

T H E J I G S A W
P U Z Z L E

by

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Characters

- RUBY LEE: A woman who can take care of herself. Mid-seventies.
- GRACIE JOHNSON: Ruby's sister. A woman who has, all her life, taken care of others.
- DOUGLAS CLARK: A middle-aged high school principal.

Setting

The hallway/front room of an old house in Stratford, Ontario.

Table at a high-end restaurant

Time

A summer weekend in the 1980s or 90s

ACT ONE

Scene 1

(Ringling of a telephone, which, when the lights come up, is seen sitting on a table in the hallway of an old house. French doors lead to the living room on one side; the front door is opposite and a shadowy staircase is at the back. RUBY, a strong-featured woman in her mid-70s, comes down the stairs.)

RUBY

Now who can that be?

(She picks up the phone.)

Hello?...Hello?...Who is this?... Mr. Clark? The Bed and Breakfast Association gave you my name? I'm afraid they've made a mistake. I haven't taken guests for over a year now... Desperate? Well, you shouldn't have left it till so late... The answer is no, Mr. Clark... You'll pay whatever's necessary?...\$150, then!... Two nights, of course... Tomorrow when? I can't stay in all day waiting for you... Noon. Alright... Yes, 190 Elizabeth... Just off Waterloo. Two-storey yellow brick with a green trim... I'll expect you tomorrow morning. Don't be late, or you might find we've gone out... Good. Good-bye, Mr. Clark.

(She hangs up.)

Gracie!

(She goes through the French doors to the living room, an old ladies' living room, with family pictures and knick-knacks, including cranberry glass, everywhere. Sitting at a coffee table with a half-completed jigsaw on it is her bright-eyed but frail-looking sister GRACIE.)

GRACIE

Who were you talking to?

RUBY

Some man from Toronto. He said he was coming up for the theatre and didn't have a place to stay.

GRACIE

Is he staying here?

RUBY

Yes.

GRACIE

I hope he's nice.

RUBY

It doesn't matter what he's like. He'll be at the theatre most of the time; we'll hardly see him.

(sitting beside her sister)

RUBY (Cont'd)

He didn't hesitate when I asked for \$150. Just said, "Is that for one night or two?" I should've said, "One." Think what we can do with the money! We can take you to the dentist...

GRACIE

We can go out for dinner.

RUBY

He'll be here tomorrow noon.

(taking GRACIE'S hand)

This is very important, Gracie. We need the money. I can count on you to be good, can't I? Just this once?

GRACIE

Of course!

(Blackout.)

Scene 2

(Noon. Lights up on the doorway of the house. RUBY is standing on one side, and DOUGLAS, with expensive suitcase, on the other. GRACIE hovers nervously about.)

RUBY

Mr. Clark?

DOUGLAS

(beat; husky)

Yes.

RUBY

Come in.

(He looks at her without moving.)

RUBY

What are you gaping at?

DOUGLAS

Nothing! Sorry.

RUBY

(closing the door as he comes in)

I haven't taken guests for over a year now—you're lucky I agreed to accept you.

DOUGLAS

I appreciate it—I know I shouldn't have left calling till so late.

(They enter the hallway; DOUGLAS puts down his case and looks around with poorly disguised curiosity.)

RUBY

If you'll pay me now...

DOUGLAS:

(recalled to the moment; taking \$150 from his wallet and handing it to her)

Yes, of course.

RUBY

Thank you.

(RUBY counts the money, then walks to the hall table and opens a drawer.)

RUBY

Let me get the book out for you...

(She pulls out an old guest book and opens it to the last written-on page. DOUGLAS, meanwhile, keeps glancing towards the living room. She hands him a pen.)

RUBY

Sign here, please, Mr. Clark.

DOUGLAS

(with his most charming smile)

Certainly.

(While he signs, she puts the cash in an envelope and deposits it in the desk drawer. DOUGLAS starts towards the living room. RUBY stops him.)

RUBY

Don't forget your address.

DOUGLAS

My address?

RUBY

Naturally. In case you leave something behind, I can forward it to you.

DOUGLAS

I never leave things behind.

RUBY

I find that hard to believe, Mr. Clark. We're all forgetful at times. You'd be surprised at the things people have left here: keys, contact lenses, even dentures.

I wouldn't do that.

DOUGLAS

Just in case, Mr. Clark.

RUBY

Your address. (handing him the pen)

(He sits down and writes it. While she scrutinizes the page, he heads towards the living room again.)

DOUGLAS

That's a fine collection of cranberry glass you have. Do you mind if—

RUBY

(blocking him)

I'm afraid the living room's off-limits to our guests, Mr. Clark.

DOUGLAS

Sorry.

(GRACIE tugs on his sleeve.)

GRACIE

Harry! Where did you put the other pieces?

DOUGLAS

Pardon?

GRACIE

(pointing into the living room)

The missing pieces for the jigsaw.

DOUGLAS

Excuse me?

RUBY

Leave him alone, Gracie! I'm afraid my sister's going senile, Mr. Clark.

DOUGLAS

Senile?

RUBY

You needn't look so concerned—it isn't catching.
(to GRACIE)

He's not Harry; I don't know why you think he is.

GRACIE

He's got Harry's mouth.

He doesn't. (looking quickly) RUBY

Who's Harry? DOUGLAS

Our brother. RUBY

Do I look— DOUGLAS

Not in the slightest. She gets people mixed up, that's all. RUBY

He's come back to us, Ruby. (looking at DOUGLAS) GRACIE

Gracie! Harry dropped dead coming home from work one day, remember? RUBY

Dropped dead? DOUGLAS

He had a heart attack. RUBY

Right in front of Mr. Teeple's house! GRACIE

Were there any warning signs? DOUGLAS

None. And he wasn't even fifty. GRACIE

Not fifty? DOUGLAS

Does heart trouble run in your family? (beat)

Yes. Why? RUBY

Nothing. I just wondered... Fifty isn't very old. I'm about that age myself. DOUGLAS

You're not a hypochondriac, are you? RUBY

DOUGLAS

Certainly not. I do think, though, you can't be too prudent where health is concerned, especially as you get—

GRACIE

(taking his arm and looking at him affectionately)

Welcome back, Harry!

(RUBY clucks her disapproval.)

RUBY

Don't mind her, Mr. Clark.

(taking GRACIE by the elbow and steering her into the living room)

Why don't you put in a few more pieces, Gracie?

(GRACIE sits down obediently in front of the puzzle, (a child's puzzle, with about fifty large pieces). She tries unsuccessfully to do it, picking up first one piece, then another, all the while listening to the conversation going on out in the hall.)

DOUGLAS

(looking from the doorway)

That's a very old jigsaw, isn't it?

RUBY

(coming out of the living room)

My sister found it in a drawer a few days ago. For some reason she got it into her head that she'd like to do it.

DOUGLAS

It's almost half done.

RUBY

I've put in most of the pieces. But at least it keeps her busy.

DOUGLAS

It must be difficult, taking care of someone in your sister's condition. I imagine you—

RUBY

You're from Toronto, are you, Mr. Clark?

DOUGLAS

Yes. Sackville Street.

RUBY

That's Cabbagetown, isn't it?

DOUGLAS

Yes, but that whole area's changed; the houses've been renovated and—

RUBY

I haven't been to Toronto for years. Wouldn't live there under any circumstances.

DOUGLAS

Why not?

RUBY

It's filthy. Full of foreigners. And not safe.

DOUGLAS

You're exaggerating the danger, Mrs. Lee.

RUBY

I'm an old lady, Mr. Clark, and I don't appreciate having to look over my shoulder all the time.

DOUGLAS

We have a lot of seniors in Toronto who wouldn't live any place else.

RUBY

I'll leave it to them, then, shall I?

(She looks at him suspiciously as his eyes stray again to the living room.)

RUBY

What was it you said you did?

DOUGLAS

I'm a high school principal.

RUBY

Oh?

DOUGLAS

It's a big school; I'm responsible for over a hundred educators and two thou—

RUBY

Tell me—how's it possible to go through twelve years of schooling in this country and still not be able to read and write?

DOUGLAS

Well, ah...

RUBY

In my day—

DOUGLAS

Things have changed, Mrs. Lee.

RUBY

For the worse!

DOUGLAS

Not at all. We still teach the three R's, but we've had to go beyond that because of changes in the fabric of society. Children who haven't had their basic needs met find it very hard to self-actualize.

RUBY

What on earth does that mean, Mr. Clark?

DOUGLAS

It means that the school's taken on the responsibilities that the family, the community, and the church used to take care of.

RUBY

While abandoning what it was set up to do: at the very least teach students how to read and write.

DOUGLAS

Not at all.

RUBY

You must have read the studies...

DOUGLAS

Well... I admit there are some failures. But as usual, it's a social problem. I've been a councillor for six years and—

RUBY

A politician!

DOUGLAS

Yes. I've run three times and been elected three times. I've been approached to run federally in the next election.

RUBY

Indeed.

DOUGLAS

I think it's obvious we need to get our fiscal house back in order—

RUBY

At whose expense, Mr. Clark? Yours or mine?

DOUGLAS

Naturally we'll all have to—

GRACIE

(from the living room)

Why won't this fit?!

DOUGLAS

Would you like me to help you?

(He takes a step forward as if to join GRACIE.)

RUBY

My sister doesn't need your help, Mr. Clark. She prefers—

(Her attention is caught by something outside the window.)

RUBY

Is that your fancy green car out there on the street?

DOUGLAS

Yes. It's a Jaguar.

RUBY

Well, it's being towed away.

DOUGLAS

What?!

(He starts for the door.)

RUBY

You can read, can't you, Mr. Clark? It says "No Parking" out front. Why didn't you pull into the driveway?

(He gives her a nasty look, and runs out.)

DOUGLAS

No! Wait! Stop!

(RUBY rushes to the living room and hurriedly starts to move things so she can close the doors.)

RUBY

Give me a hand, Gracie... I want to move this...

(GRACIE gets up and helps her.)

RUBY

I don't know why that man is so nosy.

GRACIE

He just wants to help me do the puzzle.

RUBY

His eyes are darting all over. You'd think he was a thief.

GRACIE

He's a politician.

RUBY

True. And there's not much difference: both have their hands in other people's pockets. Well, we've got nothing he'd want to steal.

GRACIE

He must be rich, if he has a green Jag.

RUBY

Where'd he get the money for it, I wonder. He lives in Cabbagetown—that's a slum area.

(GRACIE looks at her owlishly.

RUBY closes the doors half-way, then the two sisters peer out the window.)

RUBY

Looks like he managed to talk his way out of a ticket.

(She takes her sister by the elbow and sits her back down at the puzzle.)

RUBY

Sit here.

(RUBY goes out, takes a key from a jar on the hall table and locks the double doors. In the background the noise of a car is heard. As soon as her sister moves away, GRACIE gets up and presses her nose against the glass of the doors to see what's going on. RUBY puts the key back as DOUGLAS enters. He pretends not to notice what she's done.)

RUBY

Did you lock the car?

DOUGLAS

Yes.

RUBY

Good. Then no one will get in where they're not supposed to be.

(taking out a key from the jar)

Here's the key to the front door, Mr. Clark.

DOUGLAS

Thank you.

RUBY

We'll be asleep when you come in tonight. Please be as quiet as you can.

DOUGLAS

Of course.

RUBY

I'll show you to your room.

DOUGLAS
(picking up his suitcase)
Please do.

RUBY
(looking at him critically)
You'll want to freshen up before the play. Have you picked your tickets up yet?

DOUGLAS
No.

RUBY
Then you'd better hurry. This way.

(She begins to lead him up the stairs. He starts to follow her. Noticing GRACIE looking at him from behind the doors, he smiles and waves at her. She smiles and waves back.)

RUBY
Mr. Clark!

DOUGLAS
Coming. Coming.

(Giving GRACIE one last wave, he follows her. Lights fade on GRACIE.)

(Blackout.)

Scene 3

(Late afternoon. Noise of a drawer being opened, shuffling of papers, etc. As the lights come up, we see RUBY searching in the hall table for something. She slams the drawer shut.)

RUBY
(calling out)
Where've you put it, Gracie?

(GRACIE comes down the stairs.)

GRACIE
Put what?

RUBY
The envelope.

GRACIE
What envelope?

The envelope with the money in it! RUBY

What money? GRACIE

The money from Mr. Clark, of course! RUBY

I don't know what you're talking about. GRACIE

I put the envelope right here, in the drawer. You saw me do it! RUBY

Did I? Why did you put it there? GRACIE

Because I won't be going downtown to the bank till next Friday. RUBY

You should've put it someplace safer. You shouldn't leave money lying around in unlocked drawers. GRACIE

Did you take it? RUBY

Have you looked in your purse? GRACIE

Yes. And it's not there! RUBY

Well, I don't know where it could be, then. GRACIE

Please, Gracie. That money's a god-send. We can take you to the dentist. RUBY

I don't want to go to the dentist! GRACIE

Whether you want to go or not, you must. RUBY

I won't. GRACIE

Be reasonable. Please! RUBY

No. GRACIE

RUBY
 Alright, alright. We'll forget about the dentist. Just tell me where the money is and I'll buy you some candy.

Those chocolate raisins I like? GRACIE

Yes. RUBY

A big box? GRACIE

Yes. Just tell me where the money is! RUBY

(beat) GRACIE

I don't know. RUBY

If you don't tell me, Gracie, I'm going to get very angry with you.
 (GRACIE wrings her hands.)

Where have you put that envelope?! RUBY

Why are you shouting at me like that? I don't know where it is! GRACIE

Don't lie to me! RUBY

I'm not— GRACIE

(Noise of a key in the lock. The women freeze as the door opens, and DOUGLAS enters.)

Hello! GRACIE

Mr. Clark! RUBY

(glancing at her watch)
 It's only 4:30. What are you doing back?

DOUGLAS

I realized when I got to the theatre that I'd forgotten my watch. I thought I'd stop in between shows and get it.

RUBY

I thought you never forgot anything.

DOUGLAS

I must've left it in the bathroom when I was washing my hands.

RUBY

I'll go see.

DOUGLAS

Thank you.

(RUBY goes upstairs. DOUGLAS and GRACIE smile at each other.)

GRACIE

(gesturing up the stairs)

Who is that woman?

DOUGLAS

Pardon?

GRACIE

That woman you were just talking to. I don't recall her.

DOUGLAS

Ahh...She's your sister.

GRACIE

Oh... What's her name?

DOUGLAS

I thought I heard you call her Ruby.

GRACIE

Ruby. I don't like that name. Do you?

DOUGLAS

Well, it's...ahh...a nice-enough name, I think.

GRACIE

You don't like it either. I knew it.

(GRACIE starts to play with a big old-fashioned broach on her dress.)

GRACIE

What's your name?

Douglas Clark. DOUGLAS

Are you one of our guests? GRACIE

Uh-huh. DOUGLAS

Will you be staying long? GRACIE

Two nights. DOUGLAS

Only two? GRACIE

I'm afraid so. DOUGLAS

GRACIE
(looking at a playbill in his hand)
You've come for the theatre, of course.

Yes. DOUGLAS

Did you enjoy the show? GRACIE

I couldn't concentrate... DOUGLAS

Sometimes that happens to me, too.
(patting his hand)
Don't worry about it. GRACIE

I won't. DOUGLAS

(They smile at each other as people in agreement.)

Is this your first time in Stratford? GRACIE

No. I've been here before. DOUGLAS

So you've come back again. That's nice. GRACIE

(The brooch drops to the floor. DOUGLAS picks it up.)

Let me pin it on for you. DOUGLAS

(He puts down the theatre playbill, and a small camera, in order to help her.)

You've been taking pictures. GRACIE

On my way back here. DOUGLAS

What of? GRACIE

The theatre, the river— DOUGLAS

Did you take one of our house? GRACIE

Yes. DOUGLAS

That's good. Take one of me, too... GRACIE

(She takes his arm and starts to lead him into the living room. He stops and looks up the stairs—no RUBY. He and GRACIE smile at each other, then go in.)

...in front of the jigsaw. GRACIE

(As DOUGLAS enters, he takes in the room and the family pictures. GRACIE perches on the sofa and gives him a big smile. He crouches down and looks through the viewfinder.)

That's nice. DOUGLAS

(He shoots just as RUBY comes down the stairs and enters the living room.)

Mr. Clark, what are you doing? RUBY

DOUGLAS
Your sister asked me to take a picture of her.

GRACIE:
Let him take one of you, too.

RUBY
No, thank you.
(approaching DOUGLAS as if to steer him out)
Now, if you don't mind—

GRACIE
Both of us together—

RUBY
Absolutely not!

GRACIE
C'mon, Ruby!

(GRACIE grabs her sister excitedly and forces her to sit down next to her.)

GRACIE
There. Now smile.

(She puts her arm around her stiffly-upright sister and gives a big smile. RUBY looks positively sullen; she glares at DOUGLAS while he takes their picture, and when he's finished, starts to get up, but GRACIE pulls her down.)

GRACIE
One more!

DOUGLAS
If you could just move a little closer...

He goes to put RUBY into position.

RUBY
Don't touch me!

DOUGLAS
Sorry!

(GRACIE jumps up and confronts him.)

GRACIE
You leave my sister alone!

DOUGLAS
(backing off)
But I only—

GRACIE
She doesn't like being touched. I do, though. How do you want me to sit?

DOUGLAS
(pointing)
Close to her.

(GRACIE waits expectantly, but he keeps his distance. She sits side by side with RUBY.)

GRACIE
Like this?

DOUGLAS
Yes. Perfect.

(DOUGLAS crouches down, and shoots. RUBY jumps up.)

RUBY
That's enough!
(handing DOUGLAS a very expensive watch)
Is this your watch?

DOUGLAS
Yes, thank you.
(slipping it on his wrist)
Was it in the bathroom?

RUBY
(giving GRACIE a furious look)
Not exactly. But I found it. And an envelope I'd been missing, too.

GRACIE
Oh, good!
(DOUGLAS stands awkwardly for a moment.)

RUBY
Is that all you wanted, Mr. Clark?

DOUGLAS
I haven't been in Stratford for a long time. Could you...recommend a place to eat?

GRACIE
Eat with us.

RUBY

(glaring at GRACIE)

I'm afraid we don't offer dinner to our guests.

GRACIE

I could make something for him, Ruby.

RUBY

No.

(GRACIE begins to pout, but is ignored by her sister, who turns to DOUGLAS.)

RUBY

You'll want something elegant, I suppose. I hear The Old Prune is very pleasant. Or Rundles, or... Don't you have a brochure from the Festival?

DOUGLAS

Yes, but I thought personal recommendation...

RUBY

I can't speak from experience any more. It's been quite a while since we ate in a restaurant.

DOUGLAS

I'll just have to take my chances, then.

RUBY

Yes.

GRACIE

Let me make him something.

RUBY

I told you: no!

(RUBY sits her sister down forcefully. An awkward pause.)

DOUGLAS

Ahh...after the show, I thought I might take in some jazz. Is there a club in town?

RUBY

(giving him an incredulous look)

A jazz club? In Stratford?

DOUGLAS

I just thought...maybe...

RUBY

I don't know anyone here who's interested in that type of music, except, of course, the theatre people.

You don't like jazz?

DOUGLAS

Tuneless maundering.

RUBY

Oh... What kind of music do you like, then?

DOUGLAS

(grudgingly)

Opera. Not live, of course, not in a place like this. On the radio.

DOUGLAS

Did you hear the performance of "Lulu" last week? Wasn't it incredible?

RUBY

Every time music like that comes on, I turn it off.

DOUGLAS

I thought you said you liked opera.

RUBY

Is that what you call "Lulu"? I don't.

DOUGLAS

I was in England this past summer—

RUBY

London?

DOUGLAS

Yes, have you been there?

RUBY

A long time ago.

DOUGLAS

I saw a wonderful production of "Don Giovanni" at Covent Garden.

RUBY

It must be nice to have the money to travel.

DOUGLAS

Yes, well...

(Awkward silence.)

DOUGLAS

Do you like the theatre?

Yes.

RUBY

Then we have something in common—I do, too!

DOUGLAS

So I gathered. Why else would you be here?

RUBY

(GRACIE, like an angry child, mimics her sister behind her back.)

Yes, well, exactly! What do you think of the current season?

DOUGLAS

I have no opinion of it. I'm a pensioner, not a politician. Theatre's a luxury I can't afford.

RUBY

Oh.

DOUGLAS

(Awkward silence.)

Did you say you were going for supper?

RUBY

Ahh, yes...Good-bye.

DOUGLAS

Good-bye, Mr. Clark.

RUBY

I wish you could stay!

GRACIE

Another time, maybe.

DOUGLAS

(He exits.)

Why did you put the envelope in the pocket of your housecoat?

RUBY

It's my pocket-money.

GRACIE

And the watch?

RUBY

(rolling her eyes)

I took it—

GRACIE

You stole it!
 —to watch the money.
 (GRACIE looks very satisfied.)
 I can't wait till Friday. I'm going to ask Mrs. Stuart to come and stay with you on Tuesday, while I go to the bank.
 I don't like her.
 I don't care!
 (Blackout.)
 Scene 4
 (In the darkness, the rattle of a key in a lock. Lights up as DOUGLAS enters the hall and puts a theatre playbill on the table. He looks up the stairs, then carefully tries the living room doors. They're still locked. While his back is turned, GRACIE comes down.)
 You're back late.
 Yes. The show didn't end til 11.
 What did you see?
 The Pirates of Penzance.
 Pirates! Oh, Harry, why didn't you take me?
 I...ah...didn't know you wanted to go.
 But you know how I love Gilbert and Sullivan!

DOUGLAS

I'm sorry.

(She pats him on the arm, as if to say, "You naughty boy!" and starts to sing in a quavering voice.)

GRACIE

"Poor wandering one..." etc.

(He looks anxiously up the stairs.)

DOUGLAS

(patting her arm)

That's...ah... lovely,...ah...Gracie?

GRACIE

Why don't you call me Blossom, like you used to?

DOUGLAS

Ah, yes, well...That was lovely... Blossom.

(She gives him a brilliant smile.)

GRACIE

I'm not as good as Ruby was though, am I, Harry? She had a beautiful voice. Did she ever tell you why she stopped singing?

(He shakes his head.)

GRACIE

We all thought she'd go into opera—you know how she loves it. But she didn't.

(taking his hand)

Come and help me with the jigsaw.

DOUGLAS

The doors're locked.

GRACIE

(pointing)

Key's in the jar.

(They look upstairs; all is quiet. DOUGLAS fishes around in the jar, takes out a key and offers it to her. She takes his hand and they go over to the doors. He opens one side; they giggle and go in. GRACIE turns on a lamp and leads him to the sofa. They sit down side by side in front of the puzzle. She picks up a piece; her hand hovers back and forth across the board.)

GRACIE

I used to be so good at doing jigsaws...

DOUGLAS
This is a Norman Rockwell picture, isn't it?

GRACIE
Yes. It was Sarge's favourite. He thought the little boy looked like him.

DOUGLAS
Sarge?

GRACIE
You know—Ruby's boy.

(DOUGLAS picks up a piece, hesitates briefly, then puts it in.)

DOUGLAS
There!

GRACIE
Oh, Harry!
(giving his hand a squeeze)
You did it, you put one in!

DOUGLAS
You know—I can barely remember who Sarge was. Remind me about him.

GRACIE
Ruby brought him back from Toronto.

DOUGLAS
When?

GRACIE
When she came home, of course.

DOUGLAS
When was that?

GRACIE
Don't you remember? The year you came back from the war—just before you started work at the furniture factory.

DOUGLAS
Oh, yes, of course.

GRACIE
The two of you used to sit here before supper...

(She falls quiet and smiles as if seeing it in her mind's eye.)

DOUGLAS
Side by side, like this?

GRACIE

Yes. From the kitchen I could hear his high little voice and your deep one, jabbering away. You were such pals.

(patting his hand)

It's a pity you never married and had children of your own, Harry. You were so good with them.

DOUGLAS

I suppose Sarge was like a son to me.

GRACIE

We both loved him, didn't we? The moment Bill left for work in the morning—

DOUGLAS

Bill?

GRACIE

My husband! The moment he was gone, I'd be over here. Giving Sarge his breakfast, reading to him, playing games with him.

DOUGLAS

Didn't he play with the neighborhood kids?

GRACIE

Well, you know, the other boys teased him so much.

DOUGLAS

Why did they tease him?—I can't remember.

GRACIE

Because... Because... Now I can't remember either!

DOUGLAS

Never mind.

GRACIE

(putting her head on his shoulder)

Sometimes I worry so, Harry.

DOUGLAS

(holding her awkwardly)

Worry about what?

GRACIE

Worry that this forgetting's a sign... That something's...wrong...

DOUGLAS

It's just our age.

GRACIE

You think so?

DOUGLAS

Yes. Don't worry.

(She smiles at him, takes another puzzle piece and sits close, holding his arm.)

GRACIE

Do you remember that night when you let him drink a whole glass of your beer?

DOUGLAS

Not exactly...

GRACIE

You got him singing something you'd picked up in the army... Remember?

DOUGLAS

No.

GRACIE

(starts singing)

Rosaleanna the pretty young lass, had a most remarkable ass, not rounded and pink, as you may possibly think: it was grey, had long ears and ate grass...

DOUGLAS

(looking distinctly uncomfortable)

I taught a child that?

GRACIE

Only the first verse.

DOUGLAS

I suppose he didn't know what he was singing.

GRACIE

No, not with all the beer he had in him.

DOUGLAS

Oh, good.

GRACIE

We laughed and laughed. Ruby was furious, though.

DOUGLAS

Because I made the boy drunk?

GRACIE

No. She thought that was funny. Remember—she was angry because in the middle of the song, he threw up on the carpet and she had to clean it.

(throws her piece on the table; almost crying)

Where does this go?!

DOUGLAS

(picking it up, putting it into her hand and guiding her to the right spot)

Here, I think.

GRACIE

Yes. Thank you, Harry!

(She throws her arms around his neck and gives him a kiss.)

DOUGLAS

What was the boy's real name?

GRACIE

(beat)

Isn't that silly—I can't remember. We always used to call him Sarge, didn't we; I don't know why.

DOUGLAS

He must've had another name.

GRACIE

(on the verge of tears)

I can't remember it, Harry!

DOUGLAS

(patting her arm)

Never mind. It'll come back to you. Or maybe I'll remember.

(He concentrates on the puzzle pieces, picks one up.)

DOUGLAS

What happened to the boy?

(He leans forward, looking intently at her. There's no response. She stands up and starts picking obsessively at the lint on her housecoat.)

DOUGLAS

Blossom? What happened to him?

(She looks at him blankly.)

GRACIE

Who?

DOUGLAS

Sarge.

GRACIE

Sarge?

DOUGLAS
We were just talking about him! You said Ruby brought him back from Toronto.

GRACIE
I did?

DOUGLAS
Yes!

GRACIE
Oh. Sarge, you say? I can't imagine who he might be.

(DOUGLAS gets up and stands in front of some family photos.)

DOUGLAS
Are any of these pictures of Sarge?

(GRACIE looks blankly at him again.)

DOUGLAS
(pointing)
This one—this little boy... Who's he?

GRACIE
That's you, Harry.
(beat)
Are you losing your memory, too?

DOUGLAS
I'm just tired, that's all.
(pointing)
What about that one?

GRACIE
The baby? That's my Tommy.

DOUGLAS
Not Sarge?

GRACIE
Harry! Don't you think I'd recognize my own son?!

DOUGLAS
Of course you would.
(beat)
Remind me about Tommy.

GRACIE
He died when he was only six months old. Of scarlet fever. It was just before Sarge came.

DOUGLAS
Did you have any other children?

GRACIE
How could you have forgotten, Harry?!

DOUGLAS
Yes, well... As I said, we tend to forget things as we grow older, don't we?

GRACIE
I suppose.
(beat)
So many things don't make sense any more, Harry. I try to puzzle them out, but it's as if some pieces were missing. They're just not there.
(beat)
Ruby says I'm going senile.

DOUGLAS
That's not very kind of her.

GRACIE
Do you think I am?

DOUGLAS
(beat)
No. No, of course not.

GRACIE
I'm so glad!
(He walks around the room looking at all the pictures.)

DOUGLAS
You're sure there are none of Sarge here?

GRACIE
Have you forgotten? She took them all away. She burnt them all.

DOUGLAS
Who did?

GRACIE
Ruby, of course!

DOUGLAS
(stopping in front of GRACIE, putting his hands on her shoulders)
Blossom, what happened to Sarge?

GRACIE
Don't you remember, Harry? We had to—

(Suddenly the room is flooded with light. Ruby, in nightgown and slippers, is at the door.)

RUBY

Gracie, I've told you to call me if you need anything at night.

GRACIE

I had to go to the bathroom.

RUBY

The bathroom's upstairs—this is the living room.

GRACIE

I just wanted to do the jigsaw, Ruby.

(She glances at DOUGLAS, causing RUBY to notice him for the first time.)

RUBY

What are you doing here?

DOUGLAS

Your sister invited me to help her with the jigsaw.

(GRACIE nods vigorously.)

RUBY

I'll thank you to leave my sister in peace.

DOUGLAS

I was only—

RUBY

I will not have her upset.

DOUGLAS

I'm sorry. I didn't mean—

GRACIE

We were talking about Sarge.

RUBY

Sarge!

DOUGLAS

Your son.

RUBY

What makes you think I have a son?

DOUGLAS

Your sister—

RUBY

My sister's confused. We had a little boy named Sarge who stayed with us for a time, yes, but he wasn't my son. He was a friend's child.

DOUGLAS

A friend's?

RUBY

Yes! And in any case, it's none of your business!
(taking Gracie by the elbow and steering her towards the door)

Back to bed, Gracie.

(She takes the key from the door and holds it in her hand,
obviously ready to lock up.)

RUBY

Coming, Mr. Clark?

(Blackout)

Scene 5

(Morning. The two sisters, in house-dresses, are
in the living room, having coffee in front of the
jigsaw. A pill bottle is on one side of the table.)

RUBY

(putting in a piece)

What did you tell Mr. Clark last night, about Sarge?

GRACIE

Mr. Clark?

RUBY

Our guest.

GRACIE

I didn't tell him anything.

RUBY

But he—

GRACIE

I haven't even seen him.
(trying to make a piece fit)

I was talking to Harry last night. You know, he's acting very strangely these days. He doesn't seem to remember anything. Do you think we should take him to the doctor?

(DOUGLAS comes down the stairs, unnoticed. He stops in front of the hall mirror; smooths his hair and adjusts his tie.)

RUBY

You mustn't bother our guests, Gracie!

GRACIE

I wasn't bothering anybody.
(taking the bottle of pills)
Time to take your pill, Ruby.

(She tries to open the lid, but can't. Her sister takes the bottle, opens it, and gets out a tablet. DOUGLAS, the picture of confidence, is about to open the door and enter the room.)

GRACIE

Remember what the doctor said?

(DOUGLAS freezes. He stands listening.)

RUBY

He said I had high blood pressure.

(RUBY takes the pill. She and her sister, jigsaw pieces in their hands, chat while looking at the puzzle.)

GRACIE

With proper treatment, her illness can be managed, at least for a while.

RUBY

For a long while.

GRACIE

She needs structure...a regular schedule.

RUBY

Eight hours sleep.

GRACIE

No excitement.

RUBY

He didn't say that—he just said take it easy.

GRACIE

Eventually, of course, she'll have to be put in some kind of institution.

RUBY

Nonsense! I will never move from this house!

GRACIE

Until then, let her have familiar things around her so she doesn't become disoriented.

RUBY

What?

GRACIE

I know you'll take care of her as long as you can, he said.

RUBY

What are you talking about?

GRACIE

But there'll come a time when it'll be too much for you.

RUBY

What will be too much?

GRACIE

She won't be able to feed herself, you know. Or even go to the toilet alone. One day she won't even recognize you.

RUBY

Oh, Gracie, the doctor wasn't talking about—

(She stops abruptly.)

GRACIE

Don't worry, Ruby! I'll never leave you. I'll always be here.

(She hugs her sister, then returns to the puzzle and tries to jam in a piece.)

GRACIE

Why won't this fit?!

RUBY

Here, let me help you.

(DOUGLAS enters.)

DOUGLAS

Good morning, ladies.

GRACIE

Morning!

RUBY

Good morning, Mr. Clark. Your breakfast is waiting. This way.

(She leads him to the dining room; GRACIE trots after them.)

DOUGLAS

I hope I haven't put you to too much trouble.

RUBY

There's tea, coffee, hot and cold cereal, toast, muffins... Please help yourself.

(DOUGLAS sits down, takes a muffin and pours himself a coffee.)

RUBY

Is that all you want, just coffee and a muffin?

DOUGLAS

Yes, thanks. I don't eat much in the morning.

RUBY

You've paid for a substantial breakfast, Mr. Clark. You should have one.

DOUGLAS

This really is all I want. Will you sit with me, ladies?

GRACIE

(plopping herself down next to him)

Yes.

RUBY

Gracie!

(GRACIE gives her sister a smug smile; RUBY sits reluctantly across from him. During the following conversation, GRACIE tucks a napkin in at DOUGLAS'S neck, cuts and butters his muffin, goes and gets her coffee cup, then shares breakfast with him.)

DOUGLAS

I'm sorry about the little misunderstanding last night.

RUBY

I told you the living room's out of bounds.

DOUGLAS

Your sister invited me in.

RUBY

She mistook you for our brother.

DOUGLAS

I know. I wasn't sure what I should do. I hope I wasn't wrong to humour her?

RUBY

I apologize if she was a problem.

DOUGLAS
She wasn't. We had a nice chat, didn't we, Blossom?

(RUBY looks scandalized at his use of the name.)

GRACIE
(smiling coyly)
Yes.

RUBY
Blossom?! Mr. Clark, may I introduce my sister, Mrs. Johnson?

DOUGLAS
(winking at GRACIE)
How do you do, Mrs. Johnson?

GRACIE
(giggling)
How do you do.

RUBY
May I ask what it was you two were chatting about?

DOUGLAS
The pictures in the living room. You have quite a collection.

RUBY
They're mostly Gracie's.

DOUGLAS
I envy you both.

RUBY
Why?

DOUGLAS
You've documented the past.

RUBY
Not intentionally, I assure you.

DOUGLAS
Unintentionally, then.

RUBY
If you live as long as we have, photos accumulate. Dust catchers, I call them.

DOUGLAS
Still, I wish I had the same. I know almost nothing about my family tree.

RUBY
Ours, I'm happy to say, is relentlessly ordinary.

DOUGLAS
 No skeletons in the closet?

RUBY
 None.

DOUGLAS
 Genealogy's fascinating, isn't it? It's like putting together the pieces of a puzzle.

RUBY
 It's never held any attraction for me. People who start snooping into the past often find things they'd be better off not knowing.

DOUGLAS
 And sometimes they find things that change their lives for the better. Just last week one of my teachers was reunited with her birth-mother. It was a very happy occasion.

RUBY
 I had a friend once—adopted. When she grew up, she couldn't rest until she found what she called her "real" parents. She discovered her mother and father were not at all the fine folk she imagined. In fact, they were both drunkards.

DOUGLAS
 I admit that would be hard to take, but wasn't she happier knowing the truth?

RUBY
 Not at all.

GRACIE
 (with relish)
 She took to drink herself.

RUBY
 Some things are better left alone.

DOUGLAS
 Sometimes, I suppose, but not always. I do a fair amount of counselling at school; I see a lot of pain—

RUBY
 Do you enjoy being a voyeur?

DOUGLAS
 Students come to me—there's no compulsion. Getting things out in the open, sharing their problems with someone they can trust, helps them a great deal.

RUBY
 Call me old-fashioned, but I believe people should solve their own problems.

DOUGLAS
 And if they can't?

RUBY

Well then, they'll just have to live with them. Not everything that's broken can be fixed.

(beat)

Have you finished, Mr. Clark?

DOUGLAS

(getting up)

That was delicious. Thank you.

(GRACIE jumps up, takes his arm.)

GRACIE

Come and help me with the puzzle.

RUBY

Gracie!

GRACIE

Ruby!

(DOUGLAS smiles apologetically at RUBY and allows himself to be led into the living room, where he sits beside GRACIE. RUBY is left at the table; she starts to collect and take away the dirty dishes.)

GRACIE

(indicating a space in the puzzle)

Which piece goes here?

DOUGLAS

Umm... This one, I think.

GRACIE

(clumsily trying to fit it in)

No, it doesn't. It won't fit.

(petulantly throwing it on the floor)

You gave me the wrong one!

(Hearing GRACIE'S voice rise, RUBY starts irritably for the living room.)

DOUGLAS

(picking it up)

You have to turn it around.

(RUBY watches from the doorway as he takes her hand to put the piece in; she makes a fist.)

DOUGLAS

Aren't you going to help me? I'd like it if you did. Please?

(She opens her hand and takes the piece.)

DOUGLAS

(guiding her hand)

It goes like this. See?

(They put the piece in. GRACIE hugs him.)

GRACIE

We did it!

RUBY

(coming into the room)

You're a model of patience, Mr. Clark.

DOUGLAS

I often have to deal with people who're upset. I find getting upset myself counterproductive.

(DOUGLAS looks up at RUBY and smiles. A small picture of a young woman catches his eye.)

DOUGLAS

That picture behind you... Is it of you, by any chance?

RUBY

Yes.

DOUGLAS

You were a beautiful young woman, Mrs. Lee. Mind you, you still are very good-looking.

RUBY

Flattery will get you nowhere, Mr. Clark.

DOUGLAS

If you don't mind me asking, how old were you when that was taken?

RUBY

In my early twenties. Why?

DOUGLAS

Just wondering.

RUBY

I can't imagine why you'd be interested.

DOUGLAS

Photography's one of my hobbies.

RUBY

Um. I never could bear having my picture taken. I always look such a frump.

DOUGLAS

Pictures reveal character. I would say, from yours,
(looking at it and back to her)
that you were very sweet and innocent.

(GRACIE giggles.)

RUBY

Perhaps at one point. But not when that picture was taken.

DOUGLAS

The camera never lies.

RUBY

On the contrary, Mr. Clark, it lies all the time. We've both seen serial killers who look like every mother's dream for her daughter.

DOUGLAS

At least grant me that it preserves our memories.

RUBY

It preserves only the moment. What lies behind the moment is hidden.

DOUGLAS

Not always.

RUBY

Most of the time.

DOUGLAS

I bet I could guess the circumstances behind that picture.

RUBY

Oh no, you couldn't.

DOUGLAS

Your sister told me last night that as a young woman you went to Toronto.

RUBY

(glancing furiously at GRACIE)

What?

GRACIE

Well, you did, Ruby!

DOUGLAS

You found a job there, I presume.

Naturally. RUBY

But after a while you came back. Why? DOUGLAS

Because I wanted to. RUBY

It seems to me there's an air of sadness about that picture. DOUGLAS

Nonsense! RUBY

As if you'd lost something... DOUGLAS:

The only thing I'd lost that day was a game of tennis at the Club. RUBY

It was just after Sarge went away. GRACIE

It was not, it was just before. Not that it matters. In fact, Mr. Clark, that picture was taken to please my mother. We asked her what she wanted for her birthday and she said, "A picture of each of you." RUBY
(pointing)

There's Harry over there, and Gracie.

And who's he? DOUGLAS
(pointing to another picture)

My husband. RUBY

Poor Sam. GRACIE

Why poor? RUBY
(glaring at her)

(GRACIE opens her mouth to answer, but is cut off.)

Never mind. Come along, Gracie. RUBY

(She goes to the coffee table and bends over to pick up the dirty cup just as GRACIE starts to get up. RUBY'S arm is bumped and coffee spills on GRACIE'S front.)

RUBY

Now look what you've done!

(DOUGLAS steps forward with a handkerchief; GRACIE heads towards him.)

RUBY

(waving DOUGLAS away)

It'll have to be washed off. This way, Gracie.

(Cup in hand, RUBY exits towards the kitchen, GRACIE in tow.)

GRACIE

I didn't mean to do it, Ruby!

(DOUGLAS watches them go. (Their voices and the sound of water can be heard in the background.) He idly walks to the mantle and picks up the picture of Ruby as a young woman. He goes over to the other side of the room where the light is better, and pensively looks at it. Suddenly he hears the women coming back. In a panic, since he's too far to return the picture without being seen, he stuffs it into his pocket.)

RUBY

It's a good thing the dress has a pattern. You can hardly see—

(stopping)

Still here, Mr. Clark?

DOUGLAS

Ah, yes. I didn't have a chance to mention it before but... I'd like to invite you and your sister to The Church tonight.

RUBY

We don't go to church any more.

DOUGLAS

I mean the Church Restaurant. I made enquiries. I was told it was the best in town.

RUBY

Why would you want to take us to dinner?

DOUGLAS

I'm by myself here in Stratford. I'd enjoy your company.

RUBY

But why? We're not your friends.

GRACIE
Yes, we are!

DOUGLAS
It'd be a pleasure for me—I'm divorced, I live alone... And I thought you might like it, too. You said you hadn't eaten out much recently.

GRACIE
(clapping her hands)
We're going to eat out!

RUBY
Wait a moment, Gracie. I'm sorry, Mr. Clark, but I must decline your invitation.

DOUGLAS
Why?

RUBY
Gracie doesn't like going out.

GRACIE
Yes, I do! I want to go out, but you never take me!

RUBY
You can't be trusted to behave yourself.

GRACIE
I'll be good!

RUBY
That's what you said last time.

GRACIE
Why did you drag me to that strange place?

RUBY
We've known the Reynolds for years.

GRACIE
You might have, but I'd never met them before.

RUBY
I don't think you should go.

(GRACIE stands to one side, pouting.)

DOUGLAS
It would be a treat for her.

GRACIE
Yes!

DOUGLAS
I hear The Church is very nice, very elegant.

RUBY
That's not the point.

DOUGLAS
I understand the circumstances, but surely, between the two of us...

GRACIE
I want to go!

DOUGLAS
And the evening would be on me, of course.

RUBY
Do you have any idea how expensive it is?

DOUGLAS:
I can afford it.

GRACIE
He has a green Jag!

RUBY
Have you pay for me? No.

DOUGLAS
You'd be doing me a favour.

GRACIE
Both of us a favour!

RUBY
No. Absolutely not!

GRACIE
Please...

DOUGLAS
You can see how much she wants to go.

GRACIE
Yes!

RUBY
I don't think it's a good idea.

GRACIE
Ruby...!

DOUGLAS

Would you permit me to take her myself, then? I'm more than willing.

(GRACIE gives a little cry of delight and rushes over to DOUGLAS.)

RUBY

Go alone with her?!

DOUGLAS

Why not?

(GRACIE, holding onto DOUGLAS'S arm, is practically dancing with joy. Both of them face RUBY.)

RUBY

(beat)
Alright, alright! We'll all go!

(Blackout)

Scene 6

(Restaurant. Spotlight on a table. Darkness in the background. RUBY comes in and throws her purse down on the table, obviously angry.)

RUBY

"Would you and your mother like to put your coats here!" Imagine—he thought we were related!

DOUGLAS

He said we had the same mouth.

GRACIE

You do.

RUBY

He probably thought he was being clever. Well, he can keep his personal comments to himself.

(DOUGLAS pulls out chairs for them, sits them down, then sits down himself.)

DOUGLAS

May I get you ladies a drink from the bar?

RUBY

(still irritated)
Sherry, please. Bristol Cream.

Mrs. Johnson? DOUGLAS

Nothing for my sister. RUBY

Ruby! GRACIE

Drink doesn't agree with you, Gracie. RUBY

Surely just this one time... If she wants... DOUGLAS

I do! GRACIE

(hesitating)
Oh, alright. Sherry for her, too. RUBY

(GRACIE giggles with delight. DOUGLAS goes off.)

(looking around)
It hasn't changed much, has it? RUBY

You used to love coming here. GRACIE

When was the last time? Your 40th wedding anniversary, wasn't it? The four of us sat...over there. RUBY

You got into an argument with Bill. GRACIE

What a mean, nasty little man he was. I don't know why you ever married him. RUBY

He asked me to. GRACIE

(She begins to play with her cup and saucer.)

(taking them from her with a practiced hand and putting them to one side)
Don't play with those, Gracie, or you'll break them. RUBY

GRACIE
 Sam was nice.

RUBY
 Yes. He let me do whatever I wanted. Remember that trip I took to England?

GRACIE
 You were away for almost a year.

RUBY
 I was having such a good time—

GRACIE
 Without him.

RUBY
 —I didn't want to come back.

GRACIE
 You took advantage of him.

RUBY
 That's what men are for, Gracie. If you don't, they'll take advantage of you.

GRACIE
 I like Mr. Clark. And I think he likes me, too.

RUBY
 I have to admit it was generous of him to invite us here. I don't understand why he wanted to, mind you.

GRACIE
 He's a nice man.

(DOUGLAS approaches, with two sherries and a scotch and soda.)

RUBY
 (looking at him)
 I suppose. Anyway, what does it matter? We'll just enjoy ourselves.

DOUGLAS
 Here are our drinks, and I've ordered champagne, for later.

RUBY
 You shouldn't have!

DOUGLAS
 Why not? Don't worry, Mrs. Lee, the night's on me. Just enjoy.

(He smiles at both the sisters, and raises his glass. They follow suit.)

Cheers! DOUGLAS

Cheers! RUBY/GRACIE

To family! DOUGLAS

To family, Mr. Clark? RUBY

Please call me Douglas. DOUGLAS

I prefer Mr. Clark, if you don't mind.
(beat)
I thought you said you were divorced? RUBY

I am, unfortunately. DOUGLAS

Why unfortunately? RUBY

I don't get to see my children as much as I'd like to. My wife has re-married and lives on the West Coast. DOUGLAS

How many children do you have? GRACIE

Two boys. DOUGLAS

Children, boys especially, are very resilient. I wouldn't worry, if I were you. I'm sure they're happy in their new family. RUBY

But I'm their father! DOUGLAS

Of course. But you're not there and someone else is. RUBY

(GRACIE is getting more restless; beginning to play with the cup and saucer again. Without a word, RUBY moves them away from her.)

Do you have any children? DOUGLAS

RUBY
No. I married late. My husband and I travelled a great deal. Children seemed superfluous.

DOUGLAS
So you never had any?

RUBY
I told you: no.

GRACIE
She doesn't like children.

DOUGLAS
You don't?

RUBY
Truthfully, no; I find them a nuisance.

DOUGLAS
But if you don't like children, why did you have Sarge staying with you?

RUBY
I told you—as a favour to a friend.

(GRACIE gets up.)

RUBY
Sit down, Gracie.

(She does.)

RUBY
(turning to DOUGLAS)
We'd better get her some food.

DOUGLAS
(getting up and going to GRACIE'S chair)
Would you like to come to the buffet with me?

(GRACIE smiles coquettishly and starts to get up.)

RUBY
No. She'd find the choices too bewildering. Please stay here with her and I'll bring something back.

(DOUGLAS smiles at GRACIE and shrugs. She sits back down; he stands until her sister leaves for the buffet, then sits down again, too. GRACIE takes a big sip of her Bristol Cream.)

DOUGLAS
How's the sherry?

Delicious.

GRACIE

(They smile conspiratorially at each other. She polishes it off.)

What's that you're drinking?

GRACIE

Scotch and soda.

DOUGLAS

Could I have a little taste?

GRACIE

(He hands her the glass; she takes a sip.)

It makes me feel...all warm inside. Could I have some more?

GRACIE

Just a bit.

DOUGLAS
(holding it for her)

(She takes a little more than a bit. He pulls the glass away and casually puts it out of her reach.)

This place's very nice.

DOUGLAS
(looking around)

Ruby's husband used to bring us here all the time.

GRACIE

Sam?

DOUGLAS

He was rich, like you. Ruby married him so she could stay home and not work.

GRACIE

Didn't she like her job?

DOUGLAS

No. She hated it.

GRACIE

What did she do?

DOUGLAS

She was a secretary at the furniture factory.

GRACIE

DOUGLAS
How old was she when she married Sam?

GRACIE
Old. Almost forty.

DOUGLAS
Did he know about Sarge?

GRACIE
No. Anyway, he wouldn't have been interested. He had two grown-up children of his own.
(leans over, whispers)
He left all his money to them.

DOUGLAS
Your poor sister!

GRACIE
She used enough of it while he lived.

(RUBY returns with two plates, little for her sister, more for herself.)

DOUGLAS
That looks delicious.

(She sits down. Douglas makes no move to get up and get his own.)

RUBY
Aren't you going to get something for yourself?

DOUGLAS
Ah, yes, of course.
(rising)
If you'll excuse me...

(He smiles and goes off.)

RUBY
(tucking the napkin under GRACIE'S chin)
Would you like me to feed you, Gracie?

GRACIE
I don't know why you think I can't do things for myself.

RUBY
Well, at least let me cut things up for you.

(Standing up, she cuts the food.)

GRACIE
 You have more than I do.

RUBY
 You know I have a bigger appetite.

GRACIE
 You're not fair!

RUBY
 You can have more later if you want. Here—try this.

(GRACIE opens her mouth and RUBY pops in a shrimp.)

GRACIE
 Umm!

RUBY
 It's shrimp. And I got you some lobster, and roast beef, and devilled eggs, and asparagus...All your favourites.

(RUBY sits down. GRACIE starts to eat properly enough, but gets more absent minded and sloppy with each mouthful. RUBY takes the fork from her, and begins to feed her.)

RUBY
 Try this egg.

(After a few mouthfuls, GRACIE refuses to eat. She keeps her mouth tightly closed and pushes RUBY'S hand away.)

RUBY
 Why are you pushing my hand away?

GRACIE
 I want to go home.

RUBY
 But you haven't finished your meal.

GRACIE
 I don't want to finish my meal, I want to go home.

RUBY
 Please, Gracie, let me enjoy myself just this once!

GRACIE
 I need to go home. It's suppertime. I need to feed the baby.

RUBY
 What baby?

Sarge. GRACIE

Sarge has gone away, Gracie. Remember? RUBY

He has not! GRACIE

Yes, he has. You came one morning, remember, and he wasn't there. RUBY

What did you do with him? GRACIE

You know what I did! RUBY

He's waiting for me. He needs to be fed. GRACIE
(starting to get up)

He doesn't. RUBY
(pushing her down)

You never take care of him properly! You always leave him to me or to Mother to take care of— GRACIE

Please, Gracie...] [RUBY

—I don't know what you'd do without us—you wouldn't be able to look after him yourself! GRACIE

Stop this nonsense! RUBY

You don't love him! GRACIE

That's enough! RUBY
(banging her fist on the table)

Give him to me! GRACIE

I would if I could! RUBY

GRACIE
Why did my baby die, when I loved him so much?! Why?

RUBY
I don't know!

GRACIE
You don't deserve to have a child!

RUBY
How dare you—

(She falls silent as DOUGLAS reappears, puts down his plate.)

DOUGLAS
What's the matter?

GRACIE
You should be ashamed of yourself!

DOUGLAS
Pardon?

RUBY
Be quiet, Gracie!

GRACIE
I want to go home!

DOUGLAS
But why? What did I—

RUBY
It's nothing you did. She's back in the past.

GRACIE
It's time to feed Sarge!

RUBY
It is not!

GRACIE
(knocking over cutlery as she stands up)
Take me home!

(RUBY is glancing around, embarrassed. She gets up and tries to seat her sister.)

RUBY
Sit down!

No!

GRACIE

DOUGLAS
(smiling confidently as he gets between the two sisters)

Here—let me. Blossom—Sarge isn't at home.

GRACIE
(pulling her hands away)

He is! He's waiting for me!

DOUGLAS

No, he isn't.

GRACIE

He needs me!

DOUGLAS

No, he doesn't. He isn't a baby anymore. He's all grown up. He can take care of himself.

[RUBY

Don't bother trying to reason with her!]

GRACIE

He can't!

DOUGLAS

He can.

GRACIE

He's hungry. He needs to be fed!

DOUGLAS

Shh! Now just calm down!

GRACIE

I have to get back right now!

(She pulls away. DOUGLAS takes her by the shoulders.)

GRACIE

Let go of me!

[RUBY

You don't know how to handle her!]

(DOUGLAS drops his hands.)

GRACIE

I want to go home!

You're only making things worse!] [RUBY

I tell you, he's not at home! DOUGLAS

He is! GRACIE

We'd better go!] [RUBY

He isn't! DOUGLAS

Take us home!] [RUBY
(grabbing DOUGLAS by the arm)

Then what have you done with him?! GRACIE

We're going home, Gracie!] [RUBY
(taking GRACIE'S arm)

Where is he?! Where is he?! GRACIE
(shaking her off and pounding on DOUGLAS's chest)

He's here! DOUGLAS

Here?! RUBY

Where?! GRACIE
(looking around the restaurant frantically)

(He turns GRACIE around to face him.)

I'm Sarge. DOUGLAS

(He turns and looks at his mother.)

(Blackout.)

End of ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Scene 1

(DOUGLAS is pacing up and down in the living room. (The puzzle is, except for a few missing pieces, complete.) He stops as RUBY comes down the stairs and enters.

RUBY

I've put her to bed.
Sit down. (gesturing)

(She stands over him.)

RUBY

Now, do you mind telling me why you're here?

DOUGLAS

(he's been rehearsing this)

I felt there were some pieces missing from my life. I came to find them.

RUBY

What's that supposed to mean?

DOUGLAS

My adopted mother died not long ago. I realized, if I wanted to contact you, I might not have much time.

RUBY

I'm not your mother!

DOUGLAS

I found the papers.

(He takes them from his inner pocket and holds them out to her)

RUBY

Put those away!

(He does.)

RUBY

I should've guessed who you were...but I never expected... Why did you come back?

DOUGLAS

To find out the family medical history.

RUBY

Is that your excuse!

Excuse? What do you mean?

DOUGLAS

What you really wanted was to meet me.

RUBY

(They lock eyes. DOUGLAS looks down.)

Alright. Maybe. But not consciously!

DOUGLAS

(RUBY laughs.)

It wasn't until I saw the pictures that I realized...I realized it wasn't actually medical information I was after, it was family.

DOUGLAS

You were adopted into a family.

RUBY

Yes. But suddenly I saw myself like a...I don't know, like a grafted tree! I needed to find out where my roots were.

DOUGLAS

And how did you think that would help you?

RUBY

(beat)

I'm not sure.

DOUGLAS

Why didn't you write beforehand?

RUBY

I was afraid you'd...I was afraid you'd refuse to see me.

DOUGLAS

I would have.

RUBY

I knew I was taking a chance, coming, but I thought—

DOUGLAS

You didn't think!

RUBY

—we're both adults, we're civilized people. We can handle this matter in a rational way.

DOUGLAS

(short laugh)

Can we really?

RUBY

DOUGLAS

This may be our only opportunity to get to know each other. If we lose it, it may be too late.

RUBY

You seem in a great hurry to get me off the scene. You're not expecting an inheritance, are you?

DOUGLAS

You're impossible!

RUBY

Because I refuse to lie to you? To tell you how happy I am to see you, when in fact I'm not? To let you treat me like your mother, when in fact that's not the relationship we have?

DOUGLAS

We could work at it.

RUBY

I already have one grown-up child to take care of. I haven't got the energy for another.

DOUGLAS

Why do you insist on seeing me as a burden?

RUBY

Because you want from me what I can't give!

DOUGLAS

(beat)

All I want from you are the facts.

RUBY

Facts?

DOUGLAS

The name on the adoption papers is Harold. Was I named after my uncle?

RUBY

Yes.

DOUGLAS

Then why was I called Sarge?

RUBY

Because you used to wear Harry's cap, when he came home from the war.

DOUGLAS

Do I have any brothers and sisters?

RUBY

No.

Who's my father?

DOUGLAS

(She turns her back on him.)

Why did you give me away?

DOUGLAS

RUBY
(turning to face him)

Why do you need to know all this? As you've pointed out to me, you've lived your life quite successfully so far—without knowing.

DOUGLAS
(gesturing at the puzzle)

I want to put all the pieces of my life back together.

RUBY

You should've told me who you were, right from the beginning.

DOUGLAS

I thought that once you got to know me, once you understood what I'd made of myself...

RUBY

I'd be impressed enough to admit you were my son?

DOUGLAS

Yes.

RUBY

That's not the way it works. It's good that you've made a success of your life, but it doesn't concern me one way or the other.

DOUGLAS

Perhaps I was wrong, but I also assumed, if I gave you some time to get to know me, it would be less of a shock.

RUBY

Resurrection from the dead is always a shock.

DOUGLAS

Did you think I was dead?

RUBY

To be truthful, I never thought of you at all. I'd forgotten about you completely.

DOUGLAS

(beat)

Did I mean so little to you?

RUBY

You meant nothing to me.

(DOUGLAS stands up slowly.)

DOUGLAS

Well. Now I know.

RUBY

Yes.

(moving to the door)

Good night.

DOUGLAS

At least tell me something about my past.

RUBY

I can't remember so far back.

DOUGLAS

Of course you can! You're not senile.

RUBY

No. But I really can't help you. Good night.

DOUGLAS

You have to give me something...

RUBY

I have to? And how do you propose to make me, Mr. Clark?

DOUGLAS

You have to. You owe it to me.

RUBY

I owe you nothing.

DOUGLAS

I have a right to know...

(moving to block the doorway)

And I won't let you leave until you tell me!

RUBY

(sitting down)

I can stay here forever, Mr. Clark, but I don't think you can.

DOUGLAS

(beat)

Alright. Eventually I'll have to leave. But I'll come back here as often as it takes. I'll phone, I'll write...

RUBY

I thought this was going to be a rational discussion.

Please! DOUGLAS

No. RUBY

I'll go away—and never bother you again—isn't that what you want?—if you just answer a few questions. DOUGLAS

Why should I? RUBY

So I'll leave you alone. DOUGLAS

(A pause.)

There's no other way of getting rid of me. DOUGLAS

(A pause.)

Just a few facts, then I'll go. DOUGLAS

And never come back? RUBY

I promise. DOUGLAS

(beat) RUBY

What do you want to know?

(standing over her) DOUGLAS

Who was my father?

(beat) RUBY

I don't... DOUGLAS

Who?! DOUGLAS

He was...someone I met at a dance. RUBY

In Toronto? DOUGLAS

Yes. RUBY

What was his name? DOUGLAS

Mike. And don't bother asking me his last name—I really have forgotten it. RUBY

Never mind for now. What did he do? DOUGLAS

He told me he was a painter. RUBY

An artist? DOUGLAS

No. A house painter. Perhaps not as interesting from your point of view, but a perfectly respectable occupation. RUBY

What was he like? DOUGLAS

I can't really say. We only went out a few times. He seemed charming enough—until he found out I was pregnant. RUBY

He abandoned you? DOUGLAS

It turned out he was married already. RUBY

Did you ever see him again? DOUGLAS

Once. He turned away, pretended he didn't know me. I had to handle everything—alone. RUBY

What did you do? DOUGLAS

What girls like me did in those days. When I began to show, I went to a home for unwed mothers. RUBY

Which one? DOUGLAS

RUBY
How should I know! It was all so long ago.

DOUGLAS
Is my father still alive?

RUBY
Hopefully not.

DOUGLAS
You don't know!

RUBY
And I don't care. He was a despicable man. He knew I was innocent—a small-town girl. He took advantage of me.

DOUGLAS
You could've had an abortion.

RUBY
It was illegal in those days. I certainly didn't want to trust some back room butcher with my life.

DOUGLAS
Didn't you ever care for me, even a little?

RUBY
Well, you were cute at the beginning—

DOUGLAS
Cute!

RUBY
—but as you grew, you reminded me of him.

DOUGLAS
Your sister said I looked like Harry.

RUBY
Fortunately.

DOUGLAS
Why did you give me away?

(RUBY looks at him impassively.)

DOUGLAS
Why?

RUBY
I had to work. Mom said she was too old to deal with a young child. Gracie'd moved out to the country.

I see. DOUGLAS

You were an inconvenience. RUBY

Pardon? An inconvenience? DOUGLAS

Yes. RUBY

Oh. So you just gave me away, like a dog you didn't want anymore? What did you do, take me to the pound? DOUGLAS

Don't be stupid. You went to a good home. Lucky for you, I heard about a couple in Toronto. RUBY

Heard about? You mean you didn't know them? DOUGLAS

I knew they were rich, and that they desperately wanted a child to adopt. What else did I need to know? RUBY

Did you at least meet them? DOUGLAS

Just when they came to pick you up. Everything else was handled through their lawyer. RUBY

So you had no idea what kind of people they were! DOUGLAS

They didn't mistreat you, did they? RUBY

No—I was their pride and joy. They gave me the best of everything. DOUGLAS

So why are you complaining? RUBY

Yes, the Clarks loved me. I worked hard to make sure they loved me. I was a model child. Always top of my class. Prize-winning athlete. President of the student council. Because I was terrified! Terrified that if I wasn't good—the best—they'd give me away, just like you did. DOUGLAS

RUBY

Don't bother trying to make me feel guilty.

DOUGLAS

They told me I had to forget the past, that I couldn't go home again.

RUBY

They gave you a far better life than I could have.

DOUGLAS

Do you have any idea how many nights I spent crying for you?

RUBY

But you got over it, as I knew you would.

DOUGLAS

I remember when the Clarks came to get me. You had to pry my hands off the bannister, finger by finger. I was carried, kicking and screaming, to the car.

RUBY

You were five. I was lucky to find a place for you at all. You might have ended up in an orphanage.

DOUGLAS

Why did you give me away?!

RUBY

I told you—I had to work! There was no one to take care of you.

DOUGLAS

What about Gracie?

RUBY

She wanted to adopt you. In fact, that's why I kept you in the first place. For her.

DOUGLAS

She wanted to adopt me?

RUBY

Yes. It was all settled.

DOUGLAS

Then why didn't she?!

RUBY

Her husband decided he didn't want a bastard in the house.

DOUGLAS

Thank you.

(beat)

Do you think I have no feelings?!

RUBY

I thought you said all you wanted were the facts. Have you changed your mind? Do I have to take your feelings into account now, as well?

DOUGLAS

It's just as well you didn't bring me up. I might've become like you.

RUBY

Realistic and self-reliant?

DOUGLAS

Hard and cold.

RUBY

I kept you as long as I could, in spite of the snickering of the neighbours, the speculation, the sneers.

DOUGLAS

You could've moved away.

RUBY

That's easy for you to say! I had no money! And I was saddled with you. You have no idea, do you, what it was like in those days for an unmarried mother.

DOUGLAS

I can imagine.

RUBY

No. You can't. Dad died soon after I came back—Mom said from shame.

DOUGLAS

When you gave me up—didn't you ever wonder?

RUBY

Wonder what?

DOUGLAS

How I was getting along!

RUBY

No.

DOUGLAS

Didn't you ever try to get in contact?

RUBY

What for? I knew you were in good hands.

DOUGLAS

You're a monster.

RUBY

Am I?! You come here, dredging up the past... What good will it do either of us?! You hound me and hound me...

DOUGLAS

I have a right to know!

RUBY

Tell me—what exactly is it you want from me?

DOUGLAS

(beat)

I want you to acknowledge me.

RUBY

Acknowledge you? What does that mean?

DOUGLAS

It means you admit I'm your son. It means you recognize me as part of the family. It means you...you tell me you didn't want to give me away.

RUBY

But I did.

DOUGLAS

(beat)

What kind of a mother are you?

RUBY

Not up to your standards, I see.

DOUGLAS

Do you think bringing a child into the world involves no responsibility?

RUBY

I gave you food and shelter.

DOUGLAS

You know as well as I do that isn't enough!

(RUBY shrugs.)

DOUGLAS

Do you know what it's like to be given away? To live with the knowledge that you weren't loved, weren't wanted? That you were cut out of someone's life like so much dead wood?

RUBY

Surely you've outgrown your hurt feelings by now.

DOUGLAS

You never outgrow rejection.

RUBY

Well, I can't help that.

DOUGLAS

At least admit what you did to me!

RUBY

What I did to you?! Have you ever, ever, thought what it was like for me?!

(She gets up in her turn, begins to pace up and down.)

RUBY

I went to Toronto when I was sixteen. I thought I deserved more than a small town could offer. I had a beautiful voice, everybody said so. I got a job waitressing; I was saving money for voice lessons. I was lonely, I had no friends. Then one of the girls at work invited me to come to a dance with her. And yes, that's where I met your father.

(She stops; looks off into space as if seeing the event.)

He... He told me how pretty I was. I was flattered! He danced with me. He was a good dancer. I let him buy me a drink. I wasn't used to drinking; it didn't take much to...to... He offered to drive me home, but we... we didn't go home. We stayed in the... in the car... If only I hadn't... If only...

Do you know what it's like to carry a child you don't want?! No, of course you don't! Or what it's like to come home and...face your parents. I took a taxi from the station, pretending not to see the...the smirk on the driver's face. It was a hot afternoon; everyone was out on their porches. I saw their heads...turn ...as I went by. Finally we arrived at the house. Mom and Dad and Harry stood stone-faced in the doorway, just...just staring at me. Gracie was the only one... She came right out to the cab. "Welcome home, Ruby," she said. And she kissed me, and she took you in her arms and kissed you.

To be an unwed mother at that time, in this town, was to be trash! All the self-appointed moral guardians of the community proclaimed themselves shocked by my behaviour. It wasn't the man's fault, oh no! I must've asked for it. Led him on. Every time I see one of those self-righteous hypocrites on the street, even today, I want to spit!

I was made to feel like a leper. My girlfriends from before weren't allowed to talk to me. As if pregnancy might be contagious, might jump from me to them. The boys I'd known in high school—they'd be standing in knots along the main street. Watching me. They'd whistle. Call out—"Hey, Ruby! What about giving some to me, too?" They'd try and lift my skirt as I went by.

I'd come into a store. Sudden silence. Some people'd turn their backs. Then the giggling'd start. The whispering. "Look—Ruby's back! With a kid! Guess she couldn't keep her panties on in the big city. Too bad, eh?,,,Oh, sorry, Ruby. Didn't know you could hear us..."

When I took you to the park, the other young mothers scooped up their kids so they wouldn't have to play with you. As if you were unclean, as if they didn't know what their precious darlings might pick up from you. They'd leave, twittering among themselves, ignoring us, and we'd be left alone. You holding my hand, looking up at me as if to ask why, what you'd done wrong. And looking back into your innocent eyes, seeing the hurt, I'd feel my heart breaking for you. Then as you got older, you started to come home crying. You wanted to know what "bastard" meant. Why the other kids wouldn't let you play with them.

(DOUGLAS sits down, puts his head in his hands.)

RUBY

The day before the Clarks came for you, I heard boys yelling outside. They were following you, taunting you. "Hey, Sarge—where's your father?" I screamed at them to let you alone. They ran away laughing. That's when I knew for sure I'd made the right decision. And after you left, the same people who'd been telling and telling me I should give you up, wagged their stupid sanctimonious heads and called me an unnatural mother for actually doing it.

Life continued. All the people I'd gone to high school with paired off. No one wanted used goods. Harry had gotten me a job at the factory where he worked. Filing, typing, bringing the boss his coffee. Ignoring the innuendo, the groping hands in the back rooms. Finally Sam came along. A widower from out of town. Lonely. Willing to overlook the past. He made a respectable woman out of me.

He died ten years ago; I opened a bed and breakfast. I thought I'd put the past behind me. Until you came.

(She looks at him.)

DOUGLAS

I'm...sorry.

RUBY

Sorry—what an inadequate word!

DOUGLAS

I never realized...

RUBY

Well, now you do. And now perhaps you understand why I didn't want you then. And I don't now. So leave me alone.

(DOUGLAS stumbles from the room, too upset to notice GRACIE, standing in the shadows of the hallway in her nightclothes, hands over her ears. RUBY, exhausted, sits down on the sofa, head in hands. She looks up.)

RUBY

I will not cry!

(She puts her head down and begins to. GRACIE comes in, and puts her arms around her from behind.)

GRACIE

Don't cry, Ruby.

(Startled, RUBY looks up. She's relieved to see her sister as opposed to DOUGLAS.)

GRACIE

I'm here. I'll take care of you.

RUBY

(dabbing her eyes)

What are you doing up?!

GRACIE

I couldn't sleep, with you two shouting.

RUBY

What did you hear?

GRACIE

Nothing. I covered my ears.

RUBY

If I had known, known for one minute, who he was, I'd never have let him into this house!

(GRACIE sits down with her sister and takes her in her arms.
Throughout the rest of the scene she's very restless, hyped up by all
the excitement of the evening. Her hands are rarely still, touching
RUBY, playing with her clothes, picking at a cushion.)

GRACIE

Shhh!

RUBY

Why did he have to come back?!

GRACIE

This is his home.

RUBY

It is not! He has no right to be here!

GRACIE

Why don't you like him any more?

RUBY

He's...manipulating.

GRACIE

He didn't use to be like that.

RUBY

I can't even remember what he was like!

GRACIE

He was funny and sweet...

RUBY

Sweet?!

GRACIE

But he's changed. He's not as innocent as he was before.

RUBY

Of course not—he's grown-up.

GRACIE

I suppose it was difficult for him, away from home for the first time.

RUBY

I refuse to feel guilty! He said he was given the best of everything.

GRACIE

I wonder what they asked for in return.

RUBY

They asked him to forget his past.

GRACIE

Forgetting's easy. It's remembering that's so hard.

(A pause, then RUBY leans over and embraces her sister.)

GRACIE

But why did they want him to forget his past? Is that what you have to do in the army?

RUBY

In the army?!

(beat)

You're thinking of Harry, Gracie. He's not Harry, he's Sarge.

GRACIE

(big smile)

Oh! And he's going to stay with us now.

RUBY

He's leaving tomorrow morning.

GRACIE

But he's our baby.

RUBY

No, he's not!

GRACIE

He belongs here.

RUBY

No, he doesn't!

GRACIE

I've been waiting for him to come.

Why? RUBY

Waiting to take him in my arms. To kiss him. GRACIE

What? RUBY

To feel his cheek, soft and fuzzy against mine. GRACIE

Gracie! RUBY

It's wonderful, having a baby in the house again. GRACIE

Baby— Oh. RUBY
 (turning away from her sister)
 I recall it as crying, crying, all the time.

Remember when he took his first step. GRACIE

We had to put everything out of his reach. RUBY

And when he said his first word: "Mama"? GRACIE

He said it to you, not me. RUBY

He's such a beautiful child. So happy! GRACIE

Running home, sobbing— RUBY

Running to me. GRACIE

—the kids shouting after him. RUBY

Why are you sending him away? GRACIE

So I can forget! RUBY

GRACIE
How can you!

(She glares at RUBY.)

GRACIE
I want another baby so badly. Why can't I have one?

RUBY
You know what the doctor said—

GRACIE
Why are you the lucky one?

RUBY
"Lucky" isn't the right word.

GRACIE
Children are gifts, Ruby. Gifts.

(The sisters look at one another for a moment, then RUBY reaches forward and embraces GRACIE again.)

RUBY
I wish, with all my heart, you could've adopted him.

GRACIE
Let him stay; don't push him away.

RUBY
(pulling away from her sister)
I told you—I don't want him!

GRACIE
It's not right to send him away.

RUBY
He wants to cling to me. I never could bear that, especially in a man.

GRACIE
He's Sarge!

RUBY
I don't care!

GRACIE
I wish he were mine.

RUBY
Believe me, I wish he were, too!

GRACIE
 Let him stay.

RUBY
 No. He'll be gone tomorrow and everything'll be like it was before.

GRACIE
 You're just jealous! You're jealous because he likes me more than he likes you!

RUBY
 Don't be ridiculous!

GRACIE
 That's why you want to get rid of him!

RUBY
 No, Gracie, it isn't.

GRACIE
 He can't leave! I don't want him to!

RUBY
 But you hardly know him!

GRACIE
 I do, too!

(She jumps up, and faces her sister defiantly.)

RUBY
 (wearily)
 We'll talk about it in the morning. Time for bed, Gracie.

GRACIE
 (putting an arm around her shoulder)
 Do you feel better now? Have I made you feel better?

(RUBY embraces her. As she does, she suddenly notices one of the pictures is missing.)

RUBY
 The picture!

(RUBY goes over to the spot where it used to be and starts to search.)

RUBY
 Mother's picture of me—it's gone!
 (beat; turning to GRACIE)
 He took it!

(Blackout.)

Scene 2

(Early morning. Lights come up on the hall. DOUGLAS, suitcase in hand, is seen creeping down the stairs. As he reaches the bottom, he sees GRACIE sitting, waiting.)

GRACIE

I couldn't sleep a wink last night. Could you?

DOUGLAS

(relieved to see her as opposed to RUBY)

No.

GRACIE

Ruby was angry you found her, but I'm happy.

DOUGLAS

Why?

GRACIE

I like you.

(DOUGLAS gives a short laugh.)

DOUGLAS

At least someone does.

GRACIE

(throwing her arms around his neck)

Bend a bit.

(he leans over, she kisses him)

Welcome home!

DOUGLAS

Thank you.

GRACIE

Terrible things happen, but life goes on, doesn't it?

DOUGLAS

Yes, I suppose it does.

GRACIE

Come and have breakfast with me.

(She takes him by the arm; he draws back.)

DOUGLAS

No, thanks.

GRACIE
 (hurt)
 Why not?

DOUGLAS
 I want to leave before your sister gets up.

GRACIE
 Aren't you going to say good-bye to her?

DOUGLAS
 I'll write.

GRACIE
 Write to me, too.

DOUGLAS
 I will.

(He reaches for the door handle; GRACIE takes his arm again.)

GRACIE
 We had a wonderful time at the restaurant last night, didn't we?

DOUGLAS
 Pardon? We had to leave early, do you remember?

GRACIE
 With Ruby acting up like that, what else could we do?

DOUGLAS
 Exactly.

(beat)
 Well, I've got to drive to Toronto. I'd better get started.

(He puts his hand on the door handle.)

GRACIE
 And then you'll come back here and we'll do things together.

DOUGLAS
 I wish I could spend time with you.

GRACIE
 Maybe we'll go to that restaurant again. Just the two of us. What do you think?

DOUGLAS
 Maybe.

GRACIE
 With you here, it'd be such fun! Ruby's a sourpuss. She never takes me anywhere ...and she won't let me go out on my own!

DOUGLAS
I suppose she's afraid of you...ah... getting lost.

GRACIE
Last time a nice man brought me back.

DOUGLAS
I'm sure she worries when she can't find you.

GRACIE
She treats me like a little child!

DOUGLAS
She only wants to protect you.

GRACIE
I wish she'd just leave me alone. I can take care of myself!

(DOUGLAS gives her a kiss and starts to open the door.)

GRACIE
(grabbing at her sweater, some buttons of which are closed
lopsidedly)
Could you please button this sweater for me?

(With an anxious look up the staircase, he puts down his suitcase
and begins to help her.)

GRACIE
I'm up early because today's the day I go visiting.

DOUGLAS
Oh? Who do you visit?

GRACIE
All the old ladies in the nursing home. The ones that've gone a little senile. That no one
ever comes to see. Ruby takes me over.

DOUGLAS
Ah. Well, I'm sure they really appreciate it.

GRACIE
They do. They say so. I go every Friday.

DOUGLAS
Ahh... Today's Monday.

GRACIE
Monday?

DOUGLAS
Yes.

GRACIE

Oh. Well, it felt like a Friday when I woke up.

DOUGLAS

Some days do. You're not the only one who sometimes wishes Mondays were Fridays.

(He kisses her gently on the forehead, and opens the door.)

DOUGLAS

I must leave.

GRACIE

Don't go yet!

DOUGLAS

I must.

GRACIE

Stay and talk to me. Nobody comes to visit us anymore, I don't know why.

DOUGLAS

People are busy, I guess.

(He picks up his suitcase just as RUBY comes down the stairs and catches sight of him.)

RUBY

You!

DOUGLAS

I was just leaving.

RUBY

Before you do...

(She plants herself in front of him.)

RUBY

There's a picture missing from the living room.

(She puts out her hand.)

DOUGLAS

Yes, well, I...

(He puts down his suitcase, takes the picture out of his pocket and hands it to her.)

RUBY

You're leaving now, you said?

GRACIE
Oh. Well, that's alright, isn't it? We can always imagine the rest.

DOUGLAS
I suppose.

GRACIE
I love you, Sarge.

DOUGLAS
And I love you, Aunt Gracie.

(She puts her face up; he bends over and kisses her.)

DOUGLAS
Good-bye.

(He opens the door wider; she grabs his arm.)

GRACIE:
(turning to her sister)
Ask him to stay, Ruby!

(RUBY and DOUGLAS look at each other.)

DOUGLAS
I really can't.

GRACIE
(pouts, then brightens)
Come and see us again then. Soon!

DOUGLAS
(looking at RUBY)
I'm afraid I wouldn't be welcome.

GRACIE
Of course you'd be welcome. You're family, aren't you?

(DOUGLAS looks away.)

GRACIE
(turning to RUBY)
Isn't he family?

(RUBY says nothing.)

GRACIE
I want to see him again, Ruby!

RUBY
Why?

He's my baby!	GRACIE
I'm all grown up now, Aunt Gracie.	DOUGLAS
Oh.	GRACIE
(beat)	
But I still like you. Don't you like him too, Ruby?	
Liking's got nothing to do with it.	RUBY
You didn't like Sam, but you let him stay. This one's rich, too. He can take us places in his Jaguar. He can buy us things.	GRACIE
Gracie, please!	RUBY
It's alright. She—	DOUGLAS
I know! If you don't want him here, I'll go home with him.	GRACIE
What?!	RUBY
But I—	DOUGLAS
You're fun. More fun than Ruby!	GRACIE
Gracie!	RUBY
I'm sorry, but—	DOUGLAS
I want to live with you.	GRACIE
That's not possible!	RUBY
I have to work! I don't have time to...	DOUGLAS

(Both women look at him as his voice trails off.)

DOUGLAS

...to take care of you.

(RUBY and DOUGLAS look at each other. GRACIE'S face crumples as if she's going to cry. RUBY puts her arm around her shoulders.)

RUBY

Never mind, Gracie. We'll have fun here. We'll feed the swans.

GRACIE

I'll get the bread!

(She almost skips past DOUGLAS.)

GRACIE

We're going to feed the swans!

(Flashing him a brilliant smile, she exits.)

DOUGLAS

Thank you.

RUBY

You'd better go now.

(He picks up his suitcase again.)

DOUGLAS

If you need me... If you need money for a place for Gracie...

RUBY

I have your address.

DOUGLAS

Good-bye...Mrs. Lee.

(He extends his hand; she shakes it.)

RUBY

Good-bye...Mr. Clark.

(Blackout.)

THE END

