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LIQUID LIES: A PLAY IN ONE ACT

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LIQUID LIES: A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By

Kelly L. Passinault

THESIS

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ABSTRACT

LIQUID LIES: A PLAY IN ONE ACT

By

Kelly L. Passinault

All across the globe, people suffer everyday from the effects of alcoholism, drug abuse, and domestic violence, both verbal and physical. The effect of this kind of abuse on a family can range from a tragic split to humorous mishaps in the face of shame.

Abuse fills the world of the Parker family, and their concomitant dysfunction lies within deeply seeded problems. In this family, the norm is alcoholism and drug abuse may take its place from time to time, but violence is an everyday occurrence. Whether the other person is a part of the family, directly involved with the family, or indirectly acquainted with the family, lives are deeply affected. Eventually, it all gets out of hand at the price of one's dignity and pride.

In my script, *Liquid Lies: A Play in One Act*, I explore alcoholism, drug abuse, and domestic violence within a family. However, hope lies within my protagonist, Alyssa, who breaks the cycle and leaves the family to make a meaningful life in the entertainment industry.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my parents, Jon and Susan Passinault for their unconditional love and support, to the love of my life, Travis Moscinski, and to my mentor and friend, Dr. James A. Panowski who has taught me everything I know about show business.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	1
Scene One.....	4
Scene Two.....	17
Scene Three.....	38
Scene Four.....	51

INTRODUCTION

This Thesis follows the format prescribed by the MLA Style Manual and Department of English.

My research on alcoholism, which inspired my thesis, began many years ago when I wrote a paper on addiction in high school, hoping to resolve personal problems spanning generations of my own family. Since then, I have been fascinated with the literature of addiction to alcohol, drugs, sex, and violence.

It was challenging to express in my prospectus what I was going to write about in my script, *Liquid Lies: A Play in One Act*. Because of the nature of the creative process, I could not predict what my characters would think or feel or say. In fact, my goals for the play seemed impossible because I was including too many problems and making the script too complicated. However, as I began to focus, my characters wrote themselves. I also needed to move away from clinical literature to underlying psychological motivation for my characters. Dishonesty, mistrust, deceit, and manipulation all serve to make my characters more real than I had imagined.

The audience can relate to every individual in the Parker family. The daughter, Alyssa, the only self-directed member ran away at eighteen to become an actress. The son, Andrew, steals cars, drinks himself to numbness, and wrecks havoc just to get attention from anyone he can. The father of the family, Bill, had a horrific car accident, is on disability, and has nothing better to do than sit at home, drink beer, watch television, and yell at his wife. Finally, the wife and mother, Kim, is a self-proclaimed recovering alcoholic, who has resorted to prescription medication and cigarettes to fill the gaping

hole within her. Another young woman, Izzy, is best friend to Alyssa, ex-girlfriend to Andrew, and second daughter to Bill and Kim. Izzy has not only dealt with the Parker family's issues, but her mother and father recently died in a car accident, caused by a drunk driver, and her husband beats her on a daily basis.

Not only do these five characters suffer firsthand from the effects of alcohol and drug use, but they all deal with some form of domestic violence, serving either as abuser or as victim. In my script, the men abuse; the women fall victim. This is not meant to be sexist but to look from a feminist perspective at the history of male domestic abuse, the most commonly known form.

With naturalistic dialogue influenced by the works of Eugene O'Neill and Tracy Letts, I have taken a slice of life and put it to the human test. How would the audience be affected? Would their response be emotional or would it be intellectual? Is this the problem of a single individual? Or is it a problem shared by everyone in the family unit? Or does someone in the audience know someone who knows someone with the same dilemma?

By using the convention of the one-act play, I divided my script into four short scenes to give it punch, typical of the form, as opposed to two- to five-acts that move at a much slower pace. This allowed me to present, during a relatively brief time, my rising action, conflict, climax, and dénouement. I define my characters through their interactions with one another and what they say about each other, and each line gives depth to character at the same time that it pushes the plot forward.

I have also interspersed dark comic elements throughout my script, to ensure comic relief. By adding morbid humor during the most serious episodes, my audience can see absurdity in the darkest places.

After years of living in a family in which alcohol addiction goes back many generations on both sides and growing up in a town known for its high alcoholism rate, I have, in this play, faced the past and embraced the future with hope. My protagonist, Alyssa, shows that all is not lost in an addictive family. She represents every individual in abusive families who feels different and alone because of what their relatives do. She fights against what seems to be the inevitable but has no desire to make the same mistakes. She embodies all individuals who have chosen to take a different path, and those who have taken the wrong path but have found their way back. Alyssa symbolizes hope in the face of everything that seems hopeless.

SCENE ONE

Lights rise on the Parker family home, somewhere in the hills of Deerfield, Wisconsin. It's a cold Thursday evening in July. The living room is on stage left with a dining room on stage right. The décor suggests a middle class family with a messy lifestyle. The house is filled with clutter including, boxes, papers, and other random findings. The living room has a large sofa, a very well used recliner, an end table, and another chair off to the far stage left side. In the dining room, paper, dirty plates, old food, and beer cans cover a standard wooden table. Four wooden chairs surround the table and to stage right is a small desk with a bar area next to it. The main entrance way is up center. A staircase upstage left leads to the second-story bedrooms. Another door, on far stage left, leads to the bathroom. An open entryway stage right leads to the kitchen.

Kim, the mother, is a 50-year-old, plump busybody. She is also a self-proclaimed recovering alcoholic. It has been three years since she has had a drink, but she smokes three packs a day. When she isn't smoking, she is eating chocolate to help her cope with alcohol withdrawals. Two years ago, her husband, Bill, who is 62 years old, had a horrific work accident at his construction site. Bill seriously injured his back and shoulder. Kim is now addicted to his prescription medication, Vicodin, while Bill's alcohol intake has escalated. He is severely affected mentally, physically and emotionally.

Bill sits in his recliner, feet up, beer in one hand, remote in the other, dog on his lap and a pyramid of cans on the table next to him. He faces down stage left at the television, which may or may not be present on the stage corner.

KIM

(Off. In kitchen. We can tell she's eating.) I don't know why you can't just wait until our daughter gets home to do that.

BILL

Jesus Christ . . . Shut your flappin' lips, woman! I'll do what I wanna do under my own damn roof. I built this roof . . .

KIM

(Entering with her mouth full, a dishrag in one hand and a cigarette in the other.) With your own bare hands. I know. I was here, don't cha remember?

BILL

Oh, yeah. You sat on your fat ass, drinkin' wine and harpin' at me, "Hurry up, Willy!"

KIM

(Puts the rag down on the table, cigarette in the ashtray and starts picking up cans and brings them off into the kitchen.) Stop that now. Our children are coming home this evening for the first visit in a very long time. We need to clean up this mess and you need to be on your best behavior.

BILL

I always am, aren't I? *(He pats the dog, Buddy.)* I am, aren't I, ole Buddy?

KIM

(She re-enters with chocolate in her hand.) Yeah, we'll see about that.

BILL

So, why are they all comin' home again?

KIM

(She begins frantically cleaning up the house again.) You're kidding? *(He shakes his head.)* Your daughter is getting married in two days. *(Pause. Under her breath.)* Why, I never . . .

BILL

(Leaps from his chair in a sudden rage. The dog remains on the chair next to him.) What? Never what?

KIM

(Caught off guard, but somehow used to this behavior.) Honey, now you know . . .

BILL

All you ever do is call me stupid . . .

KIM

I did *not* call you anything of the sort, Willy. *(She crosses toward him, nurturing and calming.)* You know I love you. I just get a little frustrated sometimes . . .

BILL

(Interrupting.) But this wasn't my fault.

KIM

Bill, please.

BILL

I'm just sayin' is all.

KIM

How many times have we been through this?

BILL

I don't know. You tell me.

KIM

Willy, I'm sorry. Okay? What more do you want from me?

BILL

My *life* back.

KIM

(Overlapping.) I . . .

BILL

(Overlapping.) I wanna go to work.

KIM

(Overlapping.) I know . . .

BILL

(Overlapping.) And you. Look at you.

KIM

Bill, please.

Through this, Kim is still cleaning the table off. She picks up a bottle of prescription medication and holds it for a moment longer than necessary. Bill watches. She puts down the bottle and goes back to eating her chocolate and cleaning.

BILL

How many of them things ya got in ya right now?

KIM

What?

BILL

Them pills. Ya think I don't see what goes on 'round here?

KIM

Well, I . . .

BILL

I told you, I ain't stupid, woman.

KIM

I know. I never said you were.

BILL

I seen the empty bottles in the trash. You don't hide 'em too well. Plus, you walk 'round here in a trance somedays.

KIM

I know, I'm just tired, that's all.

BILL

And drugged outta your mind?

KIM

Sometimes, I take one or two just to take the edge off.

BILL

Uh-huh.

KIM

Bill, please.

BILL

Don't worry. Secret's safe with me. *(He sits back down and puts his empty beer can on the top of the pyramid.)* Get me another one, wouldja?

KIM

No. I won't. Not right now. You need to sober up some before the kids arrive.

BILL

What? You think they're gonna be ashamed? Or . . . shocked?

KIM

No. I just want to enjoy tonight. And I can't enjoy it if you're . . .

BILL

(He returns the same look reminding her he knows her secret.) Get me another one.

KIM

(Gives in with a sigh, knowing she's just as guilty.) Okay.

Kim reluctantly exits to the kitchen to get Bill another beer. Bill picks up the remote control and lets his head fall back into the recliner.

TELEVISION (VOICEOVER)

. . . Clouds will clear this evening for sun tomorrow. High 72 with a Low 57. Sun will continue into the weekend with High of 88 and Low of 70 on Saturday. Clouds will return on Sunday . . .

During the voiceover, Bill starts to snore. Just as the forecast for Saturday ends, the up center door swings open. Andrew, their 29-year-old son, enters with a small bag over his shoulder. He looks a mess, as if he hasn't showered or slept in days. Bill is startled awake with the slam of the door. A bit confused, he grabs the remote and flips off the television.

BILL

What the . . . ? Who . . . ? (*Bill gathers himself and notices Andrew standing inside the door.*) Well, I'll be . . .

ANDREW

Hey, pa.

BILL

How ya doin', son?

ANDREW

Eh, could be better. Could be worse.

BILL

Take off your shoes. Come on in.

ANDREW

I think I will. (*Calls off into the kitchen in a sweet voice.*) Momma? Hey, momma, I'm home.

KIM

(*Off.*) I'll be right there. Make yourself comfortable, darling. Would you like something to drink?

ANDREW

Got any light beer?

BILL

Hell no, we don't, boy. Ain't you know your momma don't drink no more? She's the only one who ever bought that stuff. (*No answer.*) You'd know that if . . .

KIM

(*Peaks from kitchen door, chewing.*) No, honey. Dad's Old Style is all we have right now. I can run to the store to pick you up some, if you'd like.

ANDREW

Nah, we can do that tomorrow. I'll deal with it.

Andrew crosses over to the stairs, where he tosses his bag to the floor. Then, he crosses to sit on the sofa.

BILL

Damn straight ya will.

ANDREW

So how've *you* been, old man?

BILL

Hangin' in there. One day at a time. *(Pause. Bill takes a good, hard look at Andrew.)* What the hell you doin' with yourself, boy? Ya look like hell.

ANDREW

Shut up.

BILL

Well, excuse me for askin'.

ANDREW

I'm just not in the mood right now. It's been a long day.

BILL

I hear ya. Everyday's a long day 'round here. *(Pause.)* So . . . tell me why things are so hard for *you*?

ANDREW

(Getting antsy and fed up with the questions.) Look, *dad*, I came here to see my baby sister get married and to see mom. Get off my back.

Kim enters chewing some more chocolate and with an Old Style beer in each hand and crosses to give them to the men. She sits next to Andrew on the sofa and lights a cigarette.

KIM

So how are you doin'?' *(She brushes hair from his face.)* You look tired, sweetie.

ANDREW

I'm exhausted. It's been a long couple of days trying to get here.

KIM

Couple of days? You only live eight hours away . . .

ANDREW

Look, I'm tired. And sore. I don't really wanna get into it.

KIM

Okay. Well, if you need to talk . . .

ANDREW

Thanks, mom. Just not right now.

KIM

Okay, sweetie.

ANDREW

Do you mind if I just sit here, drink my beer, and watch some T.V.?

KIM

Of course. *(She does not move from where she is sitting, but instead licks her finger to wipe dirt off of his cheek but nothing comes off.)* Is that a bruise on your cheek?

ANDREW

I don't know. Maybe. Mom . . .? *(He lifts his beer and gestures toward the television Kim gets the hint.)*

KIM

Sure. Whatever you'd like. *(She rises.)* If you need anything, you let me know.

ANDREW

Thanks, momma.

Kim exits off into the kitchen with an armful of beer cans from the pyramid. Andrew and Bill sit in silence and drink.

BILL

So . . . why're *you* so damn bitter?

ANDREW

I said I don't wanna get into it. Besides, you wouldn't get it.

BILL

Try me. I may act crazy, but that's just to keep your momma on her toes. I understand things, even if she don't think I do.

ANDREW

No, thanks.

BILL

You gotta talk sometime, ain't ya?

ANDREW

Well, not here, not this weekend.

BILL

I thought you was tryin' to stay a whole week. Didn't you get the time off from that silly fast food job ya got?

ANDREW

Assistant Manager. Sit-down restaurant, not fast food. And yes, I got it off, but . . .

BILL

You like us that much, do ya?

ANDREW

It has nothin' to do with you guys.

Kim enters and continues to clean up the dining room area. While she is doing this she has another cigarette hanging from her mouth.

KIM

You boys finally having a nice talk?

ANDREW

Sure.

BILL

Why, yes, Kimmy, I think we are.

KIM

Good. I knew things would work out if you two just . . .

Doorbell rings.

KIM

Ohhh! It's my baby girl! Come on in, darlin'!

The upstage center door swings open and Alyssa, a young lady of 24 rushes in, drops her bags, and runs into her mother's arms.

ALYSSA

Hey, mamma! How are you? I've missed you so much.

KIM

(Releases the embrace and steps back to look at her daughter.) I'm doing great. And you? You look like you're doing wonderful. Have you lost some weight?

ALYSSA

Yeah, only about fifty pounds. *(She spins to show off.)*

KIM

Fifty pounds? My lord, girl . . .

ALYSSA

I know. Had to for my career. No way I was gonna make it as an actress with that extra weight.

KIM

Is this all just recently or . . . ?

ALYSSA

Well, about two years now. *(Kim gives a look of disappointment.)* I know, I know. I've been busy, momma, finally making a name for myself out there.

KIM

I know, but don't you have any time to send me a picture or something?

ALYSSA

I'm sorry. *(Pause.)* But I got into a new film. You're looking at the next Lady in Purple Hat #2. *(She laughs.)* But seriously. It's a paid gig. Some big money. And it'll help me break into other things. I actually have four scenes, with lines. *(No one seems to really understand or acknowledge her successes.)*

BILL

Well, anyway, at least you're finally home, sweet pea.

ALYSSA

I am, daddy, and I'll be here a few days. And I promise I'll keep in better contact.

BILL

We know. *(He rises.)* So, come on over here and give your papa a big hug.

Kim and Andrew just look on as they embrace. Kim feels left out and Andrew is angry because he sees the connection he's always wanted with his father but has never had.

ALYSSA

Still drinkin' that stuff? It'll kill you, ya know?

BILL

Don't go givin' me lectures. That's what I keep *her* around for. I lived through much worse; a few beers won't kill me.

ALYSSA

No, but it sure will make you a little chubby . . . (*She pokes him in the belly and laughs.*)

BILL

That ain't funny.

ALYSSA

Sure it is.

BILL

Just cause you lost your baby fat . . .

ALYSSA

And a lot more than that.

ANDREW

Would you two just stop? You're makin' me sick.

BILL

Hey, now, Aly. If ya get on me, ya better get on your momma, too. She's been eatin' chocolate like . . .

KIM

(*Interrupting.*) Alyssa, why don't you take your things up to your old room?

ALYSSA

I still have a room? Wow. Didn't expect that.

BILL

Did ya think we'd give it away?

ALYSSA

I guess I just figured after I moved out of here . . . after high school . . . you would've cleaned it out and made it something else. A sewing room or a den, maybe a smoking room, or at least an office or something.

KIM

Oh, no, sweetie. Actually, well . . . (*A little awkward. She changes the subject.*) Anyway, your father doesn't work anymore.

ANDREW

(*As he rises from the sofa.*) In that case, I'm gonna go up to my room, too.

KIM

Well, honey, we . . . *(She stops and the two kids look at her waiting for her to finish.)*

BILL

Your room isn't "your room" anymore.

ANDREW

What?!

KIM

Now, honey, don't blow this out of proportion, but . . .

ANDREW

No. Fuck that. You do everything for your perfect little girl, and I get shit. I got into a fuckin' fight just to be here.

Everyone stops and looks at Andrew, a bit confused. He glances at his beer, then raises it and chugs the rest before throwing the can across the room and storming off to the kitchen.

KIM

Bill, you need to do something . . .

Kim looks to him, almost pleading. Bill looks at her and shrugs his shoulders.

BILL

Woman, don't get started. Let him be. He'll drink himself back to happiness.

Andrew has come back into the doorway of the kitchen and watches as he drinks another beer. The family doesn't know he is there.

KIM

That's where you're wrong. That's what sent him to jail the first time.

ALYSSA

Wait. What? Is this criminal stuff a frequent occurrence? Have I really missed that much? I mean . . . I remember the first time he got in trouble.

ANDREW

You remember because it was your fault. *(The family looks back to see his anger.)*

ALYSSA

Andrew, that was how many years ago? You still blame me?

KIM

(As she lights another cigarette.) Kids, please.

ANDREW

(Not listening to Kim.) Eight. And yes.

ALYSSA

What?

ANDREW

If you hadn't insisted I go to the walk-in clinic . . .

ALYSSA

Your head was bleeding. It could have been serious . . .

ANDREW

Bull shit, Al! I told you to take me home . . .

ALYSSA

Andrew, look, I just wanted to . . .

ANDREW

To get me in trouble? To seem like the hero? *(No answer. He is up in her face, but she does not look at him.)* What?

ALYSSA

I care about you, and I wasn't going to let you die in a car accident because I wanted to protect you from getting in trouble. I knew you were drinking, but I didn't know it wasn't your car.

ANDREW

Whatever.

ALYSSA

Honestly.

ANDREW

Whatever. *(Not sure what else to say.)* 'Cause ya know what? I got into a fight, got the shit kicked outta me and then stole a car. All just to be here for my little sissy's wedding.

The room is filled with an awkward silence.

ALYSSA

It never ends with you, does it?

ANDREW

No, I guess I'll just never be the prodigal son.

KIM

Andrew, we never expected. . .

ANDREW

I know.

ALYSSA

Andy, can we just let it go and . . .

ANDREW

(Laughs to himself.) Fuck this. Not worth it. *(He glances around the room once more, giving them a final chance to speak up, but nothing is said.)* I guess I'll be sleeping in the guest room. Goodnight.

Kim is near tears. She looks down and fiddles with her hands, grabs a cigarette from a pack on the table and lights it before she returns to cleaning.

ALYSSA

What's his problem?

Alyssa gathers her belongings and heads upstairs toward her bedroom.

BILL

What the hell's gotten into that boy? We ain't got no guest room.

Kim continues to smoke and Bill just sits in his chair with the dog, watching television and drinking beer. Lights fade.

SCENE TWO

Lights rise on the Parker family home. It's the next morning, Friday, around 10:00 a.m.

Andrew comes down the stairs, looks around the room, crosses over to the sofa and sits next to the dog, Buddy.

ANDREW

Hey, Bud. Sorry you have to live like this, pal. Won't be much longer though, right? You must be like fourteen years old now. *(The dog is silent and does not move.)* Well . . . I know I could use a good stiff drink to start my morning off right. Especially while I'm staying here.

Andrew crosses to the bar and grabs a bottle from the top shelf. He continues to talk to the dog as he gets out a glass and pours the drink. No ice, no mixer, just straight liquor.

ANDREW

I suppose this might seem a little crazy. Talkin' to a dog. A dog that's probably deaf and blind. *(Pause.)* Things sure do change quick, ya know? *(He looks at the dog who doesn't reply.)* Huh.

Andrew thinks for a moment and then walks over to the dog's dishes next to the kitchen doorway. He picks up the water dish and brings it to the bar.

ANDREW

You need somethin' to drink, too. Dish is dry.

He fills the bowl with liquor.

ANDREW

Come here, Buddy.

Andrew goes to get the dog or calls the dog to him (possibly persuaded by treats, if using a real dog).

ANDREW

Let's go in the kitchen and have ourselves a drink, shall we?

Andrew exits into the kitchen as Alyssa comes down the stairs still in her pajamas, hair all a mess. She has obviously just rolled out of bed. In her hand, she is carrying a child's toy. She crosses over to the sofa, takes a seat and turns on the television.

TELEVISION (VOICEOVER)

. . . deaths due to alcohol are on the rise this year. This accident is the sixth in Dane County due to drunk driving. Luckily, no one was killed and only one man was injured. Next up on your morning news is a brief . . .

Alyssa turns off the television quickly as she hears footsteps coming down the stairs. She hides the toy in between cushions of the sofa before Kim enters and crosses to Alyssa.

KIM

Good morning, Aly.

ALYSSA

Mornin', momma.

KIM

I'm surprised to see you awake. I thought I heard you up most of the night.

ALYSSA

That'd mean you must've been up most of the night.

KIM

I couldn't sleep.

ALYSSA

Did I keep you awake? Was I too loud?

KIM

No. I get all nervous going to bed when the family's on pins and needles.

ALYSSA

You probably haven't had that feeling in a while.

KIM

Every night. I worry about you kids even though you're not here and may not worry about us.

ALYSSA

You *know* that's not it. Please don't start this. Not right now.

Brief pause while Kim crosses to the dining room table, grabs her cigarettes and lights one.

KIM

So, what were you doing up all night?

ALYSSA
Sifting through memories.

KIM
Good ones?

ALYSSA
Good and bad.

KIM
Wanna share?

ALYSSA
Remember Izzy?

KIM
Of course, I do. She's another daughter to us. *(She grabs her chocolate, breaks off a piece and eats it.)*

ALYSSA
Yeah. I was just looking through old photo albums under my bed and . . . *(Fades off. Pause.)* Mom? Can I ask you about something?

KIM
Of course. What?

ALYSSA
I found this in my room. *(She pulls the toy out from the sofa cushions and crosses to her mother.)* I was just curious where it came from. I couldn't for the life of me figure it out.

KIM
Well . . . sometimes the kids come over and they sleep in there. It's the only room with a double bed and . . .

ALYSSA
What kids?

KIM
Well, you see . . . *(Kim fades off as she finishes one cigarette and lights another one off the ambers of the last one.)*

ALYSSA
Mom?

KIM
Yeah. Sorry. *(Pause.)* Look, Aly, it's not that easy to tell you this but . . .

ALYSSA

But . . . what? Andrew's love child or something? *(She puts the toy on the table.)*

KIM

Now, Alyssa, can't you two just get along?

ALYSSA

I was kidding, mom. *(To herself.)* But I wouldn't put it past him. *(Back to Kim.)* So . . . ?

KIM

Sit down.

Both sit down at the dining room table.

KIM

Well, see, Izzy and her kids need a place to stay once in awhile, so we let them stay here with us. I'm not sure if you know, Aly, but Izzy's parents were both killed by a drunk driver about six months ago.

Andrew enters before Alyssa can reply. He has the dog in his arms and a can of spray paint in one hand. He is already feeling better than he was.

ANDREW

Good morrow, my ladies.

ALYSSA

Um . . . good morning.

KIM

My goodness. You're awake, too? You two never got up this early, for as long as I can remember . . .

ANDREW

Years, mom. People change.

KIM

Trust me. I know this.

ANDREW

(Sarcastic.) Oh yes, Queen of Changes.

KIM

Yes, I have changed. And maybe you need to, too.

ANDREW

Fuck. I don't wanna do this first thing . . . *(Stops himself.)* I got things to do.

KIM

What're you doing with Bud. . . *and* a can of spray paint?

ANDREW

I have a car . . . that needs a paint job.

KIM

Andrew, you'd better . . .

ANDREW

Mom, please, like you care . . .

KIM

I do, and I think you need to think about what you've done . . .

ALYSSA

Whoa! You still smell like liquor from last night . . .

KIM

Andrew, dear, go take a cold shower. Then, come back and talk to us.

ANDREW

Psshh. Whatever.

Andrew still holds the dog and spray paint and rushes off upstairs.

KIM

(Jokingly.) What am I gonna do with that boy?

She rises, grabs her cigarettes, lights another one and continues to clean from yesterday.

ALYSSA

Mom . . . don't you see his problem . . . ?

KIM

He's fine. Just going through some troubled times.

ALYSSA

He stole a car. And from the looks of it, plans on keeping it. *(Pause.)* I think he's been drinking already.

Kim crosses to the bar and sees the open bottle of liquor. She exits into the kitchen and immediately returns with the dog dish in hand.

KIM

Oh no, he didn't. He got the god damned dog drunk, too.

ALYSSA

What?

Kim puts the dish on top of the bar. They both sit at the dining room table.

ALYSSA

I told you he has a problem . . .

KIM

I know. I know. *(She starts to shake in frustration.)*

ALYSSA

Mom?

KIM

(As if possessed.) What? What? I'm fine. I'm fine. I just need a moment.

ALYSSA

Okay. I'm going to go grab something to drink. Want anything?

KIM

No. Just a moment . . . alone.

Alyssa shakes her head and exits into the kitchen. Kim thinks she has left, but Alyssa peaks her head out of the kitchen entryway. Kim rises, grabs a bottle of pills, dumps a few into the palm of her hand and crosses to the bar. Kim grabs the dog's bowl, glances up the stairs and washes the pills down with the liquor in the bowl. Alyssa, shocked, disappears into the kitchen. Kim sighs, sits at the table and lights another cigarette.

ALYSSA

(Off. In kitchen.) Mom?

KIM

Yeah, sweetie?

ALYSSA

(Off.) Can I drink this orange juice?

KIM

Have whatever you'd like, honey.

ALYSSA

(*Off.*) Thanks, mom.

Kim sucks down her cigarette and has a bite of chocolate, slowly calming down. Alyssa re-enters and sits at the table.

KIM

I'm gonna go clean up the kitchen.

ALYSSA

Okay.

Alyssa gets up from the table and crosses over to the sofa and sits. With a grumble, Bill enters, looking very hungover.

BILL

Hi.

ALYSSA

Hey, daddy.

BILL

Why so blue? Ain't ya gettin' excited for that weddin' tomorrow?

ALYSSA

Of course. It's just . . .

BILL

Cold feet? (*She shakes her head no.*) A lot of work?

ALYSSA

Yeah. A *lot* of work. Financially, physically, emotionally.

Bill walks over to his recliner and sits.

BILL

Where's that fiancé of yours?

ALYSSA

We decided that when we got here, we wanted to spend a few days apart and not see each other till the wedding. (*Bill nods. There is no verbal response.*) Yeah. Not easy, but it'll be worth it tomorrow.

BILL

Sure.

Bill reaches for the remote to turn on the television. Awkward silence.

ALYSSA

Well, I need to go get dressed.

Bill smiles and Alyssa exits upstairs.

BILL

Buddy! *(No answer.)* Buddy? Hey, Kim, you seen Bud?

KIM

(Off.) No, I haven't. He's probably passed out in a drunken stupor with your son.

Kim enters, much calmer. Bill looks at her suspiciously. She crosses to the bar and puts the top on the bottle Andrew left open.

BILL

Ya drinkin' again, woman? What the hell ya talkin' about? *(Pause.)* Ya gonna answer me? Or just stand there and stare?

KIM

Your son filled the dog's water bowl with liquor.

BILL

What?

KIM

You heard me.

Andrew enters from upstairs cleaned up with the dog in his arms (a fake one has replaced the real dog). He crosses to the sofa and sits, setting the dog next to him on the far side of the sofa.

BILL

Ya fed Buddy today?

ANDREW

Yeah, yeah, he's all good.

BILL

Ya fed him some food?

ANDREW
What else do you eat?

BILL
Don't play dumb with me, boy.

ANDREW
I don't know what you're talking about.

KIM
Look, guys. One weekend. No trouble. That's all I ask.

ANDREW
You got it, ma.

BILL
Yup.

KIM
Please, for Aly.

Alyssa enters from upstairs all cleaned up. She has walked in on the last line.

ALYSSA
What for Aly?

KIM
Nothing.

ALYSSA
Uh-huh.

Alyssa crosses over to the sofa and sits next to Andrew.

ALYSSA
So . . . I was thinking about asking Izzy to stand in the wedding tomorrow.

ANDREW
Izzy? Like my ex-girlfriend, Izzy?

ALYSSA
Like my best friend from high school, Izzy.

ANDREW
She was my girlfriend before you were friends with her.

ALYSSA

No. You met her because I hung out with her and we were always here.

ANDREW

Whatever.

ALYSSA

Is that all you can say? Why can't you just admit it?

ANDREW

Admit what?

ALYSSA

That you're wrong.

ANDREW

When I'm not?

ALYSSA

When you *are*. Like right now.

ANDREW

Shut up, Al.

ALYSSA

Andy . . .

ANDREW

What?

ALYSSA

Can we please stop fighting? We're not teenagers anymore.

ANDREW

Whatever.

ALYSSA

Grow up. Take a look in the mirror, Andy.

ANDREW

Fuck you. And don't call me Andy.

ALYSSA

If you call me Al, I'll call you Andy. You know I don't like being called Al.

ANDREW

That's why I do it.

ALYSSA

You're gonna have to grow up sooner or later, ya know?

ANDREW

Shut up, Al.

ALYSSA

No. I've shut up for too long already. Personally, I'd like to have my family back.

BILL

Then, why'd ya leave in the first place?

ALYSSA

Because I couldn't handle this, the fights and drinking and . . . I just needed to pursue my dreams and I'm sorry but my dreams can't come true by staying in a small, farm-country village.

KIM

Alyssa, please . . .

ALYSSA

No. Not this time. I can't just let it go again.

KIM

Alyssa, please, don't . . .

ALYSSA

Don't you ever wonder why I left and didn't come home?

KIM

Well . . .

ANDREW

Nope.

ALYSSA

Of course, *you* don't. But, mom? Dad?

Through all of this, Bill just sits and listens, silently.

ALYSSA

Guys . . . I'm getting married tomorrow and starting a whole new life. I want you all in that life, but . . . (*She stops herself.*)

KIM

But?

ALYSSA

I'm afraid. I'm a very different person now, living a very different life. And I just need to know that all of you . . .

The doorbell rings. Kim jumps up, caught off guard, but happy that moment is over. She quickly runs to answer the door.

KIM

Izzy! Hello! How have you been, sweetheart?

Izzy quickly comes inside and embraces Kim. Kim holds her tighter and longer than she did Alyssa. Alyssa looks on, confused.

IZZY

Great! And you?

KIM

Better every day.

IZZY

I'm glad to hear you're still doing so well. Keep it up, mom.

Izzy releases the embrace before Kim. Kim still doesn't acknowledge that both Alyssa and Andrew are watching.

IZZY

I just wanted to stop by and grab a toy the kids left upstairs.

Bill rises and crosses to Izzy by the door. He gives her a big hug before she can even see Andrew and Alyssa looking on.

BILL

Hey, Iz. Good to see ya, gal. It's been a few weeks.

IZZY

Hey, pa. You're lookin' . . .

BILL

Like hell? I know. Don't get on me 'bout that right away. Ya just got in the door.

IZZY

I know. I just like giving you a hard time.

BILL

Yeah. Yeah.

Bill laughs and exits into the kitchen. Andrew rises from the sofa and crosses to Izzy.

IZZY

Well, well, well, how about that?

ANDREW

How are you, Izabel?

IZZY

Great. Never been better. And you?

ANDREW

I've seen better days. But . . . it's good to see ya. I'll see ya around this weekend?

IZZY

Yeah, of course. See ya.

Andrew winks at Izzy and she smiles. He exits upstairs.

KIM

I think he's still smitten with you.

IZZY

Oh no, no, no. Sorry, ma, keep dreamin'.

KIM

Oh, I can try, can't I?

Alyssa rises and crosses behind Kim by the door. Kim finally realizes that Alyssa is standing there.

KIM

Well, I'm gonna leave you two to get to catchin' up. We'll stay outta your way.

ALYSSA

(Simultaneously with Izzy.) Thanks, momma.

IZZY

(Simultaneously with Alyssa.) Thanks, mom.

Alyssa and Izzy look at each other. There is an awkward pause as Kim exits into the kitchen. Alyssa leads Izzy into the living room and they sit. A moment of awkward silence fills the room.

ALYSSA

So . . . you look great!

IZZY

Are you kidding me? I got married, gained at least twenty pounds. *(Pause.)* And I have a few more pounds coming too.

ALYSSA

You mean, you're . . . ?

IZZY

(Unenthusiastic.) Pregnant? Sure am.

ALYSSA

Married, huh? And pregnant? Congratulations, Iz.

IZZY

Thanks. It's actually number three.

ALYSSA

I should have known. My mom said you stayed here with the kids or something. Didn't get the whole story but . . . *(Pause.)* Anyway, how can you still work with that many kids?

IZZY

I don't work. *(Sarcastic.)* My husband is a lawyer, so I get to play housewife.

ALYSSA

But what about your . . . ?

IZZY

Dreams? Ambitions? Goals? They all seemed to fade once I had the first baby. She changed my life.

ALYSSA

Wow. That's great.

IZZY

Yeah. Not really.

ALYSSA

What do you mean?

IZZY

I love my kids more than anything in the world, I do, but . . . *(Pause.)* Nevermind.

ALYSSA

(Pause.) So, where are the kids right now?

IZZY

Uh . . . well, my mom used to take them on Fridays for a little while so I could run errands.

ALYSSA

But I thought your parents were . . .?

IZZY

Yeah. *(Pause.)* I have a sitter now for a few hours every Friday.

ALYSSA

I'm so sorry, Iz.

IZZY

Don't be. *(Pause.)* Your parents have been wonderful to me. I have another mom and dad, a second family.

ALYSSA

(Pause.) Can I ask . . . *why* you stay here sometimes?

IZZY

I just have bad days. I need an escape. It's not easy having nothing but kids under three to talk to.

ALYSSA

I can imagine. But where's your husband?

IZZY

Well, he leaves early in the morning. And works late. Every night. Typical life of a lawyer, I guess.

ALYSSA

Oh.

IZZY

So, enough about me. What about you?

ALYSSA

What about me?

IZZY

Why haven't you visited? Or called?

ALYSSA

I was afraid of this.

IZZY

Of what?

ALYSSA

The past. I was going through old pictures last night in my room. I did a lot of thinking. About you, about them (*Indicating her family.*).

IZZY

And?

ALYSSA

And I want it all back.

IZZY

It's not that easy, Alyssa. Things are different around here.

ALYSSA

I know, but . . .

IZZY

But we should all drop everything and welcome you back into our family?

ALYSSA

I didn't say that. I just . . . (*Pause.*) Wait, *our* family?

IZZY

Look, forget it.

Andrew enters from upstairs carrying a screwdriver. He crosses to the main entrance way. The girls see him.

ALYSSA

What in the world are you doing with a screwdriver?

ANDREW

Gotta get the plates off.

Andrew continues to exit out the main entrance. Alyssa watches after him, shaking her head.

ALYSSA

This just keeps getting better . . .

IZZY

(Long pause.) So . . . tell me about him, your fiancé?

ALYSSA

(At the mention of her fiancé, Alyssa seems to forget the past scene. She smiles.) He's amazing, Iz. He's smart and handsome. The first guy I've ever felt truly connected with. *(She fades off. Sigh.)* But . . . I feel like I'm not good enough or something . . . *(Pause.)* It's almost too perfect. I've kept so much from him. This. *(Indicating the house and family.)* My family . . . Well, it's just not who I am anymore.

IZZY

Just because you've changed doesn't mean your family isn't part of you.

ALYSSA

You must see the same psychiatrists as me, huh? Guess how many different shrinks I've had tell me that?

IZZY

Well, it's true.

ALYSSA

I know that. And I still want to be a part of my family. I'm just different than them. I'm 24 years old, and I can't even go out in public without feeling completely alone. *(Pause.)* Not to mention . . . I constantly wonder why I don't have the desire to drink like they do.

IZZY

Aly, that doesn't make you an outcast . . .

ALYSSA

I know. I just wonder if I were to want a drink . . .

IZZY

You can have a drink once in awhile. It won't kill you.

ALYSSA

It runs in my blood, you really believe that . . .

IZZY

Hey, now. Your mom quit drinking.

ALYSSA

(Pause.) Until this morning.

IZZY

What are you talking . . . ?

ALYSSA

She had some liquor. Out of the dog's bowl.

IZZY

Are you sure *you* haven't been drinking?

ALYSSA

I know. It sounds absurd. But I swear.

IZZY

She wouldn't do that. I know her.

ALYSSA

I saw it with my own two eyes.

IZZY

You guys being home must have stressed her out. She's been worried about it for weeks. I can't believe she'd resort to alcohol just because . . .

ALYSSA

Are you blaming Andy and me?

IZZY

Well, she hasn't drank in a very long time. Put two and two together.

ALYSSA

Look, she was drinking.

IZZY

But, she's been doing so well. She wouldn't lie to me.

ALYSSA

She hasn't told *me* the truth a day in her life and *I'm* her daughter. People don't just change overnight. (*Pause.*) I can't believe you think I'm . . .

IZZY

Well . . . (*Unsure of what to say. She thinks for a moment.*) Ya know, now that I think about it. I thought I smelled booze when I first walked in, but I just assumed . . . (*Fades off, in disbelief.*)

ALYSSA

Yeah.

IZZY

Oh my . . . (*She stops herself and thinks.*) Wait. The dog's bowl?

ALYSSA

Yeah. Andy thought it was a good idea to give Buddy a morning drink. (*She points to the motionless dog on the sofa.*) I think he's passed out.

IZZY

And so your mom took the rest in the bowl and drank it?

ALYSSA

Yeah. She thought I went into the kitchen, but I watched her take a handful of my dad's pills . . .

IZZY

She's been having some trouble with her hip, and since dad . . . *your* dad doesn't take them, she uses them.

ALYSSA

. . . and she washed them down with the liquor in the dog's bowl.

IZZY

You've got to be kidding.

ALYSSA

It's fucked up, I know.

IZZY

Could you not use that language around the baby? I don't want him to grow up . . .

ALYSSA

Yeah, sure. You've changed a lot, Iz.

IZZY

I know. But don't we all?

ALYSSA

Some more than others.

Both sit with fear on their faces, realizing their differences and the years of a friendship growing apart.

ALYSSA

Iz?

IZZY

Yeah?

ALYSSA

This may seem a little crazy with such short notice, but it's so low key, I was wondering if you'd be in my wedding tomorrow?

IZZY

Wow. Really?

ALYSSA

Yeah. I understand if you can't . . .

IZZY

You really want me there?

ALYSSA

Of course, I do. I miss you. And I can see you're part of the family now.

IZZY

I'd love to. I already have a sitter since I was planning on being there anyway. Your parents invited me a while back. *(Pause.)* But, Aly?

ALYSSA

Yeah?

IZZY

Before I can accept, I have a confession to make.

ALYSSA

Okay.

IZZY

I've kind-of been living here on and off. *(Pause. Alyssa just stares at her.)* Your parents have taken me in. They gave me and the kids your room and . . . *(Fades off.)*

ALYSSA

(Clearly unhappy.) Huh.

IZZY

I just need to get away sometimes. My husband. He isn't home much, but when he is, it's not a good environment for the kids.

ALYSSA

Does he . . . ?

IZZY

(She nods her head yes.) Uh-huh.

Both women sit silently for a moment. Alyssa is in shock at being replaced in her family under such circumstances. Izzy is scared and shaking. She glances to the dining room table where the toy sits.

IZZY

Well, I'd better get that toy and head on home. I can't leave the kids alone for too long with the babysitter. She's young and . . .

ALYSSA

Okay.

IZZY

(As she crosses to the table and gets the toy.) I'll see you later on though.

ALYSSA

Yeah. Of course.

IZZY

It's great to see you, Alyssa. I hope we can put everything behind us.

Izzy crosses to the door.

ALYSSA

Yeah. *(Pause.)* Good to see you, too. I guess we'll just have to make some more time to catch up.

IZZY

Yeah. I'd like that.

Izzy exits through the main entrance. Alyssa sits, still in shock and amazement. After a moment, she rises and starts to cross to the kitchen.

ALYSSA

(Calling off.) Mom? Dad? I need to talk to you.

Alyssa exits into the kitchen at stage right. Lights fade.

SCENE THREE

Lights rise on the Parker Family home. It is later that Friday evening, the night before Alyssa's wedding.

Bill is still wearing his pajamas from the morning and has a new pyramid of cans started on the table next to his chair where he sits, currently sleeping and snoring. The dog has not moved. Kim and Alyssa enter from upstairs, talking.

KIM

So, then, it's all set. Your dress is laid out and I made all of the confirmation phone calls this afternoon while you were out.

ALYSSA

Thanks, mom. I don't know what I'd do without you right now.

KIM

That's what moms are for, aren't they?

ALYSSA

I suppose so.

KIM

Drop it. What's done is done.

ALYSSA

(She nods her head.) Sorry about this morning. I didn't mean to attack you about the Izzy thing.

KIM

It's okay. You had every right to know. *(As she reaches the table and lights a cigarette.)* I'm sorry you found out like that.

ALYSSA

I'm glad you guys are helping her out. She needs good people. And . . . if I had to choose a sister . . . it'd be her.

KIM

I'm glad you're taking this all so well.

ALYSSA

So, what's daddy think of this whole wedding ordeal?

KIM

He doesn't say much lately. Unless it's yelling or ordering me to get him another beer.

ALYSSA

Oh.

KIM

He's been hitting the bottle pretty hard ever since the accident. Since he can't go to work, he doesn't have much else to do. It's hard for him to go from building houses to sitting around watching *General Hospital* reruns and infomercials . . . I'll have you know we have four magic bullets now. (*They share a laugh.*) But, sometimes he wakes up, completely out of it, confused. His head isn't right anymore. Sometimes he doesn't even know where he is or who I am. (*Fades off.*)

Alyssa looks over at her father passed out drunk in his chair.

ALYSSA

I had no idea . . .

KIM

Because I was always the . . .

ALYSSA

Mom, you had a lot of . . .

KIM

Excuses, I know.

ALYSSA

You just had a lot to deal with.

KIM

And I still struggle every day, Aly.

ALYSSA

I know, ma. (*Moment of silence.*) Mom?

KIM

Yeah?

ALYSSA

Will you tell me the truth . . . ?

KIM

(*Before she finishes the question.*) I've made some mistakes, yes. Regret every one of them, but I can't do any . . .

ALYSSA

Was one of them this morning?

KIM

(She looks away, not able to look her daughter in the eye, takes a bite of a chocolate bar.)
No. *(Alyssa knows she's lying.)*

ALYSSA

Mom . . . ?

Bill awakens himself with a loud snore. He shifts in his chair, grumbles and looks around the room confused. He glances over to the dining room table where Kim and Alyssa sit.

BILL

(Slurring some of his words.) What's goin' on here? This ain't social hour, woman. And who the hell's that?

KIM

I can socialize if I want to, and damn it, Bill, this is your *daughter*. Lay off the fucking liquor.

BILL

Mind your own damn business, ya filthy hag. Or I'll help ya ta mind it.

Bill rises, stumbling and unsteady. He crosses over to the dining room table and stands upstage of Alyssa. He looks her up and down while she sits, noticeably uncomfortable.

BILL

Oh, *my* daughter? I don't have a daughter no more. My daughter ran off to become some sorta slut in Hollywood.

ALYSSA

Daddy . . . please.

KIM

Bill, get a hold of yourself.

BILL

She done left to be a whore. *(He laughs.)*

ALYSSA

(Overlapping.) Daddy . . .

KIM

(Overlapping.) Bill . . . she's getting married tomorrow. Now I suggest . . .

BILL

I suggest ya quiet your waggin' tongue, woman. *(Both women are silent.)* Now, I don't wanna hear another goddamn word from either of ya.

KIM

Now, Bill. You've had too much to drink and . . .

BILL

Shut up!

ALYSSA

Daddy . . . ?

BILL

Don't you call me that. Not since years ago when ya walked out that fuckin' door.

KIM

Bill, this is your daughter.

BILL

All I see is a dirty, no good tramp. Left her damn family to . . .

ALYSSA

(Softly.) Fuck you!

BILL

Wo-ho-ho. Where'd ya learn that kinda language, sweetie? *(He advances on Alyssa.)*

ALYSSA

Only from the best *(Indicating Bill.)*. What're you doing?

BILL

Come here, sugar. Come to papa!

Bill advances on Alyssa and tries to grab at her inappropriately.

ALYSSA

What are you doing? *(She pushes him away from her, completely shocked.)*

KIM

Bill, what's going on with you?

ALYSSA

(Still in shock.) Look, I can't handle this right now. *(Visibly upset.)* You are *not* my father. *(Pause.)* And I'm walking myself down that aisle tomorrow. I don't want to see your face anywhere near that church!

Alyssa runs into the bathroom at far stage left. Kim stands up to confront Bill who has a deranged look in his eyes.

KIM

What the hell's gotten into you?

BILL

Nothin'. What's gotten into you?

KIM

Not a damn thing . . .

BILL

Ya want something in ya? I got somethin' for ya. *(Again he makes a sexual advance, this time on Kim.)*

KIM

You dirty bastard. I wouldn't touch you . . . Besides, you couldn't get it up if you wanted to.

BILL

See, now that's where I call your bluff, Kimmy. Come here, baby.

Bill grabs Kim's hand and tries to make her touch him.

KIM

Knock it off, Bill. *(He doesn't.)* Stop! *(She pulls away from him.)* What's gotten into you? *(No answer. He grabs another beer and chugs it.)* What are you thinking going after your own daughter like that?

BILL

(Completely out of it, slurring even worse than before.) What're ya talkin' 'bout?

KIM

Bill, please.

BILL

I don't even know what you're sayin', woman. *(Pause while Kim gives a look of shock and disappointment.)* Why don't ya mind your own damn business and go take some more pills? Drink some more liquor, maybe.

KIM

How would you . . . ? I will *not* take this. Not from anyone and especially not from . . .

BILL

A drunk? Ya used to be one.

KIM

And you never used to be like this . . .

Kim's guilt begins to take over. Bill starts to circle around the table towards her at stage right. Kim backs up.

KIM

What're you doing . . . ? Please, don't do this again. Not with the kids in the house . . .

BILL

I can't take this shit anymore, woman. Ya stand there accusin' me of the vilest goddamn things . . .

KIM

I didn't . . .

BILL

That don't mean shit now, does it?

KIM

Bill, not now, please.

BILL

All I ever did was treat ya like a fuckin' queen.

KIM

Bill, stop, please, I'm begging you . . .

BILL

Don't ya ever feel guilty? Don't ya ever feel like slittin' your wrists cause of the way ya fucked up our lives and . . .

KIM

(Finally losing control.) STOP IT! Please. You know there isn't a single day that goes by that I don't wish I were dead. It'd be best for everyone. *(Pause.)* And okay, you kept us together. You kept the family together through all those years. But now, look at you . . .

BILL

Yeah, look at what you've turn me inta.

KIM

Don't you dare blame this on me.

BILL

If you wouldn't a been fightin' with me that morning.

KIM

(On the verge of tears.) That accident was not my fault.

BILL

I was distracted at work because of that argument.

KIM

Bill . . .

BILL

That piece of wall wouldn't have fell over on me had I kept my mind on what I was doin'. But, I was so worried about you . . .

KIM

Bill, please . . . I feel bad enough about everything . . .

BILL

Your guilt doesn't change things, Kimmy . . .

Bill starts to walk towards Kim, a cat-and-mouse game around the table.

BILL

Come here, Kimmy. We can fix all of this right now.

KIM

Bill . . . what're you doing?

BILL

I'm taking care of some business.

KIM

Willy, please. I . . .

BILL

SHUT UP! Not another fuckin' word.

Bill gets around to the bar, as Alyssa peaks out from the bathroom. He grabs a bottle or glass and smashes it against the table. It bounces off, unbroken.

BILL

God damn it . . .

He grabs for a smaller bottle. Again, he slams it against the table. It does not break either. Bill's anger is growing and Kim just watches in anticipation.

BILL

Son of a . . .

He grabs for another bottle, but finds a corkscrew instead.

BILL

Ah-ha!

With the corkscrew in hand, Bill circles the table as Kim backs away from him, scared.

KIM

Bill!

BILL

What'd I say 'bout speakin'?

KIM

I'm sor . . .

BILL

Eh! Shut up!

Kim stops talking and stands to stage left of the table. Bill closes the gap between them. He advances on her and swipes at her arm with the corkscrew. She winces in pain, but there is no visible wound. The corkscrew flies from his grasp, and he stumbles after it.

BILL

God damn it. Outta my way, ya fuckin' bitch!

Bill pushes himself through Kim to down stage of the table where he reaches the corkscrew. As he tries to get it, he kicks it further away from him.

BILL

Ah, you fuckin' bastard . . .

He finally catches up to it, but as he bends down to grab the corkscrew, Alyssa bursts into the room.

ALYSSA

Get back, mom. *(To Bill.)* You're a drunken lunatic.

As Bill looks back, still in a bent-over position, Alyssa uses her foot and pushes him forward. He hits the floor, face first into the corkscrew.

KIM

Alyssa, please, don't hurt him, he's just . . .

BILL

Ya fuckin' crazy . . .

ALYSSA

How dare you, *Bill* . . .

Bill clumsily climbs to his feet, turns around, and lunges at Alyssa. We see blood dripping down his forehead and face. She quickly ducks out of the way. Kim backs off into the living room as Bill stumbles around drunk, swinging at everything, making a mess of the room. The noise is so loud that Andrew appears on the stairs carrying a roll of duct tape.

ANDREW

(As he enters, before he gets a chance to see what is going on.) What the fuck's goin' on down here?

Bill continues to stumble around, swinging and missing and making a complete fool of himself. Alyssa stands in front of Kim, both in the living room, backed into the far upstage left corner.

ALYSSA

Andrew, don't be the hero. Just let him go.

ANDREW

Did he hit you?

KIM

No, honey, he . . .

ALYSSA

He tried to.

KIM

Well, he . . .

ALYSSA

Stop covering for him, mom.

KIM

I'm not. I'm just . . .

ALYSSA

Mom, I saw him.

ANDREW

Momma?

Kim sinks into the sofa.

KIM

He didn't mean it. It's all my fault. I shouldn't have . . .

ANDREW

What? What's your fault?

KIM

If I hadn't fought with him that day . . .

ALYSSA

No, mom, you will *not* play this game.

ANDREW

(Angry and frustrated.) Momma, stop it. Just stop, okay?

Kim is breathing heavy, fighting off tears or a panic attack. Alyssa is trying to comfort her. Andrew is still standing on the stairs, frustrated and angry. Bill finally swings, misses, knocks over his pyramid of cans and lays passed out on the floor.

ALYSSA

Andrew, please. You're not helping. Go back upstairs.

ANDREW

No, I'm gonna tape the asshole's hands behind his back. Someone needs to teach him a lesson.

Andrew tapes Bill's hands behind his back with the duct tape.

ALYSSA

Tying . . . or taping him up is not going to help. (*Pause.*) What are you doing with a roll of Duct Tape anyway?

ANDREW

Got some numbers to cover on the car . . . serial numbers . . . (*Pause while he continues to tape Bill's hands.*) Fuck, I'm outta tape! Now what do you want me to do with him?

KIM

Leave him there.

ALYSSA

Go and do what you need to do, Andrew. Buy some more tape or something. We're fine.

ANDREW

Don't tell me what to do, Al.

ALYSSA

Just leave, please.

ANDREW

No. Fuck you, li'l sis. I'm sick of *you* prancin' around here . . .

ALYSSA

Andrew, I'm just trying to help . . .

ANDREW

You think I can't help myself? I don't need your help.

ALYSSA

I didn't say that.

ANDREW

That's what you implied. That's what you always . . .

ALYSSA

Andrew, please. For the sake of mom, grow up!

ANDREW

Fuck it. I'm outta here. Have a great wedding tomorrow.

Andrew goes back upstairs to gather his belongings. Kim is on the verge of breaking down into tears.

ALYSSA

Mom, please don't cry. It'll be okay, I promise.

Andrew re-enters down the stairs and quickly heads straight for the door.

ALYSSA

Andrew, please don't go.

ANDREW

Don't forget to feed the dog when he wakes up. *(Pause.)* Oh yeah, and congratulations. Here's a gift for ya. Make sure to cover the numbers. I'll be stayin' with a friend. Don't bother findin' me.

Andrew hands her keys to the stolen car and leaves the house.

ALYSSA

(Yelling after him.) You stupid son of a bitch! *(Stops herself before losing control. Back to Kim.)* Sorry, mom. *(Pause.)* So, what am I supposed to do with this?

KIM

(Not paying attention to Alyssa.) Aly, what have I done? I've ruined our whole family.

ALYSSA

It's not your fault, mom. Please don't cry . . .

KIM

I lied to you. To him. To everyone.

ALYSSA

What're you talking about?

KIM

I did have a drink this morning . . . just a little one . . .

ALYSSA

(Sympathetic.) Mom . . .

KIM

Don't feel sorry for me, Alyssa Marie Parker.

ALYSSA

Mom, I . . .

KIM

Don't. Please. *(Alyssa makes no move to speak.)* I'm going to bed. Get some rest tonight. I'll see you in the morning.

ALYSSA

What about him? (*Indicating Bill passed out on the floor.*)

KIM

Leave him there. He'll wake up in the morning with crusted blood and he'll be so guilty tomorrow, he couldn't possibly ruin your big day.

ALYSSA

Ok.

Kim starts to rise and go upstairs. Alyssa stops her.

ALYSSA

Mom?

KIM

What?

ALYSSA

(*Pause.*) I . . . Nothing. (*Pause.*) Goodnight.

KIM

Goodnight, honey.

Kim exits upstairs. Alyssa turns her attention to the dog still "sleeping" at the far end of the sofa.

ALYSSA

Hey, Buddy. I can't believe you slept through all of this screaming and yelling and breaking things. You used to be so jumpy. I guess that's what comes with age. (*She reaches out to pet him.*) Let's go get some food, Bud. You've got to be starving. (*She realizes he's cold and stiff.*) Bud . . . wake up . . . Bud? (*Pause.*) Of course.

Alyssa picks up the dead dog, using the blanket he is laying on. She looks around the room, making sure no one else is looking. She crosses over to the garbage can at stage right of the main entrance and puts the dog inside. She fumbles around, not sure what to do next. She wipes her hands with a rag on the table and sighs filled with panic and relief. Lights fade.

SCENE FOUR

Lights rise on the Parker Family home. Two days later, Sunday, the afternoon after Alyssa's wedding day.

The room is empty and we get a sense that nothing has changed. Kim and Bill enter from the kitchen, laughing and completely overdramatic. Obviously, Bill has had a few drinks and Kim has taken a good dose of medicine.

BILL

Darlin', I never knew ya felt that way.

KIM

Oh, sweet lover, I do. I love you with all . . .

BILL

Your heart? Your soul? Your being?

KIM

Oh yes, my love. And more . . .

By this time, they have reached the living room. Bill sits down in his recliner.

BILL

Come to me, queen of my castle.

KIM

Oh, darling.

Kim collapses onto Bill's lap. They kiss and embrace passionately. They break the kiss with giggling.

KIM

I'd better clean up this house a little.

Kim gets up and crosses over to the table, grabs her cigarettes and lights one. She starts stacking things up into a pile on the edge of the table.

BILL

What? We were havin' a moment . . .

KIM

I know, Bill, but can't we wait till Alyssa's is done packing up and leaves?

BILL

Fine, if you insist.

Bill cracks open the beer he has in his hand.

KIM

I do.

Kim opens the top on the garbage can and looks inside. She screams.

KIM

Ahh! Who put Bud in the garbage?

BILL

I been wonderin' where that damn dog went to?

Kim puts the cover back on and crosses over to the table, grabs her cigarettes and lights another one, now smoking two cigarettes at once, one in each hand.

BILL

Well, is he dead? Or what?

KIM

Yes, he's dead. *(Pause.)* And he stinks too. Whew!

BILL

Well, we gotta take him out or somethin', don't we?

KIM

Honey, please, you do it.

Bill rises and crosses over to the garbage can. Kim backs away as he lifts the top, breathes in too deeply and starts to cough.

BILL

He sure is ripe. *(To the dead dog.)* You sure is a nasty ole thing, huh, Bud?

Kim crosses to the pile of garbage on the table.

KIM

While we're takin' out the trash, let's put this stuff in there, too.

*Bill picks up the garbage can and brings it by the edge of the table.
Kim puts down her cigarettes long enough to push all of the
contents from the table into the garbage can.*

KIM

There. Now, will you please take that out to the dumpster?

BILL

Yeah. Yeah.

Alyssa enters from upstairs with her bags in hand.

ALYSSA

What're you doing?

BILL

I'm takin' out the dog . . . I mean, trash.

ALYSSA

Oh. Yeah.

KIM

What?

ALYSSA

I forgot to tell you guys. He died a couple of nights ago.

KIM

And you left him in the trash?

ALYSSA

I had more to worry about and I panicked.

BILL

Well, that's fine and dandy but do somethin' 'bout it. Don't leave the damn dog in the trash for your momma to find two days later.

ALYSSA

Well, if you two cleaned up once in awhile, you would've noticed him sooner.

KIM

Oh. Nevermind. Just take him, Bill. Please.

ALYSSA

(Alyssa reaches for the garbage bag.) I can take him. I was just heading out anyway.

KIM

No, darling. Bill?

He nods and exits out the main entrance with the bag.

KIM

So . . . can you at least stay for dinner?

ALYSSA

I have to go with my husband. On our honeymoon?

KIM

Oh, of course. Have fun.

Kim looks away from Alyssa and continues to smoke. Out of nervousness, she starts to clean up the bar area. Alyssa can tell she is worried about something.

ALYSSA

It's okay, mom. Stop worrying about it.

KIM

I'm not worried, I just . . .

ALYSSA

My wedding was beautiful and it wouldn't have been that way without you.

KIM

I know but . . . *(Fades off. Long pause.)* Can you ever forgive me?

ALYSSA

What's done is done. There's nothing to forgive.

KIM

Yes, there is. *(She glances down at her cigarette, takes a long drag.)* There is so much to be forgiven for, your father and I . . .

ALYSSA

It's okay. I promise. *(Kim nods.)* It sure was nice of Andrew to show up at the wedding.

KIM

He tries, Aly.

ALYSSA

I know. It just doesn't seem like it sometimes.

KIM

He wouldn't have missed it for anything. And you know he wasn't gonna stick you with a stolen car.

ALYSSA

I was a little worried about that. *(Pause.)* I wonder what he did with it.

KIM

Well, he called this morning before you got here.

ALYSSA

And?

KIM

He sold it. Fancy sports car for cheap, wasn't hard to sell.

ALYSSA

Wow.

KIM

And . . . ya know who bought it?

ALYSSA

Who?

KIM

Izzy's husband.

ALYSSA

No . . .

KIM

Yeah. And Izzy's moving outta that house today with them kiddies of hers.

ALYSSA

I had no idea . . .

KIM

She's actually gonna move in here for a little while.

ALYSSA

(Pause.) Oh. *(Pause.)* Good. It'll be good for her. And the kids, too. *(No reply. Pause.)*
Well, I guess I better go. Can't keep him waiting out there too long.

KIM

Invite him in.

ALYSSA
No, it's okay, we have to go.

KIM
(Kim nods again.) Keep in touch?

ALYSSA
I will. But don't expect me to . . .

KIM
I won't.

Alyssa gives her mom a sincere smile as Bill enters from the main entrance and crosses to his recliner.

BILL
There ya go. All taken care of. Now you better get out there. He's waitin' in the driveway.

ALYSSA
Oh, no. What'd you say to him?

BILL
Just told him he better not've deflowered my baby last night.

ALYSSA
Dad . . . you wouldn't . . .

BILL
Nah. I just waved.

Alyssa puts her bag next to the door and walks over to Bill in the living room.

ALYSSA
Daddy?

BILL
Uh-huh?

ALYSSA
Thank you.

BILL
I didn't do nothin'.

ALYSSA

You did, though.

BILL

It's nothin'.

ALYSSA

It's not just nothin' to me. It meant everything to have you there . . . to walk me down the aisle . . . to be my *daddy* again.

BILL

(Proud of himself.) Not to mention . . .

ALYSSA

Sober.

BILL

I sure tried my damndest.

ALYSSA

I know.

Kim walks over to Alyssa in the living room. Alyssa turns to her and puts her arms around her mother. Kim breaks the moment by backing away, possibly from the guilt.

ALYSSA

I guess I better go.

KIM

You get a run on, girl. Go get that hubby of yours.

ALYSSA

I will. *(Moment of silence.)* I love him, you know. He's my family now.

KIM

Well, we're always here if you ever need your *old* family.

ALYSSA

I know. That's not what I meant. I just . . .

BILL

It's okay, pumpkin. Run along now.

ALYSSA

I love you. Momma. Daddy.

KIM

We love you, too, sweetheart.

Without answering, Bill and Kim look at Alyssa. Her smile fades. She turns toward the door, picks up her bag and exits. Bill and Kim watch her as she goes. Kim crosses to sit on the sofa. After a moment of silence, Kim and Bill turn their attention to each other.

KIM

Well . . . now what?

BILL

We get back to how things use-ta be.

Kim and Bill both stare straight out, explaining how they feel, how they've always felt, and how they will continue to feel. They put strong feeling behind each word, taking stabs at each other to dull the realization.

KIM

Alone . . .

BILL

Drinkin' . . .

KIM

Alone . . .

Bill grabs his next drink and Kim lights up another cigarette. They both stare out as the light fade.