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MY AUNT LUCY

by

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CHARACTERS

MITCHELLHigh School Teacher & Vice Principal, age 48

AUNT LUCY Mitchell's mother's sister, age 65

RITA Mitchell's girlfriend, age 42

CAITLIN Mitchell's daughter, age 17

The Youngblood family living room in north San Diego County, California

Time is December 2017

SCENE ONE

(Sunny Monday morning. Early December)

AUNT LUCY

Was that the doorbell?

(Pause)

I hate Jehovah Witnesses. Are they out here? You know they take hidden pictures of you with spy neckties.

(Pause)

Selling Girl Scout cookies? Samoas?

(Pause)

Mitchell?

(Pause)

It could be FedEx.

(Pause)

Could be UPS.

(Pause)

It could be a subpoena. Did you skip jury duty again?

(Pause)

You do get deliveries to your door in North County?

(Pause)

Mitchell? Are deaf?

(Pause)

You know these California wildfires are coming down from Sonoma.

(Pause)

You know you fucking snore, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

No.

AUNT LUCY

Louder than a lumber mill saw.

MITCHELL

I don't snore.

AUNT LUCY

Are you saying that I snore?

MITCHELL

No. Would you please stop using the F bomb?

AUNT LUCY

What are you saying?

MITCHELL

I'm not saying anything. I heard no noise last night.

AUNT LUCY

Are you saying your dog snores?

MITCHELL

I told you. I don't have the dog anymore.

AUNT LUCY

You don't?

MITCHELL

My wife has custody of the dog.

AUNT LUCY

Impossible. That dog slept with you. You loved that Golden Retriever.

MITCHELL

I still love the dog.

AUNT LUCY

What's his name – Fluffy?

MITCHELL

The dog's name is Cezanne. Like the painter.

AUNT LUCY

Isn't that a little pretentious, my darling nephew.

MITCHELL

Barbara named him. I just paid the vet fees.

AUNT LUCY

(Sarcastic)
Oh, I see . . .

MITCHELL

She has a very good lawyer.

AUNT LUCY

And you don't?

MITCHELL

That's right. I hired the junior varsity attorney by mistake, and I got the turtle. The turtle died.

AUNT LUCY

The turtle died?

MITCHELL

I don't know how to feed a turtle.

AUNT LUCY

Why don't you have a good lawyer?

MITCHELL

You know.

AUNT LUCY

What do I know? That you have no fight in you? Or that you're too cheap to get the best legal representation? And you're paying Barbara's attorney's fees too?

MITCHELL

Only for the first six months of the dispute.

AUNT LUCY

I'll help you find your alpha male.

(She opens the front door and looks outside quickly)

MITCHELL

Maybe there's a package on the doorstep, Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

(Picks up a small package and closes the door)
And why the hell did you move this far from the coast?

MITCHELL

It's an affordable rental and near the school.

(He takes possession of the package)

AUNT LUCY

But this is like the bible belt with all these Jesus signs.

MITCHELL

Jesus likes north county.

AUNT LUCY

(laughing)

Does Jesus golf? Does he laugh at water hazards?

(Pause)

I mean, your zip code is full of zealots. Your PTA meetings must be a riot of fun.

MITCHELL

My high school still teaches science – if that’s any reassurance.

AUNT LUCY

Twenty-five years ago, your school board ordered discussions of divine creation be included in every classroom.

MITCHELL

It was a close vote, Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

If your Vista community doesn’t believe in science, they all might as well walk on all fours.

MITCHELL

You’re nothing like your sister.

AUNT LUCY

That’s *so true*. Your mother was a saint, an innocent flower, and well educated.

MITCHELL

I wish you were.

AUNT LUCY

Wish I was what? I am well educated.

MITCHELL

I wish you were half a saint.

AUNT LUCY

If wishes were fishes.

MITCHELL

If fishes were wishes.

AUNT LUCY

I’m no sin-free saint, thank God.

MITCHELL

This is our dwindling family, Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

Yes, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

Maybe you can try to be a saint until you make your flight.

AUNT LUCY

I never wore a halo, Mitchell, never wore a G string either. But that doesn't mean I'm thoroughly bad. And you'll never visit me in Ohio. I have to come here to maintain ties.

(Laughs)

Which car are you going to sell?

MITCHELL

The Mercedes. Mom's car.

AUNT LUCY

And keep the Lexus?

(Pause)

Look, I'll book a plane the end of the week. Okay?

MITCHELL

Sure.

AUNT LUCY

These wildfires are getting scary. Why the hell doesn't San Diego County have more than two fire helicopters?

(Pause)

You think I've overstayed my welcome.

MITCHELL

Don't make me answer that.

AUNT LUCY

How rude.

MITCHELL

You used to like hotels.

AUNT LUCY

I never liked hotels, Mitchell. Especially Marriott's – fucking Mormons. They own the corporation and wear magic underwear. How did you convince my sister to move into Assisted Living?

MITCHELL

She needed bed checks and a nurse. Her condition wasn't getting better.

AUNT LUCY

But a Jewish facility?

MITCHELL

She liked Jews. She like playing Mah Jong.

AUNT LUCY

Jews play Mah Jong?

(Watching him review papers at the dining room table)

More headaches?

MITCHELL

It's the biggest invoice I received. Burials are more expensive than weddings.

AUNT LUCY

Take your time with each payment.

MITCHELL

Yes.

AUNT LUCY

Catholic mortuaries are notorious for late billing. How are you holding up, nephew?

MITCHELL

Mourning takes time. She's better off now.

AUNT LUCY

You don't believe in heaven.

MITCHELL

Of course not. But Mom did. She thought there would be free WiFi when she arrived.

AUNT LUCY

Did you ever believe in a Jesus? A white Jesus with blue eyes?

MITCHELL

Lucy . . .

AUNT LUCY

Aunt Lucy. Jesus was dark skinned, kinky long hair, irresistibly handsome, highly sexual at large banquets, and a troublemaker with money changers.

(pause)

Everyone knows this but the Vatican and the Republican Party. Jesus lived in the desert and he was good building with his hands. Everyone in Bethlehem and Nazareth was dark skinned. He didn't live in Utah according to most biblical historians.

MITCHELL

When are you going back to Columbus?

AUNT LUCY

It's still snowing in Ohio, Mitch. I don't love snow in Buckeye.

MITCHELL

Who's watching your home?

AUNT LUCY

A neighbor. Frederico. I call him Fred. Fred with the five-inch tumor in his head. Fred Head. Benign tumor but it messes with his hair. I dated him for a year. Mitchell. He's a few years younger than me but he loves my personality and loved giving me oral sex. That's what he said. We went to bed on the first night, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

I don't need details.

AUNT LUCY

Do you think women my age are not erotically active? Fred's keeping my house warm so the pipes don't freeze. He's a pipe guy, Mitchell. Fred bought a diamond ring and proposed. I told him that I don't last in marriage. Told him that I was married four times. And my husbands either die or lose all their money. He didn't care about my past. And he didn't care about dying young or losing money. Fred's the epitome of Ohio. Salt of the earth. I told him that I was a white-collar crook.

MITCHELL

Why do you embellish? Why do you lie to him?

AUNT LUCY

I didn't lie. I was once charged with misappropriations.

MITCHELL

Misappropriations?

AUNT LUCY

No big deal. Sloppy CPA audit. I was acquitted and received a big Christmas bonus for the unnecessary embarrassment. A colossal misunderstanding.

MITCHELL

What?

AUNT LUCY

I was the bookkeeper for a multi-city philanthropy. The organization meant well. We did good work for the public even if the endowment came from killer capitalists. Mitchell, you must know that sometimes a little voice goes off inside our heads late at night.

MITCHELL

What little voice?

AUNT LUCY

“I deserve a gift. I am underpaid. The 1% controls 99% of American wealth.”
You know the story.

MITCHELL

I don't know the story.

AUNT LUCY

Since the funeral, you really are in a state of shock. And you've lost a lot of weight.

MITCHELL

I can afford to lose some pounds. Have you been drinking?

AUNT LUCY

Sweetie, I'm a sophisticate and I drink after 5pm, but you look at me like I'm the paragon of debauchery. No one uses the word paragon anymore, have you noticed?

(She picks up a book off the coffee table)

Are you reading Walker Percy now?

MITCHELL

I like him, yes.

AUNT LUCY

He's too Catholic for me.

MITCHELL

He has other virtues.

AUNT LUCY

I only know *The Moviegoer*.

MITCHELL

Great novel. Glad you read it.

AUNT LUCY

His father committed suicide.

MITCHELL

I know.

AUNT LUCY

Like your father. When you were 13.

MITCHELL

Yes.

AUNT LUCY

If you like these guilt-ridden Catholic novelists, why not stick with top draw Graham Greene?

MITCHELL

Greene's not a Catholic novelist. Strictly speaking.

AUNT LUCY

Well, more than Philip Roth or Cynthia Ozick, for Christsakes. And of the two Jews, I really can't stand Ozick, sweetie. She has no sense of humor whatsoever! At least Roth tells a good, raunchy joke.

MITCHELL

Were you charged with embezzlement?

AUNT LUCY

Oh sweetie. Not exactly charged. I was brought in for questioning. And being charged doesn't mean being indicted. Big distinction. I hired a witty Irish lawyer. The case was dropped. I won a small settlement to boot. I love Irish lawyers with a hint of red hair.

(Laughing)

Vermont has the most embezzlement cases. Followed by D.C. and West Virginia. And it pays to be falsely accused when you can slam back a defamation of character suit.

MITCHELL

I never know when you're joking.

AUNT LUCY

Darling, I'm not joking. Defamation wins are like lottery payoffs.

MITCHELL

You are joking.

AUNT LUCY

You'll know when I'm joking when you see my eyebrows knit and link together like Frida Kahlo. There's a thin line between stealing and daydreaming. A thinner line between joking and truth telling. A thinner line between clean and dirty money. I had trouble with my financial liquidity, but those days are fading.

MITCHELL

Do I need to loan you money again?

AUNT LUCY

Only if it will make you happy, darling. Do I make you happy?

(He frowns)

I paid you back two years ago. With interest. And if you forget a future debt, as many good people do, a loan isn't a loan but paying it forward.

MITCHELL

You know I'm saddled with spousal and child support.

AUNT LUCY

Of course I know. I read body language. Your shoulders stoop like Kung Fu Panda.

MITCHELL

Aunt Lucy, I'm getting crushed.

AUNT LUCY

But in time, Barbara – that sexy heartless succubus from Secaucus - will marry some jackass and be off your fucking back. For a Jersey girl in her early 50s, she's attractive, Mitch, and always at spin class to keep her ass tighter than a drum. She had work done on her eyes and nose. I'm sure she's blowing guys every weekend.

MITCHELL

Don't say that.

AUNT LUCY

Don't say that she's played around or that her ass is tight?

MITCHELL

It's insulting.

AUNT LUCY

Insulting? To her? To your family?

MITCHELL

To everyone.

AUNT LUCY

Marriage isn't a natural state for healthy adults. It's an instrument of torture from the Middle Ages. That's why priests don't wed. They prefer sexual freedom.

(A quick, sweet smile)

You think it's the only way to be legit and have heirs. Soon the GOP will take away the marriage tax deduction, but will remove the death tax. What more is there to think about? We're really randy wildebeests on the plains of the great Serengeti.

(Rita enters with her own key to the house)

AUNT LUCY

Good morning, Rosa.

Rita. RITA

Good morning, Rita. AUNT LUCY

Good morning, Lucy. RITA

Aunt Lucy. AUNT LUCY
(awkward silence)
What are your thoughts on marriage?
(fixing her bra strap without embarrassment)
You're up early.

RITA
The wildfires are spreading according to my phone.
(Smiles stiffly)
Struggling with insomnia.

AUNT LUCY
(Looking at Mitch)
Whose fault is that?

RITA
We spend several nights apart. It's easier that way.

AUNT LUCY
I won't comment. I might drop an F bomb. I like what you've done to your hair.

RITA
Color or the cut?

AUNT LUCY
It looks thicker. Color's good. I thought you did a weave or nuanced extension.

RITA
Oh Lucy, you're a laugh riot.

MITCHELL
Yes.

RITA
Nothing like Mitch's mother.

AUNT LUCY

If I can make you laugh that gives me great joy. Do you have children, Rita?

RITA

Yes. They're grown. Out of the house.

AUNT LUCY

Do you miss them?

RITA

No. I see them every other month.

AUNT LUCY

Mitch misses his daughter.

RITA

Yes, I know. And she needs a much better role model.

AUNT LUCY

Don't we all? Phyllis Diller was my North Star.

RITA

Caitlin's mother stopped going to AA three years ago. Poor Mitchell.

AUNT LUCY

Yes, *poor* Mitchell. He's a nurturing male with an extra Y chromosome, and there are only 5% in captivity.

MITCHELL

You're talking as if I'm not in the room.

AUNT LUCY

I see you, darling. We're talking a very slight population base, Rita. That's why he's such a good high school teacher.

RITA

Actually, he's the the vice principal of the school, Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

Really?

MITCHELL

Yes. Two months ago.

RITA

A promotion.

AUNT LUCY

Climbing up in the world, are you?

MITCHELL

Administration roles pay more. Every nickel counts.

AUNT LUCY

You're going to get a lovely inheritance, Mitchell. You can quit the school and start a bed and breakfast in Carmel near Clint Eastwood's mansion.

RITA

Is that right?

AUNT LUCY

My sister liked to buy high end foreclosures and she had keen sense. And I love Clint.

RITA

Mitchell told me all about her real estate success with her savings despite her teaching public school. She was loyal to one school district her entire career.

(Pause)

And did you ever keep a professional job?

AUNT LUCY

Of course. I worked for years as an executive bookkeeper for corporations and the non-profit sector. One company was a Fortune Five Hundred. But I've had associates who were embezzlers. Sometimes I even enabled them and looked the other way because of my deep empathy for others.

RITA

Embezzlement is a Federal crime, Aunt Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

Yes, so true. Are you insinuating that I crossed the line?

RITA

Mitchell told me about the close calls with the FBI in your life.

AUNT LUCY

The FBI doesn't really care about embezzlement. Google it, Rita.

(Laughing gently)

Darling nephew, do you think I was an accessory to an embezzler?

MITCH

No.

AUNT LUCY

Well, I get a little buzz from it. White collar crimes are never out of style. I've old friends who made out okay.

MITCHELL

How can you be so cavalier?

AUNT LUCY

I don't mean to be *cavalier*, darling.

MITCHELL

Don't press your luck. You can be locked up years.

AUNT LUCY

Maybe. Maybe not. Their crimes are not mine. I'm not Bernie Madoff. Your mother knew that I gave away a ton of money to the poor.

MITCHELL

She never told me.

AUNT LUCY

She should have told you. She once said to me that she wished she had my sense of gifting and my daring.

MITCHELL

Mom never said that.

AUNT LUCY

She said to me on three occasions, Mitchell. The first being on her wedding day. She also said to me when she took sick three years ago that she loved me. And I kissed her with tears in my eyes.

(Silence)

You do realize that most companies don't press charges even when the FBI gets involved because - in the end - the inside crime news story is too embarrassing to their stockholders and to their subsidiaries. Most female embezzlers don't see jail time. Companies just try to get the cash back discreetly. And they have insurance policies for these kinds of losses.

RITA

Have you made a science of this?

AUNT LUCY

I'm very good with company payrolls, Rita. Most embezzlers are women. Educated ladies. Nearly 65%. It's a trend.

RITA

Unbelievable.

AUNT LUCY

Yes. Unbelievable. Alfred Hitchcock built two films on the idea of a woman embezzler. Janet Leigh as Marion in *Psycho* and Tippi Hedren as Marnie in *Marnie*.

(Pause)

Isn't that strange? Hitchcock thought it was a sexy profession.

(Pause)

Most embezzlers begin in their 40s.

Most are married with good families.

Nearly all are white.

Nearly all – if caught and charged - are first-time offenders with clean histories.

Most have terminated from a job through no fault of their own.

Money loss is related to the job position.

Average embezzlement by middle executives is \$60,000.

Directors and Managers average \$200,000.

Vice Presidents often rake in \$500,000.

My girlfriend Gladys had a higher average. She surpassed VPs.

Gladys fit the national profile. Married with a good family. Church-going gal.

RITA

How much did Gladys steal?

AUNT LUCY

About a million.

RITA

Mitch? Is this true?

MITCHELL

I don't know this Gladys.

RITA

How the heck do you steal a million dollars?

AUNT LUCY

With rolling airport luggage and a ticket to Phoenix.

MITCHELL

What did she do with the cash?

AUNT LUCY

I told her to park it in pharmaceutical stocks. U.S. and internationally. Stay away from Bitcoin. She likes a good dividend. Very happy with Pfizer, Merck and GlaxoSmithKline.

MITCHELL

The government can seize her accounts.

AUNT LUCY

They're not in her name. Gladys took my advice.

MITCHELL

"Gladys" is not you, Aunt Lucy?

RITA

Mitchell, let it go.

AUNT LUCY

Gladys has Tourette's - a great defense if she gets caught.

RITA

Mitchell said that you moved around the country a lot.

AUNT LUCY

Restless folks are highly intelligent folks, Rita. I need changing environments. Look at my LinkedIn profile. My MBA's from Pace University.

RITA

Impressive, Aunt Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

I speak three languages and can read five with bifocals.

RITA

I can get by with American sign language.
(She gestures with her hands playfully)

AUNT LUCY

Ten years ago, I wrote restaurant reviews for the Chicago Tribune and the Cleveland Plain Dealer. And I taught Bikram yoga to geriatrics in Nova Scotia right after 9/11.

RITA

Yoga in Nova Scotia?

MITCHELL

It rhymes, Rita.

RITA

Icing on the cake.

(Crossing to Mitchell)

Mitchell said you married without a parachute and yet defied the rules of gravity.

MITCHELL

I never said that, Rita.

RITA

Yes, you did, honey. I thought it was so poetic.

AUNT LUCY

Mitchell loves me but he hardly knows me. I'm pained to say that.

(She blows her nose with a hankie)

I have a niece Tabitha from my first childless marriage who thought I was a charitable gold digger. How's that for a label? Such an uncouth projection . . . and in our age of celebrity sex offenders. Why are famous men in need of women to watch them masturbate? To cheer them across the finish line?

(Pause)

I tried to convince my niece that of all the male heroes in the western world – living or dead – wearing see-through tights - none is more important to me than Robin Hood.

MITCHELL

I never heard of a "Tabitha".

AUNT LUCY

Maybe she goes by the name of Tabby Sue. I don't know anymore.

RITA

Tabitha sounds like a witch from Salem.

AUNT LUCY

How witty, Rita. You met her about 20 years ago when I was in the hospital, darling.

MITCHELL

You were in the hospital?

AUNT LUCY

A hysterectomy - yes. Your mother was with me for two weeks. You flew in for a few days and said you had a history teachers' conference in Columbus.

MITCHELL

I think I remember.

AUNT LUCY

We have to give to the homeless, Mitchell. Every day you see someone on the streets, empty your pockets. They aren't to blame. Companies chew up people.

(Pause)

Have you reviewed Ruth's insurance policies?

MITCHELL

She had no policies.

AUNT LUCY

She did, Mitch. You're just in a fog. I helped her leverage her estate to lessen the tax burden. Upon her death, her beneficiaries will get a little bit of cash. Don't you remember her attorney sending you a Crummey letter each year? For Irrevocable Life Insurance Trusts, a Crummey Letter is required for purposes of gifting. Designed to hold assets for distribution to one or more beneficiaries at a future time.

(She lights a cigarette and looks for something that will serve as an ashtray)

You know, the annual exclusion used to be \$10,000.

MITCHELL

Am I the only insurance beneficiary?

AUNT LUCY

Of course not. I'm listed too. And Caitlin. She wanted me to have cigarette money. You're probably getting \$750,000. Caitlin over \$300K. My share is \$75K. It's a 10 to 1 ratio for me because that's your mother's math at work. The insurance payment plus her condo sale will give you a nice boost.

MITCHELL

I'm stunned.

AUNT LUCY

Don't quit your job just yet. You'll total over a million but not enough to sail into retirement.

MITCHELL

I wasn't thinking that.

AUNT LUCY

Money is the root of all evil. We shouldn't worship cash but we can declassify cash.

MITCHELL

I agree.

AUNT LUCY

(To Rita)

Do you agree?

(Pause)

Rita darling?

RITA

We all need money to live. But yes - we shouldn't worship money.

AUNT LUCY

(To Mitchell)

Did you hear that?

(Laughing)

We live in a country under one God and yet there are too many Gods in our pocket. I divide the world into cat and dog people. I'm a cat person. If you look at a cat, you know the cat is always thinking. The cat senses future time. If you look at a dog, the dog is just happy licking his balls.

(To Rita)

You're nothing like Barbara who's such a cruel actor.

RITA

Thank you.

AUNT LUCY

You've met her, Rita?

RITA

No.

AUNT LUCY

You really should meet her. You'll know so much more about Mitchell. Doesn't Barbara do late night Toyota commercials on TV?

MITCH

Let's not talk about Barbara. Do you think you can manage that Aunt Lucy?

AUNT LUCY

Okay. I abhor Toyotas.

MITCHELL

Rita knows everything she needs to be happy with me.

AUNT LUCY

Isn't honesty better than mystery?

RITA

I'm an advocate for honesty, Aunt Lucy.

MITCHELL

(attempting charm)

Aunt Lucy's a celebrity in her own right and that's her justification for monopolizing the conversation.

RITA

A celebrity?

MITCHELL

She's on YouTube a lot.

AUNT LUCY

I made Emily's List in Ohio.

MITCHELL

That's true.

AUNT LUCY

You know Emily's List, Rita?

MITCHELL

It's a political action committee by Democrats, running women candidates.

RITA

Yes, I know.

AUNT LUCY

I ran for office in Columbus. Had a campaign chest over 8 million.

MITCHELL

One of seven city council seats. Her first husband had nominated her.

AUNT LUCY

I lost by 249 votes. Heartbreaking. Unbearable. Tragic.

MITCHELL

She went door to door shaking hands.

AUNT LUCY

Voter fraud. Bamboo fragments from China was detected on many ballots.

MITCHELL

Not proven.

AUNT LUCY

Trained pandas were seen at some precincts distracting poll workers.

MITCHELL

(Laughing politely and checks wristwatch)
Oh no, I'm late for a school meeting.
(approaches Rita, kisses her, and grabs his sport jacket draped over the chair)
I'll see you before dinner.

RITA

Sure.

AUNT LUCY

No kiss for auntie?
(Mitchell blows her a kiss and exits)

RITA

He gets speeding tickets when he's late.

AUNT LUCY

My second husband - a brilliant Scientologist who once had an affair with John Travolta before *Grease* was filmed - came out against me on public radio. That cost 5,000 votes.

RITA

How horrible . . .

AUNT LUCY

Lester had irrational reasons for sabotaging my election. We argued liked idiots for hours. Lester the jester. He had no sense of humor. But Lester was a popular architect before he retired. I took revenge on him the old fashion way. I copied the bedroom photos with Travolta and mailed them to the National Enquirer.

RITA

Were the photos published?

AUNT LUCY

I think so . . . it was so many years ago . . .

RITA

Why did you get into politics?

AUNT LUCY

Funny question, Rita. The 1970s. The 1980s. Can I tell you the truth?

RITA

Please do.

AUNT LUCY

In 1983 I met the owner of the New Jersey Generals, a new franchise in the U.S. Football League. He was visiting Ohio for a real estate venture, and I was working for the Hyatt Corporation. I was also a volunteer for Planned Parenthood. Although he was married at the time, we had sex in the hotel suite. Lousy sex. The worst bundle of flesh in North America.

(Pause)

I'm talking about Donald Trump.

RITA

You slept with Trump?

AUNT LUCY

No. It was the afternoon. Less than 10 minutes. He was like a grizzly bear with a little penis. He placed his watch and jewelry on the nightstand like shrines for a rosary. It was a terrible experience, but he made connections for me in the local Democratic Party.

RITA

Does Mitch know this story?

AUNT LUCY

No. He doesn't like Trump. Mitchell is a synthetic liberal.

RITA

Synthetic?

AUNT LUCY

Less than organic.

RITA

Oh.

AUNT LUCY

What are your politics?

RITA

Prudent. Dignified.

AUNT LUCY

Conservative?

RITA

Independent. A centrist.

AUNT LUCY

Good for you, Rita.

A good match for Mitch.

RITA

Were you married before?

AUNT LUCY

Yes.

RITA

Experience is a virtue.

AUNT LUCY

Some experiences are painful.

RITA

Was divorce that painful?

AUNT LUCY

Yes.

RITA

With kids?

AUNT LUCY\

No kids. If we had children, the marriage might have had some glue.

RITA

Yes. It's all about glue.

AUNT LUCY

We all need strong glue, Aunt Lucy.

RITA

End of Scene

SCENE TWO

(Later that Monday afternoon. Caitlin is stretched out on the sofa while Aunt Lucy plays solitaire on the table by the armchair)

AUNT LUCY

You're getting so beautiful, Caitlin. Hadn't seen you since you were in pig tails.

CAITLIN

Pig tails?

AUNT LUCY

You were six years old.

CAITLIN

Time is funny.

AUNT LUCY

At the cemetery you looked so mature and wise. Quite beautiful.

CAITLIN

(Inattentive)
Thanks, Aunt Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

I meant that in a good way.

CAITLIN

I know.

(pause)
Do you miss Grandma?

AUNT LUCY

I do. My heart is broken. We loved each other so. Sometimes I thought your grandmother and I were twins – she was taller and much prettier. We had the same haircuts growing up. I adored her eyebrows and long eye lashes. Aren't you supposed to be in school?

CAITLIN

I took a few days off in respect.

AUNT LUCY

That's understandable.

CAITLIN

The funeral went so fast.

AUNT LUCY

Yes.

CAITLIN

I wish I had a sister.

AUNT LUCY

Do you?

CAITLIN

A younger sister. A young thing with crazy energy. I'd probably set a good example if I knew there was a kid sister.

(Pause)

Want to see my new tattoo? You'll never guess where it is.

AUNT LUCY

I don't really like tattoos. Particularly in the nether regions.

CAITLIN

Everyone's got one, Aunt Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

Not everyone.

CAITLIN

Everyone that's cool.

AUNT LUCY

Ink makes people look like branded cattle.

CAITLIN

We are cattle.

(lowers front jean waistline and shows a Chinese letter tattoo)

AUNT LUCY

I can't read Japanese.

CAITLIN

It's Mandarin.

AUNT LUCY

Marvelous.

(Pause)

Is that the new one?

CAITLIN

Number three.

AUNT LUCY

And number one?

CAITLIN

My tramp stamp.

AUNT LUCY

Don't you have to be 18?

CAITLIN

Yes. I have a phony I.D. Dad's cool.

AUNT LUCY

Okay.

CAITLIN

And Mom doesn't really care.

AUNT LUCY

She cares.

CAITLIN

Well, sure. About important stuff.

AUNT LUCY

Does a tramp stamp mean backdoor sex?

CAITLIN

(dryly ironic)

Beats me. High school doesn't teach semiotics. So how would you define backdoor sex?

AUNT LUCY

When guys don't have time to kiss you hello.

(Pause)

Why didn't your mother show up for the funeral?

CAITLIN

Why are you asking me? I don't always talk to her.

AUNT LUCY

Your father said that you've been avoiding him recently.

CAITLIN

I see him all the time.

AUNT LUCY

Did you have a blow out?

CAITLIN

No.

AUNT LUCY

And I heard you've been pretty critical on your mother.

CAITLIN

Not all the time.

AUNT LUCY

You spend more time here than at her home.

CAITLIN

That's true. She has a new lover. This time a very *masculine* woman with a hair lip. Over 150 pounds. Drives an 18-wheel truck.

AUNT LUCY

Very masculine.

CAITLIN

The lady is ten years older than me.

AUNT LUCY

Caitlin . . . I'm sorry.

CAITLIN

I had guessed they collided at a truck stop on the interstate. But they met online. Isn't that a hysterical?

AUNT LUCY

Did Barbara tell you?

CAITLIN

I just know.

(Pause)

Their first date was at Olive Garden and went to her apartment for a night of Pilates with makeshift bungee cords.

(takes out a cigarette)
Bungee cords are dangerous, Aunt Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

Are you on medication?

CAITLIN

Not anymore. I was on Abilify. Made me fat and sad. So, I stopped taking it.

(Pause)

I watched the movie *Rosemary's Baby* last night for the third time.

(looks for lighter on the coffee table)

Mia Farrow's is so good, so believable. You remind me of Ruth Gordon. The actress who played the crazy neighbor, married to the Satanic cult.

AUNT LUCY

Ruth Gordon? Is that a compliment.

CAITLIN

I wrote my high school English thesis on the Wicca influences within and outside the movie. Anton LaVey was never credited for working on the film or appearing as the Devil when Satan has sex with Rosemary. There are theories that LaVey had something to do with the movie curse and the Charles Manson murders.

AUNT LUCY

I never watch horror films, Caitlin.

CAITLIN

Why?

AUNT LUCY

They mess with my sleep cycles and my orgasms.

CAITLIN

Do you still get orgasms at your age?

AUNT LUCY

Yes, sweetie.

CAITLIN

Good for you!

(pause)

Rosemary's Baby isn't a horror film. It's an American prophesy. Evil is assisted by Good. The film explained all the assassinations of the 1960s and predicted Trump's success.

AUNT LUCY

That's so clever of you to say.

(Takes a cigarette from her pack)

There are no prophecies, sweetie. Do you smoke weed?

CAITLIN

Yes.

AUNT LUCY

Do you have some?

CAITLIN

Are you gonna bust me?

AUNT LUCY

No, I just want to get high.

CAITLIN

Really? You get high?

AUNT LUCY

Sometimes.

CAITLIN

Now?

AUNT LUCY

Why not, pumpkin?

CAITLIN

Well, we just had a funeral.

(Taking out a rolled joint)

It's medical weed. I got a Medical Identification Card.

AUNT LUCY

Great. I've got to ward off glaucoma.

CAITLIN

(Lighting up)

So LaVey owned a Victorian house on San Francisco's California Street, which he painted black. It was his new headquarters. The neighbors were pissed.

AUNT LUCY

Black paint can be severe.

CAITLIN

Here.

AUNT LUCY

(Takes a long drag and coughs)

Oh boy. This is talky talk marijuana. I'm going gas 100 words a minute.

CAITLIN

(Laughing)

Great, Aunt Lucy.

(Taking the joint back)

So LaVey stole the motto of occultist Aleister Crowley, "Do as thou wilt shall be the whole of the Law" and put this idea into his church.

AUNT LUCY

So much research, Caitlin.

CAITLIN

I like doing research. Good grass?

AUNT LUCY

Yes, I certainly do. Hope we got some chocolate cookies in the pantry.

CAITLIN

So LaVey made up weird rituals using naked women for High Black Mass.

AUNT LUCY

Did you father read your English thesis?

CAITLIN

No. He didn't.

(Pause)

Charles Manson's in the news. The dude is dead.

AUNT LUCY

Well, good that he's dead.

CAITLIN

Dying in prison must be one of the worst things in the universe, Aunt Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

He hasn't a soul, Caitlin. That's the final word. He led the unspeakable Hollywood Hill murders.

CAITLIN

I missed my period.

AUNT LUCY

That happens.

CAITLIN

But . . .

AUNT LUCY

Are you . . .

CAITLIN

So, I went to CVS . . .

AUNT LUCY

And you tested?

CAITLIN

Yeah.

AUNT LUCY

Am I the only one who knows?

CAITLIN

I told my best friend. Patty.

AUNT LUCY

What about the boy?

CAITLIN

What about the boy?

AUNT LUCY

Does he know?

CAITLIN

He's a jerk. I wouldn't tell him my zodiac sign.

AUNT LUCY

Not fair, Caitlin.

CAITLIN

Who cares? It was a few dates. He stopped texting me 5 weeks ago.

AUNT LUCY

Does Barbara know?

CAITLIN

(Pause)

Of course not. Barbara only knows that I know about birth control.

AUNT LUCY

What are you going to do?

CAITLIN

About my mother?

AUNT LUCY

About the pregnancy?

CAITLIN

I don't know. Maybe just get drunk and fall down a flight of stairs.

AUNT LUCY

What is your zodiac sign?

CAITLIN

Guess.

AUNT LUCY

Aries.

CAITLIN

Good guess.

AUNT LUCY

You want the baby?

CAITLIN

I probably do want the baby. I would devote all my love to my baby. I don't like school.

(Pause)

Were you ever pregnant?

AUNT LUCY

I had three abortions.

CAITLIN

Really, Aunt Lucy?

AUNT LUCY

It's a painful thing to go through. And very ambivalent about the last one. You'll ruin your life, Caitlin. Go see Planned Parenthood for counselling.

CAITLIN

Mom wasn't married when she conceived me.

AUNT LUCY

So?

CAITLIN

I just thought you should know that.

AUNT LUCY

Thank you for telling me.

CAITLIN

Some men are such dicks.

AUNT LUCY

Your dad isn't one.

CAITLIN

Oh, yes, he can be on his worst days.

(Rita with a bag of groceries enters the living room and senses that Caitlin and Aunt Lucy were smoking weed)

RITA

Well, that's quite an aroma.

AUNT LUCY

Did you just go shopping?

RITA

Yes.

AUNT LUCY

Are you cooking dinner tonight?

RITA

That was the general idea, yes. Where's Mitchell? He was supposed to be home earlier today.

AUNT LUCY

He's outside. Didn't you bump into him?

CAITLIN

What do you see in my father?

RITA

I love your father. We fit. Emotionally. And physically. That's so important.

CAITLIN
You fit?

RITA
That's what I just said.

CAITLIN
I'm glad that you fit. Do you think he sees the fit?

RITA
What?

CAITLIN
Do you think he loves you?

RITA
Yes. I do. He loves me very much. And thank you for asking, Caitlin. Are you two super high?

CAITLIN
Yes.

RITA
How nice. And it's not even 5pm. Marijuana – despite the California laws – is a gateway drug.

CAITLIN
Want to get high, Rita?

RITA
No. I've asthma.

CAITLIN
This cures glaucoma.

RITA
I said *asthma*.

CAITLIN
(Smiling)
Can I tell you about my last boyfriend? We didn't fit.

RITA
I don't need to know your personal secrets, Caitlin. Tell them to your dad.

AUNT LUCY

(Looking out the window)

Rita, Mitchell is fixing the sprinkler outside. A project which can rupture all the toilets. A simple warning – go now if you need to.

RITA

Thank you.

AUNT LUCY

And he might run to the hardware store for parts.

CAITLIN

His name's Lloyd.

RITA

Whose name?

CAITLIN

The old boyfriend. The guy I was sleeping with.

AUNT LUCY

(flippant)

That's a nice name.

CAITLIN

He's at UCLA. A freshman.

RITA

Excellent college.

CAITLIN

Lloyd drives a flatbed truck. His father runs a big hedge fund.

RITA

That's a nice profession.

CAITLIN

In the back of Lloyd's F150, he downed some pills. And I think he drugged my Diet Coke. We hooked up under a full moon. Big white ball in the sky. Looked like the moon was coming to crash into the planet. You know that European film *Melancholia*? A planet left its orbit and came directly at Earth. It will happen sometime. We deserve oblivion. I blacked out for a while. When I came to, Lloyd was vomiting like a fraternity pledge.

AUNT LUCY

That's so morbid, Caitlin.

CAITLIN

So, that night the moon changed Lloyd's eyes from blue to silver. He sprouted facial hair. Fingers nails popped. Howled like a wolf. I scratched his skin and drew blood. And then he stopped vomiting.

RITA

Wonderful.

CAITLIN

That night he got me pregnant.

RITA

What?

AUNT LUCY

Too much information . . .

RITA

Are you sure?

CAITLIN

I'm sure.

RITA

Oh Jesus.

CAITLIN

Your body changes right away. I can see the future. I feel spiritual.

(change in tone)

What do you think, Rita?

RITA

You're not a child, Caitlin.

CAITLIN

Thank you.

RITA

You're a beautiful young lady.

(To Aunt Lucy)

I don't know. What do you think, Lucy?

AUNT LUCY

Sounds like Caitlin was dating the Wolf man.

(Caitlin's cell rings. She scurries off to take the call)

And the Wolf man didn't have his hat on.

RITA

Is she really pregnant?

AUNT LUCY

I think so. Half the women in America either get an abortion once in their lives or seriously think about getting one. Which half are you, Rita?

RITA

Stop playing with me.

AUNT LUCY

Pro-choice or pro-life?

RITA

I'm not taking sides. It's really how Mitchell wants to handle this.

AUNT LUCY

Do you want to tell him?

RITA

I prefer that you tell him. You're family.

AUNT LUCY

Okay, I will. You avoid heavy lifting.

RITA

That's not right. But I have etiquette and I hold social standards.

AUNT LUCY

You're just like Mitchell.

RITA

Yes. I think you're right.

AUNT LUCY

It was a compliment, Rita.

RITA

Is it? I see that you like to bring negativity to this family, days after a funeral.

AUNT LUCY

I'm trying to build a good bridge between Caitlin and Mitchell.

RITA

Really?

AUNT LUCY

Really?

RITA

Was there a bridge between you and your sister?

AUNT LUCY

Yes. An emphatic yes.

RITA

That's not what Mitchell told me.

AUNT LUCY

Mitchell happens to be blind about several things involving my sister and me.

RITA

I apologize, Aunt Lucy. That was rude of me.

AUNT LUCY

Rita, Caitlin needs her father.

RITA

Agreed, and she's got a wonderful father.

AUNT LUCY

And a deficient, estranged mother.

RITA

I agree with you on that point.

AUNT LUCY

Caitlin should show more appreciation to Mitchell.

RITA

Yes.

AUNT LUCY

We agree.

RITA

Yes. Teens are teens. I was a teen. You were a teen. It's miserable being a teen.

AUNT LUCY

Maybe we can change the communication in this home.

RITA

Fine. I agree with that as well. Let's improve the harmony.
(Caitlin returns from her bedroom)

RITA

That's so funny.

CAITLIN

Yes, I'm trying to be funny.

(Broad smile)

Rita, if you had to choose between having a superpower, would you pick flying or would you pick invisibility?

RITA

I don't want superpowers.

CAITLIN

It's a game, Rita. Can't you play a dumb, little game?

RITA

Play a game?

CAITLIN

I'm not asking you to strip to your panties. Just play the game.

RITA

I don't like superheroes.

CAITLIN

Nobody really likes superheroes. That's not the point. I could have asked you x-ray vision vs. the ability to read people's minds.

(Pause)

What's your problem? Pretend you're ordering from menu.

RITA

Ask your aunt.

CAITLIN

Ask my aunt what?

RITA

If she wants to be a superhero.

CAITLIN

Rita.

RITA

What?

CAITLIN

Aunt Lucy *is* a superhero. Can't you see her beautifully invisible cape?

AUNT LUCY

(She stands and models her invisible cape)
So, Rita, would you prefer to fly like a bird or be invisible like the wind?

RITA

Invisible like the wind.

AUNT LUCY

Why?

RITA

(mildly exasperated)
I don't know.

CAITLIN

Tell us, Rita.

RITA

Because I could come and go as I please.

AUNT LUCY

Wouldn't you rather just flap your wings and leave the earth?

RITA

I have an older sister who is a lot like you Aunt Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

Physically?

RITA

No. Not physically.

AUNT LUCY

Psychologically?

(Pause)
Spiritually?

RITA

I know you have few spiritual beliefs.

AUNT LUCY

Actually, I do have spiritual beliefs. I think Mother Nature exists and most religions are praying to a false God.

(Pause)

What's your sister's name?

RITA

Elvira.

CAITLIN

Elvira?

RITA

Yes.

CAITLIN

I always wanted to be called Elvira. And be a vampire.

RITA

And the *Twilight* saga?

CAITLIN

Twilight's okay. Did you know that Polanski made a comedy vampire film with his wife Sharon Tate.

RITA

My sister ruins parties and most any public event. She ruined her life.

AUNT LUCY

That's a well-crafted art. We need more talented women like your sister.

CAITLIN

Vampires don't always suck blood.

RITA

An art that you wish to master.

CAITLIN

The art of sucking is mostly human, Rita.

AUNT LUCY

I think you two need a referee.

CAITLIN

Vampires also bum cigarettes and steal your Netflix password.

AUNT LUCY

Okay. Time out.

(Mitchell enters. The room falls silent)

MITCHELL

Just heard over the radio that the wildfires are close to Poway Road and I-15. I just hosed our rooftop. I want you all to think about packing what you need, just in case. Evacuations about to happen for Scripps Ranch, Ramona, and Poway.

RITA

Oh God, Mitchell. That's scary.

MITCHELL

Yeah. Wildfires can't be controlled.

RITA

Whether arson or acts of nature.

CAITLIN

I'm already packed, Dad.

MITCHELL

Really?

RITA

We had no rain in months.

AUNT LUCY

This has been a grueling week, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

Let's pray the winds don't kick up.

RITA

I know we've got to pack up but Caitlin's got news.

CAITLIN

Do I?

RITA

Yes. I think it's become an open secret.

AUNT LUCY

We talked about you, nephew.

MITCHELL

Do I smell marijuana?

AUNT LUCY

We've been smoking to calm down.

MITCHELL

This isn't the time to get stoned.

AUNT LUCY

Just a half joint.

CAITLIN

Just a buzz, Dad.

MITCHELL

What's the family news?

CAITLIN

I should live with you now 100%.

MITCHELL

You do already, unofficially.

CAITLIN

Well, time to make the court know.

MITCHELL

Why now?

(Pause)

Why?

CAITLIN

I had a super bad fight with Mom.

MITCHELL

How bad?

CAITLIN

I pushed her.

MITCHELL

Pushed her.

CAITLIN

She pushed me back. Then I punched her.

MITCHELL

You punched her?

CAITLIN

And accidentally knocked her tooth out.

MITCHELL

A tooth?

CAITLIN

One of her lower incisor teeth that was already chipped. Not as bad as it sounds.

MITCHELL

What's wrong with you? Caitlin?

CAITLIN

I had a lot of rings on my right hand, Dad. Look. I've anger issues. Mom was about to get dental implants anyhow. You know, she has pretty bad periodontitis.

MITCHELL

Did she catch you smoking in her house?

CAITLIN

No. I only smoke at your house.

(Pause)

Anyway. She said something awfully shitty to me. I'll never forget it. I threw away my house key.

MITCHELL

Court order. You have to stay with her.

CAITLIN

Not at my age. The court allows teens to decide if at least one parent supports the idea.

MITCHELL

I'm not certain of that, Caitlin.

CAITLIN

Look, Dad. I don't want to stress about things just now. I'm about to take my SATs. You know I missed my PSATs. I freak out with each standardized test.

MITCHELL

We'll do the paperwork for learning disability accommodations, and you won't have to test against a clock inside a gymnasium.

(Pause)

Do we have to talk about this in front of everyone?

CAITLIN

Why not?

MITCHELL

Caitlin.

CAITLIN

How pissed are you, Dad?

MITCHELL

I'm not pissed.

CAITLIN

Your eyebrows are twitching.

MITCHELL

I'm concerned about the wildfires and our preparation.

CAITLIN

Okay. I get it.

MITCHELL

I know you want to quit school and launch a YouTube channel.

CAITLIN

That's not what this is about.

MITCHELL

Isn't it?

AUNT LUCY

Mitchell, we heard something else.

CAITLIN

I'm going to have a . . .

MITCHELL

(Interrupting Caitlin)

Did you stop seeing your counselor?

CAITLIN

Yes. About two weeks ago.

MITCHELL

I'll have to phone your mother.

(Aunt Lucy reaches for the marijuana roach on the coffee table and lights it)

MITCHELL

Honest to God, Aunt Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

(Exhales marijuana smoke. Smiles broadly)

The Greeks knew the concept of zero but refused to claim it a number. Aristotle mocked the concept because you can't divide by zero. The Romans didn't utilize numerals for math and didn't require a symbol for zero. 1,500 years ago, a symbol in India was created to convey an empty abacus column. This was a dot. Praise be the dot!

(She kicks off her shoes, takes in another smoke, and falls onto the sofa)

In the 8th century Arab mathematician, al-Khwarizmi, reveled in the creation of zero. Arabs gave the zero to Europe. The gift wasn't well received; the Italians were offended to see an assault to their arithmetic.

(Laughing to herself)

I used to be a dot. But now I am zero.

end of scene

SCENE THREE

(Later that evening, at the dinner table with meal completed. Caitlin, now settling in for the night, is wearing a terry robe that is loosely belted closed)

CAITLIN

I needed to take a bath and calm down, Dad.

MITCHELL

It's perfectly fine, Caitlin.

CAITLIN

Thanks.

MITCHELL

We're done with preparations if we have to evacuate.

CAITLIN

Are you making plans to marry Rita?

MITCHELL

I really don't know how to answer that, Rita.

CAITLIN

It's just that I sense with grandma's passing, you have more human needs.

MITCHELL

Maybe I do.

CAITLIN

She's not so bad. I'm getting to like her.

MITCHELL

Good.

CAITLIN

Is it awkward for her to say overnight if I'm in the next bedroom?

MITCHELL

I don't think so.

CAITLIN

After all, I'm not a child.

MITCHELL

I never said you were.

CAITLIN

You think I'm a spoiled.

MITCHELL

No.

CAITLIN

You once thought I loved Mom more.

MITCHELL

It doesn't matter what I once thought. I just want you to try to love us equally and honestly.

CAITLIN

I will. Really. And I promise to get my grades back up. I'll take the SATs in the spring. And I'll have better school attendance. Tonight is the start of a new Caitlin Youngblood.

MITCHELL

Wonderful.

CAITLIN

Thanks, Daddy.

MITCHELL

(Playfully)

You never call me Daddy.

CAITLIN

It makes you look younger, *Daddy*.

(Aunt Lucy and Rita continue their conversation as they enter the dining room)

AUNT LUCY

Do you love your brother, Rita?

RITA

I do.

AUNT LUCY

How nice that you have close relations with a sibling.

RITA

I looked after my brother even after he left college. Our parents died in a car crash. I've always been protective of him.

AUNT LUCY

Mitchell will benefit by you.

CAITLIN

Dessert?

RITA

(To Caitlin)
Coming soon.
(Caitlin rises to help out in the kitchen)

MITCHELL

Could you please belt your robe, Caitlin?

CAITLIN

Why?

MITCHELL

Because you're a little exposed.

CAITLIN

Whoops.

MITCHELL

You're almost 18.
(Aunt Lucy enters with pie on a tray)

CAITLIN

I'm with family.

MITCHELL

Aunt Lucy . . .

AUNT LUCY

Yes?

MITCHELL

Please tell Caitlin to belt her robe.

AUNT LUCY

Pumpkin, please belt your robe. It's making your father very uncomfortable.

(Caitlin belabors this request by flashing her body in the direction of Mitchell
- back to the audience. Rita enters with pot of coffee)

RITA

Should we turn on the news for fire updates?

CAITLIN

Why not?

AUNT LUCY

Did you know that last month Harrison Ford was driving north of L.A. on a two-lane road and saw a woman careen into a ditch. So, he pulled over and helped her out of crashed vehicle. She had to think for an instant: Was this Hans Solo or Indiana Jones coming to save her? Or Blade Runner coming to kill her?

RITA

True story?

MITCHELL

It was in the news.

CAITLIN

And how many times did Harrison Ford crash his Cessna two-seater, great pilot that he is.

AUNT LUCY

(mock whisper)
She's in trouble, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

(mock whisper)
I know.

AUNT LUCY

This time it's not good.

MITCHELL

Speeding ticket?

AUNT LUCY

Worse.

MITCHELL

Are you going to tell me? Is anyone going to tell me?

She's pregnant.

RITA

Oh, fuck.

MITCHELL

Daddy . . .

CAITLIN

Everyone knows? Rita, how do *you* know?

MITCHELL

I walked into the conversation hours ago.

RITA

And you didn't want to tell me?

MITCHELL

No.

RITA

(To Caitlin)
Are you sure? Does your mother know?

MITCHELL

Mom doesn't know.

CAITLIN

Did you see a doctor yet?

MITCHELL

I will.

CAITLIN

Oh God.

MITCHELL

Dad, did you know that pregnant teens and fighter pilots have spikes of serotonin in their eyes.

CAITLIN

I didn't know that.

MITCHELL

AUNT LUCY

Last week in Washington, a Navy EA-18G Growler drew over a blue sky a penis, sketched in jet exhaust.

RITA

Are you still high, Aunt Lucy?

AUNT LUCY

No, just trying to be entertaining.

MITCHELL

Caitlin, you don't understand who I am.

CAITLIN

I do understand you, Daddy. And you want me to have an abortion.

MITCHELL

I didn't say that.

CAITLIN

But that's what you're thinking.

MITCHELL

I'm too exhausted by the week, Caitlin, to think through this.

CAITLIN

Me too.

MITCHELL

Who is the boy?

CAITLIN

It doesn't matter.

MITCHELL

Aren't you scared, Caitlin?

CAITLIN

Yeah, I am. I'm not all grown up.

MITCHELL

At night, when I look into your bedroom, I see only a child.

CAITLIN

And now?

MITCHELL

Life is too short. Death can happen. Family is important.

CAITLIN

I get it. Really. When I was a little girl, I thought my prince would come. Now I see the game. It's how Meghan Markle did it.

RITA

Would you like to meet a prince?

CAITLIN

Marry a prince? No. Meet a prince? Yes.

AUNT LUCY

Don't we all?

CAITLIN

From age 6, Meghan was raised by her mother. Her dad white.

(pause)

When she was 11, she wrote a soap company to change their ad about women in the kitchen. The company fixed the ad. That was smart of Meghan, When I was 11, I was obsessing about how big my ass was.

MITCHELL

You were never heavy.

CAITLIN

I was.

MITCHELL

I'm your father, Caitlin. I love you. You're hitting hard with news. We can make good choices. I feel your love and feel your respect.

(Pause)

I felt your support at the funeral.

CAITLIN

Grandma suffered.

MITCHELL

Yes, she did. The last year was painful to her.

CAITLIN

I hated her doctor.

MITCHELL

He's not friendly.

CAITLIN

He's not competent.

MITCHELL

He came highly recommended.

CAITLIN

He looks like Andre the Giant.

MITCHELL

Well, yes. Now that you mention it, Dr. Schneider's very tall.

CAITLIN

You pick the weirdest doctors in the galaxy.

MITCHELL

Grandma eventually chose her doctor, Caitlin.
Aunt Lucy, who do you thank for your cancer surgery?

AUNT LUCY

Five years ago, I had a good surgeon, yes. A bald Jewish guy.

RITA

We're not setting a good example for Caitlin.

AUNT LUCY

I'm a terrible model.

MITCHELL

Caitlin, go visit Planned Parenthood and get some counseling.

RITA

Yes.

AUNT LUCY

Your dad's right.

MITCHELL

And whatever you do will be the right thing.

AUNT LUCY

The right thing is the personal thing, Caitlin. When I was your age, I had some trouble too.

RITA

Thank you for sharing, Aunt Lucy.

MITCHELL

Aunt Lucy, maybe that's enough wine for tonight?

AUNT LUCY

Moi?

MITCHELL

Yes.

AUNT LUCY

I withhold things, Mitchell. Your mother taught me that skill. I should share more with all of you. Then you won't think I'm so hard to read.

MITCHELL

I don't need to know more things, Aunt Lucy. Honest to God.

AUNT LUCY

I have trouble with Christ.

RITA

Really?

AUNT LUCY

Someone impersonated Christ after his death. Or died in his place. Judas and Jesus exchanged roles. Judas made himself to appear like Jesus. Judas died on the cross. Judas didn't betray Christ. Just the opposite.

MITCHELL

That's nonsense, Aunt Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

Is it?

RITA

It is.

AUNT LUCY

Forget Christ. Forget what I just said about Christ.

(Pause)

Before Ohio, I had seven years in Boca Raton. At the time I never thought I would leave Florida. Not because I need warm winters, but I loved to laugh at rich fat retirees. I married in Boca Raton. My second husband Redford died after eating a poisonous blowfish, the Japanese delicacy fugu. He left me an inheritance of anonymous bearer bonds and a string of old Jaguar sedans. Jaguars from the 1970s. Reddy's business partner – a blind Cuban who was related to Nixon's buddy Bebe Rebozo - thought I had secret assets from their company. This was 1998 the year that Rebozo dropped dead.

There were mob connections left and right – maybe Redford was under the thumb of a Havana thug ? Rebozo began like Reddy, buying low rent laundromats and bodegas, before buying the Key Biscayne Bank & Trust. There’s something fishy about all the small concierge banks in southern Florida. But no one in government cares.

(Pouring herself a drink from a decanter)

I didn’t know why that year in 1998 I felt threatened, but I bought a Glock 9mm and went to shooting practice every Saturday. Found that I had a marksmen eye. I liked my Glock immediately and fell in love with its kickback. Kind of got orgasms from the recoil.

(Pause)

There was gossip that Rebozo and Nixon were *in flagrante delicto*. We’ll never know but I don’t think Nixon was the guy on top. My guess - he was catcher, not pitcher. The clown who swore like a whore but bled like a pig.

end of scene

SCENE FOUR
(The next morning)

RITA

That was a heavy rain last night, thank God, with these wildfires.

MITCHELL

Yes, thank God.

RITA

(Looking out the window wistfully)

It’s been a little easier for you with winter recess, even if she’s driving you crazy.

MITCHELL

Caitlin’s in shock about her grandmother’s death.

RITA

That's natural and my heart goes out to her.

MITCHELL

Mom and Lucy were close many years ago and something unmentionable had happened.

(Pause)

What, I'll never know.

RITA

Best you don't know.

MITCHELL

Lucy's fond of Caitlin.

RITA

She's not a good influence on Caitlin.

MITCHELL

At Caitlin's age, she's been exposed to everything imaginable under the sun.

RITA

Caitlin and your aunt remind me of that Lily Tomlin film, *Grandma*, that came out last year? Tomlin's tough as nails and so funny, Mitch.

MITCHELL

There was a student last week – Justin Miller - with a rifle found in his locker.

RITA

Oh Christ.

MITCHELL

It wasn't loaded but he had a mountain of ammunition in his backpack. A freshman from a good family. His two sisters graduated here a few years ago. His father's a university professor and his mother's a lawyer for the city. The teen was off his medication and got the gun from a friend. This was a scheme to scare one of the teachers. We're keeping it out of the news unless a teacher leaks this to the press. I curse the NRA. This conforms to national trends. Teens are bringing weapons to school and even metal detectors can't prevent this horrid mayhem.

(pause)

What's outside the window?

RITA

Nothing.

MITCHELL

You look dreamy.

RITA

Yes, I should be a runway model for the AARP set.

MITCHELL

(laughing)
I think you're hotter than Jane Fonda.

RITA

Cute.

MITCHELL

Hotter than Annette Benning.

RITA

Cuter.

MITCHELL

Will you marry me, Rita?

RITA

What?

MITCHELL

I thought it over the last few days. We can shop for rings.

RITA

Marry you?

MITCHELL

We don't have to live in this house.

RITA

Why are you asking me . . . of all times?

MITCHELL

I've been very emotional all week.

RITA

Obviously, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

I thought we had talked about the idea.

RITA

We haven't.

MITCHELL
We spoke about living together.

RITA
Not really

MITCHELL
We texted each other, Rita.

RITA
Did we?

MITCHELL
I saved the text.

RITA
Your divorce isn't final yet.

MITCHELL
It will be in six weeks.

RITA
You said that six months ago, but the lawyers just drag this on to Armageddon.

MITCHELL
I can give up some assets and push this to a wrap.

RITA
Are you trying to convince me or convince yourself?

MITCHELL
(Approaches and kisses her neck)
I think I can convince both of us, darling.

RITA
Just make things happen, Mitchell. Talk is cheap.

MITCHELL
I will make things happen. You know . . . we talked about adopting children.

RITA
No, Mitchell. We were drinking too much that night.

MITCHELL
Rita . . .

RITA

We're told old for more kids.

MITCHELL

We can bring in an au pair girl from Scandinavia.

RITA

Why think of raising children?

MITCHELL

We can do better than blend our families.

RITA

Your mother just died. Focus on that.

MITCHELL

Thank God she had no pain in the end.

RITA

Thank God.

MITCHELL

I had a dream last night.

RITA

And?

MITCHELL

I don't always remember my dreams. But you were in a beautiful chiffon gown with a train and a sheer white veil. Your hair was longer. There were Arabian horses. I was in a tight black suit. The priest was taller than a sequoia and I think there were violins playing Mendelsohn.

RITA

Horses and violins.

MITCHELL

It was a happy dream, and I don't want to forget something that nice.

RITA

A dream that you wrote?

MITCHELL

A dream that I felt.

RITA

Should I believe you?

Yes. MITCHELL

As much as you believe me? RITA

Yes. MITCHELL

Dreams don't mean that you can put a plan into action. RITA

I'm not a procrastinator. MITCHELL

I didn't say you are. RITA

(He kisses her)
Look at me. MITCHELL

What? RITA

What do my eyes say? MITCHELL

I don't know. RITA

Look, Rita. MITCHELL

I see. RITA
(She nods)

You don't want to get married before summer? MITCHELL

Call the lawyer tomorrow, Mitchell. Get a real timetable. RITA

I will. MITCHELL

You're a special person in my life, Mitch. RITA

And? MITCHELL

I do love you. RITA

At least think about moving in with me. That's legal. MITCHELL

Let a week go by. RITA

What will change in a week? MITCHELL

Everything. RITA

You think so? MITCHELL

Lucy might finally get the hell out of your house. RITA

She's leaving this weekend. MITCHELL

Did you see her airline ticket? RITA

Rita. MITCHELL

Did she buy a ticket? RITA

She's on standby with an award ticket. MITCHELL

RITA

Did you give her your ATM pin number?

MITCHELL

No.

RITA

Have you found your wallet yet?

MITCHELL

Not my leather wallet. Just my jogging wallet.

RITA

And that never happens to you, Mitch.

MITCHELL

I'll call the lawyer tomorrow.

RITA

Thanks.

MITCHELL

I owe you a lot and I won't forget the support.

RITA

When we visited your mother in hospice, she was livid about Lucy.

MITCHELL

Yeah.

RITA

She knew Lucy's hidden face.

MITCHELL

Mom knew her sister had issues.

RITA

I don't trust your aunt.

MITCHELL

I know.

RITA

She keeps a gun in her purse.

MITCHELL

That's not a gun.

RITA

It's not a door stop.

MITCHELL

Rita, it's a novelty cigarette lighter from eBay.

RITA

Why defend her?

MITCHELL

I don't have many relatives left.

RITA

Lucy reminds you of your mother, but I don't care if they look alike.

MITCHELL

She's going back to Ohio in three days.

RITA

Hold your ground. Make her get on a plane.

(Pause)

I think she did embezzle from Habitat for Humanity.

MITCHELL

I don't.

RITA

That story makes her sound complicit.

MITCHELL

She exaggerates. She hypnotizes herself. She loves the attention.

RITA

You should call Habitat.

MITCHELL

And say what? That Lucy Carmichael, from Columbus, is here seeing her sister's burial and has a brief case of \$700,000?

RITA

Does she have that much cash?

MITCHELL

I didn't look.

RITA

But you saw her with a wad of bills?

(He nods)

You risk being an accessory to a crime.

MITCHELL

I don't think so.

RITA

Guilt by association.

MITCHELL

No.

RITA

You know things but you're sitting on your hands. Your aunt did jail time.

MITCHELL

All of this is getting ridiculous.

(Pause)

I asked you to marry me.

RITA

I know.

MITCHELL

Why can't you share a positive emotion.

RITA

My therapist thinks I'm not quite stable this year.

MITCHELL

I bought a ring, darling.

RITA

Did Lucy help you pick it out?

MITCHELL

Say something affirmative, please Rita.

.

RITA

You can read my thoughts. I watched you at the cemetery, Mitchell.

end-of-scene

SCENE FIVE

(Caitlin and Aunt Lucy on the couch eating cereal from two bowls and an open box of raisin bran)

CAITLIN

I hate the store brand grape nuts cereal but if I'm hungry . . .

AUNT LUCY

Raisin bran can be a girl's best friend.

CAITLIN

Funny.

AUNT LUCY

At my age, we need more than coaching for success in our morning bathroom.

CAITLIN

Were you ever arrested, Aunt Lucy?

AUNT LUCY

Yes. So was Socrates in 399 BC.

CAITLIN

Dad told me stories about you.

AUNT LUCY

I don't think you should believe old family stories.

CAITLIN

Dad said Florida won't let you visit.

AUNT LUCY

Well, sweetie, I don't need a stopover in Miami and I was never a fan of the state attorney general.

CAITLIN

You served time in prison?

AUNT LUCY

Maybe once. A long long time ago.

CAITLIN

What's prison like?

AUNT LUCY

Not much worse than a timeshare in Las Vegas. Oh sure. I'm joking.

(fussing with her hair)

You know. Cold lock up. Nothing to do. Spotty library facility. Unpleasant cellmates. You get lice and see mice.

CAITLIN

How long?

AUNT LUCY

Six months.

CAITLIN

What was the crime?

AUNT LUCY

Sloppy bookkeeping.

(pours herself more coffee)

Get your high school diploma, pumpkin. And let's think about college before the world turns into a swamp.

CAITLIN

How much money was missing?

AUNT LUCY

Not that much. Really.

CAITLIN

How much, Aunt Lucy?

AUNT LUCY

Enough to have an unhappy outcome.

CAITLIN

Why can't you be honest with me?

AUNT LUCY

White-collar crime account for 4% of FBI investigations. The majority of these cases are frauds and counterfeiting. Even a thousand bucks across state lines triggers the bureau.

CAITLIN

Are you mad that you got yourself into trouble?

AUNT LUCY

Yes.

CAITLIN

Really?

AUNT LUCY

I trusted someone and got burnt, Caitlin.

CAITLIN

You said you were ambivalent about your abortions.

AUNT LUCY

Yes.

CAITLIN

Why?

AUNT LUCY

Because I wanted to be a mother.

CAITLIN

How old were you?

AUNT LUCY

My last time? The early 1980s.

CAITLIN

And guy?

AUNT LUCY

Some asshole who owned the New Jersey Generals.

CAITLIN

New Jersey Generals?

AUNT LUCY

It was a mediocre football team in a ridiculous league that failed.

CAITLIN

Did he talk you into the abortion?

AUNT LUCY

No.

CAITLIN

Did you get the abortion right away?

AUNT LUCY

Yes. But I knew this could be my last effort getting pregnant.

CAITLIN

Wow. That's terrible. Did you talk to grandma about the problem?

AUNT LUCY

I did.

CAITLIN

What did she say?

AUNT LUCY

She said to keep the baby. She knew how I felt.

CAITLIN

Grandma was good at that.

AUNT LUCY

She was. Grandma was against abortions. It was a church thing to her.

CAITLIN

Yeah. Yeah.

(Pause)

You said some beautiful things about her at the funeral.

AUNT LUCY

Thanks.

CAITLIN

You made dad cry. He never cries.

AUNT LUCY

Some theologians ask the question, "what if there is an afterlife and no God?" while other theologians ask, "what if there is a God but no afterlife?"

(Pause)

And that makes me ask a third question, "what if there is an afterlife and there is a God, but it's very hard to get a reservation."

CAITLIN

Why don't you move to California? Maybe to L.A.? Or here?

AUNT LUCY

Maybe, Caitlin. If Mitchell would say so. I can get a one bedroom apartment.

CAITLIN

Why do you have to wait for him to say anything?

AUNT LUCY

Because.

CAITLIN

Just do it.

AUNT LUCY

I really need your father's permission.

CAITLIN

I'll talk to him.

AUNT LUCY

Don't push him, darling. Lobbying is counterproductive.

CAITLIN

Do you believe in Jesus?

AUNT LUCY

Sure. Why not? He wore sandals.

CAITLIN

I don't believe in Jesus.

AUNT LUCY

Why not?

CAITLIN

He was too passive. He should have destroyed the Romans.

AUNT LUCY

You sound like Henry Kissinger?

CAITLIN

Who?

AUNT LUCY

Some guy who dated Jill St. John.

CAITLIN

Who?

AUNT LUCY

A film star from the 1970s. The first American Bond girl. You know, 007.

CAITLIN

007?

AUNT LUCY

It's an area code in Britain, pumpkin.

(end of scene)

SCENE SIX

(Later, Tuesday afternoon. Living room. Rita, Mitchell, and Aunt Lucy drinking coffee. Mitchell's reading the newspaper.)

RITA

Mitch, I thought about this carefully.

MITCHELL

Good.

RITA

Can you put down the paper?

(He does. He smiles politely)

Thank you.

(Long pause)

Yes.

MITCHELL

Yes?

Yes. RITA

Should I leave the room? AUNT LUCY

No, I think we're all family. RITA

That's a lovely way to frame it. We are family. AUNT LUCY

Yes? MITCHELL

Yes. RITA

Marriage? MITCHELL

Marriage? AUNT LUCY

Marriage. RITA

Did you propose, Mitchell? AUNT LUCY

I did. MITCHELL

But you didn't tell me. AUNT LUCY

Come on, Aunt Lucy. MITCHELL

You would have told your mother. AUNT LUCY

I was waiting for an answer. MITCHELL

AUNT LUCY

Oh, you were?

(She puts down her coffee and straightens her skirt)

How wonderful!

RITA

Mitch bought a ring.

AUNT LUCY

Do we have champagne?

MITCHELL

We have champagne.

RITA

I was scared, Mitchell.

AUNT LUCY

Scared? Rita? Really?

RITA

I'm still shaking inside.

(Mitchell approaches Rita. They embrace)

I took a Xanax an hour ago.

AUNT LUCY

Good for you, pumpkin!

MITCHELL

Can we elope?

RITA

Avoid a wedding?

MITCHELL

You don't want a large wedding?

AUNT LUCY

Large weddings are for Martha Stewart wannabes.

RITA

I'm not a wannabe, Aunt Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

When I was half your age I was.

MITCHELL

Very funny.

AUNT LUCY

Funny that I was half her age?

RITA

We can have a small wedding, Mitchell, at La Valencia Hotel.

MITCHELL

Would that make you happy?

RITA

Fifty guests. It would make me very happy.

MITCHELL

Of course.

(leaves to get the champagne)

AUNT LUCY

He's a good man. You could do worse, Rita. Did I tell you story when I met Putin's niece Svetlana on a Viking cruise along the Danube a few years ago?

RITA

Svetlana Putin?

AUNT LUCY

Well, she was travelling under an assumed name. Svetlana Berkowitz.

RITA

Sometimes I love your humor, Aunt Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

And I always love your humor, Rita.

RITA

I'm glad you convinced Caitlin consider a trip to Planned Parenthood.

AUNT LUCY

Does it matter which way she decides?

RITA

I think that she's too young to take on the responsibility.

AUNT LUCY

Nature can change us overnight.

RITA

I don't believe in miracles.

AUNT LUCY

I believe in affordable miracles, Rita.

RITA

Mitch told me that you might have a lucky break with Habitat for Humanity.

AUNT LUCY

We'll see soon.

RITA

You should cooperate with the investigation.

AUNT LUCY

There are still things to negotiate.

RITA

You will return the money to Habitat?

AUNT LUCY

\$562,000 to be exact.

RITA

Incredible.

AUNT LUCY

I plan on returning every penny.

(Pause)

Just because President Carter gave a year of his time to Habitat doesn't make the organization holy.

(Mitchell re-enters with champagne and glasses on tray)

MITCHELL

I wish Mom could be with us for this toast.

AUNT LUCY

She is. In spirit.

RITA

She's watching us from above.

MITCHELL

I hear her voice at the end of each day. It's so present and strong.

AUNT LUCY

Let's clink glasses.

RITA

Yes.

MITCHELL

A kiss first.

(He kisses Rita)

RITA

The week's been a crazy roller coaster ride.

MITCHELL

Indeed. But the wildfire alert has been downgraded today.

RITA

(Holding eye contact with Aunt Lucy)

Mitchell . . . just one thing . . . your aunt is either pulling my leg or has a thing to get off her chest today.

MITCHELL

What has she said today?

RITA

Aunt Lucy?

MITCHELL

Aunt Lucy?

AUNT LUCY

I said that Jimmy Carter doesn't make a charity holy.

RITA

Please. We're all trying to come closer. Tell Mitchell.

AUNT LUCY

I told Rita that I'm in the hole for \$562,000.

MITCHELL

Oh, come on.

AUNT LUCY

Not gambling debts, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

Embezzlement?

AUNT LUCY

In so many words. Yes.

(Drinking more coffee casually)

I've about \$200,000 liquidity if I cancel some credit card purchases.

MITCHELL

You're short. Considerably.

AUNT LUCY

Yes, that's the problem.

(Pause)

I need \$362,000 to have Habitat drop the police investigation.

RITA

She's asking us for \$362,000 Mitchell.

MITCHELL

This is insane.

RITA

Yes, I agree.

AUNT LUCY

You don't have to give me a dollar, Mitchell. I'm very resourceful.

MITCHELL

Aunt Lucy, all of this is horrifying.

(Taking a moment to absorb news)

Dear God, you'll be thrown into prison again.

AUNT LUCY

I know.

MITCHELL

You're too old for this torture.

AUNT LUCY

It's not torture, Mitchell. It's simple federal incarceration. 8% are private prisons. Some have pickleball courts.

MITCHELL

You really need psychiatric help. Not prison bars.

AUNT LUCY

I know right from wrong. I know good from evil. I know profit from non-profit.

RITA

If she returns the total sum, the authorities broker a deal.

MITCHELL

I realize that, Rita.

RITA

Given Aunt Lucy's age, she might be allowed house arrest.

MITCHELL

That's probably magical thinking, honestly.

RITA

Maybe she can tell the FBI that she suffers Tourette's Syndrome.

MITCHELL

Aunt Lucy doesn't have Tourette's.

RITA

What about multiple personality syndrome?

MITCHELL

These psychiatric conditions demand documentation.

(Looking at Aunt Lucy)

Do you have documentation? Were you ever hospitalized for psychosis?

AUNT LUCY

Honest to God, I can't remember everything Mitchell.

MITCHELL

Mom said you were in a facility during your last year of college.

AUNT LUCY

Maybe.

MITCHELL

Were you ever on psychotropic medication?

AUNT LUCY

Probably in my mid-forties. If I pay Habitat back, I'm off the hook.

MITCHELL

I've never loaned you that kind of money before.

AUNT LUCY

I know. It's not cookie jar cash.

MITCHELL

I have to talk to my accountant.

AUNT LUCY

Okay, pumpkin.

MITCHELL

He manages everything.

RITA

What about speaking to Martha Schyler?

MITCHELL

I'm not taking this to our couple's counsellor.

RITA

I think we should, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

I've a jumbo CD which is due to roll over end of the month. I could sell some stocks from my IRA, but I can't do anything with Mom's estate until we file with the state.

AUNT LUCY

You can sell some of my sister's portfolio holdings now and advance that to yourself, Mitchell. California will only slap you with a penalty. It's not a criminal offense if you're the major heir. I swear to you on your mother's grave that I will never do anything illegal again for the rest of my life.

(Caitlin enters)

RITA

Mitchell, you can fix this problem

MITCHELL

Can I?

CAITLIN

Lloyd is outside, Dad, in his truck. He wants to speak to you.

MITCHELL

Lloyd?

CAITLIN

My ex-boyfriend.

MITCHELL

I never met him. What the heck does he want?

CAITLIN

Ten minutes. Then you can ask him to go. Or ask him to help.

MITCHELL

This isn't the best time, Caitlin.

AUNT LUCY

Go talk to him, Mitchell. It will help Caitlin.

(After a pause, Mitchell goes outside. Caitlin stays with Aunt Lucy and Rita.

CAITLIN

(To Aunt Lucy)

Thanks.

AUNT LUCY

Hope for the best.

RITA

Or the worst.

AUNT LUCY

Lloyd wants to participate in your decision?

CAITLIN

Maybe.

AUNT LUCY

Why does he want to talk to your father?

CAITLIN

I'm not sure.

(Pause)

Are you a cat or a dog person, Rita?

RITA

I beg your pardon?

CAITLIN

Are you a cat or a dog person, Rita?

RITA

I'm not crazy about cats. I don't like kitty litter inside the home.

CAITLIN

So, you're a dog person?

RITA

Dogs lick themselves too much.

CAITLIN

Not all dogs.

RITA

I like canaries.

CAITLIN

That wasn't the question.

AUNT LUCY

Canary in the coal mine?

RITA

Is that a joke?

AUNT LUCY

No, I just believe that canaries are very brave.

RITA

It's incredible that the fires stopped fifteen miles from this house.

CAITLIN

Yeah.

AUNT LUCY

The wildfires weren't so prevalent twenty years ago. It's a sign from Heaven. We're guilty of stupidity. Too many housing developments in the outer canyons, brush, and homes too close together. And climate change happening before our eyes. It's a greater hazard to California than earthquakes. That's why Jeff Bezos and Elon Musk want to fly to Mars.

(To Rita)

I'm so happy that you and Mitchell will wed. You'll fulfill his life, his second chance. I feel it in my bones.

(Pause)

Do you think Marilyn Monroe really loved John Kennedy?

RITA

What?

AUNT LUCY

Did Kennedy really worry for Marilyn?

(Pause)

“The Strange Death of Marilyn Monroe”.

(Pause)

All this was just released by the FBI files on the President. Do you think the Kennedys’ killed her?

RITA

I’ve no idea and it’s a crazy to ask.

(Pause. Aunt Lucy’s eyes are burning into her)

Why are you looking at me that way?

AUNT LUCY

Did Fidel Castro kill John Kennedy?

RITA

Aunt Lucy. Stop it.

AUNT LUCY

Do you think the CIA killed Castro?

RITA

Please stop.

CAITLIN

The CIA killed everyone, Aunt Lucy.

AUNT LUCY

I hope not.

CAITLIN

The CIA should trip up the Orange Orangutan in the White House.

RITA

(In relief after Aunt Lucy turned her eyes away, finally)

I need some water. I’m feeling faint.

(She falls into a chair)

SCENE SEVEN

(Lights have changed. Everyone is still, indicating a passage of time.
Mitchell re-enters the living room)

AUNT LUCY

I can't go back to Ohio without a burning, heart-to-heart conversation.

MITCHELL

That's all we've had for the last seven days.

AUNT LUCY

I know, Mitchell, but there still is serious withholding.

(She steps closer and takes his hand)

We can excel at sequencing the human genome beyond science but we're fucking afraid of our shadow. Sit down, Mitchell. Please. I beg you.

MITCHELL

(Not sitting)

I can't think anymore. I'm shattered. And you really have to go.

(Exhausted by the day)

Why did Caitlin screw up? The boy outside is out of control.

AUNT LUCY

He's scared, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

I can't help him. He's well meaning. But . . . but . . . he's got to man up.

Sit down, Mitchell. You'll need to sit. Damn it, sit down.

(He slowly sits.)

I've carried a pain inside me for so many decades and I swear to God this is true. Your mother and I were once very close. We were like twins. We shared each other's clothes growing up. We dated the same boys in high school. We shared high school essay assignments. It was a sisters' thing. She was always smarter than me, prettier than me, and people liked her a little more. People trusted her.

(Pause)

Unlike me, your mother was stable, solid, strong about ethics. She never took risks. I was the gonzo gorilla, the maverick, the wild card. I made some awful mistakes in my

life. I regret nothing and I regret everything. But I cannot lock all these important events away from my memory. Do you understand the context?

MITCHELL

Of course I do. What *more* do you need to say, Lucy?

AUNT LUCY

At the end of a decade when I thought I had the world on a string I got into trouble. I was drinking and partying in my senior year at high school. It was 1969. The year of the moon landing. And Woodstock. The Zodiac Killer and the Charles Manson family terrorize the nation. The world's population was half of what it is today. And an explosive anti-war protest scene swept the country. It was the year that Nixon instituted the draft lottery to send boys to Vietnam. I know, I know. Some people think the government faked the moon landing.

MITCHELL

Aunt Lucy, I don't have time for this drivel.

AUNT LUCY

Just listen, Mitchell . . . please . . .

(Pause)

So I just graduated high school and took off to Boston where one of my high school girlfriends moved with her family. She had cool, well-connected parents who helped me find an intern position with Senator Ted Kennedy's office. I met him many times and he liked me a lot. He flirted with all the girls with short skirts. I stayed up that July 20th night to watch the broadcast of Neil Armstrong's first steps on the moon. It was two nights after the infamous Chappaquiddick incident. Ted Kennedy drove off a bridge with this woman. She died and he waited 12 hours to tell the police. I could have been in that car, for Christ's sake. The tragedy could have destroyed his career but . . .

(Mitchell stands up)

I know, I know. There are people who think Kennedy was nowhere near the car that killed Mary-Jo Kopechne. That poor young woman. She was the same age as me.

(Pause)

That evening there was a tribute celebration for the Bobby Kennedy campaign volunteers a year after Bobby Kennedy's California assassination by Sirhan Bishara Sirhan.

(Pause)

Ted Kennedy attended, gave a short speech, and drank heavily. He reserved the same hotel as Mary-Jo, age 19, whom he offered a car ride that night. They left in the car, with the Senator driving. Along the way, he spied a police vehicle behind a tree. He stopped the car and told the girl that he couldn't risk another DUI. So, Mary-Jo drove to the hotel while he walked. She took an old twisty road to a defective bridge and into the water. The coroner determined that she was still alive in an air bubble for five hours before drowning.

MITCHELL

You're driving me nuts, Aunt Lucy. I have no time for these stories.

AUNT LUCY

I'm getting to the heart of the matter, Mitchell. One more minute.

(Pause)

Honest to heaven.

(Pause)

In my mind, these two dates - July 18 and July 20, 1969, are very cosmic, Mitchell, even if they were 50 years ago. You realize, had Ted Kennedy *not challenged* Carter in 1980 we would have been spared the Reagan "celebrity" presidency, which led to Trump's "celebrity" presidency.

(Pause)

By late summer 1969 I was two months pregnant. The first time in my life I was ever pregnant, and I wasn't even 18. I was supposed to attend Amherst that fall term.

(Mitchell is very uncomfortable)

I wrestled with this problem, Mitchell. I wasn't mentally ready for college. I had essentially moved out of our parents' home in Marin County. And your mother was in doing fabulously at UCLA. Your grandfather had died the year before, and your grandmother was battling breast cancer. She was mad about my erratic behavior and was threatening to cut me out of her life. But I had faith in God while this ordeal was unfolding.

(Pause)

I moved back to California after Boston. I postponed admissions to Amherst and told your grandmother that I needed a gap year. She was distracted by her chemotherapy. So I went to Los Angeles to be with your mother. And I moved into her apartment just off campus. She was so good to me, Mitchell. She didn't judge me. She convinced me to have the baby. I was in great torment. But in due time I would decide to give the baby to a good family or to be the baby's mother.

MITCHELL

I don't understand.

AUNT LUCY

I'm trying to connect the dots, Mitchell. This isn't easy for me, dear Jesus.

MITCHELL

Why are you telling me this?

AUNT LUCY

Because your mother made me swear to keep it a secret until she passed away. It was years of hardship in silence, Mitchell. Please be compassionate.

MITCHELL

What are you insinuating?

(She gestures quietly and softly to him)

You're making me feel crazy.

AUNT LUCY

I know, my darling boy.

(Pause)

So, I gave birth that following winter, 1970. And I used your mother's identification at the hospital because she had university health care. We both took care of the baby until your mother finished college. Your grandmother never knew. She had passed away in the last months of 1972.

MITCHELL

You're telling me that . . . you're my mother, Aunt Lucy?

AUNT LUCY

Yes, I am your mother.

(Pause)

If you're listening with your heart . . . your mother had amenorrhea. Her periods were very infrequent and finally stopped when she graduated to college. She knew she would never have a child. She thought this accident was the best thing to have happened. I didn't have the stability to stay with a child, to nurture a child. It all felt so right. The universe decides the most intimate of our actions.

MITCHELL

If this is true, Lucy, who was my biological father?

AUNT LUCY

Who was your biological father?

MITCHELL

Do you even know?

AUNT LUCY

Of course, I know.

MITCHELL

Tell me.

AUNT LUCY

Really . . . I would like to say that it was my high school English teacher. Milton Haverstock. He taught British and American fiction. He had wonderfully long blonde hair. And I had a crush on him. He championed Nathaniel Hawthorne.

MITCHELL

That's perfect.

AUNT LUCY

But it wasn't Mr. Haverstock. It was Ted Kennedy.

MITCHELL

Senator Ted Kennedy?

AUNT LUCY

That's right, darling. Teddy.

(Pause)

I have some personal letters from him if you really want evidence. They're in the bank vault back in Columbus. He became a decent statesman in his last 15 years of life and a great lion of the Senate for the needs of children, the disabled, and those struggling with poverty.

(Pause)

I could have said your father was a gangster, Mitchell. Or jazz musician strung out on stuff. Isn't this better news?

(Pause)

Don't believe me? Genetic testing costs less than a French restaurant dinner. 23andMe.

MITCHELL

Kennedy is not my father. You're not my mother. You're certifiably insane.

AUNT LUCY

My sister was your mother, Mitchell. She raised you. But I'm more than your aunt. And I'm not insane.

MITCHELL

You'll end up in prison.

AUNT LUCY

Will that make you happy?

MITCHELL

Nothing will make me happy. And I can't raise the cash you need.

AUNT LUCY

I don't want your money. Not under these circumstances.

MITCHELL

But yesterday was different?

AUNT LUCY

Yesterday I felt desperate. Today is different.

MITCHELL

And how will you feel tomorrow?

AUNT LUCY

It would be splendid if this life optimism and love. We don't need story book treasures. Caitlin has choices different from mine. She's more privileged. You are entitled to do what you want with me, what you want with Caitlin. Marry Rita. Or perish in the next wildfire.

(Pause)

Do you want my DNA sample? I'll run off copies of Kennedy's letters.

MITCHELL

No.

AUNT LUCY

You're entitled to contact Kennedy family members.

(Pause)

What do you want, Mitchell?

MITCHELL

I want my innocence.

AUNT LUCY

What innocence? Talk like a grown man.

MITCHELL

It's that look and that feeling I have in church.

AUNT LUCY

How does that matter?

MITCHELL

Church matters. God matters.

AUNT LUCY

Good for you. Talk to God all you want. What do you hear?

MITCHELL

I hear perfect silence.

AUNT LUCY

Silence is not perfect.

MITCHELL

What else, Aunt Lucy?

AUNT LUCY

Nothing else, Mitchell. I am sorry, so sorry, to cause you this much pain.

MITCHELL

What's clean in your life? Is there anything pure?

AUNT LUCY

It's that church on the hill.

(Pause)

I know what you're feeling. You wish I was the one who passed away and my sister would still be with you.

MITCHELL

That's not what I'm feeling.

AUNT LUCY

Are you sure?

MITCHELL

I am sure.

AUNT LUCY

I want to be able to show some love for you, Mitchell.

MITCHELL

Why?

AUNT LUCY

Because we're family. You and Caitlin are my only family left. And even if I'm reduced to being a distant aunt with . . . sinking under your contempt . . . I don't want to live.

(She gets out of her chair, finds her luggage, collects her scattered things,
and heads out the front door)

RITA

Why are you just standing there?

MITCHELL

What?

RITA

You heard me.

MITCHELL

What do you expect me to do?

RITA

She's your mother, Mitchell.

(Pause)

I completely believe her.

(Pause)
You can tell.

(Pause)
Go out and get Lucy before her Uber ride arrives.

MITCHELL
How do you know that she's getting an Uber?

CAITLIN
Dad!

MITCHELL
What?

CAITLIN
Move!

MITCHELL
Okay. Okay.
(He makes his way to the front door)
What the hell am I supposed to say?
(Rita and Caitlin throw hellish faces at him)
Okay. Okay.
(He exits)

CAITLIN
(To Rita)
I hope he doesn't blow it.

RITA
He won't blow it.

CAITLIN
I've three grandmothers.

RITA
Yes.

CAITLIN
What a day, Rita.

RITA
Yes, what a day.

CAITLIN
Are you going to marry my dad?

RITA

Yes.

CAITLIN

You said yes.

RITA

Yes. I said yes. What a family.

CAITLIN

At least the house is not burned to the ground.

RITA

Yes. Not today.

End of Play