

## Caskets from Costco

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A full-length play

By Joe Correll

Contact:

Your Name

Address

Phone

Email

<< OR >>

Represented by:

Mary Agent

The Mary Agency

123 Main Street

Anytown, USA 11111

Caskets from Costco

Flower Shop. Religious artifacts.

PAULA  
These tulips don't look so good, Ma.

PATTY  
(off)  
What's wrong with them?

PAULA  
They're all wilted.

Patty enters

PATTY  
Let me see.

A beat

PATTY (CONT'D)  
They're not so bad. I think I can bring them back.

PAULA  
Okay. If you say so.

PATTY  
Will you please clean out the bottom of the cooler? Something spilled.

PAULA  
I don't even work here, Ma.

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

PAULA  
You know I don't like doing that. You should get some help, Ma.

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

PAULA  
No. Help. Like as in, "therapy".

PATTY  
And put some salt down out front. Somebody's gonna slip and sue us.

PAULA

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

PATTY

What do you have going on?

PAULA

I'm getting a promotion.

PATTY

A promotion?

PAULA

Yeah.

PATTY

What kinda promotion?

PAULA

I don't know, yet.

PATTY

Is it a good promotion?

PAULA

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

PATTY

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

PAULA

I said, I dunno. Probably running the office.

PATTY

Why do you need to do that? We've got a perfectly good business going on right here. But of course, that's not good enough for you is it?

PAULA

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

PATTY

Paul will come help out. He said he was coming back.

PAULA

He's not coming back. Not to stay.

PATTY

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

PAULA

Well, he's not here.

PATTY

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

PAULA

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

PATTY

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

PAULA

You don't take care of me.

PATTY

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

PAULA

I give you money for that.

PATTY

I would clean your room, but you're holed up in there like some kinda crazy hermit. What are you going to do when your father and I are both gone? Have you thought about that?

PAULA

Only every day.

PATTY

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

PAULA

About the thing for Dad?

PATTY

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

PAULA

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

She continues.

PAULA (CONT'D)

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

PATTY

What did you find out?

PAULA

It's gonna be at least six thousand. At least!

PATTY

Six thousand? Dollars? So, much as all that? For a funeral? I thought Pierce Brothers say they'd give us a good deal on this thing?

PAULA

Yes, they'll give us a good deal. And that is the deal they're giving us.

PATTY

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

PAULA

It's 30% off.

PATTY

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

PAULA

It's expensive to die.

PATTY

Six thousand dollars?

PAULA

It was going to be 20% off, but I got them to come down.

PATTY

How'd you do that?

PAULA

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

PATTY

That includes a casket? A nice casket?

PAULA

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

PATTY

Well, how much is a casket?

PAULA

The cheapest I could find is about a thousand bucks.

PATTY

That's so much!

PAULA

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

PATTY

Where?

PAULA

What?

PATTY

Who has a thousand dollar casket for sale?

PAULA

Costco.

PATTY

Costco has caskets now?

PAULA

Yeah. We get cash back on it too.

PATTY

I don't know if your father would like a casket from Costco.

PAULA

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

PATTY

They've been trying to put us out of business for thirty years Paula. They've been out to get us ever since they first opened.

PAULA

Costco is out to get you?

PATTY

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

PAULA

Costco, doesn't hire illegals, Ma.

PATTY

Sure, sure, fine. And the earth is "warming". Believe what you want.

PAULA

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

PATTY

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

PAULA

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

PATTY

Can you return it?

PAULA

I dunno. Probably. They take things back at Costco, but I might lose my deposit or have to pay a restocking fee.

PATTY

Okay. Let me think about it...It better be nice. I don't wanna be embarrassed.

PAULA

It's just fine.

PATTY

So, what is the whole thing going to cost? Bottom line?

PAULA

I'm thinking around ten grand, minimum.

PATTY

Ten Grand? To be dead? That seems really high. Ten grand, to be dead.

PAULA

What about cremation?

PATTY

What about it?

PAULA

It's an option.

PATTY

Not for Catholics it isn't.

PAULA

They changed that. It's okay now.

PATTY

Nobody sent me the memo.

PAULA

It's something to consider.

PATTY

You're father wouldn't like it.

PAULA  
Why not?

PATTY  
He's claustrophobic. You know that.

PAULA  
It's much cheaper.

PATTY  
He wouldn't like it.

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

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

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

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

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

PATTY  
I am painfully aware.

Door opens. Customer enters.

DOROTHY  
Hello Patty. Paula. You better put some salt down on the walk. Somebody's gonna slip and sue.

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

PATTY  
Dorothy, come on in out of the cold.

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

PATTY  
That means no deliveries tomorrow.

DOROTHY  
I really wish that "global warming" would kick in!

They laugh.



PATTY

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

PAULA

There's only one arrangement back there.

Paula goes to the back to get the arrangement.

DOROTHY

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

PATTY

We're not doin' too bad.

DOROTHY

Paula's helpin' you out?

PATTY

She tries but she doesn't know the business.

DOROTHY

Have you heard from Paul? I'm guessing he'll be back for Frank's funeral.

PATTY

Yeah, he'll be back.

DOROTHY

Well, at least you've got Paula.

PATTY

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

DOROTHY

They were both very smart at St. Francis. Paul was better at Math, Paula was better in language arts.

PATTY

I forgot you taught them- what grade was it?

DOROTHY

Sixth.

PATTY

So long ago.

DOROTHY

Sure was.

PATTY

Well, I don't think they are alike at all.

DOROTHY

Oh?

PATTY

No. Paul is very, very smart... And also very good looking.

DOROTHY

Paula always got good grades. I'm sure she has her own talents.

PATTY

Eh. She's good at some things.

DOROTHY

Like what?

PATTY

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

Paula comes out with an  
arrangement of Hydrangeas.

PAULA

Here you go.

DOROTHY

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

PATTY

Thank you.

PAULA

I did these.

DOROTHY

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

PAULA

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

DOROTHY

Hydrangeas are poisonous?

PAULA

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

DOROTHY

No worries. I don't have any pets anymore. I'm getting too old for that. I wouldn't want my pets outliving me. Then there'd be no one to take care of them.

PAULA

Who are the flowers for?

DOROTHY

They're for my sunroom.

PATTY

Not for an occasion?

DOROTHY

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

PATTY

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

DOROTHY

I don't know. Nothing I suppose, as usual. Why?

PATTY

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

DOROTHY

Oh my God! No! I didn't know Frank passed?! I knew he wasn't well, but I didn't know things were so serious. I'm so sorry to hear that.

PATTY

No, no. He didn't pass. He's upstairs.

DOROTHY

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

PATTY

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

DOROTHY

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

PATTY

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

PAULA

I thought you were just researching, I didn't know you were actually booking it.

PATTY

You're not helping!

PAULA

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

DOROTHY

Costco does funerals now?

PATTY

Just the caskets. And I still think they're pretty pricey.

PAULA

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

She grabs a cardboard box and begins assembling it.

PAULA (CONT'D)

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

PATTY

I'm not putting him in a cardboard box.

PAULA

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

PATTY

Don't be ridiculous.

PAULA

What's so ridiculous? It's free! Totally free.

PATTY

He won't fit in that little box.

DOROTHY

Oh, well, I better get going. Thank you for the arrangement. It's really beautiful.

PATTY

You're welcome.

PAULA

You're welcome.

DOROTHY

Let me know about the... I mean if you decide to go ahead with it... should I bring something?

PATTY

We're still working out the details. Say a little prayer for me, Dorothy.

DOROTHY

I always do. See you at Mass?

PATTY

Of course.

DOROTHY

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

PATTY

That's nice of you to say.

DOROTHY

Nobody hardly is goin' to church. Offerings are way down. And then all the lawsuits. Whatever happened to forgiveness? Anyhow, they just can't afford nice flowers anymore.

PATTY

Fuckin' Costco.

DOROTHY

From your lips to God's ears. Thanks for the arrangement. I know it's going to brighten up my mornings.

PATTY

Take a picture and send it to me.

DOROTHY

I sure will... if I can figure out how to work the camera and send the picture.

They hug. Dorothy goes.

PATTY

Every time you have to make a scene. That was embarrassing Paula. Very embarrassing.

PAULA

Oh, did I embarrass you?

PATTY

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

PAULA

You're used to it?

PATTY

Yes. You're just sad Paula.

PAULA

I'm sad??!

PATTY

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

PAULA

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

PATTY

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

PAULA

He's a fucking asshole.

PATTY

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

PAULA

You have not seen him in three years. He's an asshole, Ma.

PATTY

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

PAULA

Do you really think Paul would be able to fix everything?

PATTY

I do. Yes I do.

PAULA

Would you like me to get him to come home?

PATTY

You can't get him to come home.

PAULA

Oh, I'll bet I can.

PATTY

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

PAULA

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

PATTY

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

PAULA

Wanna bet that I can get him here tomorrow?

PATTY

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

PAULA

If I win, I never have to work in this store again. You can't ask me to do nothin'... But if you win, I will quit Jiffy Lube and come to work here full time.

PATTY

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

PAULA

Is it a bet?

PATTY

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

PAULA

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

PATTY

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

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

She looks at it. She drinks it.  
She immediately gags and spits it  
out.

PAULA

Fuck it.

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

PAULA (CONT'D)

What're you lookin' at?

She waits.

BLACKOUT.

## SCENE 2

A few days later. Paul comes out  
from the back.

PAUL

These carnations look wilted, Ma.

PATTY

Hold on. I'll be right there.

She comes out.

PATTY (CONT'D)

You're right, Paulie. Throw 'em in the trash.

She looks at the display.

PATTY (CONT'D)

What happened to all the yellow roses? We had dozens of  
yellow roses in there yesterday didn't we?

A beat.

PATTY (CONT'D)

Did you sell them?



PAUL

Ma. You know where the roses went.

A beat.

PATTY

Where'd they go?

PAUL

You know where they went.

PATTY

Where'd they go.

PAUL

Ma...Paula's funeral, remember?

PATTY

Oh yeah. That. I'm getting as bad as your father. That was last week. You should order more.

PAUL

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

PATTY

We'll see.

PAUL

Are you okay?

PATTY

Yeah, I'm okay. Are you okay?

PAUL

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

PATTY

It runs in the family, you know that.

PAUL

What?

PATTY

You're Uncle Eddie, remember?

PAUL

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

PATTY

He blew his brains out after Midnight Mass.

PAUL

At church?

PATTY

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

PAUL

Was Paula sad? Was she going through a hard time?

PATTY

No, she had a lot to live for. She just got a promotion at Jiffy Lube. Did you order the Gerbera Daisies for Mrs. Sullivan?

PAUL

I did. They're coming this afternoon.

PATTY

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

PAUL

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

PATTY

Will you change the water on the roses for me?

PAUL

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

PATTY

She was always unhappy. She was a very unhappy girl. I think when you two were in my womb, you got all the happiness.

PAUL

I don't know what that means.

PATTY

Did you know her casket came from Costco?

PAUL

What?

PATTY

It was apparently a pretty good deal. Funny thing is, she had just bought it for your Dad, next thing you know, boom...she's in it her own self.

PAUL

What are you talking about?

PATTY

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

PAUL

Have you been drinking?

PATTY

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

PAUL

Huh?

PATTY

But not from Costco, your father wouldn't like that. See if you can get something a little nicer. Go talk to Michael down at Pierce Brothers. See what he can do. He always like you.

PAUL

I have to go home, Ma.

PATTY

You are home.

PAUL

I don't live here.

PATTY

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

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

Suddenly, Paula steps out of the refrigerator.

PAULA

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

PAUL

Jesus Christ! Where did you come from?

PAULA

The fridge. You better change the water on those roses. They're not lookin' so good.

PAUL  
Why are you here?

PAULA  
Why are YOU here?

PAUL  
Huh?

PAULA  
Why are ANY of us here?

A beat.

PAULA (CONT'D)  
(she laughs)  
I'm just messing with you. You know I'm not really here right?

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

PAULA  
You're tired?? You should try being dead for a few days. It's actually very relaxing.

PAUL  
Go away!

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

PAUL  
No. I'm really pissed at you.

PAULA  
Why? What do you care? You haven't been back here in three years.

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

PAULA  
Check out? Buy the farm? Take a permanent vacation?

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

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

PAUL

You killed yourself so that I would come home quickly?

PAULA

It sounds like a bad idea when you say it.

PAUL

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

PAULA

Okay, okay. Don't get all snotty on me... So... what's new?

PAUL

What do you mean what's new?

PAULA

What's going on with you?

PAUL

Are you seriously trying to make small talk with me?

PAULA

What do you want to talk about?

PAUL

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

PAULA

Au contraire, mon frere!

PAUL

Since when do you speak French?

PAULA

I don't- but you do.

PAUL

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

PAULA

Did you know my Casket was from Costco?

PAUL

What?

PAULA

Yeah, I bought it for Dad- but then next thing you know- Boom...I'm in it.

PAUL

I know. Ma told me what happened.

PAULA

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

PAUL

She mentioned it.

PAULA

You think that's a good idea?

PAUL

No. It's weird.

PAULA

It would save you a trip back here though if we could get it out of the way.

PAUL

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

Paula looks at her reflection in the fridge.

PAULA

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

PAUL

What's wrong with it?

PAULA

You don't think it makes my ass look big?

PAUL

People couldn't see your ass in that casket from Costco. They could only see you from the waist up.

PAULA

How'd I look?

PAUL

What?

PAULA

How'd I look at my wake?

PAUL

I'm gonna say, not good, Paula.

PAULA

She bought this ugly green abomination for me you know. I asked to take it back but she said she lost the receipt. But I never wore it.

PAUL

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

PAULA

You're probably right. As usual.

PAUL

What's that supposed to mean.

PAULA

Nuthin'...So hows life in New Mexico?

PAUL

It's fine.

PAULA

I will never understand why you picked Albuquerque to open a XX business.

PAUL

I did a lot of research, and that seemed to be the best spot.

PAULA

But it really wasn't was it?

PAUL

Apparently not.

PAULA

I think you were always destined to fail.

PAUL

What?!

PAULA

You only picked Albuquerque because you thought the name was funny.

PAUL

That's not true.

PAULA

"I shoulda made a left at Albuquerque".... Bugs Bunny used to say that. So, are you dating anyone?

PAUL

You know I'm not. Why are you asking me about that?

PAULA

Because you're all alone, and you shouldn't be all alone. At your age, it's just really sad.

PAUL  
You were also all alone.

PAULA  
And look how that turned out.

PAUL  
I don't have time to date anyone. I don't have time to talk to you about this.

PAULA  
Where you gotta be?

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

Danny looks in the window.

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

Danny enters.

PAULA  
You've got company.

Long pause between Paul and  
Danny.

DANNY  
Hi.

PAUL  
Hi.

DANNY  
Who were you talking to?

PAUL  
Huh?

DANNY  
I saw you talking to yourself. I wondered if you were on the phone.

PAUL  
No, no. I was talking to myself.

DANNY  
I see.



PAULA  
He's still really cute Paul.

PAUL  
Shut up.

DANNY  
What?

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

DANNY  
That's okay. I was so sorry to hear about Paula. I always liked her.

PAULA  
Awwwww. How sweet.

PAUL  
(looking over at Paula)  
Yeah, me too.

DANNY  
Are you sticking around for awhile? It be nice to hang out a little.

PAUL  
No, I'm going back to Albuquerque as soon as we can get everything sorted out.

PAULA  
(to Paul)  
Flirt with him!

DANNY  
You're looking good.

PAUL  
Thank you.

Awkward pause.

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

PAUL  
You do too.

DANNY  
Thanks. So, I know this is awkward but-

PAUL

Nothing's awkward. Everything's just great. I never really liked Paula anyway.

PAULA

Hey!

DANNY

What?

PAUL

Nuthin'.

DANNY

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

PAUL

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

PAULA

Loser! Have a drink with him!

DANNY

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

PAUL

Sure.

Enter Patty.

PAULA

This should be interesting.

PATTY

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

DANNY

Hi Mrs. Rinaldi.

PATTY

You need an arrangement?

DANNY

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

PATTY

(cutting him off)

I don't have a lot to deal with. Paul go have a drink with your friend.

PAUL

I have to change the water on the roses.

PATTY

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

PAUL

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

DANNY

That's okay, I better go.

Dorothy enters carrying a the  
vase from her arrangement.

PATTY

Dorothy!

DOROTHY

Patty. So sorry. How're you holdin' up?

PATTY

As good as could be expected I guess.

DOROTHY

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

PATTY

Thank you, I picked that out. I bought it for her for  
Christmas, she never wore it and now she's wearing it  
forever. So the joke's on her.

PAULA

This is wrong on so many levels.

DOROTHY

Hi Paul- Danny.

PAUL

Hi Mrs. Dombroski.

DOROTHY

I thought maybe you could use this vase again, Patty. I got  
so many now.

PATTY

You're so thoughtful. Thank you, every bit helps.

She takes the vase and goes to  
the back.

DOROTHY

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

DANNY

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

DOROTHY

No one would be uncomfortable. The Church is very accepting now.

DANNY

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

DOROTHY

Oh that. I see... yes...so unfortunate. I'm so sorry you say that happened to you. Did you know, Father MacDonald is off living on some farm now upstate? He seemed like such a nice man.

DANNY

He really wasn't.

PAULA

He's living on a farm upstate? Isn't that what they say about dogs when they put them to sleep?

DOROTHY

It's just awful. Poor Father MacDonald. You know Danny, I think he liked you because you didn't hang out with the other regular boys hardly at all...Well, except for Paul. But Paul always seemed like a regular boy.

DANNY

I wish you wouldn't say he "liked" me.

She turns to Paul.

DOROTHY

I never suspected about you Paul, and after thirty years of teaching I'm pretty good at spotting those kinds of things. Of course we all knew about Danny, but not you. It was pretty shocking I must say when I found out.

DANNY

I'm gonna go. Call me if you want to get together.

DOROTHY

I still think most people don't really even know about you Paul, you just seem like one of the guys to most folks. You were so good at football and fixing cars. You really don't seem like that type at all. You could totally pass for straight, you know.

PAUL

Thank you, I appreciate that.

DANNY

And on that note...

Danny exits.

DOROTHY

Did I say something I shouldn't have?

Patty renters.

PATTY

Paul, I think we've still got a rat, could you poison it?

PAUL

I'll trap it.

PATTY

Why would you wanna do that?... Thanks for stopping by Dorothy. I really appreciate it.

DOROTHY

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

PATTY

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

PAUL

I'm sorry. I forgot.

DOROTHY

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

PATTY

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

DOROTHY

Oh you don't need to do that.

PATTY

Not a problem. I'll put them in the vase you brought back.

Patty goes to the back.

DOROTHY

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

PAUL

I'm not staying.

DOROTHY

Well, for a little while right?

PAUL

No, I plan to go back next week.

DOROTHY  
With your father so sick?

PAUL  
There's not much I can do.

DOROTHY  
I suppose not.

Beat.

DOROTHY (CONT'D)  
Where are you now? Arizona?

PAUL  
New Mexico.

DOROTHY  
That's right. And what do you do?

PAUL  
I run a business.

DOROTHY  
Is it doing well?

PAUL  
I'm doing okay.

PAULA  
Liar!

PAUL  
I'm doing okay.

DOROTHY  
Well, it's nice to have you home. I'm just sorry about your sister.

PAUL  
That's okay. She was a total bitch.

PAULA  
Hey!

DOROTHY  
What??

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

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

PAULA  
Hey! I'm right here!

PAUL

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

DOROTHY

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

PAULA

I'm so glad she's "sad".

Patty renters with an arrangement  
of roses.

PATTY

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

DOROTHY

They're beautiful. Thank you so much.

PATTY

Not at all.

DOROTHY

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

PATTY

I don't know. I was going to have it next week, but last night he started eating again... so now I don't know what to think.

DOROTHY

Well, call me if you need anything at all.

PATTY

Thank you Dorothy, you're a good friend.

DOROTHY

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

She goes.

PATTY

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

She goes.

PAULA

Well, that was interesting.

PAUL

Was it?

PAULA

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

PAUL

I am doing okay.

PAULA

Um, your bank account would say otherwise.

PAUL

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

PAULA

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

PAUL

Oh. Right.

PAULA

That business was a stupid idea to begin with.

PAUL

You may be right about that.

PAULA

You're gonna have to close, you know.

PAUL

Maybe not.

PAULA

Why keep throwing away money? You could just move back, run this shop. Mom would love it. You could surprise Dad and tell him you moved back every single day. He won't know the difference.

PAUL

I'm not moving back here.

PAULA

You may not have a choice.

PAUL

There's always a choice.

PAULA

Are you going to call Danny?

PAUL

What do you care?

PAULA

I think you love him.



PAUL

I do not love him!

PAULA

That was adamant. Now I KNOW you love him.

PAUL

He's fine.

PAULA

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

PAUL

Shut up.

PAULA

Colossally fucked up is what I would call it.

PAUL

I don't wanna talk about this.

PAULA

Fine. What do you want to talk about?

PAUL

Nothing with you.

PAULA

How 'bout the weather?

PAUL

How about it?

PAULA

Do you like not having winter? I think I would really miss having the four seasons.

PAUL

Yeah, well, you're dead so-

PAULA

I can't believe you're actually living in New Mexico. What's that like?

PAUL

You never came to visit. You could have.

PAULA

Well, the way you left kinda put me off of a visit.

PAUL

Oh, is that what this is all about?

PAULA

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

PAUL

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

PAULA

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

PAUL

Everyone has a choice.

PAULA

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

PAUL

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

PAULA

So now you're blaming me?

PAUL

Little bit.

PAULA

You're such a coward.

PAUL

What's that supposed to mean?

PAULA

You run away from everything.

PAUL

That's not true.

PAULA

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

A beat.

PAULA (CONT'D)

(jeopardy answer)

"What is- your brother Paul?"

PAUL

That didn't happen.

A beat.

PAUL (CONT'D)

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

PAULA

You fucked my boyfriend, asshole.

PAUL

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

PAULA

But I DID like him. You knew that. And anyhow, you're not supposed to fuck your twin sister's boyfriend...ex or not.

PAUL

I told you. He started it. He got me drunk, and he was all over me.

PAULA

You could have said no! It was very upsetting!

PAUL

I know. Finding you passed out in the garage with the car running was an excellent clue to just how upset you were.

PAULA

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

PAUL

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

PAULA

And moved away.

PAUL

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

PAULA

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

PAUL

Because you didn't like me.

PAULA

I did too like you.

PAUL

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

Enter Patty.

PATTY

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

PAUL

Sure, Ma.

PAULA

To be continued.

PATTY

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

PAUL

What are you talking about?

PATTY

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

She hands him an envelope with papers.

PAUL

What is this?

PATTY

Open it.

He opens the envelope and looks at the papers.

PAUL

I don't understand.

PATTY

I can't run the shop anymore. You're Dad is checking out soon, and you know I won't be far behind.

PAUL

You're not dying.

PATTY

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

PAUL

What?

PATTY

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

A beat.

PATTY (CONT'D)

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

PAUL

Wait- you did what??!

PAULA

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

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE SCENE 3

The shop is dark. Laughter.

DANNY

(off)

Hurry up! I'm freezing!

PAUL

(off)

Hold on a second. Let me find the key!

DANNY

(off)

It's probably in your pocket.

PAUL

(off)

Of course it's in my pocket.

DANNY

(off)

Careful the sidewalk is...

Sound of Paul slipping and falling.

DANNY (CONT'D)

(off)

Slippery...

A beat.

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

PAUL  
(off)  
Arg. I'm fine.

DANNY  
(off)  
Give me your hand.

PAUL  
(off)  
I'm fine.

DANNY  
(off)  
Suit yourself.

PAUL  
(off)  
Arrg!

DANNY  
(off)  
Give me your hand! There you go! Did you find your keys?

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

After a beat, they enter the shop.

DANNY  
Where's the lights?

PAUL  
Shhh! You'll wake up my parents.

DANNY  
What are you sixteen??

PAUL  
The power's out from the storm.

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

DANNY  
What are you lookin' for?

PAUL  
Not what, who.

DANNY  
Who are you lookin' for?

PAUL  
Never mind. She's not here.

DANNY  
How drunk are you?

PAUL  
Pretty drunk.

DANNY  
Do you have any candles??

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

DANNY  
Where'my gonna go?

Paul goes to the back to get  
candles. Danny looks around the  
shop. Paul comes back out with a  
lit candle.

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

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

PAUL  
That's my mother.

DANNY  
What are you gonna do?

PAUL  
I don't know.

DANNY  
Will you stay?

PAUL  
I dunno.

DANNY  
Will you sell it?

PAUL  
I dunno. That would break her heart.

DANNY  
You could wait till after she's dead?

PAUL  
That might break my heart.

DANNY  
It's nice to have you back.

PAUL  
Thanks, it's been a crazy week.

DANNY  
It's just so awful about Pau-

PAUL  
Shhhh!

DANNY  
What?

PAUL  
Don't say her name.

DANNY  
Why not?

PAUL  
Just don't say it.

Paul takes out a bottle opens it,  
takes out a pill and swallows it.

DANNY  
What's that?

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

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

PAUL  
Not really.

DANNY  
How's your back?

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



Here. DANNY

Danny goes to touch Paul's neck.

What are you doing? PAUL

I did massage as a side job, when I was working at the shop. DANNY

What kind of massage? PAUL

Totally legit!... Mostly. DANNY

I'm fine. PAUL

It'll help. DANNY

Okay. PAUL

Danny rubs his neck.

So tell me about New Mexico. DANNY

What do you want to know? PAUL

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

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

Food is good? DANNY

Yeah, they put chile's in everything. Red or green...that's what they ask you when you order just about anything. The Italian food? Not so much. PAUL

Nice. DANNY

Quiet for a moment.

Seeing anyone?  
DANNY (CONT'D)

No. No time. You?  
PAUL

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

Longer than mine.  
PAUL

How's that?  
DANNY

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

Gross!  
DANNY

Don't knock it.  
PAUL

Rubbing Paul's neck.

How's that feel?  
DANNY

Pretty good, thanks.  
PAUL

You're really tight. Just relax.  
DANNY

I'm waiting for that pill to kick in.  
PAUL

Quiet.

I was pretty upset when you left.  
DANNY

Who wasn't?  
PAUL

I stopped hanging out with Paula.  
DANNY

Don't say her name!  
PAUL

What's your deal??

DANNY

Ow!

PAUL

Relax.

DANNY

I'm trying.

PAUL

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

DANNY

It was easier for me to just leave.

PAUL

Easier for who?

DANNY

For everyone.

PAUL

Not for me.

DANNY

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

PAUL

I told you it was okay. I understood.

DANNY

Yeah, but did you really?

PAUL

I really liked you.

DANNY

I liked you too.

PAUL

I missed you.

DANNY

I missed you too.

PAUL

Danny continues to rub his  
shoulder and neck. After a beat  
Paul leans over to kiss Danny.  
Danny immediately recoils.

DANNY

Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!

PAUL

What's the matter? I thought you -

DANNY

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

PAUL

But you were rubbing my neck, my shoulder-

DANNY

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

PAUL

So tonight was not a date I take it?

DANNY

A date?? We just drove around and went to Macdonalds and split the bill. You call that a date?

PAUL

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

DANNY

I don't wanna hear about that.

PAUL

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

DANNY

Issues? Of course I've got issues.

PAUL

Ok, then.

DANNY

Look. Paul. It was thirty years ago. I forgive you. I've told you that, but did you really think that things could go back the way that they were?

PAUL

I don't know what I thought. Most of the guys I've been with lately I haven't even seen there faces.

DANNY

Okay...

PAUL

It's just that it was such a long time ago, and I thought maybe the past was in the past.

DANNY

I'm still dealing with it.

PAUL

The lawsuit.

DANNY

Yeah.

PAUL

Thirty years later?

DANNY

Yeah. It's not just me you know. They raised the age limit cut off.

PAUL

I see.

DANNY

We don't have to talk about this.

PAUL

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

DANNY

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

He starts to break down.

PAUL

I didn't know what to do!

DANNY

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

PAUL

I'm sorry!

DANNY

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

PAUL

I really wanted to but...

DANNY

But you're a coward. I know.

PAUL

Fuck you. Don't say that!

DANNY

Look, this was a mistake. I'm sorry. You've been through hell this week, and I shouldn't have come by. I'm really sorry. I guess I just wanted to have a little bit of closure. It was selfish. Have a safe trip back to New Mexico.

PAUL

Stop. Stop. Don't go. It's snowing like crazy. The power's out. Just hang out for a bit. I don't want to be by myself right now.

DANNY

I think I'm gonna go. I think you need some time.

PAUL

Will I see you around before I go home?

DANNY

Funny, I thought you were home, but you're right this isn't your home anymore.

PAUL

Talk again before I leave?

DANNY

We'll see. Nice to see you again. Really. I mean it.

PAUL

Thanks. You too. I mean it.

Danny leaves. Paula pops up from behind the counter.

PAULA

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

BLACKOUT.

ACT ONE SCENE 4

Flower shop. Day. Patty working.

PAUL

Good morning.

Paula pops out.

PAULA  
Morning.

PAUL  
Jesus, you scared me!

PATTY  
I didn't say anything. I was just standing here.

PAUL  
Sorry I'm just a little jumpy.

PATTY  
Sleep okay, Paulie?

PAUL  
It's still a crappy mattress.

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

PAULA  
Do not use that mattress. You don't even wanna know.

PAUL  
No. It's fine.

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

PAULA  
That sounds interesting.

PAUL  
Does it have to be right now?

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

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

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

PAULA  
Don't let her talk you into staying here, Paul.

PAUL  
I don't want to stay here. I've got my own life, Ma.

PATTY

That's fine. No one is forcing you.

PAUL

Okay then.

A beat.

PAULA

Wait for it...

A beat.

PATTY

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

PAUL

Fine.

PATTY

You're Great Grandfather started this place without a dime.

PAULA

He used to sell flowers out  
on the street.

PATTY (CONT'D)

He used to sell flowers out  
on the street.

PAUL

I know.

PATTY

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

PAUL

I thought he bought it with his wife's inheritance?

PATTY

Maybe. I don't know, but it didn't come easy. You're Dad didn't want to run this place either, but it worked out.

PAUL

He hates this place.

PATTY

He doesn't hate it.

PAUL

How's he doing?

PATTY

He ate some toast this morning.



PAUL

That's good.

PAULA

That *is* good.

PATTY

You know, we may have gotten that casket for nothing. You can't return them to Costco. I checked.

PAUL

I thought you hated Costco?

PATTY

I do, but it was a really, really good deal.

PAUL

You had to run right out and get another casket?

PATTY

It was on sale. How was I supposed to know he was gonna start feeling better?

PAUL

Don't worry, I'm sure he'll use it eventually.

PATTY

It's just that it's taking up a lot of space in the kitchen.

PAUL

You shouldn't have let them deliver it.

PATTY

I thought we were gonna need it right away. The doctors said three months, and that was over a year ago. Let's not argue over it.

PAUL

Fine.

PATTY

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

PAUL

Lisa got married?

PATTY

Finally, yeah.

PAUL

Who did she marry?

PATTY  
I don't remember his name. Some Polish man.

PAUL  
Uh, Ma?

PATTY  
Yeah?

PAUL  
What's this?

PATTY  
What's what?

PAUL  
This.

Paul picks up a gun from the  
drawer.

PATTY  
What's it look like?

PAUL  
It looks like a gun.

PATTY  
That's what it is.

PAUL  
Since when do you have a gun?

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

PAUL  
This is the gun that he...

PATTY  
Yeah.

PAUL  
And you kept it?

PATTY  
Sure, I kept it.

PAUL  
Why?

PATTY  
It's a perfectly good gun.

PAUL  
What do you have it for?

PATTY  
Huh?

PAUL  
What do you need a gun for?

PATTY  
For robbers.

PAUL  
Robbers?

PATTY  
Yeah. You never know.

PAUL  
Have you ever been robbed?

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

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

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

PAUL  
It seems fine to me.

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

PAUL  
There are no gangs running around robbing florists.

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

PAUL  
Does it even work?

PATTY  
It worked on your Uncle.

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

PATTY

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

PAUL

Do you even know how to use it?

PATTY

What's to know? Click. Bang.

PAUL

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

PATTY

Why would I do that?

PAUL

I mean by accident.

PATTY

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

PAUL

I'm not back.

PATTY

So, you're really not stayin'?

PAUL

No. I can't stay here.

PATTY

Why not?

PAUL

I don't live here anymore..

PATTY

Who's going to run your shop?

PAUL

It's not my shop!

PATTY

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

PAUL

But I don't want it!

PATTY

We already signed the papers.

PAUL

Unsign them.

PATTY

You can't unsign papers.

PAUL

Tear them up.

PATTY

That's a waste of perfectly good paper.

PAUL

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

PATTY

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

PAUL

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

PATTY

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

PAUL

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

PATTY

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

PAUL

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

PATTY

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

PAUL

I've got my own things going on?

PATTY

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

PAUL

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

PATTY

What kind of projects.

PAULA

You don't have any other projects.

PAUL

Yes, but she doesn't know that.

PATTY

What?

PAUL

Nothing.

PATTY

So come back here for a little while. I really need your help with this place and with your father, especially now that your sister is gone.

PAUL

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

PAULA

I would never go to New Hampshire for the weekend.

PATTY

I don't want to talk about it!

PAUL

Of course you don't.

PAULA

Their license plates give me the creeps. "Live Free or Die". It's so dark. Especially given my circumstances.

PATTY

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

PAUL

What?

PATTY

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

PAULA

Ouch.

PAUL

Wait a minute.

PATTY

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

PAULA

She is right about that.

PAUL

It's not my fault! She was very ill. She needed help.

PATTY

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

PAULA

Eh.