

Taking Turns

By

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TAKING TURNS/Sergel

Cast of Characters

Peter- 40s. Ted's son, Dee and Mike's youngest brother

Ted- late 70s. Walks with difficulty, uses an aluminum cane

Dee-late 40s. Middle sister

Bridget-late teens. Dee's daughter

Mike- 50s. The eldest son

Evelyn-70s. Mom to Peter, Dee, Mike, and Ted's wife

Time

The present and the past

Place

Berwyn, Illinois

"Food is love, remember?"- Peter, Taking Turns

"Put on a coat!"- Common familial instruction

TAKING TURNS/Sergel

ACT ONE
SCENE ONE

*Ted and Peter are sitting in folding chairs, facing downstage.
There is a microphone center stage. Peter nudges Ted.*

PETER

Your turn, Dad.

*Ted rises with difficulty and, using a cane, hobbles to the
microphone.*

TED

I want to know what you're going to do about those goddamn red-light cameras. They're rigged. I know they're rigged. You know they're rigged. The companies that make 'em know they're rigged-

PETER

(To audience)

-Yup. This is my dad. Mr. Live and Let Live Ted Parson.

TED

-and I want to know what my elected officials are going to do about it. About corporate and government corruption right here in our town. Right here. So that's my question.

Ted hobbles back to his chair and Peter rises.

PETER

(To audience)

Mom made me bring Dad.

Evelyn enters and she and Peter face each other.

Mom, really?

EVELYN

I don't want him driving all the way there all by himself and he needs to get out.

TAKING TURNS/Sergel

PETER

Can't Dee? It's her turn.

EVELYN

She and your dad got into it over something last week. Politics. Or was that the Karen Carpenter fight? I'm not sure.

PETER

How can you fight about Karen Carpenter?

EVELYN

Oh, your dad said she was the greatest American singer ever born and Dee Dee pitched a fit. Something about Ella Fitzgerald and...and... Motown. And I said I knew Motown and that Diana Ross was in it and I always just loved her. She was always so beautiful. She had those big eyelashes. But they ignored me 'cuz by then they were talking about the 1960s and then she mentioned Black Lives mattering so I just left the room. Not to mention, she's driving me and your dad to the orthopedic guy on Thursday. She's taking off work to do it.

PETER

What does that mean!? She's a freelance fitness writer. She's going to change from sweat pants and brush her teeth? Can't-

EVELYN

-don't be grumpy.

PETER

Mom, come on. Maybe Mikey? I think it's his turn anyway. Please-

EVELYN

-You'll have fun. You teach Government and stuff. You can talk to your kids about the experience. Maybe the high school could pay for your gas? Like a professional training thing? Have you thought of that?

PETER

The school isn't going to pay me to take Dad to a city council meeting. Geez, come on. Really? And he'll tell me how to drive the entire way and back. Why can't he just-

EVELYN

No. It's night driving and that's hard for us old folks.

TAKING TURNS/Sergel

Peter exhales. Loudly.

EVELYN

(Firmly)

-I'm not asking again, Peter Christopher Parson.

PETER

(To audience)

Shoot.

Evelyn grabs the microphone stand and exits. Peter and Ted are now sitting in the car, driving home.

So, what did you think?

TED

Politicians. Crooks. All of 'em. They all talk a good game but it's just to get your vote, to get your money so they can take care of their crooked friends.

PETER

Geez, Dad! Then why did we go?

TED

Why are you taking the tollway?

PETER

Because it's faster.

TED

It's almost a buck. Take Cicero.

PETER

Dad, it's okay. I'll to throw my massive retirement portfolio to the wind and take the tollway. *(Muttering)* Faster is okay by me.

Silence

TED

Cicero is just as fast. And people drive like jerks everywhere. Look at that-

TAKING TURNS/Sergel

PETER

He's changing lanes.

TED

In my day, people used their turn signal when they changed lanes. You-

PETER

-I know-

TED

-put on your turn signal, check your blind spot, check your mirrors, check your blind spot again-

PETER

-Dad-

TED

-and then you change lanes.

Ted reaches over and honks the horn.

PETER

DAD!

TED

People have gotta learn.

PETER

Don't-

TED

What?

PETER

Just...just...just don't do that! I'm driving, ok? Me. When you drive, you can teach the world how to drive.

Peter glances in his mirror, puts on his turn signal, shoots a glance at Ted, checks his blind spot, and changes lanes. Silence.

TAKING TURNS/Sergel

TED

You should actually check your blind spot twice-

PETER

No one was there, Dad! I changed lanes and we're still alive, okay?

TED

I could have driven myself. It's just this goddamn hip.

PETER

I thought it was driving at night?

TED

My driving is fine.

PETER

Ma says you're seeing the doctor this week.

TED

Chaos.

PETER

Huh?

TED

Chaos. That fancy restaurant. We just passed it. They tore down *Mel & Fritz's* to put up a place called Chaos. Why the hell would anyone name a place where you handle people's food *Chaos*? Bunch of numbskulls.

Peter stops the car, puts it into park. He looks at the audience.

PETER

You get the idea, right?

Peter jumps out and hurries around to the other side of the car to help Ted out. Ted waves him away.

TED

Get out of my way.

TAKING TURNS/Sergel

Ted struggles out and slowly straightens himself. They both exit.

END SCENE ONE

SCENE TWO

Evelyn is in the kitchen, Dee's in hers. During the following phone conversation Dee's daughter, Bridget enters. She is getting ready for school, grabbing notebooks, etc.

DEE

So what did the doctor actually SAY, Ma?

EVELYN

Honey, I don't know. That's why we're going.

DEE

But we're going for a reason, right? Dad doesn't just say, "Hey, Evie, let's hit the orthopedic doctor and then swing by Baker's Square."

EVELYN

Well, the one doctor said we should.

DEE

Which one?

EVELYN

The one with the funny name.

DEE

Oh, okay. That helps. Dr. Hilarious or Dr. Supercalafragolistic?

Bridget is putting on a light sweater; Dee pulls it off her and tosses her a heavier jacket. Wordless glaring between the two ensues.

EVELYN

Don't be mad at me. I forget things sometimes. I'm getting old, you know!

DEE

I know. I'm sorry, Ma-

There is now a silent mimed argument going on between Bridget and Dee over which outerwear Bridget should wear to school.

EVELYN

-You try living with your father, every day, he-

DEE

-Ma, I know. I'm sorry.

EVELYN

And don't get into it in the car.

DEE

I know. Okay.

Dee mouths "Not okay!" to Bridget, referring to the light sweater.

EVELYN

I want a nice, peaceful ride. And don't talk about Karen Carpenter-

DEE

I won't.

Bridget mouths, "I won't," gesturing to the heavier jacket.

EVELYN

Or Helen Reddy.

DEE

Okay!

Dee glares at Bridget. Bridget firmly shakes her head.

EVELYN

Or that Linda Ronstadt!

DEE

OKAY!

Dee grabs a "compromise" jacket, heavier than the sweater, lighter than the jacket and mouths, "Okay?"

EVELYN

He's mad enough he has to go. He just wanted a pill.

DEE

For what?

Bridget nods her acceptance and takes it from Dee.

EVELYN

His LEG!

Bridget puts it on. Dee straightens the collar but Bridget brushes her hands away.

BRIDGET

Mom. Stop.

DEE

(Into phone)

You can't just take a pill for an orthopedic, bone...thing! Which is why I'm going in with you guys. Into the room. I want to talk to this guy. Because meds don't fix stuff like this.

EVELYN

I know! That's why I'm making him go to the doctor!

DEE

I thought the doctor with the funny name was making him go?

EVELYN

Oh, a doctor can say to go but who makes the going...go? Me!

Bridget gestures that she is going.

DEE

Okay, okay.

BRIDGET
(Into phone)

Bye Grandma. Love you!

EVELYN

Oh, Bridge! I love you too! Be careful.

DEE

Love you.

BRIDGET

Okay.

She exits.

DEE
(Calling)

Be careful.

BRIDGET
(offstage)

Stop!

EVELYN

She's such a good girl. Tell her to be careful.

DEE

I did.

EVELYN

So, Thursday at one?

DEE

Yes. We're good.

EVELYN

Okey dokey. I have to call your brother now.

DEE

Which one?

EVELYN

Mikey. He has to help me with a computer thing. Unless you can-

DEE

-NO! No. Mikey's the expert at that. And he likes doing it.

EVELYN

Are you sure? Sometimes it sounds like, well you know Mikey. He gets frustrated and-

DEE

-Oh no, Ma. I'm sure. He loves helping you with computer stuff. It makes him feel important, you know? Okay, I love you so much and I'll be super careful.

EVELYN

I love you too. Be careful.

DEE

Love you. Bye.

EVELYN

Be careful.

DEE

Call Mikey. BYE! Love you!

They both hang up.

DEE

(To the air)

You're up, Mikey boy!

She turns to audience.

Mikey's IT. I do doctor's appointments because my schedule is flexible, Peter does...whatever. And everyone tries to off load their stuff on the other because everyone thinks it's somebody else's turn. Or they think their thing is the hardest.

Dee is picking up some of Bridget's clothes, generally cleaning up as she talks.

DEE (CONT'D)

Parents are like kids. They are! Once they get older. I realized that. I mean, one year I made this really good but really complicated apple cinnamon streusel for Christmas. I was editing a holiday cookbook and I needed a break so I made this streusel that was in it. Page 87. It took, like, a million steps. Now, EVERY YEAR, I have to make it. Bridget says, "It tastes like Christmas."

It's the same thing with Ma and Dad. Once I went with them to an appointment. One time. After that it was all, "Oh, you take such good notes. I could never do that. And you know how to talk to doctors. You ask questions!!! I get all flustered." Okay, I won't lie. The "I'm a fabulous daughter" vibe feels good. Very much "points in heaven" kind of thing. But now that they're getting up there, it's like every other week. I think Ma sort of likes the appointments. She chats with all the nurses. But I feel like I'm back doing pediatrician runs only I need to know their birthdays for the sign-in instead of Bridget's. The thing is kids grow up. Parents just grow...old.

END SCENE TWO

SCENE THREE

*Mike enters, sits at a computer. He is talking on the phone.
Evelyn dials.*

MIKE

Can you get someone to take it on? Someone there, in your office?

When he sees the caller ID on his phone

Look, can you hold on a sec?....OK....

He switches to the call waiting.

Hey Ma.

EVELYN

They took my Google.

MIKE

What?

EVELYN

I sat down to check my Facebook and at the top there was always this place that said "Google" and now it's gone.

MIKE

Okay, Ma. Um...hold on....

He pushes a button on his cell.

Can I call you back?....Ok....

He's back to Evelyn

Ok, what's the-

EVELYN

-It was there last night. I remember because I wanted to ask it about this new book that the library book club wants us to do and I don't think I'll like it so-

MIKE

-Ma, wait-

EVELYN

-I wanted to find out about the book. And the author. And I did and I don't think I'll like it so I might not go this time. But now my Google is gone.

MIKE

Okay. Wait. I can get it back but first-

EVELYN

Why would they do that?

MIKE

Do what?

EVELYN

Take it away.

MIKE

Ma, no one took it away.

EVELYN

But it's not there anymore.

MIKE

Ma, you probably just pushed a button and reduced it. I can get it back. Okay, what do you see right now?

TED

(Offstage)

Did he get it back for you?

EVELYN

(Calling to Ted)

He said I pushed a button.

MIKE

MA! Talk to me, not Dad. What do you see on your screen right now?

EVELYN

(To Ted)

He wants to know what's on the computer right now.

TED

(Still offstage)

Well, tell him what button you pushed.

EVELYN

(To Ted)

I didn't push a button. *(To Mike)* I didn't push a button. It was there last night and when I turned it on this morning, it was gone.

MIKE

It's okay! Just...what do you see right now?

EVELYN

Right now? The Google isn't there.

MIKE

But what is there?!

EVELYN

Don't yell at me.

MIKE

I'm not yelling. I just need you to tell me right now what you see right now, in front of you, on the screen. That's all.

EVELYN

Should I stay in Facebook?

MIKE

Just tell me what you see!!!

Ted comes in.

TED

Did he get it back?

EVELYN

He's yelling at me.

MIKE

Ma, Ma, Ma, I'm sorry. Just...just, please...just tell me what you see.

EVELYN

Well, I'll tell you what I don't see. I don't see my Google.

She hangs up in frustration.

MIKE

(To audience)

Ma. Ma? You get the idea, right? Once, ONCE, I was able to help her with a computer thing and now I'm the family IT guy. Two, sometimes three times a week, I do that. Goddamn Zuckerberg.

When I get on the phone with them, I promise myself every time, I'm going to enjoy them. Life is short, they're old, lots of people don't even have their parents around anymore and would kill for just five more minutes to talk to their mom or dad. And I'm good for about three minutes and then all I want to do is get off the phone. After telling them about the kids and Jen, I got nothing left. It's like talking to a kid you don't have anything really in common with. We end up talking about doctor's appointments. And the weather. And the kids again. Not really talking. And I feel they want more but I'm not sure how to give it to them. So, I end up feeling like a jerk.

We had a chance to move to San Diego. We could have. But the kids are all set up, Jen would have had to quit her job and...well.... the money didn't work. But geez. Okay. I'll admit it. I was really tempted. People say people move to California for the weather. Sure, that's part of it but really? It's the furthest away you can get from family without leaving the continent. YES, I'm a terrible son!

I love them. I do. Dad and Ma never hit us or, you know, pulled any bad parent, abusive childhood stuff. But to go somewhere and just be an independent grown up, with no one around to make you feel like a kid again? It was too tempting. I'd have never been "Mikey" in San Diego. No one would know the old me. No one would've ever even met him. College-wash-out Mikey Crappy Grades Parson never would have existed in San Diego. Man, that would have been sweet. *(His phone rings again. He looks at it and then the audience)* Goddamn Zuckerberg.

He answers the call.

MIKE (CONT'D)

(Sweetly)

Hey, Ma.

END SCENE THREE

SCENE FOUR

Ted, Dee, and Evelyn are getting ready to leave the house.

TED

Do you know where we're going?

DEE

Yup, Dad. We're good.

EVELYN

And you're sure they take Medicare?

TED

(Yelling)

Evie, I've told you fifteen goddamn times they take goddamn Medicare-

EVELYN

-Don't yell at me! Don't you yell at me!

TED

I'm not yelling, I'm saying!

EVELYN

You were yelling. And swearing. Do not yell at me when I ask a question.

DEE

Come on, guys. Let's go.

Evelyn begins to put on her jacket, struggling to get the zipper to go up.

EVELYN

(To Ted)

I have feelings you know.

Ted helps her with the zipper as they continue to bicker.

And when you swear at me like that, it makes me feel like I'm just another tv show.

She adjusts her collar like she did for Bridget in the earlier scene and pulls her gloves out of her pockets for her.

TED

What the hell does that mean?!

Evelyn begins putting on her gloves but she has the wrong hands. Dee switches them and helps her slide them on.

EVELYN

Because you yell “goddamn” at every news show and I am a person, not a news show or politician.

DEE

Kids, stop it.

TED

Well, can you blame me? You repeat yourself like every talking head on the goddamn (*he stops himself*) ...damn CNN, Fox, cable news show.

DEE

Can we go?

Dee holds Ted’s jacket opened for him to put on. Instead of accepting the help, he grabs it from her.

EVELYN

(*Looking around*)

Where’s my-

Ted hands her purse to her.

TED

(*To Dee*)

You know where we’re going, right?

DEE

Yup, Dad.

TED

Where’s your jacket?

DEE

Let's go, Dad.

TED

It's fifty-two degrees out.

EVELYN

Turnip, I have a jacket if you need one. Get the purple fleece from the coat closet for her.

DEE

I'm okay. I don't need a jacket.

TED

You need a jacket. Go get it. It's in the coat closet.

EVELYN

The purple fleece. It's got a hood.

DEE

I don't need a jacket! Let's go!

EVELYN

Ted, get it for her.

Ted exits

DEE

Can we just go?

Ted returns with the jacket. He careful holds it open for her and she slides it on. He goes to zip it but she stops him.

Good, Dad. I'm good.

She hands him his cane.

Let's go.

TED

You know where we're going?

DEE
Yes, Dad.

TED
It's cheaper if you take Frontage. No tolls.

DEE
Okay. But I...okay. Okay. I'll take Frontage.

TED
Good. Come on, Evie! What are you waiting for?

EVELYN
I'm coming! Do you have the key?

TED
Yes.

EVELYN
You sure?

TED
I'm sure! Jesus, woman!

EVELYN
Don't you "Jesus" me!

DEE
Mom, Dad has the key, okay?

EVELYN
You sure?

DEE
Yes.

EVELYN
Okay then. This will be fun.

END SCENE FOUR

SCENE FIVE

Peter and Dee in Dee's kitchen. Dee is slumped low in her seat. The purple fleece jacket is over the back of her chair, a White Sox jacket on the back of his. They both have coffee and a piece of pie.

DEE

Dude, you have so got to get married.

PETER

Why?

DEE

Because then your husband can take a turn.

PETER

Oh, yeah. That would happen.

Bridget enters.

BRIDGET

Ma, where're the car keys?

DEE

Counter. No. My purse. Why? Where are you going?

BRIDGET

I told you when you guys came in.

DEE

Did not.

BRIDGET

Did too.

DEE

Did not.

PETER

She did. She's going to Karen's-

BRIDGET

-Cassie's-

PETER

-to do homework and play with her new kitten.

DEE

Oh. Yeah. You did. Where's your coat?

Peter has scooped up a bite of pie with his fork and offers it to Bridget. She eats it.

BRIDGET

It's, like, so warm out, Ma.

Dee pulls the purple fleece of the back of her chair and offers it to Bridget. Bridget shudders in horror.

BRIDGET

Oh my god. That's heinous.

DEE

Put it on. It's like fifty degrees out-

BRIDGET

The skin would peel off my bones if I put that thing on my body.

PETER

Come on, Turnip Two. It's gorgeous! You'll start a trend.

Bridget sticks her tongue out at him.

She won't stop. Take this.

Peter tosses his White Sox jacket to her.

BRIDGET

Really? Cool! Thanks, Uncle Pete!

PETER

I want it back.

BRIDGET
(Exiting)

Maybe. Maybe not.

DEE
(Calling)

Be careful.

BRIDGET
(Off stage)

Stop.

PETER
(Calling)

Drive recklessly and take drugs.

BRIDGET
(Further off stage)

Got it.

PETER

Okay. So?

DEE

It was a total nightmare. The minute “double hip replacement and then the knee” comes up, Dad loses it. Totally. I mean, he can barely walk and-

PETER

-I know-

DEE

-he’s saying, “it’s just a pulled muscle” and “it’ll pass.” Seriously. And Mom’s face starts doing that thing that her face does-

PETER

The red, orangey color. With the vein in her-

DEE

-forehead.

PETER

Right before she starts crying.

DEE

I hate that. I hate it. And then Dad yells at her not to cry 'cuz the doctor's wrong. And the doctor is still right there. Right in front of them and me. And the doc, he's doing that deep breath thing people do. (*She demonstrates*) You know, that sort of superior "I'm being really patient" sort of thing. And then the doctor looks at me.

PETER

And?

DEE

Well, I'm a spineless, horrible person.

PETER
(*Smiling*)

Oh, everyone knows that.

DEE

Bite me.

PETER

Sorry. So why are you horrible?

DEE

I rolled my eyes. At my own parents. I should have just glared. I mean, Dad is Dad but he was trying to, you know, oh, I don't know!

PETER

Yeah.

DEE

He's always been so...strong. And now.... well...shoot.

PETER

Is he going to do it?

Dee gets up and refills their coffee.

DEE

Ma's going to work on him. It was just so odd. In there, for the very first time, I saw him as really old. Dad has always been, like, Mr. America. Big and bossy and tough. And now he can't even bend. Mom had to tie his shoelaces after the exam. He's all busted and I just didn't see this coming.

She puts another piece of pie on Peter's plate.

PETER

You never see the crazy stuff coming.

DEE

I guess.

PETER

Speaking of not seeing stuff coming, remember when I-

DEE

(Starting to giggle) -

Oh god.

PETER AND DEE

(In unison, ominous voice)

The Pie of Death.

Light shift.

They are now in the family kitchen. Evelyn bustles in, with a large tin of pie, heaping more helpings on the kids' plates.

EVELYN

(Calling)

Ted! Pie! Come before the kids eat it all.

DEE

Ma, then why are you giving us more?

PETER

(Shoveling pie in his mouth)

(To Dee) Food is love, remember? (To Evelyn) I'll take more.

EVELYN

(Conspiratorially, whispering to Dee)

Oh, Turnip, I've got a second one. *(Normal voice)* But then homework, both of you. *(Yelling)* Ted!

PETER

Ma, is there any ice cream?

EVELYN

Your dad finished it last night.

PETER

Damn.

Evelyn bops him lightly on the back of his head.

Sorry. Darn.

(A moment)

Where is he? Is he coming?

DEE

(Bellowing)

DAD! PIE! *(To Peter)* Really? You really want to go toe-to-toe with Dad over more pie, dude?

Peter shrugs. Ted comes in, no cane, walking slowly but with ease.

TED

Is there ice cream?

EVELYN

You ate it. Should I microwave your piece?

TED

Not if there's no ice cream.

Evelyn places a large piece of pie down. Ted sits.

Is there any-

Evelyn places a glass of milk in front of him. Peter has rapidly finished his second piece and takes a deep breath. Dee gets up and drops her plate in the sink and begins to exit.

PETER

Um, Ma, can you sit down for a second.

No one moves.

EVELYN

Oh, god.

TED

What's wrong?

Dee slowly backs up into the kitchen and waits.

EVELYN

Oh, god, what is it?

PETER

Ma! Sit down for a second.

EVELYN

Are you sick? Are you in trouble? Did you get a girl in trouble?

PETER

Ma, it's okay. Just sit down for one second. I'm fine.

TED

Evie, goddamn it, sit down.

She does.

PETER

Okay...

He stops.

TED

WHAT!?

PETER

Okay. Um, Ma, Dad...I've been meaning to tell you this for a while.

EVELYN

Oh god.

TED

Evie, shut up and let the kid talk! Spit it out. Just man up and say it.

PETER

I'm a...I'm, well, I've known for a long time that...that...gay. I'm gay.

Silence. Ted and Evelyn look at each other.

EVELYN

You're a...oh my. Oh, dear. Oh, Petey, are you sure?

DEE

Ma, he's sure.

Peter doesn't look at Dee, just looks at his empty plate.

EVELYN

But you took Danielle to homecoming. You have so many girlfriends. You've never brought another boy...around. Ted?

They all look at Ted.

TED

Dee Dee, get out.

PETER

Dad, I want her here.

TED

Dee.

Dee exits but lurks just outside the room, listening.

Are you a virgin?

PETER

What?! Man. Ma, Dad, I know this is hard but I've known for a long time.

TED

How can you know if you're still a virgin, huh? You've never been with a woman, so you don't really know, do you? You can't! You're just a goddamn kid!

PETER

Dad, I'm sixteen. I know.

TED

(Rising)

You don't know. You're just a kid.

EVELYN

Well, Ted, maybe he does. He's very smart. Petey, you're very smart, and so good at school.

PETER

Okay. Thanks, Ma.

EVELYN

Are you really, really sure?

TED

Evie, didn't you hear him? He's GAY! Pete's a...homo.

PETER

A homosexual. Gay.

TED

Okay. Fine. You're a homosexual.

Peter and Ted look at each other for a long moment.

EVELYN

Okay then. Well, this is news. I think...well, I think that you are still my baby boy and I still love you.

TED

Evie-

EVELYN

-Do not interrupt me! I'm talking to my boy who has done a hard thing. *(To Peter)* I'm very proud of you.

Ted grunts.

PETER

Thanks, Ma.

EVELYN

And I love you very much. If you want to change your mind, that's okay too. Or not. I just want you to be safe and happy.

Ted snorts.

PETER

Dad, do you have something to say to me?

TED

Just don't get AIDS.

Ted storms out. Silence.

EVELYN

Well, okey dokey then. Don't worry, sweetie. I'll talk to him. So why don't I get you some more pie?

The lights shift and Evelyn exits. Peter and Dee are back in her kitchen.

PETER

Yup, Dad never saw that coming.

DEE

Oh, yeah. It was quite the entertaining turn of events.

They both chuckle. Then they quiet themselves.

DEE

This is all gonna get worse before it gets better.

PETER

So, um...you see this getting better?

DEE

What?

PETER

They're both, you know...

DEE

What?

PETER

Getting old.

DEE

I think I just kept hoping it was a phase.

PETER

Like they would snap out of it and start getting younger again?

DEE

YES! Please! YES!

PETER

I hate to break it to ya.

They both take a long sip of coffee.

DEE

So, to quote poet laureate Ma, we sure are in-

PETER AND DEE

-deep doo doo.

They both start nervously giggling.

END SCENE FIVE

SCENE SIX

Evelyn is sitting at her computer.

EVELYN

(Talking to herself)

Darn it. Okay. You can do this. Just do it again. Really slow. Okay.

She refers to a piece of paper. She reads aloud quietly to herself.

Take the arrow and put it on star at the very top right corner. Push down lightly on the left top corner of your mouse and the big long rectangle box will open.

She does.

Facebook is where the blue box with the white "F" inside it. Okay. It's still there. Okay.

She clicks.

Darn it. DARN IT! *(Calling)* Ted!

She waits

Darn, darn, darn. I'm so dumb. *(Calling again)* Ted? What's my Facebook password? Mikey made it automatic but now it isn't doing it. I've tried three times. *(To audience)* I keep trying. I do. The kids think I'm an idiot. This all makes me feel so dumb. I like the people. The Facebook people. Because everybody says people are mean on the computer but it's not to your face, you know? Not like on all the tv shows Ted watches. I cannot believe the things people say to each other. Would you say all that to your neighbor, even if your neighbor was Hillary Clinton? Or the president? We've always been nice to our neighbors. Lived in the same house for forty years. When we got married, we lived in a walk-up. Everybody knew each other then. Well, some people you didn't really want to know but you would still nod "hi" to them or help them jump their car in the winter. Then we moved out here. A starter home. Ha. Forty-seven years later, we're still here. I don't mind. Schools were good. It was so nice having a backyard. It's getting a little too much for us now but Ted won't get a lawn service. Says a neighborhood boy should start a mowing and shoveling business but that never seems to happen. I said Mikey's boy Timmy could do it but he's got soccer and baseball. And they're about forty minutes away. We're lucky to see them on holidays, they're so busy. So. Anyway. Things are moving all the time and the rules seem to keep changing. I just can't seem to keep up. I feel like a kid sometimes but not in a good way. In a way like when you have a nightmare about not

EVELYN (CONT'D)

remembering your locker combination or not being ready for a test but it's just all these buttons and programs and things to remember how to do. Mikey says the Facebook guy should make another Facebook called Wrinkled-Facebook where nothing ever changes. I think that's a million-dollar idea!

Ted enters, carrying his jacket, Evelyn's jacket, and her purse.

Oh, good. Do you remember my Facebook words? I've gotten-

TED

Evie, I'm bleeding a little bit.

EVELYN

Oh, honey. The Band-Aids are under the sink. *(Looking for password)* Let me just try to remember where I put that piece of paper.

TED

Evie, it's in my stool.

EVELYN

Oh just use a little 409 on it. It'll come right off. How did you cut yourself? Let me see it.

TED

It's not ON the stool! It's IN my stool!

EVELYN

What's in your stool? What?

TED

Blood. A little, tiny bit. I think we may need to-

EVELYN

-Oh good golly. You mean in your...poop? BLOOD?! You have blood in your poop?!

TED

Yes, but relax. But come on. We gotta go.

He hands her purse and jacket at her.

TED (CONT'D)

You have to drive.

EVELYN

Oh my god! Oh my god! Oh my god!

TED

(Calmly)

Evie, don't do that. I'm fine. You'll drive. I am fine. I'll tell you what to do.

EVELYN

Oh my god.

TED

Evie, I'm fine. Come on.

END SCENE SIX

SCENE SEVEN

Evelyn is in a hospital room, Ted is off stage in the bathroom

EVELYN

Don't pee in the toilet.

TED

(Off stage)

What the hell are you talking about?

EVELYN

Well, go in the toilet but there's a plastic thing in it. The nurse, she is so sweet, she said that they have to measure every drop to compare with before and after or something. So, they'll be collecting it. In the plastic thing. So go in that. It's sort of wedged under the toilet seat. So don't take it out. Well, I had to take it out-

TED

(Off stage)

-This is ridiculous-

EVELYN

-so I could go. But I put it back in. It's not too big. I mean, deep. So go gentle.

TED

(Off stage)

What are you talking about?

EVELYN

So the pee doesn't bounce out.

TED

(Off stage)

Dear god-

EVELYN

Don't "Dear god" me!

Ted enters, zipping up his fly.

TED

I'll piss like I've been pissing for seventy-five years!

EVELYN

And look where that landed you!

Evelyn exits.

TED

(To audience)

Fifty-two years. I've been trying to follow her logic for fifty-two years. I shoulda given up a long time ago but hell, old habits and all that. Without me, she'd be giving money to every Tom, Dick, and Harry. Getting everyone's life story. We'd for sure have a house full of stray animals. I've been doing the driving since, well, we used to take turns but then she got lost coming back from the Jewel last fall. And I mean, really lost. She ended up in Oak Park. And the Jewel is four blocks away. So, I drive now. She drives by remembering the old landmarks, and the neighborhood has changed so much and I don't think she does change too good anymore. Me too, to be honest.

Everything changes and we're all supposed to keep up like it's what you're supposed to do and you're a loser if you don't. But just 'cuz something is new, doesn't mean it's better. You used to be able to walk down the street at night. I spent my entire youth, every summer, every night, outside in the neighborhood, playing ball and goofing around and now, why Mikey and Jen can't even let the kids walk to the park without worrying about some weirdo grabbing them. There's a bunch more tv but it's just game shows and shopping shows and zombies. Yeah, I watch the news. Drives Evie crazy. Drives me crazy but you need to know what's going on.

I like the *Banacek* reruns. And *McMillan and Wife*. Always had a little thing for that Susan Saint James. Don't tell Evie. I still can't believe Rock Hudson was...you know...like Pete. A gay man.

He pauses and looks around.

They say hospitals fix you but I've never come out of one of these places feeling better.

END SCENE SEVEN

SCENE EIGHT

Dee enters with a plastic grocery bag. Ted is sitting on the couch.

DEE

Hey, Dad. Good to see you back where you belong, remote in hand.

TED

Turnip.

She kisses him.

DEE

The boys here yet? Ma in the kitchen? I brought the coleslaw. They were out of the German potato salad.

TED

Bedroom.

DEE

(Calling)

Hey Ma. I'm here. Bridge has an ACT prep thing. No. SAT. No, ACT! I keep getting those mixed up.

No response

TED

Put it in the fridge and sit.

Dee goes to put it away, chattering as she does.

DEE

So I did get that assignment. The *Men's Health and Fitness* one. On the protein drinks. And my *Carbs Are the New Protein* was just published in *Shape Up* so I'm officially part of the mixed message problem. But, good news, that problem is paying the rent so I'm completely not conflicted about it. *(Looking in refrigerator)* Oh good. Ma got the good mustard. I'm gonna stick the coleslaw in the back so Pete and Mikey don't stuff their face with it before supper.

She grabs a cookie from the cookie jar and returns, munching.

So, what's up, Dad? Good to be home?

TED
Sit, Turnip.

DEE
(Calling)
Hey Ma. Thanks for getting my mustard.

TED
Sit.

DEE
Why do I love the fudge stripes? They suck but I cannot resist them. They're like cookie crack.

TED
Sit, Turnip.

DEE
Dad?

TED
We're gonna wait for the boys.

DEE
Dad?

TED
Sit down, Dee Dee.

DEE
Shit. *(A pause)* Dad? Daddy?

TED
Goddamn it, Turnip, sit your ass down!

Light change

DEE
Dad, got a second?

Ted takes a look at her.

TED

Good “got a second” or bad “got a second?”

DEE

Well-

TED

Oh boy. Okay. Sit down. Spit it out.

Dee just begins wandering the room.

DEE

So.

TED

You sick? Bridge? You need money?

DEE

No. No! Not like that. Well...um...

TED

(Gently)

Turnip, just spit it out.

DEE

Dan and I-

She begins to cry.

Oh, Daddy.

TED

Oh boy. Okay.

Ted gets up and hugs her.

Okay, kiddo. It’s okay.

DEE

I just wanted us to be like you and Ma.

TED

Well, then. It's gonna be okay.

DEE

Like forever, you know.

TED

Don't you worry. You got forever. With Bridge and us, and well, you just don't worry. Did Dan, you know, did he cheat on you or hit you or-

DEE

-No, no. Not like that.

TED

Alright then.

DEE

We just haven't been...an "us" for a long time, I think.

TED

Well, okay. You got an "us," you know that, right.

Dee nods vigorously.

DEE

Are you disappointed in me?

TED

Goddamn it, Turnip. Don't be a numbskull.

DEE

I feel like a numbskull.

TED

Well, you aren't! You're my goddamn daughter and you're gonna be okay!

DEE

You sure? Promise?

TED

What do you think, huh? I'm your dad.

Light change. Ted resumes his previous position. Peter and Mike enter together

MIKE

(To Peter)

You call that parking? *(To Ted and Dee)* Hey, we're here.

PETER

As a matter of fact, I do. *(To Ted and Dee)* Hey, guys. Yes, Dad, I did get the buns.

MIKE

Jen and the kids are coming after the meet, depending when it gets out, so we can do hot dogs for them later. But can we all not eat all the chips because Timmy is on this thing where he-

DEE

-Guys-

MIKE

-is actually counting his chips to see that he gets the exact same amount as-

DEE

-Mike-

MIKE

-as his sister.

DEE

Dude, shut up!

MIKE

You shut you!

TED

Both of you shut up. Sit down.

They do. Ted slowly gets up and goes to the bedroom.

TED

Evie.

Evelyn comes out. She's been crying.

Oh shit.

PETER

Dad?

MIKE

Daddy?

DEE

Ted slowly sits back down with Evelyn at his side.

END SCENE EIGHT

SCENE NINE

Evelyn and Ted are in the kitchen. Evelyn is bustling, cleaning up.

EVELYN

Well. Okey dokey. That went pretty good. So. So. So, you feeling okay? You want more coleslaw?

TED

Evie, if you offer me that damn coleslaw one more time, I'm gonna throw it out the window, swear to god.

EVELYN

You have to keep your strength up.

TED

I'm strong. I'm fine.

EVELYN

You think I'm an idiot, don't you?

TED

I do not think-

EVELYN

-I know. I know. But I'm strong too. And this will be just another thing we do. Yup. That's it. Okay. Just another thing we do. Like...like.... like when Dee broke her arm and collarbone. Or when Mikey flunked out of that first year of college and he had to redo, retake, all that and we thought, well, anyway. And when Jen had Jamie so early, remember? And Peter being, you know, well, we were all okay. So, this will be okay too. We'll just do exactly what the doctors say. Just do the chemo and...well...and it'll be just fine. So, you are going to eat this coleslaw, you hear me? That's it! Do you hear? Because it's important. So, so, just you do it.

Evelyn begins tearing up. Ted rises with difficulty and walks over to her.

TED

You are my special girl, Evelyn Catherine Nowakowski Parson.

*He then picks up the coleslaw and throws it out the window.
Evelyn's jaw drops and they both begin laughing.*

END SCENE NINE

SCENE TEN

Mike, Peter and Dee are sitting around a table at a bar. A pitcher of beer is mostly gone and three empty shot glasses sit on the table as well.

PETER

Wow. I just didn't see this coming.

MIKE

People never see shit coming until it comes. And it always comes. We know this, right?

PETER

Yeah. I mean, you know your folks are getting older but...

MIKE

Actually, Jen and I have talked a couple of times about what would happen if Ma or Dad, you know...

PETER

If one was-

DEE

-left.

MIKE

Yup.

DEE

Oh god. Chemo. Surgery. Can you drive when you're doing chemo? Will Medicare cover all of it? How much money do they have? I mean-

PETER

-the house. Mike, do you know-

MIKE

-I think it's paid off. I thought Dad said-

DEE

I did a piece on retirement places. The good ones are way, way expensive.

PETER

I think it'll be okay. It'll turn out. Dad will be okay.

MIKE

But not forever. You know, Ma's not up for driving Dad to his appointments and all. We all know she'll screw it up.

PETER

Dad can make them.

MIKE

What if he starts having, you know-

PETER

-side effects?

Mike and Peter both glance at Dee.

DEE

Oh no! I see where this is going. You guys, I can do some of them but just 'cuz I'm freelance doesn't mean I'm always free. I've got a schedule. A work schedule. It's taken me years and if I mess with it, I get really thrown off. We have to take turns. It can't just be me.

PETER

I can work out some subbing but it's tricky.

DEE

Could Jen maybe? At least a little bit?

MIKE

Jen just got off her night rotation and she's training two new nurses and she's taking that online class. And the kids.

DEE

Well I have a kid too.

PETER

Dee, you're better with Ma anyway.

MIKE

You are.

DEE

You guys always say that just because I'm the girl.

PETER

But it's true. She never cries as much with you.

DEE

You always say that.

MIKE

'Cuz it's true. We'll help.

DEE

Really? REALLY? If I'm making the appointments and taking them, how exactly are you guys helping?

Dee grabs the three shot glasses and exits.

MIKE

We can't get away as easy. She knows that.

PETER

I know. I know. But would you want to be the one to chauffeur Dad and Ma to chemo?

MIKE

I'd rather get goddamn chemo.

PETER

Daily.

MIKE

Through the nose.

PETER AND MIKE

(In unison)

And twice on Sundays.

They both laugh. Dee returns, carefully balancing three full shots.

DEE

Okay. I'll do the appointments and driving but you guys have to do it if I can get any weekend appointments.

MIKE

I need to know far in advance 'cuz we are going into the kids'-

DEE

-Really, dude?

PETER

We'll figure it out. Come on, guys.

The three pick up the shots.

DEE & MIKE & PETER

(In unison)

White Sox.

They toast and drink.

MIKE

Goddamn but this stinks. If things go south...

PETER

They won't.

MIKE

But if they do...

DEE

Shit. Ma can't, you know. It's not a big place but the upkeep.

Peter and Dee both glance at Mike.

MIKE

Oh no, you guys. There's no room at the Jen and Mike Inn, guys.

PETER

We aren't there-

DEE

-yet.

MIKE

Well yeah, okay, we have a guest room. So what? We also got two kids. And two cars that both need work. And a crap refrigerator, a dying dryer and crap for college savings. And a mortgage, and a stack of bills and payments going on forever. Jen and I still got student loans, you know. I'm taking care of three people.

Silence.

DEE

What the hell are we supposed to do with the cranky old son of a bitch?

MIKE

Go to hell, Dee.

DEE

What? Shit, Mike, I'm just saying-

MIKE

-you are so goddamn full of it sometimes.

PETER

Hey, come on you two.

MIKE

Both of you. Seriously, listening to you two.... the two of you have no idea what you're talking about.

PETER

Excuse me?

MIKE

You two just can't take it. You don't want to see.

DEE

See what?

MIKE

Like, maybe they would have enough for a nice retirement place if they didn't have to pay for every Tom, Dick and Harry to come here and put their kids in our schools but not pay any taxes.

DEE

You're really gonna go all Republican on us? Now?

MIKE

Well, why not? What have you two got? The world isn't all pretty and sweet and all your problems go away if you throw other people's money at it. Like, my money. Like Dad and Ma's money. Dad worked his whole life and he's only got Medicare, Social Security and the union pension they screwed everybody on. And the bungalow. And us. It's not right.

Mike grabs the pitcher and exits for a refill.

DEE

Wow.

PETER

He'll be fine. He always cools off. He's just rattled.

DEE

Well, me too. You too! He doesn't have to go all jerk-face Tea Bagger on us.

PETER

He's just scared.

DEE

No shit. Welcome to the club.

END SCENE TEN

SCENE ELEVEN

Ted sits in a chair, reading a newspaper. He is attached to an IV drip, receiving his chemo. He folds the paper up and slaps it against his leg.

TED

(To audience)

There's a city council meeting Monday. Pete said he wants to take me again. A field trip for the old man, I guess. Evie doesn't want me to go, of course. "Too many germs! Too many people!" She keeps cleaning the house. Scrubbing down everything I touch. We shoulda gotten stock in that Purell stuff, the way she's using it. Makes everybody use it who comes within twenty paces of me. She gave a bottle to the goddamn mailman, telling him to use it before he put our mail in the slot. *(Slaps the paper against his leg again)* I dunno. Those red-light cameras are a scam but...I dunno. *(Another slap of the paper)*

He stares at the IV bag for a long moment.

I'm stuck here, just sitting in this goddamn chair. It's like I'm tied to train tracks and there's a Metra train heading straight for me and I can't move. I'll tell you, sitting here on my ass just thinking, that's what's killing me. Too much time. *(Looks at watch)* Yeah. Maybe...I dunno.

Evie's started going to church again a little bit. She thought I'd make a fuss but heck, if it helps her. She likes the people and the heaven idea I think. I'm not sure about that. Oh, I'm Christian. I guess. I mean, we do Christmas but I never really thought about Jesus and all that. Too busy, I guess. But now I'm just sitting on my ass and what am I gonna do?

That do unto others thing. I don't know. Oh, loving your fellow man is a good idea but it isn't exactly human nature. It's not. It's to survive. First and foremost, to survive and make sure your family is okay. At least, that's what I think.

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO
SCENE ONE

Mike enters, still in a suit and tie, clearly coming straight from work.

MIKE

Ma. I'm here.

She enters and points to a large bottle of Purell.

EVELYN

Two squirts.

He does and rubs it into his hands as he speaks.

MIKE

Where's Dad?

EVELYN

He's out back. The rainspout gutter thing is cracked.

MIKE

Okay. So what's up with your e-mail exactly?

EVELYN

Oh honey, it's fine. Your dad just walked in the room when I called you so that's what I said so you'd come.

MIKE

Okay. So why did I drive all the way over here then? Is Dad okay?

EVELYN

Peter's taking your dad to city council tonight.

Mike walks to the kitchen and grabs a handful of cookies from the cookie jar.

MIKE

(From kitchen)

Yup, he told me. Taking a bullet for the team, eh?

EVELYN

Well, you have to talk him out of it.

MIKE

Why? It'll give Dad tons of stuff to complain about. It'll be like heaven with free coffee.

EVELYN

Have you not been paying attention? Your dad's sick and it'll be a place full of GERMS!

MIKE

Ma, I'm sure it'll be okay.

EVELYN

And how are you sure?

MIKE

I dunno. He'll be fine though.

EVELYN

You don't know! Nobody knows. But what if he gets an infection? Or a cold? Or the flu?

MIKE

Oh, Ma-

EVELYN

-He won't eat the organic stuff Dee Dee told me to get. I can't even get him to take a vitamin! He says he isn't changing one darn thing, that the chemo and the surgery is more than enough change. So, I don't know what else to do. I don't.

She exits to the kitchen. Yelling from kitchen

So you have to help. You have to talk to him. He doesn't listen to me. You have to!

MIKE

Okay, okay. I will. It's going to be okay. I promise.

Mike goes to kitchen. Evelyn is just standing there.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Ma?

EVELYN

I came in here for something and I can't remember what.

MIKE

It's okay.

EVELYN

(Snapping)

Stop saying that!

She looks at him.

Oh.

She takes a paper towel, gives it to Mike, and then gets a glass of milk, to go with his cookies.

MIKE

I don't need...okay. Thanks. Ma, look. I know it's scary. I know.

EVELYN

You have to talk to him.

Ted enters

TED

Did you fix it?

MIKE

Huh? Oh. Um, yeah. She just hit a button.

EVELYN

I'm going to check on the tofu now.

Evelyn quickly exits.

TED

What does she want you to do?

MIKE

Well, I did it. The e-mail was-

Mike drums his fingers on the kitchen table.

TED

-Your ma and I have been married for over fifty years. She's the crappiest liar this side of the Mississippi. She turns all orangey when she's stewing about something. And you do that thing with your fingers. So, spit it out.

Light change.

Mike is now sitting.

So, spit it out.

MIKE

So, Dad, I've decided maybe to take a year off from school.

TED

Have you?

MIKE

Yeah. Yeah, I think it would be good for me to, you know, maybe get a job-

TED

-maybe at the plant?

MIKE

Yeah! Yeah! Maybe at the plant. Or somewhere. You know, experience the world a little. I'm nineteen, you know. I'm a man. But I'd like to explore. Consider my options.

TED

Where would you live while you were doing this? Considering your options? Exploring yourself?

MIKE

Oh. Well, I thought, you know...here?

TED

Live here?

MIKE

Yeah. I mean, well, I'd help around the house and do stuff too.

TED

What stuff?

MIKE

Like chores. And helping.

TED

You must think I'm a world class numbskull.

MIKE

Dad! What? No!

TED

I know you got kicked out of college, you little stinker. You did not decide to "consider your options," you goddamn ran out of options 'cuz you were a lazy son of a bitch who decided to blow his chance at a better life because he wanted to major in beer and girls on our dime. Business major in keggers and parties. Well, not so fast, Mister Grown-Up Man. Not so fast. Explore this. First off, you 'aint getting no job at the plant. You know why? Because all the jobs we got are taken. By who? Not by some kid looking to explore and discover themselves. There's a whole lotta other guys standing in line who've been there way longer than you. Guys with families. Responsibilities. So I'm gonna tell you what you're gonna do. You're gonna march your goddamn lazy ass down to that goddamn community college and get your goddamn lazy ass into every goddamn business class they'll let your goddamn sorry ass sign up for. And when you're not studying, you will be helping with chores. Oh, Mister Grown Up Man, you will be helping. So, here you go.

Ted grabs a beer from the refrigerator and puts it in front of Mike. He then grabs a fashion magazine of Evelyn's and slaps it down next to the beer.

Enjoy. This is the last beer and the last girl you're gonna be spending time with for as long as you're living here and "helping." Oh, and next time you think you can get one over on me, don't. 'Cuz I'm your dad and the world don't work that way.

Light change back to present day.

MIKE

Look, Ma, just wants me to...she just wants me to ask you not to go to-

TED

-Goddamn it! Not this still. Pete is taking me, I haven't been anywhere except the goddamn hospital, she won't even let me go in the Jewel, she makes me wait in the car. I had to sneak out to the hardware store yesterday. It wasn't like I was going a bar or carousing or anything. I was thrilled to spend twenty minutes in the goddamn drill bit section!

MIKE

She's just scared.

TED

I know.

MIKE

Maybe, you know, just so she doesn't worry?

TED

So me not going is going to stop her from worrying? Have you not spent your entire life with your mother? She's made worrying into an Olympic sport.

MIKE

How are you feeling? Is it making you, well, how does it feel?

TED

I'm just more tired. But, hell, I'm an old fart so I guess I should be tired, eh? But that's it. So far, I guess. More good times to come, they warn me. And your ma is on that crazy computer every day. She keeps asking me if I'm nauseous. The other day, she started yelling at me, crying, "Why didn't I tell her my hair was falling out?" It was just a goddamn dryer sheet stuck to a pillowcase.

MIKE

Dad, well, anyway, I think she's right. Maybe you shouldn't go. Just to make her feel better, okay? Not that I'm worried. But for her. Don't go for her.

TED

Okay. I won't. For her.

Mike exhales and smiles.

TED (CONT'D)

Stay for dinner. Eat some of the organic crap she's making me eat. You owe me.

MIKE

Thanks, Dad.

TED

(Calling, but not very loudly)

Get all that, Evie?

Evelyn enters

EVELYN

You're a good boy, Mikey. *(To Ted)* And I knew you went to the Ace, Ted. I called down there and told them all to use the Purell if they waited on you. So next time you think you can get one over on me, don't.

END SCENE ONE

SCENE TWO

Dee is driving with Ted in the passenger seat. Evelyn and Bridget are in back. Evelyn is holding her purse and a large Tupperware container.

EVELYN

So, I'm bringing lemon bars for Lourdes. The nurse at the front? She's about four months along. She is so queasy these days and lemony stuff always helped Jen.

DEE

Except Christmas Eve when she barfed lemonade all over the tree.

EVELYN

Oh, why do you bring that up? It was years ago.

DEE

But it's a classic.

BRIDGET

It was awesome.

EVELYN

Or you two! You're both stinkers.

Evelyn cuddles Bridget. During the following exchange, Evelyn opens the Tupperware and gives Bridget a lemon bar, which Bridget eats.

TED

Watch out for that fella.

DEE

I see him.

TED

He's probably texting. There should be a law.

DEE

There is, Dad.

TED

Well, they should enforce it better. Turn here.

DEE

Yup. I know. I know. Been doing this for a bit now.

EVELYN

You are such a big help, Dee Dee. And it's so wonderful having you both come along this time.

BRIDGET

Oh, yeah. Institute days are always a party.

TED

When I was a kid, we didn't have all these days off like you kids do now.

DEE

And you had to walk to school. In the snow.

BRIDGET

Barefoot.

DEE

Uphill, both ways.

TED

(Grinning)

Through a minefield.

EVELYN

Oh! We can't make fun of minefields anymore. That Rachel Maddow talked about them the other night. They're very bad. We're lucky to have each other and live in America. Ted, tell the girls you love them.

TED

Oh, for god's sake.

EVELYN

Ted.

TED
(To Dee)

You know I love you, right, Turnip?

DEE

Yeah, Dad.

TED

Turnip Two?

BRIDGET

Yep. I know.

TED
(To Evelyn)

See?! They know! Do you have to turn everything into a meaningful family moment?

EVELYN

Yes! Yes, I do. I want my wonderful daughter and wonderful granddaughter to know that we love them. So sue me. I'm the worst person in the world.

TED

Well, yes, yes you are 'cuz I got not one of those lemon squares.

EVELYN
(Lightly smacking the back of his head)

Oh you!

TED
(To Dee)

You know the turn signal is there for a reason, don't you?

DEE

Yes, Dad. I know.

She does the exhale that she did in the first act when she described the doctor's reaction to Ted and Evelyn

So, surgery is next Friday, right?

TED

Don't go in the exit way this time. There's an entrance right off where you turn.

DEE

I know. But I'm going to drop you off right in front, at the, you know, under the awning drop off spot.

TED

Drop your mother and Bridget off. I don't like you walking in the parking lot alone.

DEE

Dad. It's nine in the morning on a Tuesday. All the muggers are still in bed.

TED

Drop your mother and Bridge off.

DEE

Do we have to do this every time? Dad, I'm going to-

EVELYN

-Oh, Ted. They'll be fine. Ted, you come with me. Dee Dee, you drop us both off, like you always do.

BRIDGET

I'll go with Mom.

EVELYN

See? We'll wait for you in the lobby.

TED

Well...

EVELYN

I don't want to sit alone in the lobby.

She winks at Dee in the rearview mirror.

TED

Well then. Okay. *(To Dee and Bridget)* I'll watch from the lobby. Don't park by any trucks or minivans.

DEE

I know. Okay. Here ya go. Bridge, help-

Bridget is already out of the car, going to help Ted out.

TED

(Waving her away)

Help your grandma.

Evelyn has popped back in the car and, grabbing the lemon bar Tupperware, she whispers to Dee.

EVELYN

(Whispering)

Yes. Friday. Mikey can get off but Peter has to work. We have to be at the hospital at 7:45. *(Loudly)* Got 'em. *(To Dee)* Be careful in the parking lot. *(To Bridget)* Be careful. *(To Ted)* Be careful!

TED

I'm being careful. You be careful.

Evelyn and Ted exit. Bridget gets into the front seat.

DEE

Be careful!

BRIDGET

Oh no. You be careful!

DEE

Oh, but I'm being careful. But you? Buckle up! But be super careful doing it.

BRIDGET

Where's your car-driving helmet?

DEE

Where's your bulletproof vest?

BRIDGET

Where's yours?

DEE

DON'T MOVE OR DO ANYTHING OR GO ANYWHERE FOR THE NEXT FIFTY YEARS!

They begin giggling.

END SCENE TWO

SCENE THREE

Evelyn and Mike are sitting in the hospital waiting area. Mike is holding her hand. Dee is standing upstage.

DEE

Thanks again, doctor.

She crosses and sits on the other side of Evelyn and takes her other hand. A moment as the news sinks in.

MIKE

Ma, it's going to be okay.

EVELYN

Well. This is news. One of you should call your brother. He was waiting to hear how the surgery went anyway. So, we should just tell him how it went. What they...um.... *(she begins to tear up)* ...found. And how much of it. So, one of you will have to do that.

Mike and Dee exchange a look, that wordless sibling communication. Mike nods at Dee.

MIKE

I'll call, Ma.

He exits.

DEE

Ma-

EVELYN

-I should be with him when he wakes up.

DEE

The doctor said you can go back. But it's going to be a while.

EVELYN

I don't know though.

DEE

What don't you know?

EVELYN

I can't lie to your dad. He'll know the second he sees me that something's wrong. He'll know. And that would be just awful. The first thing you find out after to wake up is that you're going to...you're not.... that it's...what they found. And the doctor should tell him. I wouldn't know what to say. I've never not known what to say to your dad.

DEE

You'll say exactly the right thing.

EVELYN

Oh, he'll just holler, whatever I say.

DEE

That's okay though.

EVELYN

I suppose. The last time I felt like this was...I remember but the feeling but...when was it?

DEE

I dunno, Ma. It's going to be okay.

EVELYN

Go. Go see if Mikey got Pete.

DEE

Ma-

EVELYN

Go. I'm okay.

Dee slowly exits. Evelyn is thinking hard.

Light shift.

Evelyn rises and is puttering in the kitchen. Ted comes barreling in with two coffees and a small bag of donuts.

TED

(Bellowing)

Evie! Evie! Where are you?

EVELYN

Don't yell at me, Ted. The coffee maker is dead for good, I think. Well, it is almost twenty years-

TED

-Turn on the tv!

EVELYN

What happened?

TED

Goddamn sons-of-bitches-

EVELYN

What?

Ted turns on the small kitchen tv.

Where is that?

TED

New York City. Two skyscrapers. Planes flew right into them. One goddamn plane each. Goddamn sons-of-bitches.

EVELYN

Oh my god. All those people! Oh my god!

Ted grabs the phone and dials.

Who are you calling? Do we know anyone in New York? Oh! Doesn't Melanie's son work in Brooklyn? Oh was it the Bronx? I always get those two mixed up.

TED

(Into the phone)

Mike, are you-

Lights up on Mike.

MIKE

-Yeah. I know, I know. I'm watching. It's unbelievable. But I'm okay. You okay? Ma?

TED

Yeah. Where are the kids and Jen?

MIKE

She's off today. Kids at school. You talk to Dee Dee and Petey?

TED

Not yet. Don't let Jen go to the hospital. They could be a target.

MIKE

You try telling Jen not to go to work.

TED

Mike-

MIKE

Oh no. You're right. I got it. Call Dee Dee and-

TED

-Yup. Stay close to the phone.

Ted hangs up. Mike exits. Ted dials Dee. Lights up on Dee.

TED

Dee. Turn on the tv-

DEE

-Daddy, I know. I'm watching, I'm fine. Dan's at work, he's okay, and Bridge is right here in her bouncy seat. I've gotta call you back. I've got a friend in-

TED

-Stay put, Turnip.

He hangs up and dials again. He waits.

TED (CONT'D)

Pete, you call me ASAP, you hear me? If I don't hear from you in 45 minutes, I'm coming to the school. Dee and Dan and Mikey and Jen are okay. Kids are at school. Your mom is here. Call the goddamn house.

EVELYN

Ted, what is this? Do you know? Do they know?

TED

We're being attacked.

EVELYN

But by who?

TED

Doesn't matter. But whoever it is better goddamn watch out. This is America, goddam it. No one attacks us!

He exits, and Evelyn picks up one of the coffees and resumes her seat. Light shift. She looks at the coffee cup like she is surprised it's in her hand. Dee enters and picks up the other coffee.

DEE

They didn't have any sugar left at the kiosk, so I used Splenda.

EVELYN

Oh, it tastes fine. It was September 11th.

DEE

What?

EVELYN

The last time I felt like this. This feeling.

DEE

Oh. Okay Ma. Pete's on his way.

Evelyn stands up.

EVELYN

I've decided I want to be there when he wakes up.

DEE

Okay, Ma. You want me to come with you?

EVELYN

Oh, no. I'll be fine. I just think, well, we've gotten bad news together before, your dad and me. It's better just to know, I think.

DEE

Ma, you'll be okay. You're really strong.

EVELYN

Oh, me?! Oh, Turnip, your dad's the strong one. I'm just me. Just, only, me. Silly old Evie.

DEE

I love you, Ma.

EVELYN

Well, okay then. I better tell those nurses to get ready, huh?

DEE

You bet.

They hug.

END SCENE THREE

SCENE FOUR

Evelyn is sitting in a chair by Ted, who is in a hospital bed. He stirs and she rises.

EVELYN

Ted. Teddy? It's me. Can you hear me?

TED

What time is it?

EVELYN

Oh geez. I don't know. Oh dear. Maybe around lunchtime?

TED

What?

He opens his eyes.

Oh. Oh. Yeah. Okay. Goddamn.

EVELYN

Are you hungry?

TED

What? No. What?

EVELYN

Because you can't eat.

TED

Water.

Evelyn gets him a plastic cup with a straw and he takes a sip.

Okay.

She places it back and then looks at him. A moment.

TED (CONT'D)

Goddamn it. Really?

EVELYN

Don't you worry. Dee Dee is already working on the research on all this and we are all going to just...just...figure this out.

Ted takes her hand.

TED

Shhhh. It's okay, Evie. Don't be scared.

EVELYN

You too.

END SCENE FOUR

SCENE FIVE

Ted is staring out the kitchen window. Peter enters the house.

PETER

Ma? Dad?

TED

Hush. Your mom's sleeping. Kitchen.

Peter crosses to kitchen.

PETER

Hey, Dad.

Peter goes to hug him. They embrace briefly and Ted steps back.

TED

Okay, okay. I'm not dead yet.

PETER

You okay?

TED

If one more person asks me that-

PETER

Sorry. Sorry.

Ted indicates for Peter to sit. Then he does. Ted begins pulling items out of a large file folder.

TED

Okay. Here's the checkbook. The savings account. All the regular monthly bills. The insurance-

PETER

-Oh, Dad-

TED

-Shut up. I'm not done. The insurance. The life insurance policy. This is important. Do not lose that. I've made copies of all our cards at the copy machine at the library. Here are those. All your mother's medical records. She confuses Dr. Simon with Dr. Simone. She goes to Dr. Simone. Dr. Simon is some hack she went to once like five years ago and he tried to give her these crazy pills to make her something. Happier or more energy or something. Like Evie needs to be more of what she is. But she says Dr. Simon when she means Dr. Simone, okay?

PETER

Okay.

TED

The will. She gets everything. Got it?

PETER

Yup.

TED

Mike handles her computer stuff but you might need to help with that too. These are the pills she's taking and the ones I'm taking so if I... you know, go splat on the ground or something, well, you can sort 'em out. This is the DNR. You know what that is?

PETER

Yes, Dad.

TED

No arguments. Here's the combination to the gun safe. (*Hands Peter a slip of paper*) It's in the basement. I know. I know. What good is a gun in the basement but...it was in the closet but with Mikey's kids, when they were toddlers, your mother made such a stink, so I finally just moved it to the basement. So, don't lose that.

PETER

Okay. What-

TED

-Shotgun and a handgun. All registered, thank you very much. You got a FOID card?

PETER

Uh, no.

TED

I figured. (*Gesturing to safe combination*) Maybe give that to Mikey.

He takes the combination back

Hell, I'll give it to him.

PETER

Dad, I can-

Ted waves him silent as he pockets the combination.

TED

Anyway. So that's it. And it's you because Mikey's got too much with the kids and Jen. And Dee and Bridget have to end up here. With your Ma. You know that, right?

PETER

Dad, I could-

TED

I know you think I'm not hip or cool but even I can see the irony of a middle-aged gay fella living with his mother.

Ted smiles and then, so does Peter.

But help. Don't be a lazy ass.

PETER

Okay. I will, I mean, I won't be a lazy ass.

TED

There's gonna be a lot to keep track of-

PETER

-But, Dad. We don't know that-

Ted stops him with his hand.

TED

It's my job to know. If I don't do this, who will? Huh? A man has to do his job. Got it?

Peter straightens up in his seat.

PETER

Yes. I got it. I got this, Dad.

TED

Good. Don't screw it up.

PETER

I won't.

TED

I know. Okay then.

Ted slaps Peter a couple of times on his back. He takes a moment, gathers himself, and then gives Peter one more slap on the back.

PETER

Thank you, Dad.

Ted grabs Peter's shoulder and shakes it a little in that macho "guy" way.

TED

You want some pie?

END SCENE FIVE

SCENE SIX

Bridget is plopped on the couch, texting. Dee is next to her, staring at the ceiling and slowly popping fudge stripe cookies into her mouth. Evelyn is on the computer. There is pounding and shuffling coming from outside.

TED
(Offstage)

The screw is stripped.

PETER
(Also offstage)

The screw is not stripped.

Mike comes storming onstage, electric drill in hand.

MIKE
(Muttering to himself)

This is goddamn ridiculous. Twenty goddamn minutes to put in four goddamn screws.

He strides off to kitchen.

TED
(Offstage)

It's stripped. Let me up there.

PETER
(Offstage)

You can't. Don't. Don't get on the stool. Dad, I got this. I know how to use a screwdriver! It's just at an angle.

Mike returns, jamming a battery onto the bottom of the drill, crossing back, exiting back offstage.

MIKE
(Off stage)

I got the drill. It's charged. Finally.

EVELYN

It won't let me sign on.

DEE

What won't?

EVELYN

The hospital website sign-in thing so I can e-mail the doctors. You said was so easy but it's not and it won't let me sign on.

Sound of a drill whirling.

DEE

Ma. We went through this like, ten times.

EVELYN

Well, it isn't working. Get Mikey.

TED

(offstage)

I tell ya, it's stripped.

PETER

(Offstage)

It's NOT STRIPPED! See!

Whirling sounds stops.

DEE

(Rising and crossing to Evelyn)

He and Pete and Dad are still-What did you do?

Ted, Mike and Peter enter; Mike and Peter are carrying a small stool and a few tools.

EVELYN

(To Dee)

I did what you said and a thing popped up. Mikey, a thing popped up.

DEE

Then you didn't do what I said.

MIKE

(To Evelyn) What? *(To Ted)* Dad, you have to keep the drill battery charging. You can just plug it into an outlet and leave it there so it's always-

TED

-And run up the electric bill? With that thing going all the time?

MIKE

Dad, it would be like, eleven cents a month! Geez!

DEE

(To Mike)

Jen called. They're running late.

MIKE

Great. Of course they are.

TED

(To Bridget)

Bridget, get the flag from the closet there and see if it works.

She rises but Peter stops her.

PETER

I'll get it. It'll work. Geez, Dad. It's just a stupid flag holder, for god's sake.

TED

Well, I want to check it.

Ted harrumphs and goes to off stage and returns with a flag on a pole. Dee has leaned in to begin helping Evelyn on the computer.

EVELYN

Mikey-

DEE

Ma. I'll help you. Here, you-

EVELYN

-But Mikey can-

DEE

Oh god. It's so simple. I'll show you. Again. Here

EVELYN

Mikey can. Mikey, I-

Ma? What?
MIKE

DEE
(Rolling her eyes)
It's just a computer thing. I'll do it.

I'll do it.
PETER

MIKE
(Eye roll)
No. I'll do it.

DEE
No, No. I got it. Okay, Ma? Just show me the "box." And I'll show you. AGAIN. God.

EVELYN
ALRIGHT! You three can just stop with all your high-handed holiness right now.

DEE
What, Ma?

EVELYN
You rolled your eyes about me! And your dad!

DEE
Did not.

EVELYN
Yes, you did. *(To Peter and Mike)* And you too. Both of you.

PETER
No, I didn't!

EVELYN
Oh yes, you did. Don't you lie to me. All of you think you're so smart and I'm sick of it! All your smarty-pants comments and looks and...and...and...can you make kielbasa?

MIKE
Why? What?

EVELYN

You can't. And you can't. Or... or...light a gas stove. Or hem on rick-rack when you let out a skirt.

PETER

-what's she? -

Ted shakes his head.

EVELYN

-Shut up. Every generation knows stuff. You're not smarter. You just have different stuff you got good at when you were young so you think I'm stupid-

DEE

-Ma, we don't-

Evelyn shuts her up with a look.

EVELYN

Well, I can kill and pluck and prepare a chicken. I can make ice cream by hand with no freezer just ice and milk and sugar and my muscles. Shuck and process corn in my sleep. I was the double-dutch queen of the block, once I went for 22 minutes straight. I know the Dewey decimal system like you...you...you know how to work the voicemail stuff! Someday, you're going to be me. OLD. Asking Bridget why things aren't...aren't...on a DVD anymore! Or talking about the good old days when you could call someone on your cell phone instead of a new way they invent that's complicated and different. And you'll have trouble and she'll laugh at you and roll her eyes behind your back and it will hurt your feelings! Because you're trying and it's hard and everything you knew is now something people just laugh at in old movies.

At some point during the rest of the scene, Dee, Mike, and Peter should end up sitting in a row on the couch as Evelyn lectures them.

TED

Now, Evie. Just calm down.

EVELYN

And sex.

DEE

Oh god.

PETER
What?

TED
Evie?

MIKE
Ma? Um-

EVELYN
-We had a lot of it. Good sex!

DEE
Ma, I'm sorry. Please.

MIKE
See? She's sorry.

EVELYN
Oh no. You've been acting like I'm a kid. Like a baby who doesn't understand nothing. Well, your father and I-

TED
-Evie, maybe-

EVELYN
Don't listen to this, Bridget.

Bridget just sinks deeper into the couch, taking in the scene.

We did it. Sex. A lot. And it was great. And you know what? We still do it sometimes. I bet I get more...ACTION than you do! Even with your dad sick! In fact, get your car keys. Dee, we're going to the mall.

DEE
What? No. Why? What's going on? I'm sorry?

EVELYN
-NO! You're taking me to the mall and I'm going to Kohl's and I'm going to get some lingerie. And then I'm going to have sex. With my husband. Because you might think I'm old and slow and you (*she points to Dee*), and you (*she points to Peter*), and Mikey (*she points to Mike*) all think

EVELYN (CONT'D)

you're so much smarter than me and your dad but we're just as good. And we're not dead yet! Right, Teddy?

Ted just nods.

We just know different stuff. We can fix things, make things last, we don't need computers to have a good time or order a taxicab or do a crossword puzzle. And some stuff was even better before than now. Like having kids. Why do you think people have smaller families now?

DEE

Ma, I really don't-

EVELYN

I'll tell you why.

DEE

Okay.

EVELYN

Back when we were having kids it was easier. None of this fancy breathing, epidural business. Oh no. You went to the hospital, they gave you a shot and a couple hours later you wake up with a baby. A clean baby. A cute, sleeping baby. It was wonderful! You got a nice nap while they took the baby out, no screaming, no crying, just a shot of twilight sleep, and wham, bam, it's all done. And then, you still get to be in the hospital for a week. None of this 24-hour nonsense. That's why gals had so many kids. It didn't hurt, we got a vacation, and we could just toss another one into the mix when we got home. In our day, three kids was a small family! Heck, Ted we shoulda had more so maybe we'd have one kid who wasn't a gosh darn stinker. So, so, all of you. Stop being so fancy-schmancy high and mighty.

DEE

Ma, I'm really, really sorry.

EVELYN

Good!

MIKE

Yeah.

PETER

Me too.

EVELYN

GOOD! You should be. We need help sometimes, but I never yelled at you when you were learning the alphabet. Or when you kept confusing the names of the colors or when you couldn't say your Ts and could only say Fs when you had to say a T-word, and you loved trucks and would yell "truck" at the top of your lungs whenever one went by. But you didn't say "truck." You said, well "truck" but with the F instead of the T. I was afraid we'd get arrested for public...bad language! But did I yell or laugh then?

PETER

No, Ma.

MIKE

Never.

DEE

Oh geez, Ma. You're right. I'm sorry.

EVELYN

Alright then. That's settled. Ted, it's your turn with these stinkers. Do you have anything to add? Teddy?

Ted turns to Dee.

TED

Get your car keys and get that woman to the goddamn MALL!

END SCENE SIX

SCENE SEVEN

Peter is standing at kitchen counter, working his way methodically through the fudge stripe cookies from the cookie jar. Dee comes in.

DEE

I told you to get the sheets.

PETER

And I told you the sheets come with the bed.

DEE

Are you sure?

Peter just picks up some paperwork, sticks it in front of Dee's face, and points to a paragraph.

PETER

"All linens are supplied"

DEE

Oh.

Dee exits.

PETER

(To audience)

Ma and Mikey are with Dad at the doctor. So they don't have to be here when they...set up. Things have taken a turn for the worse with Dad. The home hospice people are setting up today. Dee and I are here for, you know, moving stuff, making room.

What really sucks about this, if I'm being totally selfish, is that I've finally gotten the dad I always wanted. Now. Now, he gets all great and accepting. I mean, really? It took a cancer diagnosis to have you come around? So now, when I could finally bring somebody home, have a boyfriend meet my family, and I'm not seeing anybody. Great timing, Ted!

Yeah, I could have "manned up" and brought someone around before. Sean. We were together two years. Oh, god, Ma would have loved Sean. He was in hospitality. Outgoing, funny. Not good looking but cute in that short, bald, funny way. You know, really dynamic and articulate.

PETER (CONT'D)

And Ma would have been fine. She would have stammered for a bit, fed him, and then start planning what to get him for his birthday. But Dad. I mean, I've been out since I was a teenager, so it wasn't that. I just didn't want to make him sad. In the end, he wasn't angry or...well, he was freaked out but he came around. But I could tell it made him sad for me somehow. So, we never talked about my personal life. Always work or Ma or politics. But never me.

He puts the lid back on the cookie jar.

END SCENE SEVEN

SCENE EIGHT

Ted is in a bed. Bridget comes in with some applesauce.

BRIDGET

Grandma sent this in. She's said it's the Mott's you like. The kind with the apple pieces.

Ted gestures to her to put it down. She does.

TED

Sit.

She does.

So. I how did I do?

BRIDGET

What do you mean?

TED

As a grandpa. Did I do right by you?

BRIDGET

Um. Wow. Yeah. Yeah, ya did.

TED

Think about it.

She does.

BRIDGET

You've been...wow. You've just always been around so I never really thought about it, I guess.

TED

Now's the time.

BRIDGET

Okay. Well. You were really good when Mom and Dad got divorced. I thought you would be, like, you know. But you weren't. That really helped. You somehow didn't make anybody feel

BRIDGET (CON'TD)

guilty or anything. That was cool. It made it easier for me not to have to, you know, hate Dad to be with you guys.

TED

I'm glad.

A moment.

BRIDGET

Oh! Remember when you picked me up from school that one day?

Ted shakes his head no.

I was puking my guts out. I was so sick. And Mom and Dad, couldn't get there, I don't remember why. But you showed up, right away. And I was, like, in seventh grade, I think? Anyway, I was big. And once we got into the parking lot, you picked me up and carried me to the car.

TED

Now I remember.

BRIDGET

Yeah! You carried me and put me in the front seat. And every time I needed to puke on the way home, you pulled to the side of the road so I could open my door and throw up. You drove with the blinking hazard lights on and then just pulled over whenever I needed. Cars honked behind us but you just ignored them. And you brought me here and tucked me in.

TED

I remember.

BRIDGET

Thanks.

A moment.

TED

Do they still teach about religion in school?

BRIDGET

Yeah. World Religions.

TED

Did you take that?

BRIDGET

Yeah. Last year, first semester.

TED

What did you think...I mean...did it make you think about heaven and stuff like that?

BRIDGET

I guess.

TED

So? What do you think? About heaven? After you die?

BRIDGET

I think...hum...I don't know. I think maybe my physics class helped me more with that.

Ted indicates for her to go on.

Well, I like the class. It's the mathiest of all the sciences but I still like it. Anyway, there's this thing with energy. It doesn't die. Or end. If, say, fire consumes something, while the thing that's burnt up seems to disappear it's actually converted into something else, fuel for the fire. It just changes. So, I think that when you, well, when a person dies, that personal energy just kind of turns into something else.

TED

Like a ghost? Or reincarnation?

BRIDGET

No. Well maybe. But how can we feel and be so alive and then it just stops? So, I think our life as a human being is just sort of one train stop on the energy ride. And the next stop is around the corner, it just turns so hard, so sharp, you can't see it.

TED

Your grandma believes in heaven.

BRIDGET

Yeah. She's mentioned it a few times.

TED

A few??

They both smile.

BRIDGET

Do you?

TED

I kind of like your idea.

BRIDGET

Physics is cool. Do you know about Einstein and time? How time is relative?

TED

Yup. Mostly.

BRIDGET

I think when you're on the next platform, the next train stop, time could be different. Like maybe 10 years there feels like five minutes. So maybe, Grandma will live for a while but it will feel really short to you and then she'll show up and it will feel really quick. So, you won't be lonely. Hell, maybe you'll be hanging around our train stop but you'll be in the train, waiting for us, keeping an eye on us while we screw around on the platform!

TED

You're trying to make me feel better.

BRIDGET

How am I doing?

TED

You're doing an excellent job. Want some applesauce?

He hands it to her.

BRIDGET

I love you, Grandpa

END SCENE EIGHT

SCENE NINE

Evelyn is in the kitchen, standing stock still at the counter. Mike is on the couch and Dee is stretched out on the floor, eyes shut. Bridget is on her phone, texting. Peter enters.

PETER

He fell back asleep.

No one moves.

EVELYN

(Calling)

Pete, your sandwich is ready.

PETER

(Whispering)

I don't think I asked for a sandwich.

Dee, eyes still shut, just waves her hand and Mike shrugs.

Thanks, Ma.

She comes into the room and looks at Peter.

He's asleep.

EVELYN

I used the last of the mayonnaise for that nice hospice gal so I had to use the Miracle Whip. When Jen and the kids get here, be sure to tell them. If they want a sandwich. Or should she pick some up? Maybe McDonald's? What should we do? Mikey?

MIKE

It'll be okay.

EVELYN

You sure? Jamie can be sort of particular.

MIKE

They're on the way but I'll text her to get something if the kids are hungry. Okay?

EVELYN

There's a McDonalds at the corner by the...um...

MIKE

Bridge, could you text Jen and-

BRIDGET

-Just did.

PETER

Ma, why don't you sit down?

MIKE

Yeah. Sit with me, Ma. They'll be fine.

Dee struggles up to clear the way. Evelyn sits on the couch with Mike and Bridget. He takes her hand. Bridget puts her head on her shoulder. Dee sits at her knees and leans into her. Evelyn then leaps up.

EVELYN

Oh geez!

She races off stage

DEE

Ma?!

MIKE

Ma, what?

Evelyn comes running back on, American flag in hand.

EVELYN

(To herself)

Shoot, shoot, shoot.

She races out the front door. All look at each other. Flag now displayed outside, she returns.

PETER

Ma? You okay?

EVELYN

What?

DEE

Is this a holiday or something?

EVELYN

Oh, no. Your dad just really wants this. Every day. He asked me special and I forgot. It's the one thing I can do-

PETER

-Ma, he's in bed. I think it's okay if, you know, you forgot.

MIKE

Yeah. Ma, it's okay-

EVELYN

-NO! It's not okay! It's not okay!

DEE

Ma-

EVELYN

It's not okay! He wanted it outside every day.

DEE

Okay, okay. Calm down.

EVELYN

Promise me. No forgetting.

DEE

No forgetting.

EVELYN

Promise me. All of you.

MIKE

We won't forget. Promise.

PETER

Promise.

DEE

Promise, Ma.

BRIDGET

Me too, Grandma.

EVELYN

I have to remember. Every day. I have to remember.

MIKE

We'll help you.

EVELYN

We all have to remember.

MIKE

We will, Ma.

Evelyn sits back on the couch with Mike and Bridget. He takes her hand again. Then Mike begins to weep, Evelyn takes him into her arms.

END SCENE NINE

SCENE TEN

Ted is lying in bed. He opens his eyes and looks off stage.

TED

(To audience)

Oh, good. Evie got it out. See, I can just see it from here. The flag. When the wind blows, it sort of flaps at the side of the window there. I see it, then I don't. See? See there's just a little corner of the flag there, when the wind blows just right. Just a piece. Not the whole thing. It looks like it's almost...like it's blowing away. I don't know why but I like to see it flapping a little.

Guess time's up for this old timer. Time for the next stop. I'm not scared, mind you. Just so's Evie's okay. I think the kids will take care of her.

I did all I could. I hope I did. You wonder if it's enough though. Too late now, I guess. Ya do hope you taught them right. That they learned. That's all I was trying to do. Maybe that's all anybody tries to do. Kids. Parents. We all just want to take care of the folks we love. I hope I did okay with my turn.

Lights fade quickly on Ted and then come back up again. Ted easily swings out of bed and walks off stage.

END SCENE TEN

SCENE ELEVEN

Evelyn sits center stage.

EVELYN

(To audience)

The funeral was, well, a funeral. I bawled like a baby. I tried not to but I did anyway. I didn't want the grandkids to see me like that but, well, I was burying my husband so I eventually figured they could suck it up! We got lots of casseroles. I've gotta make sure to get everybody's Tupperware back.

DEE

Ma, it's time to go.

Dee enters with Bridget behind her. Bridget is carrying a few coats. Evelyn continues to talk to the audience while Dee fusses with the coats, finding Evelyn's.

EVELYN

It's been a long time since I was alone. Oh, Ted would go to the market. A couple of years ago he and Pete and Mikey went on a fishing trip. And one time Dee took him to a ballgame and coming home, they ended up at another ballgame.

Dee hands Evelyn's coat to her. Evelyn struggles to get into it while she continues to speak. Dee helps her.

Like a Little League game or something. Was it Little League? It was a Little League game in Brookfield. Oh, they had fun. They were gone for hours and hours. But they were together so I knew it was probably okay. I finished an entire book that day. Beginning to end. I sat in bed all day and read.

Dee buttons her coat up for her.

I can't read right now. You know what the only thing I can do is? Watch the tv. Ted's shows. All the cable newsy things. All that yelling, it's like he's right back in the room. Good golly, but that man makes...made a terrible ruckus.

Peter enters, holding a purse.

PETER

Ma, is this your purse?

EVELYN

Oh, good golly. Did I-

PETER

You left it in the room.

EVELYN

Geez, I'd forget my head if it wasn't attached.

PETER

It's okay. I got it.

Mike enters.

MIKE

You guys, we gotta go. Who's taking Ma?

Peter raises his hand.

EVELYN

The flowers?

MIKE

Shoot.

Mike exits.

EVELYN

Pete, where's your coat?

DEE

I got it. Is this yours?

Mike enters with two large floral arrangements.

MIKE

Help!

During Bridget's following monologue, Peter takes an arrangement, they are gathering prayer card, Dee hands coats around and they begin getting ready to leave.

BRIDGET

(To audience)

I think it's my turn. To do this talking to you thing. It's not my turn to do that. *(She gestures to Dee, Evelyn, Mike and Peter)* Yet, I guess. It will be. I think we all just take turns taking care of each other. Mom's doing her turn with Grandma, Grandma and Grandpa had their turn raising her and Uncle Pete and Uncle Mikey. Mom's STILL taking her turn with over-raising me, thank you very much!

Dee, busy with Evelyn, has put her coat on so the collar is flipped under. Bridget crosses to her as she keeps talking and straightens it.

But then, I guess, it's gonna be my turn. With Mom. And Dad too. Except maybe he'll marry Rita. His girlfriend. She has kids. But they're kind of a screwed up but maybe they'll turn out. You can never really tell, I think. So, maybe I'll have to take care of Dad too. Uncle Pete just has us so...oh, god, I am just going to make sure I make a ton of money. I mean, look at them. Sometimes, with everybody yelling and nagging and stuff, family just feels like a big old train wreck. I mean, really. Mom writes all these articles about fitness but she doesn't even exercise. I gotta get her to exercise. Just like Mom tried to get Grandpa to eat better. Oh, god, it never ends. You know, I'm beginning to get why Grandpa was always yelling at everybody. You just want everyone you love to be okay. And not be stupid.

A moment. She looks back at the family.

Okay, maybe not exactly a train wreck. Maybe just we're all just trying to figure out whose turn it is to do what.

Bridget goes to join the group. They all exit, chatting and bickering as the lights begin to fade,

MIKE

Dude, I can't take the flowers. Jen has allergies.

DEE

To cats!

MIKE

No, pollen too.

EVELYN

Pete, we'll take them. Bridge, grab one of those from Uncle Mikey.

DEE

No, Bridge, help Grandma.

EVELYN

Where's my purse?

PETER

Ma, I just gave it to you.

BRIDGET

Mom has it. Mom.

DEE

I've got it, Ma.

*As Dee, Bridget, Mike, and Peter tromp off stage,
Evelyn hangs back for a moment, smiling at all of them.
As she then exits, "We've Only Just Begun" sung by
Karen Carpenter begins to play.*

THE END