

## THE SECRET LIFE OF THE LATE JONATHAN FERGUSON

Jacqueline Ferguson: Wife of Jonathan Ferguson; in her 60's.

Alexis Ferguson: Daughter; in her mid 30's.

Bridgette Ferguson: Daughter; in her early 30's

Christopher Ferguson: Son; early 20's

Stephanie Smith: Sister; in her 70's

Raymond Smith: Nephew; in his 30's

Emily Winter: Mistress; in her 40's

Daniel Ferguson: Son; 12

Zachary Shiffman: Lawyer

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### SCENE ONE

*Evening. The scene opens empty. No one is on the set. The set is the living room of a wealthy family. Soon the scene is filled with crying and moaning from the actors entering. Jacqueline enters with Alexis and Christopher on each side of her assisting her in the home. The soon exit to a door that leads to the master bed room. Jacqueline enters exits dramatically crying. Stephanie enters with Bridgette and Raymond the same way Jacqueline entered. They exit to the same door and the crying continues. Jacqueline and Stephanie take turns sobbing, moaning, and dramatically crying. The crying continues. The doorbell rings. Raymond enters and opens the door. Zachary Shiffman is seen on the other side of the door. He is holding a briefcase.*

RAYMOND

Hi. May I help you?

ZACHARY

Hello. My name is Zachary Shiffman. I am a representative for Carmine DeLuca.

RAYMOND

Oh, come in. Is everything okay with Carmine?

ZACHARY

Yes. He's fine. Do you mind if I set this down?

RAYMOND

Not at all.

ZACHARY

*(Zachary puts his briefcase down, opens it, and removes papers).* Mr. DeLuca has asked me to come here on his behalf. He has recently been notified of the passing of *(Reading paper)* Jonathan Ferguson.

RAYMOND

Yes, my uncle. What are you hear to do?

ZACHARY

Mr. DeLuca sent me here to read the final will and testament of Mr. Ferguson.

RAYMOND

Why isn't Carmine here?

ZACHARY

Mr. DeLuca and his wife are still on vacation and are unable to travel here so he asked me to take his place.

RAYMOND

Do you have to do this today? We just got back from his funeral.

ZACHARY

Well, I can see if the office can send another representative. My schedule is pretty busy. I barely had time to do this, but I owe Mr. DeLuca a favor. Today is the only time I have available in this month. But I would need to call Mr. DeLuca first to see what he wants me to do.

RAYMOND

When does Mr. DeLuca return from his vacation?

ZACHARY

Uh...well...he's in Hawaii now, according to his schedule (*He removes a paper from his briefcase*) He leaves Hawaii next week and he continues his vacation in Italy for three weeks and then after Italy he and his wife will be traveling to the Bahamas.

RAYMOND

My goodness, that's a pretty long vacation.

ZACHARY

Well, they deserve it. What I can do is call him next week with an update and then from there he can tell me what to do about the will.

RAYMOND

Next week? Why can't you call him now?

ZACHARY

He gave us a schedule when we were allowed to call him. He said he didn't want to be bothered with business on his vacation. The next day of allowance is next week.

RAYMOND

This is crazy. Well, I really don't think my family is ready to hear his will. They are very saddened by his passing.

ZACHARY

Well, I'll make a deal with you. Ask your family if they're ready. If not, then I will call Mr. DeLuca today. It might get me into deep water, but I will risk it.

RAYMOND

That sounds fair. And trust me you won't get into trouble. Carmine has been our family lawyer for decades. He won't mind taking a phone call from us. (*Exits to bedroom; opens door, we can see him standing at the door. The dialogue is heard from offstage*). Aunt Jacky?

OFFSTAGE JACQUELINE

What is it? Who's at the door?

OFFSTAGE RAYMOND

Zachary Shiffman.

OFFSTAGE JACQUELINE

Who the hell is that?

OFFSTAGE RAYMOND

A lawyer. Carmine sent him?

OFFSTAGE JACQUELINE

Where is Carmine? He wasn't even at the funeral.

OFFSTAGE RAYMOND

Vacation.

OFFSTAGE JACQUELINE

That buzzard. Well, what does he want?

OFFSTAGE RAYMOND

Zachary said that Carmine sent him here to read the last wills and testament of Uncle Johnny.  
*(Everyone rushes in the living room knocking Raymond to the floor. They sit impatiently waiting).*

JACQUELINE

Well, come on Zachariah don't keep us waiting.

ZACHARY

It's Zachary.

JACQUELINE

Whatever.

ZACHARY

*(Raymond gets up).* Is he okay?

STEPHANIE

The boy is fine. Come on now, get the reading.

BRIDGETTE

*(Speaking to Zachary)* So, do you have the ring with you? Can I have it now?

ALEXIS

What ring?

BRIDGETTE

Grandmother's ring?

ALEXIS

Why would he give it to you? Father left it with me.

BRIDGETTE

I asked daddy for it so I know he left it with me.

JACQUELINE

Actually you're both wrong. Your father left that ring to me.

STEPHANIE

It was my mother's ring, so I deserve it. He left it with me.

JACQUELINE

It was your mother's ring before she left to *my* husband. It now belongs to *my* husband who left it with me.

CHRISTOPHER

Come one guys, don't argue in front him. It doesn't look good.

JACQUELINE

Oh, please, Zelda doesn't mind.

RAYMOND

Aunt Jacky, his name is Zachary.

JACQUELINE

Whatever. Come one Zach, start reading. That ring is good as mine.

ZACHARY

So...you guys are ready?

JACQUELINE

Yes man. Come on Zacheus, and hurry up.

ZACHARY

*(Takes will from briefcase and reads)* I, Jonathan Ferguson, residing--

JACQUELINE

Yeah, yeah, get passed all that mess. Just get to the part where he leaves me the ring.

ZACHARY

*(Flips through a page or two).* Here we go. To my beautiful wife, Jacqueline Ferguson I leave our Randolph, NJ estate and property along with my 2008 RX hybrid Lexus, my Sovereign Bank account and all my possessions in the Randolph estate. To my daughter Alexis—

JACQUELINE

Wait a minute. What about the ring?

ALEXIS

He left it to you. It's along with all of his possessions in this house.

STEPHANIE

He didn't leave his ring here. He left it in a safe deposit box at Wachovia. Whoever he left his Wachovia Bank account with is the one who owns the ring.

JACQUELINE

How did you know that? I thought that was a secret between me and him.

STEPHANIE

It was my idea. That's why I know he left to me.

JACQUELINE

*(To Zachary)* Are you sure it says Sovereign and not Wachovia?

ZACHARY

I am sure. May I continue?

JACQUELINE

Yes.

ZACHARY

To my daughter Alexis I leave my estate and property located in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania including Lexy's Pub and Restaurant, along with my 2007 CLK 63 Benz and my PNC Bank account.

ALEXIS

I didn't get the ring?

STEPHANIE

I told you that ring is mine. Continue.

ZACHARY

To my daughter Bridgette I leave my estate and property located in Manhattan, New York including Ridgeley's Book and Gift Shop, along with my 2005 Cadillac STS and my Chase Bank account. To my son, Christopher Ferguson I leave my estate and property located in Atlantic City, New Jersey including Christographic's Design Company, along with my 2004 Rolls Royce Phantom VI and my Sun National Bank account. To my lovely sister Stephanie Ferguson—

STEPHANIE

Oh, he called my lovely.

JACQUELINE

He called me beautiful.

STEPHANIE

Whatever.

ZACHARY

I leave my estate and property located in Long Island, New York along with my 2007 Lexus GS450HL and my Citibank account. To my nephew—

STEPHANIE

Wait a minute. I didn't get his ringer either?

JACQUELINE

Well, who could he have left it to?

RAYMOND

I guess me.

JACQUELINE

Well, why would he do that?

ALEXIS

Maybe it's because he knew Raymond was the only one who didn't want it.

CHRISTOPHER

I didn't want it either.

BRIDGETTE

We'll never know anything if you guys don't stop interrupting the man.

JACQUELINE

Oh, we are so sorry Zackousous. Continue, please.

ALEXIS

Mother, its Zachary.

JACQUELINE

Whatever.

ZACHARY

To my nephew Raymond Smith I leave my estate and property located in Montclair, New Jersey including Ferguson-Smith Publishing Company, along with my 2006 BMW 3 Series and my TD Bank account. To my—

JACQUELINE

Now wait a minute. Is that it? Is there more?

STEPHANIE

There has to be. But who else would he leave the ring to?

RAYMOND

Maybe dad.

STEPHANIE

Why would my bother leave my mother's ring to my ex-husband? That doesn't make sense.

RAYMOND

Mother, Uncle Johnnie and daddy were great friends, even after your divorce.

STEPHANIE

It's my mother. The ring belongs to me.

BRIDGETTE

Maybe he left it with no one.

STEPHANIE

That doesn't make any sense.

JACQUELINE

The ring is in the deposit box. He had to leave that account with someone.

CHRISTOPHER

Maybe he forgot.

JACQUELINE

He would not forget the ring.

ALEXIS

Maybe we should let him finish reading the will.

JACQUELINE

You're right. Zakieya, finish reading the will please.

STEPHANIE

Girl, what is wrong with you? What is so hard about remembering Zachariah?

ZACHARY

Zachary.

STEPHANIE

I'm sorry baby. Zachary, go on.

ZACHARY

To my son, Daniel—

JACQUELINE

What?!

ZACHARY

What?

JACQUELINE

What did you just say?

ZACHARY

What do you mean?

JACQUELINE

Damn it, man.

ALEXIS

Who is Daniel?

STEPHANIE

Are you reading that thing right?

ZACHARY

Yes.

JACQUELINE

I don't think so. Can you read?

ZACHARY

Yes, I have a law degree, ma'am.

JACQUELINE

Okay, I don't appreciate you throwing your degree in my face.

ZACHARY

And I don't appreciate you implying that I do not have a proper education.

JACQUELINE

I didn't imply that.

ZACHARY

You asked me if I could read.

JACQUELINE

I simply asked that because you mentioned a person that does not exist. Jonathan only had one son.

ZACHARY

I'm only reading what's on the paper.

JACQUELINE

Well, maybe you should let someone else read it. Chris, honey; take the will and read to us. My son has an education. He went to DeVry University.

ZACHARY

I went to Yale.

JACQUELINE

Whatever Zochia. Chris read the read.

CHRISTOPHER

Um...let's see here. To my beautiful wife Jacqueline, bla bla bla...yada yada yada...okay here we go. To my nephew Raymond Smith I leave my estate and property located in Montclair, New Jersey including Ferguson-Smith Publishing Company, along with my 2006 BMW 3 Series and my TD Bank account. To my son Daniel Ferguson—this can't be right. I leave my private estate and property located in Montgomery, Pennsylvania along with my Wells Fargo Bank account all not to be touched until he turns eighteen. To his mother—what?

JACQUELINE

WHAT?

STEPHANIE

What?!

ALEXIS

To his mother?

BRIDGETTE

Chris, are you reading that correctly?

CHRISTOPHER

Yes. And to his mother, Emily Winter I leave my 2002 Jaguar S-type and my Wachovia Bank account including the safe deposit box which holds my mother's wedding ring. (*Jacqueline is frozen*) These are my last will and testaments—

STEPHANIE

No, no, no, no, this has to be—no, no, no...it's not a problem...it's...all we have to do is call Carmine. He can fix this.

RAYMOND

What is there to fix?

STEPHANIE

These people do not exist. This Daniel and Emily we don't know them. This has to be a mistake. Carmine had to be the one to right this up. Maybe he got the names confused with another client's will.

RAYMOND

Mr. DeLuca would not do that? I can call him next week if you'd like.

ALEXIS

Next week? Why not tomorrow, why not now?

ZACHARY

He doesn't want to be bothered on his trip.

RAYMOND

I told you before its different with us. Carmine is like family to us.

STEPHANIE

I don't need Zachary to call him. I have his number. I can call him myself.

RAYMOND

He probably won't pick up the phone. He is very strict about calling him during his no call time period.

STEPHANIE

Well, how are we going to get this problem solved?

ZACHARY

According to this will it was written well over a year ago. I am pretty sure there is no mistake. Mr. DeLuca would have noticed it by now. (*Reaches in his briefcase; he searches through envelopes*). Yeah, this is no mistake. (*He hands each individual an envelope with heir name on it*). I was instructed by Mr. DeLuca to give these out. They're letters from Mr. Ferguson. He wrote them before passing and asked Mr. DeLuca to give them to you. He was supposed to give Emily and Daniel's his, but due to vacation he instructed me to give them to Raymond.

RAYMOND

Why me?

ZACHARY

He didn't say. *(He hands Raymond a package)*. There are instructions inside to tell you what to do. I was also instructed to tell you to open it in private. I am really sorry, for this, but I am only doing what was instructed of me. I will call Mr. DeLuca next week with an update and let him know you would like for him to contact you.

STEPHANIE

You just better.

ZACHARY

Again I am sorry for the mishap. I will let myself out. *(He takes his belongings and exits)*.

BRIDGETTE

Oh, my gosh.

CHRISTOPHER

What?

BRIDGETTE

You think this is a joke? You know how daddy would sometimes play practical jokes? Maybe it's a joke.

ALEXIS

I don't think father was that much of a comedian that he would play a joke like this. Especially in death.

BRIDGETTE

Well, open the package maybe the gotch-ya sign is in the package.

RAYMOND

Zachary said to open it in private.

STEPHANIE

Who cares? Open it.

RAYMOND

I think it would be best for me to open it in private. *(Slight pause)* I'm gonna go. *(Beat)* Aunt Jacky are you okay? *(No response)*. Aunt Jacky *(She passes out. Black Out)*

SCENE TWO

*Two weeks later; afternoon. Scene opens with Jacqueline sitting on the couch watching television. She looks like she hasn't moved from the couch in two weeks. When lights up; doorbell rings.*

JACQUELINE

Come in.

STEPHANIE

*(Offstage)* I can't, girl until you unlock the door.

JACQUELINE

It's already unlocked.

STEPHANIE

*(Enters)* Girl, what is wrong with you. *(Shuts and locks door)*. You can't leave your door unlocked in these times. There are crazy people out there. Some wild man can come in here and try to rape you or kill you.

JACQUELINE

That's fine with me.

STEPHANIE

What is wrong with you? And what's that smell? Is that you? Please don't tell me you've been sitting here since last week.

JACQUELINE

No. It might have been two weeks ago since I moved.

STEPHANIE

Jacky stop playing. You've been here since I left here two weeks ago?

JACQUELINE

There is no point moving. My life is over.

STEPHANIE

What are you talking about?

JACQUELINE

Why are you acting like you don't know what I am referring to.

STEPHANIE

I'm not acting. What are you talking about?

JACQUELINE

Stephanie, my husband has a son out there somewhere along with baby mama drama.

STEPHANIE

Jacky, it's been two weeks since you found out. Are you still hung up on that?

JACQUELINE

Oh, I'm sorry. I wasn't aware that there was a deadline when a widow should get over the fact that her dead husband cheated on her when he was alive and had a baby boy with some slut. I'm sorry, am I pass due.

STEPHANIE

Jacky, I am sure it was a mistake.

JACQUELINE

Unless a woman is raped, children are not mistakes. Not only did he have a child with another woman he put them both in his will. Apparently there was more than just a mistake going on in the relationship. I mean he left her the ring.

STEPHANIE

There is a really good reason why he left her the ring.

JACQUELINE

Why?

STEPHANIE

I don't know. That's why I'm here. I've been calling, but you're not answering the phone. To be honest I figured you'd be in here pouting.

JACQUELINE

What else am I supposed to do?

STEPHANIE

You didn't see me pouting when my husband left me.

JACQUELINE

Your husband didn't leave you. You both made a decision to separate. There's a difference here. My husband left me without telling me he left.

STEPHANIE

He didn't leave you. He had an affair behind your back.

JACQUELINE

It's the same thing. Why are you here?

STEPHANIE

Did you read your letter?

JACQUELINE

I'm not reading that thing.

STEPHANIE

Why not. It probably has the reason why he left the ring with Emily.

JACQUELINE

Well, I don't want to know the answer to that. And why are you using that tramp's first name as if you know her.

STEPHANIE

Well, I'll read you mine. *(She takes paper out of her purse and reads)*. Dear Stephanie, my loving sister. Before I say anything I want you to know that I love you very much. I always have and always will. If you are reading this then it means I am deceased and the will has been read. Please do not get mad at Carmine I asked him to keep this will a secret until he read it to you.

JACQUELINE

The buzzard didn't read to us.

STEPHANIE

*(To Jacqueline)* Apparently, but he didn't know that. I'm guessing he asked Carmine years ago. Anyway, *(continues reading)* First I would like to apologize for lying to you and the rest of the family. I guess you can say I got a little dream crazed and did something I knew was wrong. I met Emily in Pennsylvania while checking on Lexy's. She was flirting with me and I guess I was flattered. I was surprised that a woman her age would flirt with a man my age. I know I should have never allowed her charm win me over, but it did. I truly am ashamed at my actions, but I can never be ashamed of my son. I love Daniel. I know I should have confessed before this, but I was just too guilty and ashamed to do so. I really hope you can forgive me. I also need a favor from you. I need you to read Jacqueline's letter to her because I know she has not and will not. She really needs to read it so she will not be upset with Emily. Thank you and I love you. Love your brother, Jonathan Ferguson. P.S. Sorry about the ring. *(Slight pause)* So, where's the letter. *(Jacqueline takes out of a pocket of her housecoat and hands it to Stephanie)*. You want me to read this now or later?

JACQUELINE

Whatever, Steph.

STEPHANIE

Dear Jacqueline, my dear Jacky, my loving wife. I know you are angry with me and you have every right to be. First, I want to express my love for you. I love you Jacky, I truly do. I do not and never did love Emily. I was simply tempted and I fell. It was never love. I know that is difficult to understand, but I love you Jacky and only you. Before I continue I need you to understand something about Emily. I know it may sound bad, but it is not as bad as it sounds. When I traveled to different places out of forgetfulness I

sometimes did not wear my wedding ring. The day I met Emily was one of those days. Emily never knew I was married. I never told her or mentioned you to her. I know it sounds terrible, but I wanted to see how far it would go. I guess I played the game too long. I really, really am sorry and wish I could take the action back, but I cannot. As for Daniel, I love him. He is my son and I will always love him. He deserves everything I left him and I hope you can understand that. As for the ring there is a reason why I did that. I cannot tell you now, but you will soon understand. Please forgive me. I know it won't be right away, but please promise me you will not die with unforgiveness in your heart. Jacqueline, I love you.

JACQUELINE

How the hell can I make a promise to a man that's dead?

STEPHANIE

Can you at least promise me?

JACQUELINE

What do you matter?

STEPHANIE

You know what? I am not going to bother you. I understand you need some time. I really cannot tell you how I would feel if I found out Chester cheated behind my back. I guess I'm not as angry because I am his sister and not his wife. But I tell you this do not live the rest of your life sitting on this couch. What he did to you is no excuse for living like this. I'll leave you alone with your soap operas.

JACQUELINE

Thank you. *(Doorbell rings)* Can you get that on your way out?

STEPHANIE

*(Unlocks and opens the door)* Hey, baby. How are you?

ALEXIS

*(Embraces and then enters)* I'm doing well, Aunty. Hey mom.

JACQUELINE

*(Uninterested)* Yeah.

ALEXIS

What's wrong with her?

STEPHANIE

She still mourning over your cheating father.

ALEXIS

Oh. *(Beat)* You leaving?

STEPHANIE

Yeah, I don't feel like having a pity party right now. I'll see you later. *(Exits)*

ALEXIS

Hey mom. How are you doing?

JACQUELINE

Hey Lexy. You okay?

ALEXIS

Yeah. I just stopped by to say hey and all. You know, before I leave.

JACQUELINE

Leave. Where are you going?

ALEXIS

Pennsylvania, mom.

JACQUELINE

You're not moving are you?

ALEXIS

Yeah mom, I got a whole house and restaurant waiting for me.

JACQUELINE

Well, do you have to leave now? It's been only two weeks. That's hardly enough time for mourning.

ALEXIS

Mother, I can mourn in Philly. Besides, I've been waiting to own this restaurant ever since he named it after me.

JACQUELINE

Oh, so I guess you were just waiting for your father to die.

ALEXIS

No, mother, it's not like that. Besides, I knew he was dying. I made sure I had my last words with him. I made my peace before he passed. I'm okay. I'm still sad, I mean, who wouldn't be, but I'm okay.

JACQUELINE

You're okay? You're okay with Daniel and Emily?

ALEXIS

Mother, no offence, but he didn't cheat on me.

JACQUELINE

He still lied to you.

ALEXIS

Mother, you've lied to me too. Regardless his mistake, he was still a good father to me. And still a great husband to you.

JACQUELINE

Cheating on me does not constitute as a great husband. *(Beat)* And when did I ever lie to you?

ALEXIS

Did you forget how heart broken I was when you finally told me Santa wasn't real?

JACQUELINE

Oh come on, that doesn't count as lying.

ALEXIS

It counts more as lying than what dad did. Father never told me any lies about Daniel or Emily he simply kept the truth a secret. You, however, looked me dead in the eyes and told me Santa brought me those gifts knowing you brought them.

JACQUELINE

At least I wasn't fornicating behind your back.

ALEXIS

Neither was dad. It was behind your's not mine. He could have divorced you and married Emily, but he still would have been dad. I was very upset when I first found out, but you can't stay upset forever. It's not going to change neither the past nor the future. You have to get over this at some point.

JACQUELINE

I can't just forgive and forget.

ALEXIS

You don't have to forget. *(Pause)* I came here to spend time with you mother before I leave. Did you want to go out? Maybe shopping or walking in the park?

JACQUELINE

I'm not in the mood. Besides, you don't live that far away. You can visit me.

ALEXIS

Mother.

JACQUELINE

What?

ALEXIS

I love you.

JACQUELINE

I love you too. (*Embraces. Black Out*).

SCENE THREE

*Two months; morning. Scene three opens with Jacqueline on the couch with a remote. Looking the same as the last scene. Doorbell rings.*

JACQUELINE

The door is opened.

STEPHANIE

Jacky! You have to lock this door. What is the matter with you?

JACQUELINE

I haven't been robbed, stabbed, raped, or killed yet so don't worry about it.

STEPHANIE

Are you still moping around?

JACQUELINE

Why are you here?

STEPHANIE

I am here to take you out. We're going shopping, then we are going to the movies, then we're going to see a show at the local theater, and then we're going bar hopping.

JACQUELINE

Do you realize how queer it is for two old brawds to go bar shopping?

STEPHANIE

I don't know about you, but I am not old.

JACQUELINE

You're older than me.

STEPHANIE

That doesn't make me old. Seventy-one is not old.

JACQUELINE

You're seventy-five.

STEPHANIE

I'm seventy-one, my dear.

JACQUELINE

When I first met you, you were—

STEPHANIE

When you first met me, I was younger than I said I was.

JACQUELINE

Why would you lie about your age?

STEPHANIE

How else was I supposed to buy liquor legally?

JACQUELINE

A fake ID? Stephanie that is so juvenile.

STEPHANIE

Well, I was a juvenile at the time I did it.

JACQUELINE

Either or Stephanie going out right now is not going to happen. I am just not in the mood.

STEPHANIE

Come on Jacky, it has been two months now. When are you going to leap over this lump?

JACQUELINE

Can I just have some alone time?

STEPHANIE

You've been alone for two months now. Come on. Your children have all moved away, mine too. It is time that we finally go back to living the single life we once knew. Do you remember how much fun we had before we got married?

JACQUELINE

Stephanie...no. I'm sorry you drove all the way here from Long Island, but I'm not going.

STEPHANIE

I didn't come from Long Island.

JACQUELINE

Didn't you move to Long Island yet?

STEPHANIE

No. I guess I forgot to tell you. I thought about it and decided I didn't want to move.

JACQUELINE

So what are you going to do with that entire house in New York?

STEPHANIE

That's what I didn't tell you. I'm turning it into a bed and breakfast. It's going to be great. Last month I spent everyday incorporating myself and taking care of the business and IRS side of the house. Now I get to have fun. I have an appointment with an interior designer next week. Oh, Jacky, I am so excited. She's going to show me samples and her portfolio and I get to choose how I want the place to look. It's going to be so much fun.

JACQUELINE

Are you able to do all of that? I mean clean the house and keep it up?

STEPHANIE

No, silly. I'm hiring a staff. I mean all my life I spent working for someone. It's about time someone started working for me. I tell you Jacky it is going to be so exciting. Once I hire the staff I am going to an advertising agency so they can help advertise it so I can start getting some business. I'm just so excited.

JACQUELINE

You really want to start a business at your old age?

STEPHANIE

Well, I'm not dead. So, yes. Just because you get older it doesn't mean you're supposed to sit around and do nothing. Besides, we both started our lives late. We got married later than most and even had children later than most people. But I feel like just as long as you are alive you have to keep living. And this is my way to keep living. It wouldn't hurt you any to get up and do something productive, instead of sit around here all day and all week moping around the house. Seriously, Jacqueline, you must move past this. It's done already. You cannot change the past. Now, come on. Get up. Even if we don't go bar hopping we are going to the theater. I already bought the tickets.

JACQUELINE

*(Uninterested)* What show are they doing?

STEPHANIE

A drama called Jacky get the hell up and stop moping around.

JACQUELINE

Ha, ha funny. *(Doorbell rings)* Get the door.

STEPHANIE

*(Opens the door)*. Hey sweetie, how are you?

BRIDGETTE

I am doing well. You leaving?

STEPHANIE

Not without your mother. I am making her go out today.

BRIDGETTE

Well that should be fun. Huh mom?

JACQUELINE

Fun for whom? And what are you doing here? Shouldn't you be in New York?

BRIDGETTE

Mother, I have been calling you? How come you are not answering your phone?

JACQUELINE

What do you need?

BRIDGETTE

Nothing. I was just checking up on you. I was going to call the police you know. But I had a feeling you were still moping around. You're still not upset are you?

JACQUELINE

That is a stupid question. Has everyone forgotten what happened?

BRIDGETTE

Do you mind if I talk to my mother in private?

STEPHANIE

Not at all. I will be in the kitchen. Have you gone shopping lately? If not you should at least hire you some help if you're going to be lying around here like a rock. *(Exits)*.

BRIDGETTE

Mother, are you seriously not over this yet?

JACQUELINE

My husband died and then I later found out he had a child that I did not carry? I am sorry, but I did not realize there was a time limit to get over something like that.

BRIDGETTE

Well, okay, but you don't have to sit around the house all day. You could at least get out breathe some fresh air. See some sunshine and some happiness to help you cope.

JACQUELINE

See some sunshine and happiness? What are you a musical?

BRIDGETTE

Mother. *(Beat)* Have you at least forgiven him?

JACQUELINE

Not yet. And I don't know that I could. You do realize that he has a son—

BRIDGETTE

And I have a brother that I may never get to meet. Did you not realize that? This whole issue is not just about you mother. Lexy and Chris have a brother they haven't met, and poor Daniel. God only knows how old he is. He may never get to know who his father was. You are not the only one in pain. So stop acting like a victim.

JACQUELINE

I am a victim. I was lied to.

BRIDGETTE

You reap what you sew. The only way you can get lied to is if you lied first.

JACQUELINE

I don't lie.

BRIDGETTE

Apparently you forgot the times you lied to me.

JACQUELINE

Oh, God, please don't bring up Santa.

BRIDGETTE

No. That technically doesn't count, because Alexis told me Santa was fake before you told me he was real. I played along so you would think I actually believed. She actually told Chris and Raymond too. Out of the times you lied there was only one time were I was actually hurt.

JACQUELINE

*(Pause)* Well, are you going to tell me?

BRIDGETTE

Do you remember the time when I asked you to take me to my friend's softball game and you agreed?

JACQUELINE

Please don't tell me you're still upset about that. That was like twenty-something years ago.

BRIDGETTE

What happened the day of the softball game? *(No response)*. You told me daddy had to take me. And do you remember what you told me when I asked why you couldn't take me? *(No response)*. You said you had an emergency at work. Do you remember where

you actually went? *(No response)*. I know you remember. Where did you go? *(Pause)*. You didn't go to work. Where did you go? *(No response)*. Where did you go?

JACQUELINE

I was at Neiman Marcus shopping.

BRIDGETTE

Exactly. You lied to me. And you know what you said when you found out that I found out the truth. *(No response)*. Every now and then you have to lie to keep people feelings from being hurt. *(Pause)*. It seems like daddy lied to keep from hurting you.

JACQUELINE

Yeah, but finding out the truth hurts even more.

BRIDGETTE

You didn't think I was hurt when I found out the truth? If what goes around comes around it just seems like this was your lie returning to you. If you don't want people lying to you, you shouldn't lie to people. *(Pause)*. If I was able to forgive you then it's only fair that you forgive daddy. It's not like he had twenty women and child with each one. He had one son and he made sure he was taken care of. Yes he did something bad, but it doesn't make him a bad person. Forgiveness usually feels good when some has forgiven you. That's why it is important to forgive, because one day you are going to need someone to forgive you. *(Pause)*. I hope you go with Aunt Stephanie. You need to get out of here and stop being a victim. It was two months ago. You must get past this. My father is dead. I don't need a dead mother as well.

JACQUELINE

I'm not dead.

BRIDGETTE

You've been lying on a couch for two months. That's just as good as dead. *(Pause)*. *Bridgette embraces Jacqueline*. I love you mother. Take care of yourself. *(Stands and exits)*.

STEPHANIE

*(Enters)*. I hope I'm not interrupting, but we must get moving if we want--. Where is Bridgette?

JACQUELINE

She just left.

STEPHANIE

Is everything alright? (*Jacqueline nods yes*). Well, come on and get ready. We have to keep moving. (*Jacqueline stands and embraces Stephanie. Stephanie returns hug. They let go*). Well what was that for?

JACQUELINE

Thank you. Thank you so much for coming over here and checking up on me. I know I haven't been pleasant to be around and I apologize for that. But I just want to say thank you for not giving up on me.

STEPHANIE

You're welcome, Jacky. Now come on girl. Go get washed up. (*Fade to black*).

SCENE FOUR

*Alexis, Bridgette, Christopher and Raymond are sitting at a restaurant table eating quietly. After some time Bridgette breaks the silence.*

BRIDGETTE

Who do you think our brother looks like; his mom or our dad?

ALEXIS

What? Why are you asking such a question?

BRIDGETTE

I don't know. I mean I've thinking about him lately. I mean aren't you? We have a brother somewhere in these United States of America and we have no clue where he is and he doesn't know who we are.

ALEXIS

He's a baby. Probably no older than two. He doesn't even know who he is.

BRIDGETTE

I know, but I feel bad for him.

CHRISTOPHER

Why?

BRIDGETTE

Because, he'll never get the chance to meet his father or even know who he was. And dad will never get to see him grow up.

CHRISTOPHER

That's life, you know?

BRIDGETTE

Yeah. *(Pause)* You think mom will be upset if I go looking for him?

ALEXIS

Mom needs to get over herself. It's been two months now. She's going to have to forgive dad at some point.

BRIDGETTE

Don't you think it's kind of difficult? She was so shocked.

ALEXIS

I don't see how. As often as day used to travel. I mean I even had a thought a couple of times.

CHRISTOPHER

You too?

ALEXIS

Yeah. I'm kind of shock that you did though.

CHRISTOPHER

Well, I had watched this Lifetime movie once about a man who was a traveling doctor. He ended up with three wives in three different states. As crazy as it sounds I began to think dad might be doing the same thing.

BRIDGETTE

Well, I'll be honest. After watching so many soap operas my mind began to think crazy things about dad, but I always ended up just thinking I was crazy for thinking those thoughts.

ALEXIS

If you look at dads past the signs were there. Mom just ignored them. When it comes to cheating in relationships people choose to be blind.

CHRISTOPHER

*(Slight pause)*. How do you plan on finding him?

BRIDGETTE

I don't know. We have there names, I was thinking about hiring a private detective.

ALEXIS

Those things are expensive.

BRIDGETTE

I know, but don't you want to see your brother? I mean I know I do. Think about the fun we could have with him.

ALEXIS

He's a baby. What kind of fun could you possibly have?

BRIDGETTE

You can have lots of fun. You can play games, play peek-a-boo, read him a bed time story, and he'll be a great excuse to watch Barney. And changing his little diapers, how much fun would that be?

ALEXIS

There is nothing fun about changing a stinking diaper.

BRIDGETTE

Oh no, I wouldn't change his stinking diapers only the wet ones.

CHRISTOPHER

When I get married I am not changing diapers. Only my wife will be doing that.

BRIDGETTE

Well, that's sexist.

CHRISTOPHER

It is not.

ALEXIS

*(Christopher and Bridgette ad lib an argument. Alexis stares at Raymond who is apparently lost in space. She interrupts the argument).* Hey Raymond. Why are you so quiet?

RAYMOND

What?

ALEXIS

You're pretty quiet over there. I don't think I heard one word out of you. Is everything okay?

RAYMOND

Yea. Everything is fine.

ALEXIS

What are you thinking about?

RAYMOND

Oh, nothing. It's nothing.

BRIDGETTE

Apparently it's something. You want to talk about it?

RAYMOND

No. Not really.

CHRISTOPHER

So it is something.

RAYMOND

No, its nothing. That's why I don't need to talk about it, because it's nothing. And you can't talk about nothing so there's no need to talk because it's nothing.

ALEXIS

Are you sure?

RAYMOND

Yeah. I'm sure.

ALEXIS

*(Cell phone rings. Answers phone)* Hey, mom. How are you? That's good. What; why? Okay. Oh coincidentally enough we're out having dinner so I'll tell them for you. No problem. Alright have a good night. I love you. Bye. *(Hangs up phone)*. That's weird.

BRIDGETTE

What?

ALEXIS

Mom is having a party tomorrow night and wants us to be there.

CHRISTOPHER

A party? For what?

ALEXIS

She wouldn't say. She said to dress nicely and don't be late.

RAYMOND

What does she mean by dress nicely?

ALEXIS

I don't know. I guess formal party wear.

BRIDGETTE

What is she up to?

ALEXIS

I don't know. I guess we'll find out when we get there.

**BLACK OUT**

SCENE FIVE

*Two months later. The scene has been reset with new furniture and decorations (or rearranged furniture and decorations). Jacqueline enters with a party dress. She is holding a bottle of wine. She places it on the table next to wine glasses that have already been set. The doorbell rings.*

JACQUELINE

It's opened.

STEPHANIE

*(Enters with a dish).* When are you going to start locking this door?

JACQUELINE

Oh, stop your complaining.

STEPHANIE

Oh my goodness. What did you do to your home?

JACQUELINE

Is it that bad?

STEPHANIE

No, I love it. Wow. This is beautiful. You did this all by yourself?

JACQUELINE

No. I went to one of those interior designers you were talking about. She came and gave me an estimate. I just wrote the check.

STEPHANIE

This is lovely. You should have done this a while ago. *(Places dish on table).*

JACQUELINE

Yeah. I figured if I changed my environment maybe it would help get passed this mountain a little easier.

STEPHANIE

So, how are you feeling?

JACQUELINE

Much better. Thanks to you and the rest of my family.

STEPHANIE

That's what families are for. *(Doorbell rings)*

STEPHANIE AND JACQUELINE

It's opened. *(They laugh).*

ALEXIS

*(Enters with dish)* Mother, what are you doing leaving the door unlocked? *(Beat)*. Oh my goodness. What did you do to the place? It's amazing.

JACQUELINE

*(Takes dish from Alexis)* Thank you. I am glad you like it. *(The three greet each other)*.

ALEXIS

No, but seriously mother. It is very dangerous leaving your door unlocked. And the system is disarmed too?

JACQUELINE

Baby, don't worry about. *(Doorbell rings)*. Answer the door.

ALEXIS

But it's unlocked. *(Opens door)*. Hey, buddy.

RAYMOND

*(Enters with bottle of champagne)*. Hey Lexy. Hey mother.

BRIDGETTE

*(They all greet each other. Bridgette enters behind with a dish and bottle of wine)*. Wait leave the door opened please. *(Everyone continues to greet each other. Jacqueline takes the dish from Bridgette and places it on the table. Bridgette enters while Stephanie closes and locks the door)*.

STEPHANIE

So, Jacky, tell us what this occasion is about.

JACQUELINE

I have to wait for my son to get here. While we're waiting everyone take something and lets bring this stuff in to the dining room area and set up for the party we are about to have. *(Everyone takes something (leaving one bottle of wine) and exits. The doorbell rings. Jacqueline answers the door)*. There he is. *(She embraces Christopher)*.

CHRISTOPHER

Where is everyone? I saw everyone's cars.

JACQUELINE

They're setting up in the dining room. *(Everyone enters and then adlibs greetings. Once they are done she continues)*. Okay. Now that everyone is here. I would like to tell you all something. Now, I know I have been acting childish for the past three months, but finding out about Jonathan and his son; it just made me numb. I had realized it wasn't the truth that hurt me, but the fact that someone I loved, respected, and trusted had lied to me. I know I probably took longer than most people do to forgive, but I can happily say

that I have not forgotten, but I have forgiven. And I will do everything to return to the old me and get back out there and live life to the fullest. I just want to thank you all for helping me to forgive and climb over this huge mountain and for now on I will not sit and mope. So, to new and better me (*She takes the bottle and pours into the glasses. Everyone takes a glass*). To the new and better us. (*Everyone repeats "To the new and better us" and then toasts and drinks*).

STEPHANIE

This is wonderful.

JACQUELINE

Thank you. I am trying my best to live a better me.

STEPHANIE

No, I meant the wine.

JACQUELINE

You'll never believe where I got it from?

STEPHANIE

Where?

JACQUELINE

Carmine visited me last week. It was an apology gift.

ALEXIS

What is he sorry for?

JACQUELINE

He said after he found out Jonathan was dying he left and set it up where he wouldn't have to read the will to us. He said he knew about Daniel and Emily and he said he just couldn't be the one to break the news to us.

BRIDGETTE

Well, that was awfully cowardly of him.

JACQUELINE

Yeah, but I forgave him. I completely understand. I don't think I ever want to be the one to tell anyone anything like this.

STEPHANIE

I know what you mean. Well, is everyone ready to eat?

CHRISTOPHER

I am.

RAYMOND

Uh...before we go eat can I ask a favor?

JACQUELINE

What is it?

RAYMOND

You know what we haven't done in a long time? *(Beat)* We haven't had a Sunday brunch in a really long time.

ALEXIS

We sure haven't; after dad fell ill I guess it was the last thing on our minds.

CHRISTOPHER

I remember coming home from church playing outside and then coming inside to eat that wonderful meal you and Aunt Stephanie would cook.

BRIDGETTE

What made you think of that?

RAYMOND

Oh, I don't know. I was wondering if we could do that one more time before we all leave permanently.

STEPHANIE

Why? What's wrong with this party?

RAYMOND

It's not the same. I just wanted to have one more Sunday brunch for old time sakes. That's all.

JACQUELINE

I guess. It shouldn't be a problem.

RAYMOND

And would I be allowed to bring someone with me?

CHRISTOPHER

Oh, now I get it. So, what's her name?

RAYMOND

Oh, no, it's nothing like that. She's just a friend.

ALEXIS

Just a friend? Come on man you don't have to play that game with us.

STEPHANIE

Is my baby bringing me home a daughter-in-law?

RAYMOND

No, mother, seriously it is not—

JACQUELINE

Oh, your baby is finally getting married. Congratulations, lil' Ray Ray. Well, he ain't little anymore.

STEPHANIE

I know my baby is all grown up now. So, what's her name?

RAYMOND

Guys seriously, it is not like that. She is just a friend that I need you all to meet. Can we just leave it at that?

STEPHANIE

Sure. Of course we can. We can pretend like she is just a friend.

RAYMOND

I will let her know you guys agreed for her to have brunch with us. Thank you guys.

JACQUELINE

Well, now, let's go eat. (*Black out*).

SCENE SIX

*One week later. The scene opens with Jacqueline and Stephanie.*

STEPHANIE

How do I look?

JACQUELINE

You look wonderful.

STEPHANIE

I went all over looking for this outfit. Don't you just adore it? Does it say...mother-in-law?

JACQUELINE

You're so silly. I am so proud of your son. I sure wish Jonathan could have seen this.

STEPHANIE

Oh, he's watching from heaven. *(Looks up)* You see this Jon. It's my mother-in-law to be outfit. Your nephew is getting married.

JACQUELINE

Are you going to be okay at the wedding with your ex-husband there?

STEPHANIE

Just as long as he stays far away from me I will be fine. *(Doorbell rings. Walks to the door).* This thing better be locked. *(Turns the knob).* Ooh, it's locked. *(Unlocks then opens door).* Hey sweetie. You look marvelous.

ALEXIS

*(Enters)* Thank you, Aunty. Doesn't this outfit say...cousin-in-law?

STEPHANIE

It sure does.

JACQUELINE

Like aunt, like niece.

ALEXIS

Hey, mama. *(Doorbell rings. Opens door).* Hey.

BRIDGETTE

Wow, Lexy, you look good. And so do you Aunt Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

Thank you. *(Doorbell rings).* There goes that door again.

JACQUELINE

Just leave it unlocked. *(Stephanie opens the door. Chris enters).* Hey Chris. Are you happy about your cousin getting married?

CHRISTOPHER

I thought he said she was just a friend.

JACQUELINE

Oh, come on. Who invites “just a friend” to a family brunch?

CHRISTOPHER

I’ve been thinking. Maybe this friend is not just a friend and maybe she is a he. I think that’s why he was afraid to mention her name.

STEPHANIE

*(Pause)* But I don’t want a son-in-law, I want a daughter-in-law. I won’t be able to go shopping with a son-in-law.

CHRISTOPHER

With this kind you will.

BRIDGETTE

Well, either or he still said she or he is just a friend. So, I say we pretend this person is just a friend until he breaks the big news. *(The doorbell rings).* That’s him. Everyone remember she is just a friend.

CHRISTOPHER

Or he.

BRIDGETTE

*(Opens the door).* Hey Ray. *(Raymond enters greeting everyone, a woman and a boy follows).* So, Ray, why don’t you introduce us to your *friend*?

RAYMOND

This is my friend and this is her son.

STEPHANIE

*(Happily)* I have a grandson already?

JACQUELINE

*(Hits her).* Just a friend, Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

Oh, right *(laughs)* I’m just playing. Welcome, uh, so, what is your *friend’s* name?

RAYMOND

Before I tell you her name I just want you to know I am not trying to bring trouble. I am just doing what I can to fulfill Uncle Johnnie's wishes.

JACQUELINE

What are you talking about? Stephanie, what is your son talking about?

CHRISTOPHER

What wishes?

RAYMOND

This is Emily Winter and her son Daniel Ferguson. *(Long pause. Everyone is in shock)*. Uh...yeah, so, Daniel this is your sister Alexis, but we call her Lexy. This is your other sister, Bridgette, this is your brother Christopher, and that is your aunt Stephanie. She is my mother and your father's sister. And everyone this is Emily Winter, Daniel's mother, and that is Jacqueline, Uncle...Jonathan's...wife. *(Long Pause)*.

ALEXIS

*(Tries to speak, but has a difficult time. Uncomfortably laughs)*. Well, hi...Daniel. How old are you?

DANIEL

Twelve.

ALEXIS

Whoa. So this happened twelve years ago? Wow!

JACQUELINE

Raymond what the hell? You mean to tell me, you brought this slut—

BRIDGETTE

*(Stern)* Mother.

JACQUELINE

-Into my house.

STEPHANIE

Now remember Jacky she didn't know he was married. Remember the letter?

JACQUELINE

Fuck the letter.

BRIDGETTE

Mother!

JACQUELINE

I can't believe you brought this Bitch and this bastard—

ALEXIS

MOTHER!

JACQUELINE

-Into my house. What were you thinking?

RAYMOND

I was just doing what the letter asked me to do.

JACQUELINE

Would everyone get over the letters? You tramp of a woman. How could you have sex with a married man?

EMILY

I didn't know he was married and you know that. The letter says you know I didn't know.

JACQUELINE

He just sent letters to everyone. Did you get a letter too you illegitimate?

STEPHANIE

Damn it Jacky, his father is already dead. Did you want to kill the rest of his heart?

EMILY

Why are you treating us this way? Raymond told me that you were all perfectly fine with having us here today.

JACQUELINE

When the hell were you going to tell me you were bringing this hoe into my house?

EMILY

You didn't even tell them?

RAYMOND

Not exactly.

EMILY

Oh, just great. I should have known. First, Jon lied to me; now you; this family is just full of liars.

JACQUELINE

Oh, don't even try to act like you're a victim.

ALEXIS

You did mom, why can't she?

JACQUELINE

Who the hell side are you on?

ALEXIS

Mother this isn't about sides. Besides, what happen to the new and better you?

JACQUELINE

The old me is back and cracking. *(To Emily)* And I'm gonna crack your ass. *(Jacqueline goes towards Emily. Stephanie holds her back. There is chaos (fighting, yelling, screaming, etc.) going on. Raymond holds back Emily while Bridgette embraces Daniel to comfort him. Christopher and Alexis chime in).*

BRIDGETTE

Damn it what the hell is wrong with you people. You're acting like fools. Between all of us the only one who is a victim is Daniel. He did not ask to be born this way. Isn't it bad enough that he is a bastard child? Can't we as grown adults look past this hell and keep our focus on Daniel. Damn it daddy is dead. We need to burry this pain with him. I don't know about the rest of ya'll, but I jut realize I just missed twelve years of my brother's life. And I am not about to miss another twelve. Raymond this is your cousin, Aunt Stephanie this is your nephew. Lexy and Chris this is our brother. He is our family and we need to treat him like family.

JACQUELINE

He ain't no damn kin of mine.

ALEXIS

Mother, please.

JACQUELINE

Don't mother, please me. I want this bitch and that bastard out of my house.

BRIDGETTE

Mother. You can't be this mean-hearted.

JACQUELINE

Raymond, take your "just a friend" out of my house. *(Looks at Stephanie)* So much for the damn wedding. *(Exits).*

RAYMOND

What wedding?

STEPHANIE

Ray, what the hell is wrong with you? How could you do this? Why didn't you tell us what was going on?

RAYMOND

Would you have agreed to this?

STEPHANIE

That is not the point. Do you see what you put Emily and poor Daniel through? I don't care what a child has done wrong; no child ever deserves to go through this.

EMILY

What about me?

STEPHANIE

*(Without missing a beat)* And no mistress ever deserves to go through this either.

EMILY

I didn't know he was married. *(Beat)* Daniel let's go.

STEPHANIE

Emily, wait. I'm sorry and I am truly sorry for my sister-in-law's actions. They were wrong and inexcusable and I am truly sorry on her behalf. *(Talking to him like a baby)* Daniel, everything that nasty old bitty said; I want you to let them slide off of you. You understand me, Danny?

ALEXIS

Aunt Stephanie, he's twelve year old not a baby.

STEPHANIE

Shut up, Lexy, mind your business. *(Beat)* Never let anyone's words define you, Daniel. Emily I am really sorry. I am sorry you had to go through this. But I don't care what she said, we are family. I want you to keep in touch.

EMILY

*(Uninterested)* I'll think about it. Let's go Daniel. *(To Raymond)* How could you do this? *(Exits)*

STEPHANIE

*(Heavy sigh)* Those two probably think we are the craziest people in the world. *(Beat. Hits Raymond's head)* What the hell is wrong with you?

RAYMOND

Ouch ma that hurt.

STEPHANIE

That was the point. Just a friend, you wanted to invite just a friend. That was more than a friend. And here I am thinking you are introducing me to your fiancé and it's my nephew and his mother. Are you crazy? I think that drop is finally getting to you. I am so sorry I dropped you. You didn't cry so I figured you were okay. I should have taken you to the emergency room. After all these years it's finally taking some effect.

RAYMOND

Mother, stop playing. The letter Uncle Johnnie wrote to me told me to contact them. He even gave me their address and phone number. I guess I was being selfish. I mean I wanted to see my cousin. And I just knew Aunt Jackie would not be okay with it. I know lying to her was wrong, but how else was I supposed to get them here?

STEPHANIE

You could have talked to me. It may have not been right away, but we would have seen them soon enough. What you did was horrible and you need to call them and apologize. I just hope that boy doesn't try to hurt himself. What Jacky did could be very damaging.

ALEXIS

I'm going to go talk to her.

STEPHANIE

Oh, no you won't. She needs to be alone. Everyone is going to go home and we will give her about a week alone before we bother her. Raymond, you will need to stay really far away from her if you want to stay alive. As for the rest of us we just need to pray for her. I don't know about the rest of you, but that woman that I saw just a minute ago, is not the Jacqueline Ferguson I know.

BRIDGETTE

That is not the mother that raised me. I have never heard her use a curse word in my life. That had to be her evil twin. Poor Daniel...I just can't believe he is twelve years old.

ALEXIS

I think that's what set her off. She was thinking his son was only a baby. She had to come to terms real quickly that this affair happened twelve years ago.

RAYMOND

I am sorry everyone. *(Crying)* I am really sorry. *(Crying heavily)* If you all never want to speak to me again I completely understand. But I was just trying to fulfill that letter. I am sorry. *(Exits)*.

BRIDGETTE

I'll go see to him. So much for the Sunday brunch. I'll see you guys later. Bye. *(Exits)*.

ALEXIS

Oh, yeah the food. What are we going to do with all that food?

STEPHANIE

I'll pack it up and bring it to the homeless shelter tomorrow. I'm sure they can use it.

ALEXIS

I'll come by and help.

CHRISTOPHER

Me too.

STEPHANIE

Thank you guys. I'll see you tomorrow.

ALEXIS

Bye, Aunt Stephanie. *(Alexis and Christopher exits).*

STEPHANIE

*(Looks up).* Jonathan what the hell is wrong with you? *(Pause. Looks back up.)* God, what is this? *(Black out).*

SCENE SEVEN

*One month later. The scene opens with Jacqueline back in front of the TV this time she looks worse than previous times. There are 3-4 empty bottles of liquor on the floor and empty boxes of cakes, ice creams, chocolates, etc on the floor. She is flipping through the television.*

TV (FEMALE VOICE OVER)

You are watching Lifetime Television, television for women. Coming up next, the 2008 movie, *Why Did You Have Sex With My Husband?*

TV (MALE VOICE OVER)

*(Jacqueline changes the channel).* Coming up next on All My Nieces and Nephews. *(We hear an actress' voice).* Sandra how dare you have sex with my husband. *(We hear a slap).*

JACQUELINE

*(Changes the channel).* You have to be kidding me.

TV (YOUNG MALE VOICE OVER)

Coming up next on MTV, The Jersey Shore. *(We hear a female voice over).* Snookie, how dare you have sex with my man, you slut. *(We hear a second voice).* He didn't want you, you tramp. *(Fighting and arguing is heard).*

JACQUELINE

This is ridiculous. *(Changes the channel).*

TV (CHILD VOICE OVER)

You are watching Hanna Montana on the Disney channel. *(We hear a girl's voice).* Hanna, how dare you steal my boyfriend away from me?

JACQUELINE

*(Changes the channel).* Damn, even our children are going through this mess.

TV (CARTOON VOICE OVER)

Sponge Bob, how dare you have relations with my sponges? *(Changes the channel).*

JACQUELINE

*(Frustrated)* I am so ready to scream.

TV (FEMALE VOICE OVER)

Thank you for joining us. You have been watching an opera on PBS. Please call in for your donations so that we can continue to provide to you the best public broadcasting systems. Call today and you will receive a free copy of the opera La' Buja. La' Buja tells the story of a woman who finds out that her maid is having sex with her husband.

JACQUELINE

Damn! There has to be something else on. I'll turn to the Jesus channel. There has to be something good on there.

TV MALE VOICE OVER

Thank you for tuning in to *Jesus Can Help You* on the Jesus channel. I am your host Dr. Reverend Pastor Bishop Deacon Apostle Evangelist Prophet Leonard Kenneth Henderson Fredrick Johnson, III, Esq, M.A, D.M.D., D.P.T., D.C., Sc.D, ABC, XYZ, 123, square, circle, triangle, Jr. Today's show is all about forgiveness. Sister Jean, please tell us who you are having troubles forgiving. *(Sister Jean is heard)* My husband had sex with another woman and had a child out of wedlock. *(Sister Jean heavily cries. The host is heard)*. It's alright sister Jean let the Lord help you to forgive.

JACQUELINE

*(Turns off the television)* I hate you television. You're worthless. *(The doorbell rings. She doesn't respond to the door. It rings again. Still no response. The doorbell rings. We then hear knocking)*. What the hell do you want? Leave it on the door step and get the hell out of here.

RAYMOND

*(Offstage)*. Aunt Jacky it's me.

JACQUELINE

What the hell do you want? You lying bastard.

RAYMOND

*(Offstage)*. Aunt J please let me in. I really need to speak with you.

JACQUELINE

The door is already unlocked. You buzzard.

RAYMOND

*(Enters)*. What's wrong? How come you're not answering your phone, I've been calling you.

JACQUELINE

I don't feel like talking. Besides, I'm tired of being lied to.

RAYMOND

*(Tears are flowing)*. Aunt J you have to forgive me. I know what I did was wrong, but you wouldn't have agreed to meet her. Uncle Johnnie said he wanted me to get everyone together. I'm so sorry.

JACQUELINE

Why did you lie to me?

RAYMOND

I wasn't thinking correctly. I should have told everyone, but I was very curious to see them.

JACQUELINE

Why?

RAYMOND

Because before they were just names in a will. I wanted to see them face to face. I wanted to see what they had that we didn't.

JACQUELINE

What do you mean?

RAYMOND

Well, apparently Uncle Johnnie was missing something. A man who has everything he needs doesn't go out and get something like a woman and a child. I talked to Daniel. Uncle Johnnie spent all twelve years with him. Every time he wasn't here with us he was with them. He had to be ashamed of us to keep us a secret.

JACQUELINE

Stupid, he was keeping them a secret.

RAYMOND

He was keeping us both a secret. He had two families and neither one of them knew about the other. I was just curious. I didn't want to wait any longer. It took you three months just to get over Uncle Johnnie. How long would it have been until you were ready to see them?

JACQUELINE

I never wanted to see them. I never had any intentions of knowing them, or seeing them, or hearing from them. I did not want to see them, ever.

RAYMOND

I am really sorry for what I did. It was wrong, cruel, and just a horrible thing to do. I hope you can forgive me.

JACQUELINE

I'll think about it.

RAYMOND

I need you to do me a favor. *(She looks at him uninterested waiting for him to respond).* I need you to call them and apologize.

JACQUELINE

Raymond, get out.

RAYMOND

Aunt Jackie, please.

JACQUELINE

Ray, get out, now.

RAYMOND

I know you are upset, but your anger can never be an excuse to how you treated them. They didn't deserve that.

JACQUELINE

I didn't deserve being lied to and then being surprised by my curious nephew. Now get out.

RAYMOND

Aunt J, don't you realize the damage you could have done to Daniel?

JACQUELINE

Any damage that was done to that boy was done by your uncle. Now get the hell out of my house. *(Beat)* How dare you come into here and tell me that I need to apologize? That hoe needs to apologize to me.

RAYMOND

She didn't know he was married.

JACQUELINE

Well, maybe if that bitch didn't sin and have sex before marriage then maybe this would have never happened. That slut deserves to burn in hell for the sin she committed. FORNICATION!

RAYMOND

He who is without sin cast the first stone.

JACQUELINE

GET OUT. Get the fuck out! *(She starts yelling and throwing the trash at him. As she continues to yell and curse at him Raymond ducks and cries (pleading) for her to stop).*

STEPHANIE

*(Enters abruptly)* What the hell is going on in here?

JACQUELINE

Get your son out of my house. *(She stops throwing the trash).*

STEPHANIE

What are you doing?

RAYMOND

I just asked her to apologize to Emily and Daniel, that's all.

STEPHANIE

Raymond, leave...leave, now. (*Raymond exits*). Jacky, where are you? This woman right here is not the woman I know. She is not the woman I grew up with. Where is Jacqueline Ferguson?

JACQUELINE

(*Crying*) She is lost. I seriously do not know where she is. She got lost in the midst of this...shit. My God, what did I do to deserve this? I really mean it. What did I do in my lifetime; what pain have I caused in someone else's life that this much pain is returning to me? I can't take this anymore. I can't live anymore. I have never in my lifetime felt this much pain.

STEPHANIE

(*Pause*). I can't answer that. (*Beat*). Now, I know you do not want to hear this, but you have to apologize to Emily and Daniel. They never deserved that treatment, especially Daniel. He did not ask to be born illegitimate. He did not get to choose his parents.

JACQUELINE

I know...I know. (*Bursts out crying*). Stephanie I do not know who that woman was. I really do not know where she came from. When I saw Emily and Daniel I just exploded. (*Pause*) Twelve years. Twelve years. Twelve years. (*Crying*). Was I that stupid? I honestly can't say that I ever thought that he was cheating on me. Twelve years. How can that happen? Damn it, twelve years. I am so sorry. I feel like no matter how much I apologize it's not enough. And I don't want to apologize and that crazy woman returns. I just cannot seem to get a hold of the original Jacky. I cannot find her. I've lost her and I do not know what to do. (*Pause*) Did you hear what I said to those people? I really had some mean things in me; I guess just waiting for a time like that. (*Beat*) Why won't this pain go away? (*Black out*).

SCENE EIGHT

*One week later. Scene opens with Jacqueline sitting on the couch in casual wear. Stephanie is standing next to the couch.*

STEPHANIE

Are you ready for this?

JACQUELINE

I will never be ready for this. *(The doorbell rings). Oh God. (Stephanie goes toward the door). Wait. (Stephanie stops. Jacqueline fixes herself and then sits properly). Okay, now. (Stephanie continues towards the door). Wait. (Jacqueline stands). Okay. (Stephanie continues towards the door). Wait.*

STEPHANIE

Come on, girl. *(She opens the door. Emily and Daniel enter). Please, come right in. You may be seated on the couch. (Beat) So, how is everyone doing today? (No response). So, I guess we'll jump right into it. Jacqueline, you're first.*

JACQUELINE

Stephanie, I need you to shut up.

STEPHANIE

That I will do.

JACQUELINE

*(Sits next to Daniel. Takes his hands. Pauses and then looks into his eyes. She looks at him and then speaks).* God, you look just like your father. Daniel, I want you to know that I am very sorry. The way I acted the last time I saw you, was just disgusting. When I saw you and your mother I just lost it. But that is no excuse for my actions. The things that I did were ugly and the things that I said were just *(crying)* horrible. And I want you to know that I am very sorry and I am... *(Beat)* I don't know if you are old enough to understand what is going on, but your father did some things that in our society are looked at as wrong. But I want you to know that your father is still a good man, he is a great man and I know without a doubt that he loved you. You are a handsome young man and a wonderful person and I want you to know those words I spoke over you are wrong, they are so wrong and I do not want you to believe them. I am really so sorry for what I did to you. You never deserved it and I am truly sorry. And I hope you can find it in your heart to forgive this old bitty.

DANIEL

*(Crying, he nods his head yes)* I forgive you.

JACQUELINE

*(They embrace)* Thank you, son. Thank you so much. *(Beat)*. You may not be related to me, but you are still a part of this family. And any time we come together for anything you and your mother are welcomed. You understand? *(He nods yes)*. You're such a wonderful boy.

STEPHANIE

*(Crying)* Well, I'll go take him into the kitchen and get him something to eat. *(Daniel exits)*. *(To Jacqueline)* I am not that far away so don't you try to kill her. *(Exits)*.

JACQUELINE

That's Jon's sister. You're going to love her. *(They sit together)*.

JACQUELINE AND EMILY

I'm sorry.

JACQUELINE

What are you sorry about?

EMILY

I had sex with your husband.

JACQUELINE

But you didn't know he was married.

EMILY

I'm still sorry. I should have told him no that night. I was a little drunk and he was looking good to me.

JACQUELINE

He was a sexy man.

EMILY

Yes he was. I never knew a man at his age could look so good.

JACQUELINE

And he never lost his six pack of abs. He had them ever since I met him. *(They share a laugh)*. Emily, I need you to know that woman you met two months ago was not me. My nephew said he was bringing a friend over for brunch and we all assumed he was introducing us to his new fiancé and when those words came out of his mouth...Emily and Daniel...I just went blank. I...lost myself and I just gained a whole new person that I do not like at all. I am really sorry for what I did and for what I said. Those words I used were horrible. I can't even believe they came out of my mouth. *(Crying)* This whole situation just has me feeling all confused inside. I don't know whether to feel depressed, or sadness, anger, madness, or hatred. I mean just a bunch of feelings were swimming in me and I just exploded. I mean it was bad enough to become a widow, but to know there

is another woman out there. I just couldn't take that. My daughter told me what goes around comes around, but I am not sure what I did to deserve this. This is some harsh shit. A part of me wants to cry and a part of me wants to punch you in your face. *(She laughs)* This is just too difficult for me. I hope you can understand.

EMILY

Jacqueline, I completely understand. But you have to understand that I feel the same way you do. I wasn't married to him, but I still had a relationship with him. *(Beat)*. When he fell ill he called me. He told me that he did not want me to come see him and that he would be okay. Then after three months or so he called me back and he wanted to see me and Daniel. We went to the hospital and *(Crying)* he told me that he felt he was about to die and wanted to see us before he did. He then told me about you and his family and I lost it. I almost yelled at him in that hospital, but I knew he was almost gone. After spending the day with him two days later he was gone. *(Crying. Beat)*. I didn't know whether to mourn him or to hate him. Before he died he told me not to come to the funeral. The day he died I had to explain to Daniel not only did his father die, but I had to explain to him why we could not go to his funeral. Do you realize how difficult that was for me? And then it was like two or three months later and I got the phone call from Raymond. I was so resistant, but I was thinking of Daniel. He has a right to know his family.

JACQUELINE

Yes he does. And I am sorry for mistreating you. Can you forgive me?

EMILY

If I can forgive Jon I can definitely forgive you. *(They embrace in tears. Jacqueline begins to sob loudly)*.

JACQUELINE

I am sorry. I am so sorry. I am sorry.

STEPHANIE

*(Enters)* Is everything alright in here?

JACQUELINE

Yes, we're fine.

STEPHANIE

She's not trying to kill you, is she?

EMILY

No. Everything is fine. *(Beat)* Oh, I almost forgot. *(She goes into her pocket book and takes out a box. She hands it to Jacqueline)*.

JACQUELINE

What is this?

EMILY

Open it.

JACQUELINE

*(She opens it)* Oh my gosh, it's the ring. *(Beat)* Oh, no, I cannot take this from you.

EMILY

It's okay. I didn't want it. Raymond told me all about it. He was your husband, you deserve it.

JACQUELINE

No, I do not deserve it. Not after how I've been acting.

STEPHANIE

Well, hell, I deserve it. *(She snatches it)* Give it to me. *(She takes the ring out of the box and puts on her finger)*. What a perfect fit. *(They laugh. Fade to Black)*.

SCENE NINE

*Two days later. This scene opens with Raymond, Alexis, Bridgette, Christopher, and Daniel sitting in the living room. The scene opens with laughter.*

BRIDGETTE

*(Laughing)*. After that Hector never dated me again. I mean daddy really scared him off.

ALEXIS

Father was really strict with us. He would not let us date any boy more than once.

CHRISTOPHER

He was strict on me too. Remember Kelly?

RAYMOND

Oh, Kelly. *(They all laugh)*.

BRIDGETTE

Chris brought home this girl to a Sunday brunch. Daddy secretly told her that he was a psychic and that he could read every one of her thoughts. During the whole brunch she was sitting there uncomfortably, before we knew it she ran out of the house screaming, I'm sorry I thought that, I'm sorry I thought that. After daddy told us what he did we could not stop laughing.

CHRISTOPHER

I was not laughing. That was so cruel.

RAYMOND

He was even strict on me. You would have thought he was my father. He was always asking me questions about my friends I brought home.

ALEXIS

Well, I guess he was just looking out for us. You know just making sure we weren't having sex with someone we weren't married to.

DANIEL

Seems like he should have practiced what he preached.

BRIDGETTE

*(Quick uncomfortable silence hits the room. Bridgette breaks it)*. Yeah, well, if the hypocrite didn't disobey his own rules we would have never been able to meet such a wonderful brother and cousin such as your self. *(Pause)*. I'm sorry due to the circumstances you weren't able to attend his funeral.

DANIEL

It's okay. I got to see him in the hospital two days before he died.

ALEXIS

Really?

DANIEL

Yeah. He called my mother and me and asked if we could visit. He told me he was leaving soon so I said my goodbyes. After he died my mother explained to me everything. It was crazy to hear that. And then to hear my mother tell me about Raymond calling...it was all...like a dream.

CHRISTOPHER

Did you get to spend time with him?

DANIEL

A lot of time. I didn't get to spend the holidays with him, but the times I did were so special that the holidays didn't matter.

BRIDGETTE

Minus his falls, daddy really was a great man. I mean he could have easily abandoned you.

RAYMOND

I'm going to miss Uncle Johnnie. You know due to all of this mess it seems like he just died. It's like I never had the time to mourn him.

DANIEL

I know exactly what you mean.

ALEXIS

*(Pause. Beat).* Did he ever take you fishing?

DANIEL

*(Smiles. Sings).* First you take the bait and you bait the hook...

ALEXIS and DANIEL

Then you take the hook and throw it in the water.

ALEXIS, BRIDGETTE, DANIEL

Then you wait and you wait—

ALEXIS, BRIDGETTE, CHRISTOPHER, and DANIEL

Until you feel something moving—

ALEXIS, BRIDGETTE, CHRISTOPHER, RAYMOND, and DANIEL

Then you reel it in and take the fish out of the water. *(They laugh).*

ALEXIS

I hated that song.

BRIDGETTE

Really? I loved it

ALEXIS

It was always so corny.

DANIEL

I taught my friends that song...they laughed at me.

ALEXIS

Well, I would have.

CHRISTOPHER

Gosh, Lexy, you're so rude.

ALEXIS

What? That song was corny. If one of my friends taught me that song I would have laughed at them.

DANIEL

*(Pause. Beat)* He sang the song to me the day I saw him the hospital.

RAYMOND

The fishing song?

DANIEL

No, the song. *(Pause. Sings)*. I want you to never forget, and to always remember—

ALEXIS, BRIDGETTE, DANIEL

No matter how you feel, no matter what they say about me, I will always love you.

ALEXIS, BRIDGETTE, CHRISTOPHER, RAYMOND, and DANIEL

I will love you when the sun shines and when the rain comes down and even when I'm not around I want you to know that I will always love you, for-ever more. *(Daniel breaks into tears. Bridgette embraces him. Fade to black out).*

THE END

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