

BHUTAN

by
Daisy Foote

TREMONT, NEW HAMPSHIRE

END OF SEPTEMBER, PRESENT YEAR

ACT ONE

SCENE ONE

The action of the play serves essentially two time frames: present day and the year before.

One area of the stage will be for the Conroy kitchen and the other for the prison visiting room.

We begin with PRESENT ACTION.

MARY CONROY is in the kitchen washing dishes. She is dressed in her uniform for her job at the grocery store.

FRANCES CONROY enters the prison visiting room. A loud buzzer sounds. WARREN walks into the room. They both take their seats.

FRANCES

I brought cigarettes. But I had to leave them out front.

WARREN

Tell Ma to pack more in the box this week. I need them for trading stuff.

FRANCES

What stuff?

Mary from the kitchen:

MARY

You're not asking him a lot of questions, are you, Frances? There are things we just don't need to know about, and he really doesn't want to tell us.

WARREN

Stuff, Lady, stuff I need.

Some silence.

WARREN (CONT'D)

So guess who sent me a letter?

FRANCES

I don't know.

WARREN

Little Tom. Said he was leaving for Iraq in two weeks. But then you already know that. Said he called the house last month and talked to you. Why the hell didn't you tell me, Frances?

MARY

Don't tell him about little Tom, it will only worry him. And Matt and Rachel--

WARREN

Tom told me they were getting married, how Rachel got knocked up. Anything else you're not telling me about?

MARY

I saw her mother today. I know she does her shopping when I'm not working, but I guess she didn't count on my doing over time. The way she looked at me, like she expected me to fall apart. But I looked right back at her, looked her right in the eye and kept on walking.

Mary exits.

WARREN

Frances...

Frances turns back to Warren.

FRANCES

No.

WARREN

Are you sure? I don't want you hiding things from me. It's what we promised. You tell me things and I tell you things. It's what I need from you, Lady. It's what I need.

She nods, some silence.

FRANCES

What do you want for your birthday?

WARREN

My birthday...when the hell is that?

FRANCES

Next Sunday. September 20.

WARREN
Jesus, I don't know.

He laughs.

FRANCES
What?

WARREN
Ben and Jerry's.

FRANCES
Ben and Jerry's?

WARREN
Ice cream. Cherry Garcia. I think about it all the time. The ice cream in here, it really sucks. Like plastic. When it melts...see that's the thing, it doesn't really melt. It can't because of all the chemicals.

turn Frances' Cell camera off

Warren exits.

SEPTEMBER. A YEAR EARLIER

Frances moves to the kitchen in the Conroy house. She takes a seat at the table and begins to read a book.

SARA BEACHUM, wearing her vet technician's uniform, enters the room.

SARA
All ready for your brother's big birthday bash Saturday?

Frances keeps reading as Sara goes to the refrigerator to get a beer.

FRANCES
I guess.

SARA
I'm getting him a bottle of champagne and a case of beer -- what are you getting him?

FRANCES
Maybe a fleece. But if Anna doesn't like it, he won't wear it.

SARA
 Jesus, I never thought I'd see the day.
 My nephew with a big old ring in his
 nose.

Frances is trying to read.

SARA (CONT'D)
 What are you reading?

FRANCES
 A novel.

Sara leans over her shoulder.

SARA
 Is it dirty?

Sara grabs it and reads the title.

SARA (CONT'D)
 JUDE THE OBSCURE. Sure sounds like porn
 to me.

Frances goes after her.

FRANCES
 Give it back, Aunt.

Sara dances away and opens to the front of the book and
 reading:

SARA
 "To Nora--my Sue Bridehead...my erotic
 dream...must I always remain your Jude?"
 Oh my God it is porn...Nora Letemkin is
 giving you porn to read.

Frances finally grabs it from her.

FRANCES
 It's not porn. It's a classic. Written
 by Thomas Hardy one of the greatest
 writers of the nineteenth century.

SARA
 Well excuse me...

Sara sits down at the table and drinks her beer.

SARA (CONT'D)
 Your mother called me at work. Told me
 about their little discussion this
 morning.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

Telling Mary who she can and cannot sell her land to...where does she get off?

FRANCES

That's not what happened, Aunt. I was there. Mary was the one who started yelling. Telling Mrs. Letemkin to mind her own goddamn business. When all Mrs. Letemkin said was if Ma ever thought about selling her land...she should tell her first. She doesn't want Mary selling to some developer. She hates what's happening to Daryl Rush's farm...all those houses going in next year.

SARA

He needs the money.

FRANCES

Mrs. Letemkin says he has other options.

SARA

Not for that kind of money.

FRANCES

How much money does he need?

SARA

Is that what Nora Letemkin says? A woman who paid over seven hundred thousand dollars for Millard Dodge's broken down farm?

Sara goes to the window and looks out at Nora Letemkin's farm.

SARA (CONT'D)

How long is she going to keep those signs on her lawn?

FRANCES

As long as she wants.

SARA

"When Clinton lied...no one died." "No blood for oil." What is that?

FRANCES

It's how she feels.

SARA

See that's the problem...your Mrs. Letemkin is so busy telling people how she feels.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

But maybe people don't want to hear about it. Maybe people don't care. And what's with the slide show at the library? Selling tickets for ten bucks a pop like anyone would ever pay ten bucks for something like that.

FRANCES

She's already sold all the tickets.

SARA

She did not.

FRANCES

They're pictures of her trip to Bhutan. Everybody wants to see them. You should come, Aunt. I know she'd let you in for free.

SARA

No thanks.

FRANCES

But they're incredible. Bhutan. The country. It's like another world...another universe.

SARA

I like this universe just fine.

Sara goes to the cupboard for a snack.

FRANCES

You're not even curious?

SARA

Nope. Now pictures of Collin Farrell in a speedo...those I'd see.

Sara grabs a bag of potato chips and starts to munch on them. Sara picks up the clicker and turns on the television. Frances goes back to her book. A few beats, Frances looks over at her Aunt.

FRANCES

Aunt?

Sara ignores her.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Aunt?

Sara snaps off the television.

SARA

What?

FRANCES

Did you ever think about leaving Tremont?
What about after you graduated from high
school, did you ever think about trying
someplace else?

SARA

Why would I have done that? I was
offered a great job at the vet's office,
and I was with Carl.

FRANCES

But Carl married someone else last week.

SARA

Go to Bhutan, Frances, go there and never
come back. I'll help you pack.

Voices of Mary and Warren Conroy are heard off stage.

WARREN

Did you tell them that?

Mary Conroy and Warren Conroy enter the room carrying
bags of groceries. Mary is dressed in a suit as she
still has her job at the bank.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Did you tell them it was about goddamn
time?

Sara gets two more beers and hands them to Mary and
Warren.

MARY

(laughing)

No I did not.

Warren puts his arm around Mary.

WARREN

Ma's been promoted to new accounts.

SARA

About goddamn time. How's the money?

MARY

A little better than I'm doing now but
still not great.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm just glad it's something different,
after all these years of making deposits
and cashing checks.

SARA

So who did you have to sleep with?

MARY

Who didn't I have to sleep with?

Mary and Sara clink cans.

They all laugh except Frances who has been noticeably
quiet since her mother and brother's arrival.

Warren pulls a pint of Ben and Jerry's out of a bag.

WARREN

Sweet, Ben and Jerry's.

Mary grabs it out of his hand.

MARY

That's our dessert, mister.

She takes steaks out of the grocery bags.

MARY (CONT'D)

I have nice thick steaks for dinner. I
thought we deserved something special.

Warren takes back the ice cream and washes it down with
his beer.

WARREN

I promised Anna I'd eat up at her house.
I got a paper due tomorrow, something
about the supreme court, and I'm
clueless.

MARY

We're celebrating, do your paper over
here.

WARREN

We need her computer.

MARY

You have a computer...

WARREN

Not as fast as Anna's. She's wireless.
You can cook me a steak later, I know
I'll be hungry.

(MORE)

WARREN (CONT'D)

Anna's mother is always making some shit I can't eat. Last time it was fish, tuna, they'd done it on the barbecue, only it was raw in the middle.

(to Frances)

So Lady, last time I checked, you were still a part of this family. Congratulate your mother.

MARY

Don't bother, Warren. She's still mad about this morning.

WARREN

What about it?

MARY

Nora Letemkin making me late for work.

FRANCES

She was just asking a question.

MARY

She wants my sixty acres.

FRANCES

She does not...

Warren stands between them.

WARREN

Alright knock it off.

Frances heads for the stairs.

FRANCES

Don't bother cooking me a steak. I'm not hungry.

MARY

Suit yourself.

Warren grabs her and pulls her back.

WARREN

Lady...

FRANCES

What?

WARREN

Congratulate your mother.

Frances stiffens.

FRANCES
Congratulations, Mary.

MARY
Thank you.

Warren puts an arm around Frances.

WARREN
Little Tom was asking about you today.
He just signed up with the army.

FRANCES
So?

WARREN
So let him take you out some weekend.
Poor guy is always tagging along with me
and Anna or Matt and Rachel. It's
pitiful He needs someone of his own.

FRANCES
I can't help it if he was stupid enough
to join the army. I mean he's going to
Iraq. He does realize that?

WARREN
Yeah he realizes it and not another
goddamn word.

She exits to the stairs.

SARA
I've always wondered if Lady wasn't a
lesbian.

WARREN
Knock it off.

SARA
It's biological, Warren. A person can't
help it if that's what they are. She's
going to be sixteen, and I don't think
she's even kissed a guy, never mind
anything else. That's not normal.

MARY
She's not a lesbian. She just think
she's better than everyone. And that
woman...Nora Letemkin encourages
her...fills her head with all kinds of
crap.

SARA

Oh Jesus...

MARY

I've worked hard keeping that attitude of hers in check and then she comes along. Telling her how smart she is, how special. Well there are no special people in this world. We all require food, water and air to survive.

(to Warren)

Did you hear how loud the furnace was last night?

WARREN

I've been hearing it every night this week, Mary. How old is it now?

MARY

About thirty...I'm not really sure...

WARREN

I'll take a look at it later. But I give it maybe six months before it needs to be replaced.

MARY

It's going to be so expensive.

WARREN

I'll help you pay for it.

She playfully slaps his face.

MARY

You're awfully good to your old mother. When do you start your job with Joe?

WARREN

Monday after school.

MARY

He was in the bank today. He wouldn't stop talking about you. He's never gotten over your father dying and leaving him alone with the business. But now, now he'll have you for a partner.

WARREN

Not his partner, Mary...apprentice.

MARY

Apprentices don't install new showers.

WARREN

Jesus Mary...you didn't tell him...

SARA

She's told the whole town about that shower.

MARY

Call Anna, tell her to come have steaks with us.

WARREN

She doesn't eat red meat.

MARY

Then what am I supposed to feed her at your party on Saturday? I suppose I could buy some turkey burgers...does she eat turkey?

WARREN

That's something I wanted to talk about, Mary. See Anna's planned a whole deal for this weekend. Wander around Boston on Saturday, then dinner in the North End with her sister and brother in law that night. We can still do my birthday here. We'll just have to do it the next day. Keep it quiet, just the family.

MARY

You hate Boston.

WARREN

I know, but Anna planned the whole thing, I couldn't say no.

He tosses the now empty carton of Ben and Jerry's into the garbage.

WARREN (CONT'D)

We need more Cherry Garcia.

He exits.

Mary starts to pull pots and pans out of the cupboards.

MARY

Anna's mother was in the bank yesterday going on and on about Warren meeting her oldest daughter and son in law this weekend. I didn't know what the hell she was talking about.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

But then this is a woman who came into the bank last September and asked if we had South African currency for their family Safari. Like we had it just piled up in the back. I should have said no to him. I should have said you're too young to spend a weekend shackled up with your girlfriend in Boston.

SARA

They've been doing it all year, Mary. You're going to take a stand now?

MARY

Why this girl? He's been with girls before but this one...Anna Matthews...he's obsessed with her.

SARA

He's in love.

MARY

How do you know that? Has he told you that?

SARA

It was bound to happen some time. I think it's a sign.

MARY

What sign?

SARA

For you to find someone of your own.

MARY

Shut up...

SARA

Charlie's been dead all these years and you've had sex how many times...let's see...oh right...never. The nuns are having it more than you are.

MARY

Why don't you worry about your own life? Your boy friend of nearly fifteen years turned around and married a perfect stranger. I don't see you running out and dipping in the pool. You're here every night having dinner with me and the kids.

SARA

Fine. I'll have dinner by myself. I don't need to come here.

MARY

I wasn't saying that, you know you can come here whenever you want.

She takes the steaks from the refrigerator.

MARY (CONT'D)

How should I do your steak?

SARA

Not to rare...but don't burn it.

Mary unwraps the steaks and places them on the broiler pan.

MARY

I hate being so dependent on him. My own son. I can't even replace the goddamn furnace without his help. I should be buying him things. Him and Frances. A new computer...something decent for Warren to drive...not that broken down truck he keeps glued together. If Charlie were still alive...

And a sigh from Mary.

SARA

What?

MARY

Never mind, I'll just get pissed off.

Sara moves to the window.

SARA

Nora Letemkin is having a party.

Mary joins her.

MARY

Probably one of her meetings. Friends of the library or that environmental committee she started. I was this close to punching her this morning. I said, "I'm never going to sell my house or any of my sixty acres. But if I did, it's my goddamn right to sell it to whoever I want to sell it to, developer or zoo keeper, it's my goddamn right."

Sara goes to the refrigerator and gets two more beers and hands one to her sister.

MARY (CONT'D)

Does she not understand our great great grandparents built this house? That I'll still be living in this house when she's off to some fancy retirement village in Arizona...that I'll die in this house.

SARA

Well I had quite the day today. Two cats scratched me and three dogs peed on me. And the littlest Todd girl brought her ferret into the office. She kept calling it her puppy. She takes it out of this carrying case. "Say hello to puppy," she says to me. I nearly had a heart attack before I realized what it was. You ever seen a ferret before? You think they're kinda cute at first. But then you realize, they're nothing more than long rats with really sharp teeth.

Warren and Frances come back into the prison waiting room and take their seats.

MARY

A day in Boston and dinner in the North End..he's going to hate it. He's going to hate every single minute of it.

Mary and Sara exit.

Frances and Warren. STILL THE PREVIOUS VISIT.

FRANCES

What about if I brought you some Cherry Garcia, I could pack it in dry ice?

WARREN

Won't allow it.

FRANCES

Why not?

WARREN

You might have put something in it...buried pills in the ice cream. But the next time you and Ma put together a box for me, pack some of those super duper bags of M&Ms, I can't get them in the store here.

FRANCES

What about drugs in the M & Ms?

WARREN

I'm not saying the rules make sense. But they make them, we follow them.

(a beat)

When I first came here...and they had me over in receiving. All those guys screaming and yelling around me...the ones coming off of the drugs and the ones just plain mean or crazy. I kept saying to myself just keep your head down, Warren...just keep it down and don't do anything to make anyone notice you. And that's what I keep telling myself.

FRANCES

But things are better now, aren't they? In this building? They're not as bad as they were there?

WARREN

Sure...Lady...sure they're better.

Mary comes into the kitchen. She is back in her grocery store uniform and carries a stack of mail. She sifts through the mail.

WARREN (CONT'D)

So I heard Mary made "Cashier of the Week" at her new job.

FRANCES

Uh huh.

WARREN

She'll be running the store before too long.

MARY

I'm just glad I could tell him something nice, something positive. After what her family put me through, threatening to pull their account if the bank didn't let me go.

FRANCES

You don't know that.

MARY

Don't tell me what I know, Lady...they won't be happy until they've turned the whole town against us.

WARREN

What about Aunt? Did she find a new job yet?

FRANCES

She signed up with this temp agency, "Man Power" just a few days ago.

WARREN

I didn't think it was such a bad thing, her leaving the vet. She could only go so far there.

MARY

Don't tell him Carl's wife is pregnant and that Aunt is drunk all the time. And what happened at the vet's office...

FRANCES

I wouldn't tell him that, Mary.

(back to Warren)

I saw Charlie last week...I saw Dad.

WARREN

You saw our dead father?

FRANCES

I walked into the kitchen and he was sitting at the table drinking beer. And when he saw me, he smiled.

WARREN

Did he say anything?

FRANCES

No.

WARREN

Did you ask him anything?

FRANCES

No.

WARREN

Why not?

FRANCES

I don't know, I just kept staring at him...watching him drink his beer, like he'd never left.

A beat as Warren thinks about what she has just told him and then:

WARREN

Did Mary say anything to you about this new lawyer she's calling?

MARY

He thinks he might be able to help Warren. Of course he won't come cheap.

Mary exits.

FRANCES

Just that she talked to him.

A buzzer sounds. Warren stands. **buzzer sound**

WARREN

Don't forget to tell Mary about my cigarettes. My life will be shit without them.

Warren and Frances exit.

END OF SEPTEMBER. ONE YEAR EARLIER.

It is Saturday night, the evening of Warren's eighteenth birthday.

Mary and Sara, quite drunk, stumble into the kitchen. They are giggling and carry Mrs. Letemkin's lawn signs.

MARY

What the hell are we going to do with these?

SARA

Burn them.

MARY

NOW?!

Sara grabs the signs from Mary.

SARA

No. Tomorrow. Over to my house. Let's hide them for now.

Sara hides them behind the refrigerator.

Mary plops into a chair.

MARY

Shit...I'm wasted.

Sara lights a joint, they pass it back and forth.

MARY (CONT'D)

So what did you say to Carl?

SARA

How's work? Your truck holding up okay?
How about them Red Sox?

Mary and Sara collapse into giggles.

MARY

He couldn't take his eyes off of you.

SARA

Shut up.

MARY

He was staring at your boobs.

This gets them laughing again.

SARA

He said he missed me.

Mary laughs.

SARA (CONT'D)

And I said..."Too fucking bad. Tell it
to your wife."

More laughter.

SARA (CONT'D)

I never thought he'd do it...marry
someone else. I thought maybe he'd date
her for awhile, wave her around in front
of our friends, try and make me jealous.
But marry her...some woman he barely knew
two weeks...when we'd been together for
fifteen years? Why'd he do that?

MARY

You said no.

They drink their beers and then a loud banging starts.

SARA

What the hell is that?

MARY

The furnace.

SARA

Jesus...

MARY

I told you.

The banging stops.

SARA

I thought the whole house was going to blow.

Silence. They drink and pass the joint.

MARY

I wonder what Warren is doing right now?

SARA

Probably having sex with Anna...happy birthday.

MARY

If Charlie were here it wouldn't be like this. Charlie would talk to Warren. He would have told him, stay away from her. You'll never be happy with a girl like that.

SARA

What kind of girl would he be happy with?

MARY

I don't know. But Charlie would have known. A boy is lost without his father.

SARA

Warren doesn't seem lost to me.

MARY

What the hell do you know about it? You're not his mother? I'm his mother and believe me, he's lost.

Mary gets another beer.

SARA

Don't I get one of those?

MARY

Get one yourself.

Sara goes to the refrigerator for a beer.

MARY (CONT'D)

I was a terrible wife.

SARA

You were not.

MARY

I was always yelling at Charlie, telling him he needed to do more, telling him I wasn't happy.

SARA

Sometimes you weren't happy.

MARY

What the hell does that mean?

SARA

I mean the guy wasn't perfect.

MARY

He was good in the sack.

SARA

Oh Jesus...

MARY

You tell me I should go out and have sex with other guys...

SARA

Well you should. You're thirty eight years old, you could have another kid if you wanted to.

MARY

Joe White...

SARA

What?

MARY

A few days after Charlie died, I never told you. Joe White came up to the house. You'd taken the kids to McDonalds. And Joe...Joe came over. He was shit faced. Crying and crying about Charlie. His best friend. His partner. His brother. "What are we going to do without Charlie, Mary?" Over and over he kept asking me. And the next thing I know, he's kissing me.

SARA

Joe White?

MARY

He had his hands all over me. And his tongue in my mouth. And for a minute, you know, for a minute I was letting him do it. But then he lets out this burp. I guess it was all the beer he'd been drinking. And when he did that, I could taste all the onions he'd been eating earlier. Then I just wanted him off of me. I wanted him out of the house and the kids home and sleeping in their beds. So I kicked him, I kicked him in the balls.

SARA

What the hell did he do?

MARY

He threw up. And he ran out of the house. Never mentioned it again. I never mentioned it again. Two months later he was married to Doreen.

SARA

It wouldn't be like that with another guy?

MARY

How do you know that?

SARA

There are no guarantees. But it could be really great. You could have great sex.

MARY

No...no one could be better than Charlie.

SARA

What if they were better?

Mary is suddenly screaming at her.

MARY

He was my husband, you don't talk like that about him in this house...his house.

Frances, in pajamas and half asleep, wanders into the room. She waves pot smoke out of the way.

SARA

This isn't Charlie's house. It was Dad's house...and his father's house and his father's father's house.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

And the only reason you got it was because you were older and had kids.

Mary starts to yell again.

MARY

A lightening bolt. A goddamn lightening bolt shoots out of the sky and kills my husband. All because some flatlander can't live without his Jacuzzi and view of the mountains.

SARA

Shower...it was a shower. One of those triple headed deals.

MARY

Don't tell me what my husband was or wasn't installing when he was struck down by lightening...

SARA

Big enough for three people, he was sitting on the bench, fiddling with the pipe, when the lightening traveled...

MARY

It was a jacuzzi and he was underneath the deck. I was so mad at him.

Only now noticing Frances.

MARY (CONT'D)

Do you know why I was so mad at him?

FRANCES

He hadn't fixed the dryer.

MARY

He'd been promising for weeks. I was at Shaw's getting the birthday cake for your brother's party, and it had started to rain. I'd left the clothes out on the line, I knew they'd all be soaked by the time I got home.

Sara rolls her eyes at Frances. Mary doesn't notice.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'll fix it, Mares, I'll fix it this weekend. Oh, can't do that, I'm going over to Joe's to watch the Red Sox. I'll fix it tomorrow after work.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Oh, can't do that, I've had a couple of beers and I'm too tired. And now the goddamn clothes were getting soaked on the line and I wouldn't have any clean underwear the next day. I was going to yell at him when he came home that night, I was going to have his goddamn head on a platter.

(a beat)

I had no idea how hard it would be without him. I thought he'd always be around. And then he wasn't. I'm twenty-six years old and all alone with two kids to raise. I have to find a job. Then I find one and I see how little money I'll be making. Wondering if I'd ever be able to manage. I'd lie awake night after night. I could hear you and your brother breathing in your rooms. And I'd be thinking I'm responsible for that. I gave them life and now I'm keeping them alive.

(to Frances)

I kept you alive, Lady. Me. I did that. I don't want you going over to Nora Letemkin's anymore...you're my daughter and I won't allow it.

Frances heads for the stairs.

FRANCES

You are so wasted.

Mary grabs her.

MARY

I hope this whole goddamn town turns into a strip mall. Tract homes and strip malls. And your Mrs. Letemkin, your Mrs. Letemkin won't be able to do a goddamn thing about it.

Frances pulls away.

FRANCES

I'm going to bed.

Mary pulls her back again.

MARY

You think you're too good for us? Too good for the conversation with your mother and your aunt?

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Is that what she tells you, that we're not smart enough for you?

SARA

Lady wants to go to India just like Mrs. Letemkin.

FRANCES

Not India...Bhutan...totally different country.

SARA

Oh excuse me...

MARY

What the hell is Bhutan?

FRANCES

Never mind.

SARA

It's where Frances wants to live, in the mountains on the other side of the world.

FRANCES

I never said that.

Mary squeezes her tight.

MARY

Not my daughter...my daughter stays right here. I'm the one who made you so smart, not your Mrs. Letemkin. It's my brain you have in there. Mine. We're from the same cloth.

SARA

Buddhist monks, guy who runs the country, some kind of king...him and a bunch of other monks run it. They're Chinese or from Tibet...or is that the same thing? I looked it up on the internet...Bhutan. And you know how much it costs to travel there? Three hundred dollars a day. It doesn't matter what you do or where you stay...it's all three hundred dollars a day. And then throw in your air fare which looks to be about two thousand dollars round trip. How long did your Mrs. Letemkin go for?

FRANCES

Three weeks.

SARA

So at two thousand for the air fare and about what...two thousand a week...

MARY

Twenty one hundred.

SARA

A week...not including gifts and extra stuff. For three weeks that's...

MARY

Eighty three hundred.

SARA

And with any extras plus taxes...you're looking at about ten thousand dollars for three weeks of travel.

(to Mary)

Ten thousand dollars. Your daughter wants to spend ten thousand dollars to see a bunch of mountains and monks.

MARY

She's not going anywhere. She's staying right here with her mother. We'll take our own trip. You, me, Aunt and Warren. We'll go somewhere nice. The Fryburg Fair. Let's go to the Fryburg Fair.

SARA

No thank you.

MARY

Fine, don't go. I'll just go with Lady and Warren. Like we did right after Charlie died.

(hugging her daughter)

We had such a good time.

SARA

You hated that trip.

MARY

I did not.

SARA

You said the drive was too long. The motel smelled like smoke and dogs. It rained all weekend and Lady and Warren were crying for Charlie.

MARY

You're lying.

SARA
What did you just say?

MARY
You heard me.

Sara stands up and starts for the door.

SARA
I'm going home.

Frances stops Sara.

FRANCES
No, you've had too much to drink.

SARA
Tell her to apologize.

FRANCES
Apologize, Mary.

MARY
She said we didn't have a good time. We did have a good time. She's just jealous because she doesn't have any kids of her own, and her boyfriend of fifteen years married someone else.

Sara starts for the door again. Frances pulls her back again.

FRANCES
Let's just all go to bed.
(pulling Sara along)
You'll sleep with me, Aunt.
(back to Mary)
Come on, Ma.

MARY
Do you remember the families, Lady? All the families at the Fryburg fair? All the families with the different animals. Bringing them to show at the fair. They'd done it together, all the families. The kids with their mothers and fathers, even grandparents. The generations together talking about their cows, pigs or horses. And I wanted that so much. I wanted it so much for you, me and Warren.

FRANCES

It's time for bed, Mary.
 (she takes her mother's arm)
 Aunt, help me.

They lift Mary to her feet.

MARY

This town used to be like that. This farm too. Families together, raising their animals.

(a beat)

I don't know what happened. All these strange people here now. All these people taking African safaris and trips to see mountains and monks. They wouldn't understand the families in the barn...not in a million years.

FRANCES

Come on, Ma.

MARY

He's never been away for his birthday. Even the day Charlie died, we still had presents and a cake for him. It wasn't his fault his father died, it wasn't his fault.

Mary and Sara exit.

Frances enters the prison visiting room and takes a seat.

TWO WEEKS since the last visit.

A buzzer goes off.

Warren enters and sits.

WARREN

Thanks for my present.

FRANCES

I wasn't sure.

WARREN

What's it called again?

FRANCES

THIS BOY'S LIFE. Mrs. Letemkin thought you'd like it.

WARREN

I'm not a reader, I've never been a reader. You know that.

Mary enters the kitchen with supplies and a box for Warren. She packs the box with supplies.

FRANCES

I'm sorry...I'll get you something else.

WARREN

It's fine, Frances.

(a beat)

So you feeling better now?

MARY

Your brother said you called. That you told him you were sick and wouldn't make your visit. I didn't know what to say...I had to lie for you. I said that you had a cold.

FRANCES

(to her brother)

She was afraid I might give it to you.

Some more silence.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

So how was your birthday? The actual day...did you do anything special?

WARREN

You mean like cake and ice cream?

(a beat)

I lifted weights. And then I worked in the shop.

Mary pulls a large bag of M & Ms out of the cupboard. She places them in the box with the other supplies, seals and addresses the box.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Eight cents an hour for packing furniture parts into boxes to send out to Yuppies who want to fill their houses with crap. Pine and particleboard thrown together with glue for furniture that will last maybe five years.

(a beat)

I told Mary I liked it...makes me feel useful.

FRANCES

Warren, I wasn't sick. Last week. I was with Mrs. Letemkin. This man from Columbia...where Mrs. Letemkin was a professor...he was visiting this private school...talking to the kids about his college. Mrs. Letemkin wanted me to meet him.

WARREN

Why?

FRANCES

Remember how she talked to me about it...Columbia...how she thought I'd like it there.

MARY

I am so tired of her interfering. I am going to call her right now and tell her to stay the hell out of our business...

FRANCES

No Mary, don't...please...I'll talk to her...I promise.

MARY

You'll tell her to stop all this college crap. You'll tell her your brother needs you.

Frances turns back to Warren.

FRANCES

Mrs. Letemkin said it was just this one time, that you'd understand.

WARREN

I'd understand your lying to me?

FRANCES

I'm sorry.

WARREN

Are you still thinking about college? Because this new lawyer Mary is hiring, he told her it could be a year, a year and a half before a judge agrees to hear my order or motion or whatever the hell they call it.

MARY

He told me that other lawyer was wrong to let Warren plead guilty.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

It never should have happened. I knew that. Well, it's done...I'll just have to fix it now.

Mary exits with the box.

WARREN

And let's say this judge goes along with the new lawyer and whatever he has to say about me. There's no guarantees he'll just let me walk out of here. I might still get some jail time, let's say another year. If that happens, it would be good if you were still around. And even if I get lucky and he says I can go free...I could still really use you, Frances. Just for awhile...until I'm on my feet again...found a job...a place to live.

FRANCES

He was just this friend of Mrs. Letemkin's. The man I met. Turns out it's a really hard school to get into and costs something like fifty thousand dollars a year to go to...I could never afford it.

WARREN

Then it's probably a good thing, waiting a few extra years. Give you some time to find the right college, save some money.

buzzer sound

A buzzer sounds. Frances and Warren stand.

FRANCES

Mary wanted you to know that she mailed you another box. She put more M&Ms in it and another box of cigarettes.

Turn Frances Kitchen Camera off

Frances exits.

Warren walks into the kitchen.

ACT ONE

SCENE TWO

THE YEAR BEFORE. The day after Warren's eighteenth birthday.

Frances comes into the kitchen. Warren is there cleaning up after his mother and aunt from the night before.

FRANCES (CONT'D)
Look it's the birthday boy...

WARREN
Where's Mary?

Warren pours them both coffee.

WARREN (CONT'D)
Her car's not in the driveway.

FRANCES
She's probably driving Aunt home.

WARREN
Aunt stayed here last night?

Frances nods.

WARREN (CONT'D)
They been down to the Molly?

Frances doesn't respond.

WARREN (CONT'D)
What kind of shape were they in?

FRANCES
What kind of shape do you think they were in?

WARREN
Check the attitude, Lady.

FRANCES
I'm sorry, I'm just really tired. Aunt kept kicking me all night. Did you have a good time?

He grins.

WARREN
Anna's sister and brother in law, they were wicked nice. Told me and Anna to come and stay whenever we want. Their house is our house.
(a beat)
You are not going to believe what I did this morning.

FRANCES
What?

WARREN

I went to church.

FRANCES

You did not.

WARREN

Anna's sister and brother in law always go. Anna wanted to go, and I didn't want to seem like an asshole. And you know it wasn't so bad. I barely heard what the sermon was. The guy was going on about some story in the Bible and how to apply it to your life. Whatever. But being there with Anna and her family, it was nice...it was...orderly.

He drinks his coffee.

WARREN (CONT'D)

So what do you think, you think Anna would make a decent sister in law?

FRANCES

Are you serious?

WARREN

We talked about it last night.

FRANCES

Doesn't she want to go to college?

WARREN

It's not written in stone. Anna's a pretty old fashioned girl. And I think it's always bugged her that her Ma worked full time when she didn't have to. Anna wants to be there for our kids.

FRANCES

You've already talked about kids?

WARREN

We talk about everything.

Frances gets cereal out of the cupboard.

FRANCES

You want some cereal?

WARREN

No thanks.

She pours the cereal, gets milk and so on.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Course, Anna's parents are going to go postal when they find out. Especially her Ma, always talking about Anna being a big time lawyer some day. But she doesn't know Anna like I do.

Warren grabs a piece of paper and a pencil and makes a list.

WARREN (CONT'D)

That window in your room still broken?

FRANCES

Yes. And the light in the bathroom is still making that popping sound.

(a beat)

When are you going to tell Mary?

WARREN

I'll tell her.

FRANCES

When?

WARREN

(snapping)

When I goddamn feel like it.

Frances backs off.

WARREN (CONT'D)

I'll tell her, Frances. Soon. I promise. Anna and I need to talk through a few things first, get our plans good and set before we tell Mary or Anna's parents. We want them to see how serious we really are...that they can't change our minds.

(a beat)

Anna says she wants you to call her this week. Something about meeting her at the Big Sip...she's crazy for that place...always drinking some ice mint mocha crap.

FRANCES

Why does she want to meet me?

WARREN

Because she's going to be your sister-in-law.

He indicates the coffee pot.

WARREN (CONT'D)

This is the last of it, you want anymore?

FRANCES

You take it.

He pours.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Warren, did you ever think about college?

WARREN

No reason to. Always knew I'd be a plumber, don't need college for that.

FRANCES

Mrs. Letemkin was talking about Columbia in New York where she taught...she thought I might like it.

WARREN

You'd want to live there?

FRANCES

I don't know.

WARREN

Last place I'd ever want to live. A hell of a lot of money...college...money we don't have. So if you're at all serious, you better start thinking now about how you'll pay for it.

The furnace bangs.

furnace noise

WARREN (CONT'D)

Did you hear that?

FRANCES

The furnace. It woke me up last night it was so loud.

WARREN

I'll try and fix it later. Need to keep it going until I've got the money to help Mary pay for a new one. If it ever stopped working and I wasn't here, the wood stove will keep the downstairs warm...but the upstairs...I'll teach you how to drain the pipes so they won't freeze and burst.

(a beat)

You still want me to build you those shelves?

FRANCES
If you have time.

WARREN
I'll find it.

He is scribbling on his list again.

FRANCES
You remember that country I was telling you about...the one Mrs. Letemkin visited before she moved here...Bhutan? Did you know about it, Warren? The country. Did you even know it was there?

WARREN
No.

FRANCES
Don't you think that's weird?

WARREN
No.

FRANCES
A whole country and we didn't even know it was there. And if Mrs. Letemkin had never moved here, we still wouldn't know about it. A whole country filled with people and rivers and lakes and cities. With houses and families. And we never would have known it was there. That bothers me, Warren. It really does.

WARREN
Well, stop thinking about it.

FRANCES
I can't do that. I keep trying to imagine myself there and every time...I come back here...to this kitchen. And I'm here with you and Mary. I try to put myself on one of those mountains Mrs. Letemkin climbed or in one of those temples she visited, but this kitchen is all I see.

WARREN
You, me and Mary...?

FRANCES
Uh huh.

WARREN

Well look again, Lady, because I'm not there. I'm with Anna in my house on ten acres with a view of the mountains. That other picture...get it out of your mind. Just toss it out.

FRANCES

I can't.

WARREN

Get it out...out...

He starts to tickle her.

FRANCES

Stop it.

He tickles her more, she's laughing.

WARREN

Is it out yet?

And laughing...

WARREN (CONT'D)

Is it out yet?

FRANCES

(screaming)

Yes...yes...

WARREN

No more pictures...say it...no more pictures...

FRANCES

(shrieking)

No more pictures...NO MORE PICTURES!

She breaks loose and runs. Warren chases her tickles her some more and she is screaming with laughter when...

Mary enters the room carrying a cake box.

Frances and Warren break apart.

MARY

Happy birthday...did you have a good time?

WARREN

I did.

Warren points to the cake box.

WARREN (CONT'D)
Carrot cake?

MARY
Of course. Can we count on you for dinner?

WARREN
Told you I'd be here, Mary.

Frances takes her empty cereal box and puts it in the sink.

The phone rings. Mary answers it.

MARY
Hello...yes.

She hands the phone to Frances.

FRANCES
Hello...sure...what...really...no I didn't see that.

Frances goes to the window and looks out.

FRANCES (CONT'D)
Sure...sure...I'll come right over.

She hangs up.

FRANCES (CONT'D)
Mrs. Letemkin's signs were stolen last night.

Frances stares at her mother.

FRANCES (CONT'D)
I gotta help her plant bulbs.

Frances leaves.

MARY
(calling after her)
That woman takes advantage of you.

Warren walks to the window and looks out at Mrs. Letemkin's farm.

WARREN
You know anything about those signs, Mary?

MARY

No.

Mary goes to the window.

MARY (CONT'D)

I don't know where that woman gets her money. But she sure can spend it. First she completely rebuilds her kitchen. Then she adds that porch. And now she's talking about some solar panels for her roof and a couple of windmills in her field. She cornered me in her driveway yesterday, telling me all about it. Said it came to her in a dream. Her duty to the planet. And then she started in on me about my land again...if you ever decide to sell any of it...please see me...I know we can work something out. Over my dead body.

WARREN

How about some breakfast?

She moves to the refrigerator.

MARY

Bacon and eggs?

WARREN

No pancakes.

MARY

All right.

She takes out the ingredients and starts to prepare breakfast.

WARREN

So how was your night?

MARY

Made dinner here, had a few drinks at the Molly with Aunt.

WARREN

A few?

MARY

You've been talking to Frances.

WARREN

Stumbling into the house shit faced is no way to earn your daughter's respect.

MARY

Earn her respect? Why would I have to do that? I'm her mother.

WARREN

The two of you...Jesus...

MARY

Your sister's never been easy.

WARREN

And you are?

He throws an arm around her shoulder.

WARREN (CONT'D)

You know I'm proud of you, you do know that? Your new job...how hard you work for us.

MARY

A lot of good that does if you have to keep helping me pay for things.

WARREN

I don't mind.

MARY

So tell me all about Boston...were they nice to you...where did you have dinner?

WARREN

They were wicked nice, and dinner was in this amazing Italian place in the North End. Three courses with wine. Anna's brother in law...he paid for the whole thing. He runs a mutual fund or something like that and it turns out he knows a lot about small business. I got so jazzed talking to him, Mary. Thinking about all the possibilities. Working with Joe will be fine for now but he's too small time. I don't think it's what Dad wanted, I think he wanted much bigger things. And it's what I want too.

She places a hand on his cheek.

MARY

It was really hard not having you here yesterday.

WARREN

I know, Mary. But you survived. And I did, I had a wicked good time.

Mary exits the stage.

Warren goes back to his place in the prison waiting room.

ACT ONE

SCENE THREE

PRESENT DAY. BEGINNING OF NOVEMBER

Warren rolls up his shirt sleeve to reveal a large cross tattoo on his arm.

Frances enters the prison. She sees the tattoo but tries not to look at it.

FRANCES

They started putting up the houses on Daryl Rush's land. Huge McMansions with all these windows and towers. The one that's being built on top of the hill behind the old farmhouse, that's going to cost a million dollars. Remember how we used to sled on that hill? Mary was always telling us not to do it. That it was too dangerous. She thought we'd go so fast we'd sled right into the pond at the bottom and drown. You wouldn't listen, you said you were going anyway, she'd never know about it. And I never told you this but I was so scared. Not once we were on the hill and sledding but before when we were at the house getting ready to leave. My stomach would be doing flip flops thinking about walking over there. But once we got there, once we got there, I always had so much fun. You and me and the purple taxis. Who named it the purple taxis...was it Dad...I think it might have been. And remember when Aunt finally caught us? Standing there at the bottom of the hill with her arms crossed, trying to look all mad. But then you got her on the purple taxis, and she was screaming and laughing all the way down the hill...

WARREN

When the hell are you going to say something?

FRANCES

What?

WARREN

You're staring right at it, ignoring it...my tattoo.

FRANCES

I wasn't ignoring it.

WARREN

Then why haven't you asked me?

FRANCES

I didn't know if you wanted me to.

WARREN

Well I don't want to talk about the good old days. I get bullshit all the time from Mary and Aunt. Talking and talking about the weather or what they had for supper the night before. Last visit Aunt spent the whole time talking about her smoke alarm. How it kept beeping all night. "I got up and changed the batteries, Warren. But it still kept beeping. What do you think is wrong with it, Warren?" Like I could fucking tell her or I could fucking care.

Silence.

FRANCES

Why a cross?

WARREN

It was recommended to me. By my cell mate. He's a Jesus freak, he likes to read the Bible to me at night before lights out. When he first asked, I said, thanks but no thanks, I wasn't really the religious sort. Then the next morning after I'd come back from breakfast, I found this big pile of shit in the middle of my bed. I got off easy. Turns out he'd cut another guy in the throat for saying, "Jesus Fucking Christ" in front of him.

FRANCES

Can't you complain to someone?

WARREN

And who would that be?

FRANCES

A guard.

WARREN

The same guard who probably saw him take the shit but didn't say a word about it? Besides, you don't want to get a reputation as the guy who's always complaining. As long as I can talk to you, tell you things, I can do that, can't I, Frances?

FRANCES

Yes.

Mary comes into the kitchen.

WARREN

Did you ever talk to Nora Letemkin, tell her you wouldn't be going to college?

FRANCES

I haven't seen her much. She's been away in New York the last month for some business stuff.

WARREN

But you will tell her?

MARY

You're not going to tell him about last night, are you?

Frances turns to her mother.

FRANCES

He's going to wonder why Aunt's not visiting him anymore.

MARY

I'll think of something to tell him, Frances, but not a word to your brother, not a word.

And Mary exits.

She looks back at her brother. She takes a moment as if deciding.

WARREN

Frances...

FRANCES

Aunt and Mary had a fight.

Frances leaves her brother and goes into the kitchen.

Warren remains in his chair and watches.

Frances puts wood into the wood stove. She starts to prepare dinner of grilled cheese and soup.

Mary comes into the kitchen. She wears her grocery store uniform. She goes to the refrigerator and takes out a beer.

MARY

Anybody call?

FRANCES

No.

MARY

Warren's new lawyer didn't call?

FRANCES

No.

Mary walks to the answering machine.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

No messages.

MARY

He said he was going to call me today. I gave him my number at work. Is that dinner?

FRANCES

Soup and grilled cheese.

Mary gets a beer from the refrigerator and looks over at the wood stove.

MARY

Good, you started a fire. I don't dare turn that thermostat above sixty, every time I do the furnace starts to bang. I am so tired. I could sleep for a week. I don't know what it is about that place? I never felt this kind of tired working at the bank. Beep. Beep. Beep. I can't get that goddamn scanner out of my head.

(drinks her beer)

There was a lady today, in my check out line with her two carts filled with groceries.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

She had her little girls with her...they were crying because they wanted some kind of candy. She's telling them it's not good for them, she'll give them some fruit when they get home. And then she looks at me and calls me "immoral" for keeping candy in my aisle. "An unnecessary temptation for her children." Like I had anything to do with it.

FRANCES

Did you tell her that?

MARY

No. I was so mad I was afraid of what would come out. Her jeans were ironed...the ones she was wearing...she had actually ironed them.

She plops down at the table. She drinks.

MARY (CONT'D)

I wonder why Warren's lawyer didn't call? He said he was going to call. Set up a time to meet with Warren next week, now that I'll have the money to pay him.

FRANCES

Do you want your sandwich and soup together or your soup first?

MARY

I don't care.

Frances starts to set the table.

MARY (CONT'D)

I saw Nora Letemkin at the store today. She just got back from New York and she says she has all my money and wants to close on the thirty acres next week. I've got to get all the deed information together. I hope the papers are all there. When your father and Joe White started the business...and they took out a loan on the farm...I think that was the last time I looked at anything.

(a beat)

She was asking about you. Wanted to know if we had any college trips planned for the spring? Was all I could do not to laugh in her face. College trips...she's a goddamn piece of work your Nora Letemkin...a goddamn piece of work.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)
(and more direct)
 You're not still thinking about that, are you?

FRANCES
 No.

MARY
 Our whole priority has to be your brother, getting him out of that place. Show him all our support when he comes home. Did you see what was posted on the town bulletin board today?

FRANCES
 No.

MARY
 It was right there in front of town hall, all in bright red letters.

FRANCES
 I didn't see it, Mary.

MARY
 Announcing the dedication ceremony for the gazebo. Like we don't already know it's there. Smack in the middle of the town common with her name on it...like some kind of martyr or saint. But when you're writing checks left and right for the town like her parents do...anything is possible. Even Joe White has been bought off. Saw him coming out of their driveway...bold as anything. And the next day his sign was up, Joe White Plumbing and Septic. He's never been to visit your brother...

FRANCES
 Warren didn't want to see him.

MARY
 He should have tried harder. Not a letter or a phone call. Your father's best friend. He should have done more. And he shouldn't be working for them.
 (a beat)
 Well, he'll be sorry when your brother starts his own plumbing business and Joe starts losing customers. And if I have to sell the rest of the land and this house to help make that happen...I will.
 (MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

Your brother will be a big success,
everyone in this town will see that. And
when they do, they'll want to tear that
gazebo down.

The door starts to rattle. And then banging on the door.
From the other side:

SARA

Mary, Lady, open up...

Mary unlocks and opens the door. A very drunk Sara
stumbles into the room.

SARA (CONT'D)

When the hell did you start locking the
door?

And Mary closes the door and locks it again, ignoring
Sara's question.

Sara grabs Mary's beer.

SARA (CONT'D)

Someone feeling a little paranoid?

Mary grabs back her beer.

MARY

Did you work today?

SARA

No, Sara's services were not required by
the Manpower agency today. If this keeps
up I won't be able to pay my rent. I'll
have to move in with you and Lady. Won't
that be cozy?

MARY

Maybe you should look for something
permanent.

SARA

I had something permanent. I had a job I
loved, the best job in the world. But I
made one little mistake...

MARY

Little mistake...you showed up for work
drunk, gave a dog the wrong pills and
nearly killed him.

SARA

You just love rubbing my face in that, don't you?

MARY

No. I don't. Why don't you let me ask about a job at the store?

SARA

No thanks.

Sara opens the refrigerator.

SARA (CONT'D)

Where's the beer?

MARY

This was the last one.

FRANCES

What about some supper, Aunt? I'm just about to put it on the table.

Sara takes a look and wrinkles her nose.

SARA

No thanks. I had something at the Molly. Chicken wings and these fried mushrooms they do.

MARY

How much did that set you back?

SARA

It was free...came with the drinks.

MARY

So then it wasn't really free.

Frances pours the soup into the bowls.

FRANCES

Eat your soup before it gets cold, Mary.

Frances goes back to the stove for the sandwiches. Sara chases after her, pulling at her hair.

SARA

Aren't you the good little daughter...

MARY

Go home, Sara. Go home and sleep it off.

SARA

No.

MARY

I'm in no mood for your bull shit.

SARA

I'm in no mood for your bull shit. Well I'm in no mood to go home. When I go home...I just sit there. The phone doesn't ring. No one knocks on my door. They're all on her side now. Carl's wife. People I grew up with, people who were winking and nodding at me when we got back together, are all on her side. A whole group of them at the Molly tonight, her and a bunch of my girlfriends, all laughing and patting her belly. Three other rooms they could have sat in, but they had to sit in the bar. My bar. I told them to leave.

Frances serves the grilled cheese.

FRANCES

You should eat something, Aunt.

SARA

I was eating something chicken wings and fried mushrooms. Then those bitches walked in. She said they weren't going anywhere. It was a free country. So I asked her. "How could you stay married to a guy who loves someone else? What kind of a sad excuse for a woman are you? He might be with you, have a bunch of kids with you, but when he's drunk he'll say my name."

(sighs)

And then she started to cry and those bitches started yelling at me. So I left. And I never did finish my chicken wings and fried mushrooms.

MARY

Get over it. He married someone else. They've started a family...stop pissing and moaning and get on with your life.

SARA

She tricked him. She knew he hated her, that he still loved me. Hell, the whole town knew. So she got knocked up.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

And now he'll stay with her. Because of the baby, because he's a good guy.

MARY

"Boo hoo I love you, Sara, my wife tricked me. Boo hoo, my wife's knocked up." And how exactly did that part happen...if he hates her so much?

SARA

You encouraged me.

MARY

I did not.

SARA

You kept saying he only married her to get back at me...that it was only a matter of time. And he was, he was so close to leaving her. Just waiting for her birthday. And then Warren gets into that truck...

FRANCES

Aunt...

MARY

You're blaming Warren for your problems with Carl?

FRANCES

Ma...come on...

MARY

No. I won't let her blame your brother for her miserable life. I won't let her do that.

FRANCES

She's not blaming him. Tell her, Aunt. Tell her you're not blaming Warren.

SARA

I'm not, I'm blaming her. If you could have just said something to them, Mary. Said something to her family. The funeral. I watched it from my car...watched the whole church fill up. So many people they had to put chairs in the snow. I wanted to be there too...I wanted us all there. And then you could have walked up to her parents and apologized...

MARY

Why the hell would I apologize to them?
I know what they're saying about him.
What they're calling him. I have nothing
to say to them. Nothing.

Sara just stares at her sister in disbelief.

SARA

I want half the money you're getting from
the land.

MARY

You're out of your goddamn mind. I'm not
giving you anything.

SARA

It's my land too. And if you're selling
it...I want half the money.

MARY

Dad gave that land to me.

SARA

Dad gave you the house. He never said
anything about the land. I need that
money, Mary. I don't have any money.

MARY

Get a job...

FRANCES

Aunt, maybe you should go...we can talk
about this tomorrow...

MARY

We are not talking about this tomorrow.
We are not talking about this ever again.

FRANCES

Aunt...please.

Sara is in Mary's face.

SARA

You're a bully, Mary. It's how you've
always been. With Charlie...your
kids...me. Bullying and bullying us
until you get what you want. Well it
won't work this time. I'm going to get
my money. I'm going to get my fair
share.

She turns to Frances.

SARA (CONT'D)

Warren's the one I feel the most sorry for. The crap she's filling his head with. Telling him this new lawyer will get him off.

(back to Mary)

It's a lot of bullshit, Mary. Warren already said he was guilty. He told the police he was guilty and he told that Judge...that he killed Anna Matthews.

Mary throws soup in her sister's face. And Sara jumps on her. They fall to the floor, punching and kicking each other.

FRANCES

Stop it...stop it!

She tries to pull them apart. It's no good.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

Ma...Aunt...please...

(screaming)

STOP IT!

And finally they hear her. They roll off of one another, exhausted.

They both struggle to their feet.

MARY

You are never to come near me or any of my family again, do you hear me?

Sara turns to Frances.

SARA

Tell your brother...I don't know...just tell him...

Frances turns to her brother.

FRANCES

She's sorry.

And Sara leaves.

MARY

She'll never get that money, I'll burn it before she gets it.

Mary storms out of the kitchen, exiting to the stairs.

Frances returns to her seat in the prison waiting room.

FRANCES

Maybe if I hadn't told you about Anna, how she missed you. You wouldn't have gone to see her that day. You wouldn't have ended up in your truck with her. But I wanted you back with her. Because if you were with Anna, then things could be different for me. If you could do it, so could I. I don't know. I don't know. I just know that you're here. And things are so bad at home. Mary never leaves the house now, Warren. She never leaves except to see you or to go to work. And she keeps talking about the three of us in that house together...the three of us...year after year...always there. The three of us, Warren. Just the three of us.

WARREN

Look around you, Frances.

She isn't sure what he wants.

WARREN (CONT'D)

I said...LOOK AROUND..

She looks around the room.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Now the next time you think of coming here and whining to me about things I can't do a fucking thing about...you think about where I am. And you think about how I have spent my whole life making things right for you. Spent my whole life making sure you didn't miss Charlie the way I missed him. Missed him every fucking day of my life. I don't care if this is hard for you. I don't care if your dreams of college and traveling the world are over. It's your turn now, Lady. It's your fucking turn.

Warren stands.

WARREN (CONT'D)

I'll see you next week, Frances. And bring some cigarettes. I need more cigarettes.

Warren exits.

Frances returns to the kitchen, sits at the table with her book.

ACT ONE

SCENE FOUR

THE YEAR BEFORE. MIDDLE OF JANUARY.

Mary, dressed in her clothes for the bank, comes in carrying a bag of groceries.

MARY

Tell your Mrs. Letemkin, they won't accept her Christmas tree for pick up, she'll need to bring it to the dump herself.

Mary starts to put the groceries away.

MARY (CONT'D)

Isn't she a little late? It's a fire hazard to wait so long.

FRANCES

Not when you put it up on Christmas Eve like she does.

MARY

Set the table please.

Frances does.

MARY (CONT'D)

Why does she call herself Mrs. Letemkin if she's never been married?

FRANCES

I don't know.

MARY

Just another one of her little quirks?

FRANCES

Just what she calls herself, Mary.

MARY

Is your brother eating at Anna's tonight or here?

FRANCES

I don't know.

MARY

He hasn't been to her house since
Christmas.

Silence from Frances.

MARY (CONT'D)

What about school? Are they together
much?

FRANCES

I don't spend my days following Warren
and Anna around, Mary.

(a beat)

Mrs. Letemkin wants to know if I can go
with her on Saturday to Boston. She
wants to take me to the opera. Mozart's
DON GIOVANNI.

MARY

Why on earth would you be interested in
that?

FRANCES

I like it. We listen to it at her house
all the time. Wagner...Puccini...Mozart.
Mrs. Letemkin says if you want to get
something done, listen to opera. Clean
the house, listen to opera. Work in the
garden, listen to opera. Cook supper...

MARY

I get the point, Frances. Why is she the
only one you ever do anything with?

FRANCES

She's my friend.

MARY

A seventy year old woman is your friend?

FRANCES

Sixty-eight.

MARY

Why don't you have friends your own age?
Since you were in the first grade and
your teacher said you wouldn't play with
the other kids. Sitting in a corner,
reading books or talking to yourself. Do
you know they wanted me to take you to a
shrink? They thought maybe something was
wrong with you. And now this woman, this
old woman is your friend.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

What about other girls in your class?
Why don't you do something with them?

FRANCES

I don't want to.

MARY

Frances, that's not normal. You need to
find someone to talk to. Someone your
own age.

FRANCES

You mean like on-line?

MARY

Don't give me attitude, Frances. I am
still your mother.

FRANCES

So can I go? Can I go to the opera with
Mrs. Letemkin?

MARY

Do what you like, Frances. You will
anyway.

Sara, in her technician's uniform, comes into the room.

SARA

Good evening, ladies.

She kisses her sister and Frances on the cheek, then she
goes to the refrigerator.

MARY

Aren't we in a good mood?

Sara takes out a beer.

SARA

You want one?

Mary nods. Sara brings Mary a beer.

MARY

So I see Carl's got a new truck?

Sara grins.

MARY (CONT'D)

Nice ride?

SARA

Oh yes, nice...very nice.

They both collapse into schoolgirl giggles.

SARA (CONT'D)

Carl told me today, he said that when he and Clueless got married, he was drunk at the ceremony and said my name.

MARY

He only married her to get back at you.

SARA

He said he'd tell her about us in two weeks. He'd do it sooner, but Clueless has a birthday next Friday.

The phone rings and Mary answers it.

MARY

Hello...hey there...what...all right...sit tight. I'll be right there.

She hangs up.

MARY (CONT'D)

Warren ran out of gas.

SARA

Warren...I don't believe it.

Mary grabs her coat.

MARY

(to Frances)

Peel the potatoes while I'm gone and make the salad.

She exits.

Frances goes to the cupboard, finds the potatoes and starts to peel them.

Sara points to the pile of books.

SARA

Those from Nora Letemkin?

FRANCES

Uh huh.

SARA

Any good?

FRANCES

I don't know, I haven't read them yet.

SARA
 (picking up a book)
 THIS BOY'S LIFE.

She sits down and starts to read.

Frances peels the potatoes and glances over at her Aunt.

FRANCES
 I was mailing some letters for Mary yesterday and I saw you and Carl in front of the post office. You were standing real close and he was laughing. And just then his wife drove up. She could see you and Carl and she stared at your for awhile, then she started to cry.

SARA
 What's your point?

FRANCES
 I just thought you should know.

Sara sets the book aside.

SARA
 Well she shouldn't have been so quick to marry him. She was only with the guy a few weeks and then she marries him.

FRANCES
 Why did you say no?

Sara is startled by the question.

SARA
 I don't know. I just did. Carl and I were at this party. And we were dancing. And the next thing I know, he's whispering in my ear...he's saying..."I want you to be the mother of my children." And then I laughed and said something smart assed like..."Excuse me do I know you, sir?" I didn't take it seriously, why would I...we'd both had more than a few beers. I think he was kinda hurt. I couldn't tell for sure. But I think he was. And then all the next day and the week after that he kept asking me. "All our friends are married, Sara. Starting families." We had never talked about it before and I was suddenly feeling all this pressure from him. "Now or never, Sara.

(MORE)

SARA (CONT'D)

Now or never." That's what he said to me...the last time he asked. "Now or never." Like he could just snap his fingers and I would jump. I don't know why I said no. It was stupid. But I never thought he'd turn around and marry someone else...never in a million years.

FRANCES

You could still meet someone.

SARA

Who the hell am I going to meet in this town?

FRANCES

Maybe not here but in other towns...you could even try a city.

SARA

People don't just move to strange towns and cities and meet people. Everyone's too suspicious. Women end up alone all the time now. Adopting babies from China and Russia. Or like your Mrs. Letemkin, all alone in a big house, relying on some stranger for favors.

FRANCES

I'm not a stranger.

SARA

Not now you aren't. But she had to take a chance on you. What if you'd turned out to be a psychopath? Cutting her throat with a knife, stealing all her jewelry.

Sara gets a beer from the refrigerator.

Frances continues peeling the potatoes.

SARA (CONT'D)

I'm sorry she's upset and you saw her cry. But Carl and I were meant to be together. This is our town, with our friends and our families. And her crying doesn't change that. It just doesn't.

She walks over to Frances, looming over her.

SARA (CONT'D)

So if you have something else to say
about it, say it now, then I don't want
to hear another word.

Frances sulks.

SARA (CONT'D)

Go on...

FRANCES

(low)
I don't...

SARA

What...you don't what?

FRANCES

(yelling)
I don't have anything to say.

SARA

When did you get so superior to the rest
of us?

FRANCES

I'm not.

SARA

Don't tell me. I can feel it. You're
ashamed of us. When did that happen,
Lady? When did you become so ashamed of
your own family?

Sara goes to the door.

SARA (CONT'D)

Tell your mother I'll call her later.

And exits.

The lights fade.

Lights come up. THIRTY MINUTES LATER.

Frances is making the salad.

Mary and Warren enter.

Mary sends Frances a warning look as Warren storms
through the room and exits up the stairs, slamming the
door behind him.

MARY

She broke up with him. Met him after school and told him it was getting too serious. He was so upset, he drove over to Parker road, he sat in his truck and watched her house, he kept his truck running, it ran out of gas. I knew something wasn't right. I just knew it.

Frances remains very quiet.

Mary scrutinizes her.

MARY (CONT'D)

What have you heard?

FRANCES

Nothing.

MARY

Frances...I want you to tell me.

Silence.

MARY (CONT'D)

Frances...

FRANCES

Last week, some girls, in the library, I heard them talking. Over Christmas she went to Boston with her family. She met some guy.

MARY

Well I can't say I'm surprised.

Mary starts to organize things.

Frances notices the change in her mood. There is a lightness to her actions. She starts to hum a little tune.

MARY (CONT'D)

I got a letter in the mail today, from a developer. Just a form letter. I guess a lot of people in town are getting them. You can't believe the figures. I'd be rich if I sold my sixty acres.

FRANCES

If you sell, you have to sell to Mrs. Letemkin.

MARY

I'm not going to sell but if I did, I'd sell to the person who gave me the best price, period. Where does she get her money from anyway?

FRANCES

I don't know, Mary.

MARY

Maybe she'll leave it to you some day.

FRANCES

Ha...ha...

MARY

You better start working on her now, have her put it in writing or some third cousin will get it all.

(throwing her arms around her daughter)

Do we have any ice cream? I feel like sundaes for dessert.

Lights fade.

Lights come up.

ONE WEEK has passed since the break up.

Warren comes into the kitchen. He grabs chips and coke and turns on the television.

Frances enters the room. She takes off her coat and drops her knapsack.

FRANCES

When are you coming back to school? A couple of teachers were asking me today, wanted to know if you were sick.

WARREN

I'm not coming back.

FRANCES

You have to come back, you won't graduate.

He lowers the volume on the television.

WARREN

Did you tell Nora Letemkin about me and Anna?

FRANCES

No.

WARREN

"If you'll let an old woman give you advice...try and stay friends with the girl. Friendships with old lovers, they're always the sweetest."

FRANCES

She asked me if what she'd heard was true, and I said it was. That's all.

WARREN

Jesus it's all over town. Anna Matthews dumped Warren Conroy.

He raises the volume on the television.

Frances opens the door to the stairs.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Lady...

She pauses.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Did you see her today...Anna?

FRANCES

Yes.

WARREN

Did she say anything to you?

FRANCES

No.

And she exits.

A few beats as Warren continues to watch television.

Mary, dressed for work at the bank, enters.

MARY

I ran into Joe White at the bank today.

Warren ignores her. She turns off the television.

MARY (CONT'D)

He told me, "Tell that son of yours if he leaves one more goddamn excuse about why he can't come to work on my machine, he can consider himself out of a job." He asked me if what he'd heard was true, that this was all about a girl. He couldn't believe it.

WARREN

Of course not, he's been screwing around on Doreen since the day they got married.

MARY

Watch your tone, mister, Joe was your father's best friend and partner, he gave you an opportunity.

(a beat)

You'll call him tonight, apologize, tell him you'll be there tomorrow.

WARREN

I've changed my mind.

MARY

Warren...

WARREN

I don't want to be a plumber.

MARY

Warren...

WARREN

(screaming)

What?

Silence as Mary calms herself and then:

MARY

You are so much better than this girl.

WARREN

You don't know what you're talking about.

MARY

I know she dumped you for someone else.

He turns the television back on. Mary pulls the cord out of the wall.

WARREN

(screaming)

What the fuck...

MARY

You watch your mouth, mister.

He starts to cry. She puts her arm around him.

MARY (CONT'D)

You're going to get over this girl. You are. You'll graduate this spring, you'll start working for Joe full time. And eventually you'll either partner with him or start a business of your own. You'll meet a girl, the right girl, you'll have kids. And maybe, just maybe I'll give you five or six acres of my own land. You can build a house on it and then I can really make your life miserable, telling you how to raise your kids, telling your wife what she's doing wrong.

WARREN

No, Anna's the one.

MARY

She's not...

WARREN

She is...I know it...

Mary makes him look at her.

MARY

When this town first started changing and all these new people were moving in, your father, he was glad for all the business, but he'd always say, "I could be the goddamn plumbing king, Mares. Build my million dollar house on the top of the highest point in town. And these new people, these lawyers and MBAS and doctors, they'll chat with me while I fix their toilets and their pipes, they might offer me a beer and ask me about my wife and kids, but they won't ever, ever invite me to one of their cocktail parties or to go skiing for a weekend or to their daughter's wedding." But then your father wasn't interested in spending time with them either. He was more than glad to take their money but beyond that, they bored him to tears.

(a beat)

There are differences, Warren. People might say the world isn't like that now. All part of one big pot.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

But that isn't true. There are people who take African Safaris and people who know that doing something like that is a complete waste of time and money. And you don't do African Safaris, son. You never have and you never will. I'm not saying that my marriage with your father was perfect. There were times I would look at him and think, "How the hell did I end up with this jerk?" But I understood him and he understood me. It was deep inside us, a kind of short hand. You need a girl who understands you that way. A girl who knows that when you get home at night, you might be too tired to go to a party, too tired to play with your kids, too tired to fix the goddamn dryer. That you might just want to sit in front of the TV and not say a word.

WARREN

I wouldn't do that.

MARY

Oh I think you might, you are more like your father every day.

She takes the chips and coke from him.

MARY (CONT'D)

Now tomorrow, you'll go to school. And when you see her, you'll hold your head up high and say hello. Then after school, you'll show up for Joe, and you'll tell him how sorry you are for behaving like such a jerk.

She leans over and kisses him.

MARY (CONT'D)

You need to help me pay for my furnace.

Lights fade.

Lights come up.

ANOTHER WEEK has passed.

Frances enters the kitchen and starts clearing the table of breakfast dishes as Warren enters in his work clothes. He goes to the sink and starts to wash his hands.

FRANCES

Mary called...she's gong to be late. She has all this paperwork to catch up on. How's it going with Joe White?

WARREN

It's going.

The furnace bangs.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Goddamn it. I was downstairs two hours yesterday working on that piece of shit.
(a beat)
Those book shelves I promised you...I'll start on them this weekend.

FRANCES

It's okay, Warren.

WARREN

No it's not...I said I'd do them, and I will.

Warren goes to a refrigerator and takes out a soda. Silence as Frances assesses his mood. And then:

FRANCES

Warren, Anna talked to me today. She's really glad you're back in school. She was worried about you.

Warren winces as though he can't stand to hear it.

FRANCES (CONT'D)

That other guy...she's not seeing him anymore.
(a beat)
She said she misses you.

And now she has him.

WARREN

She said that?

Frances nods.

WARREN (CONT'D)

The other day...I was eating lunch, sitting with Matt and little Tom...I saw her come in...and she looked over at me...at least I thought she did but then I thought maybe I was just imagining it.

(MORE)

WARREN (CONT'D)

I'm going to call her. Do you think I should call her?

Frances barely has a chance to nod.

WARREN (CONT'D)

I am...I'm going to call her.

And then he grabs Frances, swinging her around.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Anna and I were meant to be together. We're going to get married and have a bunch of kids. And you...lady...you are going to be Godmother to all four of them.

He releases his sister and runs to the phone and dials.

WARREN (CONT'D)

(into the phone)

Hey, it's me.

(a beat)

Yeah, it's good to hear your voice too.

Frances walks to the stairs. She looks back at her brother and smiles before exiting.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Meet me tomorrow at the Big Sip. I'll buy you one of those mint chinos you like to drink.

Lights fade.

ACT ONE

SCENE FIVE

PRESENT ACTION

Lights come up on the Conroy Kitchen. The furnace starts to bang.

Mary comes into the kitchen. She wears her grocery store uniform and she looks utterly exhausted. She hears the furnace and immediately notices how cold it is in the house. She goes to the radiator and puts her hand on it. She then kicks it. And the banging stops. She gets a beer and goes to the phone and dials.

MARY

Jay McCarthy please...Mary Conroy. Yes, I'll wait.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

When will he be out of his meeting? I have some questions for him.

(listening)

No, I don't have a fax machine. I'm paying the man two hundred dollars an hour for Christ Sakes. I should be able to have a goddamn conversation with him.

(a few beats)

Mr. McCarthy...Mary Conroy. I was just wondering why you haven't been to see my son yet?

Frances enters from the stairs. She wears a coat and carries a box of cigarettes, a suitcase and a knapsack. She puts everything by the table and starts to gather books scattered around the room, packing them in her knapsack.

MARY (CONT'D)

I'm sure you are very busy. But my boy...my boy shouldn't be in that place. My boy needs to come home.

(Listening and getting angrier)

I just paid you a shit load of money and what I expect is for you...

(screaming)

...to do your goddamn job.

(Listening)

No...no...I don't want to find someone else. No...I'm sorry...I'm just very tired. And I am, I am really sorry.

(Listening)

You'll go next week? Great. I'll let him know. Thank you.

She hangs up the phone. And to Frances:

MARY (CONT'D)

What are you doing here? Why aren't you in school?

Frances zips up her knapsack.

MARY (CONT'D)

Answer me, Frances.

Frances gathers her belongings.

FRANCES

I'm moving out.

MARY

Go upstairs...I don't have time for this
crap.

Frances keeps walking. Mary blocks her.

MARY (CONT'D)

Frances...

FRANCES

Mrs. Letemkin said I can live with her
through next year, until I graduate. And
then, I don't know. I might start
looking into college if I can figure out
a way to pay for it. But I'll leave
Tremont. That much I do know. I'll
leave and never come back.

MARY

That bitch. She put you up to this,
didn't she? She has spent her life being
selfish. Never married. Never had
children. Then she wakes up one day and
realizes she's all alone. That's why
she's latched on to you, she's sad and
lonely and using you.

FRANCES

Mrs. Letemkin...you think Mrs. Letemkin
is the reason I'm leaving this house?
You really think that, Mary?

She starts for the door again. Mary grabs her arm.

MARY

What about your brother? What are you
going to tell him?

FRANCES

I'll tell him what I just told you. And
if he doesn't like it...

MARY

Of course he won't like it. I know he
talks to you, tells you things. Frances
please...

Frances tries to pull away but Mary holds on harder.

MARY (CONT'D)

We are twisted together...you, me and
Warren...twisted together...every single
part of us. I don't care what you do to
me. I don't care.

(MORE)

MARY (CONT'D)

But your brother...you will break him.
You will break him. Is that what you
want to do, Frances? Is that really what
you want to do?

Frances pulls away.

FRANCES

I've drained the pipes upstairs so they
won't freeze, but you should light a fire
and call Joe about the furnace...I think
it's done.

Frances leaves, closing the door in her mother's face.

Mary runs after her...screaming...and crying.

MARY

Frances you come back here. FRANCES.

And crying harder...

Mary paces around the kitchen realizing that she is
finally all alone.

She sits at the kitchen table, drinking her beer and
staring off into space.

LATER THAT SAME DAY.

Frances walks into prison visiting room. She looks
around her, taking it all in. The buzzer sounds and
Warren enters.

WARREN

Frances...is everything okay at home?

The two stand far apart from each other.

FRANCES

Everything is fine.

WARREN

Why are you here...on a school day?

She takes a moment, gaining her courage.

FRANCES

I'm sorry I made you so mad on Saturday.
And I'm sorry I told you about that fight
with Mary and Aunt. I won't do that
anymore. I won't talk about college or
any of the bad stuff at home.

WARREN

You'll just keep coming?

FRANCES

Yes.

WARREN

Week after week for as long as it takes?

FRANCES

I'll come every weekend for the next year and a half. But then I'm graduating, Warren and leaving Tremont. I'll still come and see you. I will. I promise. But not every weekend. I can't.

WARREN

Too busy traveling the world?

(a beat)

Well you won't be coming here at all any more. No weekends. No holidays. No once a year. And I'm telling Mary the next time I see her. She's not coming either.

FRANCES

You can't do that, Warren. Her lawyer is seeing you next week.

WARREN

No...no lawyers. I'll serve my fifteen years and be done with it.

FRANCES

Warren...

WARREN

And you're going to talk to her. Tell her that she can't change my mind. No matter what she says to me.

Frances moves toward her brother.

FRANCES

No. Just two days ago you were yelling at me...saying you needed me to be here. And now you don't want me or Mary to come at all?

WARREN

I'm changing, Frances. More every day. I thought maybe by seeing you...I could make that stop. But it's happening...with or without you being here...it's going to happen.

(MORE)

WARREN (CONT'D)

I don't want you seeing that...I don't want anyone seeing it...

FRANCES

Warren...

WARREN

It just pisses me off, you know...the more I think about it...

(his rage growing)

What my life will be like now...when I used to be so sure. When I could see my life...see into the future and it was all so clear...Lady...it was all so fucking clear.

(a beat)

Dad...

FRANCES

What?

WARREN

Did you know he wasn't meant to do that job that afternoon. Joe White told me. Said it was on their list for the next morning but they'd worked so fast that day, they still had a few good hours left and he decided to get it done. Dad. If he'd just stuck to his list, done the job the next morning. Or if he'd been sitting a half an inch to the left or half an inch to the right. I think about it all the time now. I can't stop. Dad. Dad. If he'd just stuck to the list.

FRANCES

I'm not leaving you. I've changed my mind. And you're going to let this lawyer come and help you. You are. You'll let him help you. And then we'll stay in Tremont or we can move somewhere far away. I don't care. We just need to get you out of here...I know that now. That's all that matters...to get you out of here.

WARREN

That day, Frances. That day me and Anna met for coffee. The way she smiled at me. Said my name. Touched my arm. I knew right then we were getting back together. I have never been more sure about anything...Anna..me and Anna.

(a beat)

(MORE)

WARREN (CONT'D)

And when we were driving, it was just like it used to be. Talking about everything and nothing. Her parents. Mary. My work with Joe. You. And then she said something, something about next year. Only I wasn't what she was talking about. And I asked her...I said, I thought you and me...I thought. And she looked at me, the way she looked at me.

(a beat)

And then she was screaming, Frances. She was screaming and screaming but I didn't care. I didn't care. I turned the wheel. I turned the wheel and drove me and Anna into that tree. I did that, Frances. I DID THAT.

FRANCES

Warren...

WARREN

That place Mrs. Letemkin went to, that country...she's always telling you about?

FRANCES

Bhutan?

WARREN

Bhutan...Christ. I was trying to remember it last night. I couldn't for the life of me. Bhutan. You think you'll go there some day?

FRANCES

I don't know.

WARREN

I think you will.

FRANCES

I don't want to go anywhere...I just want to stay here with you.

WARREN

Talk to me, Frances. Just talk to me. Take me out of this place. One last time.

FRANCES

Warren...

WARREN

Do that for me, Frances. Please.

FRANCES

Where do you want to go?

WARREN

How about Nora Letemkin's house? Where do you sit when you have your long talks?

FRANCES

Sometimes in the front room, but usually in the kitchen.

WARREN

What do you talk about?

FRANCES

Lots of things. Maybe about a book she's just read or about her garden...

She hesitates, not sure she should continue.

WARREN

And what about those places she's visited?

Frances hesitates again.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Tell me, Lady, I want to know.

FRANCES

She has all these boxes filled with pictures and each box is labeled with a different country's name. She can take a picture...any picture and remember everything about it...the day it was taken...who was there...what they were talking about...what they ate or drank...where they went next. And after she's shown me the last picture, she always says the same thing, "I think a brew is in order." And while I put out the cups and saucers, Nora, Nora makes the tea.

We stay with Warren, Frances and Mary for a few more beats and then the lights start to fade...

BLACK OUT

END OF PLAY