

Caskets from Costco

A full-length play

By Joe Correll

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Caskets from Costco

Lights up on a time worn Flower Shop, somewhere in New England. The pickings are slim, but there are a few arrangements about, and there is a refrigerator about half full with flowers in various states, from fresh, to nearly dead. There is a counter with a display of small cards for flower arrangements. Stacks of unorganized papers sit on the counter. There is also a spinning greeting card display with very old cards, and it is not particularly well stocked. There are religious artifacts decorating the place, in particular a dour statue of St. Theresa looks down on the whole place, judging everyone. The paint peels, the water drips, and it is quite clear this place has seen better days.

Paula enters, she is a working class woman in her mid thirties. She's pretty, but a bit worn and beat down, and is gruff and to the point, like most of the people in this town. Paula goes to the fridge, and looks at the flowers inside.

PAULA

(yelling off)

These tulips don't look so good, Ma.

From offstage we hear her mother's voice.

PATTY

(off)

What's wrong with them?

PAULA

They're all wilted.

Patty enters. Patty is in her seventies, but she gets around and is energetic and bossy.

She wears some sort of "house coat", not something particularly suitable for being in charge of a flower shop that is actually open for business.

PATTY

Let me see.

A beat.

PATTY (CONT'D)

They're not so bad. I think I can bring them back.

PAULA

They don't look too good.

PATTY

I'll put 'em in a little holy water, that usually perks 'em right up.

PAULA

I don't think the magic water is bringin' 'em back.

PATTY

We'll see. Hey- will you please clean out the bottom of the cooler? Something spilled. It's all sticky in there.

PAULA

Why, every time something is sticky or slimy I'm the one who has to clean it? Why do I have to do all the dirty work?

PATTY

Also I saw a rat under the greeting card display, can you put down some poison?

PAULA

I don't even work here. You should get some help, Ma.

PATTY

I don't wanna have strangers working in here. It's a family business.

PAULA

I meant help as in "mental".

PATTY

And when you're done with that, put some salt down out front. Somebody's gonna slip on that patch of ice and sue us.

PAULA

Who's gonna sue us?

PATTY

Everyone. There's a lot of strangers in the neighborhood these days. I don't even know people's names anymore.

PAULA

It's always been a crappy neighborhood. When I was little it was still crappy.

PATTY

But at least you knew your crappy neighbors.

PAULA

I think running this place by yourself is too much for you Ma. It's not healthy. Dad's out of the picture now, and I got my own stuff going on.

PATTY

What do you have going on?

PAULA

I'm getting a promotion.

PATTY

A promotion?

PAULA

Yeah.

PATTY

What kinda promotion?

PAULA

I don't know, yet.

PATTY

Is it a good promotion?

PAULA

I don't know yet, Ma. They just said a promotion.

PATTY

At Jiffy Lube? What are you going to be doing?

PAULA

I said, I dunno. Probably running the office.

PATTY

Why do you need to do that? We've got a perfectly good business going on right here, thanks to good 'ole St. Theresa.

She goes over and says a little prayer to the St Theresa statue.

PAULA

You really think Theresa's gonna bring in the business? Cause lately I think she's been slackin' off.

PATTY

Of course she brings in business. She's the Patron St. of Florists.

PAULA

There's a Patron St. Of Florists? Why don't I know this?

PATTY

There's a patron saint for just about everything.

PAULA

She looks so pissed.

PATTY

She is.

PAULA

Is that why you've had her up there all these years? Is there a Patron saint of rat extermination?

PATTY

Of course there is a patron saint of rat extermination. It's St. Patrick.

A beat. Paula looks confused.

PATTY (CONT'D)

(explaining)

He drove the rats out of Ireland?

PAULA

You mean the snakes.

PATTY

Snakes? No, I don't think so. I'm pretty sure it was rats. You remember- he drove out the rats and then he drowned all of those protestant children in the ocean because their parents refused to convert.

PAULA

I think you're getting your stories mixed up.

PATTY

I know my Saints, Paula.

PAULA

I think you're confusing St. Patrick with the Pied Piper.

PATTY
(irritated, changing the
subject)

Why do you wanna work at Jiffy Lube anyhow? What do they have going on there that's so great?

PAULA
I like it at Jiffy Lube, Ma.

PATTY
What do you like so much about it?

PAULA
You're not there.

PATTY
You know, they put Dominic's auto shop out of business. Everybody stopped going there when Jiffy Lube came to town.

PAULA
We don't even fix cars at Jiffy Lube.

PATTY
What do you do with 'em?

PAULA
(after a beat)
We...uh...lube them.

PATTY
I don't like that word.

PAULA
You know, it's not Jiffy Lube's fault. People stopped goin' to Dominic's after he pushed his wife outta that window.

PATTY
Dom didn't kill Nicki. Thats just what the papers said. She fell out that window.

PAULA
She didn't fall out of her bedroom window by accident.

PATTY
Well, either way. He's out of business. And we're one of the last survivors Paula, and I could really use some help around here.

PAULA
There are no customers anymore, Ma. It's dead. Just like these tulips.

PATTY

Don't you worry your crazy little head about it. Paul will come help out.

A beat.

PATTY (CONT'D)

(reiterating)

He said he was coming back.

PAULA

He's not coming back. He hasn't come back in three years. Stop saying that.

PATTY

You know, If your brother was here, he would kill the rats for me.

PAULA

Well, he's not here.

PATTY

Please just clean out the fridge and put some poison down. And salt the walk. You know my back is shot. It would really help me out, Paula.

PAULA

I don't wanna work here. You're going to have to close this place down if you don't get some extra help.

PATTY

Paula, why are you arguing with me about this? I don't wanna fight with you. I will never understand how you and your brother turned out so different. You're twins for God's sake. What happened to you? I'm not gonna be around to take care of you forever, ya know.

PAULA

You don't take care of me.

PATTY

I cook for you. I pay the bills. I do the laundry.

PAULA

I give you money for that.

PATTY

What are you going to do when I'm gone? Have you thought about that?

PAULA

Only every day.

Patty sorts through a stack of old invoices, and crams them in to various drawers during this dialogue.

PATTY

That reminds me. Did you get that information I asked for?

PAULA

About the thing for Dad?

PATTY

Yes, the thing. What else have I asked you to do?

PAULA

Clean the fridge. Kill the rats. Balance the books. Mop the floor. Order inventory.

She continues.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Put up flyers. Drum up business. Drive the Van. Flirt with the Wedding Halls and the Funeral homes.

PATTY

What did you find out?

PAULA

It's gonna be at least six thousand.

PATTY

Dollars??!

PAULA

At least.

PATTY

Six thousand? Dollars? For a funeral? I thought Pierce Brothers said they'd give us a good deal on this thing? Did you go talk to Danny Pierce?

PAULA

Yes, I talked to him. And he's giving us a good deal. And six thousand dollars is the deal he's giving us.

PATTY

What kind of deal is six thousand dollars!? All the favors I've done for that family over the years. Last minute arrangements. Special orders. That doesn't sound like much of a deal.

PAULA

It's 30% off.

PATTY

That's 30% off? Six thousand dollars is 30% off?!? I had no idea it was so high.

PAULA

It's expensive to die.

PATTY

Six thousand dollars?

PAULA

That's cheap! It was going to be only 20% off, but I got Danny to come down to 30% off.

PATTY

How'd you do that?

PAULA

I said if they did Dad's funeral at a big discount, they could do yours too.

PATTY

You should have had Paul call Danny. Those two were always very close.

PAULA

Uh. Yeah. I guess you could put it that way. Paul's not gonna call Danny. Not ever. And six thousand dollars is the best we're gonna do.

PATTY

That includes a casket? A nice casket?

PAULA

No, it don't include the casket. That's just for the service and burial.

PATTY

Well, how much is a casket?

PAULA

The cheapest I could find is about a thousand bucks.

PATTY

A thousand dollars? For a box? That's so much!

PAULA

It's really not. It's the cheapest I could find.

PATTY

Where?

PAULA

What?

PATTY

Who has this budget busting thousand dollar casket for sale?

PAULA

Costco.

PATTY

Costco has caskets now?

PAULA

Yeah. We get cash back on it too.

PATTY

I don't know. Your father wouldn't like a casket from Costco.

PAULA

So we won't tell him. What has he got against Costco?

PATTY

They've been trying to put us out of business for thirty years Paula. They've been out to get us ever since they first moved in and tried to take over the neighborhood.

PAULA

You think Costco is out to get you?

PATTY

They're out to get all of us, Paula. All of us! Al's butcher closed five years ago. Rita's bakery went belly up two years ago. You know very well you can't get a decent cannoli anymore around here.

PAULA

Rita sold it for a lot of money to that marijuana dispensary. I think she supplies them with pot brownies now, and she's doin' really well.

Patty reacts in disgust.

PATTY

And poor Jim and Judy and their darling little shoe shop.

PAULA

People don't need cobblers anymore, Ma! When your shoes wear out, you just go out and buy a new pair. You don't repair 'em.

PATTY

Yes, you go buy a new pair. At Costco. And they last about a month.

PAULA

I think they last longer than a month.

PATTY

And you know, they sell those cheap-o flower arrangements, that die in a day, and people are falling for it. They hire illegals for cheap labor, and then they sell cheap flowers, full of chemicals to keep them "fresh", and that's putting us out of business.

She takes an aspergillum (look it up) and dispenses holy water all over the flowers.

PATTY (CONT'D)

(a prayer)

O, Little Therese of the Child Jesus, please pick for me a rose from the heavenly gardens and send it to me as a message of love.

PAULA

Costco, doesn't hire illegals, Ma.

PATTY

Illegals is all anyone will hire these days.

PAULA

That's not true.

PATTY

Lisa Cardenelli told me they won't even hire white people anymore.

PAULA

Lisa Cardenelli is a racist bitch.

PATTY

Is it racist to just want a fair shot at a job? Costco and all those big other stores like it are what's wrong with this entire country.

PAULA

They're a good company, Ma.

PATTY

Phhht. Giant buckets of candy, and suddenly everyone's got diabetes.

PAULA

My friend Dennis works there and he says it's a great job.

PATTY

You don't have any friends.

PAULA

Well, I already bought the casket, so Dad's just gonna have to live with it.

PATTY

You bought it without asking? I would like to have seen it first. Why did you buy it without showing it to me first?

PAULA

It was on sale, and it was the floor model.

PATTY

Can you return it?

PAULA

I dunno. Probably. But I might lose my deposit or have to pay a restocking fee.

PATTY

Okay. Let me think about it...It does sound like a good deal...It better be nice. I don't wanna be embarrassed.

PAULA

It's actually really nice.

PATTY

It just seems like a lot of money for something that's going to be buried in the ground.

Patty pulls out a notepad, ready for information.

PATTY (CONT'D)

So, what is the whole funeral going to cost? Wake, service, burial... Bottom line?

PAULA

I'm thinking around ten grand, minimum.

She throws the notepad at Paula's face.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Hey! Don't shoot the messenger!

PATTY

Ten Grand? To be dead? That seems really high. Ten grand, to be dead. Your father's head would explode if he knew about this.

PAULA

Okay. What about cremation?

PATTY

What about it?

PAULA

It's an option.

PATTY
Not for Catholics it isn't.

PAULA
They changed that. It's okay now.

PATTY
Nobody sent me the memo.

PAULA
It's something to consider.

PATTY
Your father wouldn't like it.

PAULA
Why not?

PATTY
In a little jar for all of eternity?

A beat.

PATTY (CONT'D)
He's claustrophobic. You know that.

PAULA
It's much cheaper.

PATTY
He wouldn't like it.

PAULA
Okay then, I don't know what to tell you, Ma.

PATTY
Call your brother, ask him if he knows someone who can get us
a better deal.

PAULA
He's like two thousand miles away. He doesn't know anyone
here anymore.

PATTY
If he were here, he'd know what to do.

PAULA
Well, he's not here. I am.

PATTY
I am painfully aware of the current situation.

Door opens. Dorothy Dombrowski
enters.

She is bundled up like she's come from the tundra. She shakes the ice and snow from her boots.

DOROTHY

Hello Patty. Paula. How ya doin'?

Dorothy opens her coat, and we can tell she's more well off than Patty and Paula. In this town Dorothy would be considered "fancy"

PATTY

Dorothy! See- I knew that St. Therese would send us a customer. You have no faith Paula.

PAULA

Well, that's true.

DOROTHY

Hey, Patty, you better put some salt down on the walk or somebody's gonna do a slip and sue.

PATTY

That's what I just told Paula. She doesn't believe me.

DOROTHY

Did you know that Sam and Kathleen just got sued by a whole family of Chinese?

PAULA

The Chinese slipped on their walk?

DOROTHY

No. Kathleen hit them with her Rav Four. But they knew very well that they weren't supposed to be in that crosswalk.

PATTY

I hope she was okay!

DOROTHY

Kathleen was fine. A little shaken up, but the car got a dented fender. And it was brand new, just off the lot.

PATTY

(to Paula)

Oh, what a shame. She could have taken it to Dominic's if he was still in business.

Patty gives Paula an "I told you so" look.

DOROTHY

They're sayin' snow again tonight. Lots of it this time.

PATTY

I got your arrangement ready for you in back, Dorothy. Paula, go get Dorothy's arrangement. It's the one with the Hydrangeas.

PAULA

There's only one arrangement back there.

Paula goes to the back to get the arrangement.

DOROTHY

I didn't see you at Mass this weekend?

PATTY

I went Saturday night instead.

DOROTHY

Oh fancy! The flowers aren't as nice now that you and Frank aren't doing them.

PATTY

That's nice of you to say.

DOROTHY

Nobody hardly is goin' to church anymore. It's real sad. Marybeth says offerings are way down too. And then of course, all the lawsuits.

PATTY

Such a shame.

DOROTHY

Whatever happened to forgiveness? Anyhow, the parish just can't afford nice flowers anymore. They're getting them from somewhere, but they're just not as nice as what you and Frank would do.

PATTY

They're from Costco I bet.

DOROTHY

Such a shame. How are you Patty? Is business still slow? Not too bad I hope. The weather's been just terrible lately.

PATTY

We're gettin' by.

DOROTHY

Paula's helpin' you out I hope?

PATTY

She tries, but she doesn't know the business.

DOROTHY

Have you heard from Paulie?

PATTY

He sent me a nice email last week.

DOROTHY

That's nice. Well, at least you've got Paula for now.

PATTY

Paula is not like Paul. Not like him at all. They are twins, but they are not alike at all.

DOROTHY

Paul was always the smart one.

PATTY

I forgot you taught those two- what grade was that?

DOROTHY

Sixth.

PATTY

That's right.

DOROTHY

Paula always struggled. She just wasn't that bright. But I'm sure she has her own talents.

PATTY

Eh. She's good at some things.

DOROTHY

Like what?

PATTY

She's good at killing rats when she decides to commit to it.

Paula comes out with an
arrangement of Hydrangeas.

PAULA

Here you go.

DOROTHY

It's so beautiful. You always do such a nice job Patty.

PATTY

Thank you.

PAULA

I did these.

DOROTHY

Oh?...Very nice, Paula. Thank you.

PAULA

Thanks. Don't let your dogs or cats eat any of the leaves. They're toxic. It could kill them.

DOROTHY

Hydrangeas are poisonous?

PAULA

If a dog eats the blossoms or leaves, yeah, it could kill them, so-

DOROTHY

No worries. I don't have any pets anymore. I'm getting too old for that. I wouldn't want my pets outliving me. Then there'd be no one to take care of them. Nothing worse than being old, and no one around to take care of you. Right Patty?

Paula rolls her eyes.

PAULA

Who are the flowers for?

DOROTHY

They're for my sunroom.

PATTY

Not for an occasion?

DOROTHY

I just like flowers. And you've always been such a good friend. I know you need the business.

PATTY

And that reminds me... I wanted to ask you, what are you doing a week from Saturday?

DOROTHY

I don't know. Why, what did you have in mind?

PATTY

I'm thinking of having Frank's funeral that day.

DOROTHY

(very dramatic)

What?! Oh my God! No! Patty! I didn't know Frank had passed?! So soon!?? I thought he had a lot more time.

I knew he wasn't well, but I didn't know things were so serious. Why didn't you let me know?

PATTY

No, no. Relax. He didn't pass. He's upstairs. He's fine... For now.

DOROTHY

But you said you're having a funeral? Is he very...um... close?

PATTY

He could be. I don't really know. I just want to get it out of the way before the really bad weather comes. And I thought, if I did it now, it might be nice because maybe he could actually come to it.

DOROTHY

To his own funeral? What would he think of that?

PATTY

He won't think nothing. He has dementia. I could have a funeral for him every day and he wouldn't know the difference.

PAULA

(interrupting)

Um- I thought you were just researching, Ma- I didn't know you were actually booking Dad's funeral.

PATTY

I'm just putting feelers out to see when's a good time for everyone.

PAULA

You don't book funerals before someone is actually dead.

PATTY

People do it all the time.

PAULA

They don't.

PATTY

You're not helping, Paula!

PAULA

What do you mean I'm not helping?? I've been running all over town for you. I went to Pierce Brothers for you. I went casket shopping at Costco.

DOROTHY

Costco does funerals now? They won't be happy until they steal everyone's business, will they?

PATTY

That's what I've been saying for years.

DOROTHY

Al and Elaine's Drugstore is shutting down, you know. They just can't compete with the Costco prices.

PATTY

They're cheap, but not that cheap. I still think a thousand dollars is a lot of money for a wooden container.

Paula has become completely frustrated with her mother.

PAULA

(matter-of-fact)

Then why don't we just put him in a cardboard box?

PATTY

What?

Paula grabs a cardboard box and begins assembling it. She's getting herself pissed off and worked up.

PAULA

What do you think, Ma? Would Dad fit in here? You think this would work? Would this be cheap enough for you? If we get some really strong tape, I'll bet he won't fall out.

PATTY

I'm not putting your father in a cardboard box.

PAULA

Why not? It's cheap! Should we go upstairs and put him in here right now? I think it'll be easier to get him in there while he's in a cooperative mood.

PATTY

Don't be ridiculous.

PAULA

What's so ridiculous? You said you wanted cheap.

PATTY

He won't fit in that little carton.

Dorothy has become uncomfortable and excuses herself.

DOROTHY

Uh, well, I better get going. Maybe I'll stop by tomorrow? I have some of your vases that have been collecting, and I wondered if you'd like them back to reuse?

PATTY

Every little bit helps!

DOROTHY

I'll bring them by tomorrow afternoon after my dentist appointment. What time do you close?

PATTY

Oh don't worry about that. You know there's a key to the shop inside that planter by the front door, it's under a rock in there. You can drop things off anytime you like.

DOROTHY

Well, I have a lot of boxes. It'll take a couple of trips.

PATTY

Come by anytime. It's sweet of you to offer.

DOROTHY

Thank you for the arrangement. It's really beautiful.

PATTY

You're welcome.

PAULA

You're welcome.

DOROTHY

I know it's going to brighten up my mornings.

Dorothy and Patty hug. Dorothy goes.

PAULA

I don't know why you like her, Ma. She's trouble.

PATTY

She's always been a great customer.

PAULA

I don't trust her. And you shouldn't be tellin' customers where we keep the spare keys.

PATTY

She's not just a customer. She's a good friend.

PAULA

Well, I don't like her.

PATTY

You made that pretty obvious. You were very rude. I don't think the visits to the psychiatrists are working Paula. You're wasting your money.

PAULA

What?

PATTY

Every time someone's over here that you don't like, you have to make a scene. That was embarrassing Paula. Very embarrassing.

PAULA

Oh, did I embarrass you?

PATTY

Don't worry. I'm used to it.

PAULA

You're used to it?

PATTY

Yes. You're just a very sad person Paula.

PAULA

I'm sad??!

PATTY

You had the same opportunities as your brother, and you squandered them. You missed your chances and now you blame it on me.

PAULA

How can you say that? Paul isn't even here! He left.

PATTY

Well, I wish he was here. I wish he was here instead of you. He's helpful and he's kind. And he's smart and he used his gifts.

PAULA

He's a fucking asshole.

PATTY

Don't say things like that! You should not talk about your brother like that.

PAULA

He has not been here to see us in three years. Even when Dad got sick. He's an asshole, Ma.

PATTY

I wish he were here. He would know what to do. My back is giving out, the shop is failing, we're going to have to have a crappy super saver discount funeral for your father. Things are not looking good for us Paula.

Patty starts shoving and cramming the various papers and invoices into drawers.

PAULA

Do you really think Paul would be able to fix everything if he were here?

PATTY

I do. Yes I do.

PAULA

Would you like me to get him to come home right now?

PATTY

You can't get him to come home.

PAULA

Oh, I'll bet I can.

PATTY

Why would he listen to you? He doesn't even like you.

PAULA

Really. I'll tell you what. I bet I can get Paul here tomorrow. Would that make you happy?

PATTY

That would make me very happy. But you can't do it. He's not just gonna hop on a plane and fly all the way here because you tell him to.

PAULA

Wanna bet that I can get him here tomorrow?

PATTY

You want me to bet you?? What do you want to bet?

PAULA

If I win, I never have to work in this store again. You can't ask me to do nothin'...

PATTY

And if I win?

PAULA

I will quit Jiffy Lube and come to work here full time.

PATTY

I don't want you working here, if you don't want to work here.

PAULA

Is it a bet?

PATTY

Sure, if you say so. I'll tell you what- just clean the fridge and put down the poison. That would really help me out. Also please change the water on the roses...And salt the walk before somebody skids by. It's gonna snow tonight.

PAULA

You better go pick out something nice to wear because my brother is going to be here tomorrow, and I won't be setting foot in this shop ever again.

PATTY

So dramatic! Yeah, yeah. I'll believe it when I see it.

Patty goes. Paula takes a moment to collect herself. Then she goes to the back, and comes out with a bunch of Hydrangeas. She deliberately starts picking off the buds from the Hydrangeas. She picks up an empty vase and puts the flowers in it. Then she grabs the rat poison and pours some in with the Hydrangea flowers. She opens a can of soda and pours it into the vase. She swirls it around and shakes it up. She looks at it. She drinks it. She immediately gags and spits it out.

PAULA

Yuck!...Fuck it.

She goes to her purse. She pulls out some prescription bottles. She empties the pills into her hands and takes several handfuls of pills. She washes it down with the rest of the soda. She sits on a stool and waits a beat. She looks at her watch impatiently. She waits for something to happen. She looks over at St Theresa.

PAULA (CONT'D)
 What're you lookin' at, bitch?

She waits.

PAULA (CONT'D)
 Ugh. How long is this friggin' gonna take?!

She looks at her watch again.

BLACKOUT.

ACT 1 SCENE 2

A few days later. Some of the flowers have changed but not much else. Paul comes out from the back. He is in his mid thirties and dressed a little hipper than Patty or Paula. He yells out to the back room

PAUL
 (yelling off)
 These carnations look wilted, Ma!

PATTY
 (off)
 Hold on. I'll be right there.

Patty comes out from the back room.

PATTY (CONT'D)
 You're right, Paulie. Throw 'em in the trash.

She looks at the display in the fridge.

PATTY (CONT'D)
 What happened to all the yellow roses? We had dozens of yellow roses in there yesterday didn't we?

A beat.

PATTY (CONT'D)
 (smiling)
 Did you sell 'em?

PAUL
 Ma. You know where the roses went.

A beat.

PATTY
Where'd they go?

PAUL
You know where they went.

PATTY
Where'd they go?

PAUL
Ma...Paula's funeral, remember?

PATTY
Oh yeah. That. I'm getting as bad as your father. That was last week, wasn't it? You should order more yellow roses.

PAUL
I'll order them, but remember I'm not staying.

PATTY
We'll see.

PAUL
Are you okay?

PATTY
(matter-of fact)
Yeah, I'm okay. Why? Are you okay?

PAUL
No, I'm not okay...I still don't understand what happened.

PATTY
It runs in the family, you know that.

PAUL
What?

PATTY
Your Uncle Eddie, remember?

PAUL
I forgot about that. I was little. I don't even know exactly what happened.

PATTY
He blew his brains out after Midnight Mass. Merry Christmas to us.

PAUL
At church?

PATTY

No, in your old room. At least he was considerate doing it at Christmas cause he knew everyone would already be in town for his service.

PAUL

Was Paula acting differently? Was she going through a hard time? I thought she was getting better.

PATTY

Frankly, I don't understand it. She had a lot to live for. She just got a promotion at Jiffy Lube. Did you order the Gerbera Daisies for Mrs. Sullivan?

PAUL

I did. They're coming this afternoon.

PATTY

Thank you. It's so nice that your back.

PAUL

I can't stay. I'm not staying. I told you that.

PATTY

Will you change the water on the roses for me?

PAUL

Sure, not a problem...She never said anything? Gave any signs that she was unhappy?

PATTY

She was always unhappy. She was a very unhappy girl.

PAUL

She was?

PATTY

I think when you two were in my belly, you got all the happiness and she got all the not-so-happiness.

PAUL

I don't know what that means.

PATTY

Did you know her casket came from Costco?

PAUL

What?

PATTY

It was apparently a pretty good deal. I'll have to admit it looked very comfortable.

PAUL

It did.

PATTY

Funny thing is, she had just bought it for your Dad, next thing you know, boom...she's in it her own self.

PAUL

What are you talking about?

PATTY

We were planning your father's funeral, and she bought the casket from Costco, and she also got a 30% discount from Danny over at Pierce Brothers on the funeral. It all sort of just "worked out" for her.

PAUL

Have you been drinking?

PATTY

A little. Well, we're going to need to get another casket for your Dad. Will you go pick one out?

PAUL

You want me to go shopping for a casket, for Dad? As far as I can tell was looking a little bit better this morning.

PATTY

But don't get it from Costco, he wouldn't like that. See if you can get something a little nicer. Go talk to Danny down at Pierce Brothers. See what he can do. He always liked you.

PAUL

I have to go home, Ma.

PATTY

You are home.

PAUL

I don't live here anymore.

PATTY

Don't forget to change the water on the roses.

She goes. Paul grabs a bottle of water. He takes a prescription bottle out from his pocket and takes a pill. He breathes in deeply trying to relax.

Suddenly, Paula steps out of the refrigerator.

PAULA

Those aren't good for you. I thought you weren't going to take them anymore?!

PAUL

Jesus Christ! Where did you come from?

PAULA

The fridge. You better do what she says and change the water on those roses. They're not lookin' so good.

PAUL

Why are you here?

PAULA

Why are YOU here?

PAUL

Huh?

PAULA

Why are ANY of us here?

A beat.

PAULA (CONT'D)

(she laughs)

I'm just messin' with you, you big turd. You know I'm not really here right?

PAUL

I know. I figured. I'm tired. Can you please go away?

PAULA

You're *tired*?? Try being dead for a few days. It's actually very relaxing. Like a long holiday weekend in Mazatlan. Except that your dead.

PAUL

Go away!

PAULA

Is that any way to talk to your dead twin sister? Aren't you happy to see me? I'm happy to see you!

PAUL

I'd be happier if you were alive. I'm really pissed at you, Paula.

PAULA

Why? What do you care? You haven't been back here since Obama was President.

PAUL

That was no reason for you to... to...

PAULA

Check out? Buy the farm? Take a permanent vacation? Eat the Arby's?

PAUL

Call it whatever you want. It was a really stupid, selfish thing to do.

PAULA

How else was I going to get you to come home? Ma said she wanted you home, and this seemed like a really good option to get you here quick.

PAUL

You killed yourself so that I would come home?

PAULA

Well, it sounds like a bad idea when you say it.

PAUL

It was a bad a idea. A really fuckin' bad idea Paula.

PAULA

Okay, okay. Don't get all Joe Pesci on me...

PAUL

Huh??

Awkward pause.

PAULA

(sweetly)

So... what's new?

PAUL

What do you mean what's new?

PAULA

What's going on with you? There's not much goin' on with me, as you can see, so I thought I'd ask, "what's up with you"?

PAUL

Are you seriously trying to make small talk with me?

PAULA

No? Okay, what do you want to talk about?

PAUL

I don't want to talk about anything. I want you to leave me alone. Are you here just to make me feel bad?

PAULA

Au contraire, mon frere!

PAUL

Since when do you speak French?

PAULA

I don't- but you do. At least a few phrases from High School.

PAUL

Oh my God, I have to stop taking those pills.

PAULA

(proudly)

Did you know my Casket was from Costco?

PAUL

What?

PAULA

Yeah, I bought it for Dad- but then next thing you know- Boom...I'm in it. How's that for irony?

PAUL

I know. Ma told me what happened. She blames everything on chain stores.

Paul goes to the refrigerator, takes out some flowers and begins trimming the stems, while Paula hovers over him.

PAULA

You have to be more gentle with those or you'll kill them.

A beat.

PAULA (CONT'D)

You know, like me.

PAUL

Are you going to help me with these?

PAULA

I can't help you with that.

PAUL

Why not?

PAULA

My fingers are imaginary.

PAUL

Then take your imaginary self and go.

PAULA

You know, she's plannin' on having Dad's funeral before he's even dead.

PAUL

She mentioned it.

PAULA

It's like tryin' to baptize the baby while you're rolling on the condom.

PAUL

Like what?

PAULA

You think that's a good idea?

PAUL

No. It's very weird.

PAULA

It would save you a trip back here though. Think of the savings. That could be a lot of Netflix.

PAUL

I don't have Netflix.

PAULA

I know you don't. But you've been thinking about getting it. Be nice to just get the funeral all outta the way though right?

PAUL

I don't want to get it...Dad... "out of the way".

Paula looks at her reflection in the fridge.

PAULA

I wish you hadn't let her bury me in this pant suit. She knows I hate it, and yet this's what she buries me in. I never wore it; not once. And now I'm wearin' it for fuckin' ever.

PAUL

What's wrong with it?

PAULA

You don't think it makes my whole body look lumpy?

PAUL

People weren't looking at your clothes at the wake.

PAULA
How'd I look?

PAUL
What?

PAULA
How'd I look at my wake?

PAUL
I'm gonna say, "not good", Paula.

PAULA
She bought this ugly green abomination for me you know. I asked her to take it back but she said she lost the receipt. But she didn't lose the receipt. She never throws anything away. She may have misplaced the receipt, but she didn't lose it.

PAUL
You should have just worn it and she would have shut up about it. And then she probably wouldn't have buried you in it.

PAULA
You wouldn't consider diggin' me up and gettin' me some new duds would ya?

PAUL
That would work?

PAULA
I don't know Paulie, I'm no expert at this yet, but it seems logical.

PAUL
I'm not digging you up just to change your outfit.

PAULA
I'd do it for you. I'd do anything for you, you know that. I'd grant you any wish you wanted Paulie. I'm like your genie of the lamp, except without any powers, cause I'm dead, and only in your head.

PAUL
I don't like this at all. This medication is giving me a very bad reaction today.

PAULA
(sweetly)
So... hows life in New Mexico?

PAUL
You insist on small talk? Okay. Fine...It's fine.

PAULA

It is not. I know your dumb newspaper closed two years ago.

PAUL

How do you know that? I never said anything about that.

PAULA

I know everything you know. In fact I ONLY know things you know.

PAUL

I really don't have time to talk to you about this.

PAULA

Where you gotta be?

PAUL

Look, can you please just go away and leave me alone?

Outside the shop window there is a man who walks up and pauses before he enters. He watches Paul for a moment. Then he enters the shop. This is Danny Pierce, nice looking mid thirties.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(not noticing Danny entering)

I don't want to talk to you. You killed yourself and left me to deal with this mess. It's not right Paula. So can you please go back into the refrigerator or wherever you came from? Thank you, and goodbye.

PAULA

You've got company.

Long awkward pause between Paul and Danny.

DANNY

Hi.

PAUL

Hi.

DANNY

Who were you talking to?

PAUL

Huh?

DANNY

I saw you talking to yourself. I wondered if you were on the phone. But I don't see a piece in your ear- so...

PAUL

No, no. I was talking to myself.

DANNY

I see. You do that often?

PAULA

He's still really cute Paul.

PAUL

Shut up.

DANNY

What?

PAUL

Not you. Sorry, I don't know why I said that.

DANNY

I was so sorry to hear about Paula. I always liked her.

PAULA

Awwwww. How sweet. He gave me thirty percent off my funeral, you know.

PAUL

Sorry we didn't come to your family for the casket, but she had already picked one out for my dad from Costco, and she had already bought it, and it was going to be a huge hassle to try and return it, because I guess there's some laws or something about returning coffins. And I was going to call the manager and complain, but that just seemed like a lot of work that was probably going to go nowhere. Anyhow. Sorry.

DANNY

I wasn't thinking about that.

PAUL

It was on some kind of really great sale, but, you know, next time... My Dad may need one soon.

DANNY

Costco has really good deals. Frankly we can't beat 'em.

PAUL

My mother thinks they're diabolical and they're running all the small businesses out of town.

DANNY

Everyone just buys online now anyhow. Did you know you can get caskets from Amazon too?

PAUL

Caskets from Amazon? No, I don't like how that sounds.

DANNY

Honestly, I think the funeral business is on the way out.

PAUL

People will always die.

DANNY

They will, but folks aren't into the ceremony so much anymore. They don't want a fancy funeral where they're put out on display. They want to be turned into an Eco-friendly tree, or crushed and turned into a diamond or some shit like that.

PAUL

You can do that?

DANNY

We're starting to look into offering stuff like that as an alternative to traditional burial.

PAUL

Sounds very interesting.

DANNY

(joking)

I'll send you some brochures... How long are you here for?

PAUL

I'm going back to Albuquerque as soon as we can get everything sorted out.

DANNY

Sorry to hear that. I thought you might stay on to help your Mom and Dad out.

PAUL

Well, I can't.

DANNY

I see.

Awkward silence.

DANNY (CONT'D)

You're looking good.

Paula sits up suddenly
interested.

PAULA
(to Paul, excited)
Ohhhhh!Flirt with him!

PAUL
Thank you.

Awkward pause.

PAULA
You're supposed to say "you do too", idiot.

PAUL
You do too.

DANNY
Thanks. So, I know this is awkward with what just happened
with your sister, and totally inappropriate...but...uh, you
know, but-

PAUL
Nothing's awkward. Everything's just great. I'm fine. Don't
worry about it. I never really liked Paula anyway.

PAULA
Hey!

DANNY
What?

PAUL
I'm kidding. Of course, I'm kidding.

PAULA
Are you?

DANNY
When things calm down- wanna catch up? Get a drink? Some food
maybe?

PAUL
I can't. I have to help my Mom get everything in order. And
then I'm headed right back to Albuquerque.

PAULA
Loser! Have a drink with him!

DANNY
Okay, well maybe next time you're in town.

PAUL
Sure.

Patty enters from the back with
an arrangement of roses.

PATTY

Paulie, did you change the water on these roses? Oh Hi Danny!

PAULA

Well, this should be interesting.

DANNY

Hi Mrs. O'Conner.

PATTY

You need an arrangement? Who's dead?

DANNY

No, no one died, that I know of today anyways.

PATTY

Danny, please tell your parents, I'm really sorry about the whole Costco thing. It wasn't my idea. Paula went out and bought that cheap casket all on her own. I hope your parents weren't too offended.

DANNY

My Dad was fine. My Mom will get over it.

PATTY

What brings you by?

DANNY

I was hoping to catch up with Paul, but I know you've got a lot to deal with, so I don't-

PATTY

(cutting him off)

I don't got a lot to deal with. Paul go out and visit with your friend.

PAUL

I have to change the water on the roses.

PATTY

I'll do that. You two boys go have fun.

PAUL

I thought you needed help?

PATTY

You should catch up with all of your friends here. It's been a long time.

PAUL

Ma, I don't feel like havin' fun right now.

PAULA

Go out, and fool around with him, you stupid turd!

DANNY

That's okay, I better go anyhow.

Danny starts to leave but he is interrupted by Dorothy as she enters the shop carrying a box with vases, almost bumping into Danny.

PATTY

Dorothy! What a surprise.

DANNY

Excuse me. Sorry.

Dorothy hands Danny the box because it is heavy. Danny is stuck holding the box.

DOROTHY

Patty. So sorry. I'm bringing some of the vases by that I collected.

PATTY

Aren't you sweet.

DOROTHY

How're you holdin' up?

PATTY

As good as could be expected I guess.

DOROTHY

It was a lovely service. I really liked what she was wearing.

PAULA

This is bullshit.

PATTY

Thank you, I picked that out. I bought it for her for Christmas...she never wore it, and I know she didn't like it, and now she's wearing it forever. So I guess the joke's on her.

PAULA

I knew it!

DOROTHY

Hi Paul- Danny.

DANNY

Hi Mrs. Dombrowski.

PATTY

Danny put that box on the floor over there.

Danny sets the box of vases down.

DOROTHY

Your Dad is looking good, Danny. But I didn't see your Mom at the wake?

DANNY

She wasn't feeling too well, I guess.

DOROTHY

I hope she wasn't mad about the Costco coffin thing. Because you know it wasn't Patty's idea to get the casket from that place. Paula did that all on her own. So please don't blame Patty.

PAULA

What's everybody goin' on about?? It was a great deal!

DANNY

There's no hard feelings. Frankly, it's really hard to beat their prices and the quality is actually really good.

She dismisses him.

DOROTHY

There's a whole bunch of different size vases in there, Patty. I got so many now. I hope you can reuse them.

PATTY

You're so thoughtful. Thank you, every bit helps. Let me just put these roses in the back. I'll be right out.

Patty takes the vase with the roses and goes to the back.

DOROTHY

I didn't see you at the funeral either, Danny.

DANNY

I was there. I stayed in the back. I didn't want to make people uncomfortable.

DOROTHY

No one would be uncomfortable. The Church is very accepting now, as long as you don't act on your inclinations.

DANNY

I didn't mean because I'm gay. I meant because of the lawsuit.

DOROTHY

(turning sour)

Oh that. I see... yes...so sad.

Turns to Paul.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Paul, did you know, the Bishop sent Father Martin off to live on some farm upstate?

PAULA

Isn't that what they say when they're really putting a dog to sleep?

PAUL

No. I hadn't heard that.

DOROTHY

Oh yes. Poor man.

DANNY

He should be in jail.

DOROTHY

You know Danny, I think Father Martin liked you because you didn't hang out with the other regular boys. Isn't it possible he was just being friendly, and you took it the wrong way?

DANNY

No.

PAUL

Okay, well, let's not get into all of that right now. That's the past, right?

DANNY

Sure. If you say so. It kind of made my life suck, but ok.

PAUL

No one is saying it's not a big deal.

DANNY

She is.

DOROTHY

I just think it's possible you interpreted what happened in the wrong way.

DANNY

Uh- I'm gonna go.

PAUL

I'll call you. Maybe we CAN grab something to eat or something before I head back.

DANNY

Sure. G'night Paul.

Danny goes.

PAUL

Night.

Patty returns from the back.

PATTY

Did Danny leave? I thought you two were going to go out and have some fun.

PAUL

Not tonight. But maybe we'll catch up before I go home.

PATTY

You are home.

PAUL

To Albuquerque.

She dismisses him.

PATTY

Dorothy, anything else we can do for you today?

DOROTHY

You know what? Do you have any Gerbera Daisies? I'll take half a dozen if you have some on hand.

PATTY

Did the daisies come in Paul? You were going to order some.

PAUL

I'm sorry. I forgot.

DOROTHY

Oh, no worries. You've had a lot on your mind. I'll take whatever you have.

PATTY

How about some roses, and they're on the house.

DOROTHY

Oh you don't need to do that.

PATTY

Not a problem. I'll put them in one of the vases you brought back.

Patty grabs a vase from the box and goes to the back. Paul and Dorothy stand in awkward silence for a moment.

PAULA

Well, this is awkward.

A beat.

DOROTHY

It's so nice that you're back to help your Mom out.

PAUL

I'm not staying.

DOROTHY

Well, for a little while though, right?

PAUL

No, I plan to go back next week.

DOROTHY

With your father so sick?

PAUL

There's not much I can do.

DOROTHY

I suppose not. But to be here for your Mom?

Beat. Awkward silence.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

Where are you living now? Arizona?

PAUL

New Mexico.

DOROTHY

Albuquerque. That's right. And what do you do there?

PAUL

I was working at the local newspaper.

DOROTHY

Is it going well?

PAUL

Not really. People get their news online these days. I was writing a column for their online edition for several years, but things have kind of dried up.

DOROTHY

Well, all the more reason for you to come home then.

PAULA

(jibbing him)

Right! All the more reason Paul!

PAUL

I'm doing okay. Things will turn around.

DOROTHY

I know your mother could really use you here.

PAUL

I'm going to try and come back more often.

PAULA

No, you're not.

DOROTHY

Well, it's nice to have you home. I'm just so sorry about your sister. I hate to ask, but do they know why she...

PAUL

Ate the Arby's?

DOROTHY

Ate the what?

PAUL

Nothing. Just something we used to say.

Dorothy nods.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I think Paula killed herself just because she wanted me to come back here and ruin my life.

PAULA

Hey!

DOROTHY

What??

PAUL

I mean... I don't know. I guess I'm pretty angry with her.

DOROTHY

It was a very selfish thing to do. And a terrible sin.

PAULA

Hey! I'm right here!

PAUL

I'm pretty sure she suffered from some serious mental illnesses, so I don't think she was completely responsible.

PAULA

Thank you!

DOROTHY

Maybe so. At any rate. It's still sad.

Patty renters with an arrangement
of roses.

PATTY

Here you go! I did kind of a rush job. It's not perfect.

DOROTHY

They're beautiful. Thank you so much.

PATTY

Not at all.

DOROTHY

Let me know how things go with Frank. Are you still planning to have the service before he passes?

PATTY

I don't know. I'm kinda all funeraled out now. I was gonna have it next week, but last night he started eating again... so now I don't know what to think.

DOROTHY

Well, call me if you need anything at all.

PATTY

Thank you Dorothy, you're a good friend.

DOROTHY

Bye Paul- I hope to be seeing a lot more of you around.

She goes.

PATTY

Well, we have at least one customer. I better go check on your Dad, he was doing that thing with his mouth again, so I probably better go feed him.

She goes.

PAULA

Well, that was interesting.

PAUL

What was?

PAULA

Why did you tell her you were doing okay in New Mexico?

PAUL

It's none of her business. And I am doing okay.

PAULA

Um, your bank account would say otherwise.

PAUL

How do you know what's in my bank account?

PAULA

I'm dead dummy. I told you. I know everything you know.

PAUL

Oh. Right.

PAULA

Are you really gonna call Danny?

PAUL

What do you care?

PAULA

I think you still love him.

PAUL

What?? I never loved him.

PAULA

That was adamant. Now I KNOW you love him.

PAUL

Shut up.

PAULA

I wonder how he feels?...You were really shitty to him... I'm sorry... shitty is not the right word for what you did. What would you call it?

PAUL

Shut up.

PAULA

Colossally fucked up is what I would call it.

PAUL

I don't wanna talk about this.

PAULA

Fine. What do you want to talk about?

Nothing with you. PAUL

How 'bout the weather? PAULA

How about it? PAUL

Do you like not having winter? PAULA

Albuquerque has winter. PAUL

I think I would really miss having the four seasons. PAULA

Yeah, well, you're dead so, I don't think you're going to have to worry about that so much anymore. PAUL

I can't believe you're actually living in New Mexico. PAULA

It's just someplace that isn't here. PAUL

I get it, but I never really thought you'd actually leave. PAULA

You never came to visit. You could have. PAUL

Well, the way you left kinda put me off. PAULA

Oh, is that what this is all about? PAUL
(a realization)

You knew how messed up I was, and yet you left me here, by myself, with Mom & Dad. PAULA

You didn't have to stay here. That was your choice. PAUL

Really? I had a choice? That's news to me. PAULA

Everyone has a choice. PAUL

PAULA

It's so easy for you isn't it?

PAUL

No, Paula. It is not easy for me. It's not easy for me to drop everything, and come back here because my sister took an entire bottle of pills and offed herself.

PAULA

Okay, how bout we call it even?

PAUL

Even?

PAULA

After the first time I tried to kill myself, you just left town.

PAUL

I made sure you were okay before I went.

PAULA

You left town while I was still in the hospital. You didn't even tell me you were leaving. You just left. I didn't even know you were gone until I got home and Mom casually mentioned it during Jeopardy. "Things that aren't around anymore" for 200-

A beat.

PAULA (CONT'D)

(jeopardy answer)

"What is- your brother Paul?"

PAUL

That didn't happen.

A beat.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Okay, maybe it did happen. But I don't know what your issue is with me, Paula. You blame me for everything.

PAULA

You screwed my boyfriend, asshole.

PAUL

You were already broken up. You didn't even like him.

PAULA

But I DID like him. And you knew that.

PAUL

(dismissing her)

What ever happened to him? What was his name again?

PAULA

You're not supposed to screw your sister's boyfriend. I was very upset.

PAUL

I know you were upset. Finding you passed out in the garage in the front seat of the Corolla, with the car running was an excellent clue as to just how upset you were.

PAULA

I didn't really want to kill myself...I mean... that time I didn't. Everyone knew it was just to make you feel bad.

PAUL

Well, it worked. I felt really, really bad.

PAULA

And moved away.

PAUL

Yeah. I did. I thought you'd be happy.

PAULA

Aren't twins supposed to be close? How come we were never close?

PAUL

Because you didn't like me.

PAULA

I did too like you.

PAUL

You really didn't. You tried to strangle me with my umbilical cord.

Patty comes back in.

PATTY

How's it going Paulie- should we close up? Isn't Dorothy nice, still comin' around.

PAUL

Sure, Ma.

PAULA

(to Paul)

To be continued.

PATTY

So, Paul, I know this may not be the time. But really when is there a good time for anything like this?

PAUL

What are you talking about?

PATTY

Well, I talked it over with your father and...well, I didn't actually talk it over with him. Mostly he just did a lot of grunting. But, well...here.

She hands him an envelope with papers.

PAUL

What is this?

PATTY

Open it.

He opens the envelope and looks at the papers.

PAUL

I don't understand.

PATTY

I can't run the shop anymore. Paula's gone. Your Dad is checking out soon, and you know I won't be far behind.

PAUL

You're not dying.

PATTY

Ah. About that. I was waiting to tell you...but...I might be dying a little bit.

PAUL

What?

PATTY

I didn't want to worry you about it. It's not right away. But it's not that far off either.

A beat.

PATTY (CONT'D)

Anyhow- I want you to have the store and the whole building. So I signed everything over to you. It's all yours. All of it. I know you can turn things around. And I'm really gonna need you to be here to help out once I can't get around anymore. Don't forget to order those daisies!

Patty exits.

PAUL

Wait- you did what??! I don't want this building! Ma!

PAULA

I did not see that one coming. I really did not.

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE SCENE 3

The shop is dark and it is night. Some light comes in the window from a streetlamp. We hear two men laughing from outside. It is Danny and Paul. Paul fumbles with the lock.

DANNY

(off)

Hurry up! I'm freezing!

PAUL

(off)

Hold on a second. Let me find the key!

DANNY

(off)

It's probably in your pocket.

PAUL

(off)

Of course it's in my pocket.... It's not in my pocket.

DANNY

(off)

You forgot your key?

PAUL

(off)

I'm sure I had it.

DANNY

(off)

Isn't there a spare key somewhere out here?

PAUL

(off)

Yes but I don't remember wh- Ah! Here it is. It was on my pocket.

DANNY
(off)
Careful the sidewalk is...

Sound of Paul slipping and
falling.

DANNY (CONT'D)
(off)
Slippery...

A beat.

DANNY (CONT'D)
(off)
Are you okay?

PAUL
(off)
Arg. I'm fine.

DANNY
(off)
Give me your hand.

PAUL
(off)
I'm fine.

DANNY
(off)
Suit yourself.

PAUL
(off)
Arrg!

DANNY
(off)
Give me your hand! There you go!

PAUL
(off)
Yes. Hold on. There's ice on the lock.

After a beat, they enter the
shop.

DANNY
Where's the lights?

PAUL
Shhh! You'll wake up my parents.

What are you sixteen??
DANNY

Paul tries the light switch. No power.

The power's out from the storm.
PAUL

Paul looks around the shop. Under the counter. In the fridge. Everywhere.

What are you lookin' for?
DANNY

Not what, who.
PAUL

Who are you lookin' for?
DANNY

Never mind. She's not here.
PAUL

How drunk are you?
DANNY

Pretty drunk.
PAUL

Do you have any candles or a flashlight??
DANNY

I think so. In the back. Stay here.
PAUL

Where'my gonna go?
DANNY

Paul goes to the back to get candles. Danny looks around the shop. Paul comes back out with a lit candle in a glass holder with saints and Jesus in it.

It's a for the Nardoizzi funeral, but fuck it. I own the place now.
PAUL

I can't believe she just signed it all over. Didn't even discuss it with you.
DANNY

That's my mother. PAUL

What are you gonna do? DANNY

I don't know. PAUL

Will you stay? DANNY

No. PAUL

Will you sell it? DANNY

I dunno. That would break her heart. PAUL

You could wait till after she's dead? DANNY

That might break my heart. PAUL

A moment. Paul offers Danny a chair.

Here have a seat. PAUL (CONT'D)

There's only one chair. DANNY

That's okay. You take it. PAUL

Danny sits. They stare at each other awkwardly.

It's nice to have you back. DANNY

Thanks, it's been a crazy week. PAUL

It's just so awful about Pau- DANNY

Shhhh! PAUL
(cutting him off abruptly!)

What? DANNY

Don't say her name. PAUL

Why not? DANNY

Just don't say it. PAUL

Paul takes out a bottle from his pocket and opens it. He takes out a pill and swallows it.

What's that? DANNY

I get headaches sometimes. And backaches. Just a lot of aches. It's a prescription. PAUL

I see. Is it okay to take with alcohol? DANNY

Not really. PAUL

How's your back? DANNY

It's my neck actually. But it'll be better in a few minutes. PAUL

Will that pill help? DANNY

I don't know. It might. PAUL

Here. DANNY

Danny goes to touch Paul's neck.

What are you doing? PAUL

I did massage as a side job, one summer when things were really slow at the funeral home. DANNY

What kind of massage? PAUL

Totally legit!... Mostly. DANNY

I'm fine. PAUL

It'll help. DANNY

Okay. PAUL

Danny rubs Paul's neck. They relax into it. After a moment...

So, tell me about New Mexico. DANNY

What do you want to know? PAUL

I've always wanted to go to Santa Fe. DANNY

It's not far from where I am. Less than an hour. PAUL

Food is good? DANNY

Yeah, they put chili's in everything. Red or green...that's what they ask you when you order just about anything. PAUL

Italian food? DANNY

Not so much. PAUL

Nice. Gotta come home for that. DANNY

Quiet for a moment. Painfully awkward.

Seeing anyone? DANNY (CONT'D)

No. No time. You? PAUL

DANNY

Not really. Nothing serious. There was one guy. You don't know him. He lived here for a few months, but he's gone now. It was a short relationship.

PAUL

Longer than mine.

DANNY

How's that?

PAUL

Most of my dates are with truckers. And they last about ten minutes.

DANNY

Gross!

PAUL

Yeah. What can I say? I'm gross.

DANNY

I don't know. I guess truckers are kind of hot.

Rubbing Paul's neck.

DANNY (CONT'D)

How's that feel?

PAUL

Pretty good, thanks.

DANNY

Your neck is really tight. Just relax.

PAUL

I'm waiting for that pill to kick in.

Quiet.

DANNY

I was pretty upset when you left.

PAUL

Get in line.

DANNY

I stopped hanging out with Paula, you know.

PAUL

Don't say her name!

DANNY

What's your deal??

Ow! PAUL

Relax. DANNY

I'm trying. PAUL

Anyhow. I was sorry to see you go. Missed you a lot. DANNY

It was easier for me to just leave. PAUL

Easier for who? DANNY

For everyone. PAUL

Not for me. DANNY

I didn't think you'd want to talk to me. PAUL

I told you it was okay. I understood. DANNY

Yeah, but did you really? PAUL

I really liked you. DANNY

I liked you too. PAUL

You did? DANNY

Of course. PAUL

I missed you. DANNY

I missed you too. PAUL

Danny continues to rub his
shoulder and neck.

After a beat Paul leans over to kiss Danny. Danny immediately recoils.

DANNY

Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!

PAUL

What's the matter? I thought you -

DANNY

Thought I might wanna kiss you? Uh...no, thank you.

PAUL

But you were rubbing my neck, my shoulder-

DANNY

Because you're injured! That's it. I'm so sorry if I gave you the wrong idea.

PAUL

So, tonight was not a date I take it?

DANNY

A date?? We just drove around and went to The Grub-hound and split the bill. You call that a date?

PAUL

Yeah, I call it a date! I call everything a date. I told you. I call three minutes in the mens room a date.

DANNY

You've had a lot to drink okay? I know, you don't mean any of this. So why don't we just stop for tonight.

PAUL

Okay, look. Let's just forget this happened, okay? You've obviously still got a lot of issues with me. I understand that.

DANNY

Issues? Is that what you call it ? Issues? Of course I've got issues.

PAUL

Ok, then. Let's talk about it. Get it out in the open.

DANNY

Look. Paul. It was a long time ago. I forgive you. I've told you that, but what did you think was gonna happen? You know I'm in the middle of a lawsuit over the whole thing.

PAUL

Yeah. But I don't understand. Twenty years later, and you decide dig that up and to do something about it now?

DANNY

Wow. Um...okay. It's not just me you know. There were other kids too. It's hard to speak up about something like this, especially in this town.

PAUL

(surprised, shock)

I didn't know there were others.

DANNY

Because you left...I don't wanna talk about this right now. It was a fun night.

PAUL

Look, you're right. I'm sorry. I should have backed you up. I should have backed up your story. I'm sorry that I didn't but I was sixteen, and I didn't know what to do.

DANNY

It wasn't just a "story" to you. You saw it with your own eyes... I saw you standing there watching him...him... do that to me.

Danny starts to break down.

PAUL

I didn't know what to do!

DANNY

Call someone? Put a stop to it? Leave even. Anything but stand there and watch the whole thing.

PAUL

I'm sorry!

DANNY

The whole school...town... thought I was a liar. You should have come forward, and told the truth.

Beat. Awkward silence.

DANNY (CONT'D)

You just stood there and watched!

PAUL

I didn't know what to do!

DANNY

Why would you just stand there and watch something like that?? Not call someone? Not do anything? Not even just walk away? And then deny it all later.

PAUL

I'm sorry, that I don't have answers to your questions.

DANNY

Why'd you even come back here, Paul?

PAUL

Because my sister killed herself.

DANNY

Yeah, because of you.

PAUL

Whoa! Dude!

Silence.

DANNY

I'm sorry. I didn't mean that. You know I didn't mean that.

A beat.

DANNY (CONT'D)

(deciding to go- maybe)

I'm gonna go.

PAUL

Okay.

DANNY

Okay?

PAUL

Okay.

Awkward moment.

DANNY

I'm sorry to have dragged up all of this again. You don't need this in your life now with everything that's been going on.

A beat.

DANNY (CONT'D)

See you around Paul.

Danny leaves. Paula pops up from behind the counter.

PAULA

Well, I think that went extremely well, don't you?

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE SCENE 4

It's daytime at the flower shop. Patty is working on some flowers, trimming them. Paul comes in from the back room.

PAUL

Good morning.

PATTY

Sleep okay, Paulie?

PAUL

It's still a crappy mattress.

PATTY

It didn't make sense to change it while you were gone. Nobody was sleeping on it. You can take Paula's old room if you like for now.

PAUL

No. It's fine. Can we not say her name?

PATTY

I want to go over some of the books with you.

PAUL

Does it have to be right now?

PATTY

It doesn't. But I'd like to get it taken care of.

PAUL

I told you, I have no plans to stay here. I can't run this place.

PATTY

What do you mean? You know more about it than anyone.

PAUL

I don't want to stay here. I've got my own stuff happenin' Ma.

PATTY

That's fine. No one is forcing you. It's your decision.

PAUL

Okay then. Thank you.

A beat.

PATTY

It'd just be a shame if you decided to sell this place... but you should at least have all details. I'm not going to tell you what to do. It's all yours now. I trust you to do the right thing.

PAUL

Fine. Thank you.

PATTY

You know, your Great Grandfather started this place without a dime.

PAUL

He used to sell flowers out on the street.

PATTY (CONT'D)

He used to sell flowers out on the street.

PAUL

I know.

PATTY

He saved up to get this place you know. Most of his life.

PAUL

I thought he bought it with Grandma's inheritance?

PATTY

Your Dad didn't want to run this place either, but it worked out for both of us.

PAUL

How's he doing?

PATTY

He ate some toast this morning.

PAUL

That's good.

PATTY

Will you go through the invoices in the top drawer. Some of them haven't been paid. The Capobianco's still owe us for Lisa's wedding.

Paul starts to sort through some of the drawers behind the counter. He picks out various invoices, reads them, then puts them in different piles.

PAUL
Lisa Capobianco got married?

PATTY
Finally, yeah.

PAUL
Who did she marry?

PATTY
I don't remember his name. Some polish guy. Schiltski.
Lewiski. Something like that.

Paul stops working abruptly. He
sees something unusual inside the
drawer.

PAUL
Uh, Ma?

PATTY
Yeah?

PAUL
What's this?

PATTY
What's what?

PAUL
This.

Paul picks up a gun from the
drawer.

PATTY
What's it look like?

PAUL
It looks like a gun.

PATTY
Then that's what it is.

PAUL
Since when do you have a gun?

PATTY
Since forever. It was your Uncle Eddie's.

PAUL
This is the gun that he...

Paul motions with his finger to his head like he is shooting.

Yeah. PATTY

And you kept it? PAUL

Sure, I kept it. PATTY

Why? PAUL

It's a perfectly good gun. PATTY

What do you have it for? PAUL

Huh? PATTY

What do you need a gun for? PAUL

For robbers. PATTY

Robbers? PAUL

Yeah. You never know. PATTY

Have you ever been robbed? PAUL

No...Because I've got the gun. PATTY

I don't like the idea of you having a gun in the shop. PAUL

So, it's your shop now. Throw it out if you like. But this neighborhood isn't how it used to be. PATTY

It seems fine to me. PAUL

You haven't been here. We've got gangs now. PATTY

PAUL

There are no gangs running around robbing florists.

PATTY

If you don't like it, you can throw it away.

PAUL

Does it even work?

PATTY

It worked on your Uncle.

PAUL

You know, you're way more likely to be killed by a gun if you keep one in your house.

PATTY

But your more likely to be killed by a robber if you don't have a gun.

PAUL

Do you even know how to use it?

PATTY

What's to know? Click. Bang.

PAUL

Okay, keep it if you want it. But I don't want to get a call that you've shot yourself.

PATTY

Why would I do that?

PAUL

I mean by accident.

PATTY

Well, maybe I won't need a gun now that you're back.

PAUL

I'm not back.

PATTY

So, you're really not stayin'?

PAUL

No. I can't stay here.

PATTY

Why not?

PAUL

I don't live here anymore.

PATTY
Who's going to run your shop?

PAUL
It's not my shop!

PATTY
It is your shop. Your father and I gave it to you.

PAUL
But I don't want it!

PATTY
We already signed the papers.

PAUL
Un-sign them.

PATTY
You can't un-sign papers.

PAUL
Tear them up.

PATTY
That's a waste of perfectly good paper.

PAUL
I'm not staying and working in this awful store.

PATTY
How can you say it's awful?? It's what put you through Catholic school!

PAUL
I didn't want to go to Catholic School, you made me go.

PATTY
Sorry for trying to give you and your sister a good education.

PAUL
She didn't want to go to Catholic School either.

PATTY
You're being very ungrateful, Paulie. Do you know how hard your father and I worked to keep this place going? Keep the heat on, the lights on, food on the table?

PAUL
And I appreciate it, but I don't think I should be paying you back for the rest of my life.

PATTY

No one is asking you to pay us back. We're just giving you this store to carry on the family tradition.

PAUL

I've got my own things going on!

PATTY

Like what? You haven't worked in three years.

PAUL

The newspaper is struggling. But I'm working on other projects.

PATTY

What kind of projects?

PAUL

I don't know. A book.

PATTY

A book?

PAUL

Yeah.

PATTY

What's it about?

PAUL

What do you mean what's it about?

PATTY

I just wanna know what your book is about.

PAUL

I haven't decided yet.

PATTY

You're not writing any book.

PAUL

I am. I'm percolating on it.

PATTY

What's "percolating on it" mean?

PAUL

Thinking about it.

PATTY

Thinking is not writing.

PAUL

It's a start.

PATTY

So, come back and percolate on it here for a little while. I really need your help with this place and with your father on death's door... especially now that your sister is gone.

PAUL

Can we stop acting like she's just "gone"? She didn't just head to New Hampshire for the weekend.

PATTY

I don't want to talk about it!

PAUL

Of course you don't.

PATTY

She would still be here if it wasn't for you, Paul.

PAUL

What?

PATTY

You know she killed herself because you weren't here.

PAUL

Wait a minute.

PATTY

I'm not saying you caused it, but it wouldn't have happened if you were here.

PAUL

It's not my fault! She was very ill. She needed help. Why didn't you get her help?

Paula pokes her head up from under the counter, she watches them while she slowly eats popcorn.

PATTY

So, where were you? You were her twin brother. She would have done what you said. She really looked up to you.

PAUL

That's not fair.

PATTY

But it's true.

PAUL

I hate this store. I hate this town. I hate the people in this backward, racist, dying, shit-hole of a town. I hate every minute that I'm here. It's killing me. I'm not staying here and running this fucking flower shop and listening to you bitch about the orientals, the lazy people on welfare, and Costco's Evil Empire. I'm not gonna do it.

PATTY

You're such a loser.

PAUL

What?

PATTY

You're a loser Paul. Always have been. Your whole life. You have no gratitude, you're selfish, and you blame everyone else for your problems. Just get out of here. I don't want you here no more. You're of no use to anyone.

Patty storms off into the back.
Paul is stunned.

PAULA

Wow. I had no idea she felt that way.

PAUL

(startled)

Jesus Christ, have you been here the whole time?

PAULA

I'm always here. Always. You want some popcorn?

PAUL

Popcorn?

PAULA

It don't tasted that great, being that it's imaginary.

PAUL

I don't want any imaginary popcorn.

PAULA

Suit yourself. It's low cal. Might cheer you up. You must feel pretty awful right about now. You lost Danny. Ma's furious. Dad's dyin'. You're percolatin' on a book that's never gonna get written. You're headed nowhere.

A beat.

PAULA (CONT'D)

So... what are you going to do with that gun? Keep it or use it?

Suddenly a huge crash of glass
and metal from in the back.

PAUL

Ma?

He runs to the back.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(off)

Ma?... you okay? Ma...

PAULA

(to audience)

If he's not here, then I can't be here either. See ya soon!

She slowly lowers behind the
counter eating her popcorn.

BLACKOUT.

END OF ACT ONE.

ACT TWO SCENE ONE

It's daytime and the flower shop is empty. After a beat Paul enters from the back. He looks around. Straightens things up. Goes to drawer, and takes out the gun. Holds it and looks at it. Sticks the barrel into a vase with a couple of flowers.

Paula enters.

PAULA

It's nice right?...

PAUL

Don't you ever knock?

PAULA

I'm not alive. I don't gotta "knock" anymore. That's not how you use a gun, dummy. You gotta practice with it.

PAUL

What's to know? Click. Bang. Right?

PAULA

Not exactly. If you end up doin' it wrong, you could make a real mess and turn yourself into a turnip.

PAUL

I'm not gonna shoot myself in the head.

PAULA

Where are you going to shoot yourself? Not in the face I hope?

PAUL

I'm not gonna shoot myself at all.

He puts the gun back in the drawer.

PAULA

...But if you decide to, I would get someone to show you how to use that gun first. Or go take a class. They have classes at the Lion's Club on Saturday afternoons. Mr. Cipriano still teaches them.

PAUL

He's still alive?

PAULA

You know, I'm not sure. Better check on that.

A bell from upstairs rings. (It's Paul's Dad.)

PAULA (CONT'D)

You gonna go check on him?

PAUL

You go check on him.

PAULA

I can't check on him.

PAUL

Why not?

PAULA

I got no tangible body.

PAUL

Oh yeah. I forgot. You're actually starting to seem real. Sometimes I forget you're just in my head.

PAULA

Don't say it like that. You make me seem inconsequential.

Paul straightens up the shop, avoiding going upstairs.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Is he still eating?

PAUL

Yes. He's actually eating a lot.

PAULA

What are you feeding him?

PAUL

Mostly Oreo's.

PAULA

You're feeding him Oreo's?

PAUL

Yeah... Don't worry. They're the good kind. Double Stuff.

PAULA

Did the Dr. say that was okay? Him just eating Oreo's?

PAUL

No. But he likes 'em. It's the only thing he really wants to eat these days.

PAULA

Did you tell him?

PAUL

No. Why should I tell him? He won't remember it in an hour. And it will just upset him.

PAULA

I still think you should tell him.

Dorothy comes through the door
with a box of vases.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Oh look, we've got company.

DOROTHY

Oh Paul, I'm glad your here. I wanted to bring these buy for you.

PAUL

What is it?

DOROTHY

This is just some more of the vases I've collected over the years. I thought you could use them. I have cases of them in my basement. You wander into my basement, it's like Alice through the looking glass, there's so much glass.

PAUL

You've been saving all of the vases all these years?

DOROTHY

Most of them, yes. It's a shame to waste them. Why not recycle? Save the planet as you people like to say.

PAUL

Thank you, but I'm closing the store.

DOROTHY

Right now? Isn't it a little early?

PAUL

No. I mean we're going out of business.

DOROTHY

You are? I would have thought you might have changed your mind now that... Oh well, that's a darn shame. What about your Dad?

PAUL

I'm still figuring that out.

DOROTHY

So sudden with your poor Mother.

PAUL

Yes it was.

DOROTHY

But it's a blessing I suppose. Was it her aorta? She told me she had a weak aorta, and that it could go at anytime. A weak aorta is no joke, Paulie. It's like a leaky garden hose, one tiny hole and suddenly your ticker's exploding like Old Faithful at six o'clock on a Friday.

PAUL

It wasn't her aorta.

DOROTHY

No?? Something else? What happened?

PAUL

Not exactly sure. But she slipped in the backroom.

DOROTHY

Slipped?

PAUL

Yeah, she slipped. Best anyone can tell, there was some water on the floor back there from the fridge that had leaked, and she lost her footing. It looks like as she was going down, she tried to grab a cutting board that was on the edge of the table, but when she grabbed it, it flipped one of the vases into the air, which crashed into a stack of old bundled magazines on top of a metal shelf, the magazines fell and bounced onto a pile of old foam rubber, then bounced into the air hitting a loose leg on another shelving unit, which fell on her and crushed her head.

DOROTHY

How awful.

PAULA

Like the worst game of Mousetrap ever.

DOROTHY

But maybe it was for the best.

PAUL

At least it was quick.

DOROTHY

You know Paul, she told me she wasn't well, and she really didn't know how much time she had left. And yet she kept working all these years. Well, I guess what choice did she have? She had to run the place by herself. Your fathers been sick for so long.

PAULA

We all have choices, don't we Paul?

PAUL

I didn't know about her poor health, until I got back two weeks ago.

DOROTHY

You haven't been home in a very long time. How could you have known? It's probably not something she wanted to talk about over the phone. I'm surprised Paula didn't mention it to you.

PAULA

Wait a minute! Don't drag me into this. I had no idea.

PAUL

She had no idea.

PAULA

Thank you.

Dad's bell rings again.

DOROTHY

Is that your Dad upstairs ringing?

PAUL

Yeah.

DOROTHY

I heard he was eating again. That's good.

PAUL

Yeah, I'm trying to get him to gain some weight.

DOROTHY

Well, that's just super.

Paul tries to usher Dorothy out the door.

PAUL

(dismissing her)

Thanks for dropping these vases off Mrs. Dombrowski. Maybe I can donate them. Or recycle them or something.

DOROTHY
(cheerfully)

I have a lot more.

PAUL
Bring them by if you like, or you can donate them yourself.

DOROTHY
I'll bring them by, just in case you change your mind about the shop. You never know, you might just get the urge to stick around for a while.

PAUL
I don't think so.

DOROTHY
I see. So sad. I'm glad your Mother isn't around to see it. But I'm sure she's in a better place now.

PAULA
I wouldn't count on that.

PAUL
Thank you for dropping buy. Good luck, if I don't see you before I leave.

DOROTHY
Good luck with what?

PAUL
Your...life... I guess.

DOROTHY
Oh, it's much too late for that. Anyhow, I hope you'll change your mind about staying and keeping this place going.

PAUL
My mind is pretty much made up.

DOROTHY
Well, then it's not definite.

PAUL
It's pretty definite.

DOROTHY
But you could change your mind.

PAUL
I won't.

DOROTHY
Well, maybe you will.

Probably not.

PAUL

You never know...

DOROTHY

She starts to go out the door,
stops and comes back in. Maybe
she's deciding if she can keep
Paul interested in the business.

I would like to order something, you know, one last time.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)

I'm not planning on bringing in any new inventory.

PAUL

It would mean a lot to me.

DOROTHY

Okay, I'll see what I can do. What would you like?

PAUL

I don't know. With things the way they are, something that
feels like a melancholy ending, but with a splash of hope.

DOROTHY

So, red carnations and baby's breath?

PAUL

I don't know. You come up with something nice. I'll pick it
up later. Thank you Paul. Tell your Mom I said hello.

DOROTHY

Um...

PAUL

Oh my! I'm so sorry! I forgot. But it's like she's still
here, isn't it?

DOROTHY

That's okay. It's normal to forget.

PAUL

I'm so embarrassed.

DOROTHY

Don't be. I'll have something for you tomorrow, how's that?

PAUL

That would be nice. Thank you Paul. See you soon.

DOROTHY

She goes.

PAULA
(skeptical)

You're going to make an arrangement that says something final, but with a splash of hope?

PAUL

No, I'm not. I'm going to quietly pack things up and leave town before anyone notices.

PAULA

And go back to New Mexico?

PAUL

Yes.

PAULA

What about Dad.

PAUL

Still figuring that out.

PAULA

What're you gonna do in New Mexico? The newspaper's closed.

PAUL

I don't know. I'll figure it out.

PAULA

You got a lot to figure out, brother.

PAUL

I know, and you're not helping.

PAULA

It's kind of funny isn't it?

PAUL

What's funny?

PAULA

It's sort of like you're like this store.

PAUL

What? How am I like this store?

PAULA

You're obsolete.

PAUL

I'm not obsolete.

PAULA

What are you good for?

PAUL

Would you please get out of my head, for just a little bit.

PAULA

I can't get out of your head, because you won't let me. And let me tell you, I sure would like to. It's a mess in here. Your brain. A washer on spin cycle. No wonder you can't get anything done.

PAUL

So, you're just going to keep talking?

PAULA

I guess so.

PAUL

And there's nothing I can do about it?

PAULA

I guess not.

PAUL

Fuck.

PAULA

Unless...

PAUL

Unless what?

PAULA

Well, there's that gun that's not getting any use.

PAUL

(very frustrated with her)

I'm not shooting myself!!! I'm not like you.

PAULA

Of course you're like me. You're just like me. We're twins.

PAUL

We're nothing alike. Is there no way I can get you out of my head without blowing it off?

PAULA

Hmmmm. I don't know...Maybe if you do something you can really focus on and distract you, I could get out of your head for a little bit.

PAUL

Like what?

PAULA

I don't know. There's all that paperwork to go through that Ma left. You're gonna have to go through it all even if you shut the place down.

PAUL

You're right.

PAULA

Try it. There's envelopes with all the outstanding invoices in that drawer... right next to where the gun goes.

Paul pulls out envelopes. Pulls out papers.

PAUL

It looks like she just shoved everything into envelopes and set it aside. Are these invoices paid? Do people owe the shop money?

PAULA

I don't know. What are you gonna do about that gun?

PAUL

And are these bills paid or not? I have no idea.

PAULA

Me either. Just pick it up and try it out a little.

PAUL

I don't think any of these invoices have been paid.

PAULA

I wouldn't know. Add them up.

Paul take out his phone, and starts to organize the huge pile of papers, doing math on his phone while Paula watches.

PAULA (CONT'D)

Okay, I'm gonna go now.

PAUL

(half paying attention)

Bye.

He continues to sort through the paperwork for a few moments.

PAUL (CONT'D)

(to himself)

I think the Lions Club owes us 800 dollars. Why didn't she collect the money?

Patty pops up from underneath the counter, Paul jumps back knocking over a vase of flowers.

PATTY

They had a tree fall on their roof last fall, and it cost a fortune.

PAUL

Holy shit!

PATTY

I was going to get the money from them eventually.

Paul begins pacing about.

PAUL

No. No. No.

PATTY

What's the matter?

PAUL

You can't be here.

PATTY

Why not? I live here.

PAUL

Not anymore you don't. You're dead.

PATTY

Just because I'm dead doesn't mean I don't live here.

PAUL

You're just in my head, right?

PATTY

I don't know. One minute I was lookin' up at a shelf coming toward my face, then next thing I know, I was here lookin' at you knockin' over the merchandise.

PAUL

All these invoices? You never collected the money?

PATTY

I was getting around to it. Some people hit hard times. You won't see Costco cutting people slack when they hit a rough patch.

PAUL

But you have to collect the money when you deliver the goods.

PATTY

I was going to do it. When they got back on their feet. That's the problem with the world today. It's not personal anymore.

PAUL

Look at this invoice for all these orchids- three thousand dollars??

PATTY

It was a big Chinese wedding. They really went all out.

PAUL

I can see that.

PATTY

Then a week later, Mrs. Nyguen got hit by a car and died, and I didn't have the heart to bug them about the flowers. She had a really nice funeral, a beautiful solid handmade casket. I think it was mahogany. It went really well with all the pink roses that she loved.

PAUL

You did their funeral too? Did they pay for that?

PATTY

They're going to.

PAUL

So you did have customers.

PATTY

No, not really. These invoices are pretty old.

PAUL

How old?

PATTY

I don't know. A couple of years I guess.

Paul looks at the invoice.

PAUL

These are fifteen years old!!

PATTY

I don't know. I lost track of time. Is that bad?

PAUL

Did Paula know about this?

Paula enters.

PAULA

Did somebody say my name?

PAUL

Shouldn't I have to at least say it three times like Beetlejuice or something?

Paula sees Patty.

PATTY

Hello, Paula.

PAULA

Oh, hell no!

PATTY

You must think you're pretty smart, killing yourself to get your brother to come home.

PAULA

(to Paul)

What is she doing here?

PAUL

I don't know. I didn't invite her.

PATTY

You're not the only one who can live inside Paul's head, Miss "the Hydrangea juice didn't work, so I'll just have to improvise with Seconal! That prescription wasn't for you, it was for your father.

PAULA

Paul, will you please ask her to leave?

PAUL

I want you both to leave.

PATTY

(to Paula)

So, did you really buy that casket for yourself? Did you have it planned out all along?

PAULA

No, I did not have it "all planned out". I bought that casket for Dad like I told you.

PATTY

I don't believe you.

PAULA

And what were you thinking putting me in this abortion of an outfit?

PATTY

Don't say abortion. You know how I feel about that!

PAULA

I used it as an adjective not a noun.

PATTY

I don't care how you use it. Don't say it!

PAULA

Abortion, abortion, abortion!

PATTY

STOP IT!!!

PAULA

(smug)

I had one you know.

PATTY

You had one what?!

PAULA

You know.

PATTY

You did not!

PAULA

I did. Paul knew. He drove me to get it.

PAUL

Wait a minute!

PATTY

(to Paul)

You kept a secret like that all these years??

PAULA

Paul is the only one who knows. Besides the doctor and an ugly receptionist named Judy.

PATTY

I can't believe you both kept something like that from me!

PAUL

Does it even matter now? You're both dead.

PATTY

(one upping Paula)

Paul slept with your boyfriend, you know.

PAULA

(smug)

I already know he screwed Brian Gonski! We've already talked about it. So you can just shut your pie hole.

PATTY

(smiling)

Brian Gonski? I'm not talking about Brian Gonski, I'm talking about Scott MacCary.

A beat.

PAULA

Scott MacCary?

PATTY

Yeah. Scott MacCary.

PAULA

Paul? Not Scott. Please tell me not Scott. He's the only one I thought really liked me.

PATTY

He only liked you so he could get into Paul's bedroom. I walked in there one day while he was waiting for Paul, and Scotty was just parading around in your brother's jockstrap, happy as a clam.

PAUL

I liked it better when you were both alive and not speaking to one another.

PAULA

You slept with Scott?? And Brian??

PATTY

And I'm pretty sure Alex Hughes. But I only have my suspicions on that one.

PAULA

Is this true, Paul? Did you sleep with all my boyfriends?

PAUL

Not all of them.

PATTY

Just most of them.

PAULA

Paul?

PAUL

What am I supposed to say? You'll know if I'm lying.

PAULA

You're the worst, you're like, literally my evil twin.

PAUL

It wasn't like I tried to sleep with them! It was never my idea.

PATTY

I think Scott was your idea. No one leaves a jock strap sitting out on the bed when they know they're having company.

PAUL

Okay, maybe I did.

PATTY

One time they actually did it in your bed.

PAULA

What?!

PAUL

Not true!

PATTY

Of course it's true. How else would I know it? I can't know anything you don't know, Paulie.

PAUL

Okay, it's true.

PAULA

(To Patty, one upping again)

Remember when you were missing that 200 dollars and you thought Mr. Shapiro stole it?

PATTY

Yeah...

PAULA

Paul stole it to buy drugs.

PATTY

You did?!

PAUL

I was fifteen.

PATTY

You knew I was furious about that missing money. I even called up Jim Delaney and had him go have a talk with Mr. Shapiro!

PAUL

I know.

PATTY

And by talk I mean kick the shit out of him. That's on you!

PAUL

I know!

PATTY

And to think you were my favorite.

PAULA

And there it is.

PAUL

Well, Paula stole the weed I bought with the money from me and she and her friends went down to Atlantic City and that's where she got knocked up. At the Trump Taj Mahal. How disgusting is that?

PAULA

Why are you tellin' her about that now? She's dead!

PAUL

So are you!!!

PATTY

You are both going to end up in hell!

PAULA

I'M ALREADY THERE!

They argue and fight, screaming at each other. Paul reaches into the counter and pulls out the gun. He places it under his chin.

PAUL

I swear to God I'll do it, and that's gonna take all of us out.

PAULA

Go ahead do it!!

PATTY

Yeah do it!

PAULA

He doesn't have the guts!

Danny enters. Paul quickly puts the gun down.

DANNY

Wow. So quiet in here today. Is that a gun?

PAUL
(loudly)
I'm sorry did you say something?

DANNY
Why are you shouting?

PAUL
(loudly)
Am I shouting!?

DANNY
(loudly)
Yes you are!

Paula and Patty watch Danny and Paul's conversation from the side.

DANNY (CONT'D)
I wanted to check on you. You doing okay? What's with the gun?

PAUL
It was my mothers.

DANNY
What were you doing with it?

PAUL
Nothing. Deciding if I should keep it.

PATTY
You should keep it. It's a perfectly good gun.

DANNY
(laughs)
For a second, it looked like you were gonna shoot yourself. You should be more careful.

PAUL
Yeah, you're right. What are you doing here?

DANNY
I don't like how things ended the other night.

PAUL
Me either.

DANNY
But we're not gonna just pick up where we left off, okay?

PAUL
Of course not.

DANNY

And you're leavin' anyhow, so what's the point?

PAUL

Right.

DANNY

But I wanted to set some things straight. And I'm glad you're back. Even if you're not.

PAUL

I don't hate it.

DANNY

Well, that's good to know.

PAUL

I just had to get out. I couldn't stay here. I had to move on.

DANNY

Well, I wouldn't know about that. I never "got out".

PAUL

You could've.

DANNY

Why would I want to? I like it here.

PAUL

When I come back here, it feels like... like I'm being crushed. Feels like I never left, Everything is fresh...

Looks at Danny.

PAUL (CONT'D)

...Everything. It's the same.

DANNY

But it's not. I've been here, and it's not the same. Some things are, but not everything.

PAUL

I feel like I'm the same.

DANNY

But you're not. You're not the same person. You can be here on your own terms. You can face the past on your own terms.

PAUL

I don't know.

DANNY

Isn't there anything you like about this town?

PAUL

Actually, there's more than I thought. I miss Ro's Pizza.

DANNY

It's still there.

PAUL

And I miss fall. Like a real fall with lots of leaves, and frost on the ground. And I had forgotten how green everything is here. And I like how people have each other's back...most of the time. I don't miss everyone being up in everyone else's business though.

DANNY

Yeah, that never changes.

PAUL

So, why are you here?

DANNY

Look. This is hard for me okay?

PAUL

Okay. What is it?

DANNY

There's something I gotta ask you.

PAUL

Okay.

DANNY

And I don't want you to get upset, but it's really been bothering me all these years.

PAUL

Okay.

DANNY

Why didn't you back me up?

A beat

DANNY (CONT'D)

I saw you come in the office. You saw what was going on.

PAUL

I didn't see anything-

DANNY

Okay. You know what? I'm gonna go.

PAUL

Wait. Okay. Yeah, I saw it.

DANNY

And you didn't leave. You just watched.

PAUL

I didn't know what to do. What was I supposed to do?

DANNY

Go get someone?

PAUL

I guess I just froze.

DANNY

And then later, when I went to Sister Ann about it, you didn't back me up. You said you didn't see anything, and you weren't even in the building.

A beat.

DANNY (CONT'D)

She called me a liar. Everyone called me a liar. And you know, we were like... best friends. More than friends. It really messed me up for a long time.

PAUL

I'm sorry. I was just a kid.

DANNY

I just wanted to know if you had an answer.

A beat.

DANNY (CONT'D)

And I guess you don't.

PAULA

That is super fucked up Paul. Even for you.

PATTY

You knew all this time and never spoke up? What were you thinking?

PAUL

I don't know. Maybe I thought you were enjoying it.

DANNY

Enjoying it??

PAUL

I obviously knew you liked guys. And Father Martin was what? Maybe twenty six back then? Everybody thought he was hot- all the girls... some of the guys. So maybe I thought-

DANNY
That I wanted him to molest me?

PAUL
You didn't look that unhappy to me.

A beat.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Be honest. Was he really so bad?

DANNY
(in disbelief)
Yeah. He was.

PAUL
I don't know. He worked out. He had a big dick. He had those eyes.

DANNY
Wait a minute-

PAUL
Never mind. I was wrong. I'm sorry. I should have spoken up, but I guess I was scared.

Silence.

DANNY
How did you know he had a big dick?

PAUL
What?

DANNY
His back was to you.

PAUL
So?

DANNY
So I could see you, but you couldn't have seen him.

PAUL
I don't know. I guess I saw him in the shower one time or something.

DANNY
You saw him in the shower?

PAUL
Yeah, in the locker room I guess.

DANNY
You saw him in the locker room?

PAUL
I guess.

DANNY
He was in the shower naked? And you saw him?

PAUL
Yeah. I guess so.

DANNY
There's no way he got naked. He never even took his shirt off when kids were around. Even in gym class when it was hot and he was sweating. When did you see his-

A beat.

DANNY (CONT'D)
(a revelation)
Oh my fuckin' Christ... You too.

PAUL
Me too what?

DANNY
He did the same thing to you.

PAUL
So?

DANNY
But...Oh, my God.

A beat.

DANNY (CONT'D)
(a revelation)
...But you liked it.

PAULA
Holy fuckin' shit.

PAUL
So what? I was a horny fifteen year old, and he was a sexy twenty six or seven year old. He was actually a really cool guy. We smoked weed together after school a bunch of times.

PATTY
Drugs! You did so many drugs!

PAULA
I don't think the drugs are the big deal here, Ma.

DANNY

You hung out with him a bunch of times?!

PAUL

I don't see what the big deal is, Danny. We just hung out. We grabbed a bite a couple of times. He took me to see Gladiator.

DANNY

He took you to see Gladiator?? You didn't think that was weird or inappropriate?

PAUL

No! Not at all. I was failing history. It won the Oscar.

DANNY

This is unbelievable!

PAUL

(trying to diffuse the tension)

We also saw Bring it On and Erin Brockovich.

DANNY

Were you dating him??

PAUL

Dating? What?? No. It wasn't like that.

DANNY

Cause, to me it sounds like you were dating him.

PAULA

That's how it sounds to me.

PATTY

Me too. Definitely dating.

PAUL

He was just being friendly. We liked hanging out. Occasional movie, or dinner, or trip to Boston.

DANNY

A trip to Boston??

PATTY

A trip to Boston?

PAULA

A trip to Boston?

PAULA (CONT'D)

That's who you went to Boston with?? And I covered for you!

PATTY

You were both a couple of damn liars.

PAUL
It wasn't a big deal! We just had some fun is all.

DANNY
And sex!

PAUL
Not all the time.

DANNY
We were supposed to be friends...More than friends, I thought.

PAULA
Well, that was no big secret.

PAUL
We were friends... are friends.

DANNY
I don't think so.

PAUL
Wait a minute. Are you telling me you didn't think Father Tim was a good looking guy?

Danny can't believe they were on first name basis.

DANNY
Father Tim?

PAUL
We all called him Father Tim.

DANNY
Not me.

PAUL
And you didn't think he was hot? Not at all?

DANNY
I didn't say he wasn't good looking. That's not the point.

PAUL
So, you didn't do anything to make him think that maybe you were interested? Nothing?

DANNY
What? No!

PAUL
We used to joke around about him. You said you'd take him to the prom if they would let you.

DANNY

As a joke!

PAUL

Well, you didn't look that unhappy when I walked in on the two of you. As a matter of fact, I'd say you looked decidedly NOT unhappy.

DANNY

What?

PAUL

Seems like you both were really enjoying yourselves.

DANNY

Oh my God. Were you jealous???

PAUL

Jealous?? What? Why would I be jealous?

DANNY

Oh my God, you were jealous.

PAUL

No I wasn't.

PAULA

Yes, you were.

PATTY

It really sounds like you were jealous. That's messed up Paulie. Even for you.

PAUL

Shut up!

DANNY

What?

PAUL

Not you!

DANNY

Then who are you talking to??

PAUL

No one.

DANNY

You know Paul. I really liked you. Like, really, really liked you.

PAUL

I liked you too. I mean...I do like you.

DANNY

Then why didn't you stick up for me??

PAUL

I told you I don't know.

PAULA

Just tell him. Finally get it all out in the open. It's because Father Tim begged you not to say anything.

PATTY

That's right he did. Didn't he Paul?

PAUL

I don't know why I didn't say anything Danny.

PAULA

Yes, you do.

DANNY

You know what? It's okay. Long time ago. I'm gonna go okay? Good luck with selling this place, and with your Dad, and things in New Mexico.

PAUL

Don't go, okay?

DANNY

You hurt me man. You really, really hurt me. You hurt me like no one's ever hurt me before...or since.

PAUL

Danny.

DANNY

Guess it hurt me so bad, because I loved you so much.

Silence.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Good luck, Paul. I mean it. Good luck. I hope it all works out for you, dude.

Danny leaves.

PAULA

That was so awkward. I can't believe I had to stand here and listen to that.

PATTY

Very uncomfortable for everyone.

PAULA

I'm not sure how you're gonna live with yourself now. I know I couldn't.

PATTY

Me either. It's something pretty awful to have to live with.

PAULA

If it were me... well if it were me, we know what I would do. Because here I am. Dead in a very ugly pantsuit. But I guess you'll just wait for Dad to die, sell this place, and run away, right?

PATTY

You think he'll wait for your father to die? Or will he just slip out and let somebody else figure it out.

PAULA

He'll wait with Dad till the end. He's not that bad.

PATTY

I don't know, Paula. Taking care of your father seems like a lot of work.

PAULA

I don't see what the options are.

A beat. Patty and Paula get an idea and scheme.

PATTY

Hope no robbers come in tonight. Since you're all by yourself.

PAULA

I mean, now you're really by yourself.

PATTY

You could put an end to this.

PAULA

That's right. He could. Why didn't I think of that?

PATTY

Because you're not smart.

PAULA

I'm smart.

PATTY

If you were smart you'd still be alive. But for Paul, I don't see a lot of options.

PAULA

That's true. He could put a stop to all of this right now.

PATTY

Click. Bang. Lights out!

Paul walks to the counter. He slowly picks up the gun. He cries and slides down to the floor. He takes the barrel of the gun and puts it into his mouth.

PAULA

There you go. Now we're getting somewhere.

PATTY

Just click. Bang. Lights out.

Paul can't decide whether to pull the trigger, he struggles with it, just as he is about to, Danny bursts through the door.

DANNY

You know what?? You're not getting off that easy. It was a really shitty thing that you did, but-

He sees Paul with the gun in his mouth.

DANNY (CONT'D)

(quiet)

What the fuck?

A beat.

DANNY (CONT'D)

What are you doing??

PAULA

Oh brother. So close! Everyone's just waiting for the big bang.

Danny goes to Paul. Paul takes the gun from his mouth.

DANNY

What the fuck are you doing?

PAUL

What does it look like I'm doing?

DANNY

It looks like you were gonna blow your head off.

Good guess. PAUL

Why?? DANNY

What do you mean why? You know why. PAUL

No. I don't. DANNY

I let you down. I fucked up. PAUL

Yeah, you did. But this? This isn't gonna fix it. DANNY

It will for me. PAUL

Haven't you heard the expression a permanent solution to a temporary problem? DANNY

But it's a solution. PAUL

But a stupid one. DANNY

Hey! Sometimes it works out great. PAULA

It never works out. DANNY

Sometimes, it's the right thing to do. PAULA

It's never the right thing to do. DANNY

Can he hear me? PAULA

I don't think so. I think it's a just coincidence. PAUL
(to Paula)

You don't agree? DANNY
(thinking Paul was talking to him.)

PAUL

Yeah, yeah, I guess I agree. It was stupid.

DANNY

You should throw that gun away.

PATTY

It's a perfectly good gun.

DANNY

Did you ever think about what it would be like for me when I found out you did this right after a fight? Or what if I had walked in here a minute later and found your brains splattered all over the rhododendrons.

PATTY

We don't sell rhododendrons.

PAUL

No. I hadn't thought of it that way.

DANNY

It would make the other thing seem like an afternoon at the movies. What the hell were you thinking?

PAUL

You hate me is what I was thinking.

DANNY

I don't hate you. Do you think I would waste my time on you if I hated you?

PAUL

Why don't you hate me?

DANNY

It's really hard to hate someone you love so much.

PAUL

Huh?

DANNY

It wouldn't have bothered me all these years if I had hated you. I don't even really hate that asshole who fucked me up so bad. I just don't want him to keep doing it to other kids.

PAUL

I really thought you hated me.

DANNY

No. I was hurt by you. And then you left after Paula and the garage incident.

PAULA

Leave me out of this.

PAUL

Father Martin was nice to me. Nobody liked me, you know.

DANNY

People liked you.

PAUL

No they didn't.

DANNY

Okay, they didn't. They liked Paula.

PAULA

I was very popular.

PATTY

Only because you were so slutty.

PAUL

I was failing history and Tim...uh...Father Martin offered to help me out.

DANNY

I thought you always got good grades.

PAUL

I cheated. I paid Steven Sweeney to do my homework for years. But then his family moved to Tampa. So I was failing history. So, Father Tim said he'd tutor me after school at his house. At first it was just history. Nothing else. British history. I was stuck on something to do with the Magna Carta.

DANNY

What were you stuck on?

PAUL

I don't know. Who remembers that shit. Like what King signed it or something like that.

DANNY

King John.

PAUL

What?

DANNY

King John signed it. But it didn't last too long at first. Pope Innocent annulled it.

PAUL

Who's Pope Innocent?

DANNY

The Pope who annulled the Magna Carta.

PAUL

Anyway, I guess I remembered King John or Pope the Innocent or whatever, and to celebrate Father Tim broke out a bottle of whiskey and said we should do a shot to celebrate.

DANNY

He asked you to do a shot of whiskey with him?

PAUL

Yeah. You wanna?

DANNY

Wanna what?

PAUL

Do a shot of whiskey?

DANNY

Now?

PAUL

Yeah. Right now.

PAULA

This is a bad idea.

PATTY

Very bad.

DANNY

(agreeing to Whiskey)

What the fuck.

Paul goes behind the counter and grabs a bottle of whiskey and two glasses. Danny joins him behind the counter.

PAULA

(to Patty)

You kept whiskey in that cabinet?

PATTY

Just in case I needed a little "pop" in the afternoon. I Guess Paulie found it.

PAULA

Well, ya can't drink it anymore, anyhow. Cause you got no esophagus.

PAUL

Here you go.

They look at each other and then do a shot. Paul pours another one for them both.

PAUL (CONT'D)

So, we did a shot. And he gave me another question, something about who was the British Monarch during Shakespeares time.

DANNY

That's easy. Queen Elizabeth- and then at the end of his life King James. So you got it and he gave you another shot.

PAUL

No, I'm pretty sure I said King Louie, which was totally wrong.

DANNY

The Louie's are French...So no shot?

PAUL

No, there was a shot.

Paul motions for them to do another shot, which they do. He pours them another one.

PAUL (CONT'D)

There were quite a few shots, and I'm pretty sure I was giving all the wrong answers, but he told me they were right anyway. So, in retrospect Father Tim wasn't a very good tutor after all.

DANNY

Yeah, giving away the answers was why he wasn't a good tutor.

They do a shot, pour another.

PAUL

Anyway he said not to worry, I was gonna pass, and did I wanna go for a swim in the pond behind his house. It was super hot out, but I told him I didn't have a bathing suit with me, and he said he didn't either, but it didn't matter because we're both guys, and there was nothing to be shy about because we both had the same equipment. So we go down to the water, and I get undressed but I'm like hiding myself because I'm embarrassed. But he's not embarrassed at all, in fact he's pretty proud of what he's got goin' on, and he just takes off everything, and I thought I was gonna explode on the spot. He could see the look on my face, and then he asked me if I was okay, and then if I wanted to try some things with him that would feel good, so I said sure.

And so we tried some things, and they did feel good. Real good actually. So I kept going back to be tutored. He tutored me a lot. Like a lot, alot. But it wasn't bad. It wasn't bad at all. I loved it.

DANNY

It doesn't matter if you "loved it" he was still molesting and raping you, like he did to a lot of other boys.

PAUL

But most of the time, I'd just close my eyes and it wasn't him. I was thinking about someone else, and wishing it was that person.

DANNY

Who?

A pause.

DANNY (CONT'D)

Really? Oh....But we never did anything together.

PAUL

I don't think either of us wanted to admit what was going on.

DANNY

You could be right about that.

PAUL

We jerked off to that porno tape that one afternoon after school.

DANNY

Yeah, turned out to be lesbian porn. What a disappointment. I kept thinking, any minute now someone with a dick is going to show up and get this plot line moving forward. But the cocks never came, did they?

They laugh.

PAUL

I wasn't watching the video.

DANNY

Me either.

Danny kisses Paul this time. Paul kisses him back. Then Paul pulls back.

PAUL

Do you think this is a good idea?

Absolutely not.

DANNY

They kiss again.

This is kinda weird...

DANNY (CONT'D)

How's it weird?

PAUL

In the shop. I feel like your family is watching us.

DANNY

Patty and Paula are watching them intently.

Nah. That's just in your head.

PAUL

He violently motions for Patty and Pauls to leave... And they reluctantly do. Danny points to the St. Theresa statue.

And what about that creepy statue?

DANNY

That's just St. Theresa. She drove some rats out of Ireland or something.

PAUL

Can you put something over her?

DANNY

Paul covers the statue with a shopping bag.

I feel like she's judging us.

DANNY (CONT'D)

She just told me to go for it.

PAUL

They kiss and go down behind the counter, and we just hear sounds.

Outside, Dorothy approaches the door carrying a big box. She looks around for the key and finds it in the planter as Patty had instructed her. She opens the door and comes in to the shop with the box.

She looks for a place to set it down. Then she notices someone may be in the shop.

DOROTHY

Hello?! Is somebody here? Paul?

Paul pops up from behind the counter.

PAUL

Hi, Mrs. Dembrozio, what are you doing here?

DOROTHY

I was just dropping off another box of vases. Your mother had told me about the secret key.

PAUL

I see.

DOROTHY

You're here late.

PAUL

Getting a jump on some of the books and bills.

Something falls behind the counter.

DANNY

(from behind the counter)

Ow.

DOROTHY

Who's that? Is someone else here?

PAUL

Well...

DOROTHY

Who's back there?

Danny sticks his head out from the side of the counter.

DANNY

Hi Mrs. Dembrozio.

He crawls out from behind the counter but his pants are down around his ankles.

DOROTHY
(screams)

AaaaHHH!

She drops the box of vases, which crashes to the floor. Danny stumbles around trying to get his pants up. Paul comes out from behind the counter pulling up and stumbling around trying to get his pants on.

PAUL
It's not what it looks like!

DOROTHY
It looks like sodomy, that's what it looks like.

PAUL
Okay, it is what it looks like.

DOROTHY
(motioning to Danny)
I can understand this one, Paul XXXX. But you? You always seemed like a straight normal boy to me!

PAUL
Thank you.

DANNY
Why do you always say thank you when someone tells you, you seem straight.

PAUL
I don't know. Habit.

DANNY
Well, knock it off. It's offensive.

DOROTHY
That's offensive??! What would your mother think???

Patty comes out.

PATTY
I'm just glad he's finally gettin' laid.

Paula enters.

PAULA
Ditto.

DOROTHY

And with your father, upstairs in his final days. What would he say?

PATTY

He wouldn't say nothing, cause he's got scrambled eggs for brains.

DOROTHY

I am very disappointed in you.

PAUL

Hey. I would say this is none of your business.

DOROTHY

(motioning to the shop)

No, THIS is none of your business. You were right. You can't run this shop, and drag your families name through the dirt. Who will shop here now, once this gets out?

PAUL

Maybe I will stay here and run this shop with my friend Danny here.

DOROTHY

Oh really??? And just who is going to buy flower arrangements from a couple of homosexuals?

DANNY

...Like everyone?

DOROTHY

Well, you've lost a very loyal and long time customer.

PAUL

I'm so sorry to hear that. Would a coupon for a free batch of daisies change your mind?

DANNY

We're expecting to have a lot of daisy chains in the shop soon.

DOROTHY

I don't know what a daisy chain is, but I want no part of it! I am so disappointed in you Paul XX. You should have stayed in New Mexico!

She storms out.

PATTY

I for one am kind of glad this is all out in the open now?

A beat.

Am I right?
 PATTY (CONT'D)

BLACKOUT.

ACT TWO SCENE THREE

A few days later. The shop. Paula and Patty are hanging off to the sides. Danny enters carrying a bunch of boxes.

DANNY
 What do you want to do with these boxes of invoices? Keep or toss?

PAUL
 (off)
 Are they dated?

Danny sets them down and looks to see if they're dated.

DANNY
 Yeah, they're dated.

PATTY
 Of course they're dated!

Paul enters.

PAUL
 When are they from?

DANNY
 I don't know. There's a lot of dates, but they aren't in any particular order.

PATTY
 That's a lot of stuff to keep track of.

PAUL
 Hold onto them for now I guess. I'll take a look.

DANNY
 Okay. You gonna try to collect?

PAUL
 Depending on how far back they go, I might. You know, if she had just had a better book keeper, this place could have done a decent business.

PATTY

You should have come back.

PAUL

She gave too much away for free, and then either never collected, or forgot a lot of the bills. No wonder the place was going under. I think there's a chance this could be a pretty successful business... if we worked with the wedding organizers, and you guys down at the funeral home. Maybe get involved with some fundraisers or something like that.

DANNY

You think so?

PAUL

I don't know for sure yet. But the numbers seem to add up.

PATTY

See, this is all it took to get him interested again Paula.

PAULA

All it took was for both of us to be dead.

PAUL

If I had known this was going on, I could have come back and set things straight. They could have been raking it in, what with the age demo here, there's going to be an awful lot of funerals coming up.

DANNY

So, you're thinking about staying here and running this place after all?

PAUL

What? Oh, hell no. I'm not staying here.

PATTY

Hey!

PAULA

Hey!

PAUL

Nothings changed. The town is still a dead end and a dump.

DANNY

Thanks. You know I live in this dead end dump right?

PAUL

About that. Have you ever tried a freshly homemade chili relleno?

DANNY

What's a chile relleno?

PAUL

It's like the best thing ever. They have fantastic ones in Albuquerque.

DANNY

When am I gonna get to Albuquerque?

PAUL

I was thinking, maybe you'd come with me?

DANNY

To Albuquerque?

PAUL

Yeah.

DANNY

The farthest I've ever been is Trenton NJ to see my sick Aunt.

PAUL

Some come out. Check it out.

DANNY

My parents will kill me. They expect me to take over the funeral home. There's nobody else to do it. I don't think I can just leave.

PAUL

Well I don't think I can just stay.

DANNY

Well, think on it.

PAUL

You think on it.

PAULA

You two are a God damn mess.

PATTY

I'll say.

PAULA

Don't you think wherever you end up doesn't matter as long as you're together?.

DANNY

Don't you think wherever we end up doesn't really matter as long as we're together?

PAUL

Isn't that kind of cheesy?

DANNY

I don't think that's cheesy at all.

PAULA

I said it and I don't say stupid things.

PATTY

You say stupid things all the time. Everything you say is stupid.

PAULA

Shut up, old woman.

PAUL

Danny, there's some more boxes in the store room. Would you mind bringing them out here?

DANNY

Are they heavy?

PAUL

Very. But my back is still out from that slip the other night.

DANNY

Really? It seemed okay when you were riding me last night.

PAULA

TMI!

PATTY

What's that mean?

Danny goes to the back.

PATTY (CONT'D)

You two seem to be getting along great. I'm happy for you.

PAULA

I'm not.

PAUL

Okay, you two. You gotta go.

A beat.

PAUL (CONT'D)

I'm sorry. But you do. I'm kicking you out of my head. I don't need you in there anymore.

PATTY

Don't need me??

PAUL
I'll always need my real mother, but you're not her.

PATTY
I look like her.

PAUL
You do. But you're not.

PAULA
I knew it!

PAUL
Same with you.

PAULA
Why do I gotta go?

PAUL
I've got enough goin' on in my head now, and I don't need voices from the past ruining everything. So, I'm sorry, but you gotta go.

PATTY
Well you know we'll always be in there down in the...the whatdayacallit?

PAULA
Sub conscious.

PATTY
Yeah that.

PAUL
That's fine. Just stay down there. Now go.

They start to go.

PAUL (CONT'D)
Wait.

PAULA
What?

PAUL
C'mere.

He looks over at his Mom.

PAUL (CONT'D)
You too.

He brings them in and they hug.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Now get the fuck out of here.

They go. A moment. Danny returns
with some boxes.

DANNY

These really weren't that heavy.

PAUL

So you won't come to New Mexico? No chance at all?

DANNY

I don't know. That's a big deal.

PAUL

We could go someplace else?

DANNY

Like where?

PAUL

Rhode Island?

DANNY

Rhode Island? That's like 45 minutes away. What's in Rhode
Island?

PAUL

Absolutely nothing.

DANNY

So, like a new start? Together?

PAUL

Something like that.

DANNY

You'll sell the shop? And what will you do with the money?

PAUL

Have you ever considered being the foremost Florist in
Providence Rhode Island?

DANNY

No, I can't say that I have.

PAUL

Me either. Just a thought.

DANNY

It's not a bad thought.

Think about it. PAUL

I am. When do we go? DANNY

I don't know. Now's good? PAUL

Now? DANNY

No time like the present. PAUL

Fuck the past. Forget the future. DANNY

They kiss.

I'm gonna have to break the news to my parents. DANNY (CONT'D)

They'll get over it. PAUL

Maybe my Dad. Not my Mom. DANNY

Well, why don't we go grab some RO's Pizza and make a plan? PAUL

Best offer I've had all day. DANNY

I'll be right there- let me grab my keys. PAUL

The one in the planter... DANNY

Is gone. I have the only key now. PAUL

Good idea. DANNY

Danny leaves, and Paul goes to the counter to grab his keys. He turns out the lights, and just before Paul can close the door... A voice from upstairs.

FRANK

Paulie! You down there?? Can you bring me a piece of chicken??? And some mashed potatoes? Some idiot has been stuffing my face with Oreo's for the last three weeks.

BLACKOUT.

END OF PLAY.