

Blind

A play in two acts

CHARACTER NAME	DESCRIPTION	AGE	GENDER
Dave	College graduate	35	Male
Lloyd	High School graduate	35	Male
Whitey	High School dropout	35	Male
Mother	Dave's Mother	70's	Female
Carol	Old classmate	35	Female
Brenda	Old classmate	35	Female
Judy	Old classmate	35	Female

Brenda and Judy can be played by one actor, using different makeup and wigs.

Setting is a small town in Illinois, near the river.

The stage will need to represent a duck blind and a living room. Two scenes takes place in a graveyard, another on the porch of a house. They can be simply represented at the front of the stage.

"He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts"

- John 12:40

"Any one who has common sense will remember that the bewilderments of the eyes are of two kinds, and arise from two causes, either from coming out of the light or from going into the light"

- Plato, The Allegory of the Cave

ACT ONE - SCENE ONE

A rustic duck blind on the Illinois River, early morning in October. DAVE and LLOYD are sitting on stools, guns pointed out the slits in the wall. LLOYD has a persistent cough.

DAVE

Lloyd, we've been at it a while here. Where are the ducks?

LLOYD

Who knows? They say global warmin' has changed their flight patterns.

DAVE

I'll be disappointed if we don't get to shoot.

LLOYD

Lotta disappointment in life.

DAVE

It appears so.

LLOYD

It does.

DAVE

Still, this is nice isn't it?

LLOYD

Sure is. Shit Dave, I still can't believe you're here.

DAVE

Here I am.

LLOYD

You used to crack me up in study hall. Almost twenty years since we were in study hall.

DAVE

A long time.

LLOYD

Time just flies by.

DAVE

That it does.

LLOYD

Some days I feel old.

DAVE

Smoking doesn't help. You should lay off of the cigarettes.

LLOYD

I really should.

LLOYD lights a cigarette, takes a long puff, then takes a slug off bottle of whiskey and hands it to DAVE.

DAVE

Whiskey for breakfast. Not my usual M.O. I hope mom doesn't smell it on my breath. I don't want to set her off.

LLOYD

This is a special occasion. If you're gonna shoot at God's creatures you should partake of the sacrament.

DAVE

I don't remember you being a church kind of guy.

LLOYD

I'm not. Guys were drinkin' in this movie I saw and they called booze the sacrament. Sounded cool. Not sure what they meant. (laughs) When was the last time you were home Dave?

DAVE

Gosh, it would have been six, eight years ago. It's been almost thirteen years since I moved to Europe.

LLOYD

Boy when you left, you really left.

DAVE

You get a chance to make a living in Europe you gotta take it. I took it.

LLOYD

Gotta be a lot of hot woman in Europe. But you never got married?

DAVE

Never found the right person. Woman. Anyway my job keeps me busy. How about you?

LLOYD

The datin' pool's kind of shallow around here. Real shallow. A dry bed you might say.

DAVE

Your day will come Lloyd. I'm not sure for me.

LLOYD

Sure it will. Glad I ran into you at the gas station. People don't even know you're in town when you come back.

DAVE

It's my nature. Anyway, people don't care if I'm in town.

LLOYD

Sure people do. You go to college and then Europe, and I'm still down on Lincoln Street. Not a whole lot has changed on Lincoln Street. When we were little I remember you got picked on a lot. Kids can be mean.

DAVE

I guess it happened. I mostly remember playing wiffle ball and going to the Dairy Queen.

LLOYD

The heck with the Dairy Queen. You've barely told me about living in Europe. What's up with this diplomatic stuff? That's got to be exciting.

DAVE

Oh, it's kind of boring.

LLOYD

You sure you don't work for the CIA or somethin'?' (Laughs)

Long pause.

DAVE

Don't be silly.

LLOYD

I'm just kiddin'. Dave Jones the squirt, workin' for the CIA? Sure. (laugh) I used to kick your ass in whiffle ball. A lot of guys kicked your ass. You were kind of delicate.

DAVE

I don't know about that.

LLOYD

I felt sorry for you. Not much luck with the girls. Uh, I don't mean anything by that.

DAVE

I was a late bloomer. Let's not go down memory lane here.

LLOYD

Hey, I got a surprise for you Dave.

DAVE

I'm not a big fan of surprises Lloyd.

LLOYD

Yesterday I stopped in at the gas station for some lottery tickets and ran into another one of our old classmates. Do you remember Whitey Johnson?

Big pause.

DAVE

Sure. I remember Whitey.

LLOYD

I told him you were in town and we were goin' duck huntin' and he got real interested in joinin' us. I gave him directions. He's gonna bring some more booze and cigars. (looks at watch) He should've been here by now.

DAVE

Whoa. Whitey Johnson is coming? We'll hear him coming, right? We'll hear his motor?

LLOYD

He ain't got a boat. The water's shallow so you can get out here in hip boots. It's no big deal.

DAVE

He's gonna wade out here in hip boots?

LLOYD

People do it all the time.

DAVE

Dammit Lloyd! Why didn't you tell me about this?

LLOYD

I thought you'd be excited to see another old classmate.

DAVE

Let's go.

LLOYD

What?

DAVE

Let's go. I gotta take my mom to a hair appointment later. I can't risk getting held up. Let's get to the boat.

LLOYD

What's the rush man?

DAVE starts grabbing his gear. We hear water splashing.

WHITEY

Lloyd! Hey Lloyd!

DAVE

Shit.

WHITEY

Where's the door? Where's the opening?

LLOYD pulls back tarp to reveal the opening to the blind.

WHITEY flops in, spraying water into the space. He's tipsy. He sits up and smiles.

WHITEY

You boys want some Everclear?

LLOYD

I believe I do.

WHITEY

Dave?

DAVE

Not for me.

WHITEY

I expected a more pleasant greeting from ya Dave. You don't look too happy to see me.

DAVE

Always great to see you Whitey.

WHITEY pulls a bottle and cigars out of a bag and hands the bottle to LLOYD.

WHITEY

This is good stuff. And I got cigars. To celebrate.

LLOYD

You didn't bring a shotgun? We're duck huntin' dude.

WHITEY

When was the last time we saw each other Dave?

DAVE

You know.

WHITEY

I know I know. I'd just like to hear you say it. Tell Lloyd when the last time we saw each other was Dave.

DAVE

It seems to be a little fresher in your mind. Go ahead.

WHITEY

Wait a minute. This is stickin' me in my ribs.

WHITEY reaches into his vest and pulls out a handgun. He sets it on his lap.

LLOYD

Why do you need a handgun for duck huntin' Whitey?

WHITEY

You can't be too careful. Some of these ducks out here are known to attack humans. They've tasted blood. Nothin' more dangerous than a duck that's tasted blood (laughs) ...

Lloyd, the last time I saw Dave was a couple of years after you guys graduated. I had an extra ticket to see Alice Cooper in St. Louis - at the Arena. Dave was home from that showy college he went to. He hitched a ride to the concert with me. One of the greatest shows I ever saw. Alice got his head cut off by a guillotine. You never saw so much blood. It was awesome wasn't it Dave?

DAVE

Just awesome.

WHITEY

We got pulled over when we left the parking lot. License plate light was out. What a shitty break. The cop reached in my shirt pocket and found some pills and a couple of joints. They took us in, but somehow Dave was able to leave the jail. I stayed. Funny how he got to leave.

DAVE

I didn't have drugs. I never did drugs. So they let me go.

WHITEY

He left me there. They found my priors so I got convicted and sent to prison for two years. I'm a felon. My life has been a fuckin' mess ever since. Remember when I called you from prison at your mom's house Dave? Before you left the country?

DAVE

I have a vague memory.

WHITEY

Vague my ass. I told you I would get out and kill you for leavin' me in jail. I'm a man of my word.`

DAVE

I didn't leave you in jail.

WHITEY

Yes you fuckin' did!

LLOYD

Hold on Whitey. Do you really need to blame Dave?

WHITEY

That's why you moved overseas ain't it? It's why you almost never come home and when you do you lay low, right Dave? You're afraid of me. You were a pussy as a kid, you were a pussy at the jail, and you're a pussy now.

DAVE

I moved to Europe to serve in the diplomatic corp. To serve my country.

WHITEY

Bullshit! You went to Europe scared out of your fuckin' mind, somehow got a good job and lived like a jet setter on the taxpayer's dime while I've had one shit job after another and I've got shit to show for it. You always thought you were better than everybody else you piss ant. Well you ain't! The day of reckoning is here ass wipe!

He reaches for handgun and holds it up.

LLOYD

Whitey, don't do anything you'll regret.

WHITEY

Regret my ass. I ain't gonna regret this. I been preparin' for this day for fifteen years. I apologize for the mess I'm about to make in your duck blind Lloyd.

He aims handgun at DAVE.

LLOYD

Whitey ...

DAVE

My choice would have been to avoid you Whitey, but I'm not the person you knew. Don't point.

WHITEY

Fuck you.

DAVE suddenly lunges at WHITEY. Using a martial arts move he audibly breaks WHITEY's arm and grabs the handgun. DAVE jabs him in chest and WHITEY falls backwards out of the duck blind. We hear a splash and the sound of WHITEY moaning and thrashing in the water. DAVE, breathing heavily, points gun out entrance.

DAVE

(Shouts) You ever threaten me again I will blind you on the spot. Thumbs in your eye sockets. You will need help getting to the shitter.

LLOYD

... What the hell was that!?

DAVE

A successful negotiation.

LLOYD

He could have shot you!

DAVE

He's drunk. The gun's safety was still on.

LLOYD

You could see that?

DAVE

(Loudly, so WHITEY hears) Same thing happened with a drunken courier in Montenegro. I gouged his eyes out. End of problem!

LLOYD

Dave you're freakin' me out. You think Whitey is OK out there?

DAVE

You invited him so you sort that out. The party's over. You guys can wade back. I gotta get back in town so I'll be taking the boat. And the guns.

LLOYD

We can't ride in the boat? It's my boat.

DAVE

Not today it isn't.

LLOYD

Come on Dave. I don't have hip boots. It's my boat.

DAVE

You're not listening Lloyd. You wanna negotiate? Like Whitey? Like the guy I took care of in Montenegro?

LLOYD

Oh, no. No. No.

DAVE

I told you I promised mom I'd take her to get her hair done. I *really* can't be late. Being around that woman after she misses a hair appointment is something I don't even want to consider.

DAVE grabs his gear and exits the duck blind for the boat. We hear the boat start, pull away, and the sound of the motor receding in the distance. LLOYD looks on, dazed, then pulls WHITEY, moaning, into the blind.

END OF SCENE

ACT ONE - SCENE TWO

Later that morning. We are in living room of small frame house. Furniture looks forty years old and out of fashion, covered with fitted, clear plastic. Pictures of Jesus, Richard Nixon, and a family coat of arms are on the wall. Knick-knacks cover every surface, including a collection of ceramic figures. DAVE enters through front door. He is angry. He sits on chair and glares. MOTHER enters after him. She remains standing.

MOTHER

David. How could you not hold the door open for your mother? Didn't I raise you better than that?

DAVE does not answer.

MOTHER

David. A gentleman always opens the door for a lady, especially if that lady is his mother. That is how you were taught.

DAVE

(gritted teeth) I came all the way home from Europe because you said you were deathly ill. When I get here you tell me you are miraculously cured. And that it was ... gas.

MOTHER

It was excruciating David. I thought I had an obstructed bowel. I was sure I was dying. I felt darkness envelope me. Joan Bisby, right next door, died a lingering, painful death from an obstructed bowel. And this is no excuse not to open the door for your mother.

DAVE

I took time off work, flew thousands of miles and was overwhelmed with anxiety - because you had gas.

MOTHER

I had a craving for cabbage. Fermented cabbage is my weakness. Fermented foods are good for you. Cultures that eat fermented food have longer life spans. Still, don't let life's unexpected challenges cause you to not be a gentleman.

DAVE

This isn't about cabbage now. There's always a new outrage.

MOTHER

Don't be so sensitive. You have always been so sensitive.

DAVE

I've not seen Mary Beth Rhodes in fifteen years. As she did your hair, you felt compelled to tell her about your concern that I am ... gay? You tell her this in front of me? In front of the other ladies at the hair salon? It's not cool to suggest being gay is an embarrassment mother. Times have changed.

MOTHER

David, you're thirty five years old and you've never been married. Did you ever consider that your mother might be concerned about you? Gay men get terrible diseases.

DAVE

Good god. Yes, gay men can get diseases, just like all human beings can get diseases. And then there is the tiny, insignificant reality that I'm not gay!

MOTHER

Lots of men don't think they are gay and then one day, well, you know. There's no shame in it. Gay men are renowned for taking care of their mothers, bless their hearts. Mary Beth brought up your situation to me some time ago. We've talked about it many times. In any event, anger isn't healthy David. Calm yourself.

DAVE

You've talked about it with her many times! Do you see why I don't come home? Do you see why I'm alone, why I can't make a relationship with a woman work? It's always something like this. Always!

MOTHER

If you would have just had a father at home when you were a child you wouldn't be given to these outbursts.

DAVE

The father who left before I was born? The father that you've told me repeatedly was a drunken scoundrel? Yet somehow he could have been a master parent? You raised me by yourself mother. The neurotic wreckage that stands before you is your doing and yours alone!

MOTHER

That's hurtful David.

She begins to softly cry.

DAVE

It's not going to work mother.

MOTHER

I've sacrificed so much. I'm so alone.

DAVE

I know the script.

MOTHER

If only I hadn't miscarried your sister I'd have someone to look after me while you're so far away from your elderly mother.

DAVE

Don't go down that path. I will leave the house.

MOTHER

Losing a child is cataclysmic. Now I'm losing another one.

DAVE

Fuck me.

MOTHER

I should wash your mouth out with soap.

DAVE

I can still taste it from my childhood. It didn't work.

MOTHER

If you would have had a sibling you might not have been so self-absorbed.

DAVE

Yes, miscarriages are the leading cause of narcissism.

MOTHER

Sarcasm does not allow you to be your better self David.

DAVE

Keep it up and I will go back early.

MOTHER

I try so hard.

DAVE

Well don't try so hard. It puts pressure on me. I just want to be home and try to relax. I was tense from duck hunting before we went to the hairdresser. I'm more tense now.

MOTHER

What happened in the duck blind?

DAVE

Nothing.

MOTHER

Then why are you so tense?

DAVE

God only knows mother.

MOTHER

Exactly. Only God knows. Will you go to church with me tonight?

DAVE

On a Wednesday? No. I don't believe that stuff enough to go on a Sunday. Come on.

MOTHER

I don't know how you young people go to college and come back atheists. It breaks my heart.

DAVE

I'm not an atheist mother. I believe in a higher power, just not that higher power.

MOTHER

If you don't believe that Jesus is your lord and savior you end up worshiping the devil. It's a given. He's so clever, so devious. He traffics in darkness David.

DAVE

Stop. I'll go with you to church. If we change the subject.

MOTHER

OK. Tomorrow I need you to take me to visit your sister's grave.

DAVE

Dear God. Not again. You miscarried at two months. You bought a casket for a one inch long fetus. Forty years ago! They don't even have a gender at two months.

MOTHER

I know it was a girl. Daisy. A woman knows these things. The soul is created at conception. Period. She is looking down on us.

DAVE

I don't know how she can look down on us since she hadn't developed eyes yet.

MOTHER

Do you want her to wonder if we really love her? You could be causing your sister pain.

DAVE

I'm causing my one inch long, eyeless, sexless, fetus sister in heaven pain? I'm speechless. I have no words.

MOTHER

You know it won't be long until you will have to visit my grave David. Next time it might not be gas. It might be cancer. Who's to say that gas wasn't a symptom of cancer? Or much, much worse. I may be rotting inside at this very moment. So you see, visiting her grave is good practice for you.

DAVE

Do you have a hammer?

MOTHER

Why do you need a hammer?

DAVE

I'm going to hit myself in the head with it. It will be painful but it will take my mind off this conversation.

MOTHER

Mocking your mother. Where did I fail as a parent? You never visit me. It's almost like you're ashamed of me.

She sobs again.

DAVE

I will take you to the grave tomorrow if you don't cry or talk while we are there. I'm scarred enough.

MOTHER

OK.

MOTHER notices phone messages.

MOTHER

Oh my. I have three phone messages. I never get phone messages.

She presses button.

VOICE MESSAGE ONE - CAROL

Hello, Dave, this is Carol Harding. Carol Phillips in the old days. I heard you're in town and I hope we can get together and talk about old times. Please give me a call. Can't wait to see you. (click)

MOTHER

Odd that she'd call. Did you know her husband Tom died last year? Flesh eating bacteria.

DAVE

Wow. I haven't talked to her since high school graduation. I asked her to go to the prom, remember. She laughed. Couldn't catch her breath. We don't really have any old times.

MOTHER presses button again.

VOICE MESSAGE TWO - BRENDA

David Jones. This is Brenda Bell. I ran into Lloyd. He told me about your adventures. It sounds so exciting. Any chance you're free while you're home? I would love to catch up. If you know what I mean. Call. Soon. (click)

MOTHER

Brenda and Warren got divorced last year. She's already using her maiden name. Warren was philandering with the Day sisters. Those girls are trouble.

DAVE

Weird. I haven't had two woman ask me to get together in one day in my entire life. I can't remember the last time *any* woman asked me out.

MOTHER

The girls didn't seem interested in you in high school.

DAVE

Thanks mother.

MOTHER

If you are considering meeting those girls why don't you invite them over for tea in the living room? I'd love to chat with them and I could serve as a chaperone.

DAVE

That sound so inviting. Press the button.

She presses button again.

VOICE MESSAGE THREE - JUDY

Dave. This is Judy, Judy Settles. I hear you're in town. My husband is gone during the day. Call me. I think we could have an interesting, uh, visit. (click)

DAVE

Isn't her husband Jerry Johnson? The quarterback on the football team? Big guy?

MOTHER

He's huge. Ill tempered. Judy never took his last name. It a topic of concern in my circles you know. Oh. Judy's mother June has a huge goiter. It frightened a child in church. They could not get him to stop crying. And June made a scene when she lost her entire disability check on the gambling boat. She's banned for three months from the casino. Hopefully enough time to get that goiter under control.

DAVE

Is there anything going on in town you aren't aware of?

MOTHER

Only what's happening in my own house. What happened in that duck blind? ... You haven't become promiscuous have you?

DAVE

In my dreams. Let's go to church. And try to keep conversation to a minimum. Let's commune with the creator, instead of each other.

He gets the door for his mother.

END OF SCENE

ACT ONE - SCENE THREE

Next morning. We are at MOTHER's house, in the living room. DAVE peeks out window shade then paces as we hear the doorbell. He opens the door and LLOYD cautiously enters. LLOYD has a persistent cough.

LLOYD

You got my gun? I'll grab it and go.

DAVE

You'll get the gun. The invite was for the gun and a chat.

LLOYD

You're not gonna break my arm or gouge my eyes out are you?

DAVE

Should I?

LLOYD

Of course not!

DAVE

Then you're OK . . . What happened with Whitey?

LLOYD

His cousin picked him up and took him to St. Louis. You put the fear of God in him.

DAVE

That's God's purpose.

LLOYD

What?

DAVE

Fear ... He didn't say anything about coming back did he?

LLOYD

No. You genuinely messed him up Dave. He thinks he might be disabled. He was real worried about the emergency room bill too. He ain't got any insurance.

DAVE

He should have thought of that before he threatened to kill someone. Enough about Whitey . . . I've got a favor to ask.

LLOYD

A favor? Dave, I gotta be honest. You scared me half to death and took my boat and my shotgun. Now you're askin' me for a favor?

DAVE

Remember what happened in Montenegro?

LLOYD

Somebody got taken care of. I get it. What do you need from me?

DAVE

I need to use the duck blind. I need your boat. And I need you to stay away from the blind.

LLOYD

I'd kind of planned to use it. It is duck season.

DAVE

Montenegro.

LLOYD

I don't even know what Montenegro is.

DAVE

Wild terrain. Guns. Angry inbred people. Scores that get settled with violence.

LLOYD

Jesus. What's this about?

DAVE

Did you tell anyone about my experiences in Europe? Did you tell them about what happened in the blind?

LLOYD

Uh. I might have run into some folks at the Dollar Store.

DAVE

Some of our female classmates?

LLOYD

I'm sorry Dave. Please don't hurt me. You scare the bejeebers out of me.

DAVE

It's all right Lloyd. Can I use the duck blind? You know I'm going to use it no matter what you say. This is simply a courtesy. Courtesy is important to me.

LLOYD

How long before I get it back?

DAVE

I've got to go back to Germany in two weeks.

LLOYD

I know I should just shut up but what are you gonna do in the blind? It won't wreck it, will it?

DAVE

I just need some privacy that isn't available elsewhere. The ladies from the dollar store all have teenagers at home.

LLOYD

Oh. OK ... I guess.

DAVE

I experienced a moment of clarity at the blind. My eyes were opened to possibilities.

LLOYD

I'm lost here Dave ... Can I get my gun now? I really gotta go home.

DAVE

In a minute ... Lloyd?

LLOYD

Yes.

DAVE

I've got something stuck in my head I can't let go of.

LLOYD

What's that?

DAVE

When we were duck hunting we didn't get to shoot. But if we had, how were we going to get the ducks we shot back to the blind? You didn't bring a retriever.

LLOYD

Oh. I guess I didn't. Uh, my dog's been sick.

DAVE

It's almost like duck hunting wasn't the foremost thing you were thinking about when you were getting ready for the day.

LLOYD

I swear I hadn't seen Whitey in ages. I got a lot on my mind.

DAVE

I hope that's true. I really do. Time has a way of revealing truths. I've spent a lifetime trying to determine truth. Truth or consequences.

LLOYD

I've got a drinkin' problem Dave.

DAVE

(looks at clock) No surprise there. Mom will be home from her book club in a few minutes. You've got to go before she walks through that door. You start a conversation with that woman and you go from confident to broken between the subject and the verb. Here you are. I think I'll keep the shells.

DAVE hands LLOYD his shotgun.

LLOYD

Sure. Yes sir. See you Dave.

DAVE

Hey. I may come see your dog before I go back. I'm concerned about her.

LLOYD

Oh. Uh. Dolly's a lot better.

DAVE

Just since yesterday morning?

LLOYD

Yeh, she's way better.

DAVE

Dolly the miracle dog.

LLOYD

. . . Dave, I'm sorry I picked on you when you was a kid.

DAVE

That's thoughtful of you Lloyd. Thanks for the use of the boat and the duck blind. Your reward will come in heaven, because it sure isn't coming here.

LLOYD exits. DAVE pulls back shade and looks out window. He takes a deep breath, sits, puts his head in his hands.

END OF SCENE

ACT ONE - SCENE FOUR

Later that afternoon. We are at graveyard. MOTHER and DAVE stand in front of a tombstone.

MOTHER

She would have been forty at the end of the month.

DAVE

Mother, we agreed not to talk. Strictly silent contemplation.

MOTHER

I wonder what kind of a person she would have been.

DAVE

I remind you that we don't know if it were a she or a he.

MOTHER

How dare you!

DAVE

Sorry. I don't know what got into me, introducing scientific truths.

MOTHER

She was a girl. She was my girl! She would have been a wonderful daughter.

DAVE

I thought we weren't going to talk.

Silence.

MOTHER

Your father isn't your father.

DAVE

He never behaved like a father, so that's probably a fair statement. I never wanted to meet the guy.

MOTHER

My ex-husband is not your father.

DAVE

I don't follow.

MOTHER

When my husband left, before the divorce, I had a brief dark period.

DAVE

Brief?

MOTHER

I felt unloved. I felt lost. I went down a path contrary to my spirit. It didn't last long.

DAVE

You don't have to tell me this. We all drift from our ideals at some point.

MOTHER

I slept around.

DAVE

Timeout! I don't want to know this.

MOTHER

There were several men.

DAVE puts fingers in ears.

DAVE

La, la, la, la, la, la.

MOTHER pulls his fingers out.

MOTHER

Joe Phillips is almost certainly your father.

DAVE sits down on ground.

DAVE

Almost certainly? Joe Phillips that works for the town sewer department? Oh god.

MOTHER

It just happened.

DAVE

I think I would imagine my mother with a man slightly more accomplished than a sewer worker.

MOTHER

The heart has it's own measures. Joe was quite gentle.

DAVE

Wait! Oh no! He's Carol Harding's dad. She was Carol Phillips. Carol is my sister!

MOTHER

Half sister. But still a sister in the eyes of the law. I feel better now. Confession is good for the soul. I've carried this for so long. David?

DAVE

Mother.

MOTHER

I also had a brief fling with Robert Bell, Brenda's dad.

DAVE

What!

MOTHER

And Jim Jackson, Judy Settles dad. So it has to be one of them. My spirit has been lightened.

DAVE

I'm glad you feel better. Because YOU'VE TURNED MY WORLD UPSIDE DOWN!

MOTHER

David. There you go exploding with anger again. It's unhealthy.

DAVE

Of course. I'm unhealthy. I made unhealthy choices. In choosing my mother!

MOTHER

Oh, and John Day, the Day sister's late father, rest his soul. It was so upsetting when he got blown up in the fireworks factory explosion. I felt rather close to him after our little, er, episode.

DAVE

Oh my god. This was a *brief* interlude? Four separate men?

MOTHER

What are you suggesting? Of course they were separate. What kind of woman do you think I am?

DAVE

I've been trying to work that out for about forty years now.

MOTHER

That's not helpful David. Let's go. They usually have cookies after the service on Wednesday night. Church is going to be so wonderful tonight. Telling you about your father has lifted a great weight off my shoulders.

DAVE

And it's been put on my shoulders! Could you find that hammer when we get home? I need to hit my forehead with it - brain damage might erase this from my mind permanently!

MOTHER

Don't be so dramatic.

DAVE

Wait. All of the women who called me could potentially be my half sister?

MOTHER

And the Day sisters.

DAVE

It seems like a remarkable coincidence.

MOTHER

It's a small town. I didn't have a lot of options for a crisis of the flesh.

DAVE

Oh God.

MOTHER

The Lord works in mysterious ways.

DAVE noticed two other tombstones.

DAVE

Mother, why are there two extra tombstones in this plot?

MOTHER

I purchased them after your last visit eight years ago. One for you and one for me. So we can spend eternity next to Daisy.

DAVE

The graveyard is spinning.

MOTHER

It'll pass. Let's say a prayer for your sister. I'm not sure if I ever let her know that she has a half step sister. Or two. She's smiling in heaven right now.

MOTHER bows her head and quietly prays with a look of bliss on face. DAVE, still on the ground, stares into middle distance, in shock. Mother finishes her prayer.

MOTHER

David?

DAVE

What mother?

MOTHER

You may want to refrain from the cookies at church. I think you've put on weight.

DAVE looks at the heavens and sighs.

END OF SCENE

ACT ONE - SCENE FIVE

We are at the duck blind. It is evening. We hear a boat motor. It stops. We see DAVE and CAROL enter the duck blind. There is a battery powered lantern that DAVE turns on. CAROL looks around. The blind has been rearranged with a large inflatable bed with a quilt over it, a folding table, two folding chairs, and a cooler.

CAROL

Wow. This is such a cool way to get some privacy. I've never been in a duck blind before.

DAVE

I kind of fixed it up for the evening.

CAROL

My hobby is interior decorating. I could fancy it up for you.

DAVE

That's OK. I'm back to Germany in a couple of weeks anyway.

CAROL

We have time for a few more nights of, well you know.

DAVE

I hope I know. Uh, could I pour you a drink?

CAROL

Absolutely.

DAVE

I apologize but the only wine the gas station had was Strawberry Hill.

CAROL

Oh boy. That's what I got drunk on at the prom way back when.

DAVE

You know I asked you to the prom.

CAROL

You did not.

DAVE

I remember it vividly. You laughed. You couldn't catch your breath.

CAROL

I was young and dumb David. I went with Billy Baumgartner. He had a Camaro. He threw up trying to undo my bra.

DAVE

What's Billy doing now?

CAROL

He still drives that Camaro around town. It's missin' a fender and has cardboard duct taped in a side window. I dodged a bullet there. Oh, Billy had an eye poked out playin' jarts.

DAVE

That sounds horrifying.

CAROL

His depth perception is awful. Give him plenty of leeway if you meet him on the road.

DAVE

I sure will.

CAROL

I'm sorry I was mean back then David. You were so quiet. Who knew you'd grow up to be exciting and handsome and living in Europe and working for the CIA?

DAVE pours wine and hands mug to CAROL.

DAVE

Uh, I never said I was in the CIA.

CAROL

I know. You can't say it out loud. But what you did to Whitey Johnson speaks louder than words. We all know the truth, right David?

DAVE

The truth is always right there. Somewhere.

CAROL

Is it like in the movies?

DAVE

What do you mean?

CAROL

You know, living in Europe and dealing with commies and terrorists. How many people have you killed?

DAVE

I can't talk about that Carol. I can't talk about any of it.

CAROL

Oh come on Dave. I'm bored to death here. I'm dying of boredom. Just throw me a crumb. Tell me something.

DAVE

I don't know.

CAROL guzzles a mug of wine and sensuously snuggles up to DAVE and kisses him on the lips.

CAROL

David, I'm begging you. Tell me about your life in Europe. Lloyd says you mentioned . . . killin' enemy spies.

DAVE

Lloyd has loose lips ... Well. OK. I'd better clarify this ... People are rarely terminated.

CAROL

Terminated? That sounds technical.

DAVE

Termination is discouraged. It rarely helps the mission. We blind them. With our thumbs. A dead person is just abandoned. A blind guy is helpless. He needs care. It subverts their mission.

CAROL

Wow. That's the kind of inside stuff only a spy would know.

She kisses him again.

CAROL

What's it feel like to puncture someone's eyes with your thumbs?

DAVE

About like you'd think.

CAROL

Damn. Let's get under the covers.

DAVE

If you insist.

CAROL

Oh I insist.

They strip to their underwear and get under covers of the inflatable mattress. It makes a squeaky noise.

CAROL

I can't believe I'm in a duck blind getting naked with David Jones, jet setting spy.

DAVE

I can't believe I'm with Carol Harding the prettiest girl in school.

CAROL

I was such an idiot David. I simply did not know how to judge possibilities in a man. I've finally got it right. My husband Tom was a decent guy but he was just born under a bad sign. Did you know he cut two fingers off making a votive candle stand for the church? They tried to sew them back on, then they dropped off and he got the flesh eating bacteria. Thank god for the insurance settlement.

DAVE

Could we talk about something else?

CAROL

Sure. What do you want to talk about?

She kisses him on the lips and throws her leg over his leg. The mattress squeaks.

DAVE

What's it like being an only child?

CAROL

I don't know. It's all I've ever been.

DAVE

Did you ever wish you had a brother? Or a sister?

CAROL

I haven't thought about it.

DAVE

Did your dad ever mention a desire to have more children?

CAROL

He never had any children in the first place.

DAVE

You lost me there.

CAROL

I'm adopted. Dad couldn't have kids. He told me he had bad plumbing. Kind of weird since he did plumbing for the township.

DAVE

Your dad couldn't have kids?

CAROL

Sweetest man that ever lived. He adopted me and him and mom treated me like their own.

DAVE

Your dad really couldn't have kids?

CAROL

That's what I said. Why did you bring this up?

DAVE

No reason. I'm a curious person. Hey, I've really been looking forward to this evening. What do you say we forgo the talking and rub noses?

CAROL

(giggles) I like the sound of that. I think that this may be the most excitin' night of my life. Get my bra now Dave, before we get liquored up. I don't want Strawberry Hill to sabotage another evening of my life (giggles again).

They embrace and enter into a a long, passionate kiss as DAVE works to undo her bra with one hand and reaches to turn off lamp with the other. In the darkness we hear the inflatable mattress begin to squeak, slowly at first, then building to a rhythmic crescendo, accompanied by moans of pleasure.

END OF SCENE

ACT ONE - SCENE SIX

We are at DAVE's mother's house. The lights are off. DAVE enters quietly, tiptoeing into living room. He turns on a lamp, revealing his mother, sitting in the darkness, waiting up for him. He is startled.

DAVE

Holy shit! Mother you scared the life out of me.

MOTHER

David is the vulgar language really necessary?

DAVE

I'm sorry. What do you expect when you sit in the darkness and startle someone?

MOTHER

I worry about you dear. Where have you been so late?

DAVE

I, uh, had a drink with Lloyd.

MOTHER

I thought there was tension between you and Lloyd.

DAVE

Why would you think that?

MOTHER

A mother's intuition I guess. You shouldn't stay out late. Your mother worries.

DAVE

Things are fine with Lloyd and me. Don't worry.

MOTHER

Lloyd is a decent young man. Fairly remarkable given his upbringing and what he's going through right now.

DAVE

Oh god. I know I'm going to regret this, but what about his upbringing and what is he going through?

MOTHER

I don't like to gossip.

DAVE

Never.

MOTHER

Lloyd's mother got pregnant as a teenager. The man Lloyd thinks was his father married her after Lloyd was born. John Day was his father. John got around before he got blown to pieces.

DAVE

Sweet Jesus! The Day sisters are his half sisters. They're reckless as hell. I guess I'd be messed up too if my dad got blown up in a fireworks explosion.

DAVE pauses and tilts his head.

I thought this town was the dullest place in the world. There's more philandering here than in Hollywood.

MOTHER

There's not a lot to do David. People improvise.

DAVE

Does Lloyd know this?

MOTHER

Heaven's no.

DAVE

You said he's going through something.

MOTHER

Can you keep a secret?

DAVE

About as well as you can. In this town everything's a secret and nothing's a secret. So sure. I can keep a secret.

MOTHER

David. I'm serious.

DAVE

Me too.

MOTHER

Lloyd has stage four cancer.

DAVE

Oh my god. Jesus mom, you've got to ease in to something like this. This is too much to process. You've got to maybe say his dog is sick or something like that. Work your way towards something that awful.

MOTHER

Lloyd's dog Dolly *is* sick. He hasn't been able to take her duck hunting.

DAVE

I'm not even going to ask how you know that.

MOTHER

His neighbor, Mrs. ...

DAVE

Stop. Dear god. Lloyd didn't mention that he's sick.

MOTHER

He doesn't know.

DAVE

Whoa. Wait. What? How can you know he has stage four cancer and he doesn't? That doesn't make sense.

MOTHER

Dr. Assad's nurse, Francis Carpenter, told me.

DAVE

(incredulous) Medical professionals are bound by oath to not share medical information.

MOTHER

Francis and I are old friends.

DAVE

Oh, well that makes it OK then. How in the name of god does Lloyd not know?

MOTHER

No treatment can work. So Dr. Assad wants to wait longer to tell him. He wants as many of Lloyd's last days to be as stress free as possible. He told Francis it wouldn't be healthy for Lloyd to be anxious.

DAVE

Sure, because knowing the truth will kill you quicker than stage four cancer. That's just fucking insane mother.

MOTHER

David I am appalled at your language.

DAVE

I'm appalled that a doctor's nurse would tell private medical information as gossip and a doctor would hide a serious condition from a patient.

MOTHER

If you hadn't moved away you'd understand. I'm tired of bickering. I'm going to bed. I'm so glad you're home safe. David?

DAVE

Yes.

MOTHER

Please consider your language.

She kisses DAVE on the cheek and goes to bedroom.
DAVE sits in chair and mutters to himself.

DAVE

I can't believe this shit.

A soft knock on the door. DAVE is surprised. He goes to door and peeks outside. He opens the door. It is BRENDA BELL. She steps inside and without speaking, grabs DAVE in an embrace, kissing him on the lips. DAVE is startled, pulls away, and shushes BRENDA.

DAVE

(quietly) My mom is in her bedroom.

BRENDA grabs him again and plants another kiss on him and grabs him by the crotch. He pulls away.

DAVE

Great to see you Brenda. What's it been, fifteen years?

BRENDA

It's been a long while. You look fantastic Dave.

DAVE

Why are you here? We were supposed to meet tomorrow at the river then go to the duck blind.

BRENDA

I couldn't wait. I haven't played pelvic pinochle since my divorce Dave. I'm horny as hell.

DAVE

Pelvic pinochle? (rushing his words) I have an important point that must be addressed. My mom and your dad fooled around. I'm worried your dad is my dad.

BRENDA

What? That's a hell of a thing to say to a woman who's tryin' to jump your bones.

DAVE

I'm sorry.

BRENDA

. . . A spy who might be my half brother. That's the hottest thing I've ever heard in my life!
. . . Or it would be if my dad hadn't had his testicles blown off in Vietnam after I was born.
Do you have a condom? If you don't I do.

She grabs DAVE and pulls him behind the couch. We see clothes fly in the air from behind the couch. DAVE reaches up to turn off lights.

DAVE

(urgently) Brenda. Quiet. Please.

MOTHER - FROM OTHER ROOM

David! What's that sound?

DAVE

Uh, just watching TV mother!

MOTHER - FROM OTHER ROOM

Well turn it down please! And don't watch anything scary. You always used to wet the bed after you watched that awful scary stuff on TV!

DAVE sticks his head up above the back of the couch and glares towards his mother, flipping her off.

DAVE

Thanks for the reminder mother.

We hear BRENDA giggle and see her hand reach above top of couch to pull DAVE down. Sounds of pleasure come from behind the couch. Giggles.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE

ACT ONE - SCENE SEVEN

DAVE is outside of LLOYD's house. LLOYD comes outside. He is carrying a container. He has a persistent cough.

LLOYD

Is that a rental car?

DAVE

Yes. Sure. Hey. You doing OK?

LLOYD

What do you want?

DAVE

Thanks for letting me use your boat and the duck blind. It means a lot to me.

LLOYD

You didn't really ask me. You took 'em.

DAVE

Listen, about the whole spy thing.

LLOYD begins to sob.

DAVE

Lloyd what's the matter?

LLOYD

It's just too much.

DAVE

What's too much?

LLOYD

I just been to the doctor.

DAVE

Oh boy.

LLOYD

What he told me What he did ...

He cries uncontrollably. DAVE clumsily tries to comfort him.

DAVE

I know Lloyd. I know. I'm there for you.

LLOYD

It's awful.

DAVE

Dr Assad should have told you about this long ago.

LLOYD

Dr Assad?

DAVE

You know, about the cancer.

LLOYD

Why would Dr. Assad know about Dolly's cancer? He's a people doctor.

DAVE

We aren't talking about Dr. Assad?

LLOYD

No. I just went to Dr. Price, the vet. He put Dolly down! She had huge tumor. I thought she was getting better. I've lost my best friend.

He sobs.

DAVE

Oh shit.

LLOYD

What were you talkin' about Dr. Assad for?

DAVE

I just got mixed up.

LLOYD

How did you know Dolly had cancer? I didn't know until today.

DAVE

I'm just confused. I jumped to conclusions. The emotions are kind of heavy right now.

LLOYD composes himself.

LLOYD

I got her ashes and I'm gonna carry them with me the rest of my life.

DAVE

That's an interesting idea. Lloyd?

LLOYD

Yeh?

DAVE

You need anything, anything at all, and I mean anything, you let me know, OK?

LLOYD

I appreciate that Dave. I'm kind of in a daze about Dolly.

DAVE

I understand.

LLOYD

You were sayin' somethin' about spyin'?

DAVE

Uh, yeh, well . . . When things got tense when Whitey was in the blind I was mean to you. That was wrong. And I'm really sorry about Dolly.

LLOYD

I appreciate that Dave. You hurt my feelin's in the blind. You acted like I was in cahoots with Whitey. I guess spyin' just make you suspicious. It ain't healthy. It makes you wonder who's tellin' the truth.

DAVE

Life kind of makes you wonder who's telling the truth.

DAVE puts arm around LLOYD. Lights fade.

END OF SCENE

ACT ONE - SCENE EIGHT

Back at the duck blind. It is midday. We hear a boat motor, then the motor stops. DAVE and JUDY enter the blind. JUDY looks around.

JUDY

This is so excitin' Dave.

DAVE

I'm glad you think so.

JUDY

My asshole husband has been committin' adultery since a week after we were married. Finally I'm gettin' in on the action. With a spy!

DAVE

Yeh, uh, I'm not sure it's any of my business but why do you stay married?

JUDY

That's a good question.

She rapidly strips to her underwear and climbs under covers.

DAVE

Do you think your dad ever fooled around on your mom?

JUDY

That's a weird question to ask.

DAVE

I'm just trying to understand the lay of the land.

JUDY

Dave the only lay I'm concerned about is me gettin' laid. By you. I've been waitin' a long time for this day.

DAVE

But do you think your dad fooled around? I just found out that my mom had a weird phase of, well, that stuff.

JUDY

Dave there's a lot of sad boring shit goin' on in this town. People get desperate. Look at me. You brought a little excitement to town. A goddamn spy. I laughed my ass off when you broke Whitey's arm. He's an idiot. Jerry took him to St. Louis to get the bone set.

DAVE

Why would your husband take Whitey to the doctor?

JUDY

They're first cousins.

DAVE

Oh god.

JUDY

Let's get it on.

She grabs him and pulls him close.

DAVE

Could your dad and my mom have hooked up?

JUDY

You ain't gonna let go of that are you?

DAVE

I over think things.

JUDY

This is between you and me Dave. Do not repeat this. I'm close to my dad, real close. He's my hero. He told me that him and mom did the wild thing on their weddin' night and she got pregnant. He said he decided he was never, ever goin' to do that again. It creeped him out. They're kind of like best friends. They got an agreement. He goes to the city for long weekends. He's got a special (makes air quotations) friend there. So, to answer your question, dad doesn't fool around on my mom - with women. He's devoted to my mom. Just not that way. So you and me got no problem.

DAVE

Wow.

JUDY

Now enough of that. Get your clothes off and get down here Dave. We're burnin' daylight.

She holds up a condom.

Can do.

DAVE

He quickly strips to his underwear and climbs under covers. The mattress begins to squeak. They engage in a passionate embrace and kiss.

DAVE

Judy, your husband has a reputation for beating people up. There's no way he's gonna find out about this is there?

JUDY tears open the condom package and holds it at the ready.

JUDY

Hell, yes. I'm gonna tell him.

DAVE

What!

JUDY

I'm gonna end this awful goddamn marriage with a bang.

She reaches under blanket and appears to put the condom in place as DAVE looks on in shock.

BLACKOUT - END OF SCENE

ACT ONE - SCENE NINE

MOTHER's house. DAVE opens door and sneaks into living room quietly. He tip toes into kitchen and returns with pizza, which he is devouring in the dim light. He turns on lamp. MOTHER is again sitting in darkness. DAVE is startled.

DAVE

Shiiiiii -oot! Shoot mother.

MOTHER

You're out late again.

DAVE

Doesn't sitting in the dark get tiresome?

MOTHER

I can't sleep when you're out late.

DAVE

What do you do when I'm back in Germany?

MOTHER

Frankly it's difficult David. I never sleep well. Why don't you move back and take care of your aging mother?

DAVE

I've got a career mother.

MOTHER

A career is more important than caring for your elderly mother who is all alone in the world?

DAVE

Mother I didn't intend on speaking about it but since you've decided to try to keep me dependent and in the perpetual state of an infant I'm going to bring up something that has made me angry and upset.

MOTHER

Remember that I have a weak heart David.

DAVE

Maybe. I don't know what to believe.

MOTHER

That is a cruel thing to say.

DAVE

When you realized that some women were interested in me you told me they might be my half sister.

MOTHER

They might.

DAVE

A convenient way to keep me from becoming intimate with them.

MOTHER

David there are sex diseases out there now that won't just make your genitalia itch - they'll kill you!

DAVE

Thanks for painting that picture mother.

MOTHER

Everything I do I do for you.

DAVE

Is that a joke? Carol's dad can't have children and Judy's dad is gay. So they aren't my dad and you almost certainly lied about being intimate with them.

MOTHER

How dare you call me a liar. And Brenda's father?

DAVE

Brenda's father got his testicles blown off in Vietnam.

MOTHER

Didn't know that. I'm slipping. And the Day sisters father? John Day? What about him?

DAVE

I haven't sorted that out yet. He's Lloyd's dad right?

MOTHER

I saw you give me the middle finger last night. And I saw you and Brenda behind the couch. Her dad might have conceived you before his things got shot off.

She might be your sister! You may have committed incest David! You said you were watching TV. You lied to me!

DAVE

Why were you looking behind the couch! That's just creepy.

MOTHER

You woke me up. I wanted to make sure you weren't watching anything scary. I'd have to deal with your nightmares. And stop eating that pizza - you know you have a history of bad dreams when you eat pizza before you go to bed.

DAVE

I like pizza. I love pizza! I'll gladly trade a nightmare for the joy of eating pizza! You are scared to death I'll have a little pleasure in my life before I enter the goddamn void. Thank god the fetus up in the graveyard didn't live because you would have spent the past forty years sucking the joy out of her life like you've done to me!

MOTHER

That's the meanest thing anyone has ever said to me.

She begins to cry.

DAVE

Your entire goddamn life is gossip and secrets and manipulation and tedium. Is it any wonder I never come home?

MOTHER

David. Stop.

As she cries, she picks up a JC Penny catalog and begins thumbing through it.

DAVE

You can't even commit to fake tears long enough to skip looking through a JC Penny's catalog until I leave the goddamn room?

MOTHER

I need to divert my attention from the darkness of being a mother.

DAVE

By looking at men's underwear ads in a catalog?

MOTHER

You need new underwear David. The stains are becoming a problem.

DAVE

Ahhhhhhh! I can buy my own underwear! For the record, I am going to be cremated and have my ashes scattered as far from this soul crushing hell hole as geography allows. So we will not spend eternity next to each other under those tombstones you bought without talking to me. Give my regrets to my dead fetus sister!

He storms out of room and goes to his bedroom. He returns to grab the pizza. MOTHER pauses from crying.

MOTHER

David. Don't take another one of those hour long showers in the morning. If you don't think I know what you are doing you are mistaken. It's immoral and can lead to mental illness or worse.

DAVID stares at her, incredulous. He starts to talk, thinks better of it, shakes his head, and goes back to his room. MOTHER continues to cry as she looks after him. She returns her attention to the catalog and thumbs through it as her crying diminishes.

END OF SCENE

ACT ONE - SCENE TEN

Morning. At MOTHER's house in the living room.
DAVE walks into the living room from the hallway to the bedrooms. He looks around, puzzled why MOTHER is not up preparing breakfast.

DAVE

Mother! Mother! Why haven't you made the coffee?

No answer.

DAVE

I'm sorry about last night! I had a restless night's sleep. I hope you can forgive me for the things I said!

No answer.

DAVE

Why aren't you out of bed!?

No response.

DAVE

Mother!

He walks into hallway out of sight.

DAVE

Oh my God!!

He runs into living room, hyperventilating. He paces. He collapses to floor.

DAVE

No!

He gets up. He slowly goes back to hallway. He disappears for a few moments. He emerges and quickly paces the room. He sits down on couch and stares ahead. He picks up phone and dials. His voice is torn with emotion.

DAVE

Lloyd! It's Dave. Can you come to mom's house quick like?! Please, please come. . . mom is gone. No she didn't leave town. She's gone Lloyd!

He sobs.

DAVE

Thanks man.

He stands up and paces. He looks at family crest on the wall. He slowly goes back to MOTHER's bedroom. He returns with a magazine. A JC Penny's catalog. He looks at it and sighs. He puts it on coffee table. We soon hear a loud muffler outside and the sound of tires screeching. There is a loud knock at the door. DAVE lets LLOYD in. DAVE hugs him when he enters. LLOYD coughs.

LLOYD

Did you call 911?

DAVE

I called you.

LLOYD

You need to call the ambulance or the police or fire department or somethin'. I'm sorry Dave. I'm kind of emotional that you called me before you called somebody in authority. I guess we are buddies.

DAVE

My brain is short circuited Lloyd. I called you because we gotta do something before we call anybody to, aw Jesus, take her away.

LLOYD

I don't get it.

DAVE

We gotta do something. And she's my mom so I can't do it. You gotta do it for me.

LLOYD

Do what? I don't get it.

DAVE

I can't do it.

LLOYD

Can't do what? What are you talkin' about?

DAVE

Before we call the EMTs or whoever you call you've got to put mom's pajamas on her.

LLOYD

Why are you babbling about pajamas?

DAVE

I want her to look proper when they get here.

LLOYD

Proper?

DAVE

She's naked! She had the JC Penny's men's underwear section open laying on her stomach. She must of had a heart attack while she was you know.

LLOYD

Holy shit Dave. Holy shit. You mean she was ...

DAVE

Yes!

LLOYD

Women do that?

DAVE

Of course women do that. But you don't want to think about your mother doing ...

LLOYD

You don't have to say no more.

DAVE

I can't see her like this again. I'm already scarred for life. You've got to get her in fresh cleaned pajamas so we can call the coroner or somebody.

LLOYD

God Dave, using my duck blind was a pretty big favor but this is the biggest favor in the history of the world.

DAVE

I'm begging you Lloyd. If they show up and see her this way it'll be the talk of the town until the end of time. Secrets in this town stay secrets for about five minutes then they're part of the local mythology. I can't let that happen to her. Please.

LLOYD

Aw Jesus. OK Dave. But you gotta pay for my counselin'.

DAVE

What?!

LLOYD

Sorry. Just a really dumb attempt at a joke to lighten the tension. I'll do it for you.

DAVE

God bless you.

DAVE leaves and quickly returns with fresh pajamas.

DAVE

You're making your bed in the next life Lloyd.

LLOYD

I hope so.

LLOYD grabs the pajamas and head into bedroom. We hear him shout.

LLOYD - FROM OTHER ROOM

Dear god in heaven!

DAVE paces, occasionally goes to hallway then stops, turns around and paces some more.

LLOYD - FROM OTHER ROOM

This is hard Dave! I don't know if I can do this!

DAVE

Please! Keep trying!

DAVE paces some more.

DAVE

Lloyd. Lloyd?

LLOYD comes into living room. He is ashen.

LLOYD

I'm done.

DAVE

Is everything OK?

LLOYD

She's dressed. I put her hands across her stomach. She looks peaceful. No one would ever guess.

DAVE

I owe you Lloyd. I owe you big time.

DAVE creeps into hallway and disappears from sight. He returns in a moment. LLOYD sits on couch.

DAVE

Thanks Lloyd. She looks peaceful. You saved her soul from being ridiculed in town forever.

LLOYD

I may never sleep again.

DAVE

I'm gonna call 911 now.

He sits on couch. He picks up phone.

DAVE

Oh shit. Can you get rid of that JC Pennys catalog? I don't even want it in the trash in this house.

LLOYD

Sure. I'll throw it away. I'm gonna go now.

DAVE

Can you stay until they get here? I really don't want to be alone with, you know.

LLOYD

Sure. I guess I can stay.

DAVE

This is the nicest thing anybody's ever done for me Lloyd.

LLOYD

You sure owe me one. Or a hundred.

DAVE

I owe you a million.

Pause.

LLOYD

That was quite a smile she had on her face.

DAVE

I noticed.

LLOYD

I never been alone with someone before who was expired.

DAVE

Me either.

LLOYD

You were around lots of people like that in Europe, doin' your job.

DAVE

Oh yeh. It's just that, what with the horror of dealing with getting her into pajamas it's only just now sunk in.

LLOYD

What?

DAVE

I yelled at her last night. She told me she had a weak heart. I killed my mom.

DAVE breaks into tears. LLOYD sits beside him, hands folded on lap, staring forward, as DAVE sobs.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO - SCENE ONE

DAVE enters living room from bedroom hallway. He is in his pajamas. He lies down on the couch. He is groggy. He puts his hands to his head and begins to cry.

DAVE

What have I done?

MOTHER enters and comes next to couch. She is holding a JC Penny's catalog. DAVE looks up, gasps, rolls on to the floor into fetal position.

MOTHER

David. What's wrong? You look like you've seen a ghost.

DAVE looks up at MOTHER. His voice is high pitched.

DAVE

You've risen.

MOTHER

I've gotten out of bed. Is that what you mean?

DAVE

Are you . . . all right?

MOTHER

Other than being traumatized last evening by the son I love more than life itself, I'm just fine. Why are you on the floor David? Could you look under the couch and see if there are any dust bunnies while you're down there?

DAVE

Oh my god.

MOTHER

You were moaning in your sleep all night.

DAVE

I must have, I must have had a bad dream.

MOTHER

Was there a monster in the dream?

DAVE

Yes. There was a monster in the dream.

MOTHER

I told you not to eat that pizza. You always have bad dreams when you eat right before you sleep.

DAVE

I really, really shouldn't have eaten that pizza. I may never be the same.

MOTHER

Don't be so dramatic. Pizza has chemicals that cause bad dreams. Scientists may not know it, but I do. You should eat more fermented foods. I eat fermented food and I never have bad dreams.

DAVE stands up, slowly reaches out and touches his mother.

MOTHER

What are you doing?

DAVE

Just making sure you're real.

MOTHER

Now why would you need to do that?

DAVE

It's hard to know what's real.

Pause

MOTHER

David, I can make you an appointment with Dr. Assad. He might be able to give you some medicine. You're beginning to worry me.

DAVE

No mother.

MOTHER

Well, I need you to take me to his office anyway. He's going to check out a carbuncle on my bottom. I can get you some nerve pills while we're there.

DAVE

A carbuncle?

MOTHER

Maybe you could look at it and see if a trip to the doctor is necessary.

DAVE

You can't be serious.

MOTHER

We are all made of clay David. Clay deteriorates over time. I don't want your prudishness to lead to my return to dust. That's selfish. Here, take a look.

She turns and grabs her waist band. DAVE jumps up and heads for his bedroom.

DAVE

Stop! I'm scarred enough by seeing you naked.

MOTHER

You're creeping me out David. What in the world do you mean by that?

DAVE

Nothing.

MOTHER

You mean something.

DAVE

Nothing.

MOTHER

Something. You said a creepy thing about seeing me naked. There is something behind that.

DAVE

A dream! I had a dream! Sleep was the one refuge I had. Now you've invaded my dreams.

MOTHER

I'm getting you nerve pills. Only a person with a nervous disorder could say something so hurtful to his mother. And don't ever, ever eat pizza again before you go to bed. This is disturbing David.

DAVE

You think it's disturbing to you? What about me?

MOTHER

It's always about you isn't it? Stop taking those long showers. This is where they lead. Now, take a look at this.

She turns again and grabs her waist band. David rushes out of the room.

MOTHER

What are you doing?

DAVE

I'm getting dressed. I'm taking you to the doctor before I get another image in my head that will haunt me to the grave.

DAVE leaves room. MOTHER remains by couch. She opens the JC Penny's catalog, turns to men's underwear section.

END OF SCENE

ACT TWO - SCENE TWO

At duck blind. Evening. Lamp is on. DAVE and CAROL on top of blanket with underwear on. The blind is decorated with pictures hanging on the wall, a stand with knick knacks, flowers, candles, etc.. CAROL is kissing DAVE. DAVE has a bandage under his eye.

CAROL

I feel so bad for you. Judy Settle's husband is an asshole.

DAVE

I have to agree with you.

CAROL

I never liked Judy. You turn her down for an affair and she lies to her husband and he hits you at the gas station? That ain't right Dave.

DAVE

He's an idiot. I'm not wasting any more time on him. I think he hurt his hand when he hit me. Serves him right.

CAROL

But your eye.

DAVE

It'll heal.

CAROL

And Brenda? Slashing your rental car's tires for telling her you weren't interested in her romantically was just criminal. Why don't you turn 'em both in to the police?

DAVE

I'd rather focus on you than worry about maladjusted people like them.

CAROL

That's so sweet.

DAVE

Carol?

CAROL

Yes Dave.

DAVE

I've been thinking.

CAROL

About what?

DAVE

Well, when Brenda and Judy pursued me I told them I was flattered but I wasn't interested. I tried to be polite. That's part of what's so maddening about Judy's husband punching me and Brenda slashing my tires.

CAROL

Judy was erratic in high school. I always thought Brenda was good people. Until this.

DAVE

But listen. When you and I got together it was like a dream come true. I always had a crush on you and the past few days, coming here each night, well, it's just been amazing. I'm always so tense around mother. This is so relaxing. Look at what you've done to the blind. You've made it like home. It's the homiest place I've ever been. It's so beautiful.

CAROL

Dave I've been thinkin' too.

DAVE

About what?

CAROL

I got married too young. My life has been so boring since high school. It's just so exciting to do stuff I'm not supposed to do, stuff that isn't just hanging around the house, watching tv, cooking meals, changing bandages - I haven't had any fun for years, especially since my late husband, rest his soul, got the flesh eating bacteria. I lost my family unit when he died. There's a loneliness I can't shake. You've made my life fun again. Rubbing private parts with an actual death defying spy. It just blows my mind.

DAVE

Thanks Carol.

CAROL

And I gotta tell you Dave, over the past few days your love making skill set has improved an awful lot. To be honest it was a little crude there at the first. I was -

DAVE

No need to dwell on that. As long as it's good now.

CAROL

It sure is Dave.

DAVE

What do you say we give it another shot? Practice makes perfect.

CAROL

Absolutely. But I gotta get back to my teenagers before too long. Kids are decent people, you just don't want to give 'em opportunities to go bad.

DAVE

You're a good mother.

They begin to fool around. We hear the air mattress squeak. We suddenly hear splashing sounds outside of the blind.

WHITEY

Dave! Goddammit Dave, I know you're in there!

DAVE jumps up.

DAVE

Oh shit!

CAROL jumps up and grabs onto DAVE.

CAROL

Is that Whitey?

DAVE

Afraid so.

WHITEY jumps into the duck blind, rolling and spraying water into the space. He is wasted. He struggles to sit upright, gun in left hand. His right arm is in a cast and sling.

WHITEY

Dave. Guess what?

DAVE

What Whitey?

WHITEY

Guess goddammit!

CAROL

Don't be an asshole Whitey.

WHITEY

Hush, you! Guess what Dave!

DAVE

You want to play guessing games?

WHITEY

My safety's off on this gun. Guess what that means?

DAVE

You're really into this guessing game thing.

WHITEY

This time I can shoot your ass.

DAVE

You don't want to do that.

WHITEY

Wrong. But first I got to tell you and Carol, hello Carol, good to see you. I'm sorry about your husband, he was good people. I got to tell you what I learned with the help of my nephew. He's in 7th grade and he really knows how to use computers. He helped me look up Dave on the internet.

DAVE

Whitey.

WHITEY

It was hard at first. Did you know David is his middle name?

CAROL

It is?

DAVE

Enough Whitey.

WHITEY

His real first name is Leslie. No wonder you go by Dave.

CAROL

Really?

DAVE

I hate that name.

WHITEY

And Dave ain't a spy. He don't even live in Europe. He lives in Peoria. And he works for the State Disability office. He's a goddamn bureaucrat. Ain't that right Dave?

Silence.

CAROL

Dave, is that right?

WHITEY

He sits behind a desk and listens to tales of woe all day. He ain't no goddamn international spy. He's just runnin' from his nutty momma, the big pussy!

CAROL

Dave?

WHITEY

Carol, tell Lloyd I'm sorry about the mess I'm about to make in his duck blind. It can't be helped.

WHITEY points the gun at DAVE with his left hand.
CAROL screams. He pulls the trigger. Click. He pulls again. A click.

WHITEY

Aw shit! I was afraid it got wet and wouldn't work. Goddammit!

WHITEY turns gun around a looks down barrel. He pulls the trigger. Click.

WHITEY

I gotta get a waterproof gun.

BOOM! It goes off. CAROL and DAVE both scream. WHITEY drops the gun and falls to the floor of the blind, moaning and in shock. The side of his head is bloody.

DAVE quickly picks up the gun and kneels beside
WHITEY examining the side of his head.

DAVE

Oh God! He's blown his ear off!

CAROL

Whitey you dumb sonofabitch!

DAVE

Shit!

CAROL

He just scared me within an inch of my life!

DAVE

Whitey dammit! You could have killed somebody!

WHITEY continue to moan.

CAROL

What are we going to do!

DAVE

Let's get him to a hospital. Jesus!

CAROL

Don't you think we should put our clothes on first?

DAVE

Good point.

They quickly get dressed as Whitey moans.

CAROL

Dave . . .

DAVE

We'll talk about it on the drive to the hospital. Take the doily off of the end table for me.

CAROL

What for?

DAVE

I need it to pick up Whitey's ear over there by the wall.

CAROL

I think I'm gonna throw up.

She gets the doily and give it to DAVE , who picks up the ear, wraps it, and puts it in his pocket.

DAVE

Let's get this idiot in the boat and take him to some help.

CAROL

You're not a spy?

DAVE just sighs. They lift WHITEY and help him to opening in the duck blind and to the boat. Lights go dark and we hear the sound of the boat motor starting and roaring away.

END OF SCENE

ACT TWO - SCENE THREE

At the graveyard. DAVE stands alone in front of his sister's grave. He has a bandage below his eye.

DAVE

Daisy, I can't believe how many people I know in this graveyard. There's more dead people than live people in this town. It's spooky. I just saw Mr. Clark's grave. He gave me a D in physics in high school. Only D I ever got, the bastard. And right next to him is . . . Wait . . . I'm not here to talk about the town's ghosts.

Daisy . . . I always wanted a real family. A mom and dad and brother and sister and a happy home. But it didn't work out that way. I got a toxic mother. But I've realized that I have a beautiful fetus sister too.

I told mother I lived in Europe just so I could stay away from her. Isn't that sad?

She's told me crazy stuff about who my dad might be and that you and I might have other siblings. Why did she wait so long? Why is she telling me this now? It seems like it's just to keep me dependent on her forever.

(big sigh) So here I am. Reaching out to your spirit for strength. I'm giving mother an ultimatum. No more lying or sabotaging my life or she's out of my life forever. I've got to save myself. It's the only way to save myself.

I need a solemn vow from you Daisy. I can't help but worry about her even if she is toxic. She brought me into the world . . . I think . . . I need you to be her guardian angel. I never believed in that supernatural stuff but I need to now. I know you'll protect her.

Talking to you like this really helps. I finally have someone who listens and doesn't tell lies. I'm going to do this more often Daisy. Thanks for listening . . . I need to go to another grave now. It's ...

CAROL walks up beside him and startles him.

CAROL

Dave.

DAVE

Wow. You scared me.

CAROL

Who are you talkin' to?

DAVE

Uh, my sister Daisy.

CAROL

That's interestin'.

DAVE

It helps.

CAROL

I'll accept that. You and me need to talk.

DAVE

How did you know I was here?

CAROL

I stopped by your mom's house. She told me you were here. And she told me you were gay.

DAVE

Great.

CAROL

And that you have a long time companion. Who is insanely jealous and is in a violent German biker gang.

DAVE

Oh god. But you came anyway?

CAROL

I already heard from the girls at the beauty salon about the gay rumor. But I knew from experience you weren't gay. You took about 5 seconds to explode the first time with me.

DAVE

No need to revisit that Carol.

CAROL

That's pretty much a heterosexual red flag Dave. Anyway, it's obvious your mom will do anything to keep you from having any woman in your life but her.

DAVE

You are very wise.

CAROL

I'm a mother. There's a tendency to be over protective. Just not that much.

CAROL pulls a piece of paper out of her purse.

DAVE

What's that?

CAROL

It's a spreadsheet.

DAVE

What's it for?

CAROL

After I learned the truth I was lost and angry and upset. I didn't ever want to see you again. But I really love being with you Dave. I'm torn. So I made a spreadsheet of positives and negatives to analyze things scientifically.

DAVE

OK.

CAROL

Here goes. On the debit side you're not a spy. You're a liar. You were kind of dull in high school, you've got a few acne scars, you barely knew what a clitoris was, you were ...

DAVE

Carol, I'm painfully aware of my downsides. Maybe we could get to the good stuff?

CAROL

Oh. OK. On the asset side you have a college degree, you've admitted to being less than honest, and you've got a job, and health care, and a pension, which around here almost never happens. Oh and you've shown some real growth in the love making area.

DAVE

That's all good isn't it?

CAROL

It is. But most importantly, you're earnest and kind and smart and you make me feel safe, like I'm protected. You didn't panic when Whitey pointed the gun at you. Gettin' a gun pointed at you is gettin' more common these days. Not panickin' when a gun's pointed at you is a rare life skill.

DAVE

Thank you.

CAROL

And to be honest Dave, not to sound opportunistic or anything, you have better prospects than any guy in town. I see that now. The genetic pool in town is kind of stagnant. Can we still be together? Aside from Whitey shootin' his ear off I've had an amazing time at the duck blind.

DAVE hugs CAROL in a tight embrace. They kiss.

DAVE

Of course we can stay together. I want to be with you more than anything.

CAROL

I never thought I'd feel so happy in a graveyard.

DAVE

That's good because I need to visit another grave.

CAROL

You do? How come?

DAVE

By the process of elimination it appears that John Day is my dad.

CAROL

Not a real precise method of determinin' paternity Dave.

DAVE

No argument from me. But I need closure on this. He's buried out here. It's all I've got to work with.

CAROL

Wow. The Day sisters could be your half sisters.

DAVE

If I believe mother.

CAROL

They scared me in high school. They were bullies.

DAVE

They had to deal with their dad getting blown to tiny pieces in the fireworks factory explosion when they were kids. It drew them to darkness. Maybe having a brother will draw them to the light.

CAROL

That's kind of poetic. So you get two sisters and they get a brother.

DAVE

They get two brothers. Mother says John Day is Lloyd's dad too but he doesn't know it.

CAROL

John Day got around didn't he? Can that possibly be true?

DAVE

Who knows what's true with her. But I always wanted a brother. So I will have a brother. And I always wanted a sister. So I will have sisters.

CAROL

You should reach out to them.

DAVE

Some day soon I will. I need to ease into a challenge like the Day sisters. I'll talk to Lloyd first.

CAROL

Good idea.

DAVE

Let's try to find the grave.

CAROL

You lead the way.

DAVE

He's buried around here somewhere.

CAROL

My husband is over there.

She points.

DAVE

After I pay my respects to my father for the first time we can stroll over there so you can pay your respects too.

CAROL

It does seem like the right thing to do.

DAVE

John Day could have been buried in a shoe box given what was left of him after the explosion. It'd be funny if it wasn't so sad. A guy should give up smoking when he works in a fireworks factory.

CAROL

That seems like the base requirement for the job. You know you could ask your mom where he's buried, she seems to know everything about everybody in town, dead or alive.

DAVE

Wait. How could mother have known to tell you that I'm visiting Daisy's grave?

CAROL

You got me.

DAVE

I hope that's true.

They hug again, DAVE looks at his sister's monument, puts his arm around CAROL and they walk off, looking at tombstones.

BLACKOUT

END OF SCENE

ACT TWO - SCENE FOUR

At MOTHER's house in the living room. DAVE enters. He has bandage below his eye. MOTHER is sitting on couch reading a magazine.

DAVE

Hello mother.

MOTHER

Hello David. What happened to your cheek? Did someone's husband hit you?

DAVE

(deep sigh) How did you know to send Carol to the graveyard?

MOTHER

Intuition.

DAVE

And you told her a lie about me.

MOTHER

I don't remember that. The aging process takes a toll David.

DAVE

Mother, Carol is now a part of my life. You can't sabotage it. She wants to be with me.

MOTHER

This romance is doomed. You can't take her to Germany.

DAVE

I don't live in Germany.

MOTHER

What!

DAVE

I live in Peoria. I'm going to transfer to Alton so Carol and I can make a home together.

MOTHER

You live in Peoria? How could you lie like that to your mother!?

She cries.

DAVE

I learned from the master.

MOTHER

This is elder abuse. I may call the authorities. You're cruel. You're horrible.

DAVE

Like I said. I learned from the master. But I'm coming around. The most remarkable thing happened. I went to the graveyard and I talked to Daisy. I told her the truth of my life. I'm liberated. I'm through with lies. And if you want to be part of my life you have to be through with cruelty and lies. Do you understand mother? I spoke with Daisy. I finally have a family member who listens.

Silence.

DAVE

No more lies if you want to be in my life mother. I won't visit, I won't call, I won't write.

MOTHER

I'm used to not having you around David. I'm very busy. Very content. In fact, I'm late for a board meeting for the cemetery. I'm president of the board. I'm important. I have things in my life besides you.

DAVE

How nice of you to make time for me.

Silence.

MOTHER

I never had a miscarriage.

DAVE

Good god! Stop with the lies!

MOTHER

I told you I had a miscarriage but I really didn't. There's nothing in that tiny casket in the graveyard.

DAVE

There is something wrong with you.

MOTHER

I pretended I was pregnant so my boyfriend wouldn't leave me. And since I wasn't really pregnant I had to do something so I pretended I had a miscarriage. My boyfriend paid for the funeral. Then he left me.

Silence.

DAVE

You're making this up. This is another one of your sick lies.

MOTHER

I had to explain to you why their's a tombstone with our name on it in the graveyard so I stretched the truth a little.

DAVE

A little?! Have you no shame?

MOTHER

No. I mean yes. You're trying to confuse me! I'm telling the truth. I'm just trying to make my way in the world David. We do the best we can. This is the best I can do.

DAVE

Sure. You see that I've connected with Daisy and you can't stand that she brings me comfort, that I'm working towards building my own family - so you're trying to take Daisy away from me!

MOTHER

Carol's family is no good. They're white trash. She's a Phillips! They eat carp David! They don't come from good Puritan stock like we do.

DAVE

Puritan stock! We're mongrels. Everybody in town is a mongrel.

MOTHER

We're descended from royalty! We have a coat of arms! Right there on the wall.

DAVE

It says Windsor on the plaque.

MOTHER

So?

DAVE

We aren't Windsors.

MOTHER

Our ancestors changed their name at Ellis Island.

DAVE

Mother, it's the Queen of England's coat of arms! You can't help yourself can you?

MOTHER

How do you know Carol didn't let her husband's bandages get dirty on purpose? She probably gave him the flesh eating bacteria. She killed him! She'll try to kill you!

DAVE

That's it mother. You can have Daisy look after you.

DAVE storms out the door.

MOTHER

There is no Daisy! And you're adopted!

MOTHER's crying subsides. She absent mindedly picks up the JC Penny catalog and thumbs through it.

END OF SCENE

ACT TWO - SCENE FIVE

We are in the duck blind. It is decorated even more ornately. DAVE and CAROL are lounging on the inflatable bed, laughing, drinking wine, touching, kissing, obviously reveling in each other's company.

CAROL

Dave.

DAVE

Carol.

CAROL

When I lost my husband, I thought I'd lost my family forever. Now I've got you.

DAVE

I never felt like I had a family. I feel like I do now.

They hug.

DAVE

For most of my life I haven't known what to believe. I always blamed mother. But I gotta stop blaming her. I'm a man, not a child. The past few nights, sleeping here at the blind, I've been able to see clearly for the first time. I know what to believe now.

CAROL

Do what you've got to do darlin'. I'm with you no matter what.

DAVE

You called me darlin'.

CAROL

I did.

DAVE

Do you really mean that? That I'm your darlin'?

CAROL

I do. I really do.

DAVE

Aww.

Another hug.

DAVE

I've realized that you can't choose what life throws at you, but you can choose how you react to it. My reactions have been all wrong. You can choose beauty or you can choose darkness. From this point forward I choose beauty.

CAROL

That's good positive thinkin' Dave.

DAVE

Speaking of beauty, what do you say we go to the nose rubbing rodeo?

CAROL

(chuckles) I always like to rub noses with you. And I'm always up for a rodeo.

DAVE

Well then let's stop wasting time on the preliminaries.

CAROL

You don't have to say it twice Wrangler Dave.

DAVE rolls over on CAROL and they kiss passionately as the air mattress squeaks. We hear splashing outside.

LLOYD

Dave, are you in there!

They sit upright.

DAVE

Here we go again.

CAROL

Is that Lloyd?

LLOYD rolls into duck blind and sits upright, spraying water on floor. He has the container with Dolly's ashes under his arm. He coughs.

LLOYD

Sorry to interrupt you guys.

DAVE

Geez Lloyd. If you would have called I would have picked you up and brought you out in the boat. It's your boat.

LLOYD

That's OK. I stopped by your mom's house and she said she didn't have a son. Weird.

CAROL

I'm sorry Dave.

DAVE

I'm looking at it as a positive.

LLOYD

After that I figured I'd try out here. Anyway, Whitey's uncle stopped by my house. He said Whitey sent the message that if you helped him get on state disability he'd quit tryin' to kill you.

DAVE

Missing an ear isn't a cause for state payments.

LLOYD

He's deaf from the gunshot explosion.

DAVE

That might be something to work with.

CAROL

It would be nice to not have to worry about him showing up with a gun again. He's bat shit crazy Dave. You should try to get him on disability.

DAVE

You're a wise woman. I'll give it a try. I've been worried about Whitey for too many years.

CAROL

That ain't healthy.

LLOYD

It ain't Dave.

DAVE

Lloyd, I'm glad you're here. We were talking about you last night.

LLOYD

You were? I didn't think anybody thought about me. You were thinkin' about me?

DAVE

We were. I've got to make amends Lloyd. I threatened you, I didn't believe you when you said Dolly was sick, I was just plain mean to you. I got drunk with power.

LLOYD

You already apologized Dave.

DAVE

When I apologized I kept up the lie about being a spy so I'm apologizing again. I've got to stop lying. I'm not a spy Lloyd.

LLOYD

That's a relief. I don't really know much about spyin' but you seemed like the shittiest spy in the world. I was worried about the country if you were a top spy.

CAROL

I was a little worried too.

DAVE

I lost my way you guys. I was just repeating stuff I saw on HBO. I'm so damn sorry.

Lloyd starts to sob.

DAVE

Whoa Lloyd. It's all OK.

LLOYD

No it ain't. I just came from Dr. Assad's.

DAVE

Oh no. He told you about your cancer.

LLOYD

How could you know about that?

DAVE

Uh, just guessing.

LLOYD

Dave, you're still lyin'. You said you'd stopped. How did you know about the cancer?

DAVE

I am still lying Lloyd. You're right. Mother told me.

LLOYD

Your mom knew I had cancer before I did? How in God's name did she know?

DAVE

Dr. Assad's nurse, Mrs. Carpenter, told her. I'm sorry, sorry, sorry.

CAROL

Francis Carpenter has a motor mouth.

LLOYD

So you knew before me that I was dyin'. Does anybody in this town have any decency? Why didn't you tell me! How can I trust you Dave?

DAVE

I'll make it up to you Lloyd. Look at me. I'm learning. I'm trying. I've got a lot to overcome. But I'm going to break free of mother's shackles. I promise.

LLOYD

I want to believe you but it's hard.

CAROL

Lloyd, what does the doctor say about your illness?

LLOYD

He says I got stage four lung cancer. Their ain't no stage five. Stage five is dead. My mom died of a heart attack and she told me long ago that her dad and his dad had heart attacks. We're heart attack people, not cancer people! I don't have long. I'm afraid. I'm afraid I'm gonna die alone.

DAVE

No. You're not alone. We're here.

LLOYD holds up the container with Dolly's ashes.

LLOYD

I talk to Dolly in the evenin's. She was a good listener when she was alive and she's a good listener now. What's gonna happen to her ashes when I'm gone? You think I could bury her next to your sister Daisy? It might kind of get me used to the whole graveyard thing.

DAVE

Uh, sure Lloyd. I guess. There's an empty grave there I'm not going to use. I mean if the cemetery board lets you bury pets there.

LLOYD

I got no family. All dead. Even my dog's gone. I'm all alone.

Tears.

DAVE

I'm moving back Lloyd. You're not alone. You've got family. Me.

LLOYD

You got better things to do than worry about me. You graduated from college. I'm just a dumb, lonely old hick.

DAVE

Don't say that. You're a good man. You reached out to me when no one else did. It meant so much to me. You're my friend. You're more than my friend.

CAROL

And you've got me Lloyd. I nursed my husband through the flesh eating bacteria. I've been there.

LLOYD

I don't mean to be disrespectful Carol but, well ... your husband died a slow, painful death with limbs lopped of pretty regularly. There wasn't much left of him there at the end.

CAROL

I will grant you that. His physical circumstances were greatly reduced. But I provided him comfort along the way.

LLOYD

You did. That you did.

DAVE

God knows we're all gonna die Lloyd, that's a given. But Carol know the drills. She knows the bumps in the road to the next life. We're taking baby steps on honesty and love and choosing light over darkness. We're a team now. A family. We'll help you.

LLOYD

I need help.

CAROL

We're here for you.

DAVE

Lloyd, mother lies like a rug but she told me something I'm sure is true. She told me that our dad was really John Day. I'm going to take you to his grave to pay respects. Your dad and my dad. We aren't just friends. We're brothers.

LLOYD

You're my brother? I've got a family? Don't play with me. Are you tellin' the truth?

DAVE

Yes Lloyd. It's the truth. We're brothers. I'd swear to it on my beautiful sister's grave.

CAROL and DAVE sit next to LLOYD on the floor of the duck blind and they all hold on to each other. CAROL rocks LLOYD in her arms. We hear the sound of ducks quacking overhead, flying above the blind, heading home.

FADE TO BLACK

END OF PLAY