

## ***The Pact***

### *Characters*

*Ellen — An older woman*

*Dan — Her son, in his forties*

*College Dan — Same son, in his twenties*

*Older Dan — Same son, in his sixties*

*Quick note: All the Dan's could be hinted at through simple costume choices, the same blue jeans and checkered shirt, or the same pants and sweater. Their vocal patterns and physicality also will hint that these are the same person at different moments. Creative teams can have fun exploring similarities.*

*The writer uses a | to show when one or more character is speaking.*

*It's up to the audience to decide what is the past, present and future — What's real or imagined.*

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*At rise, ELLEN sits in a comfortable chair, facing a small television that's on — but muted. A small cabinet or sideboard sits somewhere onstage, with a rotary phone on it. DAN enters, coming out of the cold.*

DAN

Lucy lost a tooth today and I put it in my pocket and then —

ELLEN

Her first tooth! How can she be old enough to lose a tooth?

DAN

She was so excited — I put it in my pocket and then we were wrestling and I lost it —

ELLEN

It's that shag carpeting of yours —

DAN

What's wrong with shag carpeting?

ELLEN

You know how many people lose teeth in shag carpeting each year?

DAN

I just know I have a sad little girl on my hands — She thinks the Tooth Fairy won't come now —

ELLEN

Which tooth is it? This one — Or this one? Or one of these back here?

DAN

It's this one — the little pointy one — The canine? She won't stop crying —

ELLEN

I think I have that tooth!

DAN

You do?

ELLEN

You don't save your kids' teeth?

DAN

It's her first tooth, mom!

ELLEN

That you lost! I'm just saying if you'd saved some spares, you wouldn't have this problem!

DAN

How could I save her teeth if she hasn't lost any yet?

ELLEN

It's a good thing I'm here! Go look in the credenza —

*COLLEGE DAN enters from a bedroom. It's clear from his costume, he's DAN — at a different time of life. ELLEN sees him, but DAN doesn't. The two men don't see or hear each other.*

ELLEN

(*To COLLEGE DAN*) The dentist said it'd be sore for a while — Are you ready for a milkshake?

DAN

Isn't saving teeth kind of weird?

ELLEN

(*To DAN*) It's not like saving toenail clippings —

DAN

Is it, though?

ELLEN

Do you want the tooth or not? (*She stands — It's difficult.*)

COLLEGE DAN

(*Rubbing his face, miserable, mumbles.*) What kind of milkshake? (*He sits, flips channels.*)

ELLEN

I have Neapolitan ice cream — That's chocolate, vanilla and strawberry —

COLLEGE DAN | DAN

There's nothing on T.V.! | Lucy won't go to sleep —

ELLEN

I don't know why they do that — No one ever eats the strawberry. They should just sell chocolate and vanilla — Look in any box of Neapolitan ice cream in any freezer in America and you know what flavor you'll find left?

DAN

Yes — I want the tooth.

ELLEN

I keep the jars of teeth in a box next to the holiday placemats and the playing cards.

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DAN

*(Searching.)* The jars of teeth? You have *more than one* jar of teeth?

COLLEGE DAN

When can I take my next pain pill?

ELLEN

Look next to that wooden bowl that looks like a pineapple! — You had a pain pill an hour ago!

DAN

Who says ‘credenza’?

COLLEGE DAN

*(Muffled, through cotton balls.)* Chocolate milkshake.

ELLEN

I say credenza and you’re lucky I have one.

DAN

Here’s the box —

ELLEN

And I’ll go make your milkshake.

DAN

Three baby food jars full of teeth —

ELLEN

You think you invented recycling?

DAN

And one jar with — What are these?

*DAN and COLLEGE DAN both hold up a jar of teeth in liquid.*

DAN | COLLEGE DAN

Are these my wisdom teeth? | You want my wisdom teeth?

ELLEN

I’ve got all your teeth! I’m your *mother*! Some of us don’t lose teeth in shag carpeting!

*DAN continues to look through teeth as COLLEGE DAN makes a phone call.*

COLLEGE DAN

When are you gonna get a touch-tone phone, ma?

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ELLEN

Remember when you lost your first tooth? Came in here running —Touch-tone! Who needs that?

DAN

I ate my first tooth.

ELLEN | COLLEGE DAN

You swallowed it! “Will the Tooth Fairy still come?” | This phone number has so many nines!

ELLEN

You know many children in America eat their own teeth?

DAN

Mom, it’s weird to save these —

COLLEGE DAN

Chocolate milkshake?

ELLEN

Now look — This jar has your sister’s teeth and this one’s your brother’s.

DAN

Just — Why mom?

*OLDER DAN enters from kitchen, dressed like himself at the different ages. He’s carrying a chocolate milkshake and a spoon.*

OLDER DAN

Okay, mother — Let’s try this milkshake. You like chocolate?

ELLEN

*(Turning away from OLDER DAN.)* You come here asking for teeth — and then you question why I saved them?

OLDER DAN

The doctor says it’s important for you to try to eat. You want to stay here, don’t you?

DAN

I didn’t ask for teeth — You offered! I just told you about Lucy —

ELLEN

How much?

DAN

She gets ten dollars —

OLDER DAN

The new place is in your budget —

ELLEN

Ten dollars per tooth! Have you done the math on this?

COLLEGE DAN

*(Mumbling.)* Chocolate milkshake?

DAN | OLDER DAN

That's the going rate — | Mom — Just have a bite — Here, doesn't that look good?

ELLEN

Lucy will lose 20 Baby Teeth — That's two hundred bucks!

DAN | OLDER DAN | COLLEGE DAN

*(Digging through jar of teeth.)* They talk on the playground — | *(Attempting to feed ELLEN.)*  
Here it comes — | *(Talking on the phone.)* Yeah, hey — Me? — I just got my wisdom teeth —

ELLEN

*(To DAN)* You're the Tooth Fairy! You set the terms!

DAN

No one tells you how to do the Tooth Fairy thing — It's not in some manual!

ELLEN

No one told me how to do anything, and I did fine!

DAN | COLLEGE DAN | OLDER DAN

You smoked during all three pregnancies! | Chocolate milkshake with *codeine!* | If you don't eat, you can't stay here. You want to stay here?

ELLEN

I may have smoked and had a few cocktails but it didn't make any difference — That's just what we did in those days — And you were still six pounds!

DAN | OLDER DAN

You never made us wear seatbelts! | You already can't drive —

ELLEN

Our car didn't *have* seatbelts — And I was a very good driver!

DAN | COLLEGE DAN

Did your generation think the back of the station wagon had some kind of protective properties? | *(Mumbling — Pulling cotton packs out of his mouth.)* I want to take the car tonight — I'm fine.

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ELLEN

I'm just saying, for two hundred bucks — you could buy Lucy a good winter coat *and* boots.

DAN | OLDER DAN

She already has a good winter coat and — | Lucy is — One bite? Come on, mother — Please?

ELLEN

A good winter coat should be sturdy enough to hand down —

DAN | COLLEGE DAN | OLDER DAN

Lucy is an *only* — She doesn't need hand-me-downs. | I'll never have children! | Mom, please?

ELLEN

When I was Tooth Fairy I had to be *creative*.

DAN

When were *you* creative?

ELLEN

I could cook thanksgiving dinner out of one potato and a packet of soup mix!

DAN | COLLEGE DAN | OLDER DAN

You ironed *the sheets*! Who irons sheets? | I'm going out — | I can't help you if you won't —

DAN

And who saves teeth in the — What's it called?

OLDER DAN

Mom — Look at me — Let's try one bite. One little bite, okay?

ELLEN

The credenza.

DAN

And what's this?

ELLEN | COLLEGE DAN

The couch? | Chocolate milkshake?

OLDER DAN

Mom — Are you even watching this? (*He turns off the T.V.*)

COLLEGE DAN

Hey! I was watching that!

ELLEN



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It's called *a davenport*. It sits next to the *credenza*!

OLDER DAN

Mother — One bite?

ELLEN

What's your plan exactly?

DAN

My plan?

ELLEN

You can't just waltz in and say, "Lucy, I found your tooth!"

DAN

That was my plan.

COLLEGE DAN

Do we have anything to eat?

ELLEN

I could make you a nice bowl of Neapolitan ice cream —

OLDER DAN

You want something else mom? I wish you could understand —

ELLEN

Tooth Fairy, Easter Bunny, Santa — It all takes Parent Magic.

DAN

Well I didn't learn that here!

ELLEN

Just because I never took you to Rembrandt for Babies — Doesn't mean I wasn't magical!

DAN | OLDER DAN

I just remember a lot of canned foods. | Mother — Can you understand the words I'm saying?

ELLEN

I dusted flour by the fireplace and used your father's work boots to make it look like Santa had been here — Remember?

DAN | COLLEGE DAN

I forgot that — | Where's that milkshake?

OLDER DAN

I'm sorry, mom — Okay, let's try this one more time. Here's the bite — Just — For me?

ELLEN

And the Easter Bunny — I put jelly beans in the toilet with a little sign that said “Oops, forgot to flush!” You wrote the Easter Bunny a note that year — It's in the box, too.

DAN

(Reading.) “When you pooped in the toilet, Easter Bunny, it made me feel like you were real. Are you?” I wrote this? I don't remember —

ELLEN

Don't say that word!

DAN

Mom — I'm 40. I can say “Poop” —

ELLEN

For years — It's just chaos — Someone's always losing a tooth! And then it gets quiet —

OLDER DAN

I don't know if you understand — We're moving you.

DAN

I just remember getting a nickel from the Tooth Fairy. What could I even buy with a nickel?

ELLEN

Five teeth — That's a quarter — You could buy gum! Sugarless gum is better for your teeth.

OLDER DAN

We found you a nice home — A real nice one. Little bite?

ELLEN

I'd make a big show about your lost teeth — And at night, you'd put it under your pillow and I'd sneak in when you were sleeping and — |

DAN

I know how to be the Toothy Fairy, mom —

ELLEN

You lost Lucy's tooth in the shag carpeting!

DAN

(Reading) “Thank you for all your work and I promise to floss.” I wrote that, too?

ELLEN

Every tooth. They're all there — Every note to Santa, the Easter Bunny — And the Tooth Fairy.

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OLDER DAN | ELLEN

I watch you sleep for a minute —

COLLEGE DAN

There is nothing on T.V.!

OLDER DAN

We can't keep you safe here — I'm sorry —

COLLEGE DAN

*Where's that milkshake?*

DAN

Can I have that tooth now?

ELLEN

I'd take the tooth from under your pillow — Slowly — I didn't want to wake you — and I'd say "I love you."

DAN

That's it?

OLDER DAN

The place we found has a nice window. You like windows!

DAN

It would have been great if you could have said you loved me when I was awake —

OLDER DAN | COLLEGE DAN

The window looks out on a lake. You like lakes, mom? | I hate it here.

DAN

*(Fishes a tooth out of the jar.)* This is it — the pointy one.

ELLEN

That's the lateral incisor.

DAN

How do you know that?

ELLEN

I'm the Tooth Fairy! Well, I was —

DAN

Mom — Just — Have a goodnight.

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ELLEN

(*To OLDER DAN.*) When you see Lucy tell her — Tell her I love her. And make sure she wears her coat and her good boots — It's been so cold.

OLDER DAN

Lucy has her own children now — Remember? She's all grown up?

DAN

I will, mom.

ELLEN

And —

COLLEGE DAN

Yeah?

OLDER DAN

What is it, ma?

ELLEN

I love you.

*End of Play*