

# SPIN

By  
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## CAST OF CHARACTERS

FANCY....40s-60s.

ANGEL...a spin instructor. Fit. A friendly, sassy bad ass. Also plays:

- DOCTOR RHODES, Fancy's primary care physician
- MARY, Fancy's sister

DAN...a spin class participant. Friendly, amiable. Also plays:

- HANK, Fancy's son
- DOCTOR TURNER, a physician at an assisted living facility
- CHRIS, a staffer at an assisted living facility
- SPENCER, a middle school-teenage student with autism
- JOHN, Fancy's brother
- TONY, Fancy's dad
- WAITER

PAULINE....40s-60s. Also plays:

- GWEN, Fancy's mother. In a wheelchair, one leg amputated as a result of diabetes
- FANCY'S BODY

## TIME

The present and the past

## PLACE

A spin class and other places

## PRODUCTION, DESIGN &amp; TECHNICAL NOTES

## Casting:

Actors can be of any body type or size but must be physically capable to spin while speaking dialogue. The actor playing Angel especially needs to demonstrate physical ease and prowess on the stationary bicycle.

While most experienced spin instructors and students use shoes specifically designed to clip into spin bike pedals, the hardware on the bottom of the shoes could be distracting when actors are walking, and the hardware might also create issues when actors need to mount/dismount quickly. This issue can be explored further in rehearsal. If spin shoes are worn, carpeting might be required on stage to muffle sound.

## Props &amp; Costumes:

Props and costume pieces to indicate different characters can be kept in the bike bottle holders, hanging off the back of the bike, on the towel shelf unit, or on the coat hooks.

ANGEL: Headband/fabric "buff" around head. Headset

DOCTOR TURNER: Doctor's lab coat, headset as stethoscope

MARY: Headband as ponytail holder

DAN: Bandana

DOCTOR RHODES: Doctor's lab coat

CHRIS: Name tag

SPENCER: Large, thick rubber band

JOHN: Glasses

TONY: No costume piece designated

WAITER: Towel tucked into waistband

PAULINE: Ear plugs

GWEN: Large sweatshirt

FANCY'S BODY: Gwen's large sweatshirt

## Sound Design:

Music is an integral part of the indoor cycling class experience. Director and sound designer should work closely to weave appropriate music throughout the production. Music should inform both the intensity of the class and the intensity of what is playing out in Fancy's mind, but never overwhelm or distract from what is being said on stage.

MS

ACT ONE  
SCENE ONE

*There are four stationary bikes, "spin bikes," three on one side, the instructor's bike on the other, the three facing the instructor bike at an angle. There is a small shelf with stacks of medium sized white towels and a line of coat hooks holding costume pieces. A small office chair with wheels rests in a corner and a wall unit which dispenses wet wipes is affixed to a wall. ANGEL is at one of the bikes. Angel wears a headband/fabric "buff" on her head. FANCY enters. She is wearing large shapeless sweatshirt, is holding a water bottle and sheet of paper with a list of fitness classes. She has a paper wristband around her wrist.*

FANCY  
Hello?

ANGEL  
Hi.

FANCY  
Oh. Hi. Hi, I'm...this is spin, right?

ANGEL  
Yeah. 5:30 spin.

FANCY  
Good. I'm here. I'm early.

ANGEL  
First spin class?

FANCY  
Yes. Yeah. It shows?

ANGEL  
Nope. Just asking.

FANCY  
Well, my doctor said that I should, well, no impact 'cuz-

*She waves to her knees and legs.*

## FANCY (CONT'D)

And other stuff. Not big stuff but...you know.

ANGEL

Okay. Not an issue. I'm Angel.

FANCY

Fancy, not Franny, Fancy.

ANGEL

Nice to meet you, Fancy. Well, let's get you set up on a bike.

FANCY

Oh boy.

ANGEL

It's okay. What I'm going to do is adjust the seat, which is usually called "the saddle" during class, and handlebars, so they're suited to your body and then just take you through all you need to know to go through a class.

*As the conversation continues, Angel visually takes in Fancy's height, weight, and build and begins adjusting the level of the seat and handlebars.*

FANCY

The gal up front said you don't have to be coordinated. I'm not coordinated. Really, really not coordinated.

ANGEL

Not an issue.

FANCY

Good. 'Cuz I'm not. I'm also out of shape, obviously. I mean there's stuff going on. Well, who doesn't have stuff going on right?

ANGEL

Oh, we all have stuff going on. So, you have water, which is good. So just get on.

*Angel gently takes the water bottle out of Fancy's hand and places it in the bottle holder on the bike.*

We want to make sure your legs extend properly, and your hips, knees, and feet are all in line when you're standing. So, go ahead. Get on.

FANCY

Now.

ANGEL

Just so I can check the settings. You aren't going to do anything but sit you down first, okay?

FANCY

So, you want me to put this big ass on that little seat?

ANGEL

You've no idea the asses this seat has seen. Hop on.

FANCY

You keep saying that.

ANGEL

Yes, I do. It's okay. Just slide your toes into here and swing your leg over.

*Fancy gets on and Angel squats to wiggle Fancy's toes into the foot cages.*

Relax your foot so I can.... good. Now extend this leg.

*Fancy does.*

Good. How does it feel?

FANCY

*(Staring at her feet)*

Well. Like a bike, I guess.

ANGEL

Okay. So, there are only three positions you have to know.

FANCY

Thank god.

ANGEL

I know. You're in position one right now, just sitting in the saddle and pedaling. Hands right here. Okay. Pedal.

FANCY

Just pedal?

ANGEL

Yup. Just pedal. Round and round.

*Fancy slowly begins to pedal.*

FANCY

*(Looking at her feet)*

Ha. I feel like I'm ten again.

ANGEL

I know. How does that feel?

FANCY

Okay. Okay!

ANGEL

Make sure your elbows are loose and you keep your knees in. Good. Good. I think I got the settings first crack.

FANCY

You've been doing this for a while? How long-

ANGEL

-Now, to increase the resistance, you just reach down and turn this red knob to the right.

FANCY

While I'm pedaling?

ANGEL

Yup. Okay. Why don't I do it the first time.

*Angel reaches down and turns the knob. Fancy's legs slow.*

FANCY

OH!

ANGEL

This is called adding resistance or adding road. Okay, for position two, while you're still pedaling, stand up, out of the saddle and keep your hands right there.

FANCY

*(Still slowly pedaling)*

Stand up?

ANGEL

Yeah. Here, let me show you.

*Angel jumps on her bike and starts pedaling and stands up.  
DAN enters, carrying an empty water bottle, wearing a bandana  
on his head folded into a headband, and an opened hoodie with a  
zipper. He also has a wrist band.*

It's Dan The Man.

DAN

I am the man!

*Dan proceeds to adjust one of the other bikes, puts the hoodie  
over the back of the bike, grabs a towel, etc.*

ANGEL  
(To Fancy)

So, see? This is called position two.

*Angel jumps off and returns to Fancy's side.*

Now you.

FANCY

Alright. And I keep pedaling?

ANGEL

You keep pedaling.

*Fancy, putting a fair amount of weight on her hands on the  
handlebars, stands.*

Good! Now try to straighten your body up a little.

*Fancy does.*

Good. Okay. This is called "Going to two."

FANCY

Going to two. Got it. I'm at two!



ANGEL

You are! It's actually easier than position one because you can use your body weight to press down. It also helps to tighten your core, you know, hold in your stomach.

*PAULINE enters.*

Hey, Pauline.

*Pauline carries a water bottle and a large sweatshirt, which she places behind the bike on the floor or on the back of the bike.*

PAULINE

There're no towels in the locker room. Again. Third time this week.

ANGEL

Did you tell them up front? I can-

PAULINE

-I did it. I did it.

*She proceeds to start adjusting the other bike.*

ANGEL

*(Focusing back on Fancy)*

Good. You're doing good. Hey, Dan. Go to three for me.

*Dan easily goes to position three.*

So, you do that.

FANCY

But I think I just got two.

DAN

You can do it.

FANCY

You sure?

*Pauline mounts her bike, puts ear plugs into her ears, and begins pedaling.*

ANGEL

I'm sure.

FANCY

Oh boy.

*Fancy leans forward and goes into position three.*

ANGEL

Excellent. Now see this console? Go back to one.

FANCY

Huh?

ANGEL

Sit down but keep pedaling.

FANCY

Okay. *(She does)* What about-

ANGEL

-The console here tells you how fast you are going and how much power *(points to console's face)*. See? That's your power. Now pedal faster and look at that number. *(Fancy does)* See?

FANCY

Oh! Okay! Can I slow down now?

ANGEL

Yes.

*She does. Angel points to the console's face.*

This is your speed. So, if I say go to between eighty and ninety, make that number go to between eighty or ninety. And if you add resistance, this power number goes up. *(Angel turns the red knob)*. See?

FANCY

Oh! Okay.

ANGEL

Now you do it. Turn the knob to lower the resistance.

*Fancy does.*

FANCY

Thank you!

ANGEL

You got this. *(Speaking to the class)* Okay, people. Be afraid. Be very afraid *(To Fancy, gently)* But not you. *(To class)* But everyone else? I got a comment card. Someone thinks my class isn't hard enough. *(Groans are heard. Angel grabs a headset and begins adjusting it)* I am a very fragile flower and take things like that very personally. So, buckle up, cupcakes. We're going on a RIDE!

*Angel climbs onto her bike and begins pedaling. Music starts, a fairly energetic rock song. Light change. Music change. Everyone goes to position three. They have now been spinning for some time,*

*(Voice somewhat amplified through headset)*

Good, people! You got this! I'm hitting the fans. Keep going.

*Angel dismounts her bike and continues to speak.*

Close your eyes. Let the ride take over. Let your mind go.

*Fancy closes her eyes. The lights change, putting Dan and Pauline into relative darkness. Dan and Pauline slow to a stop but remain in position one. Angel takes a doctor's lab coat off the coat hook, puts it on, grabs a medical chart from the shelf, drapes her headset unit around her neck like a stethoscope, sits in the office chair, and she rolls in front of Fancy. Angel is now DOCTOR RHODES.*

FANCY

*(To Doctor Rhodes, still pedaling at position three)*

Okay, Doctor Rhodes. Go ahead. Shoot. I know. I'm ready. There's really only one way to spin it. Right?

DOCTOR RHODES

*(Referring to chart)*

Well, your BMI is at 34.

FANCY

*(Slowing legs, moving to position two)*

And that's bad.

DOCTOR RHODES

It's not good. And your blood work does confirm that you're in menopause. And the blood sugar isn't great. Still.

FANCY

*(Sitting and slowing legs more)*

So, I'm sterile and one more step closer to death.

*Fancy's knees subtly begin to open up.*

DOCTOR RHODES

And your knees, well, Fancy, we've talked about them before.

*Fancy pulls them back in.*

With your family history of diabetes, especially your mother's, as we've discussed before, I would recommend some lifestyle changes.

*Fancy slows to a stop and sits in the saddle.*

FANCY

No. Come on. Please?

DOCTOR RHODES

I really don't want you to-

FANCY

-I know-

DOCTOR RHODES

-to develop diabetes. And you're on the road to it.

FANCY

You know, I used to like you.

DOCTOR RHODES

I get that a lot.

FANCY

So? Diet and exercise. Yippie. Good times.

DOCTOR RHODES

Exercise can help with stress. You've a lot on your plate.

FANCY

Really?

DOCTOR RHODES

I didn't mean-

FANCY

-I know. I know.

DOCTOR RHODES

You want some brochures? Or should I just talk down to you?

FANCY

Condescend. Please.

DOCTOR RHODES

It's not rocket science, Fancy. It's simple math. Count the calories and burn the calories. Join a gym. Low-to-no impact. Try a spin class. Mix it up with maybe some yoga, the elliptical is good too. Just sweat and eat right. Stop soda, start water. Stop junk food, start fruits, veggies, whole grains, lean proteins. You're smart. You can do this.

*Doctor Rhodes props the medical chart on Fancy's handlebars, rolls the chair back to its corner, removes the doctor's coat, tosses it over Dan's handlebars, and remounts her bike. Angel remains still, in position one.*

FANCY

*(To audience)*

You know the talk inside your head when you're well...living? Anyway, your brain, or my brain, whatever, never stops yammering. I thought doing something physical would shut it up but....nope. *(Gestures to herself and the audience)* So here we are. My legs going 'round and 'round and my brain doing the same thing. Anyway. Spending my very first spin class revisiting that particular doctor's visit wasn't exactly fun. So, I decided to think about Hank.

HANK

MOM! You've gotta to do it.

*Dan, still on his bike, is now HANK. He takes the bandana off, throws the hoodie on, dismounts, grabs a towel and tosses it to Fancy. He faces her right in front of her handlebars.*

FANCY

This guy doesn't look at all like Hank, but whatever. I happened to mention I was going to put off my physical this year. You know how your insurance dictates when you get your physical? You get the first one and then you're stuck with that month. Forever. Mine is, wait for it, December. After Halloween, Thanksgiving, right at Christmas, office parties, the celebration of all that is holy and good. I get to come in for a celebration of my life right after all that. After celebrating candy, turkey, egg nog, and staring down a wonderful new year. So, I said, well, maybe that I wasn't going to this year.

HANK

Mom. I'm talking to you.

FANCY

I realize that.

HANK

Want me to go to that baby-face doctor and have him stick his finger up my ass and feel my balls? You gotta to go too. That's the deal.

FANCY

*(To audience, smiling)*

He's a charmer.

HANK

You're not croaking on me, woman. We made a deal. I'm sick of dead people-

FANCY

*(To audience)*

-his dad, my ex, died when Hank was eleven. Heart attack.

HANK

-and you are so not leaving me alone with Gran.

*He takes a swig out of her water bottle and remounts his bike, removes the hoodie, puts Dan's bandana back on, and goes back to position one.*

FANCY

*(To audience)*

My mom, well, she's no picnic. She's, Gran, has lots of health stuff. And now she's in memory care. Another thing which freaks Hank out. Oh god, I'm sorry. I'm Fancy. Fancy Carroll. I'm just spinning off in all directions! And yes, Fancy? Yes, that's my real name.

*She opens the chart and points to her name at the top of her patient summary.*

FANCY (CONT'D)

Fancy. The one thing my parents managed to compromise on. My dad wanted to name me after his favorite aunt, Franny. Mom thought Franny was a bitch. And she was. To Mom. Honestly, she had her reasons. But anyway, Mom wanted to name me after her favorite singer, Nancy Sinatra. You know? "These Boots Are Made for Walking" Nancy Sinatra? You see where I'm going with this, right? So, in a family with a Mary and a John, I get saddled with Fancy. Yippie. As you can tell, I really embraced the spirit of the name.

*She extends her arms, "models" her sweats.*

Thirteen years later Dad got out...I mean.... they divorced thirteen years later. Oddly enough, Dad's second wife was named Nancy. Anyway, happy new year. I'm menopausal. My blood sugar is off the charts. And...I'm fat. Fat Fancy, as Mom likes to call me. Oh, and did I mention, she's in assisted living. She's fat too.

*Dan removes his bandana and puts on the doctor's lab coat which Angel previous placed on his handlebars. He is now DOCTOR TURNER. Fancy looks around and spots him next to her/over her shoulder on the other bike.*

So, Dr. Turner. Um. What exactly does this-

*Doctor Turner dismounts and casually takes a wet wipe and wipes his hands as he speaks to Fancy.*

DOCTOR TURNER

-Oh, memory care is more just an increase in supervision. Your mother's been a bit more...anxious as well, so-

FANCY

-Anxiety? That's what you call it?

DOCTOR TURNER

Anxiety and frustration manifests differently with different residents.

FANCY

Okay. So, is this like hospice?

DOCTOR TURNER

Oh, we aren't there yet. Don't worry. With the increase of services and support, she could live quite a while, even with the previous amputation.

*Doctor Turner reaches down and turns the knob on Fancy's bike, adding more resistance. Fancy's legs slow as she begins working harder.*

FANCY

How did she take the news?

DOCTOR TURNER

Oh, we think it's better if family members tell their relative. Helps with the transition.

*After giving Fancy's bike one more hard turn of the resistance knob, Doctor Turner removes the coat, hangs it on a coat hook, and remains at the towel shelf, straightening towels. Fancy slowly stops pedaling and just sits on the bike*

FANCY

*(To his exiting back)*

Great. Thanks, doc. *(To audience)* Things haven't been breaking my way lately. Before holiday break...I work at a therapeutic day school for kids with disabilities. Kindergarten through high school. Mostly autism, some developmental delays, some CP. Smart kids. I love my job. I love the kids. They're truth tellers. Hank calls it the No Spin Zone. But it's not all "upside" if you're working on some mountain-sized-get-through-the-day denial.

*A soft bell chime can be heard. Dan, now SPENCER, turns. He is holding a stack of towels.*

SPENCER

Mrs. Carroll, Mrs. Rappaport sent these.

FANCY

Thank you, Spencer. Just put them on the shelf.

*Spencer very carefully places them on the shelf. He then turns back to Fancy. He has a large thick rubber band in his hands, which he slowly and rhythmically rotates around his fingers as he speaks.*

SPENCER

You've gotten fat.



FANCY

What?

SPENCER

Fat. You've gotten fat. I've been here for five years and three months and you've gotten fatter.

FANCY

I...well.... yes, I probably have. Gained weight. Yes. That's true. But, Spencer-

SPENCER

-It's okay! I like fat people. My grandma is fat, and my neighbor Mrs. Rose is fat, and she makes really good Snickerdoodle cookies. What's your favorite song? Mine is *Super Freak* but we can't play it here because it's inappropriate. What's yours?

FANCY

Um-

SPENCER

-Don't say anything by Nickelback! My sister says no one likes Nickelback!

FANCY

Okay. I like Lizzo.

SPENCER

My mom likes her to. And she's fat too! Bye.

*Spencer crosses over to Dan's bike.*

FANCY

*(To audience)*

See?

*Spencer returns.*

SPENCER

You know that tomorrow is Pizza Friday? You should have some. Grandma says resisting pizza is a sin against all that's right in the world. She also says fat is fabulous and it's what inside that counts.

FANCY

Yeah. Thanks, Spencer.

*A soft chiming is heard, indicating the end of the school day.*

*Spencer gives her a thumbs up and mounts Dan's bike. He removes the rubber band and puts on the bandana. He holds still in position one.*

FANCY (CONT'D)

After work, I usually circle around to see Mom. I'm the daily boots on the ground with Mom. My sister Mary-

*Angel is now MARY, "stands" on the motionless pedals. She has taken Angel's headband/buff and wrapped it around her hair, so she now has a ponytail. Fancy indicates by pointing or gesturing towards her.*

-and my brother John-

*Dan puts on a pair of glasses. Now JOHN, stands on his motionless pedals*

-“help.” By that I mean, John pays for this place, so he doesn't have to ever show up-

*John sits but does not pedal his bike the following scene. He just sits, occasionally sip of water, checking his phone, or toweling off his forehead.*

-and Mary says-

MARY

*(Easily pedaling in position one)*

-Fan, you're so much better with this kind of stuff. Being patient and listening. You're just better with her. And Hank is grown-

FANCY

*(To audience, starting to slowly pedal)*

-sophomore in high school-

MARY

*(Adding resistance)*

-and I've just got so much going on-

FANCY

*(To audience)*

-Part time job at the library. Husband Dave is an accountant. Three kids. Andrea is a senior. Has her own car. Josh is at community college, lives at home. Has his own car. Other daughter, Karen, a pharmacist, lives in Portland. So, yeah. She's just swamped.

MARY

*(Standing and pedaling in position two)*

-Oh, you know. But I'll do Thanksgiving.

FANCY

*(Standing and pedaling in position two)*

We just had Thanksgiving. Three hours. Four hours of prep, ya think? Total seven hours. Oh, let's round up. I'll give her ten hours. But that's how she spins it.

*Fancy stops pedaling and sits.*

I get Mom and bring her from Willowtree. Mary tells us to get there around three. She serves dinner at three-twenty. Exactly. She likes to keep the Mom exposure to the bare minimum. Get there at three, out the door by six.

I get texts all the time, "I'm doing this, "I'm doing that." Which is CODE for "Look how busy I am, this is why I can't see Mom when I live thirty-two minutes away."

*Mary comes to an abrupt stop. She takes all the resistance off her bike and looks at Fancy.*

MARY

Fan. I just can't.

*Spent, Mary stops pedaling and just sits. The lights dim, Mary becomes Angel as the buff is put back around her head. John takes off the glasses and puts the bandana back on, becoming Dan. Angel and Dan sit motionless in position one. Only Fancy and Pauline's bikes are lit.*

FANCY

I get it. I get it. I do. When I start bitching in my mind about Mary and John, I just feel like my genetic-Mom-heredity-victim-DNA disposition just rips through my body. And I'm repulsed by myself. But where does that leave me? Nowhere.

*Pauline removes her ear plugs and, now Fancy's mother GWEN, dismounts. She takes the huge sweatshirt from the back of her*

*bike and puts it on. She moves very slowly and heavily. She sits on the office chair folding one of her legs under her to indicate a missing leg. She looks at Fancy for a long moment. Fancy dismounts.*

FANCY (CONT'D)

Hey, Mom.

GWEN

Hey.

FANCY

So, the new room is nice. Better view, right?

GWEN

If you like parking lots.

FANCY

It's just the corner of the-

GWEN

-Why haven't you been here?

FANCY

I was here yesterday, Mom.

GWEN

Oh. Well.... Mary never comes either. Or your brother.

FANCY

We just did have Thanksgiving at her house.

GWEN

Her kids were on their phones the whole time.

FANCY

That's what young people do these days. They're good kids. Andrea got that award-

GWEN

-They didn't even talk to me.

FANCY

Did you talk to them? Andrea got-

GWEN

-I know she got that award. I told her I knew. And she just shrugged and said "Thanks" and went back to her phone. I was there for hours and they didn't talk to me at all.

FANCY

Do you want some juice?

GWEN

Your dad would never have put up with that. He would have smacked them upside their heads.

FANCY

No, he wouldn't have. He never.... let's look out the window. It's really pretty. There's snow, it's so white and pretty.

*Fancy pushes Gwen in the office chair (like it's a wheelchair) to look outside.*

See? That building? With the lights? Isn't that pretty?

GWEN

Is that a church?

FANCY

No. It's a-

GWEN

-It looks tacky.

FANCY

It's not!...um...it's actually a gym. A nice gym.

GWEN

Is Tony there?

FANCY

What? Dad? No. Um.... Dad's dead. He died-

GWEN

-I know that! I knew that.

*Gwen slaps at Fancy's hand. Fancy recoils slightly.*

FANCY

Do you want some juice?

GWEN

Why doesn't your sister come to see me?

FANCY

Mom, she's got work and the kids. Well, Andrea and, well...I think there's going to be a party here New Year's Eve. That'll be fun.

GWEN

I'd slap those phones right outta their hands if it was me.

*Fancy looks at Gwen and then her eyes drift back out the window.*

*Gwen slaps at Fancy's hand again, hard. Dan removes his bandana, is now CHRIS, an assisted living staffer. He gets off his bike, grabs a nametag from the shelf or perhaps puts on a "company" type short-sleeve button down.*

They should visit me. You tell them to pay some attention to their grandmother.

CHRIS

Hey, Miss Gwen. Time for dinner.

GWEN

Don't you touch me. Don't you dare. I'll smack you upside your head.

FANCY

Mom! Sorry, Chris.

CHRIS

It's okay, Fancy.

FANCY

Love you, Mom.

GWEN

If you loved me, you'd visit me more often.

*Chris ably takes over the chair from Fancy and pushes the chair over to Pauline's bike. Through the following, he helps Gwen up and out of the chair and begins guiding her onto the bike.*

FANCY

Thanks for...you know. She, Mom can be, well-

CHRIS

-It's okay. Some people get like that. It's not you.

FANCY

Chris, she's always been like this.

CHRIS

Well. Hey, I've been hit by meatloaf seven times. I shouldn't say but-

FANCY

-Say. Please.

*Chris is now guiding Gwen's feet into the pedal cages. She weakly resists him. During the following, once her gets her onto the bike, he helps her get out of the sweatshirt.*

CHRIS

I guess it's okay 'cuz the guy's gone now but, this one resident would make his meatloaf into a ball and throw it at me. Only me. And he always hit me. Every time. His wife said he was a really nice guy before. But man, he didn't like Meatloaf Monday. I guess we never know what we're gonna become.

FANCY

Or we become more of what we already are.

*He shrugs.*

CHRIS

I guess. See ya tomorrow.

*He crosses to his bike as he removes his nametag or the shirt, which he tosses on the shelf, puts the bandana back on, and remounts. Dan, Pauline, and Angel all begin very slowly pedaling unison, as though there is a great deal of resistance on their bikes. Fancy slowly remounts as well but doesn't pedal.*

## FANCY

God, that's depressing. *(To audience)* When you're doing this, this thing, elder care, caregiver thing, you don't get a break. *(Begins very slowly pedaling, also as though her bike has great resistance on it)* I mean, God doesn't give you one. I don't mean time off, but a break. A break from the past stuff you thought you had worked out. It all comes back but it's all twisted and spun into new knots. Tangled. Every visit, I feel like I'm just spinning my wheels but going backwards and not forwards. Home, work, Mom, home. Repeat. Home, work, Mom, home. Repeat. I give myself weekends off. So, weekends are home, errands, home. Then Monday rolls around and it's back in the saddle. Like there's no light at the end of the tunnel.

*She looks down. Lights up on the stage. Angel, Dan, and Paulina dismount and behave as though they are getting ready for a class to begin. Still in the saddle, Fancy begins fiddling with her pedal cages. Angel crosses to her.*

## ANGEL

Hey, Fancy. Need a hand?

## FANCY

Trying to adjust the foot strap thingys. I got it.

## ANGEL

Glad you're back. How have you been feeling? Good?

## FANCY

My ass still hurts a little. But yeah.

## ANGEL

I did warn you.

## FANCY

You did.

## ANGEL

Your ass will get tougher. I promise.

## FANCY

I need to be more of a tough ass.

## ANGEL

Hey. You made it in before the new year! That's motivated.



FANCY

Is it? I guess.

ANGEL

Yeah! Give yourself some credit. Most people wait until the first week of January.

FANCY

You know what it really was? The lights on the gym. Outside. The Christmas lights.

ANGEL

Really?

FANCY

Yeah! My mom is in Willowtree across the lot there and-

ANGEL

-Yeah, yeah. I know it. The place with the big driveway.

FANCY

Well, my mom is there. Yeah. And I told you my doctor had recommended lifestyle changes, again.

ANGEL

The dreaded lifestyle changes.

FANCY

I know. Right? (*Beginning to pedal*) So my doctor had just dumped on me and my mom always dumps on me and my sister bails on me and my brother always bails on everybody and my husband bailed out on me years ago and I just knew I had to do something so I didn't bail on me too. And I saw the lights. And I decided that I needed to cross the street and...wow. I'm sorry. Oh, god. This is way too much information. I'm sorry.

ANGEL

No. No. Not an issue. It's cool.

FANCY

I think I'm a mess.

ANGEL

Well, you didn't vomit or faint your first class. So, in my book, you're so not a mess.

FANCY

I like people with low standards.

ANGEL

Ha! Alright.

*Light change. Fancy begins pedaling more quickly and easily, as Angel crosses back to her bike and mounts and begins spinning. Angel puts on her headset.*

Okay, team. We're all warmed up. Let's get to work. And remember, this is your ride. You're here for you. Not anybody else. Feel your muscles working. Close your eyes.

*Fancy does.*

Pay attention to your breathing.

*Fancy takes a deep breath.*

Okay, let's get you on your first hill.

*Taking bandana off, Dan puts on the hoodie. He is now Hank*

HANK

*(Speaking from his bike as he pedals)*

Mom, how did you turn out so normal?

ANGEL

Now go to two.

*Everyone goes to position two.*

Working your body is what it wants to do. This is normal.

FANCY

*(Over her shoulder to Hank)*

What do you mean? I don't know.

ANGEL

Keep going.

*Hank gets off his bike and crosses in front of Fancy.*

HANK

Really? I mean, Gran is sort of just, always complaining. Like she feels burned about everything.

ANGEL

Your muscles should be burning, people.

HANK

But you're so nice. And, like, she isn't. Ever.

FANCY

I don't know.

HANK

Really?

FANCY

I can't. I don't know-

ANGEL

-You can do this. Lean into it.

HANK

Mom?!

FANCY

I don't know! God, this is hard.

*Hank gets back on his bike. Hoodie comes off, bandana on, he resumes spinning as Dan.*

ANGEL

Come on. Go to three.

*Fancy does.*

Add more road.

*Fancy does.*

Thirty more seconds. You can do this. Lean into it.

FANCY

AUGH!

ANGEL

That's right, Fancy! Work for it!

*Lights out on Angel, Dan, and Pauline as they all freeze in position three. Fancy stops in position three. She looks at Angel.*

FANCY

How did I turn out normal? Am I normal? Am I different from Mom? Or Angel! I mean, it's like she's a different species than me. Well, we both have legs and arms and a head but how can she do this? Like that?

*She sits in the saddle.*

But I'm doing it too. Not as fast. But I am. Is it just making your legs go in circles? *(She looks at her legs)* I can do that. *(She looks up)* Can I do that? I am doing that. I am doing this. I've been going in circles for years. Can I go in circles for forty minutes a day? That's all this is. Going in circles. Ha. I'm good at spinning my wheels.

Why am I even trying again? I can eat anything, and no one cares. Because I'm just one of the sexless, fat, suburban, middle age bores. "Of course, Fancy will take another piece of pizza. She's not like us. She's gross. She's lazy." She's....just like...Mom. I am so far down this road I can never go back. Can I ever go back?

*In half-light, Angel, Dan and Pauline all go to position two but don't pedal. Fancy follows suit.*

Oh boy. Okay. Two. Why am I scared? Is that normal? To feel scared of your own body? I think I walk around trying not to feel it because when I do, the fat rubs against the other fat. My knee hurts. And when it does, then I think of not having a knee anymore. Do I want to not feel so much that I'll end up like Mom? Cut off parts of my body? Just because...just not to feel? If I get rid of it, this fat, what else am I getting rid of? Each turn pushes me further into something I don't want to see. Why should I even do this?

*Lights up on the stage. Angel sits in the saddle, slowly pedaling and turning the resistance down on her bike. Everyone else follows suit.*

ANGEL

Alright! Welcome to recovery. Take all the road off and just let your legs spin.

*Everyone exhales. Dan dismounts. He grabs a few wet wipes. He hands one to Pauline, who is still cooling down on her bike, slowly pedaling and stretching her arms. He's got a towel around his neck and two wet wipes in his hand. He nods to Angel.*

DAN

Way to go.

*He hands Fancy a wet wipe. Fancy stands in the pedals, stretching out her calves but not dismounting the bike.*

You're still here.

FANCY

Barely.

DAN

Nah. You're doing great. I'm Dan.

FANCY

Fancy.

DAN

The only secret is showing up, you know. How do you feel?

FANCY

My body aches. It feels like waking up from sleeping weird, you know? When you sleep twisted and cold.

DAN

Yup. Well, you've been doing great. I knew you'd be back after that first class.

FANCY

You were here...there? Oh yeah. I remember-

DAN

-Yeah. You were in the back. Halfway through, I saw in the mirror, and you got that look in your eye.

FANCY

What look?

DAN

The look. When you're spinning but not. You're not here. You know, you're working out more than your muscles. That look.

FANCY

I had that?

DAN

Yup. You know, you should try Andy's Sunday morning. It's a conditioning class. Sixty minutes. It'll take you apart and put ya back together.... but in a good way.

FANCY

I don't think I could ever do that.

DAN

You'd be surprised.

*Dan crosses up to Pauline and they begin quietly chatting, Pauline is still on her bike.*

FANCY

It's been awhile since I've been surprised with myself. With my life.

*A soft chiming is heard. Lights dim on Angel and Pauline. Dan turns back, bandana off, rubber band being slowly twirled in his fingers, he is now Spencer.*

FANCY

Hey, Spencer.

SPENCER

Hey, Mrs. Carroll. I need a minute to do my thinking.

FANCY

Of course. Okay.

SPENCER

Will you just stay there?

FANCY

I will just stay here.

*Spencer starts slowly walking in a circle as he also spins the rubber band. After two circles, he begins to speak. His following dialogue is spoken with different inflections to explore differing meanings and tones.*

SPENCER

I love you; I don't like you. I love you but I just don't like you. I love you but I don't like you. I love you but I just don't like you right now. I love you but can't like you. No. I love you, don't like you. Spencer, I gotta say, right now, I love you but I don't like you.

*He stops his circling. Fancy remains seated on her bike.*

FANCY

Spencer, do you want to sit down?

*Spencer considers the invitation for a minute. Angel dismounts her bike and quietly stretches out in a darkened corner. Spencer carefully mounts Angel's bike.*

Spencer, what were you talking about?

*Beginning to spin the pedals very slowly, circling the rubber band in the same rhythm.*

SPENCER

Nothing, Mrs. Carroll.

FANCY

*(Matching his pedaling pace)*

Who said this to you, Spence?

SPENCER

My mom. She likes Lizzo too. I could tell by her face she was mad.

FANCY

And what did she say when she was mad?

SPENCER

"Spencer, oh boy. I love you but sometimes I don't like you." No! She said, "I love you but, you know, sometimes I really don't like you." Sorry.

FANCY

What was going on when she said this?

SPENCER

I dunno.

Spencer? FANCY

I dunno. Maybe stuff. Can't remember. SPENCER

It sounds like maybe she was upset about something. FANCY

I dunno. SPENCER

Sometimes, when people get upset, they say things they don't really mean. FANCY

All the time or just sometimes? SPENCER

Not all the time but- FANCY

-but sometimes they do mean it? SPENCER

No. I mean, maybe your mom was just tired. FANCY

Why didn't she say that? I say I'm tired when I'm tired. If she was tired, why didn't she say that? SPENCER

Well, I know your mom likes you and loves you. I know it. FANCY

How? SPENCER

Because I know you. And I know her. And I see how much she cares about you and you care about her. FANCY

Does your mom love you and like you? SPENCER



FANCY  
Yes. Yeah. Of course.

SPENCER  
Do you love and not like your mom?

FANCY  
Yes.

SPENCER  
Okay.

FANCY  
I mean no. I meant no!

SPENCER  
You don't love your mom? Mrs. Carroll, I don't think that's allowed.

FANCY  
No, Spencer, I do love my mom.

SPENCER  
But you don't like her? That's okay to do?

FANCY  
Yes. I mean, no. I mean...um...

SPENCER  
Yes or no, Mrs. Carroll?

FANCY  
I don't know.

SPENCER  
But you're a grown-up!

FANCY  
Even grown-ups can not know stuff.

SPENCER  
So, you don't know if you like your mom.

I smell pizza.

FANCY

Me too. Are we done? Can I go?

SPENCER

Yes.

FANCY

Was that changing a subject?

SPENCER

Yes.

FANCY

Okay. I'll save you a piece, Mrs. Carroll.

SPENCER

Thank you, Spencer. You're very helpful.

FANCY

Were you very helpful when you were my age?

SPENCER

Not as helpful as you are.

FANCY

You have a brother and a sister, right?

SPENCER

Yup.

FANCY

What were they like? Were they helpful?

SPENCER

They both liked pizza.

FANCY

Oh! Gotta go!

SPENCER

*Spencer quickly jumps off his bike. As Dan, he then walks over and mounts Dan's bike.*

FANCY

Ya know, I just wanted to work off the Friday pizza. That's all. Hit the class after work so I wouldn't feel so bad, well, as bad about myself. I didn't want to think. But, right around minute ten, off my brain went again. That Spencer conversation was the thing. The trigger. Brothers. Sisters. Parents. I haven't thought about this in years but there it was. Suddenly. Right in front of me.

*Angel puts her hair into a ponytail, is now MARY as a teenager. She jumps up and, holding her hand against her cheek, comes to a stop at Angel's bike and leans on it. Fancy stops pedaling and sits, head low against the handlebars like she is eavesdropping. Glasses on, Dan is now JOHN as a teenager. He pedals furiously for a moment, like he is trying to catch up to Mary.*

JOHN  
(Calling)

Mary. Mary! Come on.

MARY

Really, John?! Come on! Just stay away from me.

*John and Mary don't see Fancy throughout the following conversation. John dismounts and walks over to Mary.*

MARY  
(Still cradling her cheek)

God, Mom is such a bitch! She's just such a...a...bitch. I should've slapped her right back.

JOHN

Spend the night at Jean's.

MARY

Like that'll change anything. She just goes 'round and 'round. "You're so stupid. You're a slut. Stupid. Slut. Stupid. Slut." (Pointing to John) And you're "Just like your goddamn father" and Fan is a "lazy, fat slob." She's just such a-

JOHN

-Just get out of here.

MARY

Run? Like you?

JOHN

What the-

MARY

-You're never here. Soccer practice, or games, or FBLA, or you're at Tracy's or, but, you're never HERE. You just run. You don't help. You're just gonna graduate and be gone. You're such a coward.

JOHN

Screw you. "Coward." Help? Right. Okay. Sure. Whatever. But I at least I know.

MARY

Know what?

JOHN

You can't win with her. She just twists your words against you. Why even try? Why do you even try? Don't be stupid.

MARY

Don't you even call me-

JOHN

-Sorry. Sorry. But, come on, Mary. Come on. Why haven't you figured it out? This isn't normal. Mom isn't normal. And how this is. How we are. This isn't right. Not everybody is like this. How we live isn't right. We all just gotta get out. We just have to decide not to be like them.

MARY

Well, I can't be like you. Just ignore it. Just ignore her. And I can't be like Fan. Just accepting. Trying to make her happy. Always being nice. Always trying to be funny or nice or sweet just to keep Gwen happy. Anything to make Gwen happy. She's never going to be happy. She's never going to be nice to us. She's never going to be happy.

*A very slow light change. Fancy begins slowly pedaling again. Mary, now ANGEL, mounts the bike, puts on the headset, and begins to spin. John takes a spritzer bottle of water off the towel shelf, spray Fancy's face and shirt with water to indicate sweat, and then, bandana back on, mounts his bike as Dan.*

ANGEL

And you made it! Welcome to recovery. Take all the resistance off the bike and just let your legs spin.

*Angel dismounts.*

FANCY

*(To audience)*

She's never going to be happy. She was never going to be happy. No matter how hard I worked.

ANGEL

*(Pointing to Fancy)*

Good work, Fancy.

FANCY

Mary was right. But I think I really just heard that. Finally. Mom was never going to be happy.

SPENCER

*(Calling from Dan's bike)*

Mrs. Carroll?

*Fancy keeps pedaling.*

Um...Mrs. Carroll? It's Spencer?

FANCY

Oh. Yeah. Come in.

*Her pedaling slows to a stop. Rubber band in hands, Spencer dismounts and crosses to the front of Fancy's bike.*

Hey, Spencer. Come on in.

SPENCER

I had to knock a second time.

FANCY

Yes. I know. I'm sorry. I was thinking about something.

SPENCER

I wasn't sure.

FANCY

About what? Come on in. You want to sit down?

*Spencer wanders the room in a large circle as he speaks. Fancy sits still on the bike.*

SPENCER

Well, you told me that your door is always open. And I understand that that is an expression for telling other people that you are always ready to have a conversation. But your door was actually closed and if you open a closed door, sometimes people-

FANCY

-Yes. I'm sorry.

SPENCER

-get mad. It is inappropriate to open someone's door without knocking or...um...announcing yourself. Most of the time. I think. I'm not really sure all the time.

FANCY

No, it's fine. How are you doing today?

SPENCER

I figured out that you can love someone but not like them.

FANCY

Really? Okay. What do you think?

SPENCER

Well, it is a pretty long story.

FANCY

Okay.

SPENCER

But not too long. Sort of in between long and short. Sort of medium.

FANCY

Okay. Continue. You want to sit down?

*Angel gets off her bike and Spencer gets on it. Angel stretches in the corner.*

SPENCER

So. My mom said, "I love you but, you know, sometimes I really don't like you."

FANCY

Yes. I remember.

SPENCER

She apologized to me. Last night during a commercial break of *The Voice*. She said, "What I said was wrong, Spence honey. I love you very much." And I said, "It's okay. I know that sometimes I can be a 'god awful handful of a kid' sometimes." She says that to me. But then she said, "It's not you I was really mad at. It's Cindy. I just took it out on you and I'm sorry." Cindy is my sister.

*Fancy nods and waits. A long moment. Spencer begins slowly pedaling.*

Cindy makes my mom cry. And my dad too. 'Cuz she takes those "god awful opioids." Those are very bad drugs.

FANCY

They are.

SPENCER

She takes them. And she...

*A long moment.*

She takes money. And she took my dad's car. And when she came over once she didn't even look at me, she just fell asleep on the couch. And then she threw up. And Mom came home and called an ambulance. I stayed in my room. And one time I heard Dad say to Mom that autism is better than addiction and who would've thought that Spencer would be our easy kid.

*A long moment. Spencer stops spinning the pedals.*

So, I think like and love are two different things. Like, I like the park, but I don't love it because it has bees which can be dangerous killers if you have a bee allergy. Which I don't but I still don't like them. But, that means, since like and love are two different things, I think you can love something and not like it. Or them. Because I love Cindy. But she makes Mom cry and she ignores me and sometimes she's really mean. I mean, really mean. To Mom especially.

*A long moment.*

I don't like being around Cindy.

FANCY

I can understand that.

SPENCER

She used to be funny. We watched *Sponge Bob*. She could do all the character voices. Her Squidward was the best though.

FANCY

Well, maybe that's it. The people we like can make us laugh. The people we love can make us cry.

*Spencer sits with this for a long moment.*

SPENCER

You're a really good therapist, Mrs. Carroll.

FANCY

Thank you, Spencer. You're a really smart kid.

SPENCER

Thank you, Mrs. Carroll. Can we Spencer-Hug?

*Fancy nods. They both open their arms wide and wiggle their fingers, like "jazz hands" A soft chiming is heard, indicating the end of a class period. Spencer dismounts, gets on Dan's bike, puts on bandana. Angel mounts her bike.*

ANGEL

Welcome to the Valentine's Day ride. You're gonna love this. Hee hee. Get that? "Love" this? This is my favorite ride. We begin with "Love Stinks" and move on to Her Highness Joan Jett for "I Hate Myself for Loving You." Then "Love Bites." Def Leppard, of course. (*Scrolling through her phone*) I think "Love Hurts" is in here too. So, it's a happy ride. Enjoy the flat road now because this is the last you're gonna see of it for the rest of the class. Because without PAIN there is no LOVE, am I right, people? Yes, I am!

*Light change to an increase of intensity. Angel immediately goes to position three, and Fancy, Dan, and Pauline match her. They are all working hard at a high level of resistance.*

Keep climbing. Keep climbing. Push! Come on!



*Light change. Pauline dismounts her bike, puts on the sweatshirt, gets in the office chair and rolls to in front of Fancy's bike and is now GWEN. Fancy is still climbing the hill.*

GWEN

You're late. Where have you been?

FANCY

I was at the.... work, Mom. I had to work a little late.

GWEN

Well, I already had dinner.

FANCY

Good.

GWEN

Not really.

FANCY

Okay.

GWEN

That's all you've got to say?

FANCY

Um.... yeah. Sorry you didn't like the dinner.

GWEN

I didn't. It was terrible. If you had to eat it, you wouldn't be fat, you know. The food they feed us. You should do something about it.

FANCY

What should I do?

GWEN

I don't know! Something!

FANCY

Mom, the food is the food. It's a nice place. It's...food.

GWEN  
(Barking)

Don't get smart with me, Fat Fancy. You should talk to someone about it.

*Fancy dismounts.*

FANCY

Okay.

GWEN

Okay what?

FANCY

Okay, I'll talk to someone about it.

GWEN

Good! And you should tell your sister to call me.

FANCY

Do you want to call her? I could help you dial.

GWEN

She should call me. I shouldn't have to call her. You should tell her that.

FANCY

Okay.

GWEN

And I can dial my own phone, Fancy Pants.

FANCY

Sure. Okay.

*A long moment.*

But yesterday, Mom, when I came in your room, your phone, it was off the-

GWEN

-My neighbor makes too much noise. She's always moaning. I'll give her something to moan about.

*Another long moment.*

FANCY

Do you want to go look outside? It's pretty. The daffodils are beginning to come up. Even through the snow.

GWEN

-your dad never fixed that snowblower. Lazy son-of-a-bitch. He never liked to work. Always did just enough. Just enough. Just enough to get by. Happy with next to nothing.

*Fancy looks at Gwen.*

FANCY

I have to go.

GWEN

You just got here.

FANCY

I've got to...um...swing by the Jewel.

GWEN

*(Shrugging)*

I don't care. Whatever makes you happy.

*Fancy looks at Gwen for a moment, but Gwen is oblivious to Fancy's gaze. Fancy slowly gets back on her bike and begins pedaling.*

FANCY

I never liked her.

*She goes to position two.*

I never liked her!

*She stops pedaling. She sits in the saddle.*

Oh my god. I never liked you. I tried to get you to like me.

*She dismounts the bike.*

But you didn't like YOU! You hated you. So, you couldn't love...anybody. Me. Or anybody. Not Dad. Not Mary or John. You hated you.

*She walks up to Gwen.*

FANCY (CONT'D)

I wish you had been the one to leave and not Dad. You drove him away. You were a terrible wife. You were a terrible mother.

*Quick spot on Dan, now JOHN. Fancy faces him. Gwen goes and sits in the office chair in the corner.*

And John, you didn't help. You got out. You shrugged and got out.

*John shrugs. Spot goes out. Fancy spins on Angel, now Mary. Spot on Mary. Fancy speaks to Mary.*

And Mary, all you did was scream and fight and blame.

*Spot goes out.*

ANGEL

*(Into her headset)*

Come on, people. Thirty more seconds. We're almost there. Almost to the top. Don't quit!

*A slow spot grows on Dan, now TONY, Fancy's dad. He stands motionless in the pedals.*

FANCY

And Dad. You got out too. You just drove away one day. Got in the car, started it up, and never looked back. You left me alone with her. Everyone left me alone with Mom.

*Spot goes out. Everyone freezes but Fancy. She looks at her bike.*

I want to quit. I want to quit this. All this. Sweating and feeling and feeling bad. I've quit before. I've quit a lot. I could just stop coming. I could stop sweating and thinking and feeling. I could eat whatever is at school or home. I could just stop.

*She looks at Angel.*

I bet you've had lots of people just quit. Just stop showing up. I'd just be one more failure. One more sort of fat, sort of weak woman who gave up.

*Lights go out except for a spotlight on Fancy.*

I could just go back to the way it was.

## FANCY (CONT'D)

*(To audience)*

And I decided to. And then came that class. It was going to be my last class. Swear to god. Everything hurt. I was done. Then.... that class. The one where I met me.

*Gwen stands. She is now FANCY'S BODY. Angel dismounts and rolls the chair to the corner and sits in it. Fancy's Body mounts Angel's bike, Fancy mounts her bike, and they begin mirroring each other's movement.*

It came at that point when I got to this part of the ride I knew. And I knew what was coming. And I thought, "Screw this. It's my last time. I'll kill it and never come back. Ride 'til I die and then I'm done. I'm done with hurting and thinking and fighting. I'm done with me."

*Both begin pedaling in position three for a moment. They then look at each other and stop.*

## FANCY'S BODY

Hi. I'm your body.

## FANCY

What?

## FANCY'S BODY

Look in the mirror. I'm your body.

*Fancy and Fancy's Body stop pedaling in unison and look at each other for a moment. They then dismount and cross center between the two bikes and shake hands.*

Nice to meet you. It's been awhile.

## FANCY

Years. When was the last time?

## FANCY'S BODY

Fifth grade. I think. Was it?

## FANCY

Yeah. Yeah! I would eat lunch real fast-

FANCY'S BODY

-every day so I could get back to play tether ball on the playground. And I rode my bike everywhere.

*They both remount their bikes and begin lightly pedaling.*

FANCY

Yes! We could do that. All over.

FANCY'S BODY

No stupid helmets or anything.

FANCY

Just the bike and going anywhere. The park-

FANCY'S BODY

-the record store-

FANCY

-Ellen's house-

FANCY'S BODY

-That candy department in Marshall Field's-

FANCY

-down to the lake.

FANCY'S BODY

When did that all stop?

*They stop pedaling.*

FANCY

High school, maybe?

FANCY'S BODY

I wasn't good at sports. You had to be good at sports to do sports.

FANCY

I wasn't.

FANCY'S BODY

Took the bus to school.

FANCY

There was afterschool stuff but-

FANCY'S BODY

-I would come home and then just be home.

FANCY

TV. Homework. Always food. Mary always in her room. John, gone. Mom, alone in the kitchen. The TV.

FANCY'S BODY

Was she still smoking then?

FANCY

Yeah. I don't even really remember when Dad left. Do you?

FANCY'S BODY

Yes.

*Fancy's Body dismounts, pulls out a cigarette and lights it. Now GWEN, she stands with her back against the front of Angel's bike. Dan as TONY enters, Tony stands with his back against the front of Fancy's bike, staring at Gwen. Fancy watches.*

GWEN

*(To Tony)*

So, take off. Whatever makes you happy.

TONY

Neither one of us is happy.

GWEN

Making you happy. Okay. I'll add that to my to-do list.

TONY

Gwen, you don't even like me!

GWEN

Oh. Was I supposed to, Tony? Like you? I'm supposed to like you? You're a bus driver for the city. You drive around in circles for a living. Be still my goddamn heart.

TONY

I've been trying for...I dunno.

GWEN

Trying to be happy? Make me happy? Doesn't work that way, cowboy. So. Walk. Go.

TONY

I'll tell the kids. You want me to tell the kids?

GWEN

Tony, I don't think they'll even notice you're gone.

*After a moment of Gwen and Tony staring at each other, Tony turns away and remounts Dan's bike. Bandana goes back on. After a moment, Gwen notices Fancy. She gestures for Fancy to get off the bike. Fancy does.*

Your dad left us.

FANCY

Okay.

GWEN

I gotta go to Dominick's. Tell your brother and sister.

FANCY

That you went to Dominick's or about Dad?

GWEN

Either one. Whatever suits your fancy.

*Gwen snuffs out cigarette and becomes FANCY'S BODY again.*

FANCY

She wasn't sad. Just a shrug and an "Of course." She wasn't sad.

*Fancy's Body shrugs.*

FANCY'S BODY

She was never happy or sad.

FANCY

She was always just...exasperated.

FANCY'S BODY

Or angry.



FANCY

Yeah. Or angry.

FANCY'S BODY

Then I got that part time job after school-

FANCY

-Cashier at the roller rink.

FANCY'S BODY

God, that place was noisy!

FANCY

And way gross. The smell. Those fries with cheese sauce or ranch dressing.

FANCY'S BODY

Or both.

FANCY

Those damn punch cards. Always jamming up the machine.

FANCY'S BODY

And I just sat there and watched. Watched other people live. Watched other people move. Watched other people have fun. And ate.

FANCY

And everybody was hitting on each other.

FANCY'S BODY

That was...a little scary. I wanted it. I wanted boys to like me but didn't. But...I think that's when.

FANCY

When?

FANCY'S BODY

When I went dead from the neck down.

FANCY

When I sweat, sometimes I think more than just sweat is coming out.

## FANCY'S BODY

It's all those French fries.

## FANCY

Diet Coke.

## FANCY'S BODY

Being the failure. Being too big. Being too small. Being too...something. Too big for my britches, Mom said. Being Fat Fancy.

## FANCY

Why feel when feeling is bad? If I give up, I become her. If I give up, I become him. But maybe I am them? The genetic result of both of them. I'm destined to be a stuck, twisted, sour person. Someone who takes the path of least resistance. Fight or flight.

*Fancy's Body crosses to Pauline's bike. Sweatshirt comes off, earplugs go back in; she remounts as Pauline. Dan dismounts and hands Fancy a wipe to wipe down her bike.*

## DAN

Hey, you. Good class.

## FANCY

This one was hard. But good. I think.

## DAN

Like when you get to that point and you think you aren't gonna make it but you do anyway?

## FANCY

Yeah.

## DAN

Well. Look. You made it.

## FANCY

What?

## DAN

You made it.

## FANCY

I did.

DAN

You look surprised.

FANCY

I do?

DAN

Yeah! Oh man, you are so ready for Andy's conditioning class.

FANCY

No. Not yet.

DAN

Oh yeah. You're so ready for the big hills. Come on. You can do it.

*Dan goes back to his bike and begins wiping it down.*

FANCY

*(To audience)*

I so wasn't going to do it. I wasn't going to quit. Well, I maybe wasn't going to quit. I certainly wasn't going to do the "take you apart and put you back together" conditioning class. But I was...what was I? What am I? Well, not me anymore but not anybody else.

And then I had a day. A terrible day. A day I didn't see coming. A day I didn't know what to do with.

*Fancy begins spinning. Spencer comes racing in, jumps on Angel's bike and begins spinning furiously in position three.*

FANCY

Spencer!? Are you okay? What's wrong?

*Spencer merely shakes his head and keeps spinning.*

Spencer. What is it?

*Head down, Spencer just keeps spinning at a furious pace. Fancy matches Spencer's pace.*

Spencer.

*Spinning.*

FANCY (CONT'D)

Spencer.

*Spencer looks up.*

SPENCER

*(Still spinning at three)*

Cindy.

FANCY

*(Spinning)*

Tell me.

SPENCER

Cindy. *(Head down again)* Cindy. Cindy. Cindy. Cindy. Cindy. Cindy.

FANCY

Spencer. Slow down just a little so we can talk.

*Spencer goes to position two. Fancy matches the pace.*

What happened with Cindy?

SPENCER

She died. She died. Cindy died. She died. Mom yelled "you're dead to me" and she left and today she's dead. She's dead. She's dead.

*Spencer groans/screams in anguish and goes back to position three at a fast pace. Fancy matches the pace for a few moments.*

FANCY

Okay, Spence, honey, throttle back. Ease up. Come on. Come on.

*Spencer goes to position two. So does Fancy.*

Okay, Spencer. Just take a deep breath.

*They both take a deep breath.*

Another.

*They both take another. Fancy then sits in position one. Then so does Spencer. She slows her legs to a stop. So does Spencer.*

SPENCER

I feel so...so.... bad. It hurts! So much!

*Fancy begins to get off her bike to go to him, but he reacts.*

No! No! No! Don't touch me! No! No! No! I don't want to feel this. I don't want to know this.

*Fancy is at a loss of what to do for a moment. Then she opens her arms wide and does a Spencer Hug motion. Spencer looks at her, hangs his head, and then returns the hug from his bike.*

*Light change.*

*Angel helps Spencer off the bike. He crosses to Dan's bike, puts on the bandana and mounts it. Angel puts her hair into a ponytail and mounts the bike as Mary. Neither pedal but they do look at each other.*

MARY

Hey, Fan.

FANCY

Hey. So, they moved Mom into hospice.

MARY

Yeah.

*A moment.*

You okay?

*Fancy shrugs.*

FANCY

Rough day at work.

MARY

No. I meant about-

FANCY

-oh. Yeah. Mom. Yeah. You?

*Mary shrugs.*

MARY  
Will she be at the hospital or-

FANCY  
-no. They keep them at-

MARY  
-Willowtree. Yeah. I think I knew that.

*A moment. Mary looks around.*

Did you-

FANCY  
Yeah. Yeah. I ordered.

MARY  
Good. Okay then.

*A moment.*

Okay. So. When is she going to.... you know.

FANCY  
God, Mary. I don't know.

MARY  
Well, you're there all the time. I figured. I don't know.

FANCY  
Soon. The doctor said it's always hard to predict but anytime.

MARY  
Should I bring the kids?

*A moment.*

What should I do?

FANCY  
I don't know. What should you do?

MARY  
Well, that's a big help.

FANCY  
*(Shrugging)*  
Hank's been by a few times.

MARY  
He's a good kid.

FANCY  
Yes, he is.

MARY  
You're...you've been a good daughter.

FANCY  
Yes. Yes, I have been.

MARY  
I haven't been so much.

*Dan dismounts, sticks a white towel into his waistband like an apron, and enters as WAITER. He has two water bottles.*

FANCY  
She wasn't the easiest mom.

WAITER  
Who has the Heineken?

*Mary indicates she gets the Heineken. Waiter hands each a bottle and remounts his bike, replaces bandana. Mary and Fancy look at each other.*

MARY  
*(Shrugging)*  
Shit. I dunno. To.... Mom?

FANCY  
To surviving Gwen and Tony.

*Mary's jaw drops. Fancy grins. Then they both begin giggling, "air toast," and then drink.*

MARY

Wow. We did. Make it. I think. Did John?

FANCY

Jury's still out.

*They both giggle.*

MARY

God, I'm sorry. I'm so sorry, Fan.

FANCY

For what?

MARY

You saw her, like, all the time.

FANCY

You don't need to-

MARY

-Yeah. I do. You always did help. You know. Dealing with her. So. I'm sorry that I, well, you know.

FANCY

Okay. Apology accepted.

MARY

Thanks.

*They drink.*

So, what about the arrangements?

FANCY

What do you think? John will pay-

MARY

-so he doesn't have to show. God, he's such a tool.

FANCY

He really is.

*A moment.*



## FANCY (CONT'D)

Mary, did you ever, you know, be with your kids like Mom was with us?

MARY

Smack them ever?

*Fancy nods.*

No. Almost. But no. Thank god. You?

FANCY

Same. Just once, for a second. But Hank was always-

MARY

-so good! Unlike-

FANCY

-Man! Karen...she was something else in high school!

MARY

That stinker. I probably shoulda smacked her.

FANCY

Girl was a tornado.

MARY

And now she's the queen of the PTA. Guess you never know.

*They both drink.*

I will come by tomorrow. It's not like it's going to be any tender, loving goodbye. Mom never did tender or loving. I see no great heartfelt moment of emotional revelation or whatever.

FANCY

Probably not. But you should come, Mary.

MARY

I know. I will. Tomorrow.

FANCY

Good. Hey, Mary?

Huh?  
MARY

Thanks for surviving.  
FANCY

You too.  
MARY

*A moment.*

Wanna get some shots?

Totally!  
FANCY

*Light change. Mary removes ponytail and becomes Angel. Fancy just sits, staring ahead.*

You okay?  
ANGEL

What?  
FANCY

You okay?  
ANGEL

Yeah. Well, it's been a week, ya' know?  
FANCY

Here to work it out?  
ANGEL

I almost didn't make it. I'm a tiny bit hung over.  
FANCY

Well, you aren't the first. And hey, you did. You did make it.  
ANGEL

Yeah. I did.  
FANCY  
*(Small smile)*

ANGEL

*(To class)*

Alright, people! Let's work this out. Time to dig in.

*Angel, Dan, and Fancy go to position three and freeze. Pauline as Gwen barks at Fancy from her bike.*

GWEN

Get off that damn bike.

*Disoriented, Fancy remains frozen. Pauline, now as Gwen, dismounts her bike, puts on the sweatshirt and crosses to face Fancy.*

OFF!

*Fancy jumps off and, in her hurry, tumbles to the ground.*

GWEN

Where have you been?

FANCY

Ellen's.

GWEN

You were supposed to be home an hour ago.

FANCY

Sorry.

GWEN

Get up.

*Gwen turns to leave.*

FANCY

So, Mom. Ellen and I had this idea. Since we get to be roommates next year, and she got that car her dad gave her for getting all A's we thought maybe we'd take a road trip before. You know, before freshman year. Drive to maybe California and back. Maybe on the way I could maybe see Dad and Nancy and their new-

*Gwen slaps Fancy across the face. Hard.*

GWEN

-No!

*Fancy remains in a crouch, holding her check.*

You and her are not going traipsing across the country like a couple of sluts.

FANCY

*(Speaking to the floor)*

I'm sorry.

GWEN

Over my dead body.

FANCY

I'm sorry.

GWEN

You'll stay here and work until September, you hear me?

FANCY

I'm sorry. It was just an idea.

GWEN

A stupid idea. Don't even think about it, you understand me? You do this, you're dead to me, you understand?

FANCY

Yes. I'm sorry.

GWEN

Get up.

*Gwen crosses slowly to the office chair in the corner. Fancy slowly straightens up.*

FANCY

*(To Gwen's back)*

I wish you were dead.

*Gwen sits. Dan has dismounted and now as CHRIS, rolls GWEN on in the office chair.*

CHRIS

Hey, Fancy.

FANCY

Hey, Chris.

CHRIS

Sorry about your mom. She's on some pain meds. They might make her a little, well, loopy. Confused. The doctor told you-

FANCY

-Yeah. Yeah. Thanks.

CHRIS

*(Closely and loudly to Gwen's ear)*

Miss Gwen. I'm leaving. Your daughter Fancy is here.

GWEN

Who?

FANCY

Hey, Mom. It's Fancy.

GWEN

Oh. Fat Fancy.

FANCY

Hi, Mom.

GWEN

*(To Fancy)*

Go away.

FANCY

Thanks, Chris.

*Chris crosses to Dan's bike, remounts as Dan, and sits still.*

FANCY

Hey, Mom.

*No response. Fancy looks around, takes her water bottle from her handlebar holder and offers Gwen a sip of water, but she pushes it away.*

FANCY (CONT'D)

How are you feeling?

GWEN

Happy. Thrilled.

FANCY

What?

GWEN

Happy all this is all almost over.

FANCY

Oh. Okay.

*A moment.*

Do you want a sip of water?

GWEN

NO!

*A moment. Gwen turns her head away.*

Do you think she's mad at me?

FANCY

Who?

GWEN

MJ.

FANCY

Who's...um...no. She's not mad.

GWEN

She's so talented. Plays the banjo and the guitar. We were going to have a group. We would sing Joan Baez songs. We did it all the time. In the garage? Was it there?

FANCY

Oh. Was this Mary Jo, she was... um, your best friend in high school, right?

GWEN

MJ. I called her MJ. MJ and Gwennie. We were going to have a group. A duo.

FANCY

I didn't know that, Mom.

GWEN

I was the singer.

FANCY

I didn't know that.

GWEN

We were best friends.

FANCY

She died, didn't she?

*Gwen turns her head away.*

Sorry. What songs did you play, sing? What did you do?

GWEN

She got married. She moved away. Real fast. Right after graduation. So, I married Tony.

*Gwen taps the floor lightly with her one remaining foot and chair rotates once.*

We were best friends. She didn't want to, to move, but he did so...she did. She wanted to open her own garage. Be a mechanic. But back then, well. Girls couldn't do that. She never called me after she moved. Didn't hear that she had been in that car until I saw in the paper. He was driving. Of course, MJ was a really good driver. We drove all over. She had her dad's stick shift.

*Another turn of the chair.*

We went everywhere together.

*Another turn.*

She was so beautiful.

*Another turn.*

GWEN (CONT'D)

We wanted to get an apartment. Be single girls for a while. Like...well, some girls did back then. Before you got married, of course. But her parents. And mine too. Single girls not in college were sluts. I didn't care about dating boys. I didn't like.... I just wanted to hang out with MJ. I was so mad. When she left. Died. She left.

FANCY

I'm so sorry...Gwen.

GWEN

I always wondered what might have...if she and...

*Another turn.*

Who are you?

FANCY

Fancy. Your daughter.

GWEN

Oh. Where's the other one?

FANCY

Mary or John?

GWEN

Who? Oh. No. Is MJ here?

FANCY

Um....no, Mom.

GWEN

She left me.

FANCY

I'm sorry about that, Mom.

GWEN

You aint' sorry about 'nuthin. Stupid girl. You're both stupid, slutty girls.



FANCY

Mom?

GWEN

You don't know nuthin'. You're...you're...you're just a stupid girl. (*Looks away*) Stupid, slutty girl. Girls have to get married. If you don't, if you go off with MJ, you're dead to me, you little slutty brat.

*Fancy takes Gwen's hand. Gwen tries to pull it away, but Fancy won't let her. She squats down by Gwen.*

FANCY

I'm sorry she...I left. I'm sorry I left. I just wanted you to be happy.

GWEN

It didn't make me happy. I was never.... I don't think I ever felt anything after...you. I didn't want to hurt. You hurt me so bad.

FANCY

I'm sorry. I'm sorry I hurt you. I'm sorry you weren't happy, but it wasn't my fault. It wasn't anybody's fault. It wasn't your fault. It wasn't my fault.

GWEN

I loved you so much.

FANCY

I know, Gwennie.

GWEN

I'm sorry.

FANCY

For what?

GWEN

For not being strong enough. For staying home. For not coming after you. Do you forgive me?

FANCY

Yes. I forgive you.

GWEN

MJ, do a donut.

FANCY

What?

GWEN

In our field. Let's do donuts. Come on! Hit the gas!

FANCY

Okay, Mom. Hold on.

*Fancy spins the chair around and around. Gwen starts laughing. Eventually the chair slows to a stop and Gwen stands, removes the sweatshirt, crosses to Pauline's bike and mounts it. Fancy sits in the office chair. Dan dismounts and becomes Spencer.*

SPENCER

Mrs. Carroll.

FANCY

Oh, hey, Spencer.

SPENCER

The last person left the door open. Does that mean, well, you know.

FANCY

Yes. Come in.

SPENCER

I'm sorry about your mom. You know. That she died.

FANCY

Thank you, Spence.

SPENCER

You're welcome. *(He pauses)* I need to do my thinking for a second.

ANCY

Okay.

*Spencer walks in a large circle twice around Fancy. Fancy remains in the chair and spins slowly in a circle to follow his progress. He stops. Then he gets on Angel's bike. Fancy gets on her bike.*

SPENCER

I learned a new word. Well, I knew it, but I learned it has two meanings. Two different meanings.

FANCY

Okay.

SPENCER

Cascade. Do you know it?

FANCY

Yes.

SPENCER

Did you know it doesn't just mean a dishwasher detergent?

FANCY

Yes.

SPENCER

Oh. Well, my mom used it and she also, well, she used it in a sentence. Not about washing dishes.

FANCY

What was the sentence?

SPENCER

She said that someone can make just one bad decision. Or just have one bad thing happen to them and it can cascade into a bunch of bad things. A lot more bad decisions. But...but...it is important to be an understanding person. That the person isn't all just the bad things they did. It was the "result of a cascade, which is like a big tidal wave." Interesting fact. There is a drawing of a big wave on our box of Cascade.

FANCY

Interesting.

SPENCER

Yeah.

*A moment*

Like, so, just as an example, Cindy.

FANCY

Okay.

SPENCER

She made a poor life decision to take the opioid the first time. But everyone can make a mistake. Hang around with a bad crowd or people who are a... "negative influence." But then that one bad decision cascaded into a bunch more. A big wave of bad stuff. And Mom said...

*A long moment*

FANCY

What did she say, Spencer?

SPENCER

It crushed her. She said.... she said... Cindy wasn't the big tidal wave. She just drowned under it sort of. She wasn't bad. Mom said, the bad things just got to her. We lost her in all the bad things. She lost herself.

So, it's okay to be mad. And so, I've decided to be mad at Cindy for taking the opioid the first time. But even though she was really mean sometimes, but for all the stuff after that, I'm going to be mad at the godawful opioids instead.

FANCY

Spencer, you are an incredible kid. And very brave. And very smart.

SPENCER

Thank you, Mrs. Carroll.

*He begins to smile.*

I hope so. Because Mr. Rappaport promised a geometry test which covers all month and I sort of didn't study last night at all.

*They both dismount their bikes.*

FANCY

*(smiling)*

Uh oh!

SPENCER

Mrs. Carroll, it was the finale of *The Voice* last night! Like Mom said, "Priorities, Spence. Priorities." And she promised not to get mad if I didn't do so great on it.

*Spencer faces Fancy and opens his arms up, palms up. Fancy and Spencer have a brief, standing Spencer Hug.*

SPENCER (CONT'D)

Should I close the door?

FANCY

Leave it open.

*Spencer exits. Fancy places one knee on the seat of the office chair. She speaks to audience.*

Interesting fact. Our kids are really smart.

*She then plops down in the chair and does one wild spin.*

But does it really change anything? Knowing the why of why someone is mean? Does it really make up for all of it? The digs and shame and all of it. I had her in my life, my whole life, she was the grown up, not me. She decided to be like...

*Fancy comes to an abrupt stop.*

Maybe that's the question. When...no.... why did I decide to be a "not her"?

*Pauline dismounts, puts on the sweatshirt, and gets on Fancy's bike. She begins pedaling in position one. Fancy stands and circles the bike as Fancy's Body spins.*

I look at myself in the mirror. Going 'round and 'round. Sitting in one place and not getting anywhere. But maybe I am. 'Cuz my head and body are finally in one place together. I can't run away because I'm spinning away.

I don't think I'll ever know. Why I'm me. *(Looks at empty office chair)* Just like I'll never know why Mom was Mom. I know more. The...ride she was on, the terrain, but why she steered it into the ditch, well, that was her own driving.

*Fancy gets on Angel's bike and begins spinning.*

FANCY'S BODY

For someone so driven, she had a really rotten sense of direction.

FANCY

*(To Fancy's Body)*

For someone so mean, she wasn't really that strong.

FANCY'S BODY

I think I was stronger.

FANCY

I think I am stronger.

FANCY'S BODY

Just remember.

FANCY

Remember what?

FANCY'S BODY

It's your ride.

*After a moment, they both begin smiling. In unison, they remove their sweatshirts and toss them aside. Still smiling, they increase the resistance on their bikes, go to position three, and pedal harder and faster. Still smiling. Lights begin to fade.*

END OF PLAY