

WHAT REMAINS BEHIND

A full-length play

By Bill Plott

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ACT ONE

SCENE ONE: 1965

In the black: tires squeal; music from a car radio; boys' voices and laughter; faint sound of a girl crying; the sound of the car's brakes as it stops and the engine idles; a car door opens; no voices; murmurs of one boy's voice and the girl crying. Then lights up on:

A dark back corner of a drive-in parking lot; sound of a car, boys talking, car door slams, laughter; a phone booth, late 1950s vintage that lights when the door is opened. The car's engine guns, drowning the boys' voices; YOUNG CAROLINE is framed in the car's headlights; she is sixteen, tall, slender, simply dressed in a short skirt and a light, short-sleeved blouse, untucked and falling off one shoulder; she holds a purse and jacket in one hand. Her long dark hair is tangled and falls across her face; she pushes it out of her eyes to stare at the car whose lights shine on her; the lights move as they would when a car backs up and turns around, replaced by red tail lights. The car's tires bark as she stares out over the audience long after the lights and car sounds are gone.

CAROLINE steps out of the light downstage, pulls out a pack of cigarettes and tries to light one; her hands are shaking too hard to work the lighter; she squeezes the pack, puts it back in her purse, takes out a coin purse, takes a deep breath, carefully fishes a dime from the purse, and leans her head against the door of the booth for several seconds.

Finally she opens the door, stands inside the booth, removes the receiver from its cradle, drops a dime in the slot, and dials a number, all slowly and deliberately.

CAROLINE

Mom? . . .

I'm . . .

What? No, I'm not . . .

(CAROLINE drops her arm with the receiver to her side and leans against the glass the phone booth. Pause.)

Mom . . .

Listen . . .

I told you, no . . .

You've got to listen to me . . .

MOM!

(Long pause.)

I'm sorry . . .

Just . . .

Can you--can you come and get me? . . .

I don't know . . .

No, I don't know exactly where . . .

I'll explain later. I'll go find out . . .

I'll find out, just . . . Don't hang up, o.k.?

(CAROLINE holds the receiver at her side; after a few seconds she picks it up.)

Mom? I'll find out . . .

No. I said already. I'm not o.k. I'm really not.

(Long pause.)

I can't explain on the phone . . .

I know . . .

I know. I know you do. Just wait, o.k.? I'll be back in a minute . . .

O.k. I know. Just wait.

(She puts the phone down carefully, leaves the booth and looks around to get her bearings.)

The light fades as the scene changes.

SCENE TWO: 2007

An airport bar or airline lounge. DAVID is in a high modern chair at a glass table with an empty glass in front of him. Bar light; the runway is visible through plate glass behind him. Airport sounds: noise and music. DAVID is in his late fifties or early sixties; he is thin, has a couple of days worth of beard, wears faded black jeans, a wrinkled dark shirt and an old light suede jacket.

The OLDER CAROLINE, the same age as DAVID, is the hostess at the bar/lounge. She wears a tight, dark suit and light blouse buttoned just above her cleavage; her hair is short, dark, cut well, dyed but not obviously; she is slim but carries a few extra pounds and is very attractive, something not lost on DAVID as she seats a couple near him, returns his smile and crosses to his table.

Note: the music is good country.

Another?	CAROLINE
Sorry?	DAVID
Another drink.	CAROLINE
Oh. Right. Yes.	DAVID
My pleasure.	CAROLINE (Takes his glass.)
Thanks.	DAVID

CAROLINE

I'm sorry. I'm sure you get this all the time, but I know you, you know, from your pictures. And your books. I mean, the pictures on the covers of your books. And then, I know you--well, I knew you a long time ago.

DAVID

Yeah?

CAROLINE

Actually, we met a long time ago.

DAVID

I'm sorry, I don't remember--

CAROLINE

You wouldn't. We only met once.

DAVID

At a signing, or--

CAROLINE

No, no. We were in high school.

DAVID

(Looks at her, tries to read her name tag.)

You were at St. Luke's?

CAROLINE

No, I went to public school. Hoover.

DAVID

Cara--

CAROLINE

Caroline. The management thinks the clientele prefers something shorter, so, Cara.

DAVID

Caroline. I can't place--

CAROLINE

No, you wouldn't. It was only the once.

(Pause.)

DAVID

Really? At a party, or a game, or--

CAROLINE

Not exactly. What brings you back, Mr. Summers?

DAVID

Back?

CAROLINE

To town. Usually when you're here there's something in the paper or the news about the native son returning, but I didn't see anything.

DAVID

Oh. Family shit. Sorry--family business.

CAROLINE

I didn't mean to pry. Only--

DAVID

No, it's all right. It's been a long time since anybody from high school recognized me, especially somebody from Hoover. Besides, not that many people recognize me.

CAROLINE

That's hard to believe.

DAVID

You've read my books?

CAROLINE

Not all of them, but yeah. I like them.

(Laughs.)

Mostly.

DAVID

Mostly? Ah.

CAROLINE

I'll get your drink.

DAVID stares at her as she leaves; LILIAN enters upstage, sees DAVID and crosses to the table. LILIAN is also in her late fifties or early sixties; she is attractive, a bit heavy, very curvy, expensively dressed in a light linen suit;

she has shoulder length, dyed blonde hair, green eyes and fair skin. She smiles at DAVID and nods toward the retreating figure of CAROLINE; DAVID gets up and embraces LILIAN when she reaches his table.

LILIAN

How flattering--you invite me for a drink, and while you're waiting you ogle the waitress.

DAVID

Apparently I met her. A long time ago. And she's a fan. More than I can say for you.

LILIAN

(Sits in the chair DAVID pulls out for her.)

You could at least have the gallantry to deny it.

DAVID

How are you, Lily?

Lilian

Surprised that you called.

DAVID

And here we are. Thanks.

Lilian

For what?

DAVID

Coming to see me.

LILIAN

How's your mother?

DAVID

Furious. But she can't live by herself, so there's the usual family shit.

(Smiles.)

Jesus. I mean family business.

LILIAN

(Laughs.)

Worried about the girl from the provinces?

DAVID

You never liked my language.

LILIAN

Please. We were married, remember? And I'm still your most devoted reader. I am sorry about your mother.

DAVID

Don't be. My sister's arranged for her to be in a nice place, we can afford it, it's what happens, isn't it? This way she's independent, she'll live forever, all the women in her family do, my father's gone, so there you are. And you know that's not why I called you.

(Pause.)

I'm inept at this sort of thing.

LILIAN

This sort of thing?

DAVID

Talk. Bars. Lounges. Catching up. Trying to . . .

LILIAN

Yes?

DAVID

Flirt with my ex-wife. And with you, even with my family troubles, I get no sympathy. You're not going to give me a break, are you?

LILIAN

What did you expect?

CAROLINE comes to the table with DAVID's drink, puts it in front of him, smiles and turns to LILIAN.

CAROLINE

(To LILIAN.)

Sorry to interrupt. What can I get you?

LILIAN

Whatever he's having is fine. And a glass of water, please.

CAROLINE

Right away.

LILIAN

Thanks.

(She waits until CAROLINE is gone.)

Our daughter sends her love.

DAVID

(He pushes his glass across the table to LILIAN; she takes a sip and pushes it back to him.)

I spoke to her before I came out. I'm trying to talk her into a residency in California, but apparently it doesn't work that way. And this isn't about Liz.

LILIAN

I know. So. I'm here.

DAVID takes a pill from a bottle in his jacket pocket and washes it down with water.

LILIAN (CONT.)

Nothing changes.

DAVID

Something to make the flight more amusing. The bottle says don't mix with alcohol, thus the water.

LILIAN

Clever.

DAVID

As you say--*plus ça change*. Your disapproval of my drug abuse.

The lights change.

SCENE THREE: 1965

Lights on the bar fade; we are back in a small area of the same drive-in as SCENE ONE, only more brightly lit; loud background noise, sounds of cars, kids talking; GREG is talking to CAROLINE, dressed as she was in SCENE ONE only very neatly; they lean against a picnic table; he is seventeen or eighteen, tall, good-looking, stylish in a country-club way from the mid 1960s, dressed in khakis and a button-down madras shirt; he flirts with CAROLINE, who enjoys the attention; LINDA and SUSIE are on the other side of the table, watching and giggling as GREG puts the moves on CAROLINE.

YOUNG DAVID and BOB, slightly lesser versions of GREG, come from upstage and approach LINDA and SUSIE, who are clearly not interested, but the girls move with them to a nearby table anyway.

GREG maneuvers CAROLINE away to another table.

So. St. Luke's boy, huh.

CAROLINE

Yeah, yeah.

GREG

And I'm sure you hate it.

CAROLINE

What?

GREG

Isn't that what everybody says about school? We do.

CAROLINE

We?

GREG

CAROLINE

Hoover kids. You know I'm not a St. Luke's girl or you wouldn't be so interested, right? That's part of why you're over here, flirting with me.

(She smiles at him, moves away as he tries to put his arm around her.)

You do know Hoover. The public school?

GREG

I'm flirting with you because you look so good. I didn't know I was in enemy territory.

CAROLINE

What?

GREG

I said, I'm in enemy territory or something. And in my own drive-in. You're so suspicious. I'm just being friendly, I'm just trying to get to know you, but I can't come around, trying to be friendly without you calling the cops, or your boyfriend.

CAROLINE

Very funny.

GREG

I mean, I'm just talking to a pretty girl, right? There's no harm.

(He calls to the other boys.)

Hey! Turn the radio up. In the car.

(BOB goes to the car and cranks the radio.)

So I'm not allowed?

CAROLINE

I didn't say that. Clearly you're allowed, and like you said, this is your spot, right? I just want to know--no, wait. I want *you* to know that I realize what's going on.

GREG

Smart girl. And beautiful.

(He puts his arm around her, pulls a flask out from his back pocket and offers it to her. CAROLINE looks at it, hesitates, smiles, leans back, shakes her hair and takes a sip.)

The lights change.

SCENE FOUR: 2007

Shift back to the airport bar.

CAROLINE comes with LILIAN'S drink and water; she puts them on the table, smiles and crosses back to the bar.

LILIAN

Does this sort of thing work for you? The aging bad boy? You called me, and I came, because . . .

(Pause.)

I must be out of my mind.

DAVID

They're just pills, Lily. I'm harmless enough.

LILIAN

The thing about coming home, and I know, I know, you hate it here, but the thing is, I don't care what you've done, who you are, where you've been, you can't--to me you're still the same scared kid--

DAVID

No.

LILIAN

Yes, you are. It's why you have to get high to face me, even here in this God-awful, beige airport bar. Why you have to make fun of me, your family, everything and everybody, why you'd as soon screw the waitress as go to bed with me. Why you haven't been with anybody longer than a few months since--

(She stops, looks away from him,
breathes sharply, laughs, shakes her
head, grabs her drink and takes a long
pull at it.)

Whoa. I'm sorry. I don't know--

DAVID

It's all right.

LILIAN

No, I am, really. Jesus. Where did that . . . That will give me material for a few sessions with my shrink.

DAVID

Long drive over? Gave you time to think of--

LILIAN

I didn't say it wasn't true.

DAVID

(Laughs.)

That was interesting, though, about you or the waitress. I didn't know I had options.

LILIAN

Shut up, Davey.

DAVID

So you're not sorry.

LILIAN

What?

DAVID

About being here.

LILIAN

(Pause.)

Your lack of insight must make it hard to write.

DAVID

(Points at a speaker.)

Great music.

LILIAN

I can't stand it. But then you know that, unless you've forgotten--

DAVID

I haven't forgotten a fucking thing.

LILIAN

Right. But you're not the same arrogant boy any more.

DAVID

Why did you come? If you don't like me--

LILIAN

What do you want me to say? That I've missed you, that I was dreaming you'd call?
Curiosity isn't enough for you?

(Pause.)

I don't, actually. Like you. Much.

DAVID

Last time we talked you said it's over.

LILIAN

I what?

DAVID

Your husband. A couple of months ago. You told me you were done with him. Paul.

LILIAN

What does that . . . Wait a minute, you don't think--

DAVID

You're here.

LILIAN

--because I'm conveniently between men, and you're between women, that . . . No, no.
This--

(Waves her hands.)

--isn't some big prelude. This is what I can't stand. The drugs and your crappy music are
bad enough, but I can't stand the fake blunt pose.

(Pause.)

DAVID

Don't stop now.

LILIAN

The worst of all is that your writing's getting better while you--

DAVID

I'm not sure.

LILIAN

Of course you're not.

DAVID

I'm serious.

LILIAN

I know. But it is. You still . . . There's something, I don't know. It's missing something. But all the same. It's--

DAVID

You remember your Wordsworth?

LILIAN

What are you--

DAVID

You know my how my memory for that stuff is sometimes, but it's something like "nothing can bring back the splendor in the grass--"

LILIAN

"Though nothing can bring back the hour Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower; We will grieve not." What--

DAVID

Right. I wrote it down, actually.

(Pulls a small notebook from his jacket.)

"--though the radiance which was once so bright--"

LILIAN

You and the Romantics? This is new.

DAVID

I know, I know. But it's been going through my head the past couple of days, stumbling around town, dealing with people who insist they remember me, that they know me--

LILIAN

You must be used to it. Anyway, what does Wordsworth have to do--

DAVID

That whole thing, the past. What gets lost, what we can't ever get back. And what you said, it makes sense, that's it. Exactly what you said. That something's missing.

(Pause.)

Fuck it. I don't know. So tell me. What's wrong.

LILIAN

I don't know. I never see you, how am I supposed to say--

DAVID

C'mon. You said I'm missing something. What?

LILIAN

All right. It's empty.

(She waves at him.)

I know, you mean it to be. And--I don't like your narrators. They're sad. Mean. They don't--

DAVID

Fit.

LILIAN

Don't be clever. You asked.

(Pause.)

DAVID

Right. And?

LILIAN

You know what I'm going to say. We, your past, family, *bildungsroman*--
(Smiles.)

DAVID

Oy.

LILIAN

I have my moments. We don't exist. And don't tell me not to take it personally.

DAVID

(He motions to CAROLINE.)

Please. It's not personal, you know that. It's not. You know what--how I work, why I won't go to a shrink to keep from confusing things, how the connections aren't so simple.

CAROLINE

(Approaches the table.)

Another round?

DAVID

(Looks at LILIAN; she nods.)

Yes, please.

(Takes a pill from his bottle and washes it
down with water. To CAROLINE.)

My room upstairs . . . Can we take them with us?

CAROLINE

Certainly, sir.

DAVID

Please. Call me David.

CAROLINE

I'll be right back.

(Exits.)

DAVID

Thanks.

(To LILIAN.)

She . . .

Lilian

What?

DAVID

I told you. Apparently we've met. Long time ago. In high school, she said, only I don't remember her.

LILIAN

She was at St. Luke's?

DAVID

No. She went to Hoover. It's not like I, not like we knew that many kids from there. But before you came, she seemed to know me, and then she told me she'd read my books. It was odd, that's all.

LILIAN

Odd?

DAVID

She recognized me from book pictures, she said, and she knew me from before. But the only girls I knew in from Hoover back in high school . . .

LILIAN

What?

DAVID

Nothing.

LILIAN

Jesus. You never could help yourself. A pretty woman who reads your books? I'm surprised you didn't--

DAVID

I run from them.

LILIAN

Please.

DAVID

(CAROLINE returns with the drinks and
puts them on the table.)

I'm sorry, I'm forgetting my manners. Caroline, this is Lily, formerly my wife, but wise enough to ditch me back when. Caroline has read some of what I've written. My wife, my ex-wife, has been giving me her latest critical assessment of my work. No--to be fair, what she told me isn't new. She has long been troubled by my lack of autobiography, especially the formative years in our home town.

(To LILY.)

Is that accurate?

LILIAN

Ignore him. He's--

DAVID

I am sober enough, as Caroline can tell you, having been my waitress. She--Lily--also thinks my narrators are sad. She doesn't care for them. So I, naturally, am in search of a friend, or at least a second opinion from an intelligent, objective reader such as yourself. Are my narrators--

LILIAN

David--

DAVID

--so bad? Are they dismal?

LILIAN

For God's sake.

(To CAROLINE.)

Really, pretend he's not here. Better yet, do us all a favor, cut him off, or ask him to leave.

DAVID

Or--

LILIAN

David--

DAVID

No, she's right. I'm sorry, I've overdone it. She's right. Pretend I'm not--

CAROLINE

No, really. It's all right. I don't ever get such interesting questions, you know?

(Pause.)

I don't know, I mean, I'm not an expert or anything, so I'm not sure how to put it. O.k. Your narrators. I'm sure you mean them not to be sympathetic, but I think they're hard to take. Sometimes. Like they're . . .

DAVID

Yes? Go ahead.

CAROLINE

Bastards. For no real good reason.

LILIAN

(Lets out a short laugh.)

You asked.

DAVID

She's right, I asked. I seldom talk to readers. Other than critics. Bastards--I like that.

(Beat.)

By the way, before, when you weren't here, I hope you don't mind, I, uh, I was telling Lily that you, that we'd met before, back in high school. It's hard to believe I was ever in high school, but then . . . Well, you know how that goes.

LILIAN

Mr. Tact.

(To CAROLINE.)

He told me you recognized him. When did you--

CAROLINE

It was only the once. I remember it clearly.

(To DAVID.)

I remember that particular occasion, but you might not.

DAVID

No, I don't think I do.

DAVID looks away from CAROLINE, sits back in his chair, takes out a pill and washes it down with his drink. He stares at CAROLINE as LILIAN speaks to her.

LILIAN

You went to Hoover?

CAROLINE

Yep. And I've been around here ever since. All my life, actually. Well, I get to travel some because of the hotel, I mean I've lived in town all my life.

(She turns to DAVID, stops, looks at him for a beat, then looks back at LILIAN.)

Do you need anything else before you--

DAVID

(Looks away from CAROLINE.)

No. I . . . No. We're good.

CAROLINE

(She stares at DAVID, smiles at LILIAN.)

I'll be sure the bill gets put on your room charges.

LILIAN

Wait a second.

(She fishes in her purse for a bill.)

This should--thanks.

(She laughs.)

I try to control him, but it's not easy.

DAVID

(To LILIAN.)

I am here, and still conscious.

(To CAROLINE, waving his hand in her direction without making eye contact.)

Relatively. Thanks. Sorry about the question. I didn't mean to put you in an awkward--

CAROLINE

(Over her shoulder she turns and heads to the bar.)

Not at all.

LILIAN

(DAVID stares after CAROLINE; LILIAN watches him.)

You really are absurd. And stoned. What was all that about?

(Pause.)

David?

DAVID

All what?

LILIAN

I don't know. I thought you said you didn't know her.

DAVID

I don't. We don't know each other. You heard her, we met once, forty-something years ago. It just surprised me is all, her remembering it after all those years.

LILIAN

Maybe she's a fan. Or thinks you're attractive. Which you are, in your way.

DAVID

I don't . . .

(He turns to LILIAN.)

Maybe.

(He takes a pill from the bottle.)

LILIAN

Jesus. You'll be--

DAVID

Don't.

LILIAN

You should get up to the room fairly soon, don't you think? While we can still--

DAVID

I wish you'd stay.

(Long pause.)

LILIAN

I know.

(She picks up her glass and sips.)

DAVID

Wait. You just said "we."

LILIAN

I know.

DAVID

That's--

LILIAN

Don't look so surprised. And so smug.

DAVID

It's . . . It's great, that's all. The whole night's weird, but that's great. I don't--

LILIAN

I know. You're not good at this sort of thing.

DAVID

No. But--

LILIAN

Just be quiet.

DAVID

Not a word.

The lights fade and the music builds to cover the scene change.

SCENE FIVE: 2007

A bedroom in the airport Hilton; LILIAN is underneath a duvet, propped against long hotel pillows, sipping from a wine glass; an open bottle and some plates are on a table downstage from the bed. Music plays. DAVID enters up left, dressed in a bathrobe, crosses to the bed, gets in to LILIAN's right, kisses the back of her neck, picks up his wine glass and takes the pill bottle from the pocket of his robe.

LILIAN

I'm surprised you're still upright.

DAVID

Stuff loses its punch--part of the problem.

LILIAN

Then why take--

DAVID

It doesn't lose all its effect. I've just spent an endless couple of days with my family, to whom I'm a stone junkie--

LILIAN

Which of course you're not.

DAVID

--so I've heard enough about my drug abuse.

LILIAN

(She kisses his neck, leans against him.)

Ah, right. You're different, just pleasantly stoned, or hip, or--

DAVID

Enough.

LILIAN

No. If you're going to make an argument, make it.

DAVID

No thanks. I'm good.

LILIAN

O.k.

(She pulls him down on the bed for a long
kiss.)

Only now, in what for me can only be called the awkward aftermath, whatever it was you
were looking for isn't really there, is it? Or you wouldn't need these.

(She picks up the bottle of pills.)

DAVID

You know better than that.

LILIAN

Maybe it never was, not really.

(Pause.)

So, sadly, we won't be running off to Santa Monica, because this night can't bring it back.

DAVID

What?

LILIAN

"--the hour Of splendor in the grass," you idiot. Your brain really is addled--have another
pill, boy.

(She looks at David, shakes her head,
swallows hard.)

So tell me. Why are we here? Really?

DAVID

Isn't that obvious? I'm here with you.

LILIAN

Very gallant, but please. You write nothing about growing up here, nothing about life with
me. The waitress shakes you more than I do, and now Wordsworth? Who is she,
anyway?

DAVID

Who?

LILIAN

The waitress. What's her name?

(Closes her eyes.)

DAVID

Caroline.

LILIAN

You remembered something. She said something--you met only once, and she said she remembered the night she met you but you didn't. That was--

DAVID

What does this have to do with us?

LILIAN

I don't know.

DAVID

(He gets up, tries to pour a drink and finds the bottle is empty.)

You want more to drink?

LILIAN

Yes. No. I don't know. Maybe a Cognac.

(She gets out of bed, crosses to the table and sits next to him.)

It's late. I should go.

(He turns away from her and takes out the pill bottle.)

Davey. Don't.

DAVID

All right.

(He picks up the telephone receiver..)

Cognac you said?

LILIAN

I don't care. Sure.

DAVID

(Into the phone.)

This is Room 718. We'd like some Cognac . . .

Fine. Thanks.

(He replaces the receiver.)

It's Pasadena, by the way.

LILIAN

What?

DAVID

I live in Pasadena. Near the mountains. I haven't lived at the beach for years.

LILIAN

Pity. I picture you with palm trees. Girls in bikinis.

DAVID

Glory in the fucking flower?

LILIAN

Vulgarity doesn't work so well for you. You're far too middle-class. You forget, I know you.

DAVID

You knew me. Anyway, we're talking about high school. And even then . . .

LILIAN

What? Even then what?

DAVID

Nothing.

LILIAN grabs him; her robe falls open, he pulls her to him and fondles her, she laughs and responds for a few seconds before she pushes him away.

LILIAN

So. What didn't I know then? About you and Caroline? Let me guess.

(She stands in front of the bed, lets the robe open flirtatiously.)

What did you say before? You only knew girls from Hoover, or the only girls you knew from Hoover . . . You think we didn't know? That you guys used your preppy charms to--

DAVID

Drop it. Shut up.

LILIAN

--drive the local girls . . .

(Pause.)

What did you say?

(Long pause.)

LILIAN picks up some clothes from the bed and a chair near the bed;

DAVID sits on the bed, not looking at her; she crosses to the bathroom door holding the clothes in one hand and her robe tightly closed with the other and stares back at DAVID.

DAVID

I'm sorry.

LILIAN

This was a mistake.

DAVID

It's not--

(She opens the bathroom door.)

Don't. Please.

LILIAN

(Pulls the door shut, leans her head against it.)

What do you want me to--

The doorbell rings; DAVID jumps from the bed, pulls on a robe, crosses to the door and stands looking at it; LILIAN goes into the bathroom; DAVID opens the door and CAROLINE enters, pushing a small cart with a bottle of Cognac, carafe of water and glasses.

CAROLINE

Hello again. Where should I put this.

DAVID

Right. Just . . . Anywhere. I'll get it.

CAROLINE

(Points at the dishes on the table.)

Let me get the other dishes.

DAVID

Yeah. Thanks.

CAROLINE goes about her work as DAVID watches her. DAVID stretches, scratches his head, smiles at CAROLINE.

DAVID (CONT.)

Long night for you?

CAROLINE

Not too bad.

(Nods at the Cognac.)

Should I open--

DAVID

No. I'll wait until she's back.

CAROLINE

Fine. I hope . . .

(Speaks as she straightens up, smiling at DAVID.)

About before. Your books. I hope I didn't over do it. What I said.

DAVID

Not at all.

CAROLINE

I really do like them. Your novels. The early ones--

LILIAN comes in from the bathroom, dressed in a slip, her bathrobe pulled tightly around her.

DAVID

Thanks. And about the books. I like "bastards." That's--I'm not sure I agree, but I like it.

LILIAN

(Sits on the edge of the bed.)

He eats up anything you say to him. Well, about him.

DAVID

(Fumbles in the drawer next to the bed for his wallet.)

Thanks.

(Hands CAROLINE a bill.)

Here. Sorry. We were--

LILIAN

We've been catching up.

CAROLINE

(Takes a beat, smiles.)

Anyway, good night. Again.

LILIAN

That must have sounded idiotic.

CAROLINE

No.

LILIAN

We were talking, before--David and I were trying and we couldn't, at least I couldn't remember--

CAROLINE

(To LILIAN.)

You and I, we never met. Like I said before--

(To DAVID.)

--we only met the one time. If you try, you might remember that night. Or not.

(She crosses to the door, turns back,
stares at DAVID, smiles at LILIAN.)

Have a good night.

As CAROLINE exits, DAVID crosses to the tray with the bottle, opens it, and gestures to LILIAN, offering her a glass.

LILIAN

What . . . That was weird. What did she mean, "you might remember--"

DAVID

You want a glass?

LILIAN

A small one. I still have to drive home.

DAVID

You don't, you know. My flight doesn't leave until--

LILIAN

Did you . . . I don't think she's just a fan, it's clear she knew you. Somehow. How--

DAVID

I don't know.

(He hands her a glass of brandy, pours
one for himself, takes a sip.)

You have to go?

LILIAN

I should. Really.

The lights change.

SCENE SIX: 1965

Drive-in from SCENE ONE: Sonny's.

CAROLINE leaves the phone booth, walks from the light of the booth downstage into very dim outdoor light. She takes out a cigarette and lighter, slowly, lights up, draws the smoke into her lungs, leans against a picnic table; she is almost completely in the dark.

DAVID

(Steps into the light.)

Can I--

CAROLINE

(She jumps up, gets behind the table.)

Who the--

DAVID

(Holds his hands in front of himself.)

I'm sorry, I didn't mean to scare you. I just wondered if you wanted . . .

(Long pause; they stare at each other.)

If you needed something.

CAROLINE

Who . . .

(She stares at him.)

Were you? . . .

(She comes around the table into the light, crosses right up to him.)

You were.

DAVID

What--

CAROLINE

You were in the car. Before. You were with them, the rest of them, before. You were--

DAVID

With who?

CAROLINE

You know who. You know who I mean.

(Pause.)

You know who. You were with them, before. Don't act like you don't--

DAVID

All right. Yes.

(Pause.)

O.k. I'm sorry. I know. But . . .

CAROLINE

What?

(Pause.)

But what?

(She looks back at the phone booth.)

Shit.

(She runs back to the booth.)

Mom? . . .

No, I'm . . .

I told you, something happened . . .

I can't explain over the phone, but you have to come get me . . .

I'm not sure . . .

Hold on . . .

(DAVID has followed her and stands near the phone booth; she stares at him for a beat before talking to him.)

Do you know where--

DAVID

North Capitol between 40th and 41st. Sonny's. I can give you a ride--

CAROLINE

(Into the phone.)

Nobody . . .

I'm in the parking lot of a drive-in . . .

I told you, nobody . . .

It's . . . It's called Sonny's, on North Capitol between 40th and 41st.

(Long pause.)

I don't . . .

I'll be . . .

I'm sorry, Mommy . . .

I love you. Hurry, please.

(She hangs the phone up, steps out of the booth, crosses to the picnic table and sits.)

Damn it. Damn it, damn it, damn it.

DAVID
(Crosses to the table and reaches out to
touch her.)

Are you--

CAROLINE
(Slaps at his hand.)

--Get away

DAVID

--all right?

CAROLINE

--from me.

DAVID

I'm sorry. I only wanted to--

CAROLINE

Get away!

(She lights another cigarette, waves it at
him.)

Do you . . .

(Long pause.)

DAVID

I wasn't . . .

(Pause.)

Is there anything I can--

CAROLINE

Get away from me!

BLACKOUT

SCENE SEVEN: 2007

Lights fade up.

Hotel room. DAVID and LILIAN are in the bed, undressed; DAVID gets up, puts on a robe and goes downstage to the table to get their sniffers, hands one to LILIAN and stands next to the bed looking down at her. She pulls the duvet around her and leans against the headboard.

DAVID

You remember back in high school, good old St. Luke's, when we were kids, remember, we used to drive around, we all did, we'd go cruising, I don't remember what we called it exactly. Picking, hanging out, whatever it was. You remember?

(He takes a sip of his drink.)

LILIAN

High school? Barely. Why--

DAVID

It's a preamble. A lyrical introduction. Wasn't that what he called his?

LILIAN

He--

DAVID

Wordsworth. I . . .

(He reaches in the pocket of his robe and takes out the pill bottle.)

LILIAN

You said--

DAVID

(Washes a pill down.)

Why don't I write about my, what. Formative years? Early experiences? Lovers, disappointments, bruises, all the--

LILIAN

You knew her, didn't you. Caroline.

DAVID

I don't know. Not exactly.

LILIAN

What does that mean? Wait a minute. You said, girls from Hoover, you and your friends . . . So did you?

DAVID

Did I what?

LILIAN

You must have. Slept with her.

(Pause.)

And you forgot about it. Then you show up in her bar tonight, and can't remember. Jesus, David, even for you--

DAVID

You've got it all wrong. Anyway, it isn't like we were all friends a long time gone, right? Huh? We weren't exactly in the same crowd--

LILIAN

That's not the point.

DAVID

It is. When we were in school, in our fucking glory at St. Luke's, our parents, yours, mine, kids we knew, we, they, were powerful, right? I mean, we had money or position or both, we, they ran things and we knew it, or should have, and now you and Paul and your friends do the same thing.

LILIAN

The same thing?

DAVID

You run things. And the Carolines of the world--

LILIAN

What is this. You're not political, David, you never have been.

DAVID

Don't reject it. I just . . .

(Pause. LILIAN stretches out on the bed.)

You're right, of course, I'm not talking about politics. Not exactly.

(Reaches in his pocket for another pill.)

LILIAN

Why do you have to get so blitzed--

DAVID

(He puts the bottle back.)

Because I do. It's the last one, all right? Only . . .

LILIAN

Only what?

DAVID

(Pause.)

There's a story. About the waitress. Caroline. I did . . .

LILIAN

You did what. You fucked--

DAVID

No. I knew her. Like she said, we met, once. One night. I told you, or I started to. That was my point. The drive-ins where we hung out, where we went, sometimes, the groups of boys, guys would go to find girls. Girls from other schools, other towns. Or we'd go--

LILIAN

"We."

DAVID

To other neighborhoods, or, or, towns out in the country, you can imagine where . . . Find some place, always to look for girls. When they found a girl, some girls, a girl who was willing, I guess, I don't know, they'd get her into the car with them, then they'd drive around, maybe have something, or a lot to drink and then . . .

(Pause.)

LILIAN

They . . . You . . . Found a girl, what did you say . . . A willing girl, that's obvious enough, you all got drunk and then you . . . Had her.

DAVID

Christ. Even now we can't say it, can we?

LILIAN

You can't. I won't. Any woman knows what it was, no matter what you think. Rich boys in a gang with a girl alone in a car? It was rape, David, it was--

DAVID

I know.

CAROLINE

What was it she said? Caroline? She told you, if you tried hard you might remember that night.

And you thought, screw this, she'll never see me again, you'd never see her and even if she did you could pretend nothing ever happened. That you didn't know her? You and your friends, driving around, and you *found* her. Right?

DAVID

I didn't--

LILIAN

What?

(Long pause.)

DAVID

I didn't go.

(Pause.)

LILIAN

You said "we."

DAVID

I said "they."

LILIAN

That we would get a girl drunk and screw her--

DAVID

No. *You* said that.

LILIAN

Then who? Who exactly?

DAVID

I'm not going to tell you names. What's the difference?

LILIAN

(She gets up from the bed.)

What's the difference? You just told me they were boys I knew, men I know, drove around raping girls and you ask me what's the difference?

DAVID

You don't get it.

(He stands and grabs her; she stares at him and pulls away; he sits on the bed.)

I'm sorry.

LILIAN

How do you know what happened if you weren't there?

DAVID

I knew. People knew. They talked about it. Not . . . It happened on weekends, most weekends, and on Mondays they'd come into school and . . . There were stories. Everybody . . . Everybody knew.

LILIAN

Not everybody.

DAVID

What?

LILIAN

I didn't know.

DAVID

No.

LILIAN

We--I--we thought, I mean we knew, that, that, you went out, you chased, you met girls, we knew . . .

DAVID

You said you didn't know.

LILIAN

Not this. Not me.

LILIAN sits on bed, leans against the headboard, stares at DAVID, shakes her head. He starts to speak but she hold her hand up to stop him for a couple of beats. Finally she gets up, goes to the table and pours herself a drink. She crosses downstage and stands with her back to DAVID.

LILIAN (CONT.)

(Turns and looks at him.)

What did you do? For Christ's sake, David, what--

DAVID

I told you I didn't go with them. I--

LILIAN

I can't believe anything you say.

DAVID starts downstage toward her; she crosses around him, almost knocks him down as she grabs her purse from a chair and takes a bottle of pills from it; she takes one out and washes it down with a quick drink.

LILIAN (CONT.)

So what did she mean? Caroline?

(She gets back in bed.)

DAVID

She was . . . One night, she was in a place they--we--went. She ended up with some guys.

LILIAN

You said you met her.

DAVID

I was there.

LILIAN

I don't understand. You were, you weren't. You said you were with them, but you didn't go with them. Which is it? Tell me the truth.

DAVID finishes his drink and pours another from the bottle. LILIAN curls up against the headboard of the bed under the duvet.

LILIAN (CONT.)

That will help.

DAVID

I was there. At the place, with them, but I didn't go.

LILIAN

I don't understand.

DAVID

When she left . . . When she drove off with them, I stayed behind. I didn't go.

LILIAN

But she knew you. Tonight. She remembered you.

DAVID

Yes.

LILIAN

And you--you flirted with her tonight--

DAVID

Before I realized. If I had--God damn it, you don't get it. I . . .

(Pause.)

BLACKOUT.

SCENE EIGHT: 1965

Drive-in: Sonny's.

CAROLINE

Get away from me.

DAVID backs away from the table but doesn't leave; CAROLINE finishes her cigarette and tries unsuccessfully to light another with a match. After a few seconds DAVID comes forward, leans across the table and offers her a lighter.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

(Takes the lighter and lights up.)

What the hell do you want? Huh?

(She pulls her blouse up and hugs herself as tightly as he can.)

I told you--

DAVID

I know. Only--

CAROLINE

What? Only what? You can't do anything now, you understand? You can't . . .

Pause. Traffic sounds; faint sound of a radio station, kids from inside at the drive-in; CAROLINE fights back sobs. DAVID disappears into the black and comes back, leans across the picnic table and puts a pile of paper napkins on the table. CAROLINE takes one, turns her back to him and scrubs at herself. We hear the sound of a fist against flesh, quiet at first, then louder; CAROLINE hits herself on the thigh, hard, with her fist.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

(Whispering, crying at the same time.)

Stupid, stupid, stupid girl. Stupid, stupid, stupid girl.

After the second time she says it DAVID starts around the table toward her; CAROLINE jumps up, holds her hands in front of her and screams.

CAROLINE

No! Get away from me!

DAVID

(Quietly, backing away.)

I'm sorry. I'm sorry--I didn't mean--

CAROLINE

(With difficulty between hiccups and sobs.)

I told . . . you . . . leave me . . . alone.

(Long pause.)

Please.

DAVID

I don't think I should do that. Leave you alone.

CAROLINE

(Glares at him; beat.)

It was easy enough for you before.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE NINE: 2007

Lights fade up.

Hotel bedroom.

DAVID

I was there later.

LILIAN

What?

DAVID

I was there when she came back.

LILIAN

What happened when she--

DAVID

Nothing happened.

LILIAN

What do you mean, nothing--

DAVID

I was there, she came back--the boys she was with, the ones in the car brought her back, she got out and then they . . . Drove off. They left her. I . . . We spoke, I tried . . .

LILIAN

What?

DAVID

I asked if I could do anything, but she told me to leave her alone. After a while, in a few minutes, somebody came and got her. And that was it

LILIAN

And nobody said anything.

(Pause.)

She never said anything--you never--

DAVID

No. I don't know if she did.

LILIAN

The girls never said anything? None of them went to police, or . . .

DAVID

There were stories, but I don't know.

LILIAN

What does that mean.

DAVID

People said one of the girls, that some kid's family paid her off, some kids said there was a lot of money. Who knows. I mean, nothing was going to happen anyway.

LILIAN

Why?

DAVID

How could they? These guys weren't, they aren't . . . They're hard to get at. One of their fathers was a judge, one was a bank president, you know the types.

LILIAN

(Pause.)

And you knew.

DAVID

I knew. Lots of us knew. They weren't so different, really, from the rest of us, it's not like they were marked. We'd . . . I'd see them on the weekends in their cars. The cars were part of it, you know, how they attracted the--

LILIAN

Don't be--

DAVID

--girls from--

LILIAN

--snide. Just . . .

DAVID

They were poor, they were . . . You know. The girls. Why the girls didn't . . . Couldn't say anything. And why we just let it slide. I don't think most of us thought . . . These guys were ours, our own, rich, powerful, this was how the world is.

LILIAN

Is that what you thought?

DAVID

Before that night, I don't know. I don't know what I thought. Before that night they were just stories.

LILIAN

So it was fine for you to fuck whoever you wanted, right.

(She gets up, closes her robe around her,
stands in the middle of the room.)

It's Medieval, you know that? All because you could have them, hell, you could have any of us, we could all be had or tricked, you could fuck--

DAVID

You said fuck.

LILIAN

I told you. Every woman knows what it is.

DAVID

I always wanted out, you know that. I thought I could leave all this, lose the past, but no matter what, I see a girl at a drive-in, at Sonny's. I know. No, I knew--those guys with her, if she said no, it didn't matter. I knew. I couldn't have stopped them, I didn't try, I didn't say anything, I just watched them drive off. And I was there when she came back.

(Pause.)

Since then--

LILIAN

"We will grieve not"--that doesn't quite read right, not when you're making yourself into some kind of . . . As if your suffering were the point.

DAVID

What?

LILIAN

We know . . . We all know what it is. But I tried, for some reason even tonight I tried to find some way out of this by pretending that you were just boys, just . . .

LILIAN gets up from the bed, wrapped tightly in her robe, crosses to the bathroom door and stops, her back to DAVID. She opens the door the bathroom; she is crying.

DAVID

What did she say? "Bastards." That was--

LILIAN

I've got to go home. You don't . . . Any woman my age who looks at me . . . I thought I could understand, tell myself it's the world, money, class, I had a category, you know. But this.

DAVID

And I can't understand--

LILIAN

No, you can't. You left. You left me, you left town, you left . . . You left. I know, you had reasons, but I didn't leave, and what you left me with, what I will always have . . .

(She leans her head against the door.)

I really need to go home. I've had too much to drink.

DAVID

(He tries to embrace her from behind.)

I'm sorry--

LILIAN

(Pushes him away.)

No, David.

DAVID stumbles back and sits on the edge of the bed; LILIAN turns, stares at him, hesitates, closes the bathroom door, crosses and sits next to him, pulling her robe tightly closed around her.

LILIAN (CONT.)

You're leaving today?

DAVID

Later this morning. Yeah. I should come back more often, I know. My mother. And Liz. Though who knows where she'll be.

LILIAN

She loves seeing you. You--

DAVID

I know.

LILIAN

--should try to sleep.

DAVID

I know this isn't the time to bring it up, but I'd really like to see you. More. Soon. Maybe not here, but--

LILIAN

You can't ask me now--

DAVID

I know. But maybe . . . You and Liz, or just you, can come out to California. Or something. I don't know.

LILIAN

It's a bad idea, Davey.

DAVID

I know I'm a wreck, but there's something left. With us. There has to be, right? You know that--

LILIAN

(Gets up and puts her hand on DAVID's head.)

Goodbye, David.

DAVID

Wait a minute. I'm too stoned, but I have the book somewhere.
(He digs out a poetry anthology from a carry-on.)

LILIAN

Don't.

DAVID

(Fumbles in the book, looks, closes it.)

No.

LILIAN

"We will grieve not--" It's a good thought, isn't it. But it has nothing to do with us now.

LILIAN shuts the bathroom door behind her.
DAVID stands down center looking at the book as the lights fade.

BLACKOUT.

ACT TWO

SCENE TEN: 1965

Drive-in: Sonny's.

Car headlights sweep the stage; the sound of the car as it comes to a stop; a door opens and shuts.

MALE VOICE (OFF STAGE)

Caroline? You there?

CAROLINE comes out from the shadows upstage left into the car's light; DAVID is in the shadows all the way upstage right.

CAROLINE

Uncle Kenny?

MALE VOICE

Let me--

CAROLINE

No--stay there. I'm coming. Please--stay there. Wait.
(CAROLINE crosses out of the light and pulls at her clothes..)

MALE VOICE

Caroline? You need any--

CAROLINE

No. Wait. It's all right.

(Crosses back into the light. Sound of a car door opening.)

Mom? You there? Oh, God.

(Stares in DAVID's direction.)

I'm coming.

CAROLINE runs downstage; DAVID comes into the light.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE ELEVEN: 2007

Lights up.

Hotel room: very little light. CAROLINE, dressed as she was in the bar, enters from the hall, framed in the bright light of the doorway for a moment; she closes the door, looks down at DAVID; he sleeps soundly, alone in the bed.

CAROLINE kicks off her shoes near the door, crosses downstage and draws a curtain; late night light comes in the room. She sees the bottle of Cognac and snifters on the table; crosses to the table, puts her purse down on the floor underneath the table, takes an unused water glass, pours herself a drink from the bottle, sniffs it, and drinks slowly, her back to the bed.

DAVID stirs in the bed behind her; CAROLINE turns and sits in an armchair facing the bed, finds a docking station on a bedside table, plugs in her iPod, and plays music--not too loud, but loud enough to wake DAVID. He rolls over, sits up against the headboard of the bed, rubs his eyes, and stares into the dark room.

DAVID

What? Who . . .

(He switches on a lamp on the bedside table, blinks, sees CAROLINE.)

Who . . .

(Pause.)

What . . . I didn't ask--I didn't send for anything, did I? Why are you in my--

CAROLINE

Room? No, you didn't send for me.

(She shows him an electronic keycard.)

I let myself in. Think of this as a special service, reserved for our celebrity clients.

DAVID

Look, I didn't . . .

(Pause.)

I don't want to cause you any trouble, I just want to--

CAROLINE

Sleep? That would be nice.

DAVID rubs his face, wipes his mouth, stares at CAROLINE, looks away from her and reaches down to the floor beside the bed for his robe.

CAROLINE watches him, smiles, sips her drink.

DAVID pulls on his robe, puts on hotel slippers, his back to CAROLINE, and turns to face her.

DAVID

I really don't want any trouble.

(Looks at the clock on the desk.)

I'm leaving in a few hours, and I need to get some rest before my flight.

CAROLINE

And you're thinking with any luck, you can get rid of me and we'll never see each other again.

(DAVID holds his drink up to her.)

Or, maybe at most we'll nod to each other at a signing, or a lecture, or a reading. Is that it?

DAVID

I'm going to call the desk.

CAROLINE

Go ahead. Won't do you much good.

DAVID looks at the phone, then back at CAROLINE.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

I do work here. Anyway, what would you tell them? How do you explain a second woman in your room late at night?

DAVID

(Pause.)

What do you want?

CAROLINE

When did you remember me, Mr. Summers? Oh, right, you said I should call you David. So . . . When did it dawn on you exactly who I am? When it was we'd met? I mean, it has been some time, but if I wanted to, I could give you the exact number of years, months, days, hours, minutes, down pretty close to the fucking second when you and your friends saw me, when your gang--when you drove into that place and picked me out.

DAVID

That's not . . .

CAROLINE

What? That's not what? The way you remember it? How you'd put it?

DAVID

What do you want me to say. I can't--I don't know what you want from me, after all this time. And while I'm sure you don't believe it, even if I didn't recognize you at first, I've never forgotten for one moment. About that night.

DAVID gets up, crosses to the table, picks up the bottle and a snifter and pours himself a drink. He takes a pill from the bottle in his robe and washes it down.

CAROLINE

She's right. Your ex--Lily, is it? You take too many of those, Mr. Summers. Sorry, David.

DAVID

How do you--

CAROLINE

You're surprised that I was listening to you in the bar? I've known you for forty years, David, so I was paying attention all night.

DAVID

I think you should leave before--

CAROLINE

Before what?

(Pause.)

You're right, by the way. I don't believe you.

DAVID

(Sits on the bed, as far from CAROLINE as possible.)

No. I suppose not.

(Pause.)

Look, that was forty years ago. I'm . . . I don't know what I can say or do, what you want, but breaking in here--

CAROLINE

--Is nothing compared to what you and your friends did to me. And in some ways you were the . . .

CAROLINE gets up, looks at her glass, drains it, looks at it again, pulls back her arm as if to throw it, makes a fast, hard throwing motion in DAVID's direction but holds onto the glass. DAVID ducks, drops his glass on the floor, recovers, picks up the glass; the two of them stare at each other, standing no more than two or three feet apart.

DAVID

Jesus. Fuck. Look, we--my wife and I, my ex-wife and I, we were talking about all this, just before you came in. Tonight. And now--

CAROLINE

You think I--

DAVID

--It was the first time I ever said anything, the first time I ever--

CAROLINE

Is that supposed to mean something to me?

DAVID

That's not what I mean. I just mean . . . I don't know why I told you that.

CAROLINE

Do you remember what I said to you that night?

DAVID

Every word.

CAROLINE

What?

DAVID

(Takes a deep breath, then speaks.)

You told me I was with them, in the car, before you went with them, you told me not to “act like you don’t”--you didn’t finish the sentence, but I suppose you meant I shouldn’t act like I wasn’t as guilty as the other--

CAROLINE

--The others.

DAVID

You told me to get away from you, leave you alone, there was nothing I could do for you, say to you. Then--

CAROLINE

(Low and bitter.)

Shut up. Not another word, not another fucking word.

CAROLINE moves quickly to the hall door, pulls it open, slams it shut, turns back and stares at DAVID. He sits at the table, pours a drink, looks at it without drinking. She crosses down to the table, grabs the bottle, pours herself a drink, and sits on the bed.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

That’s some trick. You have some kind of photographic thing?

DAVID

No. I just--I remember what people say sometimes. I have scenes printed in my head. I told you--I remember that night.

CAROLINE

Fuck you.

DAVID

I don’t mean--

CAROLINE

--You were the first person in the world who saw me. After. Do you have any idea how you feel about somebody who sees you after . . . After the thing that changed everything--and then he gets to go on with his life? You get to be who you are, like this never happened, like it--like *I* didn’t really exist.

(Pause.)

Your friends drive away, and you--

DAVID

It wasn't like that. I didn't know . . . I didn't know what to do.

CAROLINE

Oh, right. I mean, they were your friends, right, their parents knew your parents, so it would have been awkward, wouldn't it, to cause trouble, or go to the cops--

DAVID

Is that what you wanted? What you want now?

CAROLINE

What do you think? I don't--before tonight, before you walked into the bar, you were a fragment, you were, I don't know, scenery. But think for a second, now we have this chance to reflect. How things would have been different.

DAVID

I don't--

CAROLINE

How do you think that night played out, David?

(She finishes her drink, undoes a button on her blouse, crosses to him and leans over him seductively.)

You're the genius--

DAVID

I wouldn't presume--

CAROLINE

That's weak. You presume things about people all the time. It's your job, right? Truth is I haven't been any more or less fucked up than most, really. I don't have an easy time trusting men, but my therapist says I'm making progress, so good news. You see, I'm not so much crazy as furious, and I know exactly why I'm furious.

(She buttons her blouse.)

Only you--you I can't fit into all this, not quite so neat.

DAVID

No.

CAROLINE

Why?

DAVID

Why what.

CAROLINE

Why did you stay behind that night?

DAVID

I don't know.

CAROLINE

You were there. With them.

DAVID

Only that once. I don't know why even. No--that's not true.

(Pause.)

Fuck. It's--they were cool, it was high school, so when they asked if I wanted to come with them that night I said yes.

Lights fade. Scene change.

SCENE TWELVE: 1965

Drive-in: Sonny's.

Picnic table in a corner of the lot; DAVID, BOB, LINDA and SUSIE are sitting, the girls on one side of the table, the boys standing and moving around on the other side, talking; music from a car radio; traffic sounds.

LINDA
What's it like?

BOB
What?

SUSIE
"What," he says. You know what.

LINDA
Your fancy school.

BOB
I don't know. Boring. Same as any school I imagine.

LINDA
I like your blazers. They're cool.

BOB
(Moves next to LINDA, sits, puts his arm around her.)
Yeah?

DAVID moves slightly downstage from them, just out of the light above the table, looking toward another table where GREG and CAROLINE are sitting. He strains to hear them.

GREG
--I'm just talking to a pretty girl, right? There's no harm.
(Turns toward the others.)
Hey! Turn the radio up. In the car.

BOB takes his arm from around LINDA, moves slightly offstage and cranks the radio.

BOB

(Coming back onstage, to the GIRLS.)

Great song, huh? So, you girls want to get out of here? Come with us and--

SUSIE

And what?

BOB

(Produces a bottle from behind his back.)

Oh, I don't know.

LINDA

He doesn't know.

LINDA laughs, looks at SUSIE, shakes her head, stands up and begins to dance in place to the song. [Note: LINDA can sing along depending on the music choice and actor.]
DAVID strains to listen to GREG and CAROLINE over the music.

SUSIE

What's in the bottle?

BOB

Does it matter?

SUSIE

"Does it matter"? Oh, no, that's so cool, he's got booze. So let's drive off, get drunk with the cool guys in the blazers, and then--

(She comes up behind DAVID and puts her arms around his waist.)

--who knows what?

(Turns to BOB.)

That what you're thinking? Pretty much?

Before BOB can answer, GREG and CAROLINE come into the light, GREG's arm loosely slung around CAROLINE's shoulder, holding his flask in his hand.

BOB

You guys ready to split?

RANDY enters from down left, carrying a bag of food and sipping on a Coke through a straw. GREG steers CAROLINE toward him; SUSIE crosses down next to DAVID; the two of them watch as GREG reaches in the bag RANDY holds, takes out a french and feeds it to CAROLINE. SUSIE looks down, turns around, crosses back to LINDA, who is starting to make out with BOB, and gets her attention. GREG takes out his flask, takes a swig, gives one to RANDY, and then he and CAROLINE cross into the darkness.

SUSIE takes LINDA by the arm.

BOB

(Still sitting at the table, sipping from his open bottle.)

Hey. We're gonna' split soon, so don't go too far.

LINDA breaks from SUSIE, who has been whispering to her.

LINDA

Don't worry, slick.

SUSIE crosses down to CAROLINE and taps her on the shoulder from behind. GREG turns, smiles at her, offers her the flask.

GREG

The more the merrier, bab--

LINDA

Caroline, we need to get going. You need--

GREG

Wait a minute, she's with me. Right?

GREG Moves his arm around down around CAROLINE's waist and pulls her to him; she pushes his hand down, laughs, and takes the flask out of his hand.

BOB comes out from behind the table and puts arms around SUSIE from behind. She slaps his hands down and moves away quickly. As the girls talk the boys gather in a group a few steps away from them, passing BOB's bottle around.

LINDA

Caroline--

CAROLINE

What?

SUSIE

(Crosses to her, takes the flask from her hand.)

What are you doing? You don't--

CAROLINE

It's about time I did, don't you think?

(To LINDA.)

That's what you're always--

SUSIE

Come on. We should get.

CAROLINE takes the flask back, has another sip from it, looks at SUSIE, then LINDA.

CAROLINE

I'm staying.

LINDA

With some guy you don't know? And three of his friends? By yourself? What're you, nuts?

CAROLINE

So stay with if you're so worried.

LINDA

(Nods at DAVID.)

With the stiff? Or the creep with the car? No thanks.

CAROLINE

Suit yourself.

LINDA

C'mon. What're you doing? Great, great--you're drunk. You don't know this guy. You don't know his friends, you don't know what they're doing.

SUSIE

Or you do. St. Lukes guys and us?

CAROLINE

Oh, come on.

(Nods at GREG.)

I've handled worse than him. And he's cute. Let's--

LINDA

No way. I'm outta' here.

(To SUSIE.)

Drive me home?

SUSIE

Caroline, you can't--

CAROLINE

I'll be all right.

(To GREG.)

Hey. My friends are worried. But I told them you're safe.

(She crosses to him, hands him the flask,
puts her arms around his waist.)

I'm gonna' hang around a while, and then you'll see me home like the gentleman you are, right?

LINDA

(To GREG.)

You even know her name?

GREG

What do you think I am? Caroline's safe with me. Anyway, you should hang around. We're all nice--

SUSIE

(Points to the phone booth.)

Call if you need to. We're gone. See you tomorrow.

SUSIE and LINDA exit down left, stopping at the edge of the stage to look back at their friend as she and the boys move to the table. We hear their car start, see its headlights sweep the stage, hear it pull away from Sonny's.

Once their car is gone, RANDY leaves the table and exits down left, sipping on his Coke.
Sound of a car starting, and a car horn.

BLACKOUT.

SCENE THIRTEEN: 2007

Lights fade up.

Hotel bedroom. Faint light coming through the narrow opening of the drapes on the windows.

CAROLINE sits at the table with her glass; DAVID stands near the bed. He puts his glass down on the bedside table, pulls his robe tight around him, turns his back to her, scratches his head. He sits on the bed, looks at CAROLINE.

DAVID

Why. I stayed because . . . I don't know why. I'd never been with them before, and I was never with them after that night. Not that it makes any difference. I know that.

CAROLINE sits completely still, stares at her glass. DAVID stares at her from behind for several seconds.

DAVID (CONT.)

I still don't know what you want from me. What you expect, why you came in here--

CAROLINE

I don't know.

(She laughs without looking at him.)

I really don't know.

DAVID

I'm not trying to be--

CAROLINE

I meant what I said. Earlier. Before tonight you didn't matter, you just *were*, you weren't more than some minor piece, one bit I had to forget. I don't know, maybe more in some way because you're somebody now. Not that your friends aren't big shots around here.

DAVID

They're not my friends. I--

CAROLINE

--No?

DAVID

--haven't seen them since--I haven't spoken to them about that night, ever, and I haven't seen them since St. Luke's, forty years ago.

CAROLINE

Yeah, well, lucky you. I know, right, from the bio, your dust jackets--you got out. Me, I've lived here all my life, I told you and--

(Waves her hand at him.)

DAVID

Lily.

CAROLINE

Your ex. Right. I told her, I've been here all my life. I dreamed about it too, before, about getting away from here, thought about a scholarship, maybe, California, back East. I was a good student, you know? I went to pretty crappy schools, but there was a chance. Nothing like you and your friends--

(Holds up her hand.)

--I know, I know. You kids from St. Lukes, whoever. You don't get it, do you? To me you're a type, just like them, whether you like it or not. Whether you got away from here or not it doesn't mean anything to me. You have, you always had position, prestige, schools, everything it takes to lord it over people like me. What the fuck, call it what it is. Money. It adds up to status, but take away the money and what do you have, huh?

DAVID

I don't know.

CAROLINE

You want some coffee? I need some coffee.

(She gets up and moves to the opposite side of the bed to pick up the phone.)

DAVID

I thought--

CAROLINE

I can get a passkey, but I can't control the fucking phone.

(Dials.)

Hey, Carlos. Can you send up some coffee? . . .

Right, Summers, 718. . . .

Thanks.

(Smiles at DAVID as she returns to the table and sits.)

Couple of minutes. And it will be fresh. Decent coffee, too.

DAVID

I still don't get it. Look, I understand why you'd be . . . Why you'd resent, even hate me, I understand that. But what do you want from me?

CAROLINE

What do I *want* from you? Maybe--maybe you can understand something, maybe feel something like what I've felt since that night you and your friends raped me.

DAVID

You know I didn't--

CAROLINE

You didn't get in the car--

DAVID

I didn't--

CAROLINE

Big fucking deal. You were there.

DAVID

I didn't know.

CAROLINE

You knew. You knew what they were going to do and you didn't do anything, you didn't say anything. You watched them drive off, you stood there, you did that while they took me in the car to fuck me. That's what you were thinking. Well that's not . . .

(Long pause.)

Don't tell me--

DAVID

All right. I don't--

CAROLINE

What? You don't what?

DAVID

I know I fucked up. I know I should have done something, even if there wasn't anything I could have done to stop it.

CAROLINE

No?

DAVID

They wouldn't have listened. They didn't--

CAROLINE

No. They didn't listen.

DAVID

Oh, Jesus. I'm sorry, I--

CAROLINE

They didn't listen.

(Pause.)

That night, after my mother and my uncle came and got me, we went to the police. Did you know that?

DAVID

I never heard--

CAROLINE

No, you didn't. Nobody did. I told my mother exactly what happened to me, and I told my uncle, and they were amazing, they were wonderful. Something else you don't know, nobody knows--they took me to the police. That night, right then. *Your* neighborhood police, not mine. That was a mistake, but we thought that's what we should do, so we went and I told them, I told the police everything

DAVID

But--

CAROLINE

You never heard. Right. Yeah, well, I talked for hours, every detail I could think of, all of it, it seemed like forever, no advocate, no counselor, nothing, just me and Mom and some male cops. And pretty soon the Chief of Police and after that the D.A.

DAVID

Jesus.

CAROLINE

You can imagine the rest. The longer we were there, the worse their questions got, and the clearer it was to us that something bad was going on. They kept asking me how much I'd had to drink, how long I'd known the boys, did I know all of them, how well did I know them, had I gone out with them before. Finally somebody--a lawyer, I don't remember who, exactly, said it outright. These were good boys from good families, and the story just didn't sound right, was I sure about what happened, after all, we'd all been drinking, wasn't it more likely . . .

(Pause.)

When he said that my mother lost it, took me on up out of there, and my uncle drove us home and that was it.

The doorbell rings; DAVID jumps at the sound, CAROLINE calmly gets up and goes to the hall door, opens it, speaks quietly to somebody in the hall for a few seconds, laughs, and comes back with a tray with the coffee. She sets the tray down on the table; DAVID pours himself a cup and spikes it with Cognac. He holds the bottle up.

DAVID

You want some?

CAROLINE

(She shakes her head.)

Your friends--

(Holds her hand up.)

--The other three. Somebody, we never found out who, hired a lawyer, and we got a couple of letters. Did we know we could be sued, these were serious allegations, what sort of proof was there, why had we left the police station that night.

(CAROLINE laughs.)

My mother showed my uncle one of the letters where somebody offered us money, a lot of money, actually, not because anybody had done anything wrong, mind you. My father had been dead for years, so his brother, Uncle Kenny, he was . . . He had guns, he wasn't a big hunter or anything but he knew his way around a rifle. I was--I was so stupid, so ignorant, I called him that night and said something about not shooting anybody, but he told me our people didn't go in for that kind of thing, never had. That--that was exactly, the exact moment, what do they call it, the clear instant or something like that when I knew that I had to let it go. When my uncle said . . . All the years of psychiatry and drugs and the rest of that shit helped, but after I heard my uncle explain what the right thing to do was and how our people knew to do it, it was in my head what I had to do.

DAVID

So you--

CAROLINE

No. Just because I know what I have to do doesn't mean I can do it. I couldn't. I can't. My mother was tough as nails, she cleaned houses, worked in stores, those kinds of jobs all her life and never once resented it, but she also never let anybody talk down to her, let alone look down on her for anything. And this . . . This kind of hatred followed her right down to her grave. It just eats at you. No matter what you try.

CAROLINE reaches under the table for her purse, puts it on the table, unzips it and puts one hand inside. She smiles at DAVID.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

(Exaggerates her accent.)

You were raised 'round here, right? You understand how we're devoted to our Bibles and our guns like the man said, so you if I was to reach in here and, you know--

DAVID watches with no expression as CAROLINE pulls an iPod out, gets up, crosses to a bureau with a dock and speaks to him with her back turned.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

You weren't even a little nervous?

DAVID

It doesn't fit.

CAROLINE

No?

(She accidentally turns the music on very loudly, turns it down. [See playlist.] Turns back to DAVID.)

You don't mind.

DAVID

No. I like it. After my scare.

(He lean back against the headboard and sips at his drink.)

Can I--You mind if I ask you something?

CAROLINE

Why did I break in your room. Jesus.

DAVID

No. You've got every right to do whatever you want here, I understand. That's not it. I can begin to get how much you hate us. And I'm--you're clearly very bright, strong, you have a lot--

CAROLINE

Get to the point.

DAVID

Why did you stay here? Why not leave?

CAROLINE

(Pause.)

Other than the fact that I plain don't have the money, and nobody in my family has the money? I mean nothing. There were times, you have no idea, seeing the two motherfuckers who stayed, who are still here, still--forty years I've seen them, and you, all of you who still run things, like what you did never happened, like I don't exist. There were time I'd have given anything to get out. But what could I do. Then I finally figured it out. There was something I could do. I could stay here.

DAVID

I don't see how--

CAROLINE

This is my country, and as much as I hate it sometimes, as plain and ugly as it can be, it's as much mine as yours. We've been here, my family, God knows how long we've been here. You look in any graveyard around here and you see our names, look in county books, registers, even county names, and there we are. Damned if I was going to let you take that from me. Besides, I like to think the times I do see them--you--you can't look at me and pretend nothing ever happened.

DAVID

Does it work? Over the years, has it--

CAROLINE

For years a couple of them--Greg is gone, he only comes for visits, but the other two, Randy and Bob--

DAVID

Jesus. I'd forgotten--

CAROLINE

Yeah, well. For a long time they'd cross the street, look away, that kind of thing, not that I saw them much. I didn't want to, I didn't follow them or try to find them or anything. Now when it happens if they notice me they ignore me, act like they have no idea who I am. Greg especially when he flies through--like you, you know? With his wife, or wives, I guess, and his perfect kids. If I ever shoot one of you--

DAVID

That's not your character.

CAROLINE

This isn't a story, asshole.

DAVID

That's not what I meant. It was a compliment--

CAROLINE

Maybe.

DAVID

Maybe. And maybe I'm not who you think I am, I'm not even who you think I was, not that I wasn't wrong, I know that, and I know I don't see us or you or he world like you do. I can't. I'm sorry, God knows I'm sorry, and there's nothing I can do to make what happened right, but--

CAROLINE

No, no, no, you don't get off so easy--

DAVID

That's not what I want. Only it's not true there's nothing I can do.

CAROLINE

What the fuck can you do? What can you possibly--

DAVID

Tell your story.

CAROLINE

What are you talking about?

DAVID

It's the one benefit of having a name. Being who I am, like it or not. If I call people, some people, they'll take the call.

CAROLINE

Then what?

DAVID

I told you, I've got a name, I can--

CAROLINE

What, tell everybody my--some exposé? What would that even do?

DAVID

I don't know.

CAROLINE

You don't get it--you open this up, you write about this and it's not just me, it's other women they did this to. And it's me, yeah, it's my name, it's my family, it's . . .

(Pause.)

We . . . We're here, we're used to being here and staying quiet and managing to . . .

CAROLINE begins to cry, listens to the song on the sound system, walks around the room, stands with her back to DAVID for a couple of beats, hits herself, makes herself face him.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

God damn you, I hate this. How can this still make me--

DAVID gets up and moves toward her.
CAROLINE holds her hands up and pushes him back violently.

DAVID

I'm sorry. I didn't--

CAROLINE

(Sits on the edge of the bed.)

It's all right. I don't have any complexes, you know. But I'm tired and you--

(She laughs.)

We've done that before, haven't we. Fuck! Maybe I need one of those pills you keep taking. Smooth me out.

DAVID

I don't think so. Though if you want--

CAROLINE

(Takes a deep breath.)

Maybe I was wrong back then. Maybe I should have talked to you that night. Only how the hell could you expect me to? You know? It wasn't your fault, it wasn't my fault. Except that I was an idiot--

DAVID

No--

CAROLINE

--and you let them--

DAVID

--I know.

CAROLINE

--and that never, never changes. So no matter what I do now--come in here, not come in here, shoot you, let you write about it, fuck you up, tell you to go to hell, nothing, nothing, nothing, nothing changes. Maybe that's what I wanted you to know, maybe that's what I thought you might be able to understand. Not some story you could write, some hole in your own life you could fill in. I know you don't mean it that way, but fuck that, it's just another way of ripping me off. This isn't the missing story from your youth that Lily was talking about, David. You understand?

Before DAVID can answer the phone rings; he looks at CAROLINE; she smiles, nods at him; he picks up the receiver.

DAVID

Yes? . . .

(Holds the phone toward CAROLINE.)

He wants to talk to you.

CAROLINE

(Into the phone.)

Hey. . . .

Who. . . .

No, that's all right. We're done. . . .

I'll tell you sometime. Maybe. . . .

Some old business, you know. Hey, Carlos. . . .

Thanks.

(Hangs up the phone. To DAVID.)

You have a visitor.

DAVID

Lily?

CAROLINE

How--

DAVID

Who else. We have some stuff . . .

CAROLINE

Right. Maybe I should stick around and set her straight, huh?

(CAROLINE goes over to the iPod dock,
shuts off the music and puts her iPod in
her purse.)

Maybe not. She'll be weirded out enough getting stopped at the desk, not to mention--
(The doorbell rings.)
--passing in the night.

DAVID goes to the door and lets LILY into the room. She sees CAROLINE, looks at DAVID, starts to go back into the hall but is blocked by DAVID.

CAROLINE (CONT.)

(Crosses past LILY and stops at the door
to the hall.)

Believe me, he's innocent. Well, in a manner of speaking. He'll tell you--I broke into his room without an invite.

LILIAN

Why?

CAROLINE

Ancient history.

(To DAVID.)

That you're leaving alone, right?

CAROLINE exits as LILY drops onto the bed and the lights fade.

SCENE FOURTEEN: 2007

Lights up.

Hotel bedroom: daylight. DAVID sits at the table, looking at an open copy of a poetry anthology. His suitcase lies on the bed.

DAVID

(Reads in a steady voice, clearly
accustomed to reading to a room.)

“What though the radiance which was once so bright
Be now forever taken from my sight,
 Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendor in the grass, of glory in the flower;
 We will grieve not, rather find
 Strength in what remains behind;
 In the primal sympathy
 Which having been must ever be;
 In the soothing thoughts that spring
 Out of human suffering;
 In the faith that looks through death,
In years that bring the philosophic mind.”

DAVID closes the book, takes a pill from a bottle on the table, washes it down with a sip of water, looks at the book. Sounds from the bathroom.

DAVID (CONT.)

“... thoughts that spring / Out of human suffering.” I don’t know.

He takes a pen and small notebook from his jacket pocket and starts writing in it.

Lights fade.

SCENE FIFTEEN: 1965

Lights up. Sonny's.

CAROLINE and GREG are just visible at one of the tables; he pulls her close to him, whispers in her ear, kisses her neck, they make out, she clearly less eagerly than he. A car engine revs, the horn sounds. The music from the car radio is barely audible.

RANDY (OFF STAGE)

Hey!

CAROLINE gets up, moves around the table out of the light; GREG follows her, puts his arms around her from behind, pulling her hard against him; she laughs, pulls his arms down, squirms; he grabs her hands and pins them against her body, walking her down across the stage toward the sounds from the car.

BOB (OFF STAGE)

Are we doing this or not?

CAROLINE turns around and tries to speak; GREG kisses her, pushes her backward toward the edge of the stage.

CAROLINE

No--I don't--

GREG and CAROLINE exit down right; the stage goes black except for car headlights.

After the blackout there is loud music from the car radio; the car engine guns and the sound of tires spinning on pavement.

BLACKOUT. CURTAIN.