June and glares at Ocean. She motions to Ocean to give up their hoodie so she can sop up some of the spilled drink off the child. Ocean is not into this idea AT ALL. Eventually they acquiesce and give up their hoody.*

*Clearly irritated they cross their arms and pout even though Ari and June have begun to enjoy the show again. Ocean looks at them and in a huff leaves and plops down on the ground in front of a box filled with old junk. The sound fades out and the lights fade on Ari and June.*

### **Twenty Three: Nostalgia**

*Joe joins and helps Ocean. The siblings are going through some boxes of Dad's things. Joe finds a particularly old looking box and opens the yellow masking tape.*

JOE

Ocean. Look at this...

OCEAN

Oh cool. Were these yours?

*Joe pulls out some old, aluminum car- one from the 50s or 60s- and incredulously looks at Ocean.*

JOE

I'm not THAT old.

OCEAN

No but you are definitely not THAT young.

JOE

In case you forgot, you were also born in the nineteen hundreds.

OCEAN

A dagger.... A dagger to my heart.

*Joe finds a box of Lincoln Logs. He sits on the floor next to Ocean. They begin building something.*

OCEAN

What was he like before I was born?

JOE

Pretty much the same. I guess different.

OCEAN

Well I mean he had to be, right?

JOE

He was cool. That's when I was a teenager so I don't remember a whole lot- wasn't home much.

OCEAN

Yeah. I remember that much.

JOE

It was just kind of a different time. And I had a lot of shit I was working through.

No- you have to lay the little logs back and forth if you want a window opening... like this.

OCEAN

Oh, right. I forgot. I haven't played with them since I was like five or something.

JOE

Right?

OCEAN

Sophia says you were a terror as a teen.

JOE

Yeah, well Sophia's a terror as an adult.

OCEAN

Was it that bad here? After mom left?

JOE

I mean, yeah. You probably don't remember much, but it was pretty fucking brutal. It's hard to explain. And Sophia came for a while and kind of tried to take over. Like take mom's place. But it wasn't well received.

She's always been a pain. It's like she is so afraid of losing control that she grips tighter and tighter and before you know it, there's nothing left in her hand. When mom left and Sophia stepped in being here was- suffocating. For me.

OCEAN

I never got that.

JOE

It was different for you. You were, I mean ARE the baby. Everyone was doing everything we could to protect you. Sophia was the first pancake.

OCEAN

First pancake?

JOE

It's a term.

OCEAN

I've never heard it before.

JOE

First pancakes are the ones you throw out.

*A moment.*

*The Lincoln Log house is built. They appreciate it while those last words hang heavy in the air.*

OCEAN

I don't think Dad wanted to throw her out.

JOE

I don't think so either. She was just older.

OCEAN

She ran. Just like Mom.

JOE

But Dad had you. Man, and that's a good thing! You brought him so much joy. I don't think he loved anything so much as he loved you.

OCEAN

He loved you too.

JOE

Yeah. But not the same. And that's probably what I needed. It's hard to explain, but I needed a friend- and mentor. Not really another parent to let me down.

Ocean do you know anything about mom really?

OCEAN

I know some. I remember how she smelled... I mean, we talk on the phone every year or so.

JOE

Yeah. It's pretty messed up. Mom had some serious issues.

She married husband number two and had Ari then me. He was a real winner. Both of them were not really into having kids. They mostly just dressed us up in matching outfits then had pictures taken of us. There are tons of photos of us kids in uncomfortable matching outfits from Sears. Neither of our parents in the pictures, just us. And no other family. It was like mom was playing house or something. And then things got bad. Husband number two, my father-- the "doner" // started—

OCEAN

Oh, you mean Darth Vader?

JOE

I forgot Ari called him that... Darth Vader.

So he got really abusive toward Mom. And he would use the belt on Sophia and us. So Mom left and she took Sophia, but we had to stay behind because he said we belonged to him.

Things got pretty out of control; it was like a bad 1990s music video. Lines of cocaine on the glass tables, bottles of wine coolers everywhere. We were allowed to eat white bread, processed cheese, jiffy peanut butter, and Miracle Whip. One time Ari snuck us a can of tuna after school and he dug through the garbage and found the can. He used to whip us with a fiberglass switch. It hurt really bad and left hardly any evidence that we were being beaten.

I got to leave first because I was younger and Dad- your Dad- Jack- was in the picture and figured out a way. Ari didn't come til a couple years later. You were just born then.

OCEAN

Then what happened? Why did you end up in jail? I mean that's kind of mostly what I remember.

JOE

That was because of Sophia. And Mom. Both of them.

OCEAN

What? Why would they // do that?

JOE

It was right before Mom left for real. I was babysitting you and some guys I know came over. You were always kind of a weird quiet kid, so we went into the garage to smoke some pot. You were watching a Curious George when I left you, so it was no big deal.

We weren't out there that long, but all of a sudden you were screaming and crying like I have never heard. When I came back inside you had climbed up on a stool and turned the burner on the stove on high. You put your whole hand on that thing... it was glass top so a bunch of your skin stuck to it. ... It was awful.

*Ocean looks down at their hand. Wiggles the fingers etc.*

OCEAN

I remember a bit of the hospital and some of the rehab stuff...

JOE

Yeah. It seems okay now that you're all grown.

But that was it. Mom kicked me out. Dad didn't really say much... He was so mortified. After that I just hung out with the crusty punks in town and worked shit jobs. Sophie tried to have me come back when she got here- but I didn't want to be under anyone's thumb. I wasn't welcome. I dropped out of school... you know most of the rest. I went to jail because Sophie found a bong and a bag of weed in my room when she was packing up my stuff to throw it out, and she reported me.

OCEAN

Fuck man.

JOE

Yeah. The worst part was the stuff with you.

I'm super sorry. I never ever meant to neglect you or let you get hurt.

OCEAN

I can't imagine you would.

JOE

Just a dumb teenager who was pretty fucked up and trying to help take care a little, little kid.

OCEAN

Yeah.

JOE

I can't believe no one told you that happened.

OCEAN

I mean, what good would it have done? You were gone most of my life anyhow.

JOE

I know man. I'm trying to make it up.

OCEAN

It's just a lot right at the moment.

JOE

Yeah. I get it.

OCEAN

I'm just gonna....

*Ocean gets up. They accidentally knock the log cabin over. No looking back- just exits quietly.*

JOE

Fuck.

*Joe cleans up the Lincoln Logs, putting them back in their box.*

## **Twenty Four: Forgiveness**

*Ari joins Joe in cleaning up. She wears a kind of white, fluffy nightgown. A song like "Sonny's Dream" plays. Ari finds a couple softball gloves and a ball in the box. She and Joe play catch a minute. Ari is way better than him, but he jolts back and forth and cheerfully catches the ball as best he can. They share a moment and put the gloves/ball back in the box.*

*Joe starts to leave but Ari tugs him back. They keep going through the box and show each other random things.*

*Then Joe finds a something that clearly doesn't belong in this box of old antiques. It's a plastic*

*pink sparkly kind of pencil caboodle. Ari panics. She snatches the caboodle out of his hands.*

*Joe holds a hand out expectantly, but Ari holds the pink box tighter. He pulls her into a hug, she reciprocates. They linger there. Joe picks the bigger box of old stuff up carrying it out with him.*

*Dolly enters singing with the song in a sexier version of Ari's nightgown. She takes the pink caboodle from Ari and escorts her to the flower swing and helps Ari put on a plastic-broke-your-foot-boot. Dolly pushes Ari gently on the swing. Ari floats for a moment with the song and Dolly. The music ends Ari swings a moment in silence.*

## Twenty Five: Not Yet

ARI

Sinclair thinks it's genetic. Genetic trauma. A kind of PTSD passed down from generation after generation and so on.

DOLLY

Epigenetic Inheritance.

ARI

Yes. That's the same term she used.

DOLLY

It's possible. The acorns don't often fall too far from the tree.

*A look from Ari.*

I already told you before, this is your world. You make everything here, including the things that I say. So if you're gonna throw some shade, do it in a mirror, Kiddo.

ARI

But I don't think she's right. Like, maybe? But then wouldn't everyone be so incredibly fuck—screwed up that they wouldn't be able to breathe?

DOLLY

Who says they aren't?

ARI

No, but you know what I mean.



DOLLY

I do, and I'm telling you people are all katty-wompus. And getting worse and worse.

ARI

What people?

DOLLY

Arianna are you really in that small a bubble. Open your eyes. Look at us. Like ALL of us. This whole freaking country is going to hell in a handbasket.

ARI

Well that's true enough, but I guess I just don't see // what you see?

*The sound of the train in the distance.*

DOLLY

I'm getting tired Arianna. This needs to stop. You know this is serious because you know I don't exist except in your brain... so you're subconscious is even tired. You need to get honest with yourself.

ARI

Honest about what exactly?

DOLLY

Why I'm here. What you are doing being stuck in this cycle over and over and over again.

Girl you need to shit or get off the pot.

ARI

...

DOLLY

Let's start somewhere easy. I'm gonna play a little game with you and ALL you have to do is be honest.

ARI

When do I ever lie? I don't want to play// this game.

DOLLY

When you were nine all you wanted to be when you grew up was a star. A movie star. Like Annie.

ARI

*(Hesitantly)* True.

See? Easy. DOLLY

Yeah. Easy. ARI

When June was almost nine they // wanted to be ... DOLLY

They wanted to be a Scout. ARI

When June was nine they // wanted to be ... DOLLY

A pilot. ARI

When June was nine you almost left in the night. DOLLY

That was a bad night. ARI

Why? DOLLY

Because Crash left. ARI

Yes. And you know why. DOLLY

Because I chased them off. I told them to leave. ARI

And you almost did too. DOLLY

Sitting in your car in eight inches of snow. Waiting for the defrost to kick on.

Waiting for the engine to warm up. DOLLY/ARI

ARI

I was done. I just didn't have anything left. We didn't fight. We just were over. And it was entirely my fault. I know that. June looooved having Crash around. Loved having that security of another adult who wasn't completely off their hinge around. June loved Crash like a parent. And it was totally me.

DOLLY

Crash even washed the dishes and cleaned up after you broke up. Bless their sweetheart. Who does that? Gets broken up with and washes dishes before they leave?

ARI

I wrote a note with careful instructions. I got that tea canister with the money in it and left it on the table. I knew Dad was coming by in the morning... June would be fine. Dad would take care of everything and June would be fine. I didn't even go back in the room to give June a kiss. I just grabbed my purse and a duffle bag with some stuff and walked out the door.

Like you said, the acorn doesn't fall far from the tree...

DOLLY

But you didn't leave.

ARI

No. But I didn't come back either.

DOLLY

A defining moment. That lingers because that relationship has never really ended.

ARI

No real closure.

DOLLY

For you or June.

ARI

For me either. My mom really fucked that.

I guess I need to make a choice.

It's just super hard, ya know? Like I feel like I can be that person with the voice. Like the Valkyrie on the hill commanding her destiny. But something stops me. And I just leave. Sometimes here. Sometimes to a bar. A lot of times just contemplating how to put my pants on and go to work. Because that's my day. That's what I get left with.

DOLLY

Epigenetic Inheritance.

ARI

Is that just a fancy excuse?

DOLLY

No. It is real. And I think the only way to start to fix it is to acknowledge it.

ARI

Likely- I mean, that seems like something that would work that way.

DOLLY

You have work to do. And I'm too tired to keep doing whatever this is.

ARI

I'm tired too.

DOLLY

I know. But I'm done.

ARI

And I'm not done yet.

*Another train horn can be heard in the distance.  
The rosy pink of dawn starts to rest on the stage.  
Dolly picks up the pink plastic caboodle and hands  
it to Ari.*

DOLLY

You're not done yet.

*Dolly leaves. Things become almost silent in the  
rosy morning light.*

## **Twenty Six: Resuscitate**

*There is nothing for a moment. Then the sound of  
bird chirping. A table with a vanity is on the stage.  
Probably more powerful if the mirror has no glass  
and the audience can see through the back. A  
blue tooth speaker and some random make-up is  
also on the vanity.*

*June enters with a drippy head full of hair dye.  
Ari watches. June is quite experienced with this  
and probably has a plastic bag over their hair so  
that dye doesn't get everywhere.*

*They sit at the vanity and look at themselves. They pick up the phone and pick out some music.*

*Cue something like Chelsea Wolf's "16 Psyche". Really loud.*

*June takes some kind of black face paint and smears lines on their face and neck like Marilyn Manson or other classic goths. They add deep red lipstick.*

*Ari gets up and hobbles over by the open doorway in her nightgown. She watches.*

*June is really feeling themselves. They move from the mirror and dance. They notice Ari. They continue to dance. Ari takes a couple steps forward.*

*She waves. June stops dancing and waves back. She gestures to them to turn the music down a bit. June does. Abruptly.*

Mornin'.

ARI

Good Morning.

JUNE

All-nighter?

ARI

Yeah. The campaign finished up around four. It was pretty good.

JUNE

Me too. All nighter...

ARI

I thought we were gonna stick to the Cinderella rule?

JUNE

On school nights.

ARI

June. Midnight is too late on school nights. You are sixteen.

JUNE

So.

ARI

How many sixteen year olds do you know stay up til midnight on school nights roleplaying?

JUNE

Obviously three others.

*Ari sighs. This is exasperating.*

JUNE

How many sixteen year olds do you know have a 2.2 GPA and still won the state forensics tournament?

ARI

You're just proving my point.

JUNE

This shit is fucked.

ARI

Yeah. I know.

JUNE

Grandpa said the real mark of intelligence seldom comes from a score on a test.

ARI

That is true.

JUNE

You even told me you were a terrible student.

ARI

Also true.

JUNE

So what does it matter. As long as I get a 2.0 I can go through Running Start next year and not even have to deal with this dumb shit.

ARI

Except for you do. Over and over again.

JUNE

No. That's not true.

ARI

Is this your life goal, June? Living in a shitty rental and working grocery the rest of your life? You want to always have to bartend on the weekends because you can't make ends meet otherwise? This looks good to you?

JUNE

It's good enough.

ARI

GOOD ENOUGH FOR WHO? You deserve better than this! WE BOTH DESERVE BETTER THAN THIS. Yeah. I'm grateful we have a roof over our head and that I do work grocery so we can afford food- but that job is shit. I keep it because I have benefits. For both of us. It is soul-sucking. And I come home every shift wishing I had made better choices early in life.

JUNE

You mean wishing you did not have a kid unsupported.

ARI

NO. NoNoNoNONO.

Was it ideal timing? Nope. But that's not what I regret. I regret going to getting a "general studies" degree that is useful as tits on a bike. I regret not being emotionally available to find a partner to help me out- because you have suffered because of that. I mean, I suffer too. I am lonely and sad. Not like that's big news to you. But I wish I had made better choices as a whole to create a more stable foundation for YOU.

You are one of my favorite choices ever.

JUNE

But I was a choice.

ARI

Of course. Every human is a choice... well they should be. They aren't human til the person pregnant says they are going to be.

JUNE

Thanks for the after school special recap.

ARI

Don't get sassy with me. I stand by this amazing choice. Look at you?

JUNE

Yeah. I'm a work in progress.

So am I kiddo.

ARI

**Ari sets the plastic caboodle down next to June.**

What's this.

JUNE

It was mine. I found it in an old stash spot at Dad's.

ARI

***June opens the box. They look; inside there are a couple box cutters, Neosporin, and bandaids. June takes it in, then snaps it shut.***

I don't understand.

JUNE

ARI

I'm trying to be honest with you. Maybe for the first time in my adult life- honest with myself- like out loud. You gotta know all this shit because I don't want you to end up living through and in my depression anymore.. There's like all this trauma around you and imprinted on your DNA... it's like genetic finger prints. It covers you and tries to bend you, but I see you through all of that. You are so much stronger than I have ever been. Your will to thrive is a beautiful and vibrant force.

So you need to know the truth. Because if I can't just be honest with you so that you know all skeletons in the family closet, then you're gonna have a way tougher time trying to get through the maze of mental health issues stacked up in front of you.

This is what I kept stashed at Dad's. I would go out to the garage. And that's where I would do it when you were little.

JUNE

When was the last time?

ARI

It's been a few years. Not gonna say I don't struggle. This past few months there's been times I've had something sharp in my hand- at the ready- and stopped. Even when I found this old thing I had to tell myself no.

I'm trying.

I'm not done being a mom.



*A long moment. June hugs Ari. They breathe together. Mother and not-so-much-a-child.*

ARI

What color is it gonna be this time?

JUNE

Mystery batch. Whatever was left in the cabinet.

ARI

My favorite.

*A timer goes off on the phone.*

JUNE

I gotta rinse out.

ARI

I never remembered to set a timer.

JUNE

Oh I know. I've seen pictures.

ARI

Your Grandpa knew it from day one. You've got an old soul. Tenacious and strong. Intelligence takes on many forms.

Promise me you'll only take a short nap today and get back on a regular schedule.

JUNE

Okay. I'll try. I gotta take Uncle Joe to the Amtrak at one anyhow.

ARI

Thank you.

JUNE

Mom?

I'm not done being your kid yet.

ARI

...

Love you.

*June exits. Ari looks at herself in the mirror. She takes the black make-up and makes a big Marilyn Manson stripe across the bridge of her face.*

**One: Over the Phone**

*Ari's phone begins to ring. She doesn't have it on her and searches for it.*

*Who the hell calls this early? She finds it. It is not a number she recognizes.*

ARI

Hello this is Ari Washington.

Yes. I'm sorry what? .... WHAT?

Ummmmmm. Ahhhhhh.

ARI

I'm sorry. Can you say that one more time? It sounded like you // said my dad was...

Oh. Okay. ...

Sure. Um. We'll be right over.

*Ari hangs up. She sits. Nothing. Nothing. Nothing.*

*She makes a call. Right to voicemail. She dials again. Same thing.*

ARI

C'mon, c'mon, c'mon... please, please, please.

*She sends a text. Likely this is setting in now. Likely she is crying.*

*She dials another number. Joe answers.*

ARI

Hi. Yeah. I know. It's really early. ... No. Everything's not okay Joe. It's not. I just got a call from that place Dad's been rehabbing at. And they said- this woman just called me...

Joe. Dad died last night.

*The lights fade on Ari.*

## Fifteen through Seventeen: Painless

*Ocean, June, and Crash are in a hospital waiting room. Joe is asleep on a too-small couch under his jacket. The sound of the opening theme music to M\*A\*S\*H plays. They all vacantly watch.*

OCEAN

That shit with Clinger is total crap.

CRASH

Agreed.

OCEAN

Like- it's a lot to process... He's Lebanese American who was a conscious objector, drafted, and then decided to cross-dress so that everyone would think he was mentally unstable. But they didn't so he just is like this masc-femme that just exists. On American television. In the 1970s.

JUNE

I mean, it's pretty offensive.

OCEAN

To be sure, but also- just kind of interesting...

*June pulls their knees up under their t-shirt. They place their earbuds back in and play on their phone.*

CRASH

It's almost 6:30. What time did they find her?

OCEAN

Just before three this morning.

CRASH

And she just woke up some time after everyone went to bed?

OCEAN

I guess so.

CRASH

Jesus Ari...

*The laugh track from the episode can be heard. Ocean uses the remote to turn the sound down. M\*A\*S\*H still flickers on screen silently.*

*Joe makes a snarfling sound and roles of the couch with a plop on the floor.*

JOE

Ow. Mother fuck!

OCEAN

Oh good. Did you sleep some of it off? Comfortable?

JOE

No I'm not comfortable! FUCK!

*June looks casually over at Joe tries to shut him up with their glare.*

JOE

Little help?

...

Anyone?

*June begrudgingly gets up to go help Joe up off the floor.*

JOE

Thanks June.

Hey. Hey Man. Have a seat.

JUNE

I don't really want to talk.

JOE

Okay. Can you just sit?

JUNE

You smell like booze and juicy pits.

*Joe contemplates this and smells his breath, then does a sniff test on the armpit of his shirt.*

JOE

Okay. Yeah. I do stink pretty bad. I'm gonna try and clean up in a bathroom... maybe find a toothbrush?

JUNE

Gift shop doesn't open til ten.

There's tic-tacs in the vending machine.

JOE

Cool.

*Joe saunters out of the space like a tired bear.  
Crash gently punches at Ocean.*

CRASH

You know, you can't just ignore him.

JUNE

The silent treatment is irritating.

OCEAN

I just don't understand how he let it happen.

CRASH

I don't think he LET anything happen.

OCEAN

He was on the other couch in the same room!

JUNE

I love my mom, but I am gonna say that she wouldn't have given a crap if he did hear her. She's a professional when it comes to the Irish Goodbye.

OCEAN

...

JUNE

I'm just saying...

*June's words settle on them. They start to cry and try to close the opening on their hoodie so there's just a little Kenny hole to breathe out of. Ocean pulls June close and holds them.*

OCEAN

She would not have done that. Not to you. Any other stupid fucker here, but not to you.

CRASH

Fuck man. I think I need some air.

*Crash leaves frustrated. It's just June and their Barnacle.*

*The sobbing from June begins to turn into a panic attack. Not overdramatic, but clearly something that is elevated from sobbing. Ocean fumbles- they aren't sure what to do.*

OCEAN

June. June? Oh shit! JUNE!

CAN I GET SOME HELP IN HERE?

*Joe comes running in.*

OCEAN

Okay June. You're okay. Calm down. Caaaaaaallllllm down.

JOE

Don't say that. You never tell a person having a panic attack to calm down. It's our job to stay cool hunny bunny.

June I'm right here. I'm right here. Can I pull open your hoodie so you can breathe better?

*June starts pulling at it and nodding frantically.*

JOE

Okay. Okay. Hold Ocean's hand with this one and mine with this one.

Good.

Let's just breathe. Breathe in... 2... 3... 4... 5...  
And out... 2... 3... 4... 5...

*This goes on for as long as it needs to. Joe begins to ask June a series of questions. Joe handles it like a boss.*

JOE

Okay. Good. I'm gonna ask you some questions.  
What are you sitting in?

JUNE

What?

JOE  
Just answer. Don't think too much about it. What are you sitting in?

JUNE  
A chair?

JOE  
Good. Where are your feet?

JUNE  
On the floor?

JOE  
Where are we at.

JUNE  
The hospital.

JOE  
What's your favorite soda?

JUNE  
Purple flavor.

JOE  
Who is sitting next to you?

JUNE  
Barnacle.

JOE  
What's your favorite color?

JUNE  
Black.

JOE  
Who am I?

JUNE  
Uncle Joe.

Good. Good. And breathe... good.

JOE

You want something to drink?

*June nods.*

Ocean stay here. I'm gonna get some water.

JOE

*Ocean is a bit dumbstruck.*

What do I do?

OCEAN

Just- just stay here. Try not to fuck it up.

JOE

*Joe leaves again.*

So this is happening a lot?

OCEAN

...

JUNE

Okay.

OCEAN

I'll talk to your mom. About the meds and stuff. I mean, after this is // all over.

*Joe reenters and offers June a water bottle.*

C'mon. We can go see her now.

JOE

Did they say that?

OCEAN

Yeah. Come on. She's conscious and responding.

JOE

*Joe starts leaves and Ocean gets up to. June pulls on their hand and pulls them back into the couch.*



JOE

I'm gonna go there. Here's some water. You two take your time. No one is in a hurry.

OCEAN

Man. Your mom's up. We should go see her.

JUNE

...

OCEAN

I'm not sure I'm ready...

JUNE

...

OCEAN

Yep.

JUNE

...

OCEAN

Okay. So I'm just gonna say things. You seem okay with me doing that, so that's what I'm gonna do. I just have to- like have to be able to say some stuff.

JUNE

...

OCEAN

Your mom sucks.

JUNE

...

OCEAN

I can't even decide if it's worse than my mom. But right now I am so- ANGRY with her. And I'm sad. But mostly just fucking angry.

JUNE

...

OCEAN

I am- ... I mean. I am not sure what to say.

I love my sister. I love her so much. But I can't imagine how she could. Like. I'm fucking sad too. I'm fucking devastated. All of us are. And so now seemed like a good time to almost make it a double whammy?

Don't even know anymore. We all drank a lot. That was always the plan. Play cards. Talk shit. Sit around a fire. And then go pass out. Planning on Taco Bell for breakfast.

JUNE

...

OCEAN

This was not in the plan. At all.

JUNE

...

OCEAN

But she jumped. I mean, she's still fucked. She rolled down a pretty steep hill of sharp gravel and into that ditch, but she jumped. So for whatever reason it started and then she said no.

*June scoffs then shudders.*

OCEAN

Yeah. Probably chickened out. Maybe. But who knows? Right? Like maybe she needed— maybe she didn't want to. Maybe something clicked?

*The sound of really loud clompy heels can be heard coming down the hall. Fairly fast paced. Sophia arrives clearly displeased.*

**Nineteen: Not Today Sophie**

*She takes in the scene of Ocean and June in the waiting room. No one says anything for a moment.*

OCEAN

Uh. Hey Sophia. Didn't know you were coming.

SOPHIA

I am listed as Ari's emergency contact.

OCEAN

Oh right. I kind of forgot about that.

SOPHIA

Are there any updates?

OCEAN

Well, she's awake now. So that's something.

SOPHIA

June?

JUNE

...

SOPHIA

June. I'm not this evil bad guy here to swoop you away. I know and you know that I am your legal guardian should anything happen to your mom. But that's not why I'm here. You're seventeen. You are old enough to start making some of the calls for yourself.

JUNE

Sixteen.

SOPHIA

Oh. Right. Sixteen. Well I'm still not here to swoop you away and change your life. You're old enough to start making choices about where you want to go and how you want to handle yourself.

JUNE

...

OCEAN

Uh- that's great. Thanks for stopping by to say that. So I'm gonna // make the call—

SOPHIA

Maybe you should let June speak for themselves.

OCEAN

Sophia. Now is not a great time.

Like I know you just got here and had almost two hours to think over in the car what your plan of attack was going to be- and I get that I really do, but we're just trying to keep a nice mellow zone right now. You know? Keep the drama on the stage? Stay calm and carry on sort of situation?

We've all been up a real long time.

*Joe returns. Sophia crinkles her nose and glares at him. They stare each other down a hot moment.*

SOPHIA

Welcome home. The prodigal son returns.

JOE

Oh how I love an inaccurate Bible reference first thing in the morning...

SOPHIA

And how I love the smell of a hangover.

*Joe rubs his head.*

JOE

Maybe you should go visit your sister? Then you can be on your way, having dispensed with obligatory family bullshit, and we can continue whatever fucking part of the seven stages of grieving this is. How does that sound, Sophie?

SOPHIA

It's Sophia. And I'll go see Ari because it's what I came here to do, but I have something to say.

You don't get a free pass here, Joe. You are this selfish kid who came from suburbia and decided that your life was so full of angst that you were gonna become a heroine addict. You fell right into step with the rest of the idiot skater kids in the late 1990s and you're not fooling anyone.

SOPHIA (Cont.)

Over the years you have said and done awful, unforgivable things. And just because the rest of the family is too blind to see it doesn't mean that I don't.

You have always been cruel. Lashing out at whoever was in your way... the last text message you sent me you told me if you ever saw me in town you'd put me in the hospital.

JOE

You're so toxic.

SOPHIA

And you're so pathetic. You can slink around here- take whatever inheritance gets thrown your way- there's not much by the way- and go back to your too-cool-for-school-life. Because I am done. I wouldn't even choose to know you if I didn't have to. If we met in a bar somewhere- or at a party- and you tried to share your number with me, I'd just pretend to lose it.

JOE

You are really something.

SOPHIA

Am I?

JOE

You come in here spouting all these lies because you wouldn't know the truth if it hit // you square in the ass.

SOPHIA

I'm not going to sit here and argue with you. But I will do everyone the family a favor and have security escort you out. You don't belong here. You are a threat.

*Sophia brandishes her phone.*

SOPHIA

It's your choice. Leave in peace or be escorted out.

***Joe almost lunges like he wants to hit Sophia. Instead he grabs his jacket and storms out.***

*June and Ocean just look at Sophia. No one dares say anything.*

SOPHIA

Eventually you'll give me the time of day and I can tell you the whole story. It's for your protection. Trust me. You don't need that in your already complicated lives.

Now if you'll excuse me, I'm going to go check in on Ari.

***She clip-clops loudly down the hall. June leans over on Ocean.***

OCEAN

I don't know what to do with all that.

JUNE

...

OCEAN

If this is the fun part of disfunction, then I'm building a bridge. I am so over it.

JUNE

...

OCEAN

Yeah. I know you are too.

*The lights shift from the waiting room to a hospital bed. Sophia is already there next to Ari.*

**Twenty: End of an Era**

*A version of "Summertime" plays softly. Something like Janice Joplin's recording would be perfect. Ari hums along.*

*Ari doesn't look too bad. Her hands are covered in bandages and she has an IV. Her leg sticks out of the bed with a plastic medical-broke-your-foot-boot.*

*Humiliation and defeat hang heavy in the air. Sophia looks over some paperwork.*

SOPHIA

You gotta give it to Dr. Sinclair. She is going above and beyond.

ARI

She thinks staying on the third floor will do more damage than good right now.

SOPHIA

What's the plan then, Ari?

*The sound of a train in the distance.*

ARI

We'll stay with Ocean til I can figure out some treatment. And then maybe June will stay there too.

SOPHIA

Ocean and your sixteen year old kid? Great. More excuses for Ocean to remain in a permanent state of arrested development.

ARI

Soph, can we not do this? Don't you have a plane to catch or something?

SOPHIA

Right. I'll get out of here. I do need to get things organized for my trip.

ARI

Okay. We'll see ya when you get back.

*The sound of a train getting slightly louder. Closer.*

SOPHIA

My whole life has been picking up all these broken pieces Ari. The mess mom continually made and left behind. The shit storm Joe caused in the family. Jack's inability to function through his depression.... Don't you remember me cleaning the house once a week? Have you not paid attention to how filthy and in disrepair the place is? The toilets don't even work Ari. He was using a bucket in the back yard.

ARI

I haven't been able to go over there. It's just too much...

SOPHIA

I'm not trying to make you feel bad about that. I'm trying to get you to a place of understanding. These people, these "parents" that were supposed to be teaching us how to be functioning in this world did a pretty awful job. They weren't equipped. And from the stories of their upbringing, they weren't given much guidance either.

We have got to do better. At least for Ocean. Definitely for June. And the person who needs to be showing them how to adult is you. Not me. I'm not even here. Ever. I've got a life and a career and am in a totally different world than y'all. And I like it there. Everything is exactly the way I want and need it to be. But this adolescent depression bout has got to stop. You cannot keep this up.

ARI

I know.

*The train in the distance.*

SOPHIA

So what are you going to do to grow up and knock it off?

ARI

I keep trying to tell you it's not like that. There's some things I just can't control. Like I see myself doing it, but I can't make it stop. Like someone else is driving the bus and the part of me that is supposed to stop it can't even move from the seat.

I'm broken. The part of my brain that is supposed to work like yours is not functioning. And it doesn't work for Joe or Ocean either. Well, maybe Joe. He's got his shit together more than the rest of us.

You are just gonna have to accept that we can't do things the way you do. There's no pulling ourselves up by our bootstraps and mucking through the swamp. The swamp never ends. There aren't enough pairs of boots.

And I think June has it too... I know June is dealing with it too- this broken part. And I know that I'm so paralyzed by my own shit that I can't help. And that's really what we're dealing with here, Sophie.

*Sophia stokes Ari's arm gently. The train sounds are getting louder and louder. Sophia does not notice them.*

SOPHIA

Ari, I really wish I knew how to help.

ARI

I know.

SOPHIA

I've tried. Forever trying.

ARI

I know. And I'm not sure I can try anymore.

*Sophia sits quietly with Ari. They look out a window in silence. The sound of a train. Maybe they cry, maybe they don't.*

*Suddenly Ari's body convulses violently. The sound of that train pulling into the station blaring the horn and screeching to a halt. It's loud and scary.*

*Sophia presses a button frantically. Beeps, intercom sounds, and Sophia calling for help are all drowned out by the train and the lights fading down.*

## Twenty Seven: Farewell

*Lights remain cast down mostly. A makeshift tombstone is brought out with a small hole in it. Maybe some AstroTurf. Crash, Ocean, Sophia, and June, sit on the grass. Lights brighten to full whiteout.*

*They sip cheap beer. It's a glorious summer day. No one says anything. Likely there are tears.*

*The tail end of "Taps" plays. A sound of three rounds firing (about 15 seconds between each) from a 21 gun salute. Silence.*



*Ari arrives and sits with the group. She holds an American Flag folded in 13 Folds. She gives the flag to Ocean.*

ARI

That was so much harder than I ever thought.

OCEAN

...

ARI

No one in any of my biological families have graves. They just get scattered- usually in the water.

OCEAN

Hm.

ARI

But in your family- in my sibling's family- we put our ashes in a very expensive hole in the ground.

SOPHIA

It's what he wanted.

CRASH

My family has full on viewings and burials.

OCEAN

Oh god.

CRASH

Yeah. It's really rough.

SOPHIA

Well. Should we...?

ARI

Yeah. I guess that's what we're here to do... Ocean?

*Ocean has been holding the wooden box containing the ashes close. They begin to sob heavily.*

*Dolly enters. She wears funeral attire. She sings softly "Long Time Traveler" behind the siblings as they put Dad's ashes in the ground.*

DOLLY

*These fleeting charms of earth  
Farewell, your springs of joy are dry  
My soul now seeks another home  
A brighter world on high*

*I'm a long time travelling here below  
I'm a long time travelling away from home  
I'm a long time travelling here below  
To lay this body down*

***The family fumbles through this process. They take the bag of ashes from the wooden urn and put them into a container that is inside the ground. There is a kind of brass plate that screws on to the top of the grave marker.***

***Crash uses a penny to tighten the screw. Sophia holds Ari and Ocean while June cries softly dusting away any dirt and ash from the top of the headstone. Dolly finishes the song. She remains on the stage.***

DOLLY

*Farewell kind friends whose tender care  
Has long engaged my love  
Your fond embrace I now exchange  
For better friends above*

*I'm a long time travelling here below  
I'm a long time travelling away from home  
I'm a long time travelling here below  
To lay this body down, to lay this body down*

*Flowers are laid on the grave. More silent grief.  
However long this needs to be.*

*Finally June breaks the silence.*

JUNE

Fucking flowers.

*Ocean giggles a little through tears.*

OCEAN

Fucking flowers.

ARI

So do we... I dunno. Say anything? Like call the guy over who's in charge, or?

CRASH

Nah. He'll come by after we're gone. He said to stay as long as we needed.

*More silence with tears and blowing noses.*

JUNE

At least we don't have to hear "Taps" again.

*A moment. Sophia stands softly.*

SOPHIA

I'm not sure how to do this. So I'm just gonna talk while I have a captive audience.

I love you all so very much. I have not been able to be a good big sister. I have let so much get in the way of being able to help you and share your burdens. I have not wanted to be here. It's been too painful and not my job. I didn't think it was fair to be put into a place of parenting people when I wasn't old enough to be a parent.

But I'm here. And I appreciate you letting me sidle up to you.

Jack you were a really good Dad. I mean, you were a total mess, but you loved us. And that wasn't something anyone had really done before. And we're all going to miss you so, so, so much. We already do.

*Ocean sobs deeply. Sophia nuzzles them and kisses the top of their head.*

*The gentle sound of a train from far off in the distance. A soft summer breeze.*

*The family gathers their things and walks away quietly holding on to one another.*

## Twenty Six and a Half: Goodnight and Joy Be With You All

*An Amtrak station and all the sounds with it. Joe and June sit together on a bench. Joe's backpack and a vintage suitcase at his feet.*

JUNE

So it's like two days?

JOE

Three! Almost three.

JUNE

How do you live that far from the water? And the mountains?

JOE

Doesn't remind me of home so much. Besides there's a huge river in Sioux City. They even have one of those old river boats... like a show boat?

JUNE

Yeah?

JOE

It's kind of touristy but pretty cool.

You ever decide to come out for a visit, I'll take you.

JUNE

I may have to do that. Mom's gonna get a new-to-her car and give me the old CRV.

JOE

It's a good car. It'll run forever.

JUNE

It's a stick shift.

JOE

Ha! Well that is tradition. Dad said you can't learn to drive a car that drives you. Hope the clutch on that thing can handle the damage...

JUNE

Barnacle didn't have to learn on stick.

JOE

Yeah? Well Barnacle is the baby. The baby never has to do what the others do.

JUNE

I'm the baby.

JOE

Take it up with your mom. I'm clearly not in a position to be inserting any opinions.

JUNE

Yeah.

JOE

Yeah.

*A moment. Some crackly announcement comes over the speaker.*

JOE

Well. That's me. Thanks for the ride. I appreciate that.

JUNE

I got you something.

*June pulls out a little 35mm film canister from their pocket and hands it to Joe. He doesn't really know what to say. He gets a little choked up.*

JUNE

Ocean said that the ashes we take to the cemetery will mostly be dog ashes. We found both the dogs stashed in Dad's office... he just never buried them. So Ocean put some of dad's ashes in with the Juno and Raleigh; that's what's going in at the cemetery. I'm not sure what we're doing with the rest, but you are supposed to have this.

JOE

Ocean is a good person.

JUNE

I think it's fucking creepy. Y'all gonna be haunted. But you know...

JOE

Can I have a hug?

JUNE

Yeah.

*They embrace.*

JOE

You know some day we'll get this all figured out. At least to a point where your aunt and I aren't screaming at each other.

There's just a lot of dark matter there.

JUNE

Or it won't get figured out. You are all so obsessed with shit figuring itself out. Maybe that's just not how it's gonna go. Maybe shit just sucks.

JOE

Yeah. Maybe.

*Announcement again.*

JUNE

I love you Uncle Joe. I'll see you on all the social media stuff. I promise I'll keep a facebook account just for you old people.

JOE

Me too. I'll try and keep in touch better.

JUNE

Cool. Take it easy.

JOE

You too. Love you!

*June walks away. Joe pauses before he puts the film canister in his jacket pocket. He gathers his things as the sound of the train dissolves into the "The Keep Going Song" by the Bengsons and then there is darkness.*

*End of play.*