

**PLACENTA MEN**

**a play by Tom Baum**

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Characters (in order of appearance):

**Mariah**, 70s, an actress

**Lorenzo**, 70s, Mariah's husband, an M.D. and drug company president

**Connor**, late 30s, their older son, an actor

**Ethan**, 30s, their younger son, a mathematician

The setting is the living room/dining area of Mariah and Lorenzo's condo in Boulder, Colorado.  
The time is the present. The action takes place over two days.

Scene 1. Friday, midday

Scene 2. Friday, early evening

Scene 3. Saturday morning, one a.m.

Scene 4. Saturday morning, several hours later

Scene 5. Late Saturday afternoon

## Scene 1

*(Lights up on LORENZO and MARIAH's living room/dining area, amply furnished, with many knickknacks and photographs and including a small antique desk with a mousepad, a land line, a paperweight, a pen in a pen holder, plus a sideboard with a chess trophy and several videos on a DVD rack. Three entrances...one stage right, leading to the bedrooms... one from a stairway that descends to an unseen foyer, stage left...and one leading to an unseen kitchen, center left. One large French window, opening onto a roofed balcony, with a view of treetops; it's snowing outside; the window's partly open. There's a chessboard on one of the tables, with pieces on and off the board—a game in progress. Next to a couch is a standing lamp. The floor around one of the chairs is strewn with books, magazines, and magazine blow-in cards.)*

*MARIAH is seated on the couch, shivering almost uncontrollably in her housedress, attended by LORENZO, dressed in a T-shirt and pants, but shoeless. MARIAH has a large, cumbersome digital thermometer in her mouth. A blood pressure machine sits on an end table.)*

MARIAH: I hbwb thss dmm thrmomrwm.

LORENZO: Don't talk.

*(MARIAH takes the thermometer out of her mouth.)*

MARIAH: I hate this damn thermometer.

LORENZO: No you don't. Keep it under your tongue.

MARIAH: It hurts my tongue. It hurts my whole mouth. It's been in long enough.

*(LORENZO takes the thermometer, examines it.)*

LORENZO: Ninety-nine point seven.

MARIAH: Oh God. No wonder my joints are aching.

*(LORENZO lifts up MARIAH's nightdress.)*

LORENZO: Calm down, there's no rash. This is not a CAPS attack. It's probably just a cold. Or your imagination.

MARIAH: *(suddenly)* Oh good Lord.

LORENZO: What is it?

MARIAH: The window.

LORENZO: What about the window? (*looks*) Oh I see.

MARIAH: You wouldn't be trying to kill me, would you, darling?

LORENZO: I didn't leave the window open.

MARIAH: Oh, then who did?

LORENZO: The likely explanation? You opened it and you don't remember.

(*LORENZO closes the balcony window, slaps his pockets.*)

LORENZO: (*suddenly panicked*) Oh no.

MARIAH: What?

LORENZO: I still had it when I fetched the thermometer.

MARIAH: Lorenzo, you're not calling Petrocelli. We bother her enough.

LORENZO: (*nervously sings; to the tune of "Cinderella"*) "Petrocelli, Petrocelli, night and day it's Petrocelli..."

MARIAH: Lorenzo, did you hear me?

(*LORENZO starts keying in a number on the land line.*)

LORENZO: (*sings*) "Fettucine, Gorgonzola, Osso Bucco, Cowabunga—"

(*A muffled cell ringtone. LORENZO pries up a sofa cushion and finds his cell, turns it off.*)

LORENZO: I feel better now.

MARIAH: Careful, dear. Those were D.H. Lawrence's last words. I hate for the boys to see me like this.

LORENZO: Are we sure they're coming?

MARIAH: I texted them both. Haven't heard back.

LORENZO: Better never than late. What do we tell our friends if the boys don't make it?

MARIAH: That's up to you, dear.

LORENZO: It's never up to me. You're the actress.

*(Land line rings. LORENZO and MARIAH both tense up.)*

LORENZO: Speak of the devils?

*(LORENZO checks the Caller I.D.)*

LORENZO: Yes, it's the gate. *(picks up phone)* Hello, yes, let them through. *(to MARIAH)* Did you remember to take your Neuristoral?

MARIAH: Did I take it or do I remember taking it? Those are two different questions.

LORENZO: Then we can assume you didn't.

*(LORENZO exits in the direction of the unseen kitchen.)*

LORENZO: *(singing; off)* "...Oh it's a long long while...from May to December...but the days grow short...when you reach September..."

*(MARIAH starts plumping pillows, nervously rearranging knickknacks, while ignoring the relative mess by the chair. LORENZO enters with the pill vial and a glass of water.)*

LORENZO: *(sings)* "...When the autumn weather...turns the leaves to flame...One hasn't got time...for the waiting game..."

*(MARIAH has started putting the chess pieces back in their box.)*

LORENZO: What are you doing? I was about to win your queen!

MARIAH: Ooh, right, very sorry.

*(LORENZO hands MARIAH the pill vial. She puts it aside and continues to make meaningless adjustments, moving an area rug an inch away from the couch, while LORENZO puts the chess pieces back in their home squares.)*

LORENZO: Mariah, for God's sake will you stop cleaning? The place looks fine. Bottoms up.

MARIAH: This pill you invented is much too large. It's practically phallic.

LORENZO: Lay it parallel to your tongue. Then take a huge gulp of water.

(MARIAH carefully places the pill, turns her back on LORENZO, facing downstage as she pretends to gulp the pill. With an eye on LORENZO, she wipes her mouth, surreptitiously spitting out the pill, hiding it in her fist. Doorbell rings. LORENZO tightens visibly.)

LORENZO: Put the thermometer away, unless you want to worry them.

(MARIAH stows the thermometer in a sideboard drawer and drops the pill in there as well. But the blood pressure machine remains in plain sight. MARIAH exits, heading downstairs to the unseen foyer.)

MARIAH: (off) Coming, coming!

(LORENZO starts taking deep breaths. Off, the sounds of greeting:)

MARIAH: (off) Connor, darling.

CONNOR: (off) Hey, Mom. Look at you. You look great.

MARIAH: (off) Thank you, darling, so do you. Where's Riley?

CONNOR: (off) Riley sends her love. She couldn't make it, she's casting her new play.

MARIAH: (off) Oh, that's too bad, we were so looking forward...

(MARIAH enters with CONNOR, who's wearing a cashmere sweater and wheeling a small overnight case.)

MARIAH: (continuing) ...Is there a part for you in her play?

CONNOR: Yes. The lead.

MARIAH: How wonderful! Did you bring a script? We could run lines.

CONNOR: Christ, I'm sorry, I forgot to pack it. That would have been fun, wouldn't it? Sorry, Mom. (to LORENZO) Hey, Pop. Happy Anniversary!

(CONNOR puts down the overnight case, gives LORENZO a big hug.)

CONNOR: Great to see you, Pop. Been way too long.

LORENZO: Where's your brother?

CONNOR: Your guess is as good as mine.

MARIAH: But he's coming?

CONNOR: We haven't talked. How are things here? Exciting, huh? Fifty years of married bliss.

LORENZO: I'm sorry Riley isn't coming. We were looking forward to showing her off. (*sings*) "A pretty girl...is like a melody...."

MARIAH AND LORENZO: (*sing*) "...that haunts you night and day...Just like the strain of a haunting refrain..."

CONNOR: (*uneasily*) Right. So this is the new place. Much cozier, isn't it?

MARIAH: And no garden to worry about.

LORENZO: What's the new play called?

CONNOR: It's called *Thanks For Having Me*.

LORENZO: Do you play a cannibal or his dinner?

CONNOR: (*obliging*) That's good, Pop. I'll have to pass that along. No, I play a podcaster.

LORENZO: And it's the lead.

CONNOR: Big part, yeah.

LORENZO: Won't they want a star?

MARIAH: Darling, what are you saying, your son is a star.

LORENZO: In our eyes, yes, but they always want at least one Hollywood carpetbagger. Your mother ran into that problem, didn't you, darling? You lost that role to what's-her-name, what was the play—

MARIAH: *After the Fall*.

LORENZO: Name starts with an F.

MARIAH: No, I think it's a D.

CONNOR: Faye Dunaway.

LORENZO: Faye Dunaway, there you go. Haven't seen her in anything lately, and your mother's still working.

MARIAH: (*to CONNOR*) Community theater. I get a call now and then. Dying women. Dotty grandmas. Obviously not a stretch. Well, except for the absence of grandchildren. But we hope to live that long!

CONNOR: What's the blood pressure machine for?

MARIAH: (*realizing*) Oh dear.

CONNOR: You're shivering, Mom.

MARIAH: I know I am. "Someone" left that window open.

CONNOR: But it's so warm in here. Feels like 80.

MARIAH: Yes, well, turns out I have a mild case of CAPS.

CONNOR: CAPS?

LORENZO: Cryoprin-associated Periodic Syndrome.

MARIAH: You remember how sensitive to cold I used to be? Your father thought it was poor circulation, but now I get a fever. Sometimes nausea. Various aches and pains. (*with a hint of accusation*) Took years before it was diagnosed correctly.

LORENZO: It's a rare disease. Sue me, I'm not a rheumatologist.

MARIAH: No rash today, thank God. And no heart attack.

CONNOR: Jesus, Mom.

LORENZO: Ignore that, please. That's her hypochondria talking.

CONNOR: But you'll be OK for the party?

MARIAH: Of course I will. (*to LORENZO*) Darling, why don't you show Connor where he's sleeping? And lay out the towels, in case I've forgotten?

LORENZO: Where are they again?

MARIAH: In the linen closet, darling. Between the two bedrooms.

LORENZO: Ah yes. (*going*) Did you know most criminals are hypochondriacs?

(*LORENZO exits in the direction of the unseen hallway.*)

CONNOR: Whoa, what did he mean by that?

MARIAH: Your guess is as good as mine. We're both in our dotage, you'll get used to us. (*sotto*) Don't tell him I told you, but he has me on Neuristoral.



CONNOR: Neuristoral? Never heard of it.

MARIAH: He hasn't gotten FDA approval yet. Took him five years to get it out of the lab.

CONNOR: Is it for CAPS?

MARIAH: No, it's for memory loss. All forms of the D-word. I'm his prize guinea pig. His only pig, actually.

CONNOR: A sample of one? Is he kidding?

MARIAH: Don't act so shocked. Didn't he try Sopradine on me?

CONNOR: Yes, and a hundred other people. And we know how that turned out.

MARIAH: What do you mean? It turned out beautifully. Sopradine has helped millions of people with their OCD.

CONNOR: Yes...if they could afford the pills.

MARIAH: Now now. Sopradine put you and Ethan through college, not to mention your two years in med school.

CONNOR: One year, Mom. I never finished my second.

MARIAH: Right, of course, you stopped going, didn't you? Well then you shouldn't judge. I feel so young behind my eyes...till I have to get out of a chair and try to think where I put my glasses. And my hypochondria is getting worse, he's right about that. He says it's death I'm afraid of, but he's wrong. (*as LORENZO enters*) I'm afraid to outlive him, how many times have I said that, darling?

LORENZO: Oh but you will outlive me. My toothpaste, my sunscreen, my deodorant, they're all going to outlive me. (*to CONNOR*) Your mother will be knocking them dead in *Hello, Dolly*...while I'm dribbling out my farts in some high-end nursing home. (*to CONNOR*) You're at the end of the hall, on the left.

MARIAH: (*shivers*) You'll be sharing with Ethan.

LORENZO: If he's coming. (*feels her forehead*) Why don't you go lie down for a while? We'll call you when Ethan arrives. If he arrives.

(*LORENZO gives MARIAH a little kiss of reassurance. MARIAH exits. LORENZO sits.*)

LORENZO: The older she gets, the more she cleans.

CONNOR: Is Neuristoral helping?

LORENZO: She mentioned that, did she?

CONNOR: She said you're testing it on her. And only her.

LORENZO: And I'm seeing improvement. Fortunately, your mother was brilliant to begin with, so she has more brain cells to lose. That's why she was so marvelous in Shakespeare. And on Broadway, no less.

CONNOR: Why not go wider? Why just one test case?

LORENZO: That's my business. Don't question what you can't possibly understand.

*(Land line rings. LORENZO bolts to his feet. And starts to lose his balance.)*

CONNOR: Pop, are you OK?

LORENZO: Got up too fast. Orthostatic hypotension. The cerebral vessels don't contract as quickly as they used to. Gravity does its worst.

*(LORENZO steadies himself, checks Caller I.D.)*

LORENZO: What do you know, your brother made it. *(answers)* Yes, let him through. *(hangs up)* My first approach to Neuristoral, I did a QSAR modification on Aricept. Can you guess which R group?

CONNOR: OK, Pop, you proved your point.

LORENZO: What point? I'm asking which R group.

CONNOR: I flunked pharmacology, and don't say you don't remember. The day I booked a TV gig I started ditching all my classes.

LORENZO: I remember very well. You were living at home, pretending to go to school. You lied very convincingly, as I recall.

CONNOR: Till Mom figured it out. "Ohmigod, this will kill your father."

LORENZO: Unfortunately for you, it didn't.

CONNOR: Hey.

LORENZO: Come on. You never could take a joke.

CONNOR: You made me take my finals. You kept saying, "You may want to go back." When I showed up for Pathology, the whole class burst into applause.

LORENZO: Too bad you didn't go back. You could have inherited the business. But no, you're happier doing what you're doing. Pretending to be what you're not. That always came naturally to you.

*(Doorbell rings. LORENZO stiffens.)*

LORENZO: Do you want to get that?

CONNOR: It's your house, Pop.

*(Doorbell rings again. MARIAH enters.)*

MARIAH: Isn't anybody going to get the door? Lorenzo, darling, at least put your slippers on.

LORENZO: I don't know where I left them

MARIAH: Did you try under the bed? *(doorbell rings again; calls)* Coming, dear!

*(MARIAH exits in the direction of the unseen foyer.)*

LORENZO: *(to CONNOR; sotto)* How long since you've seen your brother?

CONNOR: *(lying)* Hard to say. Too long.

*(Sounds of greeting, off:)*

MARIAH: *(off)* Darling, you made it, I'm so happy to see you!

ETHAN: *(off)* Hi, Mom.

MARIAH: *(off)* Is this the warmest coat you have? You must be freezing. Hang it there, on the hook.

ETHAN: *(off)* No, I'll keep it on.

*(MARIAH enters with ETHAN. ETHAN is wearing an old down jacket, frayed pants and mismatched socks. He's lugging a backpack.)*

LORENZO: Well, hello stranger.

ETHAN: Yeah. Hi.

LORENZO: Come here, kiddo.

*(ETHAN goes limp as LORENZO pulls him in for a hug.)*

LORENZO: Take off your coat and stay awhile.

(ETHAN *takes off his jacket, hugging it to his chest.*)

CONNOR: Hey, bro. Long time.

LORENZO: How was your flight?

ETHAN: Terrible. 37B.

CONNOR: Toilet City

LORENZO: Boyd-Zeller doesn't fly you first class?

ETHAN: This wasn't a business trip.

LORENZO: Well, but with your salary, you can afford to fly in comfort.

MARIAH: He's frugal, darling, he takes after you.

LORENZO: And it's just as well. You're better off in Toilet City. Plane goes down, First Class folds up like an accordion. I trust you brought a jacket for tomorrow?

ETHAN: Yeah, it wouldn't fit in my backpack.

MARIAH: Your father will lend you a jacket. And maybe you two will have a game of chess before dinner? (*to* LORENZO) Wouldn't you enjoy that, darling?

LORENZO: Yes, if there's time.

MARIAH: We still keep your trophy on the sideboard. What was the name of that player you beat?

ETHAN: Magnus Carlsen. He was ten years old and playing 30 other people.

MARIAH: And you were the only boy who beat him.

LORENZO: How's your health, son? Any complaints?

ETHAN: Yes, I have complaints. The rich are getting richer, the poor are getting poorer, psychotic tyrants are ruling Planet Earth.

CONNOR: (*quickly*) Mom, why don't you show Ethan his room?

LORENZO: (*to* ETHAN) Aren't you helping the rich to get richer? With your algorithms?

MARIAH: That's enough, you two. *(to ETHAN)* Fair warning, dear. Our friends are going to pester you for investment tips.

ETHAN: Fire your broker, buy an ETF. They track an index and trade like common stock. The rest is bullshit.

MARIAH: *(to LORENZO)* Will you remember that, dear? *(to ETHAN)* Come, I'll give you the tour.

ETHAN: I don't need a tour.

LORENZO: Ethan.

ETHAN: What?

LORENZO: Could you try and be civil to your mother? And could you stop the drumming?

*(ETHAN has been drumming rhythmically on his belly with both hands.)*

MARIAH: Lorenzo, why don't you try and be civil.

ETHAN: Yeah, I didn't start this—

CONNOR: Mom, don't you have dinner to get ready? I'd like to catch up with my brother.

MARIAH: Yes, good idea, we'll get out of your way. Lorenzo, come help me slice the vegetables.

*(LORENZO exits in the direction of the unseen kitchen. MARIAH starts out, doubles back.)*

MARIAH: Your father didn't mean to be rude. He's so proud of both of you.

*(MARIAH exits. ETHAN and CONNOR huddle.)*

ETHAN: How much did you tell them?

CONNOR: Not a fucking thing, OK? He's been on my case since I got here. Crazier than ever. We've gotta tread lightly here.

ETHAN: Why's it so hot in here?

CONNOR: I know. She's got some disease called CAPS, cold brings it on. She had an attack this morning. Window was left open.

ETHAN: Whoa. Is it life-threatening?

CONNOR: She mentioned a heart attack.

ETHAN: Fuck.

CONNOR: Plus he's got her on some drug he cooked up. Supposed to nip dementia in the bud. Neuristoral.

ETHAN: Liar sore nut.

CONNOR: What?

ETHAN: It's an anagram, OK? (*with contempt*) Neuristoral. Why doesn't make a new antibiotic? No, that would be helpful. Always goes for a hole in the market, pulls all kinds of tricks to fuck the competition. The man's a killer capitalist.

CONNOR: OK, bro, slow it down.

ETHAN: Is he still screwing around on her? That's what I'd like to know.

CONNOR: We don't know for a fact that he was.

ETHAN: Dude, you weren't here.

CONNOR: And you didn't catch him in the act.

ETHAN: Everything but.

CONNOR: Fine. Do me a favor? Don't ask him where he was that weekend. And if you have to drum on yourself, do it privately. Aren't you taking your Sopradine?

ETHAN: Sopradine. Sad neo rip. That sad man ripped off millions with his neo drug. The sore nut is probably lying about this new one. No, the shrink took me off Sopradine, put me on Depakote.

CONNOR: And how's that doing you?

ETHAN: It's fucking with my liver, thanks for asking.

CONNOR: Did you send out more resumes?

ETHAN: Deafening silence. Apparently all of Wall Street knows about my meltdown.

CONNOR: How much do you owe now?

ETHAN: North of thirty grand. I had to sell half my stuff to pay for the plane ticket. Any progress on the Broadway deal?

CONNOR: We're not closed yet.

ETHAN: You keep saying that, man. When will you be?

CONNOR: If I knew, I'd tell you, all right? Anyway, I wouldn't see any of that money for months.

ETHAN: What about all those TV gigs you booked?

CONNOR: I spent most of that.

ETHAN: On what?

CONNOR: Hookers.

ETHAN: You're shitting me.

CONNOR: Yes, I'm shitting you. Thirty grand? Forget it. I don't have it.

ETHAN: What about Riley?

CONNOR: Riley doesn't have it either. You bought a ticket, you're here, time to face the music.

ETHAN: I can't do it, man. I can't ask him for money. I'll kill myself first!

CONNOR: Hey— calm the fuck down, all right? And quit darting your eyes around. What are you looking at?

ETHAN: I see shapes sometimes. Out of the corner of my eyes.

CONNOR: Those are floaters.

ETHAN: Floaters don't have faces. You see how I am, how can you ask me to do this—

*(ETHAN breaks off as MARIAH enters from the kitchen.)*

MARIAH: Boys? You want to help your father with the prep?

CONNOR: Sure. Yeah. Give us a minute, Mom.

*(MARIAH exits.)*

CONNOR: All right, this is how it's gonna go. First I'll make something up. "He's...he's launching an app." "He's turning chess pro."

ETHAN: He'll never buy it.

CONNOR: Of course he won't. Then you come clean, that'll prove how stressed you were, you couldn't bear to ask for charity. Mom will back you up.

ETHAN: Are you kidding? She will have a heart attack.

CONNOR: Just don't go into details.

ETHAN: You don't get it. I could end up in lockdown again. I'm like this close already—

CONNOR: That is not going to happen, OK? Button your lip. Stay off your soap box. Nothing about the FDA or why he didn't invent a new antibiotic or how much he pays himself in salary. You listening?

ETHAN: Yeah yeah, no politics.

CONNOR: Leave it to me. I'll pull you out of this quicksand.

ETHAN: OK, Dad.

CONNOR: There you go. Bring it in.

*(CONNOR enfolds ETHAN in a hug. ETHAN goes limp in his arms. Outside the balcony window, snow is coming down harder. Blackout.)*



**Scene 2**

*(Early evening, several hours later. Snow is still falling. The family are seated at the dining table. There's wine at every place except ETHAN's. LORENZO and MARIAH are both a little drunk.)*

LORENZO: —Here's where the ends meet. Public toilets, they tend to flush as soon as you get off the pot. You wipe your ass standing up, that presents a problem. Pass the wine.

*(CONNOR reaches for the bottle. MARIAH shakes her head no.)*

LORENZO: What is this, a conspiracy? I said pass it.

MARIAH: The bottle's empty, dear.

LORENZO: Nonsense. Pass it here.

*(MARIAH reaches for the wine, pours what remains in the bottle into her glass, knocks it back.)*

MARIAH: Now it's empty.

LORENZO: Very cute. First she salts the salad dressing, now she defies me.

MARIAH: *(to ETHAN and CONNOR)* I never cook with salt. Ever. I'm the one with hypertension.

LORENZO: Then you're trying to kill us both. The good part of standing up? Urine gets trapped in an aging urethra, and that helps shake the dew off your lily.

MARIAH: Boundaries, dear.

LORENZO: What boundaries? When didn't we argue in front of the children? No sense stopping now. If I respected boundaries, we couldn't afford to live where we're living. And face it, you wouldn't have fallen in love with me.

MARIAH: *(to CONNOR and ETHAN)* He always expects women to fall in love him.

LORENZO: And now and then they do.

MARIAH: More asparagus, anyone? Your father thinks all our female friends are rooting for my demise, so they can come calling with their casseroles.

LORENZO: They know how devoted a husband I've been. For example: Your mother has a thing about hats on the bed. Thinks it's bad luck. If I'm home by myself? I never put my hat on a bed. That's how much I love your mother. You boys know what good sex is?

CONNOR: Yeah, Pop, I think so. Mom, thanks, I will have some more asparagus.

LORENZO: We've had perfect sex.

MARIAH: He has no plans to trade me in.

LORENZO: Your mother still looks gorgeous by candlelight. (*to MARIAH*) I'd say the last year has been stellar, wouldn't you? Better than in our thirties.

MARIAH: We had the children then.

CONNOR: We accept the blame. Next topic.

LORENZO: Just trying to set you a good example. (*to ETHAN*) You remember that time you walked in on us? That Colonial we rented one summer? No bolt locks on the doors, so we had to put a pencil in the hasp. You rattled the door and the pencil fell out.

MARIAH: Poor dear, you ran crying back to your room.

ETHAN: (*under his breath*) Wow.

MARIAH: Lorenzo, we should stop, we're making Ethan uncomfortable.

LORENZO: And afterwards you hid your eyes whenever there were sex scenes on TV.

MARIAH: Lorenzo, what did I just say?

ETHAN: OK. For your information, that's not the reason I close my eyes.

CONNOR: Dude, we don't have to go into it.

ETHAN: (*to LORENZO*) You always licked your lips when there were kissing scenes. "Mm-mm...good."

MARIAH: You still do that, darling. Especially scenes I'm in.

LORENZO: Yes. It means sex is a good thing.

CONNOR: No, it means sex is problematical. Seriously, can we please change the subject?

LORENZO: (*to* CONNOR) Hasn't held you back, has it? Riley's a lively, beautiful girl, and I can't imagine she'd settle for a prig.

ETHAN: (*suddenly*) How do you picture it?

MARIAH: Picture what, dear?

ETHAN: Before Christ comes from behind my head.

CONNOR: (*quickly*) Who else wants more asparagus?

ETHAN: (*doggedly*) The timeline takes a right turn when Christ is born. Then another right turn at the start of the second millennium...a left turn at 1940... right at 1980...right at 2000...no turns yet in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

(*Pause.*)

LORENZO: Well. A shame you didn't go in for chemistry. That's a chemist's way of structuring reality. At least one of you boys got those genes.

MARIAH: And Connor got mine instead, thank God. And soon to be on Broadway, think of that.

LORENZO: (*to* CONNOR) Did you ever get in touch with my Harvard classmate, Preston Fader?

CONNOR: No, I never did.

LORENZO: Might pay you to look him up. He's produced a number of plays.

CONNOR: No, Pop, he's a lawyer at Endeavor. It's actually not that relevant, but OK, I'll give it a shot.

LORENZO: You've never let me help you. I can't think why.

ETHAN: It's not help.

LORENZO: Sorry, what did you say?

ETHAN: It's interference. Like the time you made me pick up marbles with my supposedly flat feet.

CONNOR: Ancient history, dude. Mom, how many people are coming to this party?—

ETHAN: (*interrupts; to* LORENZO) You bought me orthopedic shoes and made me walk straight instead of with my feet turned out. Which a podiatrist said was my natural gait.

LORENZO: I wouldn't take a podiatrist's word for anything.

ETHAN: Well, he was right. Remember you took us skiing at Mountain Creek? No? You don't remember that? I couldn't snowplow 'cause I couldn't make my feet go pigeon-toed.

CONNOR: You almost skied into the lodge. Great meal, Mom, what's for dessert?

ETHAN: That was the night you called me a pipsqueak.

LORENZO: Pipsqueak? That's not a word in my vocabulary.

ETHAN: You said it to Connor. You told him I was anoxic during delivery and that's why I was on the Spectrum and I'd never amount to anything.

CONNOR: Dude, he never even thought that. Let's help Mom clear.

(CONNOR *starts to gather the plates, loading them on a cart.*)

ETHAN: Meanwhile I was teaching myself calculus.

MARIAH: (to LORENZO) With your textbook from Harvard. At age 12.

ETHAN: Eleven and a half. (to LORENZO) You said it was pointless to major in math.

MARIAH: (to ETHAN) And look at you now, making a fortune on Wall Street.

(ETHAN's *drumming on his stomach a mile a minute.*)

LORENZO: I never said any of that. (*dryly, to ETHAN*) But feel free to use it in your toast tomorrow.

MARIAH: Lorenzo, don't be snide. (to ETHAN) Your father was under a lot of pressure in those days.

ETHAN: Yeah, great, that excuses everything.

LORENZO: That's enough out of you, sonnyboy. Stop attacking your mother.

ETHAN: Oh here we go. I wasn't attacking Mom, I'm attacking you. Here's an idea. Instead of screwing around with "Neuristoral," which God knows what it's doing to Mom, why don't you invent a drug that does nothing at all and call it Panacea? You'll still make tons of money and nobody gets hurt.

MARIAH: That a very amusing notion, dear.

LORENZO: Hilarious. *(to ETHAN)* You've been nothing but surly since the moment you arrived.

ETHAN: Fine. I'm surly. Leave Mom out of this.

LORENZO: Not before you apologize to her.

ETHAN: For what? Telling you to fuck off? *(as LORENZO rears up)* Yes, there you go, that's your cue. Now you can whip off your belt and chase me up the stairs.

MARIAH: Please both of you stop.

LORENZO: You know what? At this rate, I don't want to have a party. I don't think there's anything to celebrate.

*(LORENZO takes out his phone.)*

MARIAH: Lorenzo, stop it, who are you calling?

LORENZO: I'm sending an e-blast. Tell our friends the party's off.

MARIAH: Don't be silly, put your phone away. Who wants coffee, besides your dad?

ETHAN: Not for me, Mom.

CONNOR: Me neither.

MARIAH: Lorenzo, I said put your phone away!

*(LORENZO pockets his phone.)*

LORENZO: What are we having for dessert?

MARIAH: Bread pudding. Not that you deserve it.

*(MARIAH exits, wheeling the cart of dirty dishes in the direction of the unseen kitchen.)*

LORENZO: *(to ETHAN)* You're just adding to your mother's stress. It's the last thing her system needs.

MARIAH: *(off)* Oh hell.

LORENZO: You see there? You made her drop something. High time you put your grudges behind you. You make your own life. Nobody makes it for you. Whatever you think I've done to you, get over it.

*(MARIAH has entered with dishes of bread pudding and a cup of coffee for LORENZO.)*

LORENZO: What did you spill?

MARIAH: I didn't spill anything. Boys, you sure you don't want coffee?

CONNOR: We're good, Mom.

LORENZO: You forgot the Häagen-Dazs.

MARIAH: I didn't forget. You put it in the fridge instead of the freezer.

LORENZO: I put it in the fridge? You're the one who puts away the groceries.

MARIAH: Not yesterday. I was meditating when you came home from TJs. How's the pudding?

CONNOR: Delicious, Mom.

LORENZO: This coffee tastes awfully sweet. You didn't brew it with antifreeze, did you?

MARIAH: No, dear. We ran out of Prestone when the car boiled over.

*(LORENZO starts bolting his bread pudding.)*

LORENZO: You know, why don't I just give up. Cash out my insurance, leave everything to a foundation, and move to the south of France.

MARIAH: Darling, be quiet, you're being ridiculous.

LORENZO: You're right. The south of France is out. Too many sheikhs from Qatar. Whole region is overrun. I'll just throw myself in front of a train.

MARIAH: *(to CONNOR and ETHAN)* He does that to get my goat.

LORENZO: Better yet, I'll buy myself a new can of antifreeze. Save you the trouble of poisoning me with excess salt. That way I won't have to worry about drafting your obit—

*(LORENZO stiffens suddenly. He's choking. Can't breathe.)*

MARIAH: Lorenzo, are you OK?

*(Pause. CONNOR shares a look with ETHAN.)*

MARIAH: Hurry, please, do something, he's choking to death!

*(CONNOR rises, goes over to LORENZO, and performs the Heimlich maneuver. Out pops a wad of bread pudding.)*

MARIAH: Lorenzo, good God, are you all right?

LORENZO: Yes. I'm all right. Leave me alone.

MARIAH: Aren't you going to thank your son?

LORENZO: I noticed he wasn't in any rush.

MARIAH: Lorenzo, will you please stop talking like an idiot!

LORENZO: And why can't you clean up this pigsty? It stinks to high heaven in here. *(starts out, stops; to ETHAN)* I swear to God, the way you talk to me...We threw away the baby and brought up the placenta.

*(LORENZO exits.)*

ETHAN: Was he serious? Suicide by antifreeze?

MARIAH: Good Lord, I hope not.

CONNOR: *(to ETHAN)* Did you think he was kidding?

ETHAN: No. I don't know.

MARIAH: Of course he was kidding. It's just crazy talk.

*(Off, the sound of muffled ranting.)*

LORENZO: *(off; muffled)* Damnation...What do I have to do...Fucking hell...

MARIAH: I'd better go to him.

CONNOR: Mom, are you sure? He sounds pretty worked up.

MARIAH: I can usually calm him down.

*(MARIAH exits.)*

CONNOR: You really fucked that up royally, didn't you?

ETHAN: Were you actually gonna let him choke?

CONNOR: Why, were you?

ETHAN: I don't know the maneuver.

CONNOR: Yeah, well, I had to do it in a play once, and you know what? It was just as phony then.

ETHAN: What do you mean?

CONNOR: He was faking. The food didn't come shooting out. It was in his mouth the whole time. He spit it out.

ETHAN: That's nuts.

CONNOR: It's worse than nuts. It's malicious.

ETHAN: What was all that sex talk? I almost puked.

CONNOR: That's because they're not having any.

ETHAN: Seriously?

CONNOR: No more candles, no candle snuffer, and there's no erectile drugs in the medicine chest. Oh and there were clothes on the floor, dirt everywhere, clumps of hair in the shower drain—white for him, dyed black for her.

ETHAN: She can't see anymore.

CONNOR: That stupid pill. He could be shortening her life.

ETHAN: So he can marry her.

CONNOR: Who?

ETHAN: The girl he was fucking that weekend.

CONNOR: Whoa, dude, let's stick to what we know.

ETHAN: Shit. This is really messing me up.

*(ETHAN goes to the window. CONNOR takes a vape pen out of his jacket pocket.)*

ETHAN: What are you doing? I'm all right.

*(CONNOR takes a hit.)*



CONNOR: I'm a disciple of the ancient Goths. They made every crucial decision twice—once sober, once high.

(CONNOR *offers the pen to ETHAN.*)

ETHAN: No thanks.

CONNOR: You sure? Might calm you down.

ETHAN (*then*) All right, give it here.

(ETHAN *takes a token hit, hands the vape pen back.*)

ETHAN: Uh...what are we deciding?

CONNOR: The best way to keep you off the street.

ETHAN: Fuck. You're right. That's where I'm gonna end up. One way or the other.

(ETHAN *opens the window.*)

CONNOR: Whoa, stop, what are you doing?

ETHAN: Nothing about my meltdown, you promise?

CONNOR: (*closes window*) Yeah yeah.

ETHAN: Seriously. Or I'm liable to go out that window.

CONNOR: Yeah, sprain your ankle, that'll help. You have more chance of flying than killing yourself.

ETHAN: So what's our Plan B?

CONNOR: I'm working on it, bro.

(CONNOR *starts to close the window, then stops.*)

ETHAN: Close it. Close the window.

CONNOR: Yeah, poor Mom. Don't want to give her a CAPS attack. Right before their party.

(CONNOR *closes the window.*)

CONNOR: Look at it. Snow's really starting to come down...

*(Blackout.)*

**Scene 3**

*(Lights up on MARIAH, in PJs. Outside, snow is falling heavily—it's night, the next morning, one a.m. We notice, though evidently MARIAH hasn't, that that the balcony window is open. She's plumping pillows as ETHAN enters, also in PJs. MARIAH doesn't see him. She's shivering and appears to be in a daze.)*

ETHAN: Mom?

*(MARIAH doesn't respond. ETHAN approaches her slowly.)*

ETHAN: Mom!

*(ETHAN reaches out, touches her arm. MARIAH comes to, startled.)*

MARIAH: Oh hello, darling. What time is it?

ETHAN: It's like one in the morning?

MARIAH: Is it really? Oh gosh, I completely lost track. What's the matter, couldn't you sleep? I have Ambien if you need it.

ETHAN: Ambien wires me. Did you get Dad to chill?

MARIAH: I gave him a foot massage.

ETHAN: Right.

MARIAH: Sometimes that's all it takes.

ETHAN: Yeah, we don't have to go into it.

MARIAH: Yes, I'm sorry about that. All that bragging about sex...that's what got you upset, isn't it? That was terribly gauche of us.

ETHAN: Connor says the candle snuffer is gone.

MARIAH: The what?

ETHAN: And no Viagra.

MARIAH: Oh, your brother's such a busybody. He didn't snoop enough. It's generic Cialis, it comes in these funny little boxes from India. You knew about the candles? I thought we kept them in a sock drawer.

ETHAN: Didn't matter. We always knew when you were doing it.

MARIAH: I had no idea.

ETHAN: We could hear him sneezing.

MARIAH: Yes, oh dear, your father's a post-coital sneezer.

ETHAN: With everybody?

MARIAH: Everybody?

ETHAN: Forget it.

MARIAH: No, please, what did you mean?

ETHAN: It's none of my business.

MARIAH: Ethan. Your father has been a completely faithful husband.

ETHAN: Fine.

MARIAH: No, not fine, it's true.

ETHAN: Aren't wives the last to know?

MARIAH: Oh, that's such a canard. Wives always know. This wife knows. I can't tell you how lucky I've been.

ETHAN: Lucky?

MARIAH: Yes. You ask any actress, most of them dream of marrying a doctor. Which they never do, they end up with actors or agents or directors who cheat on them left and right. My God, if you knew how many men of our generation just up and left, couldn't be bothered anymore. Your father was the exception, your father devoted half his time on Earth to my health and happiness. Can any woman ask for more?

ETHAN: Mom.

MARIAH: What?

ETHAN: You're not on stage. You're talking to your son.

MARIAH: And I meant every word.

ETHAN: OK, maybe I shouldn't say this.

MARIAH: You can say anything in this family, you know that.

ETHAN: Are you kidding? We look cross-eyed at you, he flies into a rage.

MARIAH: All right, then say it to me, and stop berating him. Is that the word I want? Doesn't he have to be in the room to be berated? Of course you were doing that, weren't you, at dinner, tearing him to pieces—

ETHAN: Mom.

MARIAH: Yes. All right. You were saying—what?

ETHAN: OK. This is when I was in high school, Connor was in college, you were doing some musical in Detroit—

MARIAH: *Gypsy*, that's right, at the Fisher, I was Mama Rose.

ETHAN: For one whole weekend I was totally by myself.

MARIAH: That's not possible. We never left you alone. You always had Angelina.

ETHAN: Angelina was visiting her husband in Guatemala. On Friday Dad suddenly disappeared. Without saying goodbye. He didn't come back until Monday morning.

MARIAH: Where was he?

ETHAN: He didn't say.

MARIAH: Did you ask him?

ETHAN: No.

MARIAH: Why not?

ETHAN: I was too freaked out.

MARIAH: And you thought what? He was having an affair?

ETHAN: That's what I'm saying, yeah. For that whole week I couldn't sleep.

MARIAH: Oh you poor poor child.

ETHAN: Seriously? Mom? Are you being sarcastic?

MARIAH: (*realizes*) I don't know. The whole weekend?

*(MARIAH sinks onto the couch, shivering. CONNOR enters, in T-shirt and pants. MARIAH sees him, lets out a whimper.)*

CONNOR: Mom, what's the matter?

MARIAH: It's all right. I'm feeling a little sick.

CONNOR: Well, no wonder. Somebody left the window open.

MARIAH: My God, you're right. Who on Earth did that?

CONNOR: Yeah, good question.

*(CONNOR closes and latches the window. Sits beside MARIAH, puts his arm around her. She's still shivering.)*

CONNOR: Easy does it, Mom. You're OK.

MARIAH: I'm such a wreck these days.

CONNOR: Shh, no, you're not a wreck.

MARIAH: *(to ETHAN)* I'm sorry, darling. You were telling me something, what was it?

ETHAN: About Dad leaving me alone for a weekend.

CONNOR: That happened, Mom. Did he mention he was devastated? *(to ETHAN)* What did your shrink call it?

ETHAN: Relational trauma. Attachment injury.

CONNOR: He lost all faith in Dad.

MARIAH: *(to CONNOR)* You knew all about this.

CONNOR: We talk all the time.

MARIAH: Why did you lie about that?

CONNOR: Ethan?

ETHAN: I asked him to.

MARIAH: Oh God. And I thought you trusted me.

CONNOR: Should I tell her about Amy? *(to MARIAH)* When Amy dumped him, that rebooted the trauma.

MARIAH: (to ETHAN) Amy dumped you? Oh I'm sorry.

CONNOR: For a guy at Boyd-Zeller, some douchebag in a bigger office.

ETHAN: That wasn't the whole story, but OK.

MARIAH: What was the whole story?

CONNOR: (to ETHAN) You want to tell her or should I? (to MARIAH) She wanted sex every day. Sometimes three times a day. Your son had better things to do...(to ETHAN)...is that fair to say?

ETHAN: The sex wasn't "Mmm-good."

CONNOR: Bottom line, he can't get a job.

MARIAH: What do you mean? Ethan has a job.

(ETHAN starts drumming on his chest.)

CONNOR: He had a meltdown at work.

MARIAH: Oh Lord...when?

CONNOR: (to ETHAN) How long ago did Amy dump you?

ETHAN: Six months. Something like that.

MARIAH: What kind of meltdown?

CONNOR: An ugly one.

MARIAH: Tell me, please. Ethan? I won't judge.

ETHAN: I gave a speech to the whole floor.

CONNOR: "We're the handmaidens of tyranny. We're fueling the fires of corruption." Exact quote.

MARIAH: And they fired you?

CONNOR: Not just fired. Blackballed. The whole thing went viral. His former landlord is suing him, he's lost his health insurance, he's living in a five-story walk-up on East Broadway over a Chinese grocery.

MARIAH: Oh my God.

CONNOR: One night I found him up on the roof.

ETHAN: Dude, that's enough. (to MARIAH) I wasn't gonna jump, I swear.

CONNOR: No, because he thought he could fly.

MARIAH: [shivers, moans]

ETHAN: I told you she'd flip out. Mom, are you all right?

CONNOR: Mom, say something.

ETHAN: You want the furnace turned up?

(MARIAH comes to.)

MARIAH: How much money do you need?

CONNOR: He needs a lot.

MARIAH: How much is a lot?

CONNOR: More than thirty thousand dollars.

MARIAH: Oh my. Connor, you can't help out?

CONNOR: If I could, believe me, I would.

MARIAH: Just enough to tide him over?

CONNOR: Mom, it's not a question of tiding him over. He's about to be homeless.

MARIAH: Oh gosh. I'm not sure he has that much on hand.

CONNOR: What about your investments?

MARIAH: Your father handles those. Of course he'll have a lot of questions.

CONNOR: No he won't, because you're not gonna tell him.

ETHAN: Please don't, Mom.

MARIAH: Why not? Why can't you just come out with it?

ETHAN: Because....because I just can't.

CONNOR: Dad'll be like, "I saw this coming."



ETHAN: He always had a low opinion of me, Mom.

MARIAH: Ethan, no, he loves you.

ETHAN: Yeah, he loves me. If I'm a success. Otherwise I'm the knock-kneed pipsqueak with the *pectus excavatum*. You don't remember that? How he was always harping about my cave chest?

MARIAH: I know, I know. I begged him not to do that.

CONNOR: He can't help it, Mom. Any excuse to tear him down.

MARIAH: I'm sure he'd pay for a therapist.

CONNOR: Yeah, some shrink he knows, somebody who'll report to him, more infantilizing bullshit, more trauma. (to ETHAN) Your shrink said to be careful about that.

MARIAH: (pause) What did you tell your shrink about me?

ETHAN: Not that much.

CONNOR: (prompting) The shower thing, you told her about that.

MARIAH: What shower thing?

CONNOR: How you used to let us shower with you, and then dry our hair with that giant chrome-plated hair-dryer?

MARIAH: (stricken) While I was naked?

CONNOR: You were naked a lot, Mom.

ETHAN: You used to garden topless.

CONNOR: You got us tickets to *Sweet Bird of Youth*, you were naked in that.

MARIAH: Good Lord. I might have turned you into Don Juans.

CONNOR: (levelly) Yeah, that could have happened.

MARIAH: (wryly) And I thought I was playing a mother so well.

CONNOR: You were, Mom.

ETHAN: A hippie Mom.

MARIAH: No. A hippie? In the 60s? I was a shy little ingénue.

CONNOR: You were at Newport when Dylan went electric.

MARIAH: Yes, but way at the back, we didn't even know there was any ruckus.  
Why don't I remember any of this?

CONNOR: Maybe it's this drug he's testing on you. It could be making things worse. Who knows what design errors he's making? (*improvising*) What he did, this is what he told me, he replaced a fluoride group on the Aricept molecule with a chlorine group. And that could easily isomerize to a poison.

MARIAH: I've started to forget where I am.

CONNOR: Well, there you are.

MARIAH: That's why we moved out of the house, he was afraid I'd lose my way, fall down in the dark and crack my skull.

CONNOR: And this is after taking Neuristoral.

MARIAH: Yes, but I don't take it anymore.

CONNOR: What do you mean?

MARIAH: I only pretend to swallow the pills.

CONNOR: Wow. (*to ETHAN*) That's a relief. (*to MARIAH*) So you're suspicious.

MARIAH: Why am I the only one taking the pill? He wouldn't give me a straight answer.

CONNOR: He's afraid what the pill might do to strangers.

MARIAH: At night he pokes me.

CONNOR: Pokes you?

MARIAH: To see if I'm dead. (*corrects herself*) To make sure I'm alive.

CONNOR: Jesus, Mom. He's poking you, he's dosing you...and accusing you of over-salting his food, doesn't that make you think?

ETHAN: He's projecting, Mom.

CONNOR: And threatening suicide.

MARIAH: Will you please stop saying that?

CONNOR: Mom...I found cyanide in the pantry.

MARIAH: No. I don't believe it.

CONNOR: Behind the cleaning products. I'll show you the container. I hid it in my bag.

MARIAH: Why would he...ohmigod.

CONNOR: He's lost it, Mom. Just like Even did, thinking he could fly, that was suicidal. And this is important, OK? Ethan didn't go to the nuthouse on his own steam. I had to dose him with Benadryl or he would never have gotten in the taxi. I had to wheel him into Creedmoor. All during intake he cursed me to the skies.

MARIAH: But he thanks you now.

CONNOR: Ask him.

ETHAN: He saved my life.

CONNOR: That's all we're trying to do here. Save a life.

MARIAH: And oh my God if you hadn't known the Heimlich...

CONNOR: Wouldn't have mattered, Mom. He was faking it.

MARIAH: How do you know?

ETHAN: He knows, Mom.

MARIAH: (*shudders*) Tell me what I should do.

(CONNOR *puts his arm around* MARIAH.)

CONNOR: (*softly*) You don't have to do anything, Mom. I'm already dealing with it.

ETHAN: And don't say anything to Dad.

CONNOR: That's crucial. Don't let on you're scared. That'll just provoke him. Everything's going to be all right. You'll see.

MARIAH: You're so wonderful. Both of you. I have such wonderful sons—

(MARIAH *breaks off as they hear* LORENZO.)

LORENZO: (*sings; off*) "...Oh the days dwindle down...to a precious few...September...November..."

(LORENZO *enters*. CONNOR *removes his arm from around* MARIAH's *shoulder*.)

LORENZO: What the devil are you doing up?

MARIAH: I could ask you the same thing.

LORENZO: (*to* CONNOR *and* ETHAN) You know you're taking months off your mother's life.

MARIAH: Oh, they're doing no such thing, are you going to be this disagreeable at the party?

LORENZO: Look at her pallor. Look at her crow's feet. I can see the new lines already forming.

MARIAH: Lorenzo, stop the crazy talk, please.

LORENZO: (*to* CONNOR *and* ETHAN) Go back to your room and stay there.

CONNOR: Mom, are you going to be all right?

LORENZO: What business is that of yours? I said go! Now! This instant.

(CONNOR *and* ETHAN *exit*. MARIAH *hugs herself, shivering*.)

LORENZO: What are you doing? Why are you shivering? The window's closed.

MARIAH: Lorenzo, please stop. I can't take this anymore.

LORENZO: You know they're both lying through their teeth.

MARIAH: I don't know that. About what?

LORENZO: They've been in touch with each other all along. They're both afraid to tell us something.

MARIAH: Do you blame them? The way you land on Ethan, I'm scared to tell you anything.

LORENZO: I think he's in trouble at work. Your other son too. I Googled Riley and there's nothing about Connor. I'm starting to wonder if there is a Riley.

MARIAH: Lorenzo, that's crazy, you were at their wedding in Connecticut—

LORENZO: Then why isn't she here? You'd think she'd have the respect to show up for our 50<sup>th</sup>...Will you please stop fiddling with the knickknacks? Look at this trash over here, are you blind or just oblivious?

MARIAH: Pick it up yourself! I touch your magazines and you scream at me.

LORENZO: The only time I scream is when you deliberately provoke me. What were you all talking about behind my back?

MARIAH: They're worried about you, Lorenzo. So am I.

LORENZO: What the fuck do you have to be worried about? Tell me the truth or by God I'll—

*(LORENZO brandishes a fist. MARIAH flinches. LORENZO starts to turn away, then grabs her face, a hand on each cheek.)*

MARIAH: Stop, you're hurting me. Lorenzo!

*(LORENZO lets go.)*

MARIAH: What do I have to do, go to a battered woman's shelter?

*(CONNOR enters, carrying a manila envelope.)*

CONNOR: Dad, let go of her.

*(LORENZO lets go of MARIAH. Suddenly loses his balance.)*

MARIAH: Lorenzo, look out!

*(CONNOR catches LORENZO. For an instant he looks as if he doesn't know where he is.)*

LORENZO: *(to the air)* "Hello, my friends, thank you all for coming. I'd like to introduce my sons. They flew 4,000 miles just to fuck with their old man."

CONNOR: Go to bed, Pop.

*(LORENZO backs away.)*

LORENZO: That does it. No more. Not worth it. I'm done.

*(LORENZO exits.)*

MARIAH: My God, what did he mean by that? Lorenzo?

(MARIAH starts out. CONNOR stops her. ETHAN enters, carrying a can with a screw-on lid.)

CONNOR: It's OK, Mom. Ethan, show her.

MARIAH: (examines label) KCN?

CONNOR: Potassium cyanide. You believe me now?

MARIAH: Oh God.

CONNOR: Shh. I said I was handling this.

(CONNOR is opening the manila envelope, takes out several legal documents bristling with yellow tabs.)

MARIAH: What are those, are those contracts? Ohmigod, did the Broadway deal come through? Does that mean you can lend Ethan the money?

CONNOR: No, no deal yet. That's not what these are.

MARIAH: So what are they? Please let me see.

ETHAN: (to CONNOR) Maybe we should wait. Till after the party.

CONNOR: Till after the party. Maybe you're right.

MARIAH: No, show me, what is it? I can't see, hand me my glasses. There on the sideboard.

CONNOR: (to ETHAN) I think we have to do this. Sit down, Mom.

(MARIAH sits down at the dining table. CONNOR fetches MARIAH's glasses, hands her the documents, sits close. She starts to read.)

MARIAH: When did you do this?

CONNOR: Honestly, Mom? If I'd known how lethal things were getting, I'd have brought them with me from New York.

MARIAH: How could you have known? (reads) "...Becomes a danger to himself and others..." What, what does this mean? Have him committed? To a psych ward?

CONNOR: Mom, he's suicidal, he's threatening you, he's leaving the window open so you can freeze.

MARIAH: What's this other document? (*reads*) "Power of attorney"? I'm his wife, I already have power of attorney.

CONNOR: Now I'm included. If you ever need to take legal action, I can speak for you. Handle your affairs.

MARIAH: By affairs you mean our money?

CONNOR: Mom, I told you last night. We're trying to save lives here.

MARIAH: You'd use the money to help Ethan.

CONNOR: That's the priority.

MARIAH: (*to ETHAN*) Tell me again: Why can't you ask your father?

CONNOR: Mom, hello, we've been over this.

ETHAN: I just can't bring myself, Mom.

CONNOR: There'll be a screaming fight. Ethan could end up in the loony bin again.

ETHAN: It's true, Mom.

CONNOR: It's for the good of the family, Mom.

MARIAH: Yes, all right, will you please stop selling me! [moans]

CONNOR: Shh, what is it, Mom?

[MARIAH: Nothing....I was remembering something...

CONNOR: What, Mom? It's OK.

MARIAH: (*to CONNOR*) The night you were born.

CONNOR: What about it, Mom?

MARIAH: You were so slow in coming...and I was in such terrible pain....I pleaded with them to give me an epidural...and oh Lord it knocked me for such a loop. They wheeled me to Recovery and I was fast asleep. They brought your father in to see me...for a second after he woke me...I didn't know where I was. He was looking at me with the strangest look in his eyes, I almost screamed. He said, "Mariah, we have a son."

ETHAN: What did he say when I was born?

MARIAH: When you were born? He said, “Connor’s in for it now.”

*(Off, the sound of furniture being shoved or hurled across a room.)*

LORENZO: *(off)* Fucking ingrates!

MARIAH: Connor, hand me that pen on the desk. I can’t move.

*(CONNOR takes the pen out of the pen holder, gives it to MARIAH. She stares at it, turning it over in her hand.)*

MARIAH: God, he’s going to hate me for this.

CONNOR: Mom, it’s just a precaution. He never has to know.

*(MARIAH puts out her hand out for the documents. CONNOR gives them to her.)*

CONNOR: Sign your name where the tabs are. Initial where it says to.

MARIAH: Ethan, what’s the matter, don’t look so sad. Look how happy your brother looks.

CONNOR: I’m not happy about this, Mom. Believe me.

MARIAH: Of course you’re not, darling. I was only teasing.

*(MARIAH signs the documents as the lights fade.)*



#### Scene 4

*(Late afternoon, the same day. Snow is continuing to fall. Lights up as LORENZO enters, in a suit and poorly knotted tie. He starts to clean up what remains of the mess in the room, and spots something on the dining table—the pen. He stops singing, picks up the pen, contemplates it. Sound of footsteps on the bedroom stairs. LORENZO puts the pen back in the pen holder as MARIAH enters, a little dazed, in her housedress, hair askew.)*

LORENZO: Is that what you're wearing to the party? I didn't know it was Come As You Are.

MARIAH: Of course it isn't. I was having a lie-down. Did the flowers come?

LORENZO: Yes the flowers came. Orchids, for Christ's sake? The whole place smells like a morgue. Why was my pen out of the pen holder?

*(MARIAH looks from the dining table to the desk.)*

MARIAH: I don't know.

LORENZO: Come on, you're a good actress, make something up. What was my pen doing on the dining table?

MARIAH: Lorenzo...

LORENZO: What? Speak.

MARIAH: Why aren't you testing Neuristoral on other people?

LORENZO: Oh I see. They've been in your ear about that. They think it's poisoning you, don't they?

MARIAH: Yes.

LORENZO: Yes?

MARIAH: A poisonous isomer, that's what Connor said.

LORENZO: A poisonous isomer. Marvelous.

MARIAH: What was cyanide doing in the pantry?

LORENZO: Oh for Christ's sake.

MARIAH: Lorenzo, I'm so frightened—

LORENZO: Potassium cyanide is a staple of my lab. We use it for synthesis.

MARIAH: Then what's it doing here?

LORENZO: (*uneasily*) You're always complaining about the silverfish. It's an insecticide. I dusted the basement with it. What, they said I was planning to kill you?

MARIAH: Or yourself.

LORENZO: Anything they say, you swallow. What other bullshit have they been handing you?

MARIAH: It's not bullshit. Your son is in a great deal of trouble.

LORENZO: I knew it the minute he walked in.

MARIAH: He was fired.

LORENZO: Is that what he told you? They probably didn't even read him.

MARIAH: I'm talking about Ethan!

LORENZO: What about Ethan?

MARIAH: Amy dumped him.

LORENZO: Amy who?

MARIAH: Oh you know perfectly well who Amy is. She left him for someone in the company, he started mouthing off at work. He's having trouble finding another job. He owes money all over the place.

LORENZO: They wouldn't fire him for mouthing off, he's too valuable—

MARIAH: Not any more. He had a manic episode.

LORENZO: What?

MARIAH: A serious one.

LORENZO: Are you sure?

MARIAH: Yes, I'm sure. He nearly jumped off a roof.

LORENZO: How do you know that?

MARIAH: Connor was there. Ethan was tripping. Thought he could fly. Connor doped him up with Benadryl, signed him into Creedmoor.

LORENZO: Oh Christ.

MARIAH: Lorenzo, did you ever leave him all by himself? While I was in Detroit with *Gypsy*? And Angelina was in Guatemala, and you were, I don't know where you were, he thinks you were having a weekend somewhere. He says it totally destroyed him.

LORENZO: Oh Lord—Ethan...

MARIAH: What weekend is he talking about? Lorenzo, what are you doing, be careful—

*(LORENZO lurches, collapses, bringing down a standing lamp. It crashes to the floor. LORENZO struggles onto the couch, hyperventilating.)*

MARIAH: *(calls)* Connor! Ethan!

LORENZO: How am I ever going to...oh Jesus. Give me...

MARIAH: Give you what?

LORENZO: That....the machine...the pressure machine...

*(MARIAH hands LORENZO the blood pressure machine. He wraps the cuff around his upper arm, activates it.)*

*CONNOR and ETHAN enter, dressed for the party. CONNOR's in a suit and tie. ETHAN is wearing a crumpled shirt over his Black Sabbath T-shirt, and the same frayed pants.)*

CONNOR: Jesus, what happened? Who knocked over the lamp? Why is the goddamn window open?

*(CONNOR sets the lamp upright, closes and latches the window. MARIAH peers at the blood pressure machine result.)*

LORENZO: What is it? Is it over 200?

MARIAH: 211 over 107.

*(MARIAH shows him. A long look passes between them.)*

MARIAH: Connor, go warm up the car.

CONNOR: Why does the car need warming up?

LORENZO: (*with a look at MARIAH*) The battery's weak.

MARIAH: The battery's weak. You need to make sure it doesn't die on you.

CONNOR: Maybe we oughta call Uber.

MARIAH: No. Just go.

CONNOR: Are you sure?

MARIAH: Yes. Do it. Here are the keys.

CONNOR: (*sotto*) Which E.R.? Foothills or Boulder Medical?

MARIAH: Boulder is closer.

CONNOR: (*sotto*) Good psych ward?

MARIAH: Yes. Hurry.

CONNOR: What about the party? Shouldn't you send out an e-blast?

MARIAH: You let me worry about the party. Go!

(CONNOR *exits with the keys*. ETHAN *starts to follow him*.)

MARIAH: Ethan, stay here please. (*sharply; to LORENZO*) Your father needs to talk to you.

ETHAN: (*worried*) Where are you going, Mom?

LORENZO: (*groping*) She needs to...she's—

MARIAH: (*interrupts; to LORENZO*) I'm packing your bag for the hospital.

(MARIAH *exits in the direction of the bedrooms*. *Long silence*. LORENZO's *chin droops to his chest*.)

ETHAN: Pop, are you all right?

(*Pause*.)

LORENZO: Do you think I'm trying to hurt your mother?

ETHAN: I don't know, Pop. You've been acting so weird.

LORENZO: Tell me something. You ever drink a cup of coffee in a restaurant...as soon as you take a sip... the whole room sounds happier?

ETHAN: 'Cause you're buzzed from the coffee.

LORENZO: That's not what I mean.

(LORENZO *shudders.*)

ETHAN: What is it, Pop? Please don't just sit there. Do you have pain in your chest?

LORENZO: Yes.

ETHAN: Yes?

LORENZO: It's not a coronary.

ETHAN: What is it?

LORENZO: It's heartache. Oh Christ—

ETHAN: Pop, what is it, are you crying? Come on, you wanted to play a game? We'll play a game of chess.

LORENZO: Chess? Yes. Let's play chess.

(LORENZO *doesn't move.*)

ETHAN: Or maybe you don't want to.

LORENZO: Yes. I want to. Please.

(LORENZO, *dazed, seats himself at the chess table.*)

LORENZO: You'll have to give me odds.

ETHAN: Sure. Whatever you want.

LORENZO: Two minor pieces? Rook and a pawn?

ETHAN: Or I could play blindfold.

LORENZO: Blindfold, yes! We used to do that, remember? After you beat Magnus Carlsen and I couldn't last twenty moves with you?

ETHAN: I remember, Pop.

LORENZO: I'll play White. Is that all right? Or do you want White.

ETHAN: Whatever, Pop.

(ETHAN *retires to the desk chair*. LORENZO *stares at the board*.)

ETHAN: Your move, Pop.

LORENZO: Feet on the ground. Head above the clouds. You ever feel like that?  
If you died, the whole world would go out like a light?

ETHAN: Um, no? It's your move.

LORENZO: Right. F4.

ETHAN: E5.

LORENZO: Pawn takes Pawn on E5. What about voices?

ETHAN: D6. Voices?

LORENZO: Pawn takes Pawn on D6. Vague, high-pitched, like you need closed captioning to understand them?

ETHAN: Bishop takes Pawn on D6.

LORENZO: Is that a yes? Did a voice tell you you could fly?

ETHAN: Aw shit.

LORENZO: See, there's a chat room for voice-hearers. I haven't checked it out lately. Knight to F3. Did you?

ETHAN: No, I never checked it out.

LORENZO: You'll see, the older you get, the more this stuff fades out. In a way it's a shame.

ETHAN: (*uneasily*) Why is it a shame?

LORENZO: OK, good example. A voice told me what R group to add to make Sopradine. And that made all the difference. What was your diagnosis?

ETHAN: Bipolar One.

LORENZO: Code number?

ETHAN: 296.42.

LORENZO: What is that, moderate with psychotic features?

ETHAN: Something like that. H5.

LORENZO: G3. What did they prescribe?

ETHAN: Depakote.

LORENZO: What?! That's way too harsh. Seroquel. That's what you want.  
That's what worked for me, I'll write you a prescription.

ETHAN: Seriously?

LORENZO: Absolutely. Seroquel was a godsend.

ETHAN: So you...you're not just screwing with me.

LORENZO: I hide it well, kiddo. Except when I don't. This girl who broke up  
with you, Amy, I think you sent us her picture? Downy upper lip? Cheery smile?  
Did you love her?

ETHAN: I thought I did. I told her I did. H4.

LORENZO: I hear that's the worst damn feeling in the world, getting dumped by  
someone you love. Worse than a kidney stone.

ETHAN: Nobody ever dumped you, Pop?

LORENZO: No, thank God. Knight takes pawn on H4. I married my first love.

ETHAN: I'm Lost.

LORENZO: (*re chessboard*) Sure, you're a little rusty, take a peek.

ETHAN: I mean I'm the Lost Boy.

LORENZO: Sorry. Yes. I know what that feels like. Being the Scapegoat.

ETHAN: Connor, he's the Golden Boy.

LORENZO: The Golden Boy.

ETHAN: According to my shrink.

LORENZO: Well, your shrink should know this: When Connor was five years old  
your mother caught him with a xylophone hammer. He was bending over your  
crib. Why do you think he hasn't lent you money?

ETHAN: He says he can't till they sign him to the play.

LORENZO: Is that his excuse?

ETHAN: That's what he told me.

LORENZO: You were afraid to ask me for money. Afraid I'd say "I told you so."

ETHAN: That's pretty much it, yeah. Rook takes Knight on H4.

LORENZO: I would've said something like that, you're right. But Ethan...I swear to Christ I never called you a pipsqueak. The Golden Boy, he made that up. Like he makes up half the things he says.

ETHAN: You chased me with your belt, Pop. He didn't make that up.

LORENZO: Yes, that I remember.

ETHAN: Multiple times.

LORENZO: They were episode-related. Before I found Seroquel. Doesn't matter. It's unforgivable. Here, I'll take off my belt, you can hit me with it.

(LORENZO *loosens his belt.*)

ETHAN: Hey, stop. Don't.

LORENZO: Take it.

ETHAN: I'm not gonna hit you, Pop.

LORENZO: Some other time. Whose move is it?

ETHAN: Yours, Pop.

LORENZO: Oh right. Pawn takes Rook on H4. What am I, two Pawns up, plus the exchange?

ETHAN: Queen takes Pawn on H4 mate.

LORENZO: What? That's not possible. I was about to crush you.

ETHAN: Checkmate, Pop.

LORENZO: Well. So it is. Thought you were letting me win. Fine, I accept that. You turned your hatred to account.



ETHAN: I don't hate you, Pop.

LORENZO: All boys hate their fathers. With any luck they get over it. You want to know where I was that fateful weekend?

ETHAN: The nuthouse?

LORENZO: The nuthouse. No, thank God. That whole summer Mom was in Detroit? I was perfecting Sopradine. Used to spend whole nights in my office. That's where I was when you thought I was...God knows where you thought I was. I was on such a manic high I couldn't tell I was causing you pain. I thought the whole world was sharing my happy mood.

*(Sound of footsteps on the stairs from the foyer. LORENZO starts to put his belt back on.)*

LORENZO: And you never called me on it. You never asked me where I'd been, and I didn't tell you. My head was far above the clouds and I made you crazy.

ETHAN: I was already crazy, Pop.

LORENZO: And I was too blind to see the resemblance.

*(CONNOR enters as LORENZO rethreads his belt.)*

CONNOR: What are you doing, playing chess?! I've been waiting out there, nothing wrong with the battery...Pop, what's with the belt, what the hell is going on here?

LORENZO: I asked your brother to whip me.

CONNOR: What?

LORENZO: He took a rain-check. Mated me in seven.

CONNOR: *(to LORENZO)* Oh I see. So you're feeling better now?

LORENZO: I do feel better. I feel much better.

CONNOR: I'm not taking you to the E.R.

LORENZO: Not tonight, son. *(calls)* Mariah? You ready yet? It's almost party time! *(to CONNOR)* Come here a second, Connor. Time we had a heart-to-heart.

*(LORENZO steers CONNOR aside as ETHAN replaces the chess pieces.)*

LORENZO: I ever tell you about my Grandpa Roy? How he invented Silly Putty?

CONNOR: Many times, Pop. World War II, at GE.

LORENZO: They were looking for a rubber substitute.

CONNOR: Is this another genetics lecture?

LORENZO: Do you know the chemistry of Silly Putty?

CONNOR: No, and guess what? It never comes up.

LORENZO: It's basically silicone oil mixed with borax.

CONNOR: Yeah, OK, I didn't get the great man's genes, and you did. Stipulated.

LORENZO: But you got the Mom genes. No pun intended.

CONNOR: I got the Mom genes, that's right.

LORENZO: And you're wearing those very well.

*(MARIAH has entered, dressed for the party, carrying a handbag.)*

LORENZO: Except for her moral compass. You and I, we're both lacking that endowment. I've gotten drugs past the FDA...you remember Finagle's Constant? To make the experiments come out right? Ends justify the means. We both know how that works.

CONNOR: *(to ETHAN)* What the fuck did you tell him?

ETHAN: I didn't tell him anything.

CONNOR: You just sat there and played chess.

ETHAN: Did you try to brain me with a toy hammer?

CONNOR: A what?

ETHAN: Mom? Pop said you were there when it happened.

MARIAH: Oh I doubt you could have brained him. You could barely reach over the crib.

CONNOR: *(to ETHAN)* Did you ask him about that weekend?

ETHAN: He said he was at the lab. Working on Sopradine.

MARIAH: Is that what you told him, Lorenzo?

LORENZO: Yes, and it's the truth. I swear on my life.

CONNOR: Right. You want to see what a liar he is? They both are?

*(CONNOR picks up the blood pressure machine. Presses a button. Shows the machine to ETHAN.)*

CONNOR: That's the last reading. 126 over 75. Moral compass my ass. They lied about the car, they lied about his blood pressure. Got me out of the room so they could work on you.

ETHAN: Didn't you work on Mom?

CONNOR: When? I didn't "work" on her.

ETHAN: Didn't you bully her into signing those commitment papers?

LORENZO: *(to MARIAH)* Commitment papers?!

CONNOR: Great. You just fucked yourself, dude. Congratulations.

LORENZO: *(to MARIAH)* Is that why the pen was out?

MARIAH: Yes, darling.

LORENZO: When were you going to tell me? Christ, woman!

MARIAH: *(to CONNOR)* Connor, where did we put them?

ETHAN: In the sideboard.

LORENZO: *(to ETHAN)* And you went along with this? Jesus God Almighty!

*(LORENZO starts to lose his balance. MARIAH has taken the documents out of the sideboard.)*

MARIAH: Lorenzo, shh, calm down! Here. Read.

*(LORENZO starts leafing through the documents.)*

LORENZO: When did you prepare these?

CONNOR: When I saw how fucked up things were.

LORENZO: Connor to the rescue.

CONNOR: Yes, that's right. The cyanide, the suicide threats, getting physical with Mom, I called my lawyer and she faxed me the documents. If you think I regret it, you're dead wrong.

(LORENZO *turns to the last page of the first document, gives MARIAH a look.*)

LORENZO: They're worthless.

MARIAH: Of course they're worthless. They have to be signed in front of a notary. (*to CONNOR*) You were giving such a good performance I couldn't bear to stop you.

CONNOR: Bullshit. You were freaked out, you know you were.

LORENZO: (*to CONNOR*) You were willing to lock me up. Just to get hold of my money.

CONNOR: Whoa, hold on, that was not the reason—

LORENZO: Then what's this power of attorney?

CONNOR: I was worried about Ethan, I was scared for Mom—

LORENZO: Any other considerations? See, I understand why Ethan couldn't ask me for money, but you: If you needed money, why not just come out and say so?

CONNOR: Who said I needed money?

LORENZO: I'd have thought you had some socked away. From all those TV appearances.

CONNOR: Those were guest shots, Pop. We're talking about Ethan.

LORENZO: Couldn't Riley help Ethan out?

CONNOR: I can't ask Riley for money.

LORENZO: Why the hell not?

MARIAH: Why not, darling?

ETHAN: Because he's glad I bottomed out. He wants me to stay there.

MARIAH: Connor, is that true?

CONNOR: Oh for Christ's sake—

MARIAH: Connor, your father will cover Ethan's debts. Provided you tell us all the truth.

CONNOR: I've told you the truth. Fuck this. You don't want my help, I'm out of here.

*(CONNOR starts toward the bedroom stairway. ETHAN grabs a paperweight off the desk, steps in his way.)*

ETHAN: Tell me what's going on, or I swear to God—

MARIAH: Ethan, put that down! What aren't you telling us, Connor?

LORENZO: What happened to your money, son?

ETHAN: He says he spent it on hookers. Where are you going? I didn't say you could leave.

*(ETHAN grabs CONNOR around the neck.)*

CONNOR: Fuck are you doing? Get this...get him off me—

MARIAH: Ethan, let him go!

*(ETHAN lets go. CONNOR grabs ETHAN, twists his arm, shoves him against a wall. LORENZO grabs CONNOR, pulls him free, pushes him away. CONNOR pushes back. ETHAN shoves CONNOR. MARIAH picks up the paperweight, brandishes it.)*

MARIAH: Stop it! Ethan, back off. You too, Lorenzo. All of you, behave!

*(ETHAN, CONNOR and LORENZO separate.)*

MARIAH: Sit down, Connor.

CONNOR: Forget it. I don't have time for this shit—

LORENZO: Do what she tells you, son.

MARIAH: Lorenzo, be quiet, I'm dealing with this. I said sit!

*(CONNOR sinks onto the couch.)*

MARIAH: *(to CONNOR)* Why couldn't you lend Ethan any money?

*(No answer.)*

MARIAH: Connor? I'm waiting for an answer. Why wouldn't you help him out?

*(Pause.)*

CONNOR: *(to MARIAH and LORENZO)* You never saw me do improv, did you?

MARIAH: I think we've seen nothing but. No more bullshit, Connor, I mean it!

CONNOR: *(miserably)* Mom, stop yelling at me, please. *(to ETHAN)* Yes, I'm glad you hit bottom. I got off on it. That's me. I'm the poster boy for schadenfreude. Weren't you there at the Magnet the night I did the arsonist?

ETHAN: Oh yeah. That was embarrassing.

LORENZO: "Did the arsonist"?

ETHAN: *(to LORENZO)* The audience suggested "crimes" and Connor played a guy who burned down a hotel. It was totally weird. Zero laughs. What about it?

CONNOR: I called it the Wickersham. The Wickersham Hotel.

MARIAH: Out of thin air.

CONNOR: Out of thin air.

LORENZO: Isn't that wonderful.

ETHAN: What's wonderful about it?

MARIAH: *(to ETHAN)* That's the hospital where you were born. The Wickersham. East 58<sup>th</sup> between Park and Lex.

ETHAN: Oh. OK.

LORENZO: He didn't want a brother. In the worst way.

ETHAN: Hey, I never asked for one either.

CONNOR: My therapist uses that in her seminars.

ETHAN: Your therapist.

CONNOR: Yeah, big surprise, my therapist. Pop, you promise to write Ethan a check?

MARIAH: I said he would. Quit stalling. What happened to your money?

CONNOR: Mom, you're killing me here! *(pause)* OK, the reason? Why I can't help Ethan out? Other than my foul, invidious nature? Because Riley has stopped the clock.

MARIAH: Oh dear.

ETHAN: What does that mean?

CONNOR: It means you and me, we've both been dumped.

MARIAH: *(to ETHAN)* Riley's money isn't his money.

CONNOR: Not till half of it belongs to me. Or some of it. Or none of it.

LORENZO: And here we were hoping for a grandchild.

CONNOR: No, she's fucking the director instead.

ETHAN: But there is a Broadway play?

CONNOR: Yeah, just not one I'm gonna be in.

ETHAN: So why didn't you tell me?

CONNOR: Tell you what? That I'm living in a Motel 6 in Queens?

MARIAH: You were ashamed to tell him.

ETHAN: Because Mom actually made it to Broadway.

CONNOR: Yeah, touché, that's right. Mom made it to Broadway and I was never gonna be on Broadway...and you, you were making way more money than me, and Riley's career was taking off while my bookings were off like 50 per cent, so fuck yeah, I was ashamed, as ashamed as you were, except I had a way out. The day Riley blew up I started hitting anything that moved. And the nights I failed to score, I paid for it. That's the whole miserable story, you happy now?

MARIAH: I should never have taken those showers.

CONNOR: No, Mom, you probably shouldn't. *(to LORENZO)* I grew up to be you, except broke and unsuccessful.

MARIAH: Oh boo hoo hoo.

LORENZO: You have the rest of your life to succeed. Bravo for sharing, son. That took real courage.

ETHAN: Right, let's hear it for the Golden Boy. *(to MARIAH)* He tried to kill you too. Except this time he didn't use a hammer.

CONNOR: Dude? Calm down.

ETHAN: Admit it. You're the one who opened the window. I saw the look on your face. "Look there, the snow is really coming down."

CONNOR: Yeah, I opened the window so Mom could have a heart attack and I could blame Dad. All part of the plan. Whatever it takes. End justifies the means.

ETHAN: In other words, you thought about it.

CONNOR: I didn't fucking do it, so get off my back.

ETHAN: Dad?

LORENZO: What? Did I leave the window open? Not that I remember. The bathroom window, yes, sometimes I forget to close it.

MARIAH: He takes such long showers. The steam frizzes my hair.

ETHAN: So who opened it? Come on, you know what happens when you lie to a paranoid? It's the worst thing you can do. What are you all looking at? Oh shit.

*(ETHAN goes over to the balcony window. Opens it experimentally, as though trying to remember something.)*

ETHAN: I did it. That's what you're saying, isn't it?

LORENZO: We're not even thinking it. No more Scapegoat, kiddo.

*(MARIAH guides ETHAN backs into the room, closes the window.)*

MARIAH: It was probably me, darling. I took Ambien last night.

LORENZO: *(to ETHAN)* There you go. Your mother sleepwalks.

MARIAH: I was on Ambien when you woke me up. I must have opened the window before you came in.

ETHAN: Why would ever you do that?

MARIAH: Oh probably to clean it. I do a lot of cleaning in my sleep. Don't obsess about it, dear, it's blood under the bridge. Oh goodness, look at the time. We don't want to be late for our own party. *(stows documents in drawer)* We'll put these away for a rainy day. *(to LORENZO)* Now where did I leave my glasses, in case our friends start showing us pictures?



LORENZO: Right where they usually are. Did you remember to take your pills?

MARIAH: All except for Neuristoral.

LORENZO: They told you not to take it.

MARIAH: No, darling. I never take it.

LORENZO: Since when?

MARIAH: Since the first week, I think. Don't worry, I didn't flush them, they're safe in the pill drawer. Thought you might want to test them on yourself. Boys? Let's go. *Andiamo.*

CONNOR: Wait. What are you going to tell your friends?

MARIAH: About you two hooligans? How proud we are of both of you, no matter what trouble you're in.

LORENZO: And hey, don't look so glum. You'll both come live with us. Rent-free. *(to CONNOR)* I'm sure Mom can get you into her theater group. And listen, when Neuristoral drops? A man with your persuasive talents? You'll join my sales force, maybe even head it up. Ethan, I can use a senior engineer, half my staff don't know how to code. Come, let's go enjoy ourselves.

MARIAH: Look at you all. My three Placenta Men. I'm the luckiest woman on Earth.

*(MARIAH straightens LORENZO's tie, leads him in the direction of the downstairs foyer. At the doorway he turns.)*

LORENZO: And by the way? The sex is still good. We weren't lying about that.

*(LORENZO exits with MARIAH. CONNOR looks back at ETHAN, then follows. Pause.)*

*ETHAN unlatches the balcony window, goes onto the balcony... and jumps. Pause.*

*CONNOR re-enters from downstairs, with his coat on. Sees the balcony window open. Goes over to the window. Looks down. Takes out his vape pen. Takes a hit. Pause.*

*CONNOR exits in the direction of the bedrooms.)*

LORENZO: *(off)* Boys? Hurry, we're late!

(CONNOR *re-enters, zipping his carry-on bag, carrying Ethan's down jacket and backpack. Sound of LORENZO and MARIAH mounting the stairs.*

CONNOR *tosses his carry-on bag, Ethan's down jacket and backpack over the balcony railing, and jumps down after them.*

LORENZO *and MARIAH enter.*

LORENZO *goes over to the open balcony window.*)

MARIAH: You didn't really expect them to stay, did you? Close the window.

LORENZO: (*closes it*) I hope they didn't break anything. The ground under that snow is awfully hard.

MARIAH: I'm sure they survived. Come along. Before all our friends get there.

LORENZO: What are we going to tell them about the boys? I already put out the place cards.

MARIAH: Oh we'll think of something. (*thinks*) Connor had a callback on a TV show.

LORENZO: And there's an IPO coming up and Ethan had to grease the algorithm.

MARIAH: Perfect.

LORENZO: Oh damnation.

(LORENZO *slaps his pockets.*)

MARIAH: Your keys are on the sideboard where you left them.

LORENZO: Thank you, darling. What would I ever do without you?

MARIAH: Let's hope you never find out.

LORENZO: Oh, now you want to outlive me?

MARIAH: Do I want to outlive you? I'm counting on it, darling.

(MARIAH *starts toward the downstairs exit.*)

MARIAH: (*sings*) "...Oh, the days dwindle down...to a precious few...."

(LORENZO *hesitates, looking toward the balcony window.*)

MARIAH: (*sings; urging him*) "...September...November..."

(MARIAH takes LORENZO in tow. Marches him down the stairs.)

LORENZO AND MARIAH: (*off; singing*) "...And these few precious days...I'll spend with you...These precious days...I'll spend with you..."

(*Their voices fade. Spotlight on the unlatched balcony window. A gust of wind blows it open. The lights fade. END OF PLAY.*)