

THE DUEL

BY: ANDRADA ANGILERI

Notes by the Playwright:

- Any text message from Father or a Facebook post read by Sister or Half-Sister should remain as written and no production or actor should change any spelling or grammar issues.
- Although the age of Daughter explicitly changes, there is no need for the production to change the actor playing Daughter depending on age. Daughter should remain 20 throughout the entire play, and the actor playing Daughter does not have to act the age stated in the play.
- Production can either make their own images for the Facebook posts or can ask the playwright permission to use the real images, as they are verbatim posts.
- Production can either project the scene titles on stage or choose not to.

Characters

Father- a father

Daughter- a daughter

Mother- a mother

Sister- a sister

Half-Sister- a half-sister from Father

Neighbor- Father's Neighbor

ACT I

SCENE I: **D**aughter wants to **b r e a k a w a y**

The curtain opens revealing a tableau of FATHER and DAUGHTER in an embrace. Daughter's face is towards the audience while Father's face is turned away. A small table with a piece of paper on it and chair are on stage left. After a moment, Daughter goes to pull from the embrace but Father pulls her back in. Daughter pushes him away and goes to sit at the desk as Father blends away into the background.

DAUGHTER

I do have some hope that in the future, I will be ready to speak with you again. I don't mean for this to be a complete separation or cut-off between us. All I am saying is that based on some of your actions and words, I need time away from you to think about whether I want you to remain in my life. I know this will hurt you, and I do apologize for that, but I need to ensure that I am in a healthy mindset, since my own mental, emotional, and physical health comes before anyone else's.

Silence.

I'm twenty. I know everything.

FATHER

You know everything.

DAUGHTER

Isn't that better?

Daughter and Father look at one another and hold eye contact as they walk to opposite sides of the stage. A spotlight on each of them as they begin to revolve around the stage.

FATHER

(brandishing gun)

You know everything.

DAUGHTER

(brandishing gun)

Isn't that better?

The two aim their guns at one another. Daughter is visibly upset that it has come to this. Father has no expression. Father does not care. He never cared. The two shoot. Father misses. Daughter shoots his heart. The revolving stops. Father stumbles

*back trying not to show any emotion. Father drops to his knees.
Daughter puts down her arm. She is no longer upset.*

DAUGHTER

It's done.

SCENE II: A Reunion... of Sorts

*The desk and chair are taken offstage. A table is brought
on stage. Daughter is sitting at it with MOTHER and
SISTER.*

DAUGHTER

(aside)

I'm nineteen. I'm about to know everything.

*HALF-SISTER enters the stage. She sits next to Sister.
Half-Sister is most pleased with everyone at the table.*

HALF-SISTER

It's wonderful to finally meet you all. Again, I've got to apologize for bringing you into something that I maybe shouldn't have...

MOTHER

No need to apologize. I just feel sorry about why you contacted us. He never should have done that.

HALF-SISTER

Yeah...but that's him. Always using Facebook, isn't he?

Pause.

What did he tell you about us?

SISTER

Essentially that he was trying his best to be the perfect father to you. Always picked you up for weekends, paid his child support, and that your mom turned you and Mary against him during the divorce.

HALF-SISTER

(laughing)

That's so far from the truth.

DAUGHTER

What did he do?

HALF-SISTER

After the divorce, he didn't see Mary and me for three years, and he never paid child support. Our mother would make us wait as she'd tell us that he would pull up any minute. We had to tell her it was pointless

and ask if we could go unpack. When he did start to show up, he always brought a date, and when she wouldn't call him back, he'd tell us that we weren't polite enough. When he was still with my mom, he'd hit her, and he once beat Mary so badly that she ended up being hospitalized... at eight... and what could we say?

Silence.

We cut him out after some time. It wasn't until he heard about my wedding to my now ex-husband that he sent me a letter, apologizing and writing that he was dying from a blood disease and wanted to be there for the wedding.

MOTHER

I remember he mentioned writing a letter to you. I never knew that's what he wrote about. He wasn't suffering from anything. He was perfectly healthy then.

HALF-SISTER

Well, I believed him. We met, and I realized he had lied after he kept saying he would pay for the wedding but have it in Italy so the *whole* family could attend. After that meeting, I stopped all contact with him again.

SISTER

Did he ever leave guns around your house?

HALF-SISTER

Yes.

DAUGHTER

Yeah, he'd always place his pistol on the side table when we were watching T.V. together and say it was in case of intruders.

HALF-SISTER

Yeah... intruders. The only intruder was him.

MOTHER

May I ask what you've told your son about him?

HALF-SISTER

Nothing. He doesn't know anything about him, and I have no intention of telling him now, nor do I plan on telling him about you all. He's just six. He knows nothing about the situation, and he won't understand.

MOTHER

What about Mary?

HALF-SISTER

She's got a girl and twin boys. They don't know anything either. And you couldn't meet her anyway. She's in Switzerland... currently going through her own divorce.

DAUGHTER

That's funny.

HALF-SISTER

Why?

DAUGHTER

Papa wanted to move to Switzerland.

SCENE III: **Father just wants to know how you are...what's so bad about that?**

The table and chairs are taken offstage as Mother, Sister, and Half-Sister exit. Father gets up from the stage and pulls out his phone. He sends out a text message to Daughter. A ding goes off and Daughter pulls out her phone, reading the text.

FATHER

How are you? Feeling better?
Did you go to school today?
Going to my doctor I saw your mother car parked at home. She is sick too?

Ding.

School sent message you did not go to school. How are you?

Ding.

Are you okay?
I hope you did not hurt yourself going on the stairs.

Love, Papa

Daughter texts back.

DAUGHTER

I'm good just that my
throat's been bothering
me so I decided to stay home

FATHER

Okay. Hope you feel
better soon. Love, Dad.

DAUGHTER

Thanks.
Love you.
Good night.

*Daughter looks over at Father. He's overjoyed by her
response. Daughter puts her phone away.*

DAUGHTER

(aside)

Saying 'I love you' became a courtesy, like when you hold open the door for someone out of habit.

Pause.

How much longer can I hold the door open for him?

*Father turns to face Daughter. He smiles. Daughter
waves. He walks over to her and wraps his arm around
her shoulders, ushering her to his side of the stage.*

SCENE IV: Weekend at Father's

FATHER

What do you want for dinner? I haven't been out to the supermarket yet.

DAUGHTER

What do you have?

FATHER

I have steak, sausage, chicken...

DAUGHTER

Chicken.

FATHER

Okay. I'll make you chicken, and I'll make me steak. I'll also roast some potatoes. You want some?

DAUGHTER

No, thank you.

FATHER

Are you sure?

DAUGHTER

Yes.

FATHER

Okay.

Father pulls out a remote and turns on the T.V. We hear the Fox news channel. A couch comes onstage and Father and Daughter walk backward until they fall onto the couch. Daughter is on her phone sitting as far away from Father as she can. The voices from the news channel start to become contorted until the words 'punch, jump, land, run' are heard like a soft chant. Daughter looks up from her phone and whispers the words until Father stands. The news channel goes back to normal and Father walks downstage right.

FATHER

You know...if it weren't for you and your sister, I probably would have killed myself by now.

Seeing the serious look on Daughter's face, Father begins to laugh. We hear Daughter speak.

DAUGHTER

(aside)

I'm sixteen. I know he's capable of doing it.

FATHER

I'm only joking. Don't worry.

DAUGHTER

That's not a joke.

FATHER

Don't worry.

Walking offstage.

I'm going to make dinner.

Exits.

Daughter pulls out the couch, and it becomes a bed. The lights dim, and we can hear the crickets and the sound of cars passing by. Daughter lies down on the bed and is sleeping.

SCENE V: GET OUT

Daughter awakens from her slumber. Mother and Sister are on stage left. Father is on stage right.

FATHER

Get inside the car. I'll be there shortly.

MOTHER

Don't take too long.

FATHER

I won't.

Mother, Sister, and Father exit. Daughter sits up on the bed. Father appears on the upper level of the stage. He's holding his Rifle. He aims towards the audience. BANG! Sister screams offstage. BANG! Mother screams offstage. Daughter is horrified.

DAUGHTER

No, no, no!

Daughter cowers on the bed and hunches forward. She puts her hands over her head. Father aims the Rifle at Daughter. BANG! Daughter screams. Quick Blackout. The lights come back. Father has exited the stage and Daughter is awake in her bed, clutching her right shoulder. She realizes it was all a dream.

I wish I could say this was the first time, but it's just one of many recurring dreams. It was always him. He always goes after Sister first and then Mother. I'm inside the car, and I try to escape from the sunroof.

I get stuck, and he enters the garage. I try to get out, but he shoots my right shoulder. I wake up, and I'm relieved to know that it was all a dream...so why does my shoulder burn when I wake? Was it really a dream? What if he really did try to kill me, and I woke before he could finish?

Pause.

I learned to start locking my door when I went to bed in his house. It's better to be safe than dead.

SCENE VI: A Promise...Part One

Daughter turns the bed back into the couch. Father enters with a small table. On the table is a bowl with two eggs. Father sets the table down and breaks the eggs into the bowl. He's making breakfast while Daughter is sitting on the couch watching T.V. Muffled voices from the T.V. are heard throughout the scene.

FATHER

How is it at home?

DAUGHTER

It's fine.

FATHER

Any fights?

DAUGHTER

Just the normal ones.

FATHER

Ah.

DAUGHTER

Everything's fine.

FATHER

And your mother...has she met anyone lately?

DAUGHTER

I don't know. You'd have to ask her.

FATHER

I'm not going to do that. That's her personal business.

DAUGHTER

Okay.

FATHER

How many years until you start college?

DAUGHTER

I've got two more. I start applying next fall.

FATHER

You know, your sister has been doing well with her tuition, being under my care. No loans. Nothing.

DAUGHTER

Okay.

FATHER

I'd be more than happy to help you out, too.

DAUGHTER

You have the college account set up already.

FATHER

Yes, but I can help with other things.

Pause.

It wouldn't take a lot for you to be under my custody. Wouldn't that just be a slap in the face to your mother?

DAUGHTER

What?

FATHER

I can provide you with money for college, so you don't have to worry about any loans. I have a good pension. What does your mother have? But, no matter what, the money is yours. I've always added money into it every year since you were born, money from *my* salary. I took good care of you when you were babies, you know that. Would you be willing to go to court?

DAUGHTER

Um...

FATHER

And after the things she did to you as a child. It will be an easy fix. Your sister is happy.

DAUGHTER

Um...

FATHER

You don't have to make a decision now.

DAUGHTER

No.

Pause.

I'll do it. I'll testify against her.

FATHER

(smiling)

Good.

Father goes offstage with the table and eggs.

DAUGHTER

I'm sixteen. I think I'm making the right decision.

Silence.

Do I tell her?

SCENE VII: **Do I tell her?**

Mother enters and sits down with Daughter on the couch. She watches the T.V. with Daughter. Mother looks down at Daughter and smiles brightly, placing a kiss to the side of her face before looking forward at the T.V.

DAUGHTER

(aside)

It's true. She's hurt me in the past. We fought and we bickered, but that's what normal mothers and daughters do. She knows what she's done in the past was wrong. We've made amends. She's just trying. Who knows what she's gone through in her own past, and while she was married to Papa. I love her. I love her with all my heart. I couldn't bear to hurt her over something I've forgiven her for. I'm happy right where I am.

Mother wraps her arms around Daughter and the two laugh as Mother pinches Daughter's side.

I'm making the right choice. I know I am.

SCENE VIII: **A Promise...Part Two**

Mother exits offstage and Father comes back on stage with a table. On the table is his Rifle. He's cleaning it.

FATHER

Did you have a good week at school?

DAUGHTER

Yes.

FATHER

Have you thought about what I said?

DAUGHTER

Yes.

FATHER

Good. There's no need to say anything to her.

DAUGHTER

I'm not going through with it.

FATHER

What?

DAUGHTER

I'm happy being in her care. I have no problems with her.

FATHER

You said you would testify against her.

DAUGHTER

I know.

FATHER

That's fine. It's your decision. Besides, you still have the college account. The money was always yours anyway. I would never take that away from you. Just know that if you say yes to something, you always keep your word. A promise is a promise.

DAUGHTER

I know. But people are allowed to change their minds. I'm happy with mama.

FATHER

That's fine. I understand.

SCENE IX: Let's Play a Game!

Father takes the Rifle offstage as Daughter stands on stage left, while Sister enters wearing a shimmering suit and stands on stage right. They're both smiling, but it's painful.

SISTER

Hello everyone! Do you want to play a game?

DAUGHTER

I want to play a game!

SISTER

I know you do! Do you know what game we're going to play?!

DAUGHTER

Is it-

DAUGHTER/SISTER

Guess Which Facebook Post Is The Most Disturbing!

SISTER

That's correct! Now, let's get our handy-dandy helper out on stage, please.

Mother enters the stage. She's wearing an elaborately designed dress that shimmers. She's the Vanna White of the show.

SISTER

Now, the rules are simple! Just react to the Facebook posts as they appear on the screen behind me! And we *LOVE* audience participation, so don't be afraid to react yourselves. Step out if necessary, but if the rules of this show say you won't be admitted back in, that's on you! Let's get started!

*A projection of a Facebook post appears on screen.
Sister reads them out as they appear.*

SISTER

“VIOLENT BY NATURE. PEACEFUL BY CHOICE.”

DAUGHTER

That's not too bad.

SISTER

We're just getting started.

Another post appears. It's an image of a small child in a soldier's uniform.

“ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF WHITE SUPREMACY. A 6 YEARS OLD BOY IN THE USA WORKING IN THE MINES, CIRCA 1910.”

DAUGHTER

How does that make any sense?

SISTER

Now you're getting there.

Another post.

“WHY THEY DO NOT GIVE A LIE DETECTOR TEST TO ALL WOMEN OR MEN WHO SAY THEY HAVE BEEN SEXUALLY HARASSED?”

DAUGHTER

At least he's admitting men get sexually harassed too.

SISTER

Ah, yes, a silver lining!

Another post.

SISTER

“THE DEVIL GOT HIS BLOOD SACRIFICE FROM 17 INNOCENT PEOPLE BY THE HAND OF A DEMENTED HUMANOID!” Posted on February 15th.

DAUGHTER

Happy Belated Valentine's Day, I guess.

SISTER

That's the spirit!

Another post.

“I JUST SENT AN EMAIL TO TUCKER ON FOX NEWS AND TO PRESIDENT TRUMP TO PUT UNDER HYPNOSIS THE SCHOOL SHOOTER, NICKOLAS CRUZ”

DAUGHTER

With a comment: “THE RESULTS WOULD BE ALTERED TO HIDE THE TRUTH.” Why is he so obsessed with mind control?

SISTER

Maybe this will help?

Another post.

“A HUMAN ASSASSIN: Find a man who doesn’t have friends, who likes to live alone. Friendship him. Put a drug into his drink. Take him to the lab. Implant through his nose into his brain a “Organic Nano Chip”... Bring him back to the original place so when he wakes all is normal to him! Now you have total control on his mind! After you command him to do what do you like to do, you can program him to take his own life or to be killed. Once is dead, the “Organic Nano Chip” will disintegrate living no traces!”

DAUGHTER

That’s...wait...

SISTER

I know! And we here at home can’t get past that awful spelling!

DAUGHTER

I’m sorry...I don’t...

Another post. It is a screenshot of a video consisting of babies hugging.

SISTER

“One Christian, one jew and one muslim. If they grow without religious teachings they will love each other as brothers. Divide them and brain wash them into each religion and when they grew they will kill each other.”

DAUGHTER

Why did he write that under a video of babies hugging each other?

SISTER

Our thoughts exactly!

DAUGHTER

How many more are there?

SISTER

Too many to count!

DAUGHTER

I don’t want to play anymore.

SISTER

Too bad! You're forced to see these every time you go on Facebook because he's Father, and if you were to unfriend him, there'd be a shit storm waiting for you when he found out! And you don't want that to happen, do you? You're even too afraid to repost articles and images that go against his beliefs for fear of what he might say to you.

DAUGHTER

I don't know how to fight back with him.

SISTER

That's not an excuse!

Another post.

“MAMMALIAN SEX: Only one animal in the Mammalian Kingdom is sexually addicted, the humanoids. It is like a drug!”

Another post. It is a photo of Hitler with a young boy, and Father's face as a young boy is superimposed over the child's.

“HOW TIME PASSES!”

Another post. It is a link to a Youtube video about the Civil War not having been about Slavery.

“The reason slavery is the popular justification for the Civil War, is that it's the only way to excuse the gross amount of illegal actions taken by Lincoln for engaging in a war to prevent the Confederacy from having the right to govern themselves. The Civil War was an illegal war carried out by the North to retain America's biggest cash crops: cotton and tobacco, and to justify it, the North came up with one of the biggest lies of history.”

Another post.

“I sent an e-mail to Carlson on Fox News, to Pam Bondi, Attorney General in Florida and to Trump also to put the Florida shooter under hypnosis but nobody answered my message! It shows that they are aware that if the shooter is forced to be put under hypnosis he will spill the beans on who worked on his mind! It seems these three people that I contacted do not have the will to follow up on my suggestion, therefore they are part of the problem!”

Another post.

SISTER

“Friday I had to fill a medical form, At a certain point was a question “Race/Ethnicity”. Got confused by, then I remembered my DNA test that as Haplogroup I1 put me into Nordic people so I wrote as a reply to the question “Aryan” instead of ‘White’, did I right?”

DAUGHTER

Stop. I don’t like this anymore.

SISTER

Don’t worry. It’s almost over, folks. We hope you feel as terrible as we do at home.

Another post.

“So blatantly tell us to use a vaccine when the vaccine makes things worse! Chemical trails to their best combined with influenza’s virus!”

Another post.

“Make No mistake, the goal is to confiscate all guns under a Socialist Democrat run Government. Vote against the Democrats!!!”

DAUGHTER

STOP!

*The screen gets shut off before the next post can appear.
Mother has just been doing her job the whole time,
oblivious to the posts appearing on screen.*

DAUGHTER

I’ve had enough.

SISTER

Have you?

DAUGHTER

Yes.

SISTER

What are you going to do about it?

DAUGHTER

I can...I’ll unfollow his page. I won’t see any of his posts from now on.

SISTER

But you're still his *FRIEND*. Do you want to be his friend?

DAUGHTER

No.

SISTER

So what *are* you going to do about it?

DAUGHTER

Nothing.

SISTER

Why?

DAUGHTER

I'm afraid of what he might do.

SISTER

And that's all the time we have tonight for GUESS WHICH FACEBOOK POST IS THE MOST DISTURBING! I hope you've all had a good time tonight, and we hope to see you again the next time Father makes another post!

SCENE X: **Father Invites a Friend**

*Sister and Mother exit the stage. A ding goes off.
Daughter checks her phone as Father reappears where
Sister was standing. He is holding his phone.*

FATHER

I had a nice day. Went with Chris to NJ to help him out on a new hotel construction and then stopped for lunch at a Chinese buffet. Glad to know the first show was a success and looking forward to Saturday. I am not sure yet but is a possibility I will come with my neighbor Simone.
Good night. Love, Dad.

DAUGHTER

I'd prefer just you
coming to the show.

FATHER

I understand, but I
invited him for company.
If he will change his
mind than I will come
alone.

*NEIGHBOR enters the stage and stands center. He is
dimly lit, and it is hard to see his face.*

DAUGHTER

It's just I don't know him
well nor do I want
someone I don't know
knowing the high school
I go to. Just as I ask
mama not to send
photos of me to people I
don't know, I ask for you
to just come yourself.

DAUGHTER

You're also listed as
only having one
reserved seat.

FATHER

Okay.

*Neighbor looks over at Daughter. He begins to walk over
to her. Before he can reach her, we hear a ding.
Daughter checks her phone . Neighbor exits the stage.*

FATHER

Good day, Daughter.
I do not know how you
will think about it
especially when I told
you I was coming with

my neighbor and you
told me you prefer I to
come alone. It was fine
with me until this
morning to come alone
but at 11am I got a nose
bleed and went to my
specialist. She closed
my left nostril and
Monday I have to go
again to remove the
packing and see if she
can cauterize the
capillary.

Until then I cannot take
a chance to drive on the
highway in case I have
problems with the right
nostril.

If you like I can send you
copy of the bill I paid
just now to the doctor
and a photo with my
closed nostril.

Due to the above I
cannot be there
Saturday to see your
show. I wanted to come
but cannot take a
chance. Hopefully there
will be many more and
always one better than
the other.

Love and miss you,
Papa.

Father and Daughter put their phones away.

SCENE XI: Montreal Trip

*They turn to face one another and soon two beds are
brought on stage as Sister enters with a piece of
luggage.*

DAUGHTER

(aside)

I'm fifteen. I'm uncertain of what to think.

Daughter watches as Father and Sister begin to make the beds.

DAUGHTER

(aside)

We went on my birthday. I told him I didn't want to celebrate my birthday here. I wanted to be at home with my mom... but he was insistent. He was insistent me and Sister came on this trip with him alone. Vacations were never relaxing when he was around. We always had to follow everything he said and everything he had planned. There was no free reign. He was in charge, and we can't argue with him.

Sister and Father get into their respective beds, and Daughter sits on Sister's bed.

DAUGHTER

It has been long days of walking, strolling through museums, and pretending to be enjoying myself. I learned about what he'll do if you don't pretend.

Daughter lies down next to Sister. A timer appears on the back of the stage as a projection. The timer is set for fifteen seconds. There's a low hum on the stage as everyone waits to see what will happen when the timer finishes. The humming gets louder and we hear a soft chant of 'Punch, Jump, Land, Run.' When the timer finishes, an alarm goes off. It's Sister's phone. Father gets up. He's tired. He's angry. A horrible combination.

Father gets out of bed as Sister wakes. Daughter remains asleep. Sister goes to shut off the alarm, but before she can, Father enters her space.

FATHER

Why is your alarm going off in the middle of the night?

SISTER

Sorry, I forgot I had it turned on.

FATHER

I'm trying to get a fucking good night's sleep, and I have to be woken up because you forgot your alarm!

SISTER

It was an accident.

FATHER

Turn the fucking thing off now!

Sister turns off the alarm. Daughter begins to wake, but hearing the anger in Father's voice, she remains laying down on the bed.

FATHER

Is it off?

SISTER

Yes.

FATHER

Are you sure? Are you sure it's off? I don't want to fucking wake up again because of it.

SISTER

Yes! It's off!

Sister is upset. Sister is crying. Father exits to use the bathroom. Daughter sits up in the bed. The coast is clear.

DAUGHTER

What happened?

SISTER

I forgot my alarm on, and daddy got mad at me because it woke him up.

DAUGHTER

It's over now. Let's try and get some sleep.

Daughter and Sister go back to sleep as Father enters back on stage. He stands at the foot of his bed staring at the two sleeping girls. After a beat, Sister and Daughter wake up and get out of bed. They immediately walk over to Father.

FATHER

Listen, I am sorry for getting mad at you. It was a simple mistake. Just make sure it doesn't happen again. That's all.

DAUGHTER

(aside)

She learned to not let it happen again.

SCENE XII: 46 Shots in One Night

Sister exits the stage, and the beds and luggage are taken off as well. Mother enters, and a few chairs appear. Daughter sits in one of them as a hooded Neighbor sits in a few chairs behind her. Father and Mother are on the other side of the stage watching Daughter intently.

DAUGHTER

(aside)

I'm in a classroom that I remember well. The only thing different is that Father and Mama are on the other side of the door, and only me and one other student are inside. I see them through the glass pane of the door, and they look at me with such urgency and fear. I stand up from my seat and make my way towards the door. As I reach out to touch the doorknob, I spot him in the corner of my eye. It's someone I don't know. It's someone I've never seen. He's dressed in all black and stands up from his seat. I turn my gaze from Father and Mama and watch him as he reveals his Assault Rifle from under his cloak. I stare at him like an animal caught in the headlights. I don't know what to do. I freeze. I'm not prepared for this. You're never prepared for this. No matter how many drills you go through, you're never prepared. He points his Assault Rifle at me, and no words escape my mouth as I try to speak. I can hear the continuous barrage of bullets as they pierce my small body. I can feel it burn all over my legs, my arms, my stomach, my chest, my neck, and my face. With each bullet, my body disintegrates little by little, until I feel that I am no longer in it. My vision begins to blur. I'm dying.

Neighbor exits the stage. Daughter falls to her knees and gasps for air as she slowly turns her head to look at Father.

You're never prepared if it happens at school. You're never prepared if it happens in a movie theater. You're never prepared if it happens in a mall. You're never prepared when it happens. I am only prepared if it happens at home.

Father exits. Daughter begins to revolve around the stage. She's trying to remain balanced. After a beat, she

falls and the revolving stops. She's in front of the audience.

I was shot 46 times in that dream. The number holds no other significance to me, but it is a number I will always remember. When I woke up, I felt my body burning, as I laid all alone in my bed. No one was there to comfort me. I forced myself to suffer through it...alone. Alone. The blood pumping through my body continued to feel as if it were lava. I almost wished my heart would stop beating, just for a moment, so that I could be at peace. I was all alone there. No one can understand this. No one will ever know the fears hiding inside my head.

Pause.

The burning stopped. My body returned to normal, but something was different. Something changed. It's hard to go back to normal life after something like that.

SCENE XIII: Father Checking In

*A phone ringing is heard throughout the space.
Daughter is visibly annoyed. Father walks on stage with his phone to his ear. Daughter collects herself before bringing the phone up to her ear.*

DAUGHTER

Hello, Papa.

FATHER

Hello, Daughter. How are you?

DAUGHTER

I'm fine. How are you?

FATHER

I am doing alright. Went to my doctor for a check up to make sure everything's okay. They ran a blood test, so I am waiting back on those results which should take only a few days. I don't think anything is wrong, but it is better to check these things. You know, at my age, it's always better to check so that I can ensure I have the rest of my life to spend with you and Sister.

DAUGHTER

That's good.

FATHER

Okay. How is your mom?

DAUGHTER

She's fine.

FATHER

She meet any men lately?

DAUGHTER

(aside)

He always asked me this question whenever I spoke with him. Coming from a man who said he didn't care about what Mother did with her life, he seemed to care a lot about her prospective dates.

Pause.

Mother is very open and always told me about the men she was speaking with- who they were and where she was meeting them, just in case. It's not within my right to tell him, and I didn't want to start a shit show between the two of them. I knew how to answer him...

(to Father)

I don't know.

FATHER

Okay. How is school going?

DAUGHTER

It's fine. Not much is happening.

FATHER

Any tests or quizzes?

DAUGHTER

No. It's pretty easy right now.

FATHER

That's good to hear. Do you have any boyfriends?

DAUGHTER

(aside)

This question always seemed to catch me by surprise, no matter how much I expected it. He asked it every time we spoke, yet I never remembered it was coming.

Pause.

In truth, I didn't, but I gave him an answer I knew he would like.

(to Father)

No, I'd rather focus on my studies.

FATHER

Good. That's what I like to hear.

DAUGHTER

(aside)

Told you.

FATHER

Well, I just wanted to check in with you and see how you are. It has been sometime since I last heard from you.

DAUGHTER

Yeah, things are just busy here.

FATHER

Okay. Call me the next time you can. I want to hear from you first, instead of me calling you all the time.

DAUGHTER

Okay.

FATHER

I love you and I miss you.

DAUGHTER

I love you, too.

FATHER

You mean it when you say it, right?

DAUGHTER

(nervously chuckling)

What?

FATHER

You mean it when you say you love me and miss me? In your texts too?

DAUGHTER

(aside)

What do I say? If I said yes, I'd be lying. If I said no, he'd get angry. I had no choice but to say-

(to Father)

Yes. I do.

FATHER

Good.

Daughter and Father put their phones away. The two begin to revolve around the stage with Daughter walking away from Father as he walks toward her. This slow chase continues for a moment, until Daughter stops in

her tracks and Father is able to place his hand on her shoulder. The stage stops revolving once Daughter and Father are facing the audience. Father smiles.

SCENE XIV: **Father Proposes a Test**

FATHER

It's wonderful to have you here for the weekend.

DAUGHTER

Yeah.

FATHER

Is there anything you want to do together while you are here? Go for a walk in the mall? What?

DAUGHTER

I don't know. I'd rather stay inside.

FATHER

Okay. If you change your mind, let me know. I'll be upstairs.

Father goes to exit the stage but stops himself. He turns back around to face Daughter.

FATHER

I want to ask you something?

DAUGHTER

What is it?

FATHER

Would you be willing to do something for me?

DAUGHTER

It depends what it is.

FATHER

You don't have to let me know now... I want a paternity test done for you and Sister.

DAUGHTER

What?

FATHER

I told you what Mother was like and what she did. You know she wanted the divorce, remember. If you say yes, this would just stay between the two of us.

DAUGHTER

...

FATHER

Don't worry. Like I said, you don't have to decide now. Think about and let me know.

DAUGHTER

Okay.

Father exits the stage. Mother and Sister enter and stand towards the back of the stage, their faces shrouded from light.

DAUGHTER

(aside)

He never asked me about it again. Never even brought it up in a conversation. He simply forgot. It wasn't until years later that I mentioned this to Sister and Mother. In doing so, Sister revealed Father had asked her as well, and Mother was horrified we never said anything.

Pause.

But how can you say anything when you've become entrapped by his mind games?

SCENE XV: **Father Wants to Show Daughter Something**

Mother and Sister exit the stage as Father enters with his phone. Half-Sister enters and stands toward the back of the stage, her face shrouded from any light.

FATHER

Come here. I want to show you something.

Daughter walks over to Father. She is right beside him as he shoves his phone in front of her face.

FATHER

Do you see her?

DAUGHTER

Yeah.

FATHER

Do you know who she is?

DAUGHTER

She looks familiar.

FATHER

This is Half-Sister. I've shown you some photos before.

DAUGHTER

Yeah, you have, but she was younger in those photos.

FATHER

She's beautiful, isn't she?

DAUGHTER

Mhmm.

FATHER

Such a shame, though. I just wish she wouldn't get all this work done on her chest and face. She's beautiful without it.

DAUGHTER

(aside)

He hadn't had any contact with Half-Sister that would let him know whether she's had work done.

FATHER

And her son too. She's putting all these colors in his hair. It's not natural.

DAUGHTER

She can do whatever she wants.

FATHER

You know, I've been thinking that once you and Sister graduate from college, I might move to Switzerland. It's such a nice country.

Daughter's phone dings. Sister has sent an attachment. It appears as a projection behind Father and Daughter. It's a Facebook post. Half-Sister speaks the post.

HALF-SISTER

"SWITZERLAND. I just sent an e-mail asking info for residence in Switzerland just one hour ago. I promptly received the answer that I can easily get. Just one hour!!! I start to LOVE Switzerland and

their precision in everything. Now I will program my trip to see if I like living there for next spring and if I like it in 2019 I will be there.”

FATHER

But that is farther in the future. We don't have to worry now. You are all set with the account.

Father and Half-Sister exit the stage.

DAUGHTER

If I'm doing my math correctly, and I know I am, my eldest half-sister is just a year younger than my mom. My dad was born in 1950 in post-war Italy- my mom was born in 1973 in communist Romania. My mother was twenty-six when she had me, and my dad was forty-nine. I always believed the story of how they met: my dad was vacationing in Romania and happened to meet my mom. They fell in love, came to America, and started a family. Growing up, those to whom I told the story thought it was the epitome of romance. A dashing man coming in to save the damsel in distress. The truth was far from the idealistic fairytale I was taught. I never knew the real story about how my parents met until I asked Sister to clear it all up.

Pause.

She told me that my mom was sixteen years old, living in Romania. My dad, a forty-year old man, was in Romania with his second wife... my mom's aunt. After the first divorce and separation from my half-sisters, my dad wanted a new family, but his second wife didn't want to carry any children. Adoption came to mind, and they thought that they could adopt one of her brother's children, giving them a chance at a good education in an American high school. Sister told me that out of my mom's five siblings, she showed the most promise. However, my mom was seeing a boy named Aurel, who she loved dearly. Aware of the relationship, my dad and his wife nonetheless brought my mom over to America at sixteen. Aurel wrote her many letters, but my mom never knew, since my dad intercepted them until they stopped coming. My mom finished high school here, and while she was in college, my dad divorced my mom's aunt to marry her when she was just nineteen. My mom's father went from having a brother-in-law to a son-in-law, older than he was, almost overnight.

Silence.

In a lot of ways, my dad was a true Woody Allen in the making. And if you really look at it, my dad at the ripe age of forty-three was a man who had been twice-divorced, had two daughters who cut him out of their lives -the eldest just eighteen when he married my mom - and had physically, emotionally, and verbally abused all those he claimed to “love.” He was, and still is, a man so accustomed to lying, you couldn't help but fall under his spell. I know I had. Who do you think told me the first version of this story? In fact, the only stable marriage he ever had was to all the webs of lies he'd created during his life.

Father enters the stage.

FATHER

It was their mother who turned them against me during the divorce. She told them lies about what a horrible man I was and how I never cared about them. I love my daughters, but unfortunately, their mother got into their heads and brainwashed them. Luckily, I have you and Sister. In some ways, it is as if God gave me another chance. My do-over daughters.

DAUGHTER

(aside)

Is that all we were to him?