

'RAIN ON FIRE
A full-length drama

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CHARACTERS

- MARIE PETERSON:** Female, late 30s to early 40s, the only child of Ned and Lorraine “Rain” Peterson. Marie is warm, often funny, but keeps everything at arm’s length. A hobbyist musician, she is grieving her troubled parents and raising a toddler with her boyfriend Chuck.
- CALEB PETERSON:** Male, 34, Marie’s cousin. Caleb is mixed-race, though no one is certain of his heritage or biological father. He is kind at heart and often seems to have an excess of energy. He is a drug user, self-medicating ADHD. He is the product of small town biases.
- NAN PETERSON:** Female, late 50s to early 60s, Marie’s aunt through marriage, and ‘Rain’s best friend since high school. Nan is an LPN/home health care worker. She would probably deny she is a racist, but she totally is. In all but one scene, she is wearing her scrubs. She is never without her large purse.
- EINO (AY-no) PETERSON:** Male, late 50s to early 60s. Nan’s husband and Marie’s uncle. Eino is a gentle soul, a long-time recovering alcoholic and a classic enabler. His speech is never rushed.
- CHUCK THOMAS:** Male, late 30s to early 40s, Marie’s partner. A teacher, he is compassionate, funny and devoted to Marie and their son.
- GLORIA RAMIREZ-JONES:** Female, can be any age. She is a nurse practitioner who cared for ‘Rain. Honest, compassionate and often funny. Passes for Latina.

The actors playing Marie and Caleb do not have to be virtuosos, but should be able to play a few simple chords on the guitar and to carry a tune. The song they sing should never sound too polished.

Two actors will also be required to provide voiceovers for Ned and Lorraine in one scene.

The music for the song can be adapted to the skills of the cast, as long as it does not plagiarize an existing piece of music.

SETTING

Bouldertown, MI.

A small town in Michigan's upper peninsula, still feeling the effects of the 2009 recession.

Late last August

SCENE ONE:	Rain's house, August
SCENE TWO:	Rain's house, the next day
SCENE THREE:	A field by Nan and Eino's house
SCENE FOUR:	Rain's house, same day
SCENE FIVE:	Rain's house, evening
SCENE SIX:	Rain's house, next day
SCENE SEVEN:	Rain's front steps, next day
SCENE EIGHT:	Bouldertown Funeral Home
SCENE NINE:	Rain's house, after the funeral
SCENE TEN:	Rain's house, September

SCENE ONE

(Lights up on the Peterson house. We see a small kitchen and living room with tidied stacks of clutter ... magazines, newspapers, mail, on coffee tables. There is a yard with an old lawn chair, a coffee can next to it and some empty plant pots. This is the home of someone who loved to garden, but stopped.)

(If the director and designer opt for a more intricate set, the house décor should be a little outdated. Regardless of design, it should feel confined.)

(MARIE and her aunt NAN enter from the driveway off stage. Marie carries a duffel and garment bag. Nan wears nurse's scrubs and carries a large purse.)

NAN

I went in and tidied it up a little last night. It needed it.

MARIE

You didn't have to do that, aunt Nan.

NAN

Yah. I know. I just knew she wouldn't have wanted you to see it as messy as it was.

MARIE

How are you?

NAN

Oh, I'm ... I'm hangin' in there, hon. *(Almost cries)* I'm so sorry, Marie.

MARIE

(Touching Nan's shoulder) I know. Me too.

(Marie stares at the house a moment. She walks over to the plant pots.)

I've never seen these empty.

NAN

(Joining Marie) Yah. I knew it was gettin' bad when she didn't plant nothin' this spring. She just lost all interest.

MARIE

Yes, she did.

NAN

How are you doin', hon?

MARIE

I'm numb. I haven't cried. What's wrong with me?

NAN

It's just a shock.

MARIE

Is it?

NAN

Well, yah! Of course. Maybe not a surprise, but a shock. C'mon, let's go in.

(Marie and Nan enter the house.)

MARIE

So where's the song?

NAN

Right over there. In that red notebook.

MARIE

(Picking it up) Did you read it?

NAN

I took a peek, yah. It's just the words. She must've been workin' on it for a while. Some parts look neater than others. Looks like she started over a few times. You know more about that stuff, you and Caleb.

MARIE

I'm not that good. I can get by with some really simple notes ... and a couple dozen chords. I'm not a real musician.

NAN

Well, you always sound nice. You went to Nashville for Pete's sake!

MARIE

I lasted three months. I met actual musicians and got a taste of reality.

NAN

When you were a little girl, your mom used to brag about you, say you were gonna be a big star.

MARIE

(Laughing) Yeah, but when I actually took steps to do anything, she freaked out.

NAN

No ...

MARIE

Yes! God, my move to Duluth was hard enough for her. She made herself crazy when I was in Nashville.

NAN

Well, in a big city like that ... so far away, you never know what can happen.

MARIE

In a city, huh? A grandmother gets hooked on pills and drops dead before she turns sixty. Where did that story happen, aunt Nan?

NAN

(Pause) Well, you know what I mean. I blame that Mexican doctor of hers. That's where all them drugs around here come from. These Mexicans movin' in.

MARIE

(Choosing to ignore this) Mom seemed to like her.

NAN

Well, of course. Y'know she ain't even a real doctor. She's just a nurse with a fancy degree.

MARIE

So how is Caleb? I didn't know he still played. Is he still using?

NAN

Yah. I'm pretty sure. Your mom was lettin' him stay out at your dad's old camp there. He'd come do odd jobs for her instead of payin' rent. No one else will rent to him around here, his druggie friends always comin' by.

MARIE

I'm sorry to hear that.

NAN

Your mom felt sorry for him, I guess. Eino went out there not too long ago. Caleb was burnin' a bunch of old junk in the yard. Your mom asked him to, I guess. Eino says it does look nicer without all them boxes around.

MARIE

I'm sure it does.

NAN

You gonna let him keep stayin' there?

MARIE

I haven't thought that far ahead, Nan.

NAN

That Caleb. We all worry about him, y'know. But ... you can't trust a druggie.

MARIE

It was not easy for him to grow up around here.

NAN

Yah. When auntie Fran and Uncle Tom split up there for a while, Fran went a little nuts. Caleb was the result. No hidin' the almond in the milk jug.

MARIE

It'll be good to see him.

NAN

Thought you'd have your guitar.

MARIE

I figured I'd just use my dad's. Seems ... appropo, doesn't it?

(Nan is quiet.)

So Mom wrote a song, huh?

NAN

She said she wanted people to know she made something, to think she did something. I think she wrote it a while ago.

MARIE

Why Caleb and me? Why not uncle Tim or someone?

NAN

I don't know, Marie. I think ... she wanted *you* to know she made something. Like there was, I don't know, more to her than we all thought, I guess.

MARIE

She used to write poetry.

NAN

Yah. Got a poem in our yearbook senior year too.

MARIE

She was very guarded about it. She caught me reading it once and got so mad at me, like she was embarrassed.

NAN

It was a real shame when she stopped.

MARIE

When did she tell you? About the song, I mean?

NAN

On the phone while she was waitin' for the ambulance. I thought she was talkin' nonsense at first. She made me swear I'd come back and find that notebook and said if she went, she wanted you and Caleb to sing what she wrote. I told her she got things mixed up with a movie or somethin' but ...

MARIE

I'm ... glad you were there.

NAN

You gonna take a peek?

MARIE

Not yet.

NAN

Yah. You just got here. Take your time. Chuck and Tyler coming?

MARIE

Yeah, in a few days. I honestly ... I just don't want to be chasing a toddler around while I have a ... funeral to plan. I feel like I just did this.

NAN

You did. Oh, Marie, I'm so sorry. Your dad gone ... not even two years. Geez.

MARIE

(Suddenly realizing) This house. What do I do with this house?

NAN

Don't worry about the house. It's paid for. You got that in your favor.

MARIE

There's so much to do.

NAN

You let me and Eino know how we can help.

MARIE

Nan ... was she conscious, like sober I mean? When she died?

NAN

She ain't been totally sober in a coon's age, hon. She had to have her pills just to get through the day or she'd be a hurtin' mess. Spend half her day just about, out drivin', getting' her scrips. The more she took, the more she needed.

MARIE

We barely spoke the last six months. It was like talking into a black hole. I wanted her to come down for Mother's Day, see her grandson, spend time together. She was too ... busy. Then too sick. Then she was waiting for a check ... it was always something.

NAN

Lorraine loved that grand baby. Always talkin' about little Tyler.

MARIE

Huh.

NAN

I oughta get goin' home. Eino's gonna be wantin' his supper. You wanna come over and eat?

MARIE

No thanks, Nan. I need to just stay here tonight. Find my dad's guitar, make some calls.

NAN

Well, you call if you need anything.

MARIE

This is about the time having a sibling would be nice.

NAN

Well, you got us. Family'll be droppin' by like crazy soon. Fran's been cookin' up a storm. And I saw your auntie Angela at the store ...

MARIE

Oh boy ...

NAN

Oh boy is right. Not to give away any great surprise but all I saw in her cart was a case of beer and a bunch of Hot Pockets. Said it was for you. (*Mocking*) She had a coupon.

MARIE

Hey, how is Tommy? Were you able to reach him?

NAN

What? Oh. Yah. He won't be makin' it. He sends his condolences.

MARIE

Tell him he's still my favorite cousin.

NAN

(*Hugging Marie*) Yah. Well, I better head on home.

MARIE

Thanks for everything, Nan.

NAN

I'll come check on you tomorrow, hon. You take care.

(*As Nan exits, Marie picks up the notebook but does not open it.*)

(*Lights out on Marie.*)

SCENE TWO

(Next day. Lights up on Marie, seated on the couch and talking on the phone.)

MARIE

... I have to go to the funeral home tomorrow and then the bank to figure out what she had left. Nan is coming with me to the church ... *(smiling)* What? What's he doing? ... Hey, sweet pea! Are you being good for Daddy?

(CALEB enters from the driveway offstage, carrying a guitar case. He approaches and enters the house. He appears calm, but has a hard time staying still.)

... You did? Dinosaurs, huh? ... Mama will see you in a couple days, love bug ... Thanks for taking care of things. ... No, I'm sure ...

(She and Caleb see each other and wave.)

This way I can worry about the stuff that needs to get done. Yeah. I know. Hey, Caleb is here. Okay. Love you too. *(She hangs up.)*

CALEB

Hey Marie.

MARIE

(Hugging him) Hey, cuz.

CALEB

I'm real sorry about your mom. That just ... it sucks.

MARIE

Yeah. It does. Thanks for doing this.

CALEB

We got a job to do, eh?

MARIE

Yep. I haven't looked at it yet. I'm too ... I don't know what it will be like.

CALEB

Yah. I never knew she was writin' a song.

MARIE

I think there's a lot we didn't know.

CALEB

I hope it's not shitty ...

(Marie laughs out loud.)

Ah, shit. That was a shitty thing to say. Geez. I'm sorry.

MARIE

You said just what I was thinking, Caleb!

CALEB

Still, I'm a dumbass ...

MARIE

Don't say that. You want some coffee? Catch up a little before we get to work?

CALEB

Yah. I'll have some coffee.

MARIE

(Pouring two cups) So. How are you?

CALEB

Okay, I 'spose. What about you? Been thinkin' about ya, cuz.

MARIE

Thanks. Hey, I know you helped my mom out a lot. I appreciate it. She did too.

CALEB

Least I could do, y'know? Your ma was lettin' me stay out at the camp. *(Pause)* I uh ...

MARIE

Stay there as long as you need to, Caleb. Don't worry about it right now.

CALEB

Thanks, eh? Man, these landlords around here don't give nobody a break. Jesus. Shitholes, some of these places they got too. Actin' like some of us ain't good enough to live there.

MARIE

Well, thanks for keeping the camp up. I haven't been out there in years.

CALEB

(Chuckling) Yah, I know. Found somethin' for ya...

(Caleb digs in his pocket, pulls out a piece of paper and hands it to Marie.)

MARIE

(Reading) I love you more than sun. And more than the stars and moons. Someday you'll see that I'm the one. And we'll be two silver spoons. Ricky and Marie 4-ever. Wow!

CALEB

Who was Ricky?

MARIE

(Laughing) Ricky Schroeder was my first celebrity crush. He was on a show called Silver Spoons. Where did you find this?

CALEB

Tucked in an old Sears catalog. Was throwin' it away when this dropped out. Had to show ya!

MARIE

Jesus. Dad saved everything.

CALEB

(Laughing) Yah. And he put it all out there at the camp!

MARIE

I heard you burned some of it.

CALEB

Yah. Your mom asked me to.

MARIE

God only knows what he had out there.

CALEB

Three boxes of Popular Science, mostly from the eighties. Five big-ass boxes of old shoes and work boots, all fallin' apart. One box of porn.

MARIE

Ahh! Stop! I don't wanna know!

CALEB

Yah. Sorry. I was gonna look 'cause, well, it's a box of porn. Then I opened it up and thought, ah, shit. I don't wanna touch my dead uncle's porn stash. That shit just seems ...

MARIE

Gross. I don't wanna know.

CALEB

Well, anyway. That went in the burn pile too.

MARIE

I'm glad you're out there. And thanks for taking care of things around here. Mowing her lawn and stuff.

CALEB

Happy to do it. Shit. Auntie 'Rain was always real nice to me.

MARIE

I know. She worried about you.

CALEB

Yah, yah. Nobody needs to worry about me.

MARIE

How are you ... doing? You ... doing okay?

CALEB

Yah! I'm great.

MARIE

You know what I mean.

CALEB

I'm fine. Got things under control. I'm doin' odd jobs and stuff. I clean house for my buddy Wes.

MARIE

(Indicating guitar) I'm glad you started playing again.

CALEB

Takes up time out at the camp. No electric or nothin'. I listen to the radio a lot. Go through a shit ton of batteries. Started listenin' to that PBS radio for somethin' different. They got some good shit on there. Like that ah, Prairie show.

MARIE

Prairie Home Companion.

CALEB

Yah, right! Heard Jack White on there this one time. It was awesome.

MARIE

It must get kind of lonely out there.

CALEB

Hey. Know what I been doin' again?

MARIE

What's that?

CALEB

Photography.

MARIE

Cool! Do you have a decent camera, or ...?

CALEB

Nah. Just my cell. I did some tutorials on google at the library one day. C'mere and look at this.

(Marie looks at Caleb's phone.)

MARIE

(Surprised) That's ... really good! Is that on the pond by the camp?

CALEB

Yah! Took me, man, must have been a whole day, to get that shot. Kept skipping rocks to try to get those ripples in just the right spots leadin' up to that lily pad there.

MARIE
You spent a whole day on this?

CALEB
Well, I think so. I kinda ... lose track of time out there sometimes. I couldn't stop, just got like focused on getting it right. Here. I got all these different albums.

MARIE
(Looking at his phone) "White Trash"?

CALEB
Yah! I got this idea one day. Maybe I should do one of them big books, what do you call 'em, a coffee table book, on white trash livin'.

MARIE
594 pictures?

CALEB
You don't have to ...

MARIE
I can't wait to see what you have. *(Flipping through his photos)* Lots of this old trailer.

CALEB
Yah. Well, it's ... I just started. I get a little focused, eh?

MARIE
(Quietly) They're all ... of the trailer.

CALEB
(Taking phone back) Yah, well. I'm a perfectionist sometimes. Hey, what kinda coffee is this?

MARIE
Uh ... Steep 'n' Brew. It's roasted somewhere in Wisconsin. You like it?

CALEB
You like grind your own beans and shit?

MARIE
Usually.

CALEB
Yah, it's ... it's pretty fuckin' good!

MARIE
I'm glad you like it. You got a coffee pot out there? You can take some with you.

CALEB
I might take you up on that. Damn!

(They sip their coffee for a minute.)

MARIE

(Presenting the notebook) Here it is. I'm afraid to look.

CALEB

Yah. Who knows what was goin' on in her head, y'know? You didn't bring your guitar from home, eh?

MARIE

No. I wanted to use my dad's but I can't find it anywhere.

(Caleb opens his guitar case and removes the guitar.)

Is that it?

CALEB

Yah. Your ma, she ... gave it to me.

(Marie goes blank.)

But Marie, she was kinda out of it. Almost sold it and then chickened out. She gave it to me. You can have it! It was your dad's ...

MARIE

It was. *(Pause)* But she wanted you to have it. You should have it.

CALEB

No, Marie. I didn't plan on keepin' it. I mean, I figured I'd ask you if you want/

MARIE

/Caleb, it's fine! It's fine. I'll have, um, Chuck, bring mine. If we need it. Let's see the song.

(Marie braces herself and opens the notebook.)

CALEB

Wanna read it out loud?

MARIE

Okay.

(Long pause)

You spend your whole life looking for the light
 You find a twinkle every now and then
 Love the ones who make you feel you can't do nothin' right
 Find it's easier to live without a friend

CALEB

Damn.

MARIE

But pain is far behind me, thanks to you
 My body and my mind so hurt and tired

(Cont'd) I take you and you ease the burn, it's all that I can do
You cool down my head like rain on fire

Memories
They hurt me now

I can't ... I can't make out this line. Um ...

I never thought you'd make me feel inspired
Now I only want to feel like rain on fire

(Marie stops.)

Unbelievable.

CALEB

Right. It ain't too shitty.

MARIE

Caleb. Did you hear these words?

CALEB

Yah. Well, she liked country music ...

MARIE

No. I think ... it's a love song. To her pills!

CALEB

What? Nah! It's like a, a play on words! Her name was Rain, she had a bad back, like it was ... on fire?
But rain puts out fires ... oh. Yah, I see what you're sayin'.

MARIE

(Bitter) It's almost funny.

CALEB

(Takes guitar out) Well, let's keep goin'. Maybe it ain't all about that.

(Caleb tunes the guitar as Marie paces, reading the song lyrics.)

MARIE

I've driven everyone I love away
I worked this body way too hard for years
Maybe when I'm dead *(straining to read)* they'll hear what I could never say
But medicine, you take away my tears

Well, great. In case you had any doubts!

(Marie tosses the notebook down.)

Jesus. "Don't just plan my funeral! Sing this love song I wrote. To my ... pain meds."

(Caleb picks up the notebook and strums.)

Dammit, Mom. Where the fuck did you go?

(Caleb plays on.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE THREE

(Lights up on EINO, running a metal detector in a field.)

(Eino is dressed for summer, his way. An old t-shirt, jeans and work boots and probably a baseball cap with a machinery logo on it.)

(Nan enters, still in her scrubs and carrying her ever-present purse.)

NAN

Eino, whatcha doin' out here? It's hot!

EINO

(Looks up from metal detector) What?

NAN

It's hot out here, Eino. And you in them jeans. You must be roastin'.

EINO

Nah.

NAN

Any luck?

EINO

Just some old nails. Nothin' good.

NAN

You and Ned and your metal detecting. When you gonna find us somethin' good?

EINO

Marie at the house yet?

NAN

Yah. She's there all by herself. That boyfriend of hers is home with the baby. Just like she likes it.

EINO

Aw, Nan.

NAN

He's asked her to marry him and she won't do it. She thinks she's too good for it.

EINO

Too good for what? Marriage?

NAN

Yah. She always said that when she was a girl. She'd say, "I'm never gettin' married," and then she'd go pout.

EINO

Well, ya can't blame her.

NAN
 What's that mean?

EINO
 'Rain and Ned had a lot of troubles.

NAN
 You mean he abused her.

EINO
 I meant they had troubles!

NAN
 Your brother had no respect for women! Especially his wife. He hit her/

EINO
 /Once!

NAN
 That's enough! He beat her down so the only good ideas were his ideas. No wonder she didn't know what the hell to do with herself when he died. Had to ask him for approval on every damn thing unless she wanted Ned pickin' at her nonstop.

EINO
 He loved them two. 'Rain and Marie. He just had ... different thoughts sometimes.

NAN
 You call it what you want. Then doin' logging work on the side with that half-ass insurance. Hope he thought about his wife and daughter when that heart attack hit.

EINO
 Sure he did. And that's a shitty thing to say.

NAN
 (*Looking up*) Look. Hawk's back.

EINO
 (*Also looking up*) Huh. Yah. It sure is.

(*They watch the hawk for a moment.*)

Look at that. It's got a hold of somethin'. Heh. Supper.

NAN
 Better be a rabbit. I'm tired of them damn things gettin' in my garden.

EINO
 How's Marie doin'?

NAN

She's numb. She says she ain't cried yet. Ah, I know it's hard for her. They didn't talk much those last months. I think 'Rain was ashamed.

EINO

You look at the song yet?

NAN

Just a peek. Felt funny about it.

EINO

(Chuckling) 'Rain the songwriter.

NAN

Yah. I just hope it's not a stoned-out mess. Poor Marie.

EINO

She know about Ned's guitar?

NAN

I didn't have the heart. Let Caleb tell her. Assumin' he hasn't sold it.

EINO

Wonder what Caleb's gonna do. Marie say if she's keepin' the camp?

NAN

Oh, geez, Eino. She just found out her mother died. She ain't thinkin' that far ahead.

EINO

I'd buy it.

NAN

And what would you do with that camp?

EINO

Investment property.

NAN

(Faux snooty) Ooh, investment property, eh?

EINO

Caleb's got it cleaned up pretty good out there. Fix it up a little more and rent it to tourists.

NAN

Tourists?

EINO

Lots of rock hounds like these ol' mines up here. And the snowmobilers and whatnot. That Wesley Hope got three houses around Bouldertown. Rented out pert-near every weekend.

NAN

You and your big ideas.

EINO

People do it. (*Carefully*) You make *all* the calls you were gonna make?

NAN

Yah. I got his voicemail.

EINO

We oughta send Tommy Marie's address. He'll wanna send her a card or somethin'.

NAN

He can find it on the internet. You put your check in the bank yet?

EINO

Nah. Figured I'd see if you wanted to head to town. Maybe we oughta buy somethin' nice for Marie. Help her out.

NAN

Yah. I need somethin' to wear to the funeral. We should get her a nice floral arrangement.

EINO

Yah. There room on the credit card?

NAN

Yah, there is. There's two hundred and ten dollars available credit.

EINO

Christ.

NAN

Well, the car wasn't gonna fix itself!

EINO

I could've fixed it!

NAN

Yah, you could've but you didn't. I need my car for work Eino. I lost wages those days I couldn't get around.

(Eino looks at her.)

Well, I'm only down to three days at home health now because of these knees. We can't lose income, Eino. Not with how rough it's been at the shop.

EINO

People liked Ned.

NAN

They like you too. You're just not a business man. And they sell lawn mowers so cheap now. They're practically disposable. What you oughta do is advertise. Get some new business. Put an ad in the paper.

EINO

Listen to you. A regular whatsisname ... Warren Buffet.

NAN

(Chuckling) Yah, that's me. I'll be talkin' on the Today Show next week.

EINO

Hey, ah ... you think there's gonna be anything left for Marie? Besides the house?

NAN

I don't know, Eino. Your brother left shit for Lorraine. Paid off the funeral and a couple credit cards. That's it.

EINO

She could've gone to school. Bunch of people did that when the hospital closed.

NAN

Can you picture Lorraine going back to school?

EINO

(Smiling) Nah. I guess not. Just hope Marie'll come out okay.

NAN

House is paid off. There's the camp. Bunch of stuff she can sell if she wants. She'll do fine.

EINO

Probably, yah. Wonder about Caleb. 'Rain was awful good to him.

NAN

I sure hope he didn't sell that guitar.

EINO

Nah. He ain't that far gone. Caleb's a good kid.

NAN

Good kid. He's thirty four. Doin' drugs ...

EINO

Now, we don't know that.

NAN

Eino.

EINO

(Pause) Well, we don't know that for sure.

‘Rain said Caleb was a lost soul. NAN

So was she. EINO

I miss her though. My best friend, all my life. NAN

Yah. EINO

(A quiet moment.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE FOUR

(Lights up on 'Rain's house the next day. Marie is in the kitchen putting away food. A few large Tupperware dishes and bags sit atop the various surfaces.)

(GLORIA enters carrying a dish and a wine bag. She approaches and knocks on the door.)

MARIE

(Not paying attention) Yeah, come in.

GLORIA

(Entering) Hello? Hello? Are you ... Marie?

MARIE

(Not expecting a stranger) Oh. Yes. I am. Did you know my mother?

GLORIA

Yeah. Is there a place I can ...?

MARIE

Of course. I'm sorry. *(Takes food from Gloria)* Thank you.

GLORIA

Looks like I'm not the first.

MARIE

People have been dropping off food all day. I won't have to cook while I'm here.

GLORIA

Well, here's a casserole. It freezes well, if you need to.

MARIE

Thanks. *(Holds up wine bottle)* And this?

GLORIA

I figured you could use it.

MARIE

You're not wrong.

GLORIA

Marie, I'm so sorry about your mom. Lorraine was very proud of you.

MARIE

Thank you. I'm sorry to be rude, but ... do I know you?

GLORIA

I'm sorry! No, we've never met. My name is Gloria Ramirez-Jones. I was your mom's/

MARIE

/You were her doctor.

GLORIA

Nurse practitioner. As my patients like to remind me when they don't like what I'm telling them.

MARIE

(Warily) She mentioned you. Quite a bit.

GLORIA

Your mom was um, not without challenges, was she?

MARIE

You've got that right.

GLORIA

She talked about you. I feel like I know you and little Tyler.

(This hurts Marie.)

MARIE

You do, huh?

GLORIA

I'm sorry for your loss. Not just now. I know you might feel like you lost her months ago.

MARIE

I'm sorry to be blunt, but I need to ask you something.

GLORIA

Of course.

MARIE

Did she get them from you?

GLORIA

Her prescriptions?

MARIE

Yes.

GLORIA

At first. She came to me because of her back. She fell on the ice the winter after your dad passed. It was a bad fall.

MARIA

I remember.

GLORIA

I prescribed Oxycodone. She was supposed to be doing exercises and icing it too. Things started to "happen." She'd call in and say she lost her purse her medication was in, and could I write a

(*Cont'd*) new prescription. Another time, they were “stolen.” I knew what was happening.

MARIE

What did you do?

GLORIA

Said I didn't believe she was losing her pills, that I was worried she was becoming dependent.

MARIE

I'm sure that went over well.

GLORIA

I was 90 percent sure she was dependent and just needed to stop. As sure as I was, I also know how awful it is to live with chronic pain. Sometimes, especially in someone who did physical work like your mom for so many years, lifting people every day, it's hard on a body. How frustrating is that for your doctor to not believe it. I won't do that to a patient. I just won't.

MARIE

So she kept taking them.

GLORIA

I wanted to wean her off. And I said I'd do it slowly if she would agree to counseling and physical therapy.

MARIE

Hah!

GLORIA

Well, she agreed to it.

MARIE

To counseling? Seeing a therapist?

GLORIA

I was pretty certain she was depressed. That it might be more than grief from your dad's death.

MARIE

She never mentioned this.

GLORIA

She never went.

MARIE

Of course not.

GLORIA

I did cut back her prescription. But it didn't matter. She was getting them somewhere else.

MARIE

Where?

GLORIA

Who the hell knows? There's people selling pills all over up here. They don't look like the drug dealers you see on CSI either. We've had to fire people from the clinic. Stealing pills so they can sell them, or use them.

MARIE

Shit.

GLORIA

Anyway. There was something about your mom I liked. We had some nice talks.

MARIE

She talked about you a lot. Like a friend, more than a doctor.

GLORIA

She could be funny, couldn't she? We liked a lot of the same TV shows. I think she was lonely. I told her she should talk to you. Tell you she needed help.

MARIE

(Opening the wine) Guess how that went. Would you like some?

GLORIA

No thanks.

MARIE

When did you cut her off?

GLORIA

Maybe six months ago? I wish I had sooner.

MARIE

(Pouring a glass of wine) Six months, we were barely speaking. Not because of any big fight or anything. She was always distracted. Ever since I was eighteen and away at college, we talked every weekend. We still did after I had Tyler. Then my dad died. You'd think we'd have talked more then, but ...

GLORIA

She missed him.

MARIE

I would call *her*. Me. The one who works full time and has a toddler. And then I'd talk, tell her what was new, tell her about Tyler. Sometimes she'd mutter something and I'd realize she was engrossed in a TV show. Or if she did talk, it was all about her. Or how no one came to visit her, which I know is a lie.

GLORIA

Yeah, I think I challenged her on that a few times, myself.

MARIE

I mean I know my aunt Nan was out here all the time. Caleb was here. My cousins had her over for dinner once a week. She just ... couldn't make an effort.

GLORIA

Addiction plus grief plus depression. They can give you tunnel vision—all you see is your own misery.

MARIE

It was also my mom. The thing is ... we know the worst about the ones we're closest to, right? She was always lost in her own head, her own problems. The pills, losing my dad, the combination, I don't know, they just made it more obvious. And sometimes ...

GLORIA

Yes?

MARIE

Sometimes she could say something so terrible. Just, like it was nothing. Was she so depressed she just wanted to push everyone away? I'd hear how Caleb came and fixed her cupboard doors and Caleb mowed her lawn. He was the son she never had. It just ... calling started to hurt. I would dread it, feel guilty, finally call, get mad and feel guilty again. So I just ... stopped calling.

GLORIA

People say a lot of well-intentioned things to the grieving. So I'm going to be careful. But I will tell you a few things I heard and you can tell me if I'm right or wrong.

MARIE

Okay?

GLORIA

You and your partner Chuck have been together a long time. You met on vacation in Minneapolis and found out you'd lived two blocks from each other for three years.

MARIE

That's right.

GLORIA

Your son Tyler is about two now. He was ten pounds when he was born, was an easy, happy baby and started walking before he was one.

MARIE

Yes.

GLORIA

You're a substitute teacher. You enjoy playing music...you sing at weddings sometimes...but you don't think you're very good.

MARIE

Right.

GLORIA

She thought you were. How would I know all this?

(Gloria gets up to leave.)

Don't worry about the container.

MARIE

She wrote poetry when she was young.

GLORIA

Really? Lorraine?

MARIE

Yes. When I was a kid, I found a stash of her poems. I used to read them when I was home alone. Until she caught me. She was so mad at me. I ... didn't understand.

GLORIA

She was embarrassed, maybe? That's really sad.

MARIE

She wrote a song.

GLORIA

A song?

MARIE

Recently. She wanted my cousin and me to make it into something. To sing it at her funeral.

GLORIA

Maybe she wanted to leave you with some part of her, some special part that connected you/

MARIE

/It's about her pills. Her pills that make the pain go away and make her so happy. Fucking. Pills.

GLORIA

Jesus. *(Pause.)* I'm so sorry.

MARIE

Thank you. For trying, I guess. She liked you. You opened her world a little.

GLORIA

I did?

MARIE

She ... I'm sorry.. she always pointed out that you were "a Mexican."

(Gloria starts to laugh.)

What's funny?

GLORIA

I'm not Mexican.

MARIE

What?

GLORIA

I'm not even Latino. My husband is half Puerto Rican. He's the Ramirez of Ramirez-Jones. I'm Italian and Greek.

MARIE

I'm so embarrassed. I shouldn't have even brought it up/

GLORIA

(Still laughing) /Don't be. I get it all the time. It's just funny. It explains a few things.

MARIE

Like what?

GLORIA

We both watched Dancing With the Stars, right? She would always talk about the salsa numbers in this way...like I knew all about salsa dancing. And...I hadn't even thought of this until you said it...she would always make a point of talking about Latinos on TV shows in that way...like, "that *(loud on the name)* Benicio del Toro... is so handsome. I think he's from Spain!"

MARIE

(Chuckling) I'm just glad she didn't ask you pointed questions about anyone brown-skinned she saw on the news.

GLORIA

Awkward. Well, I will miss your mom. I'm sorry we didn't meet under better circumstances, Marie. Take care.

(Gloria leaves the house. Marie sits alone. Opens a container and starts to eat.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE FIVE

(Lights up on the Peterson house, later that evening. Marie and Caleb have been working on the song and drinking. Marie has the notebook and Caleb holds the guitar. Marie is a little drunk on wine.)

(Marie is transposing lyrics and chords onto another sheet of paper.)

MARIE

There's an entire verse here I can't even make out.

CALEB

Should we skip it?

MARIE

Not sure. Wait. I have an idea. How 'bout this?

(Singing) Pills, pills, pills, pills, pills, pills, pills, pills,
My daughter sucks but Oxy is the bomb,
If I could I'd put these fucking pills into my will,
But that takes effort, just give me a pill

CALEB

Uh ...

MARIE

I'm kidding.

CALEB

Yah, no shit. But ... you okay?

MARIE

I'm fine. I'm kind of drunk and it's awesome.

CALEB

I feel kinda weird playin' your dad's guitar for this.

MARIE

Don't. Chuck's bringing mine. It's fine.

CALEB

How's this sound?

(Caleb plays a chord progression for the song.)

MARIE

Works for me. What should we do with the chorus? Keep the same chords?

CALEB

I was thinkin' maybe

(Caleb plays chords for the chorus.)

MARIE
That's good, Caleb.

CALEB
You sure?

MARIE
What if we added a seven chord to that A minor right before the last line of the chorus? Like ...

(She sings as Caleb plays)

MARIE
I never thought that you would *(gesturing the chord)* make me feel inspired.
You cool down my head like rain on fire.

(She stops and stares off for a moment.)

CALEB
Yah, that's nice. Good idea.

MARIE
I keep waiting for it.

CALEB
For what?

MARIE
Tears. Just now I thought I might cry.

CALEB
You, uh, need a hug or something?

MARIE
It's okay. I want to, but I ... can't. Thought maybe the wine would help.

CALEB
How long till the funeral? Bet you'll cry then.

MARIE
Three days.

CALEB
Shit, we're in good shape, eh?

(Nan enters and approaches the house.)

MARIE
Huh? Yeah. Hey, you want another beer, Caleb?

CALEB
Yah. I'll take one.
(Marie goes to the kitchen. Nan enters.)

NAN
Knock-knock.

MARIE
Hey, Nan.

NAN
Ah, Caleb's here too.

CALEB
Hey, Aunt Nan.

MARIE
Yeah, we're working on the song.

NAN
How's it comin'?

MARIE
I don't know. How's it comin', Caleb?

CALEB
All things considered, pretty fuckin' good!

NAN
(Whispering) How's he doin'?

MARIE
He's fine. How are you doing, Caleb?

CALEB
High as a kite, Aunt Nan!

NAN
That ain't funny. Caleb, I hope that ain't true. I'll tell your mom and dad.

CALEB
Like they fuckin' care...

MARIE
Also, he's thirty four. And the song is coming along. Can I get you something, Nan?

NAN
Yah, I'll take a pop if you got one. I know your mom liked her pop at night.

MARIE

Sounds like the start of a dirty joke, Nan.

NAN

(Laughing) Don't it though! Mom liked her pop...at night.

MARIE

(Opens fridge) Pepsi okay? I'm not sure how old it is.

NAN

(Sitting in living room chair) Yah, that's fine. Cripes, it's hot out there. You gonna get the house sprayed, Marie?

MARIE

What?

NAN

Cluster flies'll start comin' out next month.

MARIE

Oh, shit. I almost forgot. How have they been the last few years?

NAN

Not as bad the last couple years. Eino can spray the house for you. We're due for another bad year though.

MARIE

Disgusting. A few years ago they were just bouncing off the house and still getting in.

CALEB

Hey, Marie. Don't worry about it, eh? I sprayed the house for your ma. Couple weeks ago.

MARIE

Oh, good.

NAN

(Whispering) You should still have Uncle Eino do it.

MARIE

Nan.

CALEB

Them little buggers are like a fuckin' plague. Did you know they can squeeze in through a crack as wide as a business card?

NAN

Listen to the Orkin man over here.

CALEB

Just heard about it is all.

NAN
So. How's that song soundin'?

MARIE
I'll be glad when it's all done.

CALEB
Wanna hear it so far?

NAN
Yah, I s'pose.

MARIE
Always love an eager audience.

NAN
Well, it's just ... hearin' her words.

MARIE
It's okay if you don't want to/

NAN
/No, I do. I wanna hear it.

MARIE
Well. How about just a preview. We'll play the BEST part.

(Caleb starts to play.)

Brace yourself. It's dedicated to the one she loved.

(The song should feel clearly like an early work in progress.)

(Singing) But pain is far behind me thanks to you,
My body and my mind so hurt and tired
I take you and you ease the burn, it's all that I can do
You cool down my head like *(air quotes)* rain on fire

Memories
They hurt me now
But you make all the pain just disappear
You'll never turn your back on me, it's clear
I never thought you'd make me feel inspired
You cool down the pain like rain on fire

(Bitterly) Ta-dah.

NAN
It's almost like she ...

MARIE

Yep.

NAN

Jesus Christ, Lorraine. Oh, Marie. You sure you wanna do this?

MARIE

It was her wish, right? The funny thing is ... it's not bad. If I wasn't her daughter, I wouldn't see it as a self-serving punishment. Of me.

NAN

Now, I don't think she was tryin' to punish you. You were the apple of her/

MARIE

The apple of her eye! I've heard that a lot today. It's true. I was. When I was six. Boy she could say things ... even before she became a drug addict.

(Caleb begins to tune the guitar.)

NAN

Y'know we were best friends our whole lives, your mom and me.

MARIE

You were like a sister to her.

NAN

She wrote a poem in school once. Our English teacher thought it was so good, he had it put in the paper. I think she wrote more than that too. She was real proud.

MARIE

Why did she stop?

NAN

Your grandpa made fun of her for it. Didn't even read it, I don't think. It crushed her, I think.

MARIE

Aw, Mom.

NAN

I'm just sayin' it ain't that surprising. Well, maybe the subject matter ...

(Marie stands there for a moment, then starts to laugh.)

Marie Peterson!

(Nan begins to laugh too.)

It ain't funny!

MARIE

No, it's not! She wrote a love song about pills. She could've written a song about ... anything. Nope!

NAN

Oh, that ‘Rain.

MARIE

(Laughing harder) That sounds like a sitcom. This week. On “Oh, That ‘Rain ...” Lorraine gets into a pickle when she hides Ned’s secret booze stash in the trunk of her mother’s car. Grandma Rose won’t be happy when the cops pull her over for a burned out tail light!

NAN

(Laughing) Oh, geez! That’s right!

MARIE

Last week on “Oh, That ‘Rain,” Ned tells ‘Rain she’s spending too much on groceries so he decides to take it over. He comes back from the store with no bread, no cereal, but ten pounds of ground beef, some apples and a bag of flour. Next day for breakfast ‘Rain serves...hamburgers with apple slices. Lunch...meatloaf with an apple on the side. Dinner...hamburgers an apple peel. When the apples run out, Wednesday’s dinner is ... burgers! Followed by a dessert of what she calls “meat pies,” which are basically burgers. And Ned stands up from the table and says, “All right, all right, ‘Rain. You win!” And he stomps off.

(They all laugh and enjoy the memory. Marie picks up the notebook.)

MARIE

Last week on “Oh, That Rain,” after months with a demolished kitchen and bathroom, thanks to Ned’s latest do-it-yourself kick, Rain hired a contractor and got herself hit.

(A painful joke) “To the moon, ‘Rain.”

(Nan stops laughing.)

(Caleb remains focused on tuning his guitar.)

And ... when little Marie sees and starts to cry, Rain shakes her until they’re both crying.

NAN

(Quiet.) Yah. I remember that one.

MARIE

Remember how this house used to look, Nan?

NAN

Yah.

MARIE

Dad insisted on doing the work himself. He’d start and ... leave it. He left the kitchen torn apart for weeks.

NAN

Yah. Your ma was so mad.

MARIE

He was fine just leaving it, but she took matters in her own hands. He was so angry. He broke her nose. God, why am I thinking about this now? Caleb, I think it's tuned. Can you give it a rest?

(Caleb doesn't react.)

NAN

That's...all in the past. When's Chuck coming?

MARIE

Sometime tonight.

NAN

It'll be good for you to see that baby.

MARIE

Yeah. It will.

Seriously, Caleb! Can you please stop?

CALEB

(Focused) I almost got it. It's almost there. It ain't supposed to make that vibrating sound.

MARIE

It's not vibrating, Caleb. What? Why don't you have another beer?

(Caleb keeps playing one string.)

Caleb! Stop!

(Marie goes to Caleb and puts her hands on the guitar.)

CALEB

(Agitated) I almost got it! Come on!

MARIE

(Takes the guitar) Take a break.

CALEB

I can't. I gotta, gotta get it right!

MARIE

Stop! It's not yours!

(Caleb roughly grabs the guitar from Marie's hands. She's stunned.)

CALEB

Just ... let me tune it. It's almost right. I'll ... go outside.

(He goes outside and sits in Rain's chair, resuming tuning.)

MARIE

What was that?

NAN

Yah, he's on somethin'. That meth, y'know ...

MARIE

I haven't seen him act like that. We've been ... having fun, weird I know, but ...

NAN

Last time he was stayin' at home, Fran found him washin' the windows one day. Nice thing, right? Well, pretty soon she noticed he's been cleanin' the same spot for pert-near an hour. And she couldn't get him to stop. Scared the bejeesus out of her. She wanted to get him some help, but your Uncle Tom wasn't havin' it.

MARIE

Who does Caleb work for?

NAN

Mows lawn for a couple of my patients. Wesley Hope, he got a couple houses he rents out to rockhounds and snowmobilers. They're old buddies, y'know, and Caleb goes and cleans up after guests.

MARIE

He can't be making that much money. How does he eat? Put gas in his car?

NAN

He got ways, I s'pose.

MARIE

He and my mom were close at the end.

NAN

Yah.

MARIE

If he is using, how does he pay for it?

NAN

(Hesitates) Well. I just hear things. I don't know if it's true.

MARIE

Is he a drug dealer?

NAN

I just hear things.

(Caleb is more agitated and keeps tuning the guitar.)

(Marie steps outside and approaches him.)

Caleb. MARIE

Yah. I'm almost done. Almost got it. CALEB

Caleb, I need to ask you something. MARIE

Yah. CALEB

Caleb! Stop! MARIE

(Caleb keeps tuning. Marie grabs the guitar from him.)

(Caleb grabs the guitar back.)

Let me finish it! CALEB

What is wrong with you? Are you high? MARIE

No! I ain't high! This is me *not on shit!* This is me! I just wanted to tune your dad's shitty old guitar for this fucking depressing-ass funeral song! CALEB

Caleb, stop. MARIE

But I can't even fucking TUNE IT! CALEB

(We hear a car pull up.)

It's a piece of shit!
(Caleb throws the guitar to the ground. Nan steps outside. Marie picks up the guitar.)

Caleb! You have to tell me something. MARIE

(Caleb stops.)

I-I'm ... I'm sorry, Marie. I just ... CALEB

MARIE

Did she get them from you?

CALEB

What?

(Marie's boyfriend CHUCK enters, carrying a suitcase.)

MARIE

Did you sell her pills? I know her doctor stopped giving them to her. And then you started showing up to help her. You were never that close before.

(Caleb looks at Nan in the doorway.)

CHUCK

Marie? Everything okay?

MARIE

Did you give her drugs?

CALEB

Fuck this.

(Caleb exits, brushing past Chuck.)

(Chuck comes to Marie.)

CHUCK

Hey. Are you okay? Hi, Nan.

NAN

How you doin', Chuck?

MARIE

Where's Tyler?

CHUCK

Sleeping in the car.

NAN

I can't wait to see how that baby's grown.

CHUCK

What happened?

MARIE

It was fine. And then, Caleb. God, what did happen? He started acting all crazy and wouldn't stop tuning the guitar, and ... He sold my mom her pills. I guess I knew before, but ...

CHUCK

Shit. Come here. Let's get Tyler and get you in the house. Are you a little drunk?

MARIE

Yep.

CHUCK

You're entitled. C'mon. I'll get the bags. You can carry Tyler in.

(Chuck exits. Nan goes into the house.)

(Marie picks up the guitar and touches it.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE SIX

(Lights up. The next morning. Marie and Chuck sit drinking coffee. Marie is typing on a laptop.)

CHUCK

What time do you need to have it done?

MARIE

I need to email it to the newspaper by three if it's going to run this week.

CHUCK

How's it coming?

MARIE

It's not as good as my dad's.

CHUCK

It doesn't have to be.

MARIE

I'm so glad Nan said something last night. I've been so worried about the song, I forgot about the obituary.

CHUCK

Want me to look at it?

MARIE

Yeah, once I get it all done. You know which part was the hardest?

CHUCK

What's that?

MARIE

Saying how she died. Lorraine Mae Hopkins Peterson passed away ... suddenly. Unexpectedly? I didn't know how to say it. "Passed away from a heart attack stemming from an addiction to painkillers" seemed inappropriate.

CHUCK

You don't have to say anything about it.

MARIE

And I didn't. Everyone is saying how suddenly she died, how unexpected and shocking it is. But it's not. She didn't really die suddenly. She was on blood pressure medication since I was a kid. She found out she was diabetic last year. The pills didn't really happen until my dad died, well, as far as I know. Anyway, she faded away, really. It wasn't sudden at all.

CHUCK

Hm.

MARIE

What?

CHUCK

I was just thinking. What is it with places like Bouldertown? Shit, my hometown too. We watch the same news, hear the same reports in Duluth, or anywhere. I'm not talking politics. I mean, just what's happening in the world, right? You and I hear, I don't know, drinking too much causes cancer or cirrhosis or whatever. We hear all the reports about ... I don't know know ... diet soda, the tricks it plays on your brain. Makes you fatter. *You and I* hear it and we process it and maybe ... avoid it or cut it out.

MARIE

It's the small town mindsets.

CHUCK

You can't tell me just because someone lives in a small town they don't hear the same data. In fact, in my family? They'll get defensive and make sure you know they watch the news. But it's like they pick out what's worth believing based on ... what? Convenience?

MARIE

Preach, babe.

CHUCK

This rejection of facts. I don't get it.

MARIE

Fear?

CHUCK

Maybe. It's also denial. This idea that "it's not going to happen to me."

MARIE

Because everyone knows at least one person who smoked and drank until were 93.

CHUCK

Yeah and their last years were probably shitty because of their bad health!

MARIE

(Joking) At least they could drink. Reminds me. A few years ago I was visiting my cousin Penny. She offered me a beer "for the road." She meant to take with me. To drink. In the car.

CHUCK

It's funny. We leave our hometowns because if you get decent grades and an aptitude for something, everyone tells us, "Get out of here. Go to college. Don't stay around here."

MARIE

So we do ...

CHUCK

And we see a little more of the world. Get exposed to other ideas, people, our view expands. Only to be ... dismissed. Made into the big bad scary people who are "too good for" what ... drowning in bad choices? They think we want to take away their lifestyle.

MARIE

Well. We kind of do. (*Laughing*) But I know what you're saying.

CHUCK

And *we're* the "snowflakes." Anyway, your mom was a product of her environment. Right or wrong.

MARIE

You know, she wasn't always the 'Rain you knew. She used to be fun. I think she was always depressed. But as long as she was Marie's mom, Ned's wife and a Copper Haven employee, she could get lost in those ... identities, I guess. She lost them one by one and she didn't know how to be ...her anymore.

CHUCK

She was always your mom.

MARIE

Yeah. But I moved away. I changed.

CHUCK

She was also a grown woman.

MARIE

You remember when Tyler had hand, foot and mouth and we couldn't make it for my dad's burial that spring?

CHUCK

Yeah.

MARIE

She told me in one breath she understood. And in the next she said she didn't know where my heart was anymore.

CHUCK

I'm sorry.

MARIE

(*Moving on*) I should get this done. I keep thinking about Caleb.

CHUCK

He really went off the deep end, huh?

MARIE

What if I'm wrong? God, I drank almost a whole bottle of wine last night. I wasn't thinking.

CHUCK

You made a perfectly rational connection.

MARIE

But I could tell he wasn't ... okay. We had been having a good time. The song was going ... as fine as it could. He gets so hyper. He's always been that way.

CHUCK

Don't beat yourself up. Was he high? Will he remember?

MARIE

I don't know. That's the thing. He said this was him sober. He must have been in withdrawal maybe?

CHUCK

Does Caleb have ADHD?

MARIE

Who knows? If I had to guess, I'd say yes. Fran and Tom weren't about to take poor Caleb to a counselor. They'd feel that way even if he wasn't a mixed-race reminder of a shitty time in their lives. Why?

CHUCK

At the school, we had this counselor come in and talk about why some kids are more prone to drugs. For some of them, adults too, I would think, drugs ... even something like meth, can actually make someone with ADHD more chill. So their tweaking looks different than the average bear's.

MARIE

I don't know. Have you seen a tweaking bear?

CHUCK

Not lately. Come here.

(Marie leans into Chuck.)

MARIE

Tyler was tired.

CHUCK

Oh my god. He jabbered almost the whole way. He must have asked me a hundred times, "Why Charlie Brown bald?"

MARIE

(Laughing) Maybe we should break down and get one of those mini-vans with the movie screen?

CHUCK

A mini-van? What craziness is this? First a baby. Then a mini-van. Next thing you know, you'll agree to marry me.

MARIE

Did you just pseudo-propose to me? Again?

CHUCK

Maybe.

MARIE

We're not having this conversation. *(Beat)* No mini-vans. We have one kid.

CHUCK

Okay.

(They sit there a moment.)

You know. People say rotten things when they're hurting.

MARIE

I know.

CHUCK

Like refusing their significant other's marriage proposal. Again.

MARIE

Should we make it a double feature at the church? As long as we have the space, just go get married after the funeral?

CHUCK

I will if you will.

MARIE

Very funny.

CHUCK

Think of the tax benefits!

MARIE

So romantic.

CHUCK

Maybe we could even prop up your mom so/

MARIE

(Elbowing him) Morbid. Stop.

CHUCK

How's your dad's guitar?

MARIE

It's actually fine. It needs a new string. *(Looks at her phone)* God, Caleb kept trying to tune it to ... some level of perfection he wasn't finding.

CHUCK

You wanna check on him?

MARIE

I do. Our singing this ... mess. It's what she wanted.

(Marie removes her phone from her pocket and texts.)

(A toddler's voice calls "Mama" from offstage.)

CHUCK

I got him.

Thanks.

MARIE

Hey. *(Marie looks)* Someone without a heart wouldn't be so worried about about their drug addict cousin.

(Chuck leaves the room..)

(To herself) Just a product of my environment.

MARIE

(Marie picks up her phone.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE SEVEN

(Lights up on 'Rain's house. Chuck is sitting outside, working on a laptop. Eino enters, carrying a bucket.)

CHUCK

Well, hey, Eino.

EINO

Yah. How's it goin' Chuck?

CHUCK

Not bad. Beautiful day.

EINO

Yah. You got in last night, eh?

CHUCK

Yeah. Marie said I could wait another day or two but ... I didn't want her to be all alone out here.

EINO

Yah. How's she doin' today?

CHUCK

Holding it in. She's angry at Caleb, but not sure if she was fair. She's in ... get-it-done mode with her mom. Once the funeral is done ... it will sink in.

EINO

It's a shock.

CHUCK

What do you got there in the bucket?

EINO

Ah, it's some of Ned's copper. We used to go metal detecting. This is all copper he found. We cleaned it up in my garage, weekend before he died.

CHUCK

That's a lot of copper! Where were you guys looking?

EINO

Ah, there's a bunch of old mines back of Pinevale. I don't know if she'd even want this stuff, but ... heck, if she wanted to sell it or somethin', I figured I'd bring it by. Whatever she wants.

CHUCK

She'll appreciate it. She's just putting Tyler down for his nap right now. He's a little squirrely after the long drive and late night.

EINO

Yah. I remember them days.

(A brief awkward silence.)

So how's the shop?

CHUCK

It's goin' okay. Ain't what it used to be.

EINO

You have any help?

CHUCK

Nah. Just me. I got a couple buddies who come by and offer their opinions on how I should be fixing the engines. That's real useful. I'd like to hire Caleb. Help the kid out. Nan won't have it.

EINO

That's too bad.

CHUCK

Yah. He's a good kid. At the end of the day.

EINO

Marie's worried about him too. I think she knew 'Rain was getting drugs from him, but didn't really want to believe it.

CHUCK

Caleb. He ... didn't have it too easy growin' up around here. He got called some pretty nasty names. Fran and Tom acted like it never happened, just pretended Caleb was just another Peterson. Probably made him feel like they wish he never happened. And well ...

EINO

How long you been sober, Eino?

CHUCK

Oh, let's see. Guess about 25 years?

EINO

That's great.

CHUCK

I missed a lot. With my boy. I was a lousy dad. Somethin' had to change.

EINO

Y'know when Marie and I first met and I met Ned and 'Rain ... I never would have thought ... we'd be here now. So soon. Never would have pinned 'Rain for a drug addict.

CHUCK

Them painkillers are bad news. I had to take that Oxy for a while after my leg surgery a couple years ago. I hated to do it. After a few weeks, I just stopped. Felt like I was needin' 'em too much and I didn't want to go down that road again. *(Pause)* You'd be surprised how many people just have it around.

EINO

(Marie joins them.)

MARIE
He's finally asleep.

CHUCK
Thank god. He was a hot mess this morning.

MARIE
Hey Eino. Want some coffee?

EINO
Yah, if you got some made there.

CHUCK
I'll get it.

(Chuck enters the house to get coffee for Eino.)

MARIE
What's in the bucket?

EINO
I'll show ya.

(They sit down on the steps.)

It's copper your dad found and cleaned up.

MARIE
Did you guys find this on one of your metal detecting excursions?

EINO
Yah. This was a collection he had. We shined up these pieces weekend before he died.

(Marie picks up a larger shiny piece and looks at it.)

MARIE
What was he going to do with all this?

EINO
Heh. Your dad had all kinds of cockamamie ideas. You lose a bracelet or something when you were a kid?

MARIE
Yeah. One of the few family trips we ever went on was to Copper Harbor, up in the Keweenaw. I was, ten? I had my own money and I bought this beautiful copper bracelet I just loved. I lost it a couple years later, at a sleepover. I was so sad. How did you know?

EINO
He told me that story. He figured maybe he'd try to make one for you.

(This affects Marie. She comes as close as we've seen to tears.)

MARIE

He made a lot of ... plans.

EINO

Yah. He was kind of a big talker, wasn't he?

MARIE

Kind of?

EINO

(Laughs) Remember when he was gonna fix up that boat?

MARIE

(Laughing) Which one? For a while we had three old boats in the field. He'd buy them thinking he was going to fix them up. Some yards have cars up on blocks. We had boats.

EINO

Your ma got so mad when he brought home that third one.

MARIE

I know! She was like, "Ned! If you don't get rid of all these damn boats, I am leaving you for good!" And of course he didn't. And she didn't.

EINO

They were a pair, those two.

MARIE

They were.

EINO

I know it wasn't always rosy. I know your dad hit your ma. At least once.

MARIE

Thing is ...that last time, as far as I know, was his bottom though. He quit drinking after that.

EINO

They loved you, y'know.

MARIE

When I was really young, we used to go on drives. They'd buy a six-pack and we'd just ride around backroads, listening to music. Usually Fleetwood Mac. On that old Ford's eight-track player.

EINO

(Laughing) Sure can't do that nowadays!

MARIE

Hah! I'm pretty sure we didn't wear seatbelts either. Anyway, I know there were good times too.

(Chuck enters with a cup of coffee for Eino.)

CHUCK
Here you go, Eino.

EINO
Yah, thanks, Chuck.

CHUCK
You need anything, Marie?

MARIE
Nah, I'm good.

(Chuck goes back into the house.)

EINO
They had their troubles but there's a reason they could never stay apart.

MARIE
I guess.

EINO
I know Ned could be ...

MARIE
...an asshole. It's okay. If anyone can say it, Eino, you can.

EINO
Yah. He could be a real asshole sometimes. Used to say he hoped you'd play more music. But he knew you liked having a steady job too.

MARIE
It's so weird. We were ... a unit ... for so long, the three of us. When he died, my mom pulled away. Then when I wasn't looking, she's suddenly ... an addict. How does that happen? It's like a stupid teen sitcom where someone *comes down with* a drug problem.

EINO
I think sometimes people, they meet up and find someone who keeps 'em from goin' off the deep end. It ain't always pretty, but well ...

MARIE
Were you gonna say it's kind of beautiful?

EINO
(Embarrassed) Well, yah ...

MARIE
Eino Peterson. Poet of the north. I won't tell.

EINO
 Yah! You better not.

MARIE
 Thanks, Eino.

EINO
 I don't know what you wanna do with all this copper, but ... just felt like you oughta have it. Sell it even. Whatever you want. Just seemed like somethin' you should have.

MARIE
(Looking at another piece.) Okay.

EINO
 I oughta get goin'. You get a hold of Caleb?

MARIE
 I texted him to say we should still do the song together. It's what she wanted. I promised no drama, let's just play the song. I haven't heard back.

EINO
 I hope he shows up. Caleb was ... he was good to your ma. I don't know about the drug stuff, but he helped her out. I know it ain't right, but he mighta thought he was helpin' her. I don't know.

MARIE
 I can't think about it right now.

EINO
 You ready for tomorrow?

MARIE
 As ready as I can be. I really don't want to be up there alone. Singing her words.

EINO
 Was it any good?

MARIE
 Take away the fact that it's an ode to painkillers, it's not terrible. Caleb and I were sounding at least passable.

EINO
 You gonna get through it okay?

MARIE
 I will. I have to. I don't know what she was thinking.

EINO
(Starting to exit.) Yah. Who knows?

MARIE
 Thanks again, uncle Eino.

EINO

Yah, you ... you take care, Marie. Anything youse need, you just let us know.

(Eino exits.)

(Marie examines a piece of copper with her hands.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE EIGHT

(Lights up on a part of the stage that is not 'Rain's house.)

(We see two chairs and a music stand. Marie enters, carrying her own guitar.)

MARIE

Some of you might have heard already that my mom had a last wish. A little known secret of hers was that she used to write poetry when she was very young. I hope it's okay with her that I told you that. She was very mysterious about it.

If you don't know, my mom told my aunt Nan on the way to the hospital that if she died, she wanted my cousin Caleb and me to put these lyrics she wrote to music and song a song that she wrote.

She always did like a good drama.

So Caleb and I, we did our best with some simple chords and ... well. It is what it is.

(She sits.)

(Caleb walks up and joins her, carrying Ned's guitar.)

(They start to play. The song should sound a little clumsy.)

MARIE AND CALEB

(Singing) You spend your whole life looking for the light
You find a twinkle every now and then
Love the ones who make you feel you can't do nothin' right
Find it's easier to live without a friend.

MARIE

But pain is far behind me thanks to you
My body and my mind so hurt and tired
I take you and you ease the burn, it's all that I can do
You cool down my head like rain on fire

BOTH

Memories
They hurt me now
But you make all the pain just disappear
You make it go away one thing is clear
I never thought you'd make me feel inspired
Now I only want to feel like rain on fire

CALEB

I've driven everyone I love away
I worked this body way too hard for years
Maybe when I'm dead they'll hear what I could never say
But medicine, you take away my tears

MARIE

I'm all alone but there's a constant thing
I don't care what anybody thinks
A bird can never soar the skies with a broken wing
I'm forgetting what it's like to sink

BOTH

Memories
Wash over me
Wonder how I ever wound up here
Missing all the things I held so dear
It's been so long since I have been inspired
Eases the burn like rain on fire

You cool down my head like rain on fire.

(Marie and Caleb play another chord and the song is finished.)

(Lights out.)

SCENE NINE

(Lights up on the Peterson house, a few hours later.)

(All have gathered after the funeral. Food containers of varying sizes are strewn about the kitchen.)

(Caleb is outside smoking. Everyone else, including Gloria, are inside snacking.)

MARIE

(Eating) Oh my god. Who made these mint brownies? They're amazing.

NAN

Oh, that was Bonnie Troia. Yah. She's a good baker.

CHUCK

You and Eino need to take some of this food, Nan. It's way more than we'll eat.

NAN

Yah, sure. I'll take a plate before we go.

MARIE

Those ladies at the church, man. They are too kind. When my dad died too, there had to be thirty people who made and served food. My parents were barely even members anymore.

NAN

Well, you got a lot of aunties and uncles who go.

CHUCK

The cheesy potatoes stay with us though, right?

MARIE

No one's going to come between you and your cheesy potatoes. Gloria, let me get you your container.

GLORIA

Seriously, don't worry about it!

MARIE

Thanks for coming by.

GLORIA

I felt terrible about missing the funeral.

MARIE

You had a baby to deliver. That's a better excuse than other people had.

GLORIA

Yeah, this little guy wasn't waiting until he got to Portage Hospital. He wanted out! First baby born in Bouldertown in more than five years, I guess.

MARIE

You'll probably be on the cover of the Gazette. Hey, you want some food? We really can't take it all back with us.

NAN

Yah, there's a pan of enchiladas there. I think there's some salsa too.

(Marie and Gloria exchange an amused look.)

MARIE

Nan, you should/

GLORIA

/Ooh, enchiladas! I always like mine with a little tequila. Do you have any?

(Marie shakes her head, stifling a laugh.)

Ay yi yi. Well, maybe next time.

MARIE

Thank you for coming.

NAN

Yah. Lorraine always liked you.

GLORIA

Take care, Marie. Be good to yourself.

MARIE

I'll try. Bye, Gloria.

(Gloria exits.)

CHUCK

Marie, you want a glass of wine? I'd say you've earned one today.

MARIE

That is the best thing I've heard all day.

CHUCK

(Preparing a glass for Marie and himself) The best thing I've heard all day was you and Caleb.

NAN

Yah. Boy, Marie. Youse sounded good. Not a dry eye in the house. Youse did real good.

MARIE

I barely remember it.

EINO

Boy, is that good coffee, Marie. Nan, we oughta get one of those grinders and make it fresh like this.

NAN

I got barely any counter space as it is, Eino. Where am I gonna fit a coffee grinder too?

EINO

Maybe I'll just get one for the shop.

CHUCK

Glad you like it, Eino. You can buy it ground. We can send you some after we get back home.

EINO

Yah! I'd like that.

(Caleb tentatively approaches the door and eventually enters, but hovers in the doorway.)

NAN

You oughta do somethin' with that song, Marie.

MARIE

Like what?

EINO

Make a record or somethin'. Yah. Betcha 'Rain woulda loved that.

MARIE

We'll see. *(Sees Caleb)* I really couldn't have gone up there without Caleb.

NAN

Where's that little one?

MARIE

Napping.

NAN

Is that all that boy does? He sure was good at the service.

CHUCK

His schedule gets all out of whack when we aren't home. He's usually overtired most of the time he's here. We take advantage of every nap we can get.

MARIE

Maybe I shouldn't have this wine. I've got kind of a headache.

CHUCK

You need to sleep, hon.

NAN

We should get goin' pretty soon, Eino. I gotta make a couple rounds yet tonight.

CHUCK

How many people do you see a day, Nan?

NAN

Depends on the day. Home health keeps me busy. Ever since they closed down the hospital and Mayfair, the nursing home, home health is the only care some of these people can get.

MARIE

I think this is the first time I haven't seen you wearing scrubs in, a while. At least since I got here. You've been working a lot.

NAN

Yah. Well, I get a lot of call-ins.

CHUCK

(Kind, but not overly friendly) Caleb, you hungry? We have a ton of food.

CALEB

Nah, I ain't hungry right now.

CHUCK

You can take some with you. Eat it later. Seriously ... look at all this.

(Caleb looks at Marie.)

MARIE

Take some. Do you need a cooler?

CALEB

Nah. I got a cooler out there.

NAN

I gotta use the john, Eino. Then let's get goin'.

(Nan exits, leaving her bag on the counter.)

(Chuck and Marie pack up food for Eino and Caleb to take with them.)

CALEB

When you guys headin' back to Duluth?

MARIE

(Not looking at him) Tomorrow. We both need to get back to work.

CALEB

What are youse gonna do with this place?

MARIE

Keep it awhile, I guess. There are some legal ... things ... I'll need to look into. She didn't leave a will. Maybe we'll rent it out. I don't know.

CALEB

(Uncomfortable) Sorry to ask, but you got plans for the camp?

MARIE

Do yo have anywhere else to go?

CALEB

Well, my buddy got an old camper he says/

MARIE

/You don't have to sleep in a camper. Just stay there until I figure it out. If you feel like doing some more work on it while you're out there, consider that your rent for now. I'll look into getting electric hook-up out there.

EINO

Yah. Just call the power company. It's maybe sixty, seventy bucks to turn it on. There's power lines out that way.

CALEB

That'd be sweet. I feel like Abe Lincoln out there.

MARIE

You have to promise me something. *(Pause)* Never mind. God, my head. I never get headaches.

CHUCK

Take an aspirin or something.

MARIE

Yeah, about that! My mother the pill addict has bottles of aspirin, ibuprofen and Tylenol. But one is empty and two are expired.

EINO

(Laughs) I'm sorry. I shouldn't laugh.

MARIE

It's okay. It's funny.

EINO

Ah. Nan got a whole medicine chest in her purse. Go 'head and look in there.

(Caleb looks at the bag.)

MARIE

I don't want to just dig in her purse.

EINO

You see how many plates she filled up? She's gonna be in there a while. Go 'head.

MARIE

(Opens the purse, warily) Only if I see them right away.

(Marie opens Nan's purse. She seems surprised.)

(Marie lifts baggie after baggie containing pills. Each has masking tape with writing on it.)

(She removes a baggie filled with cash.)

MARIE

How many patients does she have?

EINO

Oh Christ.

(A toilet flushes offstage.)

(Marie pulls out one more bottle.)

MARIE

Ibuprofen.

NAN

(Entering) I feel like I lost a whole person. Let's go, Eino.

(She sees Marie standing by her emptied purse.)

MARIE

I needed some ibuprofen.

NAN

(Panicked) Why did you go in my purse? Who said you could go in my purse?

(Nan tries to put the pills back in her bag.)

These are my patients' pills. Y'know, I could get in a lot of trouble for someone handling their medication.

MARIE

(Grabs baggies and reads their labels, written on masking tape) Vicodin. Fentanyl. Oxycodone. Roxicodone. That's a lot of painkillers for geriatrics, Nan. That you just carry around in your purse?

NAN

They're for my rounds! I got patients.

MARIE

Uncle Eino ... tell me the truth.

EINO

Christ, Nan.

MARIE

Caleb?

NAN

Marie, what are you accusin' me of? You oughta be ashamed! Lorraine was right. You think you're so perfect.

MARIE

Tell me who they're for, Nan!

NAN

They're for my patients!

CHUCK

Your home health patients are all on opioids?

NAN

They're old people! They got pains!

MARIE

Uncle Eino ... tell me what you know.

NAN

He knows I'm an LPN for Home Health is what he knows!

CALEB

Shut the fuck up, Aunt Nan. Stop fucking lying.

MARIE

Eino ...

EINO

I didn't know it was ... that much.

NAN

Eino!

EINO

Back when I busted up my leg, I stopped takin' my. I was worried about gettin' hooked. Right around the Recession there, shop got real slow. Bunch of hospital workers got home health jobs so she got less hours. Anyways, there was a bunch left over and well, she had a patient who couldn't afford their pills no more so Nan sold mine to her, cheap. I kept gettin' the prescription. She ...

MARIE

Became a drug dealer.

NAN

(Seething) Don't you ever call me that!

CALEB

It's true! It's fucking true!

NAN

Don't you act like some goddamn angel, Caleb! You ain't too good to take fifty bucks for deliverin' 'em

(Cont'd) for me!

CALEB

I ain't sayin' I'm no angel! I know I ain't! But you always actin' like I'm a piece of shit. Like I'm a piece of dirt ... that's helping you! Then acting like you understand why, like because I'm half ... whatever the fuck I am, and "Oh, he had it so rough. That's why Caleb is a fucking loser. He's just a useless druggie. Until I need him, though... oh, he comes in fucking handy when I can't bring Shirley or Ida her fuckin' pills."

MARIE

Shut up! Just tell me. One of you. *(Pause)* Did she get them from you? Nan?

NAN

What do you think? You act like you know.

MARIE

I think she did.

NAN

She was ... gonna quit, you know. After that Mexican doctor/

CHUCK

/Jesus.

NAN

After she told 'Rain she wasn't gonna give her no more pills ... 'Rain was tellin' me about it, and ... her back was just killin' her. When your friend needs something and you can help 'em out, you do!

MARIE

Or you call their daughter and say your mother needs help. Let's try to help her.

NAN

Wake up. Like she wasn't gonna find 'em somewhere. You know how many people do what I do? Your old friend from grade school? Sweet little Tammy Koivisto? Your mom called her first. Then the little snot upped her prices. At least with me, she was getting it from a friend. From family. She didn't have to deal with no ... troublemakers.

MARIE

How did she pay you?

NAN

I'd slip her some free ones sometimes. I didn't charge her as much. It's just ... a business. I'm helping people. They're all adults. They make their own decisions.

MARIE

Get out.

(Marie starts to throw pill baggies at Nan.)

You were her best friend!

NAN

At least I was there for her.

(Nan puts the last of her baggies back in her bag. She throws the ibuprofen bottle at Marie and exits.)

EINO

I didn't know it was ... that much. I didn't know.

(Eino exits after Nan. Caleb slips out behind them.)

(Marie sits.)

(Chuck checks the date on the ibuprofen bottle and pours two out.)

MARIE

What just happened?

CHUCK

(Pouring a glass of water) Too much. But here's what's going to happen. You're going to take this ibuprofen and drink this water. And then we're going to call the police.

(Marie nods.)

You have to do it now before the family guilt kicks in.

MARIE

I know.

(Caleb returns from offstage carrying Ned's guitar. He enters the house.)

CHUCK

Not a good time, Caleb.

CALEB

Yah. I know. Can I just ... say somethin' quick?

MARIE

Fine.

CALEB

I'm sorry. I know it don't matter ... your ma was so nice to me. She'd sometimes ask me to go find Nan and buy from her. She'd pay me twenty bucks, let me drive the Camry. I needed the money sometimes, and ... I always said yes. I never thought she'd be dead. She wasn't right those last couple months. That's all she did was go look for pills and write in that notebook. I didn't know she was writing a song.

(Marie can't look at him.)

Remember her and her People magazine? I used to tease her about the crossword puzzle. She couldn't wait to do that fuckin' crossword in it. She knew all about them celebrities. Couple months ago I came

out here, was fixin' up her cupboard doors and I saw a stack of her magazines there. Still in the plastic. She didn't even read 'em anymore. She was just starin' at the TV.

Anyways, Marie. This is your dad's guitar. It don't feel right.

(He gives her the guitar and she takes it.)

Plus, I got my photography, y'know?

CHUCK

I think it's time to go, Caleb.

CALEB

Yah. Okay then. I'm ... see ya, cuz.

(Caleb exits.)

(Marie holds the guitar.)

CHUCK

You're still calling the cops.

MARIE

I know.

(Lights out.)

SCENE TEN

(Lights up on the Peterson house, a month later.)

(Aside from a few boxes, the house is noticeably free of clutter now. Marie enters, carrying two candlesticks.)

MARIE

(Calling) Trust me, they're not silver!

CHUCK

(Off) How do you know?

MARIE

Because I painted them. In eighth grade, I think.

(Chuck enters carrying a tool bag.)

CHUCK

You painted?

MARIE

I did. It was my only 4-H experience.

CHUCK

Huh. I thought I knew everything about you.

MARIE

(Puts candlesticks in a box) I have to keep some secrets. If I don't keep you on your toes, you'll get bored.

CHUCK

Yeah, finding out you were a 4-H candlestick painter is intriguing stuff. What next? Were you a competitive eater?

MARIE

No. But I could have been a competitive drinker.

CHUCK

Nice.

MARIE

Boy, we have a lot of work to do.

CHUCK

We have time. It already looks better in here.

MARIE

God, she saved everything. How's the painting coming?

CHUCK

One coat on three walls, one more to go.

MARIE

It's going to brighten up that room. I can't go in there.

CHUCK

If it wasn't your mom's bedroom, I'd say we should both paint it. Naked.

MARIE

Hah!

CHUCK

Tyler's at my sister's. I feel like we should get decadent.

MARIE

(Laughing) It is weird, isn't it? I have that appointment later this afternoon.

CHUCK

Right. Sorry. You okay?

MARIE

I don't know. Watching my aunt's court hearing seems so ... like a Lifetime movie.

CHUCK

How's Eino doing?

MARIE

Surprisingly upbeat.

CHUCK

Caleb?

MARIE

Who knows?

CHUCK

Jail might be the best thing for him. Who knows?

MARIE

Yeah.

CHUCK

Tell you what. Look at all those flies out there.

MARIE

I know. They're disgusting.

CHUCK

But they're not getting in here. Caleb did a good job spraying the house.

MARIE
Yeah. Thank goodness. They're insidious.

CHUCK
(Exiting) Alright. I better get back to it.

MARIE
Keep your clothes on, Chachi.

CHUCK
(Off) No promises!

(Marie looks at items in one of the boxes.)

(Chuck returns, carrying an old boom box.)

CHUCK
Hey. DJ M-Bop. See if you can find a radio station. I need to go look for something in the garage.

MARIE
This old thing. It's been around two-thirds of my life.

CHUCK
They did not have boom boxes sixty years ago.

MARIE
Watch it, smartass.

CHUCK
Want me to take a couple of these boxes out with me?

MARIE
Yeah, that'd be great. Looks like one of my old mix tapes is in here.

(Chuck grabs two boxes and exits, opening the space even more.)

(Marie plugs the boom box in. She pulls up the antenna. She curiously ejects a cassette tape and looks at it.)

(She holds and stares at the cassette for a long moment. Marie puts the cassette in the player and hits play.)

(SOUND/VO: NED and RAIN whispering for a moment.)

'RAIN
Okay. Okay. Hi Tyler. It's your grandma Lorraine.

NED
And your grandpa.

'RAIN

We miss you and thought we'd make you a little something. It was your grandpa's idea.

NED

Yah. I get the blame.

'RAIN

We got a little lullaby for you since we don't get to see you too much. So ... here goes. Oh, boy.

(Ned plays Brahm's lullaby on the guitar as 'Rain sings. It's not pretty, but it's sweet.)

Lullaby

And good night

Sweet dreams little Tyler

Your grandma and your grandpa

Love you with all our hearts

(Marie finally begins to cry.)

Go to sleep

Big and strong

In our hearts you belong

Lullaby

Baby boy ...

(The guitar plays on.)

(Spoken, laughing) Oh, no! I forgot the words!

NED

(Spoken, also laughing) Ah, no. Well, we'll just do it again.

RAIN

Don't you make me listen to myself. I hate my voice.

NED

Yah, but she's gonna love this. Let's try 'er again.

(We hear the stop button.)

(Marie lets it go for a few long moments.)

(Chuck enters, not seeing her right away.)

CHUCK

I thought you were going to find some ...

(He sees her and stops. He sits near her and gives her a moment before reaching out to her. Marie rests her head on his knee.)

(Chuck just lets her cry.)

You need a minute alone? Or ...

(Marie looks around the room.)

Ask me. MARIE

Ask you what? CHUCK

Ask me ... again. Right now. Please. MARIE

(Chuck looks at her.)

Ask me to marry you. I'll say yes.

(He takes her hands.)

(Lights out.)

(End of play.)