

FAULT LINES 10 PAGE SAMPLE

George Sapio

THERESA

I thought you got rid of this stuff years ago.

ANASTASIA

That was from Mom's honeymoon.

THERESA

It's a snow globe. Of Iowa. Snow falling on rows of corn.

ANASTASIA

Just put it on the shelf over there, okay?

THERESA

This is like being back at Mom's house. Why did you keep all this shit?

ANASTASIA

I don't know.

THERESA

Whatever.

ANASTASIA

Just chalk it up to Stazi the freak.

THERESA

You realize you're the one that said that, right? Not me.

ANASTASIA

But it's what everyone thinks.

THERESA

When did you learn to read minds?

ANASTASIA

Can you not badger me today, please?

THERESA

I am not badgering you. Can you stop being so goddamn sensitive?

ANASTASIA

I AM NOT SENSITIVE!

THERESA

My mistake. I apologize. What are you looking for?

ANASTASIA

Nothing.

THERESA

You keep going into the kitchen. Then you come back out. You look in the cabinets. You look behind the doors. You hardly ever pick anything up.

ANASTASIA

It's nothing.

THERESA

Well then you should be little miss chipper cheery, cuz that's all your finding.

ANASTASIA

I'm sorry.

THERESA

Stop apologizing. I'm trying to help.

ANASTASIA

I know. I'm sorry.

THERESA

I'm going out for a cigarette. [*She exits*]

[ANASTASIA sighs, keeps looking, but soon despairs. Gets frustrated, picks up an object and throws it. Lets her frustration take over; begins throwing stuff everywhere. She stops. Sits. THERESA re-enters]

THERESA

Well, I see progress was made. If you say "I'm sorry," I'll strangle you with my rosary.

[Stands looking at her for a brief moment, then crosses and hugs her from behind]

THERESA

You wanna tell me what's wrong?

ANASTASIA

I can't.

THERESA

You don't trust me?

ANASTASIA

Partly.

THERESA

I'm your sister.

ANASTASIA

That's not it. I keep thinking that everything I say to you goes straight to god's ears.

THERESA

Well, that's just stupid.

ANASTASIA

Thanks.

THERESA

You're a doctor. You are supposed to be sensible.

ANASTASIA

Mom said it all the time. "God hears everything you say to Sister Phillipa." I think it stuck.

THERESA

That woman took everything way too seriously. Ever since the day I got nun-erized she thought I was some kind of holy hotline. Forget about god, okay?

ANASTASIA

I can't tell you. I can't tell anybody. [*Breaks away*]

THERESA

Whatever it is . . . Come on, Stazi. Let me help.

ANASTASIA

Look, I don't trust you, okay? It's like talking to Mom. You always criticize.

THERESA

Well, you're the one who has all of Mom's shit all over the place. Snow globes, furniture, pictures. This place is a freakin' shrine.

ANASTASIA

I just couldn't throw it away. I will, though.

THERESA

You've had it for ten years, Stazi.

ANASTASIA

So?

[*GINGER enters, dressed*]

GINGER

I thought we cleaned this stuff up already.

THERESA

[Nolan Ryan¹] over here had one of her moments.

[*ANASTASIA gets up and flees to kitchen*]

GINGER

That was nice.

THERESA

I do not believe you two. I am your sister. You both treat me like I was some kind of . . . disease.

GINGER

Well, maybe there's a good reason for it.

THERESA

I'm too critical.

GINGER

Yeah. There's that.

¹ Or whoever is well-known as a baseball pitcher at the time.

THERESA

Oh brother. You don't get it.

GINGER

No. We get it. It's your way of communicating.

THERESA

“Communicating.”

GINGER

Fine then. Talking to us like Mom did. Like we were your idiot children.

THERESA

Sometimes you act like idiot children.

GINGER

We are who we are.

THERESA

Really. Who else would you be?

GINGER

Stazi's been through a harrowing experience. She could have been attacked. Her house was broken into. Invaded.

THERESA

And she's gonna whine about it forever?

GINGER

It happened TODAY.

THERESA

I understand that. But if we just mollycoddle her, we're not doing her any good. You know how fragile she is.

GINGER

She gets upset when we argue. It hurts her.

THERESA

What doesn't?

GINGER

So calling her “stupid” is better?

THERESA

You heard that.

GINGER

I heard it. I was listening behind the door.

THERESA

Okay, okay. I could be a little more . . .

GINGER

Could you? I don't think so.

THERESA

As it so happens, I have an issue or two I was *hoping* to bring up with you two.

GINGER

Life-threatening?

THERESA

No.

GINGER

Then it will have to wait. You're not going to preempt her calamity with yours.

THERESA

Wow.

[Sounds of wreckage emanating from the kitchen. Both THERESA and GINGER start for the kitchen]

GINGER

I have it. You stay here.

[GINGER exits. THERESA hesitates for a beat, then starts to clean up again. She picks up some dvd boxes]

THERESA

“Bridget Jones' Diary” . . . “Under the Tuscan Sun” . . . “My Best Friend's Wedding” . . . Jeez, Stazi. You are desperate.

THERESA tries to put them back in an upper cabinet but something is blocking them. She pulls out a paper bag. In it are several more dvd boxes]

THERESA

“Breast Side Story” . . . Hmmm . . . must be a typo . . . “Riding Miss Daisy” . . . huh? What?! “Chitty Chitty Gang . . .”!!!!?? Jesus, Stazi!! What the . . . ??? *[Discovery] Ginger . . . ? No, it can't be . . . omigod . . .*

[Thunderstruck, THERESA doesn't know what to do. Noise from the kitchen startles her and she hurriedly puts the videos back in the bag and jams them into the cabinet. She picks up her bag and starts to exit. GINGER leads ANASTASIA into living room]

GINGER

Leaving?

THERESA

I . . . I thought I was not being useful here.

GINGER

Yeah, well. Leaving is one way out of it. Bye.

ANASTASIA

Don't leave. Please, Theresa.

THERESA

[Very reluctantly] I'll stay if you want me to.

[GINGER sits ANASTASIA on couch, sits next to her on arm of couch. THERESA sits across the room, away from GINGER]

GINGER

Why did you start throwing things? You know we're here to help you clean up.

ANASTASIA

I . . . I lost . . . I can't say it.

GINGER

You can say anything to me . . . us, Stazi. We'll understand. We'll understand anything you tell us. Right, T?

THERESA

. . . yes . . .

GINGER

Well, that was encouraging.

THERESA

I'm sorry. I need to leave.

[THERESA rises, collects her bag and begins to exit]

ANASTASIA

No! Stay! Theresa!

THERESA

. . . I'm sorry . . . I can't . . .

GINGER

Chickenshit. Coward.

ANASTASIA

Ginger, stop! Theresa, don't go!

[ANASTASIA tries to stop THERESA from leaving; THERESA tries to find a way around her]

THERESA

I can't stay . . .

GINGER

Let her go, Stazi. *[Crosses toward THERESA]* Let her run away.

THERESA

Stay away from me!

GINGER

[Backing away] Fine. Didn't know that was how you really felt. Can't even stand to be near me. She ran away to a convent first, now she runs away from this.

THERESA

I'll come back when little miss stone thrower isn't here. Look who got married and became oh-so blameless.

GINGER

That's just great coming from Mother Superior, never a sensitive moment in her life. Always a comment, always a judgment.

THERESA

Well, one of us had to have some kind of grounding.

GINGER

Yeah. Living in a convent gives you grounding.

THERESA

It certainly beats looking at life while lying in a jail cell. Or on your back.

GINGER

At least I did.

THERESA

Yes, you did. And how many times did we bail you out? Little Ginger, bought out of jail again. Three episodes in drug rehab. [*Pause*] God knows what else some of us never found out about.

[Beat. ANASTASIA looks away]

GINGER

Mind. Your. Business.

ANASTASIA

Stop it!

THERESA

Look who talks about judging others.

GINGER

Yeah, I made a lot of bad choices, but at least I was out there.

THERESA

You made some very bad choices, Ginger. Are you really proud of all of them? [*Beat*]

GINGER

You're like Mom, all over. You are her. Constantly criticizing. Never a word of encouragement.

THERESA

I kept this family together after Mom died. I was the one bailing you out, if you remember. I was the one handling all her affairs. You were off somewhere, getting stoned. Racking up . . . boyfriends like it was going out of style.

GINGER

That is all behind me. I changed.

THERESA

Did you really?

GINGER

Yes.

THERESA

Do we know everything about you?

GINGER

What I don't tell you is none of your business.

THERESA

Fair enough. Is it Shawn's business? Did you tell your husband?

[Dead silence. GINGER crosses to THERESA, goes nose-to-nose with her]

GINGER

If you breathe one word about anything in my past . . . you will regret it.

THERESA

[Standing] That shows what you know. I would never . . . EVER . . . say anything of the kind. And that, my dear sister, is the difference between you and me. I merely asked because I was hoping you would say that you had the guts to tell your husband who you really are. I would have thought he'd have the right to know.

GINGER

I hate you.

THERESA

Yes. I can see that.

GINGER

You're not any better than us.

THERESA

Never said I was.

GINGER

Never needed to.

THERESA

Never thought I was.

GINGER

Really. *[Crosses away]*

THERESA

I have to ask. Why do you have this vendetta against me? I really do not understand.

ANASTASIA

Because Mom loved you and hated us.

THERESA

That is such bullshit.

ANASTASIA

No. It's not. You know she was a devoted catholic. Went to church every day. She was fanatical.

THERESA

Oh, I get it . . .

ANASTASIA

You fulfilled her dream. She had a daughter who was a nun. She was so proud of you. Ginger got tired of the endless criticism and left. I stayed. And well, Mom could never appreciate who I ended up being. She thought everything I did was stupid or silly. I wanted to join the Peace Corps . . . why would I want to go spend my life with *those* people? I became a vegetarian because I couldn't bear the idea of animals being tortured and mistreated. And I didn't want to eat anything that had been injected with chemicals and hormones. You think she would have understood that, right? Appreciated it? You know what she said? "If you can eat our Lord's body every week, you can eat a stupid cow." Next time I went to church, I had an image of Jesus' head on a cow's body with a big sign that said "Eat me," and I ran out. Mom never forgave me for not going back.

[THERESA stares, then begins to laugh. Her laughing increases. Slowly, she regains control.]

THERESA

Oh. My. God.

ANASTASIA

Don't call me stupid.

[Still chuckling, THERESA leans down and kisses ANASTASIA on the top of the head]

THERESA

I love you, Stazi. So much. Well, you can rest easy. The both of you. Pretty soon we'll all be in the same boat. Mom will look down and disown all of us.

GINGER

What does that mean?

THERESA

I'm leaving the order.