

Red Glare

By  
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CHARACTERS

<b>PROMISE</b> -	<i>(she/her)</i>	Mother, 40s in Act One, 50s in Act Two
<b>HONOR</b> -	<i>(he/him)</i>	Father, 40s, then 50s
<b>BRIGHT</b> -	<i>(she/her)</i>	First born, 18, not on stage in Act Two
<b>BRAVE</b> -	<i>(he/him)</i>	Middle child, 16, then 26
<b>(FIRST) DAWN</b> -	<i>(she/her)</i>	Youngest, 8, DAWN in the first act
<b>(SECOND) DAWN</b> -	<i>(she/her)</i>	Youngest, 18, DAWN in the second act, same actor as BRIGHT
<b>RADIO*</b> -		same actor as BRAVE, scene 1.1
<b>NURSE</b> -		same actor as BRIGHT, scene 1.4
<b>SHADOW 1</b> -		scene 2.0
<b>SHADOW 2</b> -		scene 2.0
<b>ANCHOR*</b> -		same actor as PROMISE, scene 2.1
<b>WEATHERMAN*</b> -		same actor as HONOR, scene 2.1

*\*indicates pre-recorded roles*

SETTING**TIME**

ACT ONE: 2009

ACT TWO: 2019

**PLACE**

an American city.

**CONTENT WARNING:** substance abuse, mental health, physical health and medical diagnosis

1.1

*Winter. 2009.*

*Lights up on a home. The house is nothing special, but nothing to scoff at either. A staircase descends from offstage into the family's living room, featuring a couch, rug, few chairs, side tables with drawers filled to the brim with random odds and ends, lamps in every corner, many picture frames, a landline, a CD player, and a radio. On a wall hangs a large old portrait of a woman with a dark background. A clock hangs above the portrait. Original artwork also hangs on the various walls, created by different members of the family. The furnishings are old- resembling antique pieces passed down as family heirlooms for generations- and used. A table with a few chairs is set downstage. The back door to the house is connected, leading to the back stoop and a small grassy area. A patch of dirt sits downstage.*

*DAWN, 8, is laying on her stomach on the living room floor, drawing in a sketchbook. The radio plays the news.*

## RADIO

*"It's like a fire in a theater. Everyone rushes to the door. Of course, you rush to the door too." That is what Naveen Mangal, an economics professor from Harvard, had to say about the financial crisis after he observed a dangerous new trend this past Wednesday. Global investors frantically moved money into the safest investments as many credit markets stopped functioning as normal. Wall Street firms were hit by waves of selling, explained by what some economists believe to be caused by a psychology of fear that has gripped investors across the globe since the moon appeared larger in the sky. NASA confirmed this morning that the moon has moved 3,000 miles closer since last month, making it now at a distance of 233,900 miles from the earth. Paired with heightened tension by the steadily rising unemployment rate here in*

*America—that has climbed fifty percent since this time last year—many have chose to protect their investments. Though personally smart, on mass this action becomes a pattern that continues to fuel the fire burning down the—”*

*HONOR, 40s, dressed casually, enters from offstage and turns the radio off.*

HONOR

You don't need to listen to that.

DAWN

I don't mind.

HONOR

You should. That bullshit is all they play. Who wants to listen to that 24/7? I swear I— Let's do something else.

DAWN

Like what? Wait, look!

*DAWN slides the drawing closer. HONOR looks at her drawing of a woman.*

DAWN

Sooooo?

HONOR

*(faking her out)* I don't know what to say.

DAWN

*(believes it)* Stop.

HONOR

It's incredible! The colors?

DAWN

Thanks. I don't know.

HONOR

Are you kidding? This is one cool lady.

DAWN

I messed up her head a little bit.

HONOR *walks over to an already crowded bulletin board.*

HONOR  
May I?

DAWN  
Thanks, Dad.

HONOR *pins the drawing to the board.*

HONOR  
It's covered in shit anyway.

HONOR *sits on the floor with DAWN.*

HONOR--(cont.)  
Do you want to play a game?

DAWN  
Ooh, yeah!

HONOR  
Cards or mancala?

DAWN *gets the mancala board and pebbles out of the drawer. DAWN puts the board in between them on the floor. She moves them around until there are four pebbles in each pocket.*

HONOR  
I can help you with your homework later too. You go first. If you want help.

DAWN *goes first. They play quickly, clearly familiar with the game and their respective strategies.*

DAWN  
Thanks, but I did it already.

HONOR  
Really?

DAWN  
When you were downstairs.

DAWN *has a good move in mancala; takes a lot of Pebbles.*

HONOR  
You're quick.

DAWN  
Try to keep up!

*They keep playing.*

DAWN  
You really liked my drawing?

HONOR  
Of course.

DAWN  
Thanks. I got the idea in school.

HONOR  
Oh, really? What'd you learn about today?

DAWN  
We actually, in science, did this super thing where they taught us about ecosystems. There's aquatic ecosystems, like fish and coral and octopus, and there are... terrestrial ecosystems—that's us.

HONOR  
You know that already.

DAWN  
I know! It was so funny. The kids could barely name what animals eat other animals.

HONOR  
That's pretty important.

DAWN  
Right? But they did say we're making our own soon. Which is going to be crazy. Like our own little aquariums and terrariums.

HONOR  
What are you putting inside?

DAWN

I don't know, I think guppies and bugs and worms.

HONOR

Teachers sure get their hands dirty, don't they? That's wicked. I'm so excited for you.

DAWN

Yeah me too.

HONOR

Are you doing anything else?

DAWN

I told you about my art project?

HONOR

I don't think so.

DAWN

Daaad, I definitely did.

HONOR

This is the one where you guys made people out of beans?

DAWN

This is the one where we're making animals out of clay. And I'm making a...? ...Pig?

*HONOR finishes a good move in mancala; takes a lot of pebbles.*

DAWN--(cont.)

Daaad?

HONOR

What? Didn't think I'd catch up?

*They keep playing.*

HONOR--(cont.)

Why a pig?

DAWN

They're so smart and gross.

HONOR

Yeah... You making it out of clay?

DAWN

I said that already.

HONOR

Do you like stuff like that? Like sculpture better? Or do you like two dimensions?

DAWN

I don't know if I like one better than the other. Do I have to?

HONOR

I always likes "2d" better. I'm a paint and pen guy all the way.

DAWN

I know. Your stuff is all over the house.

HONOR

I told your mom we should take them down.

DAWN

Why? I like them. Does she have any? We should put them up too.

HONOR

I don't think she has much canvas work left from back then.

DAWN

Does she have a sketchbook?

HONOR

Has she ever shown you her old portfolio?

DAWN

Never.

HONOR

Ask her sometime. She'd love that.

DAWN

You think? She's always so busy.

HONOR

Your mom's a hard-worker. She could use a break.

HONOR *stops playing.*

HONOR--(cont.)

I wish I could stay down here but my back's not what it used to be. Can we move to the table?

DAWN

Yeah. No cheating!

*HONOR is affected by this comment; DAWN is clueless to its effect. HONOR almost knocks over the drying rack as he stands.*

HONOR

Fuck this thing. I need more room to get up.

*DAWN brings the mancala board to the table and sits down. HONOR sits at the table.*

DAWN

Ok. Ready?

HONOR

Ready.

*They begin playing again.*

DAWN

I wish we could do this everyday.

HONOR

Me too.

DAWN

Why can't we?

HONOR

Well, hopefully I'll hear back from somewhere soon. And then I won't be home as much.

DAWN

Aw!

HONOR

But we'll see. I'd love to live like this.

*HONOR has a killer move. It's undeniable: he's won.*

DAWN

Damn!

HONOR

Hey! I can't just let you win.

DAWN

I never saw it coming... Play me again.

HONOR

Ok, one more.

*DAWN starts setting up the mancala board once again.*

DAWN

I'm gonna beat you this time.

HONOR

You think you can?

DAWN

I know I can.

HONOR

I hope you do.

*BRIGHT, 18, and BRAVE, 16, enter through the door. BRIGHT wears a shirt with an alien on it. BRIGHT immediately rushes to where the family keeps the mail. She start checking the name on each envelope.*

BRIGHT

Did any mail come?

HONOR

I'm not sure.

BRIGHT

You're not sure? This is only the most important letter of my life.

DAWN

Nope. Nothing for you.

BRAVE

(to DAWN) Oh, what are *you* expecting?

DAWN

Nothing. Who do you think picks it off the floor?

BRIGHT *finishes looking through the mail:  
it hasn't arrived.*

BRIGHT

Ugh.

HONOR

Any day now. You have nothing to worry about. I can't wait to see you read that letter.

BRAVE

No matter what, we'll be proud.

HONOR

Of course. I didn't mean it like—

BRIGHT

Thanks. So who won last game?

DAWN

I'm winning the next one.

BRAVE

Whatever you say, grubby.

DAWN

Stop calling me that! I am not a grub.

HONOR

(to BRAVE) How was your game?

BRAVE

Weeee CRUSHED IT!

BRIGHT

Honestly, Dad, they blew the other team right out of the water.

BRAVE

My backspin's getting really good.

HONOR

Sweet! Show me?

BRAVE

Nah, I'm tired.

BRIGHT

Really?

BRAVE

Yeah, I don't know. I started feeling it in the last quarter.

BRIGHT

Well, I couldn't tell.

BRAVE

Bet your ass you couldn't.

HONOR

Don't let your mother hear you talking like that.

BRAVE

I know, don't worry. She won't be home for hours. What you been up to today, Pops?

HONOR

Got this one from school. Nothing special.

BRAVE

Any interviews followed up?

HONOR

Nope. Can't even get rejected to my face.

BRIGHT

Times are hard, Dad, for everyone. I'm sure you'll get good news soon.

DAWN

Yeah, don't give up! Then beating you will be no fun.

HONOR

I'm fine for now helping around the house. Clean this pigsty up a little. Still, never thought I'd be a house... husband?

BRAVE

Just say housewife.

BRIGHT

That's somewhere you and Mom probably agree.

HONOR

Yeah. We'll see. How was school?

BRIGHT

Senioritis is hitting HARD.

HONOR

Ah, I remember.

BRIGHT

Good thing I have my notes or else *I* wouldn't be able to.

PROMISE, *40s*, enters. *She drops her bags and rushes straight over to the drying rack.*

HONOR *stops playing mancala.*

PROMISE

Hey, how is everyone? How was school?

HONOR

You're home early.

PROMISE

Ah. Still wet.

HONOR

Yeah... I hung them not too long ago.

PROMISE

Well, it's just temporary. (*to BRIGHT*) Any acceptance letters?

BRIGHT

...Not yet.

PROMISE

Well, they'll come soon. Everyone knows you're going big places: 4.0 student, always on honor roll, even on track to become valedictorian! I'm so proud of you.

BRIGHT

Thanks, Mom.

PROMISE

And my basketball star! I don't even need to ask about the game, do I?

BRAVE

Damn straight.

HONOR

(to BRAVE) Hey—

PROMISE

And my baby! My beautiful little artist in the making!

DAWN

Mamawww!

DAWN *gives PROMISE a hug. The hug breaks her.*

BRIGHT

Mom..

DAWN

What's wrong?

PROMISE

...I... I was laid off.

BRAVE

What?

BRIGHT

Mama, I'm so sorry.

BRIGHT *hugs PROMISE.*

PROMISE

It's ok, I just wasn't expecting it.

HONOR

Do you wanna talk?

PROMISE *stares wide eyed.*

HONOR--(cont.)

Just you and me?

PROMISE *nods. PROMISE then shakes her head.*

PROMISE

No, no, I'm ok. I'm just going to go upstairs for a minute. Make a few calls.

*PROMISE ascends the stairs. She stops midway and looks at her family, on edge.*

PROMISE--(cont.)

We're fine! Just focus on your work. We'll be fine.

*PROMISE exits up the stairs. BRIGHT grabs their schoolbag and starts exiting.*

BRIGHT

I'm gonna do my homework.

BRAVE

Right behind you.

*BRAVE gets their bag. BRIGHT stops. BRAVE exits. BRIGHT looks at DAWN and HONOR and almost says something. BRIGHT turns and exits.*

DAWN

Do you want to keep playing?

HONOR

Not really.

DAWN

What words did Mom use?

HONOR

What do you mean?

DAWN

"Laid." "Off."

HONOR

Oh.

DAWN

That's what happened to you too, right?

HONOR

Yeah.

DAWN

So Mom doesn't have a job anymore too?

HONOR

That's right.

DAWN

So she was fired?

HONOR

No, no. Being fired means you did something wrong.

DAWN

And you guys didn't do anything wrong.

HONOR

Exactly.

DAWN

So she quit?

HONOR

*Your* mother? She's not a woman who gives up easily.

DAWN

?

HONOR

No, she didn't quit.

DAWN

Then why?

HONOR

Sometimes, companies get smaller. Sometimes, companies get bought out. It's all very confusing. You don't need to worry about it.

DAWN

...actually, could we keep playing?

HONOR

Yeah?

DAWN

If you want to.

HONOR  
I'm game.

*DAWN and HONOR continue their game of mancala.*

DAWN  
The guy on the radio said the moon's getting closer. Is that true?

HONOR  
It seems so.

DAWN  
I thought the moon didn't move. I mean, it spins. But I didn't think it *moved*.

HONOR  
Things change. We learn new things every day.

*They play.*

DAWN  
I'll feel bad beating you.

HONOR  
Don't feel bad for me.

DAWN  
I'll try.

HONOR  
I mean it. It's been good. I've had time to think.

DAWN  
And?

HONOR  
I think you're going down!

*HONOR makes the final move and once again beats  
DAWN in mancala.*

DAWN  
Awh!!

HONOR  
Next time.

HONOR *puts on his coat.*

HONOR  
I like being here with you. I wish I could stay.

DAWN  
Why can't you?

HONOR  
I got an interview to get to.

*HONOR kisses DAWN on the cheek and exits through the door. DAWN sits alone at the table. She looks at the various exits to different parts of the house, debating each one. She gets her art supplies and starts drawing.*

*Black out. End of scene.*

1.2

*The house is dark, except for a single lamp on. The crescent moon can be seen in the sky outside the house.*

*PROMISE is in the living room hanging wet clothes on the drying rack. She takes a sip of tea. She yawns. She finishes and puts the basket away. She turns the lamp off, and takes her tea to bed.*

*A moment passes. BRAVE begins to make his way down the stairs, silently. The stairs creak. He pauses. He assesses. He continues. He creeps all the way outside the back door. He shuts the door behind him.*

*Relief. The lighting shifts. His demeanor normal, he sits downstage and takes out a bowl, then grinder, from his pocket. He packs the bowl and smokes.*

*BRAVE looks at the flowers.*

*BRIGHT enters, keys in hand.*

BRIGHT  
They're pretty, right?

BRAVE  
Didn't know you were still out.

BRIGHT  
I couldn't sleep. I went for a drive.

*BRIGHT walks over to BRAVE and sits next to him.*

BRIGHT  
You shouldn't be doing that, you know.

BRAVE  
I know.

BRIGHT  
You're only 16.

BRAVE  
You should talk.

*BRAVE hits the bowl. A moment. BRIGHT puts her hand out. BRAVE passes BRIGHT the bowl. BRIGHT hits it.*

BRIGHT  
Fuck today, man.

BRAVE  
Did you see the moon?

BRIGHT  
Don't remind me.

BRAVE  
What do you think's happening?

BRIGHT  
It has to be gravity.

BRAVE  
Maybe the world got heavier.

*BRAVE hits the bowl.*

BRAVE  
Summer job applications open soon.

BRIGHT  
I'm already stressed enough about college.

*BRIGHT takes a hit.*

BRAVE  
You know you'll be fine.

BRIGHT  
"Fine."

BRAVE

What? You will.

BRIGHT

Even if I get into Yale—any of my top three—who's to say we can afford it? Dad's been out of work a while. Now with Mom home... I just hope I can get out of here.

BRAVE

They're smart. Give them some credit.

BRIGHT

We both know the world has to change before Dad will learn a new trade.

BRAVE

"I dedicated twenty years manufacturing garbage and the biggest trash was the raw deals they cut their employees!"

*They laugh.*

BRIGHT

What about you? And Dawn?

BRAVE

What about us?

BRIGHT

I want to shoot for the stars but I'd never forgive myself if I knew either of you couldn't because I did.

BRAVE

That's not your job to worry about.

BRIGHT

That doesn't mean it's not going to change the results.

*BRAVE takes a hit.*

BRIGHT

Maybe I'll try shooting the moon.

BRAVE

Wanna listen to a song?

BRIGHT

Sure.

*BRAVE takes out their iPod with earbuds plugged in. BRIGHT takes one earbud. BRAVE takes the other and presses play. "Across the Universe" by the Beatles starts playing aloud like the audience is listening with them.*

*They smoke and listen.*

*"Words are flowing out like endless rain into a paper cup  
They slither wildly as they slip away across the universe  
Pools of sorrow, waves of joy are drifting through my opened mind Possessing  
and caressing me..."*

*Jai guru deva, om*

*Nothing's gonna change my world*

*Nothing's gonna// change my world//*

*Nothing's gonna change my world//*

*Nothing's gonna change my world..."*

BRIGHT

//Dad used to play this.

BRAVE

//It's a good song.

BRIGHT

//I forgot.

*"Images of broken light which dance before me—"*

*The music cuts.*

BRAVE

Shit. It died.

BRIGHT

It's ok. I wish it were true.

BRAVE

...Can you feel your heart?

BRIGHT

Like hoping?

BRAVE

Like, it hurts.

BRIGHT

What do you mean?

BRAVE

Like physically hurts. Like you can feel it inside your chest. ...Mine does.

BRIGHT

Really?

BRAVE

All the time.

BRIGHT

You want the truth? ...Sometimes my chest gets tight and my breath becomes shallow and I can't focus on anything except that I'm going to die.

BRAVE

That's about right.

BRIGHT

Well, anxiety's a bitch.

BRAVE

But it's not just that.

BRIGHT

What do you mean?

BRAVE

I know that. That panicky feeling. It sucks. But it's different. It's something more.

BRIGHT

?

BRAVE

What makes you anxious?

BRIGHT

What doesn't?

BRAVE

For real.

BRIGHT

I am! Um. Friends? School. When teachers say I'm top of the class. When I have to step too high on a ladder. When someone leaves something too close to the edge of the table. When Mom always speeds and takes turns way too fast. When Mom brings up Dad. When Dad brings up Mom. But I don't wanna think about that shit. It's all I think about.

BRAVE

I don't think they love each other.

BRIGHT

I don't think they know how to anymore.

BRAVE

You think they ever did?

BRIGHT

I think they thought they did.

BRAVE

I'm scared I'm going to make decisions like that. Confidently and thoughtlessly.

BRIGHT

I think that's inevitable.

BRAVE

I guess... You know this is his?

BRIGHT

?

BRAVE

Dad's.

BRIGHT

The weed?

BRAVE

It's not like he's giving me money.

BRIGHT

You're going to get in so much trouble

BRAVE

Relax, he never notices.

BRIGHT

How many times have you taken it?

BRAVE

I don't know. Doesn't change anything. He's clueless. And if he gets to get high through all this shit, so do I.

BRIGHT *hits the bowl and passes it back.*

BRAVE *puts it down.*

BRAVE

...Can I ask you something? ...What was it like... telling Mom...?

BRIGHT

What? Why are you thinking about that?

BRAVE

I don't know.

BRIGHT

Well, quit it.

BRAVE

I'm sorry. But I want to know, and I never really asked. And the mood's already down so figured I'd take the opportunity. ...Please? I want to hear what you have to say.

BRIGHT

I saw the woman. I told Mom. It was pretty straightforward.

BRAVE

But how did you feel?

BRIGHT

I don't know, I was a kid.

BRAVE

Try to remember.

BRIGHT

I'm high. Let's relax.

BRAVE

Please.

BRIGHT

Dude.

BRAVE  
Really?

BRIGHT  
It's hard.

BRAVE  
You must have felt something.

BRIGHT  
I don't know.

BRAVE  
Tell me.

BRIGHT  
Stop it!

BRAVE  
Feel it.

BRIGHT  
I felt sick! ...Ok? ...I didn't even know why. I just felt like running away.

BRAVE  
Dad's a fucking idiot.

BRIGHT  
I was so young. There's no way he thought I'd remember any of it let alone tell anyone.

BRAVE  
He wasn't thinking beyond getting some.

BRIGHT  
You're disgusting.

BRAVE  
Him. Not me.

BRIGHT  
I don't want to think about that. I don't know why he would bring his kid around the other woman. I don't know how either of them could sleep at night. All three.

BRAVE  
\*Four.

BRIGHT  
?

BRAVE  
(You.)

BRIGHT  
(Oh.)

BRAVE  
Well, he has a chance now to prove he cares about us. He stayed, didn't he?

BRIGHT  
Mom stayed.

BRAVE  
Yeah. I don't know why she would do that.

BRIGHT  
Because marriage isn't about love. It's about pride. Or taxes.

BRAVE  
You think?

BRIGHT  
You think *love* made her stay?

BRAVE  
I think her heart hurts too.

*Black out. End of scene.*

1.3

*Lights up on the family home. It is midday.*

HONOR, *once again dressed casually, plays guitar in the living room. He attempts to play “Across the Universe” by the Beatles. He’s stumbling: out of practice. He finds his rhythm.*

HONOR

*(sing-speaking)*

“Images of broken light which dance before me like a million eyes.  
They call me on and on across the universe...  
Thoughts meander like a restless wind inside a letterbox they  
They tumble blindly as they make their way across the universe...”

Nothing's gonna change my world  
Nothing's gonna change my world...”

HONOR continues strumming and humming the melody. PROMISE *hurriedly enters from offstage. She unlocks the door and enters the house. The sound of the door causes HONOR to make a mistake. He stops playing. Upon arrival, PROMISE is in a rush, drops her bags on the couch.*

HONOR

I didn't know you were coming home.

PROMISE

Just for a second. I need to change for an interview.

PROMISE *takes off her cardigan as she walks and ascends the stairs, exiting the stage.*

HONOR

Interview??

PROMISE (offstage)

Yeah! They called last minute, had a cancellation! I said I'd be there!

HONOR

*(to himself)* Of course. *(to PROMISE)* When is it?!

PROMISE (offstage)

1:30!

HONOR

*(checks clock)* It's 1:04!

PROMISE (offstage)

I can make it!

HONOR

Where is it?!

PROMISE (offstage)

Off fourteenth street!

HONOR

You're cutting it close!

PROMISE (offstage)

Quit worrying// about me!

HONOR

//I'm// not!

PROMISE (offstage)

//I'm the one who should// be worried!

HONOR

//I'M FINE! I found my old guitar! *(picks up guitar)* It's been really nice playing around with it, actually.

PROMISE (offstage)

What was that?!

HONOR

Nothing! I'm fine!

HONOR *starts tuning the guitar.*

PROMISE (offstage)

You better have not been playing guitar all day! I swear, I've been out since 8 A.M. going door-to-door to every business on Washington street! You better have been doing more than tuning that damn guitar!

HONOR *stops tuning the guitar.*

PROMISE (offstage)--(cont.)  
Have you seen my white shirt?!

HONOR  
Which one?!

PROMISE (offstage)  
The blouse with the brown buttons down the middle!

HONOR *looks at the drying rack.*

HONOR  
It's down here!

PROMISE *comes downstairs wearing new bottoms and shoes. She has on a bra. HONOR watches her. She walks over to the drying rack and picks up the shirt, and starts to put it on.*

HONOR  
Take your time.

PROMISE  
(*buttoning up her shirt*) Please. Are you still going to the doctor with—

HONOR  
Oh I totally forgot about that.

PROMISE *gets a watering can and starts filling it with water at the tap.*

PROMISE  
Of course you did.

HONOR  
But I can. You're gonna be late.

PROMISE  
I'll be fine.

PROMISE *exits the house and waters the patch of dirt.*

HONOR

It's dead winter. What is that gonna do?

PROMISE

You never know.

HONOR

I can do it.

PROMISE

It needs to get done.

*Once the can runs empty, PROMISE re-enters and gets ready to leave.*

HONOR

I'll go.

PROMISE

No, I want to be there anyways. I should be done before basketball gets out.

HONOR

Are you sure?

PROMISE

Just get the kids home after school. Goddammit, this shirt is all wrinkled, they're going to think// I'm-

HONOR

You look beautiful.

*HONOR leans in to kiss PROMISE. PROMISE turns her head. She puts on her earrings.*

PROMISE

There's more laundry downstairs too. If you wouldn't mind.

*PROMISE leaves through the door and exits the stage. HONOR looks at the drying rack. HONOR sits down and grabs his guitar.*

HONOR

Just one more.

*HONOR begins plucking "Across the Universe".*

*Black out. End of scene.*

1.4

*Lights up on a doctor's office. White walls. Clean surfaces. A jar of lollipops sits on the counter.*

*PROMISE and BRAVE are waiting.*

*BRAVE is standing, reading a poster on the wall.*

BRAVE

“Cardiology. Cardi, from the Ancient Greek for heart.” That’s funny.

PROMISE

What?

BRAVE

Like cards. The whole suit of hearts are cardi-cards.

PROMISE

Just like your dad. What is it with you all and cards?

BRAVE

They’re fun.

PROMISE

Not when you take them so seriously.

BRAVE

We’re invested. It’s part of the fun.

PROMISE

I don’t like games. Look, lollipops.

*BRAVE walks over to the jar and takes out a lollipop. He unwraps it as he walks towards PROMISE.*

BRAVE

They take wit. Every time you’re dealt a different hand. Who wouldn’t want to know how to win with a losing hand?

PROMISE

*That I understand.*

BRAVE

But it's not just that. It's to see how winning hands lose.

*BRAVE starts sucking on the lollipop, and tosses the wrapper. NURSE enters, carrying a clipboard. She flips through the papers, a bit frantic but still professional.*

NURSE

Hi, again. Thank you for your patience

PROMISE

Of course.

NURSE

How are you all today?

BRAVE

Ok? I've been better.

PROMISE

Things are crazy as usual but that's life, huh?

NURSE

Indeed.

*PROMISE takes a small notebook and pen out of her bag. She clicks the pen.*

PROMISE

So you got the results?

NURSE

Yes. I just looked over your EKG (*PROMISE begins scribbling*), and we got your bloodwork back from last time. We did a cardiac enzyme test and found proteins related to heart muscle damage.

PROMISE

You said cardiac enzyme(?) test.

NURSE

Yes. (*PROMISE scribbles*)

PROMISE

And heart muscle damage.

NURSE

Yes. This is irregular, especially at your age, so we'd like to run a few more tests.

PROMISE

What does that mean?

NURSE

The results indicate signs of myocarditis.

BRAVE

What?

PROMISE

What is that?

NURSE

Myocarditis translates to the inflammation of the heart muscle. Your symptoms—fatigue, chest pain, difficulty breathing, and lightheadedness—all check out. We didn't want to say anything until we were sure.

BRAVE

Like, my heart's, swollen...?

NURSE

Exactly.

PROMISE

It's diagnosed?

NURSE

We'll continue testing but the EKG and blood tests are all the confirmation we need to move forward with treatment. I'm giving you a prescription for corticosteroids. *(hands over paperwork)* Take these and let me know if any symptoms change. You should schedule a follow-up, standard in this case, like I said we need to do some additional testing, a chest x-ray and a cardiac MRI, as soon as possible, hopefully in the next week or so, just to make sure there isn't another condition affecting or causing the myocarditis. You can do so at the front desk.

BRAVE *throws away the lollipop.*

BRAVE  
*I feel sick.*

NURSE  
I'm really sorry. I know this probably is not the news you wanted to hear. But we are going to do everything we can to ensure the highest standard of living from here on out.

BRAVE  
Is there a cure?

NURSE  
Myocarditis is treatable. With medications and procedures, you can live a long life.

PROMISE  
See? You'll be fine.

BRAVE  
"Fine."

NURSE  
As a precaution, you should refrain from any harsh exercise until we've begun treatment and can monitor your progress.

BRAVE  
I'm sorry, what?

PROMISE  
What exactly qualifies as harsh?

NURSE  
Anything prolonged and intensive.

BRAVE  
Like basketball?

NURSE  
Playing sports is included in that, yes.

BRAVE  
You're fucking kidding me.

PROMISE  
Language! Excuse him.

NURSE

It's understandable.

BRAVE

I just got told I can't do the thing I spend all my time thinking about, and you're worried about my language? Fuck that! Fuck all of this! You can't make me stop playing.

PROMISE

It's not safe.

NURSE

It's only a precaution, it could be just a couple of months. We don't want you to get hurt.

BRAVE

I'm already hurt!

PROMISE

We have to follow the doctor's orders. (*to NURSE*) Could you please, just, give us a second?

NURSE

Of course. Please let us know if you need anything. I'll be here.

PROMISE

Yes, thank you.

*NURSE exits.*

BRAVE

Mom, I'm sorry, but fuck this. I'm playing.

PROMISE

You can still be involved! You can go to games, be their manager. I'm sure Coach Calhoun will be more than accommodating.

BRAVE

I don't want to be...

*BRAVE begins crying. PROMISE holds BRAVE in her arms.*

PROMISE

It's ok. It's gonna be ok.

BRAVE

This can't be... my life.

PROMISE

Things get better. I promise.

*PROMISE's phone rings. PROMISE picks it up and sees BRIGHT is calling.*

PROMISE

Uh—

BRAVE

You can pick it up.

PROMISE

Are you sure?

BRAVE

It's ok.

*PROMISE answers the phone.*

BRIGHT (over phone)

AAAAAAAAAAAAH!

PROMISE

What?! What happened?!

BRIGHT

GUESS! WHO! GOT! INTO! YALE!

PROMISE

Oh. Honey! Congratulations!

*PROMISE wipes a tear from BRAVE's cheek.*

BRIGHT

I can't believe it!

PROMISE

Neither can I.

*Black out. End of scene.*

1.5

*Spring 2009.*

*Nighttime. The half-moon is larger in the sky than before. The house is slightly changed, with new papers on the bulletin board and the clothes drying rack in a different place.*

*PROMISE sits in the living room as she did in 1.2, typing on her laptop with a lamp on nearby. This time the lamp stays on throughout the scene, providing the only source of light.*

*A lighter and then a bong rip can be heard from offstage. HONOR grunts. HONOR comes upstairs from the basement. He is wearing clothes ready for bed.*

HONOR

Sorry. Didn't know you were still up.

PROMISE

Somebody's gotta make money for you to smoke away.

*HONOR gets a beer from the fridge. He cracks it.*

PROMISE

My mistake. Drink AND smoke away.

HONOR

You're allowed to have a drink too, y'know.

PROMISE

I don't want one.

HONOR

Why are you still in your day clothes?

PROMISE

Hm? Oh. I didn't notice.

HONOR

Why don't you ever relax?

PROMISE

Relaxing's not free.

HONOR

Nothing's free.

PROMISE

You're one to talk. It's been months since you had work.

HONOR

You know how it is.

PROMISE

The place I'm temping at gave me some not-so-subtle hints that they're going under.

HONOR

Typical.

PROMISE

It was never permanent but still. We need something that is.

HONOR

Nothing's permanent.

PROMISE

Stop being so dramatic.

HONOR

*Permanent?* Actually, I can tell you what's permanent: Death.

PROMISE

Pffft.

HONOR

I'm serious.

PROMISE

You're high.

HONOR

And? I mean it. Talk about a guarantee.

PROMISE

How can you talk like that?

HONOR

Do you *want* the truth?

PROMISE

I want our children to live. More than live. Thrive. And I need you to fight for them.

HONOR

My parent's fought for me and look how good I turned out.

PROMISE

So help me God. Face. Reality. One's off to college this fall.

HONOR

How did we ever make one that good?

PROMISE

She got into Yale! *Yale*. We need to send her.

HONOR

She had to shoot for the moon.

PROMISE

What do you want?

HONOR

A fucking break! *She's* off to college, *another's* got myo-myocar-

PROMISE

Myocarditis. You don't even know the name.

HONOR

I was getting there.

PROMISE

What about it?

HONOR

It's expensive! The treatments! The medicine!

PROMISE

Don't I know it!

HONOR

I just never imagined...

PROMISE

...me too.(Beat.) And the last one, that we can't even tell what it's gonna be yet, but it'll be something.

HONOR

We've been smart. We've saved up. We're doing ok.

PROMISE

We need to be doing better than ok. We need to guarantee their future.

HONOR

We can't do that.

PROMISE

Of course we can. That's our job.

HONOR

Things are going to happen to them that are beyond our control.

PROMISE

So we need to do the best with what we can control.

HONOR

Then let's just sell the house.

PROMISE

Stop. You know why we can't do that.

HONOR

Why? This house is worth something. We can flip it and make some good cash. Our kids will have enough money for school and drugs and a flight to the moon!

PROMISE

Just stop already!

HONOR

It's a good plan.

PROMISE

It's not thought through. They won't have a home.

HONOR

We can move somewhere cheaper.

PROMISE

But it's not their home. This home. I told you the day we bought my sister out of this house that we will have it till the day we die. *That's* permanent. My mother didn't die for us to leave her house.

HONOR

You don't owe her anything.

PROMISE

Of course I do.

HONOR

She was a terrible, bitter old woman.

PROMISE

I never said I liked her.

HONOR

Then how could you honor her house?

PROMISE

It's more than that. It's our family. Don't make me choose between family.

HONOR

Whatever. The solution's right in front of you.

PROMISE

The solution is you GET A JOB. I know, you could start a hotline, 1-800-LIPSERVICE. At the end of the day your words don't mean shit. Raise your voice when you get your next paycheck.

HONOR

Don't speak to me like that!

PROMISE

You think you deserve better?

*A noise is heard upstairs. PROMISE and HONOR stop yelling. Another noise.*

PROMISE

Hey, sweetie? We know you're up there.

HONOR

It's ok, you can come out.

*DAWN peaks around the corner at the top of the stairs. DAWN slowly walks down a couple steps, wearing their pajamas and carrying a stuffed monkey.*

PROMISE

We didn't mean to wake you, honey

DAWN

I was waiting for you to tuck me in.

HONOR

Oh, we're so sorry.

DAWN

I fell asleep anyway.

*DAWN starts walking down the stairs.*

PROMISE

It's ok. I'll come up.

DAWN

Why are you guys mad? Who needs medicine?

PROMISE

Everything's fine. I'll be there in a second. Promise. Just go back to bed.

DAWN

I had a dream, and you guys were there, all five of us were there, and we were farmers. And we had a pig pen out back, far, as the eye could see. We were in the mud, surrounded by pigs. We were so dirty. And we were laughing. And then the pigs started squealing and running and we got pushed into the corner. A crocodile had gotten into the pen. It came out of nowhere.

HONOR

What happened?

DAWN

I woke up.

PROMISE

...I'll// be-

DAWN

I know, I'll go.

DAWN *ascends the stairs and exits the stage.*

HONOR

I'm trying my best. I really am.

PROMISE

Do *you* even believe that?

PROMISE *ascends the stairs and exits the stage.*

HONOR *drinks and turns on the radio.*

RADIO

*"The moon goes back and forth between perigee and apogee, the high and low points of distance from the earth and relation to the sun. Now, with the lows outnumbering the highs, the normal timeline is disrupted, and this unpredictability indicates the cycle is unbalanced and broken. The moon is in a state of perpetual perigee, causing global tides to reach unprecedented heights. Stormy seas have sent cargo ships and ocean liners off course and kept thousands more ships at dock. With no sign of the moon getting any further away, tidal unbalance will only further intensify."*

HONOR *drinks and listens. He gets frustrated and goes outside. He drinks. He sees the moon. He re-enters the house. As he walks, he stumbles into the drying rack. He gets angry and kicks the rack down, picks it up and throws it across the room. He finishes his drink. He turns off the radio and gets another beer from the fridge. He pops the tab as PROMISE re-enters, descending down the staircase.*

PROMISE

What did you do?!

HONOR

Did you see the moon?!!

PROMISE

Control yourself!

HONOR

That's the only thing I can control!!! All my life, I saw it was a game, but I'm good at games. I know how to play. I gave that company twenty

years—TWENTY YEARS—of my life for what? Them to kick me to the curb the moment I need them most? That's against the rules! Those bastards got scared the minute cash started flowing a little tighter. *Our child is sick.* My parents haven't even gotten ill in old age yet. It's their turn. That's the rules... I planned for birthdays. I planned for college. I planned for weddings. I did not plan on the world falling apart.

PROMISE

It hasn't.

HONOR

How can you say that?

PROMISE

How can *you* say that? You complain but you're never there.

HONOR

What are you on about?

PROMISE

This isn't a game. But you're always getting the instant replay...

HONOR

I'm not following.

PROMISE

Don't talk to me about how hard things are while *you've sat* in this house doing jack shit. Don't talk to me about how hard things are until you've heard that diagnosis at the same time as your child and you have to figure out what to say to them//

HONOR

//I said// I'd go!

PROMISE

//DON'T TALK to me about how hard things are when our first born came to me when they were four years old and told me Daddy had another lady in the car. *Stop talking. Change. Do something.* (Beat.)

HONOR

I'm sorry. (Beat.) D'you remember that hill by the river? We'd sit together, sun beaming. I'd play guitar. You'd draw in your sketchbook. We used to smile.

HONOR *finishes his drink.*

PROMISE

I'll circle some more listings in the paper tomorrow morning before I leave.

HONOR

God bless America.

*HONOR exits up the stairs.*

PROMISE

The clothes?!

*He's gone.*

PROMISE

Goddamnit.

*PROMISE looks at the portrait of the old woman.  
She picks up the drying rack and puts it back.  
She gathers the dry clothes scattered on the  
floor into a basket.*

*She sits, opens her laptop again and starts  
typing.*

*Black out. End of scene.*

1.6

*Lights up on the family home. It is nighttime. The <sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> moon can be seen, large in the sky.*

*The house is unchanged except the drying rack is gone. HONOR is eating at the table. He is dressed in formal clothing.*

RADIO

*“Floods have devastated both the Ganges and Mississippi River Deltas. Various metropolitan areas have had to scramble to counter rising water levels and more rainfall than anticipated, even with the regions’ history of heavy rainfall and flooding.*

*DAWN comes in with her plate and sits at the table.*

RADIO--(cont.)

*“There’s never been anything to this level. New Orleans, Bangkok, and Shanghai are top of the list of the cities most affected by these raging storms, sweeping floods, and crashing waves. Until the moon returns to apogee, increased reliance on cargo planes have allowed global trade to continue despite these difficult circumstances. However, air travel is not unaffected by these shifts in weather, forcing air traffic control to change thousands of flight paths and update them hourly, mostly around the Pacific Rim. America watched the cost of imported goods, when in contrast with domestic product, reach an all-time high yesterday afternoon.”*

*BRAVE enters with their plate. They put the plate on the table. They eat. They get up and turn the radio off.*

HONOR

I was listening to that.

*BRAVE takes a bite and looks at HONOR.*

BRAVE

This chicken’s perfect, Mom.

PROMISE (offstage)

What?!

BRIGHT

He said, the chicken's perfect!!!

BRAVE

Do we *have* to sit at the table?

PROMISE (offstage)

Why can't we be a normal family for once?

*BRAVE sits at the table and begins eating.*

*BRIGHT enters with their plate and sits, eats.*

HONOR

Are you coming, Honey?

PROMISE (offstage)

Just finishing up! How was your day?!

HONOR

Ok!! I had a couple interviews! One's for a cashier, the other's food prep.

*PROMISE enters with her plate.*

PROMISE

That's great.

HONOR

Sure it is. I'm considering tutoring instead. It'd be comparable pay.

PROMISE

Would it be steady?

HONOR

It'd be something. Might as well tutor or even teach guitar lessons if that's the type of money that's available right now. At least it's fun.

PROMISE

I'm glad you're trying.

HONOR

Of course I'm trying.

BRAVE

My shift at the grocery store went pretty well today.

PROMISE

Oh really?

BRAVE

No. It sucked. It's really hot in the back room.

PROMISE

You should tell them you need more breaks. They have to accommodate you.

BRAVE

I don't want them looking at me different.

BRIGHT

Different doesn't mean bad.

BRAVE

Whatever.

HONOR

You deserve a break.

BRAVE

Yeah, ok.

DAWN

*(bursting with energy)* I almost forgot!

PROMISE

What?

*DAWN races to her bag and pulls something out. She conceals it behind her back and approaches the table.*

PROMISE

Well, don't just stand there!

*DAWN puts a white clay pig with blue eyeshadow and red lipstick on the center of the table.*

DAWN

Ta da!

PROMISE

Woah.

BRIGHT

Awesome.

BRAVE

You made that?

DAWN

Yup. Cool, huh?

HONOR

That's a pig alright.

DAWN

\*He.

HONOR

But the lipstick?

PROMISE

Honey.

HONOR

Well, he's a good pig, Dawn.

*DAWN takes her seat again at the table and eats.*

PROMISE

You glazed him?

DAWN

Yep.

HONOR

Why white?

DAWN

He's from the moon.

BRIGHT

Oh really? What's it like up there?

DAWN

Let me ask.

*DAWN picks up the pig, whispers in his ear, and then holds the pig's mouth to her ear.*

DAWN

He says it's cold. And his family misses him.

PROMISE

He doesn't miss them?

*DAWN holds the pig to her ear.*

DAWN

He does.

*DAWN holds the pig to her ear again.*

DAWN--(cont.)

But it was his decision to go. He wanted to find color, he just didn't know it yet.

BRAVE

We really can't sit on the couch? It's right there; we can still talk.

HONOR

Finally got the space...

PROMISE

Ok, fine. But don't get used to it.

DAWN

Yes!

*DAWN immediately gets up with her plate and rushes to the couch. BRAVE stands.*

BRAVE

Thanks, Mom.

*BRAVE and BRIGHT take their plates with them. BRAVE sits on the couch. BRIGHT sits on a chair.*

PROMISE

Be careful! If you make a mess, you're cleaning it up.

BRIGHT  
Heard.

HONOR  
When are you bringing your stuff down? Are you already packed?

BRIGHT  
Yup. I was thinking we'd load up the car this weekend, so Thursday?

PROMISE *looks at HONOR. HONOR shrugs.*

PROMISE  
Works for me. I'm so excited.

BRIGHT  
You're telling me. I can't wait, especially for the field research! Getting out in the world, on the ground, seeing it with my own eyes, y'know? Collecting data, turning around, and using it for environmental good! I can't wait to get my hands dirty.

HONOR *chuckles.*

DAWN  
We'll visit you, right?

BRIGHT  
Of course!

PROMISE  
And we're all going to help move in.

BRAVE  
And say goodbye.

DAWN  
Ok, good.

HONOR  
Good for you. You made a plan and you're seeing it through. And an extensive plan at that.

BRIGHT  
Hopefully I can get my doctorate, eventually. Whatever it takes. I just want to help the Earth heal.

PROMISE  
You'll have plenty of opportunities to choose from.

BRIGHT

Right.

PROMISE

Well, this house has been in a transitional phase recently. (*looks at HONOR*) I didn't want to say anything until you were pretty much leaving but I guess we're here. I've decided to use this opportunity to make something new. I'm starting my own graphic design business.

BRIGHT

Like a private contractor?

PROMISE

That's right. The last company I was with even gave me a few clients when they let me go. I've been sorting out everything, making sure it's feasible. But it is. It's more than that. It's our future.

DAWN

What's that mean?

PROMISE

No more bosses. I'll be in charge of what I do and when I do it. But most importantly, I'll have more job security doing this than the other possibilities in front of me.

BRIGHT

Sounds like a lot of work.

HONOR

It will be.

PROMISE

And it'll be worth it. The good thing about this country is when things go wrong, you yourself have the power to make things right.

BRAVE

That's awesome, Mom.

PROMISE

And it means I'll get to spend more time here, with all of you.

DAWN

Awww.

BRAVE

So what type of clients are we talking?

PROMISE *stands and walks to her bag.*

PROMISE  
I just finished my first sample last night. I had it printed today and I think it came out pretty good.

PROMISE *pulls a brochure out of the bag.*  
PROMISE *comes back to the table and hold the pamphlet up.*

BRAVE  
Really?

BRAVE *and BRIGHT look skeptical.*

PROMISE  
Open it.

BRAVE *unfolds a side, then the other, to reveal a full white moon on the back of the pamphlet.*

BRAVE  
“The moon is steadily growing closer to the Earth everyday. In six months of the ever-impending lunar eclipse, we have learned a few things:”

BRIGHT *snatches the pamphlet.*

PROMISE  
Be careful!

BRIGHT  
“Science doesn’t always have the answers. Intuitively, people knew the moon grew in size. But no world governments or the research teams confirmed the moons’ growth until after a week of public suspicion.”

PROMISE  
The layout’s nice, right?

BRIGHT  
What is this?

PROMISE  
One of the clients my last company had to let go was a brochures program

BRIGHT  
This is wrong.

PROMISE

What is?

BRIGHT

I mean, none of the facts are incorrect. But the implication.

PROMISE

I'm with you. But it pays the bills. Whatever I can do to send you to New Haven. Here.

BRIGHT

I guess.

HONOR

You're so lucky. Be grateful for all your mother's done.

BRIGHT

I am. I'm just surprised.

PROMISE

Well, I'll keep you updated, sweetie.

BRIGHT

You better! It's so weird to think I won't be in this house.

BRAVE

I can't believe you won't live here.

PROMISE

Well, we're not going anywhere.

BRAVE

I know.

BRIGHT

I'll be back before you know it.

BRAVE

I'm really happy for you.

*The smoke alarm starts beeping.*

DAWN

Ow!

PROMISE

Oh, shit. The potatoes.

PROMISE *rushes off stage into the kitchen. She opens the oven and smoke billows out and onto the stage. PROMISE re-enters, smoke still seeping in. HONOR gets up and opens the door. PROMISE stands on a chair under the stairs and uses a broom to poke at the smoke alarm. HONOR gets a blanket or towel and starts waving it vigorously in the air to clear the smoke.*

*The moon begins to grow ever-so-slightly larger in live time on stage.*

BRAVE *starts coughing. BRIGHT stands and starts to go outside before getting DAWN and BRAVE out too. BRAVE is slow to stand. The children file out of the house, BRAVE last. BRAVE sits on the porch as they step off of it. They are breathing heavily. BRIGHT notices. DAWN notices. DAWN goes back inside and exits the stage into the kitchen.*

BRIGHT  
Dawn!

*DAWN returns with a glass of water. BRAVE drinks it.*

DAWN  
Sorry.

BRIGHT  
Don't be. (to BRAVE) Are you okay?

BRAVE  
My chest...

*PROMISE and HONOR have cleared the smoke and turned the alarm off.*

PROMISE  
You guys can come back in!!

BRIGHT  
MOM!!!

PROMISE *rushes outside, followed by HONOR.*

PROMISE  
Dawn, get my bag.

DAWN *goes inside the house and frantically looks for PROMISE's purse.*

PROMISE  
What happened?

BRIGHT  
I don't know! I don't know.

BRAVE  
My... heart...

PROMISE  
Get the car.

HONOR *runs off stage. PROMISE holds BRAVE.*

PROMISE  
It's ok. It's ok. Just breathe. Focus on your breath, ok? In... Out... In...  
You got it. I'm here.

*The sound of car tires screeching.*

BRIGHT  
Dad's here.

PROMISE  
We're gonna drive you to the hospital. Can you stand?

DAWN *finds the purse and comes back outside with it in hand. PROMISE and BRIGHT help BRAVE stand. The moon is noticeably larger from the top of the scene.*

PROMISE  
We got this. Ok? One foot in front of the other.

Black out. End of Act 1.

2.0

*Lighting indicates seasons passing. The lighting goes through nine cycles. With time, the moon grows in size, engulfing the sky, and becomes full. A distorted version of “Across the Universe” by the Beatles plays, almost as if it were underwater.*

*“Limitless undying love which shines around me like a million suns It calls me on and on across the universe.*

*Jai guru deva, om,  
Nothing's gonna change my world  
Nothing's gonna change my world  
Nothing's gonna change my world  
Nothing's gonna change my world  
Jai guru deva  
Jai guru deva  
Jai guru deva  
Jai guru deva  
Jai guru deva  
Jai guru deva...”*

*Stage crew changes the appearance of the interior of the house. This stage crew movement does not cease until the end of the scene. As they alter the environment, five flowers emerge from the patch of dirt in the yard.*

*A person, dressed in full white, emerges from within the house. They move to reveal it is actually two people, SHADOW 1 and SHADOW 2.*

*SHADOW 1 plucks one of the five flowers sitting at the lip of the stage, accidentally crushing one as they pluck the other. SHADOW 2 fills a vase at the sink, carries it to the center of the dining table, and places it there as a centerpiece. SHADOW 1 walks to the table and puts the flower in the vase. SHADOWS exit.*

*Stage crew continues the house's transformation, replacing more and more items until a decade's worth of change is present.*

*Stage crew rolls in a cot.*

*Black out. End of transition.*

2.1

*Summer 2019.*

*Lights up on a home. The house is nothing special, but nothing to scoff at either. A staircase descends from offstage into the family's living room, featuring a couch, rug, few chairs, side tables with drawers filled to the brim with random odds and ends, lamps in every corner, many picture frames, a landline, a CD player, and a radio. On a wall hangs a large old portrait of a woman with a dark background. A clock hangs above the portrait. Original artwork also hangs on the various walls, created by different members of the family. The furnishings are old- resembling antique pieces passed down as family heirlooms for generations- and used. A table with a few chairs is set downstage. A cot is now the central function of the room, facing the TV. A few boxes of various items litter the room. The interior of the house is lit.*

*The back door to the house is connected, leading to the back stoop and a small grassy area. It is nighttime. The large full moon takes up almost the entirety of the sky.*

*Four flowers sit on the edge of the stage in the patch of dirt that was once barren. One flower of the four is wilting. The fifth flower sits in a vase on the table.*

*HONOR, 50s, and BRAVE, 26, enter, outside the house. HONOR does not help BRAVE walk but watches them. BRAVE is clearly in pain.*

HONOR

We have everything set up. I know stairs are hard right now so we put a cot in the living room. Just temporarily, until you can get to your room.

BRAVE

You didn't have to do all that.

HONOR

Let me get that.

*HONOR opens the door for BRAVE. BRAVE enters the house, then HONOR.*

HONOR

Do you need anything? I'm sure you're thirsty.

BRAVE

I'm fine.

*BRAVE sees the cot and sighs.*

HONOR

Your mom wanted to make sure you could easily get food or go to the bathroom. In case we're asleep.

BRAVE

That's smart actually. Where is she?

HONOR

Probably her office. She had to get some work done.

BRAVE

MOM??

PROMISE (offstage)

IS THAT-?

*PROMISE, 50s, enters. She quickly descends the stairs and gives BRAVE a careful but big hug.*

PROMISE--(cont.)

Oh! I missed you!

BRAVE

I saw you two days ago.

PROMISE

I want to see you every day.

BRAVE  
It's no big deal.

PROMISE  
I would have come! It's like these damn clients don't realize I'm ever off the clock.

HONOR  
*(under his breath)* Are you?

PROMISE  
But that doesn't matter. I'm so happy to have you home. Do you need anything? I put the cot so you can reach the bookshelf in case you get bored.

BRAVE  
You guys, quit worrying. You've already done so much. Thank you. I'm tired. I just want to lay down.

*BRAVE walks to the cot. HONOR and PROMISE try to help.*

BRAVE  
I'm fine. I got it.

*BRAVE lays in the cot and gets under the covers. PROMISE sits on the couch. HONOR awkwardly stands there.*

*BRAVE reaches for the remote but can't quite get it. PROMISE waits a moment before handing it to BRAVE.*

BRAVE  
Thanks.

*BRAVE clicks on the TV. They click through a few channels before turning to the news. HONOR exits into the kitchen.*

ANCHOR  
What look like shaven sheep have been appearing in pastures across the country. Shepherds and farmers alike have discovered their sheep populations have stopped producing wool. Top biologists cannot explain this phenomenon, another to add to this list after jumbo-jumbo-shrimp, krill-like creatures

the size of lobsters, were found in the Mid-Atlantic last spring. Before a deeper dive, let's get the weather.

HONOR *re-enters with a bottle of water for  
BRAVE and gives it to them.*

WEATHERMAN

Ha ha, thank you. It looks like we are going to have another wave of torrential downpours. Every day next week starting Wednesday should see anywhere from thirty to fifty inches of water a day. With the average temperature of rain in the past month at a hundred and fifteen degrees Fahrenheit, I would recommend you stay indoors, in your car, or better be really great at cross country.

ANCHOR

Oh, that's just terrific. Meteorologists around the world think this hot rain is responsible for the changes in agriculture we have seen in recent years. The temperature of the water could be what's causing trees to lose their leaves and sugar plants to reap salt, among other things. Intense storms continue to change ecosystems all over the globe.

PROMISE *takes the remote from BRAVE and changes  
the channel.*

PROMISE

Don't need to listen to that, do we?

BRAVE

I was watching.

PROMISE

How can you? It's depressing.

BRAVE

It's real. Don't you wanna know what people are going through?

PROMISE

It's hard to watch the news these days. Who knows...

HONOR

Who knows what?

BRAVE

Could I have the remote back?

PROMISE *gives* BRAVE *the remote*. BRAVE *changes the channel and settles on something other than the news*.

PROMISE  
Thank you.

HONOR  
I'll be downstairs if you need me.

HONOR *exits*. BRAVE *and* PROMISE *sit, watching, not talking*. (Beat.)

BRAVE *turns the TV off*.

BRAVE  
Actually, I think I'm just going to go the sleep.

PROMISE  
You must be exhausted.

BRAVE  
Yeah, it's been a long day.

PROMISE  
Ok... Well, I'll be in my office. If you want to talk.

BRAVE  
Ok, Mom.

PROMISE *ascends the staircase. She stops halfway*.

PROMISE  
Glad you're back.

BRAVE  
Glad to be back.

PROMISE *exits up the stairs*. BRAVE *relaxes*.

BRAVE--(cont.)  
I can tell stuff's changed, but everything looks the same.

BRAVE *clicks back on the TV and turns it to the news. They mute the TV and just watch the images.*

HONOR *starts playing guitar off stage. "Across the Universe" by the Beatles, just instrumental, begins.*

BRAVE *slowly gets up and out of bed. They walk over to the flower in vase and pour some of their water into the vase. They walk over to a cabinet and pull out a handle of clear liquor. They pour the liquor into the bottle until it is full again. They take a swig from the bottle before putting it back.*

BRAVE *takes out his smartphone and sends a text. We hear a ding off stage. The guitar stops. BRAVE puts their phone back in their pocket and walks back to the cot. They lay. BRAVE's phone rings. It's BRIGHT. They answer.*

BRAVE

Hey! How are you?

BRIGHT

Fine, how are *you*? You got discharged today, right?

BRAVE

Yeah. Just got home.

BRIGHT

And how are you feeling?

BRAVE

Physically? Ok. Better, I guess.

BRIGHT

No, not physically. Although I'm glad to hear.

BRAVE

Oh. Well. You know then.

BRIGHT

I do. Which is why I'm checking in.

BRAVE

I'm ok, really.

BRIGHT

Don't lie.

BRAVE

I'm not.

BRIGHT

Ok. How's Dawn?

BRAVE

I haven't seen her yet.

BRIGHT

Could you just let me know how she is when you see her?

BRAVE

Why do you ask?

BRIGHT

She was asking me a bunch of questions about the moon the other day. Pretty existential

BRAVE

She is eighteen. And you are the person to ask.

BRIGHT

I know. I can't help but worry.

BRAVE

Yeah. Yeah, me too. I'll talk to her. What's up with you?

BRIGHT

I got the week off.

BRAVE

You? Off?

BRIGHT

So I'm working on my dissertation.

BRAVE

Of course. You work yourself too hard.

BRIGHT

I work hard, but I play hard too, don't forget. I need to tell you something. I wanted to wait until you got out.

BRAVE

What is it?

BRIGHT

About Antarctica.

BRAVE

Finally, the good stuff.

BRIGHT

Well, I've been stationed mostly at McMurdo, but they had me go to Amundsen-Scott for a few weeks.

BRAVE

That's the station at the South Pole?

BRIGHT

I can't believe you remembered.

BRAVE

Hey, when you listen to your sister babble about something for fifteen years, something has to stick. So how was it? Sounds unreal.

BRIGHT

It was. I knew I'd see the south pole one day, ever since I got into climate justice I just knew it was my future. What I couldn't have guessed was that when I arrived, the sky would also be white. It was blindingly bright and freezing cold. This thick, untouchable, unknowable whiteness as far as the eye can see. You couldn't see the horizon- couldn't tell apart the sky from the ground. It was like a movie, when the characters reach another realm or something. I couldn't believe Earth could be so unvaried, so unalive. Like I was on the moon.

BRAVE

Wow.

BRIGHT

I know, right?

BRAVE

That sounds really scary.

BRIGHT

It was. I thought it would be more freeing. But it felt like the white walls were closing in on me.

BRAVE

Damn.

BRIGHT

I said I'm off this week, it wasn't so much my choice. I said some of this stuff to Professor Foley and he said I should take some time in New Zealand, decompress, try to "refocus my research."

BRAVE

What an ass. He probably hasn't expressed a genuine emotion since the 90s.

BRIGHT

*(chuckles)* I needed the break honestly. It's hard to think about going back.

BRAVE

Really? This is your dream, it's all you ever talked about.

BRIGHT

I know. I love you. It's just, all this analysis and gathering data sets and crunching numbers. I feel like a robot half the time. Like a machine.

BRAVE *looks at his IV drip.*

BRAVE

Yeah, I understand.

BRIGHT

What's up with you, though? Any big plans now that you're out?

BRAVE

Try not to die. That's pretty much my only plan. (Beat.) I'm kidding! I don't know, job hunt once I feel strong enough.

BRIGHT

Any place in mind?

BRAVE

Anywhere but here.

BRIGHT

Okay//

BRAVE

I'll let you know when I know, k? Gotta check some listings. Wasn't exactly focused on that in the hospital. I'm still pretty tired.

BRIGHT

Right. Okay, well I'll let you go. Call soon?

BRAVE

Will do.

BRIGHT

Okay, bye. Love you.

BRAVE

Love you too.

*DAWN, 18, enters outside and approaches the door. She is a spitting image of her older sister, but their styles couldn't be farther apart. An artistic and expressive type, HONOR once described her as a 'punk bohemian'.*

*DAWN unlocks the door and sees BRAVE. DAWN runs and gives BRAVE a hug while they're laying down.*

DAWN

Thank, god.

BRAVE

Sorry, I'm kinda sore.

DAWN

This house is a nightmare without you.

BRAVE

Can you plug this in for me?

*DAWN goes to a power strip filled with cords that PROMISE calls the 'charging station.' She drags a long one across the*

*stage and all the way over the BRAVE's cot. It's ridiculous, but it reaches.*

BRAVE

All I can see is the moon out the window.

DAWN

Get used to it.

BRAVE

I am.

DAWN

The blank white... it's//

BRAVE

//Like the hospital... How was school?

DAWN

I can't think about anything but college apps.

BRAVE

When are they due?

DAWN

First one's in a few weeks. I still don't know what to study.

BRAVE

You always liked art, music...

DAWN

But that won't pay. If I've learned anything in this house, it's that I gotta find something that will make me money.

BRAVE

You never know what will pay.

DAWN

That's the thing.

BRAVE

So you gotta do what you love.

DAWN

You think?

BRAVE

Why not? What have you been thinking about?

DAWN

Well... I don't know.

BRAVE

What were you gonna say? I know that face.

DAWN

It's silly.

BRAVE

C'mon, you know what you want. Do you know how many people spend their lives trying to figure out what they want? *And spend their lives trying?* If you have a dream, you gotta be brave enough to do it! You owe it to the rest of us. So what is it?

DAWN

...I want to paint the moon.

BRAVE

What?

DAWN

I want to paint a mural on the moon.

BRAVE

WHAT? HOW? And WHY?

DAWN

I'm sick of looking at this big white mess. Daunting. Hanging over me, over all of us. It's too empty. It could mean anything. I want it to be something. Not everything. Not nothing. Just, something.

BRAVE

That, actually makes sense.

DAWN

It does?

BRAVE

You should do it. Anything's possible.

DAWN

Thanks. Ok, yeah. Maybe I will.  
Do you want food? You must be starving.

BRAVE

Oooooou yes I am so sick of hospital food.

DAWN

I hear you.

*DAWN walks offstage to the fridge and looks inside.*

DAWN (offstage)

We got leftover spaghetti, some chicken— ooh, there's a sandwich in here.  
Mom's from yesterday.

BRAVE

Bingo.

*DAWN enters with the sandwich and gives it to BRAVE.*

BRAVE

*(mouth full)* Thanks.

DAWN

Damn, you weren't lying. Breathe.

BRAVE

What can I say? I'm famished.

DAWN

Why's it muted?

BRAVE

I got the subtitles on.

DAWN

You don't want to hear what they're saying?

BRAVE

Not always. Sometimes, I like to close my eyes and not hear anything.

DAWN

Is Dad home?

BRAVE

Yeah, he's downstairs.

DAWN

Oh? I don't hear him.

BRAVE

Yeah I told him to stop playing.

DAWN

I like his guitar. It's one of the only things I like about him. He's actually expressing himself.

BRAVE

Well he can play outside until I'm upstairs.

DAWN

I'm not an idiot. (*whispering*) You smell like liquor.

BRAVE

I do not.

DAWN

How long have you been home?

BRAVE

What do you want me to do?

DAWN

You were in rehab six months ago.

BRAVE

And I was in the hospital yesterday. Are you going to tell Mom?

DAWN

I don't want to be in the middle of this.

HONOR *enters.*

HONOR

Princess, you're home.

DAWN

Hey, Dad.

HONOR

Do you guys wanna play cards?

DAWN  
Really?

HONOR  
I don't know, I thought. We're all together.

BRAVE  
Yeah. That'd be nice.

DAWN  
What game?

BRAVE  
Hearts?

HONOR  
Hearts is shit with three people.

DAWN  
*(under her breath)* You're one to talk.

HONOR  
What?

DAWN  
Nevermind.

HONOR  
But shit, I'm down.

DAWN  
Should we play at the table?

BRAVE  
Um... yeah.

*DAWN and HONOR roll the cot over so BRAVE can play at the table.*

BRAVE  
Thanks.

*DAWN and HONOR take seats around the table. HONOR starts to shuffle.*

DAWN  
Can I deal?

HONOR  
Go for it, girl.

HONOR *passes DAWN the cards. DAWN starts shuffling, bridging, and dealing the cards.*

BRAVE  
Anything happen since I been gone?

HONOR  
Ah, I don't think so. With the promotion I've had a lot on my hands.

BRAVE  
I didn't know you got a job.

DAWN  
Yeah. He's executive douchebag now.

BRAVE *laughs.*

HONOR  
Watch it. They moved me to the office. No longer a manager.

BRAVE  
You've never been manager material.

HONOR  
Well, I had to put in my dues. I'm just hoping it pays off.

DAWN  
I think I'm gonna apply for the city mural program.

HONOR  
Like paint your own mural?

DAWN  
God no, *not yet*. First I gotta be an apprentice, see how it's done.

BRAVE  
But eventually?

DAWN *finishes dealing.*

DAWN

Yeah. *(smiles)* Yeah, that's the dream.

HONOR

That's a great idea, Dawn. This city can use some more artwork.

DAWN

You think? I mean, any place could.

HONOR

You gotta start with what you know.

DAWN

Right. "What I know." That's why I'm starting here, I guess.

BRAVE

Have you been working on anything lately?

DAWN

Yeah. My biggest painting yet.

HONOR

Let 'im see it.

DAWN

Do you want to?

BRAVE

Of course. If it's not too much of a hassle.

DAWN

Hold on.

*DAWN runs up the stairs.*

DAWN

Don't peek!

*DAWN exits.*

BRAVE

So... everything with Mom been good?

HONOR

Uh, yeah. Yeah. You know, she's busy busy busy.

BRAVE

Yeah. And Dawn?

HONOR

I can't believe she's graduating.

BRAVE

Me neither. But I can't believe she hasn't yet at the same time.

HONOR

She *is* pretty jaded.

BRAVE

She's brilliant. She has a real future in front of her.

HONOR

How are you?

BRAVE

Glad to be... y'know. I'm just taking it one day at a time.

HONOR

Amen to that.

BRAVE

So you really started working again?

HONOR

Yeah. A few months back.

BRAVE

And you're happy?

HONOR

I got bills to pay.

*DAWN walks back down the stairs with a huge canvas.*

DAWN

Ok, ok. Y'all ready?

HONOR

Show us!

BRAVE

I'm dying!

DAWN *flips the canvas around to reveal three pigs.*

HONOR

Wow.

DAWN

What do you think?

BRAVE

The colors... it's so bold. Bright.

HONOR

Brilliant.

DAWN

Aw. Thank you. I'm really proud.

BRAVE

You should be.

HONOR

You made some real progress from last time I saw it. Is it done?

DAWN

Yes-no-I don't know. I'll find out.

DAWN *leans the painting against the wall.*

DAWN

Alright, let's get this party started.

*All three pick up their hands of cards and begin sorting.*

BRAVE

Who do I pass to?

HONOR

Dawn.

BRAVE

(to HONOR) Shit, I get your cards?

DAWN

(passing three cards to HONOR) Don't hate me.

HONOR *gives BRAVE three cards. BRAVE slides three cards to DAWN.*

DAWN  
I got the 2.

*DAWN plays the 2 of clubs.*

DAWN--(cont.)  
How come you always pass it?

BRAVE  
I don't want to go first.

*PROMISE enters from the stairs, carrying her closed laptop.*

PROMISE  
I thought I heard you come down the stairs.

DAWN  
Hey.

PROMISE  
How was school?

DAWN  
Boring.

PROMISE  
Finished any college apps?

DAWN  
Not yet. I'm getting close.

HONOR  
What schools are on your list again?

DAWN  
University of Pennsylvania, UChicago, a lot of the UCs...

HONOR  
Just make sure you apply for all the scholarships and grants you qualify for.

DAWN  
Of course.

PROMISE

But don't worry about the cost, dear, we'll take care of it. Just that you're happy. Look!

*PROMISE reaches into one of the boxes and pulls out DAWN's stuffed monkey from the first act, mangier and dirty from the years since.*

PROMISE

I found this little guy when I was looking for twin sheets.

DAWN

What is that?

PROMISE

Bobo! Your monkey? You used to love your monkey.

DAWN

I don't remember.

PROMISE

Nonsense! You two were inseparable until you went to first grade.

HONOR

Really?

PROMISE

Yes, really.

HONOR

I don't remember that monkey.

PROMISE

I'm not surprised.

DAWN

Yeah, sorry, Mom.

PROMISE

...Well, I think he's cute.

DAWN

He is cute.

PROMISE *puts the monkey back in the box and walks over to the table. She notices there is more water than she put this morning.*

BRAVE  
You want us to deal you in?

PROMISE  
No. It's okay.

HONOR  
You sure? We need a fourth.

PROMISE  
It's fine. This client is on my ass about a design I could have submitted last night if they had just-whatever. I'm going to get some work done outside. Enjoy the warmth.

PROMISE *gives BRAVE a squeeze.*

PROMISE--(cont.)  
I'm so happy you're here.

PROMISE *takes her laptop and walks out the door. She keeps the door open. She sits outside and types on her computer, her face lit in the screen light.*

BRAVE *drop their cards on the ground.*

BRAVE  
Shit.

DAWN *gets up, crouches down, and starts collecting the cards.*

DAWN  
I got it.

BRAVE  
Sorry.

DAWN  
Don't be.

HONOR

I forgot. I'll be right back, I gotta ask your mom something.

*HONOR exits the house and closes the door behind them.*

HONOR

What's your week look like?

PROMISE

Busy.

HONOR

Well, I was thinking we could go down to the spot by the river like we used to. Bring some food. It'd be nice.

PROMISE

Sounds it. Also sounds like it'd take, an hour, or two?

*HONOR nods.*

PROMISE--(cont.)

That I don't have.

HONOR

Right.

PROMISE

It's probably flooded now anyway. At least muddy.

*HONOR sits next to PROMISE and closes her laptop.*

PROMISE

Hey! That was important.

HONOR

We can't send Dawn to college.

PROMISE

Yeah... ok.

HONOR

Listen to me.

PROMISE

What are you talking about?

HONOR

We don't have the money. It's just not enough.

PROMISE

What do you mean it's not enough? Since when?

HONOR

A couple months ago. But it's been coming.

PROMISE

Why is this the first I'm hearing of this?

HONOR

It isn't. You wouldn't listen. We've been struggling for a while. With both kids through college and all of the medical bills, rehabs—it's just not enough.

PROMISE

How could you not tell me?

HONOR

I tried. Do you think I wanted to quit smoking? Drinking? It was a waste of income.

PROMISE

How noble of you. Fuck. I should've known when you quit.

HONOR

She can go to community college for a couple years! I know it's not what we wanted but she can always transfer. In a few years I think we'll be in a better spot.

PROMISE

You think?

HONOR

I hope.

PROMISE

Great. Tell *her* that. What do you mean you tried telling me?

HONOR

I got a job. Even got promoted. We haven't been going on vacations//

PROMISE

//You hate flying.

HONOR

I'd do it, y'know. For you. But it's easier to have someone to blame. So I hate flying.

PROMISE

You could've told me.

HONOR

Could I?

PROMISE

Fuck you.

HONOR

You're not innocent in all this.

PROMISE

You're a liar!

HONOR

You made it clear you're never giving this house up. I know you. I know you can't choose between your family. I chose for you.

PROMISE

You chose yourself.

HONOR

I made certain commitments I had to honor. To you. To the kids. She's the last commitment I made. I had to choose. I made a sacrifice.

PROMISE

That's rich.

HONOR

I did my best.

PROMISE

I did my best! I started a company. I fought for everything we have. *You?* You did lazy temp jobs and fell out of work.

HONOR

You let me.

PROMISE

But it was fine. We had savings.

HONOR

It was never fine. We have to tell her.

*Long beat. PROMISE sighs and stands up.*

HONOR Now?

PROMISE Why not?

*PROMISE and HONOR enter the house. They sit in the empty seats in the living room. PROMISE, HONOR, BRAVE, and DAWN all sit around the TV, the silent images flickering against their faces.*

*After a moment...*

PROMISE

So you haven't started college apps?

DAWN

Jeez, what's with all the questions? I'll do them, okay?

HONOR

Don't rush.

DAWN

Why do you say that?

PROMISE

Good going.

HONOR

What? You wanted to tell her.

DAWN

Tell me what? What? Say it.

PROMISE

(to BRAVE) Do you want to be here?

DAWN

Just. Say it.

PROMISE *looks to* HONOR.

HONOR

We—I—there isn't as much as we intended.

DAWN

As much what? Spit it out.

PROMISE

Your father and I do not have the savings we previously believed we had: the money that was going to get you through college.

HONOR

You can still go to community college and we can help support you. In a few years I should have enough to send you wherever you want. Transfer your credits.

PROMISE

There are many options. Student loans. College is a privilege after all.

DAWN

Oh. Just a privilege everyone else in this house gets but not me?

BRAVE

Maybe I should go.

DAWN

Please don't. How could you do this? You're telling me *now*?

PROMISE

You deserve to know.

DAWN

I deserve to go to college! I deserve time to plan! Save up! I didn't know...

BRAVE

You guys, look at this.

*BRAVE grabs the remote and unmutes the TV. Audio plays of rushing water and huge waves crashing. The family moves around the TV and watches the water turn to bombings and explosions. They watch: DAWN*

*wide-eyed, PROMISE surprised, HONOR  
scared, and BRAVE almost at peace.*

HONOR  
Oh my god.

DAWN  
Where did the money go?

PROMISE  
Don't look at me.

DAWN  
Dad?

HONOR  
We... I spent it.

DAWN  
ON WHAT?

HONOR  
Liquor. It was before I quit.

DAWN  
Unbelievable. Un-fucking-believable! Did you know?

PROMISE  
He just told me.

DAWN  
How could you not know?

HONOR  
Don't blame your mother.

DAWN  
I blame both of you! I knew you getting this job was too good to be true.

PROMISE  
We're doing our best.

HONOR  
No one in this house is doing their best! How can we be honest with each other? We can't even be honest with ourselves!

BRAVE

We're all trying.

DAWN

Ohhh, you're one to talk. You know he's been drinking, right? I bet he has a stash somewhere in this room. It's your house. Pay attention.

HONOR

Don't talk to us like that.

PROMISE

Is that true?

BRAVE

No, I mean I had *a* drink// but there's no stash-

HONOR

//Really? After everything we've done for you?

DAWN

People drink for a reason, y'know.

HONOR

Trust me, I know.

DAWN

Well, way to keep the ball rolling, Dad. Really. Great job.

HONOR

I deserve this.

DAWN

Fuck. This is real.

PROMISE

I'm sorry.

DAWN

Fuck! I can't be here anymore. I can't live like this.

PROMISE

Family is staying when things get tough.

DAWN

Please! Does that make you feel better?

BRAVE

Dawn...

DAWN

Seriously. "It might be shit but at least it's *my* shit." Give me a break.

PROMISE

What are you saying?

DAWN

I'm not crazy. I'm not the only one who thinks this place is fucking mental.

PROMISE

Meaning?

DAWN

There are five people in this family.

PROMISE

She made her choice.

DAWN

No. You did. It's always about you. You say it's for family or love or whatever bullshit excuse you use to convince yourself you're just, anything to help you sleep at night, but it's not real.

HONOR

Of course we love each other.

DAWN

How can you say that?

PROMISE

How could we not?

DAWN

(to HONOR) You cheated her! You cheated me! The country cheated its people! This whole species cheated the earth!

You're the biggest hypocrites I've ever met! You know a relationship takes two people? Complaining and reacting rather than having the courage or intelligence or just the fucking foresight to be proactive—it's pathetic. To try to stop messes from happening rather than just cleaning them up. I put up with all of it, because one day I'd get to leave.

BRAVE

You're not the only one.

DAWN

All I've ever expected was to go to college. That's all I've ever asked for. That's it. I never asked you for advice or emotional support because you couldn't give it to me if you tried. I'd say you're out of touch but that implies you ever were.

But why would I even want to go to college? To be like you?

You (*to PROMISE*) work and work and work and work. Always someone who needs you. Like that's normal. You (*to HONOR*) rejected it completely and let everything fall apart. Nobody can depend on you. There's a middle ground! All work, all play—one without the other doesn't mean anything!

HONOR

Can you turn that off?

*BRAVE mutes the TV, ending the flood/explosion noises.*

BRAVE

Calm down.

DAWN

I've been calm all my life. A child shouldn't have to be. I'm eighteen now. A legal adult. Guess it's my time to be crazy. You clean up my mess.

PROMISE

Dawn, please.

DAWN

What's it all been for, huh? *Me? Us?* You two can't spend *five minutes alone in a room together!* You're consumed with all these resentments from the lives you signed away without knowing what you were doing. Who you were. What you even want. If you were able to talk to each other, I guarantee things wouldn't have gone like this!

HONOR

Life is complicated, Dawn. Sometimes you have to make sacrifices.

DAWN

WHY. I've asked so many questions about why you're together, why you got married, why you went into your field of work—*why you do what you do*—and you

know what I get? "It's just what you did." It's just. What. You. Did. It doesn't make any sense. You know, when you have a child, you do everything you can to send them to college. It's just what you do. When your spouse cheats on you, you leave. It's just what you do. What *you* do, both of you, is hold on to whatever narrow ideas you've been able to decipher through throughout the years, but by the time you recognize the present, it's the past. Times change. You can't stop lying. You're both addicted to this false reality. But you can't pretend like you did what was best for me.

PROMISE

Ok, honey, I know you're upset right now, but try to stay focused.

HONOR

This wasn't easy!

DAWN

You're fucking telling me.

PROMISE

You didn't deserve this.

DAWN

Everything is connected. Don't you get it?

PROMISE

I promise I have done everything I can for you. But you don't get to question the way I live my life.

DAWN *gets her backpack and starts packing.*

DAWN

I'm going to paint a mural on the moon.

PROMISE

What?

DAWN

You should be happy. I don't think I'll need a degree.

HONOR

*On the moon?*

DAWN

Yup.

PROMISE

Why?

DAWN

Why not? Nobody likes sterile white walls.

PROMISE

That's not possible.

DAWN

It's a canvas! I see it so clearly.

HONOR

How?

DAWN

Paint over the white. It'll be the biggest artistic undertaking the world has ever seen. It'll redefine the scope of scale and possibility.

PROMISE

At least your sister's nonsensical dreams are on Earth! This is ridiculous!

HONOR

So you'd fly up there and what? Get in an astronaut suit with your paintbrush?

DAWN

I don't have everything worked out yet, but I have time. I'll study, no thanks to you.

PROMISE

Honey, be reasonable.

DAWN

What's unreasonable about painting a mural on the moon?

HONOR

Do you hear yourself right now?

BRAVE

Her life hasn't exactly been precedented.

PROMISE

It sounds dangerous. And pointless.

HONOR

I don't think it's possible, sweetheart.

DAWN

The impossible becomes real when we choose to try. You should know better than anyone.

HONOR

What's that supposed to mean?

DAWN

You'll understand when I spray-paint a pig on the moon!!!

*DAWN exits the house, backpack on, and lights a cigarette. HONOR follows her out of the house.*

HONOR

You smoke?

DAWN

Try to keep up.

HONOR

Dawn... I'm sorry. I'm so sorry...

DAWN

There's weight in this house. Like gravity. I wouldn't be surprised if the moon was getting closer because of this house alone. It makes me feel so heavy. I don't want to feel that anymore.

HONOR

It was never supposed to be like this.

DAWN

Please. Help them.

*DAWN exits. HONOR re-enters the house and goes downstairs.*

*Silence fills the room.*

PROMISE

Sorry for all the drama. You could use an uneventful return home.

BRAVE

But then it wouldn't be home.

...Did you spend the money on me?

...On medications? On treatments?

...On rehab?  
 ...Why didn't you tell her?

PROMISE

You didn't make the decision. He did. I suppose... we did. I don't want her to resent you because of a choice you never got to make.

BRAVE

You should've told me.

PROMISE

Would it have made a difference? I noticed the vase was a little fuller than when I left this morning. You should know no one takes care of the plants around here but me.

BRAVE

Why am I like this?

PROMISE

What do you mean?

BRAVE

I. I don't wanna drink. I really don't. But I feel like I'm drowning. I feel helpless every time I look at the sky. Everytime I see that white above my head. I feel as if it was always gonna be this way, and the only thing that changed was I see it now. It's only a matter of time. How am I supposed to believe I deserve space in this world? What can I do with my place here? My sad compromised life. How do I cope? How do you?

PROMISE *starts crying.*

BRAVE--(cont.)

Mom?

PROMISE

Thank you. I can't imagine—my mother never wanted to hear what I had to say. Our relationship was conditional. I had to look and behave a certain way and I wouldn't be an embarrassment to the family.

BRAVE

You felt like that?

PROMISE

(*nods*) She never outright said it but I knew if I didn't get my degree, didn't get a steady job with decent pay, didn't get married and have

kids—after I graduated but before I turned 30—I would fail. In her eyes. I couldn't do that.

BRAVE

What about your eyes?

PROMISE

What?

BRAVE

She's dead. You don't have to reach her crazy standards anymore.

PROMISE

I know.

BRAVE

So why are you?

PROMISE

It's all I know. I think somewhere I started believing them.

BRAVE

I'm jealous of you.

PROMISE

?

BRAVE

Reaching the standards you and Dad want for my life never seemed like an option for me.

PROMISE

It's not your fault. None of this is. I mean, I'm finding that stash and pouring it down the drain, but it's the least I can do. But please. I understand wanting to escape. Wanting to let the current take you if you see the tide coming anyway. But you deserve to be happy too. Nothing, not even a swollen heart, can make you question that you're deserving of everything this world has to offer. You were sixteen. It's not your fault. I'm sorry.

BRAVE

It's not your fault you have a big heart either.

COMPROMISE

Let's decide to tell each other how we feel, ok? Maybe do like a weekly lunch or something.

BRAVE

That could be nice.

COMPROMISE

You really think so?

BRAVE

I do. I want to be here for you. God knows it's the least I can do.

COMPROMISE

I don't want you to spend any time with me out of any obligation. When me and your father became parents, we made the choice to give you the world. You never have to do anything, unless, and only if, you want to. Ok?

BRAVE

Ok.

COMPROMISE

Good.

*COMPROMISE gets up and looks at the portrait on the wall.*

BRAVE

How old is that thing?

COMPROMISE

(Beat.) Too old. About time we moved it, don't you think?

BRAVE

Seriously?

*COMPROMISE takes the frame off the wall and leans it somewhere to the side.*

COMPROMISE

I think it'd look good in the basement.

BRAVE

I've never seen the wall behind that portrait.

COMPROMISE

Besides...

COMPROMISE *picks up DAWN's painting of the three pigs and hangs it in the old portrait's spot.*

COMPROMISE--(cont.)  
...*this* is making a statement.

HONOR *re-enters. He stops and looks at the painting. All three of them look at the painting.*

HONOR  
It's perfect there.

BRAVE's *head shifts towards the window, the moon.*

Black out. End of scene.

2.2

*Lights up on the family home, set the same as the top of 2.1, except the old portrait of a woman has been taken down, with the painting of the three pigs hanging in its place.*

*The white moon-filled sky now features a mural: two bold and bright pigs, painted on the moon.*

*COMPROMISE and HONOR sit at the top of the stairs, holding hands.*

*Water slowly rises, flooding the house. The water reaches the bottom of their feet.*

Black out. End of play.