

PRIVATE POLICY  
a circus in two acts

Alessandra R. Most

Submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Fine Arts  
in the Theatre Arts Program of the School of the Arts

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY  
April 29, 2013

\*Production notes:

1. **Doubling:** This play should only be performed with six actors. Highly suggested doubling is as follows: the actress playing Marsha plays Rita and the actors playing Barry, Tyler, Marsha, and Becca play the reporters depending who is on stage at the time, leaving only Susan and Peter with no doubling. A production might choose to have the actor playing Peter play a reporter as well. The designations 1, 2, and 3 for the reporters in the script are merely there to separate the voices asking questions for the sake of rhythm. A production need not stick strictly to those numbers throughout the play, but the designations should be maintained within each scenelet.
2. **Pacing:** Special attention should be paid to pacing in this play. Specifically, pacing can be used as a way to separate public moments between Susan and the reporters and interactions between Susan and her family in private. Public scenes should feel paced quickly enough that Susan has no control but there should be a hint that control is just out of her reach. Private scenes should be slower. Do allow for gradual transitions between the two modes rather than abrupt changes in pacing. For instance, in Tyler's first entrance, he might start out sounding like a reporter questioning his mother, but will ease into a more conversational tone. Towards the end of the play, the rhythmic styles might blend, suggesting the conflation of Susan's public and private lives.
3. **Scenes:** There are no traditional "scenes" or "transitions" in this play. Each act is structured as a continuous experience for Susan. It is as if she were on a conveyor belt, pulling her through all of the encounters that make up a singular experience. In order to aid in the audience's understanding of her experience, it is essential that each encounter begins before the previous one ends.

A near blinding light illuminates Susan at a table, and nothing more of the stage. Flash bulbs go off from actors playing reporters sitting amongst the audience. On the table is a microphone and a glass of water. Susan looks flustered for a moment--blinded by the flashes. She quickly recovers her confidence.

SUSAN

I guess no one ever asked me that question before.

Flash.

REPORTER 1

No one?

SUSAN

Well, my mother. She's not here too, is she?

Susan laughs. The reporters politely laugh.

REPORTER 1

And what did you tell her?

SUSAN

I rarely tell my mother anything of consequence. Do you?

REPORTER 3

Please answer the question.

SUSAN

I'm sorry, I forgot the question.

Susan waits for more laughter. There is none.

REPORTER 2

Are you hiding something, Mrs. Turner?

SUSAN

What would I be hiding?

REPORTER 1

It sounds like you're evading.

SUSAN

I'm not sure I could if I wanted to. If there was any reason to.

REPORTER 2

Well, if you don't want to tell us, then...

SUSAN

There's nothing to tell.

REPORTER 2

So you say.

SUSAN

Yes. Yes, I do say. I've been saying.

REPORTER 1

What else do you have to say?

SUSAN

More than you have to write by press time, apparently.

REPORTER 3

Tell us what you're going to do next.

SUSAN

What do you mean "next"?

REPORTER 3

You know, now that you know what you know about him.

SUSAN

I don't know anything about him. I mean, I know a lot but not what you're...not what you want me to know, I guess.

REPORTER 3

But if you did know something, what would you do with that information?

SUSAN

What information?

REPORTER 3

You tell us!

SUSAN

I can't be specific if you won't.

REPORTER 2

We're hoping you have more information regarding the recent legal action taken against your husband.

SUSAN

There's no information to disclose.

REPORTER 1

But, is there information you are suppressing?

SUSAN

I can't say.

REPORTER 2

Well, why not?

SUSAN

Because I somehow don't think you can keep a secret. Sue me. Can I go now?

Susan stands up.

REPORTER 3

Well, what are you going to do about it? This information you don't know.

SUSAN

Find out?

REPORTER 1

So, you're saying, you think there's something to find out?

Susan tries to answer but stumbles over her words. Flash bulbs go off like crazy.

SUSAN

That's not what I'm saying.

REPORTER 2

What are you saying?

SUSAN

Just that I think all this fuss is a bit premature.

REPORTER 1

Do you think she thinks it's premature?

SUSAN

I don't know what she thinks.

REPORTER 2

But you know what she alleges.

I have heard what she alleges.

SUSAN

And if these allegations were proven true, would you still think these questions were premature?

REPORTER 1

Probably not.

SUSAN

Flash.

But.

SUSAN

Flash.

I maintain that these questions are premature.

SUSAN

Because...

REPORTER 1

Because the allegations are false.

SUSAN

How do you know that?

REPORTER 1

I just know.

SUSAN

But you don't know how you know.

REPORTER 2

No I don't know how I know.

SUSAN

But if you knew how you knew, you'd know why the questions are premature.

REPORTER 1

Yes.

SUSAN

REPORTER 2

But you don't know, so you know there might be something to know but for now you don't know.

SUSAN

I...what?

REPORTER 3

And if there was something you knew, but you knew we shouldn't know, you'd tell us you didn't know how you knew that there was nothing to know.

SUSAN

Yes.

ALL REPORTERS

YES?

Flash bulbs go off. She realizes what's been said. At least she thinks it must have seemed bad.

SUSAN

No! I mean no! I don't know!

A silence.

REPORTER 1

Mrs. Turner.

SUSAN

Yes?

REPORTER 1

You seem upset by the recent turn of events.

SUSAN

Yes.

REPORTER 2

Yes?

A flash. She winces. She shifts in her chair.

SUSAN

I'm upset by the allegations.

REPORTER 1

But not by the events.

SUSAN

I don't know the events to have happened.

REPORTER 2

But if they had happened?

SUSAN

I could never imagine that he could do something like that. Never in a million years.

REPORTER 2

If the allegations were true. If what he's been accused of were actually things he actually did...

SUSAN

Well, they're terrible. Terrible things to accuse someone of anyway.

REPORTER 3

Yes.

SUSAN

Terrible things to say that someone is capable of.

REPORTER 2

You don't think he's capable of that?

SUSAN

I wouldn't have married him if I thought he were capable of that.

REPORTER 3

But what if you were wrong?

REPORTER 1

What if he were capable of that?

SUSAN

Then I'm an idiot. Can we do this tomorrow?

Susan doesn't move.

REPORTER 1

What would you say to your son. If it were true?

SUSAN

What would I say?

REPORTER 1

To Tyler.



If his father... SUSAN

Would you tell him? REPORTER 1

At some point. SUSAN

What point? REPORTER 1

When he's old enough. SUSAN

How old is old enough? REPORTER 1

What? SUSAN

To know that? REPORTER 1

Susan takes a breath.

Well, I'm glad I won't have to have that conversation with him. SUSAN

I see. REPORTER 1

You see what? SUSAN

What? REPORTER 1

You said you see. What, exactly do you see? SUSAN

It was just a... REPORTER 1

A what? SUSAN

REPORTER 1

It was just something people say.

SUSAN

Just something people say?

REPORTER 1

Yeah.

SUSAN

My world is falling apart and you think now is a time to say ‘something people say’?

REPORTER 1

I didn’t think that much about it.

SUSAN

No. You didn’t. You know why? Because you don’t ‘see.’ You report, but you don’t see. People. You don’t see people. Would you want to have that conversation with your son?

REPORTER 2

Mrs. Turner, I think we’re getting off topic, here.

SUSAN

What is the topic exactly?

REPORTER 2

The topic is your...

SUSAN

My what? My situation? My shame?

REPORTER 3

Are you saying the allegations are true?

SUSAN

Do you think that’s what I’m saying?

REPORTER 1

Thank you for your time, Mrs. Turner. We didn’t mean to upset you.

TYLER

(offstage)

Mom!

Susan tries to ignore the voice. Time and space are blending.

SUSAN

Do you think I would contribute in any conscious way to the destruction of my husband's career, my son's future?

REPORTER 2

No, we're just trying to...

SUSAN

To what? To trick me into saying something incriminating?

TYLER

(offstage, getting closer)

Mom!

SUSAN

*(To Tyler)* Just a second! *(To reporters)* I'm not going to do that. But, I'll tell you what I will do. I will walk through that door, I will walk out of the building with my husband, and we will go home, and have dinner with our son. Because, at the very least, I have that. For now, I have that. Tomorrow I may not, but right now, I do.

TYLER

(offstage)

Mom!

SUSAN

So, if there are no further questions, I'll be on my way.

Flashes. Susan begins to look dizzy as she tries to figure out where Tyler's voice is coming from. A cacophony of "Mom"s and "Mom! Are you ok?" in voice-over begins.

TYLER

(offstage)

Mom!

REPORTER 1

Mom!

SUSAN

And stay off my goddamn lawn.

TYLER

Mom!

REPORTER 2

Mom! Are you ok?

REPORTER 3

Mom! Are you ok?

REPORTER 1

Mom, can you hear me? Are you okay?

She begins to stand up. Flashes go off. The lights on the stage turn on to illuminate Susan's kitchen. Tyler, a precocious 13 year old, is standing by the light switch. Susan avoids eye contact.

SUSAN

I'm fine.

TYLER

Fine about what?

SUSAN

What?

TYLER

What?

SUSAN

What are you doing awake?

TYLER

What are you doing awake?

SUSAN

I was going just going to bed.

TYLER

It's seven thirty.

SUSAN

I know that.

TYLER

Okay. Me too. Have you been here all night?

SUSAN

Of course not.

Mom... TYLER

What? SUSAN

You always tell me not to wear the same shirt two days in a row... TYLER

Right. I was testing you. SUSAN

Oh. TYLER

Seeing if you'd notice. SUSAN

Oh. TYLER

Tyler stares at his mother for a moment. He eventually gives up and goes to make himself something to eat. He starts spreading way too much peanut butter on a piece of bread. Susan tries to ground herself.

How was school? SUSAN

When? TYLER

The last time you went. SUSAN

Yesterday? TYLER

Yeah. SUSAN

Fine. TYLER

Good. SUSAN

Yeah. TYLER

Anything you want to tell me? SUSAN

Not really. TYLER

Anything funny happen? SUSAN

Funny? TYLER

Funny bad not funny funny. SUSAN

Oh...no. TYLER

Okay good. SUSAN

Funny things happened but not bad funny things. TYLER

That's good. Funny funny is good. SUSAN

Like when I accidentally threw a pencil at Sammy when I sneezed. TYLER

That is funny. SUSAN

It didn't hurt him. But it almost poked his eye out. TYLER

That's funny. SUSAN

Well, that part isn't funny. TYLER

Oh. SUSAN

Pause. Tyler takes a bite.

Mom? TYLER

Yeah. SUSAN

You should go back to bed. TYLER

No, that's okay. SUSAN

Dad's still sleeping? TYLER

He is? SUSAN

I'm asking you. TYLER

How would I know? SUSAN

How would I know? TYLER

I'll go back to bed. SUSAN

Okay. TYLER

Can I make you some breakfast first? SUSAN

Tyler places a sandwich in front of his mother.

Have a good day, mom. TYLER

Tyler kisses her on the cheek and walks towards the door.

Tyler! SUSAN

Tyler turns around.

TYLER

What?

SUSAN

I love you very much. Just remember that.

TYLER

I'm gonna miss the bus.

SUSAN

I just want you to remember that. If anything happens today.

As Tyler and Susan walk away from the table and towards the door, Peter enters and takes a seat at the table. Marsha and Barry stand next to him, holding portfolios. They are now in a conference room.

TYLER

What's gonna happen?

SUSAN

I'm not sure.

TYLER

This is really weird.

SUSAN

Your father does too. He loves you too. I know he does.

TYLER

Thanks...

SUSAN

Have a good day.

TYLER

Thanks.

Tyler goes to the door. As soon as he steps out of the doorway, the lights switch to illuminate the table.

MARSHA

The issue is not what happened.



SUSAN

It's not?

They usher Susan to the table.

MARSHA

The issue is what is believed to have happened. It's really the central question of what we do.

BARRY

What you do. Not what I do.

MARSHA

You don't do the same thing?

BARRY

I am a member of the bar in this state. I have an advanced degree. You read a lot of Us Weekly and pray that Perez Hilton will be kind. Huge difference. Huge.

MARSHA

Whatever you say. In this state and all other states, I try to protect people, like yourselves from slanderous accusations like this one.

BARRY

It's not slander if it's true.

MARSHA

We're not here to assess the verity of the accusation. It could tarnish reputation, therefore, I treat it as slander.

PETER

(to Susan)

It's not true.

She grabs his hand.

SUSAN

I know.

MARSHA

How nice. Anyway, we need to start with all of the details that you may have left out.

PETER

What do you mean?

MARSHA

Well, in order to figure out what details we need to leave out, I need to know the scope of the details, you know?

SUSAN

There are no details. You can't have details if nothing happened.

BARRY

Of course.

MARSHA

But if there were details, hypothetically, what would they be?

SUSAN

He just said there is no truth to the accusation, how could he know details?

MARSHA

Any that pop into your head.

SUSAN

I've known this man for fifteen years. When he says there are no details, he means it. Don't you listen?

PETER

They're trying to help.

Marsha and Barry look at each other.

BARRY

Maybe we should start with you, Susan.

MARSHA

Sure.

BARRY

Let's start with everything you've heard.

SUSAN

Some lowlife seeking her milliseconds in the spotlight.

BARRY

These things happen.

MARSHA

It's very common nowadays. I'm not sure what came first, men being sleazy, or people finding out about it.

They all look at Marsha.

Not that this is that kind of case.

PETER

It's not.

He looks to his wife.

It's not.

SUSAN

All of the rumors we know are public. Rumors usually are. You don't need us to tell you those rumors.

BARRY

Well, technically they're a bit more serious than rumors. There is a written complaint. An ever-growing trail of legal documents, a major police investigation...you know...there's stuff.

SUSAN

Rumors come in all shapes and sizes, Barry. Didn't they teach you that in law school?

BARRY

So do indictments, Susan. Didn't they teach you that in law school?

PETER

Let's get back to your questions.

MARSHA

Great idea.

BARRY

Is there anyone you believe may have an interest in your...demise, for lack of a better word?

SUSAN

There are many better words.

MARSHA

Maybe we should come back at a more convenient time.

PETER

It gets more convenient?

MARSHA

Not without our help.

PETER

Give me a minute.

Peter pulls Susan aside. Marsha and Barry can hear them. They make faces to each other as Peter and Susan talk.

Do you want to wait outside?  
PETER

What for?  
SUSAN

If this is too hard for you.  
PETER

I'm fine.  
SUSAN

You don't seem fine.  
PETER

I'm not fine with these people wasting our time, no.  
SUSAN

It will all be over soon. And you're doing so great.  
PETER

But the questions they're asking...  
SUSAN

I know.  
PETER

They're not listening.  
SUSAN

They think I'm a stereotype.  
PETER

They think I'm an idiot.  
SUSAN

Well...  
PETER

What?  
SUSAN

Just kidding. PETER

This isn't funny! SUSAN

It's a little absurd. PETER

It's too public to be funny. SUSAN

One day it will be. PETER

It will be funny? SUSAN

Sure. When this all blows over. PETER

I didn't tell Tyler. SUSAN

Good. PETER

SUSAN  
He's going to find out. Today. At school. Every person under the age of 16 worships a goddamn iPhone. Someone's going to tell him.

PETER  
He knows better than to believe what other people tell him.

SUSAN  
He believes what we tell him.

PETER  
That's different.

SUSAN  
He's going to see me. On TV. Talking about you.

PETER  
You did great, Peanut.

I didn't. SUSAN

Well, you were stressed. PETER

I yelled. I scolded. SUSAN

It was adorable. PETER

Why is this happening to us, Peter? SUSAN

It happens to the best of us. People get jealous. People get greedy. PETER

You think? SUSAN

Absolutely. This too shall pass. PETER

I hope you're right. SUSAN

But right now we should listen to these people. They know what they're doing. PETER

They seem awful. SUSAN

Not listening to them would be worse than sitting in a room with them. PETER

You better be right. SUSAN

Always have been. PETER

Sure. SUSAN

She laughs hesitantly. They turn back to Marsha and Barry.

I'm sorry about that. SUSAN

Not a problem. MARSHA

Where were we? BARRY

Oh yes. You were going to tell us what happened that night. MARSHA

You're kidding... SUSAN

Susan... PETER

I'm sorry, this is ridiculous. SUSAN

You said you'd hear them out. PETER

Fine. SUSAN

So that night... BARRY

What night? SUSAN

The night the...the night she specifies in her statement. PETER

You were home. SUSAN

I was. PETER

The whole time? MARSHA

Peter hesitates.

BARRY

We need to know everything.

SUSAN

He was...at...Peter?

Peter doesn't answer.

BARRY

Maybe if we met with you both individually.

MARSHA

Or really just Peter.

BARRY

Or both individually, we might have better luck.

SUSAN

Peter has nothing to hide from me.

PETER

Of course not.

SUSAN

He was at...wait...

BARRY

Even so, it just might be better.

SUSAN

How would it be better if he has nothing to hide?

MARSHA

Sometimes it just works.

SUSAN

Racquetball? A late meeting?

BARRY

Sometimes it allows people to speak freely.

SUSAN

About what?



MARSHA

Anything really...

SUSAN

You have nothing to tell them. He has nothing to tell you.

PETER

Let them do their jobs, alright Peanut?

She looks at him. Stunned.

Barry gestures towards the door. Peter gets up from the table and exits the conference room with Marsha.

BARRY

Thank you, Mrs. Turner. I know this can be difficult. We'll be with you in a few minutes.

Barry exits. Susan goes to follow them. Becca appears in a diner booth on another part of the stage. Her voice catches Susan, who turns around to see her sister, giving up her pursuit of Peter.

BECCA

It's bad.

SUSAN

It's not that bad.

BECCA

Mom called. It's bad.

Susan goes to sit with Becca.

SUSAN

It's really not that bad, we have a team of people working on it.

BECCA

Mom said it's bad.

SUSAN

What does mom know?

BECCA

A lot, I guess.

SUSAN

Not about this.

BECCA

What's to know? It looks bad, it probably is bad. These things are usually as bad, if not worse than they sound.

SUSAN

We'll be fine.

BECCA

Mom said she always wished you kept your job. That she didn't raise her daughters to be dependent on a man.

SUSAN

Don't tell me what mom said.

BECCA

She also said you're avoiding her calls.

SUSAN

Well, that's absolutely true.

BECCA

And she doesn't appreciate what you said about her on TV. Those reporters mothers don't appreciate it either, she said.

SUSAN

Becca.

BECCA

She also said she saw this coming the day she met Peter.

SUSAN

Come on!

BECCA

You have to admit, this kind of goes with the territory.

SUSAN

Of what?

BECCA

Being married to a politician.

SUSAN

There are plenty of politicians not implicated in sex scandals.

BECCA

But it's a possibility.

SUSAN

Not with Peter.

BECCA

Men in power and all that.

SUSAN

Becca!

BECCA

Power over women. Dominating. Fetishy stuff.

SUSAN

That's disgusting.

BECCA

I didn't marry him, you did. We women with ordinary husbands don't have to worry our heads about that. Stu wouldn't fuck anything. Not even me.

SUSAN

I didn't need to know that.

BECCA

Every schmuck in America didn't need to know about your hubby's dirty little fetish, but here we are.

SUSAN

Wow. Thanks for your support.

BECCA

Sorry.

Susan waves it off.

BECCA

How's Tyler holding up?

SUSAN

Haven't seen him yet. He's been at school.

BECCA

You knew yesterday.

SUSAN  
I was still processing. He was studying for an exam.

BECCA  
You didn't tell him?

SUSAN  
I couldn't.

BECCA  
So you didn't.

SUSAN  
I thought he should find out himself. I justified.

BECCA  
Why?

SUSAN  
Better that way?

BECCA  
Nu uh.

SUSAN  
Shit.

BECCA  
Poor kid.

SUSAN  
I fucked up.

BECCA  
Oh man. Poor kid.

Susan pulls out her cell phone and starts dialing.

BECCA  
Too late.

SUSAN  
He's not answering.

BECCA  
He's pissed. They don't answer when they're pissed. Trust me.



SUSAN  
He wouldn't do something that disgusting!

BECCA  
Of course not.

SUSAN  
He couldn't. He's not that kind of guy.

BECCA  
No. Who could?

SUSAN  
Well, someone, maybe, but not him.

BECCA  
Right.

SUSAN  
Not him.

BECCA  
Right.

Becca takes a deliberate bite of her pancakes.

SUSAN  
Don't worry about mom.

BECCA  
I'm not.

SUSAN  
She's a sensationalist.

BECCA  
I know.

SUSAN  
Conspiracy theorist.

BECCA  
She is.

SUSAN  
Don't worry about me, either.

I'm not. BECCA

I'll be fine. SUSAN

I know. BECCA

I know what I'm doing. SUSAN

I know. BECCA

So does Peter. SUSAN

I hope so. BECCA

We're going to be fine. SUSAN

Of course you are. BECCA

And Tyler will be fine. SUSAN

Yes. BECCA

Tyler will forget all about this. SUSAN

BECCA  
Of course. Because nothing happened. Because these allegations against senators and governors and presidents and directors of the fucking CIA are always denied and are rarely true. Right? Because your husband is a rich dirtbag like all the other rich dirtbags but he's different. Right? Elmo did it, but not Peter.

Right. SUSAN

Becca takes another bite. She chews. A lot. A long, long silence.

SUSAN

He did it, didn't he?

Becca keeps chewing. Tyler appears in the kitchen.

TYLER

Did he do it, mom?

SUSAN

I'm so sorry I didn't tell you.

TYLER

He never did any of that...to you? The hurting...

SUSAN

Of course not.

TYLER

But why? Why her and not you?

SUSAN

I wish I could tell you. I wish I knew. I wish I could take it all away.

TYLER

They say he broke three ribs and a wrist.

SUSAN

Where did you hear that?

TYLER

They say he used kitchen knives to engrave in her skin.

SUSAN

Stop.

TYLER

Letters. His initials maybe?

SUSAN

Stop.

TYLER

He branded her.



SUSAN  
How do you know that word?

TYLER  
It's all over the news, Mom. All over. Sammy showed me on his iPhone.

SUSAN  
Don't watch anymore news. No more websites okay?

TYLER  
Okay.

SUSAN  
It's trash. It's all trash.

TYLER  
Okay.

SUSAN  
Promise me.

TYLER  
I promise. Geez.

SUSAN  
Good.

TYLER  
Mom?

Susan looks at him.  
What if he really did it? What if it's not all trash?

SUSAN  
I'm telling you it is.

TYLER  
That's not what Jenna's mom said.

SUSAN  
Your dad needs us to believe in him. Okay? No matter what other people say.

TYLER  
Okay but...

SUSAN  
I need us to believe in him.

Okay. TYLER

Okay. SUSAN

A silence.

Mom? TYLER

Yes. SUSAN

Tyler picks up a knife block from the counter.

One's missing. TYLER

Coincidence. SUSAN

Lights switch back to the press conference setting. The reporters are back in the audience, closer this time.

He did it, didn't he? REPORTER 1

Mrs. Turner. REPORTER 2

Mrs. Turner! REPORTER 1

I'm not sure. SUSAN

But you're fairly certain. REPORTER 2

Where was he that night? REPORTER 1

SUSAN

A basketball game, a business dinner...

Barry steps out into view and she looks to him.  
He shakes his head.

SUSAN

My attorney advises that I not discuss those matters.

REPORTER 3

Do you feel remorse? Regret?

SUSAN

For what?

REPORTER 3

Towards the victim. For what she's gone through.

SUSAN

Me? I never...Well... Yeah. I guess I do. I would, at least. If this had happened. I'm sure if there was something to feel remorse for, that's what I would feel. What we'd all feel. I guess.

Flashes go off.

On the other side of the stage, lights up on Peter, also at a press conference. One in which he is far more in control. Susan watches.

PETER

The nature of a person who could think up such crimes should be questioned, no doubt. But do we question the person accused of these crimes, or the person who accuses another of committing them? As we all know, it has not been proven that these "events" ever took place. Evidence proving that these allegations are true has yet to be presented to any court or, more importantly, to me. So, if we're looking at my "sanity", versus that of a person who could say such things about a person such as myself, a public servant with a proven track record of caring for the citizens of the state of Pennsylvania, well then I think we can all agree that it's probably a better idea to trust your trusted public figures rather than perfect strangers who are sick enough to make up what are pretty disgusting crimes. Don't you agree?

REPORTER 1

Yes. I think I do.

PETER

Great! Need me to repeat any of that?

REPORTER 1

I think I got it.

REPORTER 2

But what happens if the allegations turn out to be accurate?

PETER

I've always wanted to write a book!

He winks. They laugh. Flashes go off, we're back to Susan's press conference.

REPORTER 1

Any comment?

SUSAN

On what?

REPORTER 2

On your husband's statement.

SUSAN

Why don't you just tell me what you want me to say so we can be done with this?

REPORTER 3

Well, we were hoping you could share your thoughts on how he looked. How he's...holding up.

SUSAN

I'm not sure how he's holding up.

REPORTER 2

Has he said anything to you about his psychological state?

SUSAN

Well, no we really haven't had the time to discuss that.

REPORTER 1

Didn't you have dinner together last night?

SUSAN

I can't remember.

REPORTER 2

You don't remember if you had dinner? You mentioned you were going to...

SUSAN

I'm sure I did. That sounds like something I would do. Eat, I mean.

REPORTER 1

Was your husband there?

SUSAN

Was he where when?

REPORTER 1

Last night.

REPORTER 2

For dinner.

SUSAN

Where is he now anyway?

Susan is trying to figure out ways to cross the stage to get to her husband.

REPORTER 1

What did you eat, Mrs. Turner?

REPORTER 2

What is his favorite meal?

REPORTER 1

Do you cook?

REPORTER 3

Do you?

Susan is blocked by reporters.

SUSAN

Excuse me. Could you let me through please?

Worlds melt. Tyler enters.

REPORTER 2

Did you have tuna casserole?

REPORTER 1

Are you prepared to make an official statement regarding the details of your sexual past and your knowledge of his involvement with the escort in question?

REPORTER 3  
Did you have meatloaf?

SUSAN  
Excuse me. Let me through please.

REPORTER 1  
Are you a vegetarian?

REPORTER 2  
Are your shoes faux leather?

REPORTER 3  
Turkey or beef?

TYLER  
Mom! Mom! I'm hungry!

SUSAN  
Excuse me.

PETER  
You'd read a memoir, wouldn't you?

SUSAN  
Peter?

BECCA  
You need to call mom. Jesus, she's driving me batshit. Just call her so she can say she told you so. Get it over with.

REPORTER 3  
Does the senator like your cooking?

TYLER  
Mom, seriously. All we have is crackers.

PETER  
Did you know I was a little bit neglected as a child?

SUSAN  
Peter.

TYLER

Not even good crackers! They're the ones with the little seeds on them.

REPORTER 2

Which sexual positions does the senator prefer?

REPORTER 1

With you.

TYLER

They look like rat poop.

REPORTER 2

And which does he prefer with other women? While beating them?

REPORTER 3

Has anything been engraved in your skin?

TYLER

When's dad coming home?

SUSAN

Peter.

REPORTER 1

Does he like any kinky shit?

TYLER

Tell him to bring a pizza.

SUSAN

Peter, look at me.

REPORTER 2

How's your sex life?

REPORTER 1

Did you drive him to this?

REPORTER 2

You probably did, frigid bitch.

REPORTER 1

You probably did, frigid bitch.

Peter!

SUSAN

PETER  
(as if still giving his speech)

You probably did, frigid bitch.

PETER!

SUSAN

Peter turns towards Susan, everyone else disappears.

Peanut!

PETER

You look surprised to see me.

SUSAN

I am surprised to see you here.

PETER

I've been here all along.

SUSAN

Really?

PETER

Yes, really.

SUSAN

I think I would have noticed that.

PETER

I was trying to get to you.

SUSAN

Are you sure?

PETER

They wouldn't let me.

SUSAN

I'll have a talk with them. Don't worry. No wife of mine...

PETER

I know you did it.

SUSAN



Susan. PETER

I know. Everyone knows. SUSAN

What do you know? PETER

Don't try to tell me that you didn't. SUSAN

I didn't. PETER

Peter. SUSAN

Susan. PETER

SUSAN  
This is your chance to tell me. Your get out of jail free card. Tell me and we'll figure out a way to get through this together. But this is your chance. Your one chance.

Let's talk about this at home. PETER

Right now. SUSAN

I'd rather discuss it in private. PETER

Why? SUSAN

It's complicated. PETER

SUSAN  
It's pretty much a binary here don't you think? Either you did it or you didn't.

PETER  
Well what does it matter, then. You already know everything, right? You've already got the cuffs on.

SUSAN

It matters because I need to know from you.

PETER

If you love me you don't need to know. You should already know.

SUSAN

You cut that woman. You paid that woman and hurt her. Her ribs her wrist. You...

PETER

Did I?

SUSAN

Yes.

PETER

Have I, in our 15 years together given you any indication that I could do something like that? Have I?

SUSAN

No.

PETER

How could you believe something like that about me?

SUSAN

Tell me. Just tell me if it's true.

PETER

I can't do that.

SUSAN

Why not?

PETER

What good will it do?

SUSAN

Because if you can't look me in the eye and tell me the truth, then I'm next.

PETER

Susan...I would never.

SUSAN

But you did.

PETER

I didn't say that.

SUSAN  
You should. You should say something.

PETER  
I won't.

SUSAN  
So you'll allow the world to think you did unthinkable things to this woman?

PETER  
I guess so.

SUSAN  
And you're okay with that?

PETER  
Yes.

SUSAN  
Why?

PETER  
Because that means I've made it.

Marsha and Barry sit at the table with Susan.  
Peter comes over and joins.

PETER  
The more public the public figure, the more  
serious the accusation.

MARSHA  
The more public the public figure, the more  
serious the accusation.

MARSHA  
(not looking up from her blackberry)  
You hadn't noticed?

SUSAN  
Go away. Please.

MARSHA  
(to her blackberry)  
Damn it!

SUSAN  
Where do you even come from?

MARSHA  
(ignoring Susan)

Your interview with Time was pushed back to Tuesday.

	PETER		BARRY
Damnit.		Damnit.	
		SUSAN	
Peter, tell them to leave.			
		MARSHA	
Fuck it. Print is dead.			
		PETER	
Right. Print is dead.			
		BARRY	
Call Larry King.			
		MARSHA	
Also dead.			
		PETER	
Retired.			
		MARSHA	
That's what I meant.			
		PETER	
Right.			
		SUSAN	
Peter, get them out of here right now.			
		MARSHA	
Let me think.			
		BARRY	
Hannity.			
		SUSAN	
Peter we need to talk about this. We owe it to Tyler.			
		MARSHA	
Insignificant.			
		SUSAN	
Tyler?			

Hannity. MARSHA

O'Reilly. BARRY

Please. MARSHA

I'm not okay with you going on television. SUSAN

Hmm. BARRY Hmm. PETER

Tyler's hearing things at school. Peter! SUSAN

I got it. MARSHA AND BARRY

We do our own news special. BARRY

Oh my god. MARSHA

Peter begins walking across the stage, smiling and waving at the flashing bulbs. He sits at a small couch on the other side of the stage.

Our own little corner of heaven. BARRY

Right. MARSHA

Barry and Marsha begin ushering Susan to the couch next to Peter. Susan tries to shake them off. Tyler sits down next to them.

What are you doing here? Aren't you in school? SUSAN

Shop it to all the networks. BARRY

Teachers let me out. TYLER

What about Lebron? MARSHA

That was different. BARRY

Right. MARSHA

Why? SUSAN  
(to Tyler)

I told them I was going to be on TV. TYLER

We'll have the wife, the kid. BARRY

Brilliant. MARSHA

He's not doing this. Tyler isn't doing this. Do you hear me? SUSAN

Hey, kiddo. PETER  
(to Tyler)

Hi, Dad! TYLER  
(to Peter in reverence)

Look at those cameras! Pretty cool, huh? PETER  
(to Tyler)

Mom! Look at the cameras! We're going to be on TV! TYLER

No, we're not. SUSAN

Anderson Cooper. BARRY

Anderson Cooper! MARSHA

The silver fox. BARRY

So hot. MARSHA

I'm not doing this. Tyler, you're not doing this. SUSAN

A team of people flurry around Susan, Peter, and Tyler, doing hair and makeup. Susan tries to get up. The makeup artists restrain her.

No. Diane Sawyer. BARRY

He's gotta cry. MARSHA

Peter, can you cry? BARRY

Sure! PETER

He's good. MARSHA

You can't make us do this. SUSAN

Susan gets up again. Tyler grabs her hand.

Come on, mom. Sit down. Dad needs us to believe in him. Remember? TYLER

Tyler, we're leaving. SUSAN

In 5, 4, 3, 2.... BECCA (AS TV PRODUCER)

She points to them.

PETER

Have a seat, honey. We're on the air.

SUSAN

No, we're not.

TYLER

Mom!

He gestures to the camera.

PETER

Susan, you can sit down, my collar is just fine. She's always worrying about me.

He grins to the audience. Susan sits  
dumbfounded.

BARRY

That guy's gonna go somewhere.

MARSHA

Where?

BARRY

I dunno. Rikers?

They laugh themselves offstage.

REPORTER 1

Tell me in your own words, Susan. What has this been like for you?

SUSAN

It's been...umm...

REPORTER 1

Fascinating. Now, Senator, what are your plans for the upcoming election?

SUSAN

Upcoming election? You're running again?

Becca enters the kitchen.

BECCA

He's running again?



PETER

Well, Diane, so glad you should ask...

Peter continues talking in pantomime. Susan talks to Becca from across the stage.

SUSAN

I guess.

BECCA

Does mom know?

SUSAN

It doesn't matter.

BECCA

It might to her.

SUSAN

Is she going to stop him?

BECCA

No but she'll never let you hear the end of it.

SUSAN

You're her messenger now? The bearer of 'I told you so.'

BECCA

Someone has to return her calls.

SUSAN

Better you than me.

BECCA

I happen to agree with her.

SUSAN

I'm sure that's very validating for the both of you.

BECCA

Not really.

SUSAN

Becca.

BECCA

Are you leaving him?

All action on stage stops. Susan stands up and begins crossing towards Becca.

SUSAN  
I hadn't considered...I hadn't thought of that as/ an option.

BECCA  
--Bullshit.

SUSAN  
Seriously. I haven't had the time to...

BECCA  
Everyone's asking.

SUSAN  
It's been three days.

BECCA  
Everyone's asking.

SUSAN  
Who is asking.

BECCA  
CNN? Hoda Kotb? Everyone's asking.

SUSAN  
Well, tell them I don't know.

BECCA  
You must know.

SUSAN  
It wasn't the first thing that came into my head.

BECCA  
That's so noble.

SUSAN  
I don't even know what he really did.

BECCA  
But you're pretty sure.

SUSAN  
There's something. He did something.

BECCA  
But you don't know.

SUSAN  
Not from his mouth.

BECCA  
No, what's coming out of his mouth is...

SUSAN  
It's unrecognizable.

They look over at a television in the corner of the kitchen. Peter is audible on the other side of the stage once again.

PETER  
... and I truly believe, Diane, that the constituents want someone trustworthy. Someone who can turn to you and say, I know who you are, I see what you're feeling and not only do I sympathize, I also *empathize*.

He winks at the reporter. She blushes.

These are the values I try to teach my son. These are the values I want to instill in America....the part of America that to this day doesn't share these values. Like some of my colleagues across the aisle. You know which ones I'm talking about.

Tyler laughs and smiles up lovingly at his father.

SUSAN  
That's not him. It's not. This whole thing is... so foreign.

BECCA  
And if you left?

SUSAN  
What about it?

BECCA  
What would happen to him?

SUSAN  
I don't know.

BECCA  
Would it really affect him?

I don't know. SUSAN

And what about you? BECCA

I would get by. SUSAN

Would you? BECCA

Of course I would. SUSAN

And Tyler? What would happen to him? BECCA

He'd get through it. SUSAN

He would. BECCA

I'd make sure of it. SUSAN

You wouldn't be able to. BECCA

You think... SUSAN

I do. BECCA

REPORTER 1  
Tyler, how do you think your dad's been holding up through all of this?

TYLER  
It think he's doing great! I really believe in him.

The reporters laugh adoringly.

BECCA  
You have to think that Peter would bounce back pretty quickly.

Not if he's in jail. SUSAN

He's beloved. BECCA

I know. SUSAN

It's not like other families. Much more in the spotlight. BECCA

I know. SUSAN

Everyone knows you. There's a difference. BECCA

I know. SUSAN

...In how he'd do, how you'd do. BECCA

Becca, I know. SUSAN

You're not as resilient. BECCA

That's not true. SUSAN

You're not. BECCA

So? SUSAN

I just wouldn't do anything stupid is all. BECCA

And what would you consider stupid exactly? SUSAN

They'll take Tyler away. BECCA

SUSAN

That's ridiculous.

BECCA

They're not going to give him up--he's too valuable. It's all about how it looks.

The actress playing Diane Sawyer becomes Marsha once again. Throughout the following Susan, Becca, Marsha, and Barry transition into the conference room and sit down at the table.

MARSHA

It's all about Norman Rockwell, my friend. Even today. Even today, in this fucked time we inhabit. It's all about Norman fucking Rockwell. NORMAN FUCKING ROCKWELL.

SUSAN

I get it.

BARRY

It's all about that you know?

MARSHA

Because you can't trust shit in this world. You can't trust shit. Everyone's a piece of shit. Everyone's the piece of shit your husband is, frankly. You think there are people out there that are better? There's no one better.

SUSAN

So you think he did it?

MARSHA

Of course he did it!

BARRY

I have this rule, you know? Hookers don't lie. That's what I always say. Hookers don't lie. If she says it? It's true.

SUSAN

I don't know about that.

MARSHA

No, he's right, whores don't lie.

SUSAN

Ever?

Ever. MARSHA

What about drugs? BECCA

Whores on drugs don't lie either. BARRY

Seriously? SUSAN

Honestly, what do they stand to gain? MARSHA

Money, notoriety? BECCA

Who wants notoriety for being a whore? MARSHA

Diablo Cody? BECCA

She was a stripper. Strippers are different. BARRY

Oh. BECCA

All I'm saying is, if this crack whore said your sleazy senator husband did something, he probably did. Why? Because if he didn't, some other sleaze bag did and someone deserves to pay for it. But, the likelihood is, judging from what I've seen of that smug little bastard, he probably did it. MARSHA

I believe it. BECCA

He probably did it. SUSAN

Let's just say, we're operating off that assumption. BARRY

And he's going to be fine? For this election he's going to be fine? SUSAN

Yes, and you know why? MARSHA

Why? SUSAN

Norman fucking Rockwell. MARSHA

Americana bullshit. BARRY

Ameri-fucking-cana. MARSHA

Oh. SUSAN

And you, my friend, are a sleaze-ball's dream trophy. MARSHA

I went to Vassar. I went to law school. SUSAN

That's what I'm saying. BARRY

You didn't say it, she did. BECCA

Same thing. BARRY

You're the best kind of trophy. The chicks love you because you're "smart" for a girl. The dudes love you because you have a great ass. MARSHA

You really do. BARRY

The old people love you because of both things. And they think you keep him in line. And everyone in the goddamn country can whack off to the Norman Fucking Rockwell porn your dirty little family emits. You're like a hot Hillary. MARSHA

And the kid... BARRY



Oh the kid!!!! MARSHA

That kid is gold. BARRY

Gold! MARSHA

Total gold. BARRY

Absolute Norman Rockwell gold. MARSHA

What did you pluck him off an Aryan farm? BARRY

Ha! Right! MARSHA

What? SUSAN

Where they keep all the blonde haired blue eyed mensa boys ripe for the picking? MARSHA

Don't talk about Tyler like that. SUSAN

He'll be on the covers of teen magazines. There are still teen magazines right? MARSHA

But what if... SUSAN

What? BARRY

What if I don't want to? SUSAN

Don't want to what? MARSHA

To do all of this? SUSAN

BARRY

I don't understand.

SUSAN

What if I'm not up for exploiting myself, and my son, for...this. For his career.

Marsha and Barry look at each other and begin laughing.

BARRY

Hilarious.

SUSAN

I'm serious, what if I don't want to be the wallflower wife in the background of all the pictures? What if I don't want my son around all of this? What if I want out?

BARRY

We're prepared for that.

SUSAN

How?

MARSHA

We have an offer.

BECCA

Of what?

BARRY

You'll be very happy with it.

MARSHA

It's more than fair.

SUSAN

What are you offering me?

BARRY

It's industry standard.

SUSAN

There's a standard?

MARSHA

The going rate.

SUSAN

An offer of what kind?

BARRY  
Let's call it a Norman Rockwell offer.

MARSHA  
I like that.

BARRY  
Thank you.

MARSHA  
A Norman Rockwell offer...

SUSAN  
I don't know what that means.

BECCA  
They're offering you money, Suzie.

SUSAN  
For what?

BECCA  
To stay. Imagine what Elizabeth Edwards would have gotten.

SUSAN  
To stay with him?

BECCA  
More than she got by walking out the door.

BARRY  
You think Silda Spitzer stayed with that pervert out of the goodness of her heart?

MARSHA  
Your son gets the same. Trusts of course. His is accessible at the age of 18. Furnished by a generous campaign donor so no strings attached. It's totally yours.

SUSAN  
If I stay.

BARRY  
And preserve the Rockwell name.

MARSHA  
Rockwell Jr. will be set for life no matter what happens to Peter.

SUSAN  
You know our name isn't actually Rockwell, right?

MARSHA

Of course! (*To Barry*) We know that, right?

BARRY

What does it matter?

MARSHA

Right. So, what do you think?

Everyone on stage then turns to look at Susan.

SUSAN

I want to talk to my husband.

Everyone onstage groans.

MARSHA

You're not quite grasping how these things work.

BARRY

It's a time thing, you see? We need to get all this squared away before important people put more money into the campaign. Those important people need to see important documents proving you've accepted our offer.

SUSAN

I don't need money.

BECCA

Right now you don't.

BARRY

Think of this as an insurance policy.

MARSHA

In case things don't go as planned.

BARRY

Creditors come out of the woodwork.

SUSAN

What creditors?

MARSHA

We just assume men like that owe money to someone. And if he goes away, and you're all that's left...

BARRY

How much are you making these days? Oh...right.

BECCA

Tyler will be taken care of. You'll be taken care of.

MARSHA

For life. We're talking...life money.

SUSAN

No matter what happens.

BARRY

If you stay.

BECCA

And you get to be with Tyler.

MARSHA

Well, I didn't want to bring it up but...

BARRY

It might be the only way to guarantee that.

A phone rings in the kitchen. Tyler gets up to answer it.

TYLER

Hello?

BARRY

All you have to do is live out the life you already built for yourself.

MARSHA

Sounds like a no brainer to me.

BARRY

You're getting this to do absolutely nothing.

MARSHA

Essentially.

TYLER

Mom?

And if I leave?  
 SUSAN

Nothing?  
 Marsha shakes her head.

Poor little Tyler.  
 MARSHA

Barry pulls out a giant stack of papers. And begins flipping through it.

BARRY  
 The contract simply states that in exchange for X sum set up in two trusts: one in your name and one in Tyler's furnished by a donor unrelated to your husband, his law practice, or his campaign, divorce is prohibited, as is any contact with the press outside of the parameters stated here, here, and here. Overseen by us, of course. Take a minute to peruse. We'll just sit here and watch you.

I want a lawyer.  
 SUSAN

I am your lawyer. I'm here to protect you.  
 BARRY

I want my own lawyer.  
 SUSAN

Norman Rockwell, don't you want to be Norman Rockwell?  
 MARSHA

We never were.  
 SUSAN

Well, now you can be. The American dream. Am I right?  
 MARSHA

Mom?  
 TYLER

You could be the next Camelot.  
 BARRY

Mom! Phone for you?  
 TYLER

Tell grandma I'll call her back.  
 SUSAN

It's not grandma. TYLER

Who is it? SUSAN

She won't say. TYLER

Tell whoever it is I'll call back. SUSAN

She says it's urgent. TYLER

Tell her to hold on. SUSAN

She won't. TYLER

Susan goes to the phone. In the kitchen. The lights on the other parts of the stage go dark. The actress who plays Marsha appears in another pool of light on the another part of the stage. She is now Rita, dressed in a hospital gown, covered in bruises, casts. She's was beaten very severely. We can tell she's lived a non-virtuous life, let's say. She is holding a phone receiver. The kind next to a hospital bed.

Hello? SUSAN

Hello? RITA

Who is this? SUSAN

Who is this? RITA

You don't know who you called? SUSAN

Just wanted to make sure it's you. RITA

It's me. At least I think so. SUSAN

You're the wife. RITA

Susan freezes.

Yes. You're the... SUSAN

Right. RITA

How did you...how did you get this number? SUSAN

He.... RITA

Don't answer that. I don't want to know. SUSAN

Right...so... RITA

So... SUSAN

I just want to let you know I'm...I'm sorry, you know? RITA

Sorry? SUSAN

Yeah. RITA

Oh. SUSAN

I didn't mean to...I saw you on TV. You look terrible. RITA

Oh. SUSAN



RITA

I didn't mean to make you sad I just. I was doing my job.

SUSAN

Your job...

RITA

I don't ask who he is you know? I don't want to know I just want to wait until the end. I don't know if he's married or what I just wanted to...he had a nice car.

SUSAN

He picked it out on his 40th birthday.

RITA

Must be nice.

SUSAN

Yeah.

RITA

So I just wanted to tell you...

SUSAN

What?

RITA

I mean you probably already know.

SUSAN

Know what? About you?

RITA

And the others.

SUSAN

There are others?

RITA

Fuck, I thought you knew.

SUSAN

How long has he been...

RITA

He's been coming around for years.

SUSAN  
The same with them?

RITA  
In my case he just got a bit out of hand is all.

SUSAN  
Jesus.

RITA  
It happens a lot you know, they get carried away and...

SUSAN  
Carried away and what?

RITA  
The fantasies these men have. I mean, they pay top dollar. Some girls let it go too far.

SUSAN  
I don't want to/ hear this...

RITA  
--I just want you to be careful. I just want you to be safe. For that boy of yours. He's really something else. I wouldn't want to see him become like...

SUSAN  
He's never been rough or...

RITA  
Never?

SUSAN  
Never.

RITA  
Guess he's been saving it for us.

SUSAN  
I guess.

RITA  
Not worth it man. This'll all cost me a fortune. They don't exactly insure us you know.

SUSAN  
Oh...I can send/ you some--

RITA  
I don't want your money.

Right. Sorry. SUSAN

I don't want anything from you. RITA

I didn't mean to... SUSAN

I know. RITA

A silence.

I have to go. SUSAN

Yeah, you go. Tell that motherfucker I said hi. RITA

I will. SUSAN

Don't actually do that. RITA

Okay. SUSAN

And I thought I had it bad. RITA

Right. I'm sorry too. I... for what...you know. SUSAN

I know. RITA

So...uhm... SUSAN

What's your name? Rita laughs. She hangs up the phone.

Dial tone.

END OF ACT ONE

## ACT TWO

Peter and Susan sit on a picnic blanket on the floor of the stage. It is fifteen years in the past and they are on their first date. They are laughing, mid conversation.

SUSAN

The look on her face when you just walked in and took your seat.

PETER

I thought her eyes were going to pop out of her head.

SUSAN

And you pulled out your book and...started writing.

PETER

And she said nothing.

SUSAN

Nothing!

PETER

She didn't want to disturb everyone else. Not during the exam, of course.

SUSAN

And what did you say again?

PETER

I said that purple was her color.

SUSAN

You're awful.

PETER

And she said nothing.

SUSAN

45 minutes late for the midterm.

PETER

I tamed the beast.

SUSAN

Unbelievable.

PETER

The famed Connie Gordon, professor of Con Law. Instilling fear in law students since 1963.

SUSAN

Her first name is Frances.

PETER

It's better if it's Connie. Makes it seem like she lives to teach Con Law.

SUSAN

She might.

PETER

Poor Connie.

SUSAN

Poor Connie.

He pours more wine into their glasses.

Did she fail you?

PETER

B minus.

SUSAN

What?!

PETER

I cannot tell a lie.

SUSAN

Unbelievable.

PETER

What did you get?

SUSAN

It doesn't matter.

PETER

Oh, come on.

SUSAN

B plus.

PETER

That's great.

But I studied!

SUSAN

Clearly that's a waste of time.

PETER

You might actually have to study before you graduate, you know.

SUSAN

I don't know. It doesn't seem necessary.

PETER

Let me guess...family firm?

SUSAN

Is it that obvious?

PETER

A long shot.

SUSAN

Listen, I should go.

A silence.

Wait.

PETER

Thanks for the wine.

SUSAN

She gets up to go.

I'm not like that.

PETER

I know.

SUSAN

I'm not a "family firm" guy.

PETER

I'm sure you're not. I just. It's different for me. I don't come from that.

SUSAN

That's okay.

PETER

SUSAN  
I know it's okay.

PETER  
And I like you because you're so...you've got so much...you've got this...

SUSAN  
What?

PETER  
You're like a little peanut.

SUSAN  
How am I like a peanut?

PETER  
You're just so...adorable and then you have this shell and I can crack it open to reveal...

SUSAN  
A nut?

PETER  
A legume actually.

SUSAN  
I'm not sure this metaphor works.

PETER  
I, for one, love peanuts.

SUSAN  
They're okay.

PETER  
They're way better than okay.

SUSAN  
They're not even in the fancy mixed nuts can.

PETER  
They don't consult me about such things.

SUSAN  
I guess not.

PETER  
Don't go, okay? I'm not a bad guy.

SUSAN  
I have a lot to study. I will actually have to study to get a job.

PETER  
Ouch.

SUSAN  
I didn't mean it that way.

PETER  
Yes you did.

SUSAN  
But I don't want you to know I meant it that way.

PETER  
That's fair.

SUSAN  
Goodbye, Peter.

PETER  
I'll study with you.

SUSAN  
Seriously?

PETER  
Yeah. It'll be good for me.

SUSAN  
I don't know.

PETER  
I could use the help.

SUSAN  
I like to study alone usually.

PETER  
That sounds horribly boring.

SUSAN  
It's not supposed to be fun.

PETER  
How do you know?



SUSAN  
I guess I don't.

PETER  
I won't take no for an answer.

Susan considers his offer.

SUSAN  
Even Con Law?

PETER  
What can I say? I'm a sucker for legumes.

He kisses her. As they kiss, flashbulbs go off.  
The reporters and Marsha reappear. Peter and  
Susan come back to the present at different rates.

REPORTER 1  
Mrs. Turner? Are you going to forgive your husband?

PETER  
Are you saying you forgive me for being so persistent?

SUSAN  
I didn't say anything.

PETER  
Do you?

SUSAN  
(to Peter)  
Stubbornness is a virtue.

PETER  
It's only a virtue if I turn out to be right about us.

SUSAN  
I guess. If you turn out to be wrong it's mere stupidity.

PETER  
So, are you saying I'm going to turn out to be right?

SUSAN  
I didn't say anything of the kind.

REPORTER 1

Are you prepared to make a statement?

REPORTER 2

Mrs. Turner! Susan? Are you staying with him?

REPORTER 1

Do you think the voters can look past these allegations as you have?

REPORTER 2

Would you vote for him?

REPORTER 1

Did you read the police report? Has she read the police report?

MARSHA

You don't have to answer that.

SUSAN

I don't have to answer that.

Susan starts becoming aware of the others as one becomes aware of waking up from a great dream. She resists.

REPORTER 2

What have you told Tyler?

MARSHA

You don't have to answer that either. *(To Reporters)* Give her a second, guys.

REPORTER 1

Sorry.

REPORTER 2

Is he sorry?

SUSAN

*(To Peter)*

Are you sorry?

PETER

Sorry I tried?

SUSAN

Are you sorry?

Peter, are you sorry?

REPORTER 1

Yes. No. What for?

PETER

For...what you did?

SUSAN

Peter laughs. He is coming back to the present.

What did I do?

PETER

Peter!

SUSAN

Do you want some more wine?

PETER

You had them give me a gag order?

SUSAN

A what?

PETER

You sent them to do that.

SUSAN

It's standard.

PETER

You sound just like them.

SUSAN

It's better for you than it is for me.

PETER

I doubt that.

SUSAN

Your life is no different, just more secure.

PETER

No different?

SUSAN

PETER  
Did you have other plans?

SUSAN  
Did you?

PETER  
Of course not, Peanut. We stick together.

SUSAN  
I talked to her. I heard her voice.

PETER  
Everything's going to be fine, Susan. Things like this happen all the time. You just don't always hear about it.

SUSAN  
All the time? Do you know how terrible that sounds? It doesn't happen all the time.

PETER  
Sure it does.

SUSAN  
People don't beat prostitutes all the time.

PETER  
How do you know?

Susan slaps him. He grabs her arm.

PETER  
You get one of those.

SUSAN  
How many did she get?

PETER  
There are people in this world who are jealous. They're jealous of you, of me. They're jealous of our two car garage, they're jealous of our intelligent, athletic son. They're jealous that I'm white...

SUSAN  
What do we tell Tyler?

PETER  
What do you want to tell him?

SUSAN

I want to tell him it's all a lie! I want to tell him none of this happened! That his life isn't ruined, his family isn't disgraced!

PETER

You can't tell him that.

SUSAN

Because it's not true.

PETER

We tell Tyler that families stick together. We tell Tyler that humans are human. We sit our son down and we tell him that there are truths in this world that never come out. There are stories that get distorted there are denials and monstrosities in the press, and then there's the truth. The truth doesn't exist. The truth happens and is instantly gone. That's what you tell him.

SUSAN

You believe that?

PETER

I believe that you deserve a two car garage.

SUSAN

That has nothing to do with this.

PETER

That's all this has to do with. That's all there is.

SUSAN

There used to be more.

PETER

I'm moving on. For us.

SUSAN

They won't let you.

PETER

They will. It's just a matter of how. I'll apologize, repent, rehab, reboot, whatever they need me to do. What happens after that more or less depends on you. You should take the money and move on with me. I won't touch it. I promise. They made sure I couldn't.

SUSAN

I don't want the money.

PETER

Fine. Plead for sympathy until the day you die and hope that the voters will believe all of the horrible things I did to you. You can go on and on about how ruined you are and that might take you as far as a divorce settlement and perhaps a book deal or two. Maybe. But after that, you're just a woman scorned with a destitute son.

SUSAN

Why are you doing this?

PETER

What will you do next? Pick up the pieces of a law career never started?

SUSAN

Because of you.

PETER

Because you trapped me.

SUSAN

What?

PETER

An unwanted law school pregnancy.

SUSAN

You wouldn't do that to him.

PETER

And I am the man you drove away.

SUSAN

What?

PETER

I did the right thing, treated you well. But you were unkind. Unsupportive. Unsatisfying. Cold. Abusive even.

SUSAN

You wouldn't.

PETER

Far too volatile to raise her sensitive son.

SUSAN

Stop it.

PETER

Take the money, and live your life.

SUSAN

I can't do that.

PETER

You go with the plan we set up and you get your life back and then some. You can buy your mom a new house. Far, far away from you, where the phone lines don't work.

SUSAN

You're going to jail.

PETER

Maybe, maybe not. Probably not. I'm charming, remember?

SUSAN

This isn't law school.

PETER

You're right law school was hard.

SUSAN

You make me sick.

PETER

And even if I do go to jail, maybe I won't get elected again, but my life is far from over. I may even have a new career waiting for me on the other side. Broadcasting? I hear satellite radio is taking anyone.

SUSAN

So what do you need me for?

PETER

I'm giving you the opportunity to put things back to normal.

SUSAN

We'll never be back to normal.

PETER

Maybe not. But you have to try. For Tyler.

SUSAN

I have to try?

I want you to try. You can fix this. PETER

I can't fix this. SUSAN

You can help me come closer than I can alone. PETER

But you don't need me. SUSAN

No. PETER

So what do you want me for? SUSAN

I want you there with me. PETER

Why? SUSAN

Because that's where you belong. You always have. I told you that from day one. PETER

I didn't believe you then. SUSAN

I have a way of knowing these things. PETER

She sizes him up.

Are you going to do it again? SUSAN

I don't know. PETER

Then why should I do this? SUSAN

Because you made a vow. PETER



SUSAN  
So did you.

PETER  
You're a better person than I am. Better at vows.

SUSAN  
I know.

Peter remains on stage, frozen in Susan's  
sightline. Tyler enters.

TYLER  
Mom?

SUSAN  
Yes, honey.

TYLER  
The cameras are outside again. When's it going to stop?

SUSAN  
Soon.

TYLER  
Mom?

SUSAN  
Yes honey.

TYLER  
Did he do it? You can tell me.

REPORTER 1  
Did he do it? Mrs. Turner?

TYLER  
Mom?

REPORTER 2  
Do you have a confession, Mrs. Turner? Did he confess?

SUSAN  
I'm not going to...

TYLER  
Mom, people keep asking me things. I'm not sure what to say.

REPORTER 1

Mrs. Turner, do you have a statement?

TYLER

Mom? Are you getting a divorce? That's what they're saying at school.

SUSAN

I can't tell you what he did or didn't do.

TYLER

People say you don't believe him.

SUSAN

I don't know what I believe.

TYLER

What should I believe?

SUSAN

I don't know.

TYLER

You said we had to believe in him.

SUSAN

I know what I said.

TYLER

You said you needed us to believe in him.

SUSAN

I did. I do.

TYLER

You sat next to him on TV.

SUSAN

I know.

TYLER

Dad wants you to help him.

SUSAN

He told you that?

TYLER

I just know. He needs us.

Tyler... SUSAN

No. You have to help him. If you help him, all of the reporters will stop. TYLER

I don't know if that's true. SUSAN

What are you going to say? BECCA

I don't know. SUSAN

You have to make a statement. PETER

They're expecting it now. MARSHA

Please. Mom, please. It's the only way to make it stop. TYLER

Susan considers for a while, then takes Tyler's hand. Susan, Peter, and Tyler turn towards the audience. Susan addresses the reporters.

Someone once told me that the truth in history only exists at the time when it happens. After it happens, the truth is gone. All that's left are stories. (*She looks at Tyler.*) Over the past few days I've decided that there are things that are more important than the truth. SUSAN

So...uhm...what's the truth? REPORTER 1

I don't know. I wasn't there. SUSAN

You weren't where? Was there somewhere to be? REPORTER 1

There probably was. It's irrelevant now. SUSAN

So you're saying... REPORTER 2

SUSAN  
I'm saying, I am supporting my husband.

REPORTER 1  
Supporting him how?

REPORTER 2  
Are you staying with him?

SUSAN  
I'm standing by him.

REPORTER 3  
Why?

SUSAN  
For now.

TYLER  
You made a vow.

SUSAN  
I made a vow.

REPORTER 2  
So did he!

SUSAN  
I'm better at vows than he is.

PETER  
She really is!

Susan, still standing with Tyler and Peter, sees  
Becca at the corner of the stage.

SUSAN  
There's gonna be a trial.

BECCA  
Of course there is. He's going to jail for a long time.

SUSAN  
He might not.

I hope he does. BECCA

They walk to the table. The others disappear.

I should have gotten a job. SUSAN

What? BECCA

Mom was right. I had so many offers. SUSAN

That was a long time ago. BECCA

It's not like being home made him stick around. SUSAN

Don't even start with that. BECCA

What if it was my fault? SUSAN

It wasn't. BECCA

I didn't make time for him. I didn't dress up for him. SUSAN

It wasn't you. Wives can drive their husbands away. They can't drive them to be perverts. BECCA

He told me politicians did better when their wives didn't work. SUSAN

In 1950 maybe. BECCA

I wanted to believe him. Always. Anything he said. SUSAN

I know. BECCA

I was in love. SUSAN

I know. BECCA

And then there was Tyler and I couldn't leave him at home. SUSAN

You couldn't. BECCA

And I didn't have to. And the money.... SUSAN

It wasn't an issue. BECCA

Right. SUSAN

Never was with him. BECCA

It would be now. SUSAN

Only if you go. BECCA

He's my whole identity now. Without him I'm nothing. A vapor. SUSAN

You don't have to have nothing.. BECCA

I'll always know that I'm nothing without him. SUSAN

But maybe this way's better. More honest. Sure, you'll have to be with him, but you'll always know your terms at least. You'll never be caught off guard again. BECCA

It will never be the same. SUSAN

It will never be the same. You're right. BECCA

But... SUSAN

But nothing. BECCA

What? SUSAN

You don't see me complaining. BECCA

What are you talking about? SUSAN

I think mom's right. BECCA

That I deserve it? SUSAN

You knew what you were getting yourself into. BECCA

You think I had this coming to me. SUSAN

I think it was in the fine print. BECCA

Well I didn't read it. SUSAN

But you have a gorgeous home and everything you could ever need. BECCA

It's not about that. SUSAN

You're making out pretty well. BECCA

I wouldn't call this making out well. SUSAN

Well, if it would pay my bills... BECCA

Sorry. She stops herself.

I can't get her voice out of my head. SUSAN

Who? BECCA

The...the girl. SUSAN

Oh. BECCA

She sounded so young. And all I could think was...we're exactly the same. SUSAN

You're not that young. BECCA

We both trusted him. SUSAN

He's charming. BECCA

We both did what he asked. I still am. SUSAN

You're not alone. BECCA

We both got fucked. SUSAN

They laugh. A release.

They want to do another special. An official announcement of the new campaign. SUSAN

TV? BECCA

In our living room. SUSAN



Norman fucking Rockwell. BECCA

Norman fucking Rockwell. SUSAN

Wow. BECCA

They're buying us new furniture. SUSAN

I love your furniture. BECCA

Me too. My fine print furniture. SUSAN

They don't like it? BECCA

They want more Rockwell. SUSAN

Weird. BECCA

Modern furniture is for the Swedes, they said. Not patriotic. SUSAN

What are they going to ask you? BECCA

About...sticking it out through adversity. SUSAN

The sanctity of marriage. Long lasting true love. BECCA

Right. SUSAN

Gross. BECCA

Appealing to the masses. A modern day Camelot. SUSAN

BECCA

How long are they going to make you sit there and lie?

SUSAN

There are no lies when there is no truth. Just stories.

BECCA

Where'd you get that anyway?

SUSAN

Where do you think?

Marsha and Peter enter. The space transforms  
into the conference room.

MARSHA

We're going to have to ask you to sign now.

PETER

It will be fine.

SUSAN

The woman who stuck by it all to keep her family together.

BECCA

Why can't he stick by anything?

SUSAN

I never believed all that bullshit.

BECCA

So give it all up. Pack your bags.

SUSAN

I can't.

BECCA

Why not?

SUSAN

I guess I believe all that bullshit.

PETER

It's really going to make it better for all of us. Think of Tyler.

BECCA

You're doing the right thing. Think of Tyler.

BARRY

I've read through the whole thing, don't worry.

MARSHA

It's a formality really, we know your intentions are good.

SUSAN

What do you know about good intentions?

PETER

You have to sign now, Peanut.

MARSHA

We like to have everything in order.

PETER

Just a formality.

BARRY

Just so we are protected.

SUSAN

We?

BARRY

And you and little Tigger, of course.

SUSAN

Tyler.

MARSHA

Trust me, everything is much easier this way.

SUSAN

Can I ask you a question?

MARSHA

Sure.

SUSAN

What does she have to sign?

MARSHA

Who?

SUSAN  
You know who.

BARRY  
We're not at liberty to discuss...confidentiality stuff, you understand.

SUSAN  
Is she...

MARSHA  
She's taken care of.

SUSAN  
What do you mean?

MARSHA  
She's compensated in a similar manner.

SUSAN  
You're paying her off?

MARSHA  
She's agreed to...

SUSAN  
Being silenced.

MARSHA  
I wouldn't call it that.

SUSAN  
What do you call it?

BARRY  
An arrangement.

SUSAN  
Medical bills?

MARSHA  
And then some.

SUSAN  
There are others. Other women.

MARSHA  
No there aren't.

There are. SUSAN

We don't know anything about any others. BARRY

How many arrangements are there? SUSAN

Everyone is content with their terms. MARSHA

Everyone? SUSAN

Everyone. MARSHA

And everyone includes... SUSAN

We're not at liberty to discuss... BARRY

Everyone includes everyone who knows...or suspects. Or could help to silence... SUSAN

If you could just sign... MARSHA

Everyone includes...my sister? SUSAN

You know I can't say. MARSHA

My mother? SUSAN

This isn't exactly relevant to what we're doing here. BARRY

I think it's relevant. SUSAN

Suzie...I'm so sorry. BECCA

Don't. SUSAN

You knew. BECCA

I guessed. SUSAN

It's just been so hard. Stu out of work and...I really did believe in...the stuff about Tyler. BECCA

Stop. Just stop. SUSAN

Susan picks up a pen.

Thank you. BECCA

Just that line right there. BARRY

Shouldn't I have a lawyer or something? SUSAN

You are a lawyer. BARRY

Susan signs.

I know it's not ideal, honey. But we gotta do what we gotta do. You know what I mean? MARSHA

Best way to get everything back to normal. BARRY

So, what do I do now? SUSAN

Act normal. BARRY

They take the papers away.

Doesn't that feel better now? MARSHA

SUSAN

I just signed on to play myself in some fake reality.

MARSHA

Kinda!

Peter pats her on the back. Marsha hands Susan a bowl of food to put on the table.

PETER

Hungry?

TYLER

I am.

Peter and Tyler sit down for a meal. Susan reaches out to hug Tyler, he sits on the opposite side of the table.

PETER

Everything looks delicious.

There are pictures being taken of them as they eat.

SUSAN

I didn't make any of it.

TYLER

Mac and cheese! My favorite.

SUSAN

You're lactose intolerant.

PETER

How was your day, honey?

SUSAN

You know how my day was.

PETER

That's nice dear.

He takes slow, deliberate bites.

TYLER

Mmm! This is great!

They eat in awkward silence. Susan watches.

You're not hungry?  
PETER

I don't have an appetite.  
SUSAN

Rita appears and takes a seat at the table. She's still in a hospital gown.

Pass the asparagus please.  
RITA

You.  
SUSAN

She sloppily spoons lots of food onto her plate and eats very messily.

Good shit.  
RITA

Tyler roars with laughter. Susan is surprised at seeing the wounds for the first time. She reaches out to touch them.

Does it still hurt?  
SUSAN

Rita takes a bite.

Is that garlic? Delicious.  
RITA

Did he mention me?  
SUSAN

RITA  
You can never get too much garlic. Keeps the monsters away. And the congressmen.

Rita laughs. Tyler and Peter join in.

SUSAN  
How could you not know who he was? He'd been there before.



I haven't had a home cooked meal in a while.

RITA

Do you want more potatoes?

SUSAN

How was school?

RITA

Fine.

TYLER

Just fine? You didn't learn anything?

RITA

Math.

TYLER

Math? Just math?

RITA

Algebra.

TYLER

Equations?

RITA

Yeah.

TYLER

I loved that shit.

RITA

Mom!

TYLER

What?

SUSAN

Sorry.

RITA

Tyler?

SUSAN

Did Mr. Lamb hand back the tests?

RITA

No. TYLER

Did he? PETER

Yes. TYLER

How did you do? SUSAN

What did you get? RITA

A minus. TYLER

That's great! SUSAN

Why the minus, dummy? RITA

He's not dumb. SUSAN

Didn't check my work. TYLER

Always check your work. PETER

I was great at algebra. Not so much geometry. RITA

You were great at everything. PETER

Peter kisses Rita violently.

Stop it! SUSAN

You can show me later what else you're great at. PETER

He slaps her ass.

Gross! TYLER

Stop it! SUSAN

You have to appreciate what you got. PETER

He winks.

Grosser! TYLER

Peter grabs Rita's breasts. Tyler laughs. Peter begins roughing Rita up, re-enacting his violation of her. He puts her on the dinner table and carves in her skin with a knife. Tyler roars with laughter.

Stop it! Stop! SUSAN

Susan pushes Rita off the table violently. She begins kicking and beating the chair Rita was sitting in. The world slowly comes back into reality. Peter and Tyler see a chair fall. Flashbulbs erupt. It goes on for far too long. After a silence.

Susan. PETER

Mom. TYLER

Damnit. MARSHA

We didn't put in a crazy clause. BARRY

You said you'd done this before. MARSHA

I have. BARRY

MARSHA

Shoulda put in a crazy clause. Always put in the crazy clause. Now we're stuck with her. The senator's gonna be pissed.

Peter turns to the audience. He dresses Susan in a hospital gown as he speaks.

PETER

Susan is doing well, thank you for the concern.

REPORTER 1

Will this affect your campaign?

PETER

No. Of course not.

REPORTER 2

You're not afraid you'll be seen as insensitive?

PETER

Susan supports me in whatever I do. It is most important to her to help the people of this state. At this time, we are confident she will make a swift recovery.

REPORTER 1

How's Tyler holding up?

PETER

He's eager to get on the campaign trail.

Peter places her in a hospital bed.

REPORTER 1

And how does he feel about his mother's illness?

PETER

Tyler is a supportive and patient son. We've both been by her side for the past week and we plan to be until she is one hundred percent better.

REPORTER 2

And then what?

PETER

And then we'll see! Maybe we'll kick her to the curb.

The reporters laugh.

PETER

I'm just kidding of course.

REPORTER 1

Senator, can you speak to exactly what caused her breakdown?

PETER

I can't say. All I know is that she is the hardest working wife and mother there is. Women are asked to do a lot, you know. It's way harder for them than it is for us.

He winks. A flash bulb.

REPORTER 1

She must be very proud of you, sir.

PETER

She is.

Peter exits. Susan calls after him. Barry is standing next to the hospital bed.

SUSAN

Peter?

BARRY

He can't be seen speaking with you.

SUSAN

Why?

BARRY

We have to make sure it's controlled. You understand.

SUSAN

I don't.

BARRY

Things are a bit different than they were prior to your little...episode.

SUSAN

Yes, they are.

BARRY

Unfortunately, we're going to have to change the arrangement on our end.

SUSAN

I want out of the deal.

Barry laughs.

BARRY

We're both smart enough to know that's not possible. That contract's air tight. Except for the crazy clause goddamnit.

SUSAN

I don't care about the money.

BARRY

Well, that's fine but you signed.

SUSAN

You can have it back.

BARRY

Whether you spend it or not is your business but the check is written. The trust is in the bank.

SUSAN

We don't need the money. We'll figure it out ourselves.

BARRY

I don't have time for this. You're staying and we're moving on. Now we have some clean up to do.

SUSAN

What do you mean?

BARRY

It seems with your little "episode"...

SUSAN

Stop calling it an episode.

BARRY

With your little outbreak...

SUSAN

I was upset.

BARRY

Whatever it was, it's looking a bit hairy for the senator.

SUSAN

But the thing with the prostitute?

BARRY

That we could solve.

SUSAN

I see. But this...

BARRY

The current situation presents a difficult set of options for us. He could keep running, ramp up the rhetoric, deny any reports you're still ailing. We throw you in some suits, you smile and wave, do some pharmaceutical commercials, no harm no foul.

SUSAN

Or?

BARRY

He quits the race, is seen as an heroic care-taker, makes millions when he gets a daytime talk show a la Dr. Phil and teaches other champs like him how to be the perfect man.

SUSAN

Do that one.

BARRY

Well, it's not ideal.

SUSAN

Why not?

BARRY

Tons of work for the big guy. And, as you know, senators are not typically fond of work.

SUSAN

So he wants me to do the work.

BARRY

Yes.

SUSAN

He wants me to smile and wave.

BARRY

There is another option of course.

SUSAN

Another one?

BARRY

Peter didn't exactly condone the idea but it could get both of you off the hook.

And what's that? SUSAN

You go crazier. BARRY

Than I already am. SUSAN

BARRY  
Give him a reason to leave. Cause if he leaves, you're all in the clear. There's nothing in the deal about him leaving. If he leaves, the money is still yours.

I don't want him to leave. SUSAN

Sure, honey. BARRY

I don't. SUSAN

Anyway, think about it. BARRY

I've thought about it. SUSAN

Barry laughs.

BARRY  
It's the merciful thing to do, you know? Get some rest, kid.

I don't need rest, I know what I'm doing. SUSAN

Now you sound crazy. BECCA

Thanks. SUSAN

Look... BECCA

I get it. SUSAN



BECCA  
Just give me a chance to explain.

SUSAN  
You did what you had to do. We both did.

BECCA  
I guess.

SUSAN  
How's Tyler doing?

BECCA  
Surprisingly well, actually.

Tyler appears in another part of the stage. He is on television. Becca and Susan watch.

TYLER  
My mother's doing just fine, thanks.

Flashbulbs go off.

SUSAN  
How's he going to turn out?

TYLER  
She's been getting fabulous treatment. Dad's made sure of that.

Flashbulbs go off.

BECCA  
He's a great kid.

TYLER  
We're focusing on bigger and better things.

BECCA  
You've rubbed off on him.

TYLER  
Moving ahead, we look to helping those who struggle with mental illness.

SUSAN  
He thinks I have a mental illness?

BECCA

That's what they've told the press. You've gotten lots of support from the mental health community.

TYLER

Not everyone is lucky like my mother to have the support around them she does.

BECCA

He's got your brains.

TYLER

That's why I'm announcing the Susan Turner Foundation for mentally ill women.

BECCA

Your passion.

TYLER

In honor of my mother.

BECCA

Your heart.

REPORTER 1

Tyler, your parents must be very proud of you.

TYLER

My father's really proud. He says I take after him. That's the best compliment I ever got!

Flashbulbs go off.

BECCA

And his charm.

TYLER

Any questions?

Flashbulbs erupt.

Susan follows Tyler offstage. She encounters Rita. She isn't sure how she got there.

RITA

I told them I wouldn't talk to you.

SUSAN

I know.

RITA

They gave me a lot.

SUSAN

I'll tell them it was my idea. They won't take it away.

RITA

You really shouldn't be here.

SUSAN

I won't stay long. How are you feeling?

RITA

Like you care.

SUSAN

I do care.

RITA

But nothing ever happened, right? What happened happened and was instantly gone, right?

SUSAN

I didn't come up with that.

RITA

You said it.

SUSAN

I did. But it was...It wasn't me.

RITA

It's who you've become.

SUSAN

You don't understand.

RITA

I understand completely. All I'm saying is, be one or the other. Just fucking own it. Don't pretend you are playing both sides because it just sounds like bullshit, okay? I signed their stupid stack of papers and you know what it got me? A hell of a lot.

SUSAN

I know.

RITA

The most I'll ever have. The most I'll ever see.

SUSAN

I'm sure.

RITA

And, I'm off the hook. I face no prosecution, no criminal record. And you know what? It's a fucked up thing to sign. It really is. I let him get away with it. Profit off of it.

SUSAN

Listen...

RITA

No, you listen. I signed it because it was the best possible setup for someone in my position. I can walk away from it all, I can go back to school.

SUSAN

That's great.

RITA

It is great. And you know what I'm not doing with it?

SUSAN

What?

RITA

I'm not going up to all the other girls and flaunting it in their faces and pretending like I give a shit.

SUSAN

That's not what I'm doing.

RITA

It's not?

SUSAN

I just want to know what happened.

RITA

You know what happened.

SUSAN

I need to know from you.

RITA

You need to know from him.

SUSAN

He's different. He's not him.

RITA

I'm pretty sure this was him all along. You're just seeing it now.

SUSAN

If you could just show me.

RITA

What?

SUSAN

Just show me what he did.

RITA

You're crazy.

SUSAN

Please, show me what he did to you.

Susan starts moving toward Rita. Rita backs away.

RITA

Don't get any closer.

SUSAN

I need to know what he did. I need to see it.

Susan tries to lift up Rita's gown.

RITA

Get the fuck away from me.

SUSAN

I need to see it. I need to know. Show me. Please show me.

RITA

Get the fuck away from me. Get away from me.

SUSAN

I need to see it. I need to. Please. Please show me. It could have been me. It could have been me.

RITA

But it wasn't. It was me. Now get your hands off me.

SUSAN

I'm sorry...

RITA

I'm not going to help you feel better about letting him get away with it.

SUSAN

That's not what I want.

RITA

Do you think he did it?

SUSAN

I don't know.

RITA

But you're pretty sure.

SUSAN

I'm pretty sure.

RITA

Are you okay with sticking by someone who did that for the rest of your life?

SUSAN

It's more complicated than that.

RITA

Are you okay with your son seeing him get away with it?

SUSAN

Don't talk about my son.

RITA

Are you okay with being a part of this whole thing? Forever?

SUSAN

I don't know.

RITA

I'm taking my stash because I have nothing to lose. I am taking mine because I want to. I'd rather live with knowing I let him get away with it because it lets me out of the game. I'm done. I don't have to do this for any other scumbags. But you, if you stick around, this is all you'll ever be. Forever. You'll be a pawn. And that Tyler....

SUSAN

What about him.

RITA

He's the prince, my love. Waiting in line to inherit the throne. The throne you gave him. Thanks mommy.

Tyler comes bounding in.

TYLER

Mom!

SUSAN

(to Rita)

I'm sorry for what this did to you.

TYLER

Did you see me on TV?

RITA

I'm sorry for what this did to you.

TYLER

Dad says I have to be more adult now that you won't be around.

SUSAN

Why won't I be around?

TYLER

He said you're going to stay home when we go on the campaign tour.

SUSAN

He's taking you out of school?

TYLER

The teachers said it would be a good learning experience. They said I'm lucky to have a dad like him.

Rita nods to Susan and exits.

BARRY

For the sake of the campaign, you'll just stay home for a while. We'll tell them all you're recuperating--They started an adorable little charity, you know.

SUSAN

I'm not crazy.

BARRY

It's the sympathy vote.

SUSAN

Sympathy for him?

BARRY

And the female vote.

TYLER  
Right, the female vote.

SUSAN  
You want me to stay here?

BARRY  
For the campaign.

PETER  
Thanks, Suzie Q. You're a life saver.

SUSAN  
Can I talk to you about something?

PETER  
Anything.

BARRY  
But only for five minutes.

PETER  
Only for five minutes.

SUSAN  
Do you miss the way it used to be?

PETER  
What do you mean?

SUSAN  
Between us.

PETER  
Like when?

SUSAN  
Look at me. Do you miss the way it was?

PETER  
You are the same to me you always were.

SUSAN  
The same?

PETER  
You've made me better. Stronger.



The wind beneath your wings. SUSAN

Exactly. PETER

Can we go back to before? Quit all of this and go back? SUSAN

Susan. PETER

Please. For me. For Tyler. SUSAN

Tyler loves this stuff. PETER

You say the word and we can go back to picnics in the park. SUSAN

I don't know. PETER

You loved me once. SUSAN

I still do. PETER

I know. Look at me. SUSAN

He does.

I don't know how to stop it all. PETER

You do. SUSAN

We can't afford it. PETER

We'll be fine. SUSAN

It's too late now. PETER

Peter, please. SUSAN

It's too late. PETER

Just try. For me. I'll forgive you. Wipe the slate clean. Just the three of us. SUSAN

It's too late. PETER

Time's up. BARRY

That wasn't five minutes. SUSAN

It sort of was. BARRY

We'll see you soon. Don't worry. PETER

Yeah mom. Don't worry. TYLER

Barry whisks everyone away.

Peter. SUSAN

What did you write in her skin? He turns back.

Get some sleep, Peanut. PETER

Susan is left alone on stage in her hospital gown.

She wanders for a while, then catches a glimpse out in the audience. She sits down at the table and adjusts her microphone. She is positioned the same way she was at the top of the play.

I'm ready now....

SUSAN

A flash.

BLACKOUT.

END OF PLAY.