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The View from Here: A two-act play (Original writing).

Eve Susan. Pidgeon
University of Windsor

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The View From Here

A Two-Act Play

By Eve Pidgeon

A creative writing project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts at the University of Windsor
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Abstract

The View From Here is a project that intended to challenge traditional theatre forms, and traditional uses of stage space and time. In doing so, it, in no way, pretends to a greater reality, consistently admitting its theatrical and, thus, collaborative, nature both in structure and in theme. In the play, three distinctly individual women are drawn together through common experiences and emotions by the catalyst that is art—be it literature, theatre, or the photography that is projected onto the set and the characters as part of the staging and the theme of the play. Essentially transformed and merged in the end, their solidarity is an affirmation of their belonging in a feminine, but not necessarily feminist, world that is definitively “theatrical” in its complexity.

The theme of photojournalism, or journalism, in general, is used both as a contrast and a parallel to the theatre motif. While both explore human issues in a voyeuristic manner, one, objective, remains outside its subjects, reducing them to moments as they are defined by a single person. The other, very biased, seeks to get inside its subject, giving it life, passions, dreams, and history. Elaborating on moments, it does so in collaboration with the visions of others, creating a condition of solidarity. It is this condition that The View From Here seeks to celebrate. When the three photojournalists, and the woman who enkindled their anger, their understanding, and their transformation, are integrated, it is solidarity that has functioned as a catalyst for the evolution of women and for the evolution of their important friendships.

As a play about women, The View From Here takes feminine issues such as battery, male-dominated careers, and patriarchal religions, and attempts to create a context in which its characters and its audience can begin to see the relational, inseparable, enriching contexts of their shared experience.
Dedication

The View From Here is dedicated to my mother, Anita Snider, and my grandmother Mary Perlmutter, in honour of their dreams, hopes, aspirations and, especially, their influence.
Acknowledgments

With heartfelt gratitude I wish to thank Dr. Alistair MacLeod for his patience and guidance, Dr. John Ditsky, for his support and many helpful suggestions, and Dr. Sue Martin for her patience and understanding. Also not forgotten are the students who helped to workshop and criticize preliminary drafts of this work, and the friends and family who stayed by my side regardless of the neglect they endured while I worked to complete this final manuscript.
The View From Here

A Two Act Play

By Evie Snider
Excerpts of The View From Here were first presented on October 26, 1994 at the University of Windsor. The cast was as follows:

DAWN FAWCETT as Kate Mannery
LANIE ANDERSON as Lucille Robson
ANGELA WHYTE as Elaine Handley
JUDIT SCHÖNWALD as Hannah Tress

The presentation was directed and introduced by the author.
Characters:
Kate Mannery    Hannah Tress    Elaine Handley    Lucille Robson

Memories:
Raymond Mannery    Child-Lucy    Young(er)-Kate
Police Officers (two)

Photographic Images/Slides:

"LOVE."

- Old man, in prayer shawl, kissing the torah (holy scrolls)
- little boy pulling his sister's ponytail in church
- young lovers kissing on a park bench as elderly woman looks on, blushing
- a father, helping his son tie a tie (proud, it is for the first time)
- the wedding of Kate Robson and Raymond Mannery
- Raymond Mannery, as he kisses his wife (and pats her bottom) while she does dishes and their seven year-old daughter looks on

"Every Two Minutes...:" 

1) a tight shot of Raymond drinking a beer, while Kate, brushing Lucy's hair before bedtime, looks concerned in the background.
2) a fight, between Kate and Raymond; he is screaming in anger, she is terrified as they struggle at the counter of their messy kitchen.
3) Raymond with his fist raised, Kate cowering.
4) Kate, crying as she tries to calm her daughter.
5) Two police officers arresting Raymond, while Kate sits and cries on the living room sofa. In the near-background, Lucy points a finger, in anger and accusation at her father, who is being led out the door of their small middle-class home.
6) Kate, putting make-up on her bruised face.
7) a tight close-up of Kate and Lucy, their heads leaned against one another’s, taking comfort in their togetherness.
Act One:

[A red safelight blandly illumines (and discolours) centre stage where an L-shaped counter sits neatly upholding various sized boxes and jugs, three large metal trays and an old enlarger. The almost neurotic tidiness of the darkroom should be apparent and the light should be just bright enough to show the House that this sterile, unused room is the second-most lived-in area of the stage despite the fact that upstage right is meant to imply the living area of a home (or two).

Downstage right, a small area of the stage is taken up by a colourful throw rug, an old wooden chair (brightly and quaintly painted and stencilled) and a blue and white tiled counter. The rest of the stage is bland and boxy and beige.

The rest of this passage should serve as a guideline to your vision. Two desks, stage left, serve their purposes here as the desks of HANNAH TRESS and ELAINE HANDLEY as they exist in the photography department within the editorial offices of the Times Herald Tribune, a large, metropolitan daily newspaper. A third chair is pulled up to the side of one of the desks, and waits, empty, for LUCILLE ROBSON, a 22 year-old photography intern at the paper. Alone in the office, TRESS, 45, and HANDLEY, 32 are, respectively, staring out the “window” and working at their desks when...

Your imagination/vision/budget takes priority here. The memories of TRESS, an esteemed, Pulitzer Prize-winning photojournalist are pivotal to this work. So, too, are the photographs she has taken of KATE and RAYMOND MANNERY (whose blue-and-white tiled kitchen is ingrained in her memory), THEIR nine year old daughter LUCY, and HER many other subjects.

Photographic images are to be projected on the beige walls and boxy set and, too, on the characters. I recommend making use of stage rear in either (or both) of the following ways:

Stage rear, a raised platform on which past memories are both played out and projected while the intrusive sound of a CAMERA SHUTTER and drive echo throughout the House...

OR

Stage rear, a system of screen and speakers on which photographs are projected while sound-overs of past conversations and emotions make themselves heard to HANNAH, who remembers them so clearly, and to the House, who will be moved by them for the first time.
HANNAH is standing at the “window” stage left, as ELAINE works ardently at her desk, slowly and painfully typing out a copy block to accompany a recent photo story, when the sound of a CAMERA SHUTTER and DRIVE thunders through the House.

HANNAH’s response is minimal — these are, after all, her own oh-so-intrusive memories — and ELAINE, undisturbed, continues to type as the CAMERA SHUTTER sounds off in accompaniment to the images of HANNAH’s acclaimed photo story, “Love,” being projected stage-rear.

Safe light fades out as lights rise over the THT offices.]

Hannah:

What a beautiful sky.

[SHE is obviously disturbed as she tries, however gently, to interrupt HER colleague’s work, and to distract HERSELF.]

Elaine:

(Distorted) What?

Hannah:

Oh. I was just saying it’s a beautiful sky tonight.

Elaine:

Yes. (SHE returns to her work)

[HANNAH stares at HER colleague a moment longer before returning to HER own distraction at the “window.” This time, the projection of images is not accompanied by the sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER. “Every Two Minutes...” photo number one is projected and HANNAH, startled, shakes HER head, closes her eyes, and tries to return to memories of “LOVE.” When SHE is peacefully looking out the “window” again, the images of KATE and Raymond’s happier days begin to come back to her (as evidenced by the projection). The IMAGES are interspersed: the wedding...the drinking...the love-pat in the kitchen... the struggle in the kitchen...

HANNAH begins to pace about, trying to distract HERSELF. Mostly HER movements are toward and away from the darkroom where SHE processes HER images and escapes HER reality. The IMAGES/MEMORIES continue repetitively. SHE is almost frantic now, approaching stage-rear.

The final IMAGE (in this sequence), of Raymond with fist raised, shows on stage rear and on HANNAH herself. Lights dim and the first “memories” come to life.
The few spoken lines are mingled with the sounds of crashing (as Raymond throws something), crying (after Raymond hits his wife), anger and pain. It should be brief, loud, and highly intense—something the HOUSE won’t soon forget)

Raymond:

I said I don’t want her here anymore! Do you hear me? You and your...

Kate:

Raymond! No!

Raymond:

Bitch!

[This last word is first drowned out by the sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER and then echoes into nothingness as the IMAGE fades, lights rise and HANNAH returns to her “window.”]

Hannah:

(Slowly) I don’t think I’ve ever seen one quite like it.

Elaine:

What?

Hannah:

The sky. It’s really beautiful tonight.

Elaine:

Okay. Then I’ll tell you what. Let me just finish this one sentence...I’ve gotta get this copy block done...and then we’ll talk.

Hannah:

All right. We don’t really have to. It’s just...

[ELAINE looks at HER skeptically.]

Okay.

Elaine:

Just let me get this done (referring to HER copy block).

[HANNAH nods and returns to the “window” as ELAINE returns to HER desk. After a moment...]

Hannah:

(Brightly) What are you working on, anyway?
Hannah...

Okay. Sorry. I just...

(Mildly frustrated) The photo story on the doctor. You know. The one holding a free practice Wednesdays at the mission?

Oh. Great. What kind of shots did you get?

Yes. Hannah...(slightly annoyed) Do you want to talk?

No. No. I didn’t mean to disturb you.

It’s okay. (SHE returns to HER work)

Those colours, they’re just so...

Oh come on. You don’t want to talk? We’ve been working together for three years now. I know you.

Oh, Elaine, it’s nothing. Honestly. I just wanted you to see the sky. It’s really lovely tonight.

Oh, yeah? (Rising and approaching HANNAH) Well, I happen to know that you are not one of those schmaltzy women who worry about who does and who doesn’t see a beautiful sky. I know you have an assignment that needs to be souped and that your standing at the window staring at the sky instead of going into the darkroom to do it is a bad sign.

Oh, no really. I just thought it looked really pretty and figured that I would take a minute and...
Elaine:
I also know that you never talk about the sky except when you’re teaching an intern about diffused and flattering lighting. What gives?

Hannah:
All right. So you caught me. It isn’t that crucial, though.

Elaine:
(Nodding) Mmmm-hmmm...?

Hannah:
(Relaxing) I’ve just been feeling a little tense lately.

Elaine:
(Sarcastic) A little!

Hannah:
Okay. More than a little. It’s just...well, really, it’s not that important.

Elaine:
Not that important?

Hannah:
No....I’m just...a bit distracted, that’s all.

Elaine:
One second, okay? (Types then turns computer/typewriter off) Damn good ones...That’s what kind of shots! Come here. Sit. (HANNAH sits and ELAINE puts HER own coffee cup in front of her) Now, what’s going on?

Hannah:
(SHE drinks) Thanks. I don’t know really. I’ve been really tense and I’ve got stuff running through my head...

Elaine:
Come on. Spit it out.

Hannah:
It’s stuff I just haven’t thought about in years....You know that photo story I did...I don’t know...about twelve, thirteen years ago?

Elaine:

Hannah:
“Every Two Minutes...?”

Elaine:
“Every Two Minutes...?”
Hannah:

Yeah. That one.

Elaine:

How could I forget it? It was one of the best damn photo stories I’ve ever seen. It’s what inspired me to want to become a photographer!

Hannah:

Elaine...I’m just glad you remember it. I...

Elaine:

Jesus, Hannah! How could I forget it?

Hannah:

...just don’t feel much like having to describe it to you.

Elaine:

You sure—enough don’t have to! How could you talk about it so lightly?...”that photo story I did”...the one that got you the Pulitzer Prize that year, the one that...

Hannah:

All right, Elaine. Enough.

Elaine:

Sorry. Go ahead.

Hannah:

That’s what I’m living with lately. I can’t stop thinking about it. Like it’s some kind of enemy. It’s making me crazy, affecting my work....

Elaine:

Okay. So you stare at the sky all day, all night, ‘cause you just can’t handle the fact that you took pictures that changed lives, that were internationally recognized, that made your name in photojournalism.

Hannah:

Elaine...

Elaine:

Okay. I hope your story gets better, hon. I envy you...but I sure don’t pity you!

Hannah:

Just listen. I took Lucille to the World Press Photo Exhibit last week...
Elaine:
The intern? Whaddya go and do that for?

Hannah:

I wanted to.

Elaine:

You don’t have to take the interns out.

Hannah:

I just felt like it, Elaine. I don’t know why...She just kind of intrigues me, that’s all.

Elaine:

Too intense, if you ask me.

Hannah:

Well, that’s just it. She is intense. And a little hostile. And she asks these questions...

Elaine:

Hmmm?

Hannah:

We were looking at Baldwin’s photo...You know the one of the junky, the john, and the baby?

Elaine:

Uh, not off-hand.

Hannah:

Well, there’s this prostitute, she’s got needles all over the floor, one arm around her baby, and the other hand, undoing...well, you know...her client’s pants.

Elaine:

You can see him? The john?

Hannah:

Just from the junky’s perspective. Waist down.

Elaine:

Oh yeah. Gotcha.

Hannah:

Well, Lucille looked at it for a minute. Then she started crying.
Elaine:
I don’t blame her. That shot...damn. What a great catch! I wish I had taken it. There’s not a person in the world who wouldn’t be affected by something like that.

Hannah:
Well, don’t get me wrong — it was just a few little tears.... She didn’t break down...

Elaine:
All right. I get the picture. And her questions?

Hannah:
Well, she asked me. “How could he take that photo?” “Why didn’t he grab that kid and get him outa there?”

Elaine:
Well, you told her, right?

Hannah:
Oh yeah.

Elaine:
What.

Hannah:
Huh?

Elaine:
What’d you tell her?

Hannah:
(Bored, as if reciting) I told her that making that kind of life public was more important than saving the kid from one moment of his life’s horrors...

Elaine:
Oh, good.

Hannah:
...and I gave her all that stuff about how, as journalists, we have the power to bring it out of hiding, make people feel for it, etcetera, etcetera, etcetera.

Elaine:
Right. Perfect. And did she understand?
Hannah:

No. She said that he could have used his friendship with the woman to help her get out of her situation, or at least, to get the baby out.

Elaine:

(SHE takes a moment to ponder this idea) Oh come on! The girl shouldn’t even be in this field. We’re not social workers, we’re...

Hannah:

Exploiting our subjects.

Elaine:

(Angrily) What?

Hannah:

That’s what she said.

Elaine:

Please!

Hannah:

She’s kind of got a point.

Elaine:

What point!?

Hannah:

You know he went to a lot of trouble to form a relationship with her...

Elaine:

He had to.

Hannah:

A real relationship. Honest, trusting...

Elaine:

Well, yeah...Not just with the junky either. He had to get the pimp and the john to agree, too.

Hannah:

Yes. But, before he took that picture, he had to make that woman and her baby trust him. He made her think he was her friend.
Elaine:
And a friend has to be responsible for... for what? Rehabilitating her drug habit? Sending her back to school? Finding her a nice apartment in a nice neighbourhood so the kid can...

Hannah:

Yes.

Elaine:

Bullshit.

Hannah:

They were friends.

Elaine:

They were never friends.

Hannah:

He pretended they were.

Elaine:

Yeah? And she had to know that in the real world it couldn’t happen.

Hannah:

What about her real world?

Elaine:
She knew she and Baldwin were just shooter and subject — not friends.

Hannah:

She couldn’t have known it.

Elaine:

So you say she thought their worlds were even mildly comparable? I don’t think so.

Hannah:

Elaine, she thought they were friends.

Elaine:

What? Her and her johns, tryin’ to get another hit of crack and Baldwin in his khaki chinos and button down shirt, ten grand worth of photo equipment hangin’ ‘round his shoulder? Oh yeah, very compatible.
Hannah:
It doesn't matter. They were friends as far as she was concerned. She didn't know his offer was false, that he was only in her life to make an issue of it.

Elaine:
Yeah. And it was his job to make it an issue.

Hannah:
Lucille thought the junky should have been Baldwin's issue.

Elaine:
She was.

Hannah:
Not as a photojournalist, Elaine. As a person.

Elaine:
And when and where do we draw the line, Hannah? We can't get involved with every subject. Objectivity's the name of this game. If Lucille can't handle it, she should take a job...I dunno...somewhere else.

Hannah:
Objectivity.

Elaine:
Yeah. Objectivity.

Hannah:
(Staring out the “window” again) You think that's such a good thing?

Elaine:
Yeah. I do.

[ELAINE stares at HER colleague, using the time passing to calm down from their near-heated debate.]

What's this got to do with you, hon?

Hannah:
What? I'm sorry...

Elaine:
What has this got to do with you and “Every Two Minutes?”

[HANNAH turns and sits down at her desk just as lights dim over the THT editorial offices and lights rise, downstage right over KATE and HER kitchen.]
Kate:

When she got sick, I made her some barley ‘n’ ham soup with lots of onions hoping that would make her feel better. It had always worked for Ray and the baby....I guess you could say that we were friends. Good friends. But after...well, after the pictures...I just wasn’t sure anymore. Oh she kept in touch...when Ray was in jail, she came over almost every day, but after...after he got charged, got “help,” and came back... well, she stopped returning my calls. One day, I called her office to ask her to meet me and Lucy at the park across the street from the paper. We needed her help. Didn’t have anyone else to turn to....I’m sure her editor gave her the message....But...she never came. It was cold that day. We had left without our coats.

[The CAMERA SHUTTER echoes through the house and the long-term photo story on the MANNERYS begins to be projected over HANNAH, stage left: eight photos, from the Mannery wedding, to the arrest of Raymond.]

I guess she didn’t really owe us anything. We didn’t know her very well before. Ten years earlier, she had shot our wedding. We were working on a really tight budget, Ray and me, and needed to save money somewhere. We took an ad in the paper and, well, since she wasn’t famous yet, and was saving up for some new equipment, she called and agreed to do our wedding pictures for only two hundred and fifty dollars. They turned out nice.

[KATE runs HER hands wistfully over the kitchen counter.]

I really liked her. She wasn’t like me at all. I watched her when I was walking down the aisle. She was so serious, so professional...down on her knees, taking pictures, up on top of chairs, taking pictures. Just before I got to the altar, I remember thinking that she was making her dreams come true. So was I, though. I had dreams, too. Hannah was only a year older than me, but our lives were just so different. I got married to Raymond at twenty-one; she got a job at a big newspaper when she was my age. I had a baby at twenty-two. She won a regional prize for a “spot-news” photo...whatever that is. I was washing dishes, changing diapers, loving my husband; she was becoming a “famous photojournalist.” She was becoming a famous photojournalist, and I was becoming the poor, poor woman whose husband beat her.

[Lights dim over KATE and rise, once again over ELAINE and HANNAH and the THT editorial offices.]

Elaine:

You just can’t live with that kind of guilt, Hannah.

Hannah:

You think I want to? It’s making me crazy. I’m just not functioning as a journalist this week. I can’t get it out of my head.
Elaine:
You’ve got to. What else are you going to do? Retire early? Maybe do some volunteer work at...uh...that house downtown?

Hannah:

What house?

Elaine:
You know, that one for battered women. What’s it called?

Hannah:

Can’t remember.

Elaine:
Me neither. (Lightly) Anyway, you’re much better at picture stories than you’d be at dishing out condolences all day.

Hannah:
That doesn’t help me with my problem, Elaine.

Elaine:
You don’t have a problem, Hannah. You have a job. You do it well. No problem.

Hannah:
Problem. Does my job preclude me from thwarting an attack on a woman who trusted me?

Elaine:
Oh come on. Prelude-schmeclude. You did your job.

Hannah:
Does my job...then, photographing situations where love prevailed...mean I have to exploit situations when it doesn’t?

Elaine:
What are you talking about?

Hannah:
I was doing a photo story on “Love,” Elaine. They started fighting, I started shooting.

Elaine:
The nature of a true photojournalist.

Hannah:
I took pictures of her being beaten!
Elaine:
Oh, I know you did. Very powerful ones.

Hannah:

I should have stopped him.

Elaine:

How? He’d have gone after you and then...

Hannah:

I don’t know how. I just should’ve been there in some other capacity.

Elaine:

It was your job.

Hannah:

I should’ve...I don’t know...I should have, at least, met them in the park...

Elaine:

Come on. Like you said, you got busy. You couldn’t throw away an important assignment.

Hannah:

I could have returned her call.

Elaine:

Look. She probably thinks you just didn’t get the message. Don’t worry about it.

Hannah:

Well, you see, normally I wouldn’t. I wouldn’t worry about it at all. It’s just... Lucille, all her hostility and the questions she asks.

Elaine:

What kind of questions?

Hannah:

All right. What is it about this job that precludes me from...from acts of human kindness.

Elaine:

So, that’s where it comes from. Stop philosophizing. You sound like an ethics textbook. Its easy. Your job is to objectively display the truth. As it stands before you. As it is.
Hannah:

But what gives us that right?

Elaine:

Hannah, give me a break! You did your job and...and it was more than your job. It was your obligation. You were supposed to take Kate’s life and offer it up as a symbolic image for all the millions of women who share her story.

Hannah:

(Feeling better and slightly amused) Oh yeah? “Offer it up as a symbolic image for...”

Elaine:

Okay. Okay. So it was a bunch of text book crap. It worked, though!

Hannah:

Yes. It did. Don’t let me do that to myself again. All right?

Elaine:

All right. Just remember. They wouldn’t have given you that Pulitzer Prize for being a first-class, inhuman schlomp.

Hannah:

Keep reminding me of that. You finish your copy-block?

Elaine:

Yeah. Good thing it didn’t have to be long. Would’ve taken me all day, the way I type.

Hannah:

Let’s hear it.

Elaine:

(Reading) Dr. Edward J. Switzer, specialist in Suppressed Memory Disorder, is keeping busy downtown on his days off. Every Wednesday, in the basement of St. Patrick’s church, the doctor is offering free treatment for those in need.

“They’re poor, they’re helpless, they’re lost,” the renowned psychologist says, “and I need them as much as they need me.”

Switzer, 57, is hoping to complete a two-decade inquiry into just what, besides economics, creates the tragic lives of those who live in the poverty-stricken corridors that are “far too abundant in North American cities.”

Each week, 7-15 participants search their pasts, addressing memories and the emotions that accompany them, in the hopes of discovering their true selves.
“Every one of us has an intrinsic right to know who and why we are. We want to know why we have an addictive personality, why we aren’t capable of sustained, healthy relationships, and what we can do to change those facts,” says Switzer.

The group-sessions, held every Wednesday at 2:00-3:00 p.m. are free of charge.

Not bad, uh?

Hannah:
Not bad at all. How long did it take you to type it?

Elaine:
Now, don’t forget, I composed it here, too.

Hannah:
How long?

Elaine:
An hour-and-a-half!

[H THEY laugh.]

Hannah:
Well, all I can say is that it’s a good thing you never wanted to be a reporter.

Elaine:
No kidding.

Hannah:
(At HER desk, SHE is riffling through some papers) So, what don’t you wanna shoot tomorrow?

Elaine:
Oh, everything.

Hannah:
You don’t want to shoot at all?

Elaine:
Oh yeah. Sure. I just thought it would be nice to drive around and listen to the scanner, you know...drive by the bank, just as the bank robber’s running out with the loot, look up in the sky...

Hannah: And see the plane!

Elaine: ...and see the plane!

[H THEY laugh.]
Elaine:
Why do you ask?

Hannah:
Got to decide which assignments to give to Lucille.

Elaine:
How 'bout the one of the "exciting new chicken dish" at Chez Nous?

Hannah:
Yes. That's a good one. Very challenging. (SHE writes it down)
And how 'bout the kite-flying challenge? I think she'd enjoy it.

Elaine:
Yes. Absolutely. She will like that one.

Hannah:
It's at three o'clock right?

Elaine:
Yep.

[HANNAH writes.]
You know what else I'd like to give her? The shot of the mayor's recital.

Hannah:
You mean the mayor's daughter's recital.

Elaine:
Yeah. Whatever. (Reading off a memo on HER desk) It says here, she plays accordion. Fascinating.

Hannah:
Oh, but it's what she's playing that gives it spice! "King of the Faeries."

Elaine:
Oh, I think I know him. Doesn't he work down at Cooper's?

[THEY laugh.]

Hannah:
Come on. Let's go grab a car and see if we can't find...
Hannah:  
...that plane!  

Elaine:  
That plane!  

[Exit HANNAH and ELAINE, laughing.  
Lights rise, once again, over KATE and HER kitchen as SHE sits in HER chair,  
nervously fiddling with HER skirt.]  

Kate:  
I’ve thought of myself in an hundred different ways over my lifetime. Yes, I know it  
hasn’t been a long lifetime...I’ve not lived through revolutions, depressions, or  
wars...but, for all it’s worth, forty-four years is a lifetime, when you’ve lost two  
parents, raised a child, and spent years in this damn chair trying to figure out  
why...when one day you were a wife, and another day a mother...all of a sudden  
you’ve become...a plane.  

[KATE stands when SHE hears the thunderous sound of the CAMERA  
SHUTTER. IT sounds off three times and SHE looks about nervously.]  
That was when it happened...one moment, a nurturing wife and patient, loving  
mother...the next...(SHE imitates the sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER and DRIVE  
while pretending to take a photograph)...well, you know...a plane. It’s surprising,  
really, how much one person can affect your opinions of yourself. I never would have  
thought it was possible before...to be a plane.  

[Again, KATE sits in her chair.]  
She told me about it just after the wedding, when she brought the pictures over. Oh,  
they were so lovely. You took one look at those wedding pictures....  

[KATE pauses woefully only to have her thoughts interrupted.  
Quietly, two or three photographs of KATE and Raymond’s wedding are  
projected stage rear. SHE looks and considers them, briefly.]  

Well, one look at them and you’d never think...  

[Again, SHE pauses. The image (of HER cowering away from Raymond and his  
raised fist) is, this time, silently projected, not only onto the scene and set, but onto  
KATE, HERSELF. After a moment, SHE walks away from it, toward stage left.  
Slowly, as SHE begins to speak, and lights, stage left, rise, and the image fades.]  

Anyway...she fascinated me. Just one year older than me, like I told you, but so, so  
different. I didn’t really understand what she did, or even why. Somehow, I thought  
her career hid her in the bushes and made her take pictures of movie stars, political  
figures...I figured she made lots of money every time she got a picture of them kissing  
someone other than their wives. When I told her that, she kind of laughed at first, then
she got really offended and ranted and raved about the differences between what she did for the world and what “sleazy, opportunist paparazzi” did for money. I’d never heard that word before, paparazzi, but, frankly, I still don’t really understand the difference. (In sarcastic imitation) She was a photojournalist. They were paparazzi. She took pictures of things that mattered in the world. They took pictures of things that could only interest nosy, boring housewives. She took pictures because she wanted to show the world the “truth.” They took photos because they wanted money and fame. She walked around with her camera hoping to see and document Jackie O with her top off.

[Stage Right, HANNAH is seating ELAINE in HER living room. Sitting, SHE removes some photos from a case and the two PHOTOJOURNALISTS begin to quietly look through them.]

Oh, she had a lot to say about paparazzi, but when she got right down to it, I still didn’t understand. So, it was over a long explanation and a cup of hot cocoa that she and I started to be friends. It was then that we told each other all about ourselves. I told her about my hopes and dreams. About how I wanted to be a good wife. About how I wanted to take care of Ray and...(quietly) be what a dedicated wife should be. She told me about the plane.

[In HANNAH’s living room, ELAINE stops in tableau as HANNAH stands and begins to pace about, full of hope, full of passion.]

Hannah:

What I’m really waiting for is a big break, Kate. Something huge to happen...right while I’m standing there!

[SHE gets down on her knees and raises HER hands to her face as if holding up a camera.]

Then I’ll just get down and shoot until I get the perfect angle, the perfect expression...just capture the whole moment.

[HANNAH freezes in tableau, while KATE narrates and makes HER way over to the other woman.]

Kate:

So I told her, thinking that I understood: Yes. Like you did at our wedding. Captured the best moment of my life.

Hannah:

(Coming to life again) No. Not like your wedding. That’s portraiture. You guys were posing. Happy-as-hell-and-all, but still, posing. I want to shoot something big...right in the action, right in the middle of it all.
Kate:
Like...like Nixon saying “I am not a crook”?

Hannah:
Well, that’s closer to it. But...even more than that. I mean, I want something big. Kate, I wanna be famous some day. I want to take the picture that no one else could take. I want...I want... Well, listen to this.

[HANNAH takes KATE by the hand and sits her down on the couch. THEY sit on either side of ELAINE who remains in HER tableau.]

I carry my camera with me everywhere I go.

Kate:
Everywhere?

Hannah:
Everywhere. To the movies, to the market, to the park...

Kate:
Really?

Hannah:
Yes. It’s always hanging off my left shoulder, right here (HANNAH pats HER left hip) so that I’m always ready to just...

[SHE makes the motions of grabbing the camera with HER right hand, bending down and taking a picture.]

Kate:
You’re a maniac, that’s what you are.

Hannah:
I’m a photojournalist. Well, I’m going to be. A big one. ‘Cause one day...one day, I’m going to be walking around with my camera and...and I’m gonna look up into the sky at an airplane...

Kate:
An airplane.

Hannah:
Yeah. It’ll just be flying there, peacefully, when all of a sudden, it’ll explode. (SHE stands and paces, excitedly) Right in mid-air, Kate. It’ll just explode, falling to the ground in a cloud of black, curling smoke and red, red flame. All the pieces of the machine falling through the air like metallic rain before hitting the ground: bang! bang! smash!
Kate:

Oh god, that's horrible.

Hannah:

And I'll be right there. Getting down on one knee, or standing up tall on my toes, and shooting off a whole roll of film before it crashes and then another one right after it does hit the ground.

Kate:

(Laughing nervously) Oh, Hannah, that's just horrible.

Hannah:

No. It's not. That's what photojournalism's all about.

Kate:

Well, then, I don't know what I think of photojournalism. You should...knock on wood or something. You shouldn't wish for such things. It could be bad luck.

Hannah:

Oh, my dear lady, you haven't heard the worst of it. When it crashes? In my dreams? The mayor's on it. Or...even better, the president!

Kate:

(Shrieking) Hannah!

Hannah:

(Sitting down again, SHE is smiling comfortably at KATE) See, that's the difference between you and me. You want to be the woman who married Raymond Mannery and loved him until he was a wrinkly old man. I want to be the woman who took the photo of the plane exploding, when all the other guys got were pictures of the workers cleaning up the wreckage.

Kate:

Oh, but...

Hannah:

That's gonna be me one day. I'll be the one. I promise you.

Kate:

(Smiling) Well, I believe it, then. (Shaking HER head) I'm sure it will be.

[As HANNAH relaxes into her previous posture beside ELAINE, KATE rises and re-enters HER "kitchen."]
I was shocked, but a part of me wished I had her drive. And I believed her, too. She was going to be a famous photojournalist and I was going to be the woman who loved and cared for Raymond Mannery....In all actuality, I was going to be the plane. I just didn’t know it then.

[Lights dim on KA'TE and rise over ELAINE and HANNAH who continue to sort through photographs, plaques, and the like.]

Elaine:

Oh, Hannah! This is a great one.

Hannah:

Not to be an egotist, but I think so too. Would you believe it never got published?

Elaine:

You’re kidding me. Why the hell not? Was your photo-ed crazy?

Hannah:

No, he was cute!

Elaine:

What?

Hannah:

For the first six years of my career, my photo-ed was this gorgeous, intelligent, completely intimidating man named Tony Galeano. I was ridiculously and hopelessly in love with him.

Elaine:

Did you have an affair with him?

Hannah:

Are you kidding? I barely even talked to him!

Elaine:

So, what happened with the photo?

Hannah:

I was too scared to give him the film.

Elaine:

Too scared to give him the film?!

Hannah:

I thought he’d hate it.
Elaine:
How could he? It’s an amazing shot! It’s...

Hannah:
He’d hated everything else I brought in. I got to be too scared to show him anything that I didn’t shoot on assignment.

Elaine:
That’s awful. Was he that fussy?

Hannah:
No, not at all. I was just annoying. The first two years of my job there, and the first two years of my never-ending crush, I brought him film just so I could look at him. It was crap most of the time and none of it ever made it into publication.

Elaine:
So, by the time you got something really good, you were too intimidated and embarrassed to show him.

Hannah:
That’s right.

Elaine:
Kind of like I was when I first got this job?

Hannah:
You were intimidated by Mike? That’s ridiculous.

Elaine:
No. I was intimidated by you.

Hannah:
By me!

Elaine:
Yeah, by you! Pulitzer Prize winner, legend in her own time...Hell! My teacher in college used your portfolio like a stinkin’ textbook!

Hannah:
How embarrassing.

Elaine:
I should be so embarrassed someday.
Hannah:
Hey, you haven’t done so badly. There are quite a few little plaques with your name on them in the hallway.

Elaine:
Yeah, but that was all the luck of the assignment. I didn’t just catch anything great like you did.

Hannah:
So, is that why you decided to become a photographer? The thrill of the catch?

Elaine:
Yes and no. On one hand, the glory of the catch is something I wanted. On the other hand, well, it was you.

Hannah:
Elaine, that’s very flattering, but we’re friends now. You don’t have to patronize me.

Elaine:
But it was you. Before I saw your name and your shots, I didn’t know what photojournalism was. I thought it was about taking pictures of the annual firemen’s carwash, and cute kids playing in the snow. Then I saw what you did.

Hannah:
That’s sweet, but...

Elaine:
I’m serious. You...all right fine. I wanted to become a photojournalist ‘cause taking pictures was all I liked to do and because it pissed me off that almost every single by-line was followed by a man’s name and that all their pictures were always of very pretty girls doing very pretty, very delicate things. Then you came along and got famous changing it all and I wanted to be a part of that. There.

Hannah:
That’s quite a mouthful. But, I know. If I saw one more picture of a pretty white girl playing with her children...

Elaine:
...Or making a quilt in the park during her pregnancy...

Hannah:
Yes. Or baking fresh bread in her kitchen...I thought I might explode. We got into this for the same reasons.
Elaine:
Yeah, but there are a couple big differences between us.

Hannah:
Okay. I’ll give you age and experience, but that’s it.

Elaine:
And recognition.

Hannah:
Your time will come.

Elaine:
And something else.

Hannah:
What’s that?

Elaine:
I want to be the cute, intelligent, intimidating editor who scares the shit out of my male interns. You don’t.

Hannah:
No, you’re right. I don’t and you, Elaine Handley, you’re too wild for me to handle. Who’d of thought you, with all your dreams of excitement, would want to spend your days locked in a dusty office?

Elaine:
I do. Sure, I want to take some great pictures now, but, later, I want a power job.

Hannah:
You’re a wicked little feminist who doesn’t know what’s good for her.

Elaine:
I want a power job. This paper has never had a woman editor, you know that?

Hannah:
Yes, but I wouldn’t say it’s worth giving up all the good stuff to make it happen.

Elaine:
Good stuff? That depends how you define it.

Hannah:
Shooting!
Elaine:

More money.

Hannah:

The rush of adrenaline you get when you’ve gotten a good catch.

Elaine:

Day shifts, Hannah. Solid, unchangeable, day shifts!

Hannah:

(Incredulous) Shooting!

Elaine:

Power.

Hannah:

To paraphrase a good friend...power-schmower.

Elaine:

It’s about time a woman had some around here.

Hannah:

Well, all right. I’ll give you that. But, do you want to suffer through all those mundane meetings and telephone conferences....

Elaine:

Yes.

Hannah:

...all so that you can get other photogs’ names in print while yours doesn’t even show up in the publisher’s flag?

Elaine:

It doesn’t?

Hannah:

No. Just the news ed, the advertising guys, and management.

Elaine:

That’s crap.

Hannah:

That’s the way it is.
Elaine:
I’m going to have to change it, that’s all.

Hannah:
You’ll have to marry the publisher to do it.

Elaine:
I should hope not. Wouldn’t want to horn in on a friend’s territory.

Hannah:
What’s that supposed to mean?

Elaine:
You dated him, didn’t you? Our esteemed publisher?

Hannah:
He took me out to dinner a few times.

Elaine:
That’s all?

Hannah:
Well, you don’t see a ring on this finger, do you?

Elaine:
No. Why not?

Hannah:
We didn’t relate. He was...

Elaine:
No. I mean in general. How come you never got married?

Hannah:
Too busy, too caught up, and too damn happy in my career to even think about it.

Elaine:
Yeah. That’s how I feel.

Hannah:
Oh, you’re young yet. You’ve got some time.

Elaine:
Not really. I am thirty-two.
Hannah:

I'm not saying you have to be responsible for the survival of the species...populating the world, and all...but there is still time for you to find a companion.

Elaine:

Why do you say that? Do you regret it? Being alone?

Hannah:

No, but you might.

Elaine:

I don't think so. Lust is a much safer emotion. STD's aside. I'll just keep finding cute, young boys to hang out with...and make sure I keep abreast of the latest safe-sex techniques.

Hannah:

Oh yes. I forgot. Condoms can't save you from love.

Elaine:

No they can't. Sex is safe, all precautions taken. It's not emotional. It's not threatening.

Hannah: 

Elaine: 

You control it. I control it.

Elaine: 

How'd you know I was gonna say that?

Hannah:

You've said it before.

Elaine:

Oh.

Hannah:

You've got a regular little safety-net going...I'll give you that much.

Elaine:

Damn right I do! Hell, look what happens to married people. I'm just not risking it.

Hannah:

Risking what?
Elaine:
Look. Look how many people ended up in “Every Two Minutes” by the time you finished it. It’s sick.

[HANNAH begins to walk away, slightly disturbed.]

I’d rather have this career and a few cute young boys than end up in one of your photo stories...no offense. Any day.

Hannah:
It doesn’t happen to everybody. Some people do live “happily ever after” you know.

Elaine:
Yeah? And some people take a career that keeps them too busy to risk that they won’t live “happily ever after.”

Hannah:
No time for pain, uh?

Elaine:
Nope. I don’t want to go through what they did, Hannah. Like...what’s-her-name? Your...uh...your...

Elaine:
...your first subject for that piece.

Hannah:
Kate Mannery.

Elaine:
Yeah. I never remember the names of subjects.

Hannah:
It was Kate. Kate Mannery.

Elaine:
Yeah, well “Kate,” then. I don’t ever want what happened to her to happen to me.

[ELAINE stands up and begins to pace.]

That must’ve scared you out of love. Look at what she went through. All the...

[As the sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER interrupts HER, ELAINE’s comments on love, trust, and wife-abuse are silenced. HER lips move as SHE “discusses” HER passionate ideas about love and hate with HANNAH, but neither the House nor HANNAH can hear HER. ELAINE is at centre stage as the photo story, “Every Two Minutes,” is projected over HER silently.]
HANNAH sits on the couch, pondering her memories. KATE enters with a bowl/cup of soup. SHE places it on the table in front of HANNAH who has pulled an afghan blanket over HER chest. In the name of unity, you might consider having her enter stage left, and take up the mug that was ELAINE’s coffee.

Hannah:

Kate? What makes you do it?

Kate:


Hannah:

But you take care of everybody.

Kate:

That’s my job, isn’t it? As a woman, as Raymond’s wife, as a mother, as a friend...

Hannah:

As a woman?

Kate:

Yes, Hannah...as a woman. Don’t you take care of your own loved ones? It’s just what we do.

Hannah:

It’s what you do. I mean, sure, if someone needed my help, I’d be right there for them, but...

Kate:

But what?

Hannah:

But what you do for Raymond, that’s just far too much.

Kate:

Hannah...now, Ray does a good job; he works hard and...

Hannah:

I think you just don’t know how to relate to people unless they need your help. Unless they’re...

Kate:

And you don’t know how to relate to people unless they’re just like you. (Beat) Eat your soup.
[HANNAH pretends to pick up a camera and take a picture of KATE as SHE hands HER the bowl and spoon.]

Tell me, what’s gonna happen to old Hannah Tress...when she can’t get her clumsy hands and feet to work for her, when she’s old and lonely and scared, and there are no children to look out for her?

Hannah:

She’ll be living high and mighty off the money she made by selling photographs of the most loving, caring, nurturing family she’d ever seen.

Kate:

Oh, and I’ll be so glad to have helped. But really, what about Hannah Tress? She’ll be all alone.

Hannah:

She’ll be fine.

Kate:

No children. No husband. No friends because she scared ‘em all away with her big ideas about feminism and independence? Nobody to keep her company, nobody to take care of her when she’s sick. What are you going to do then?

Hannah:

I’ll call you.

[As ELAINE’s tirade makes itself heard again, lights dim Stage right and the “memories” disappear. By the time ELAINE makes her way back to HANNAH, the afghan, and all associated with it, is gone.]

Elaine:

I mean, it’s just crap! Nobody should have to go through that! The scary thing is, Hannah, she stayed with him after that! He messed her up enough emotionally that she stayed. Took away all her self esteem, made her afraid of the world around her...I could never do that, Hannah. I could never risk that someone could do that to me! Could you?

Hannah:

(Quietly) I don’t know.

Elaine:

What? I know you better than that. You never put yourself in her place because you knew it could happen to you, too.
Hannah:

I never put myself in her place because I’m not like her.

Elaine:

No kidding. You have about as much in common with that woman as Baldwin does with the junky.

[HANNAH does not respond; SHE is in HER own world at this point.]

Hannah?

[The OTHER Woman is silent. ELAINE paces about.]

Come on...I know you’ve got at least one more philosophical debate in you, girl....Hannah?

[Without responding, HANNAH puts HER chin in HER hand and continues to think, unfazed. ELAINE walks away, turning back to look at HER silent friend once before continuing. Stage left, LUCILLE enters, looking about the office, confused. As ELAINE comes to centre stage, HANNAH stands and LUCILLE approaches downstage left.]

Lucille:                Elaine:                Hannah:

Is anybody there?      Is anybody there?      Is anybody there?

[For a moment, the THREE WOMEN are in tableau; HANNAH and LUCILLE mirroring one another, EACH looking in toward the centre of the house. ELAINE stares at HANNAH, frustrated.]

Lights darken over stage. After a very brief moment, a spot appears over HANNAH. LUCILLE and ELAINE remain in tableau.]

Hannah:

You can’t be shy in this job. Can’t hide behind the camera. You have to get in there...all the time...to get the shots you want. And sometimes, it seems less than noble. Standing as an intruder with a crowd of mourners at a funeral, muscling your way through battalions of soldiers to get an image of the cadaver as his dog-tags are being torn off...standing up on top of the jeep to get just the right angle...and you can’t care. You can’t care that they’re all standing around offended by your boldness, by your lack of sympathy. It’s not that you’re numb to them. You’re going to create the sympathy, the warmth, the reality in that image. And you’re going to share it and extend it to all who see it.

[Spot fades on HANNAH and rises on ELAINE.]


Elaine:

When I first started here, fresh out of college, I didn’t know what I was doing...not at all. I kind of treated it like school, you know...find out what the prof wants...give it to him. So I went around asking everybody...Hannah, Jim Baldwin...all of them, “What does Mike want?” They didn’t have any answers but “Good pics,” “Unlikely catches,” “Focused would be nice.” All right. So I messed up my first assignment. I swear it was the camera. Something was wrong with the...well, anyway, not a single one was tight. Every damn frame soft as a beanbag. But, still, I couldn’t give Mike the images he wanted unless I knew what they were. I was so frustrated, I asked him. Marched right into my photo ed’s office and asked him: What kind of images are you looking for?

[Spot fades on Elaine and, this time, rises on Lucille.]

Lucille:

I didn’t really know what I was doing there. Not just in his office, in this career in general. Sure, it’s a great job. Once I stop interning and get something full-time, it’ll be stable, high-paying, exciting. But somewhere inside me I knew it just wasn’t for me. Like every other intern, I had to ask him: “Mike, what kind of images are you looking for?” “I don’t know what I’m looking for,” he said, “but I’ll know when I see it.” Then he paraded me around the hallways. Photographs everywhere. Framed in black, some matted, some not. From the ceiling to the floor, spot news, picture stories, feature shots of women with babies... “Samples,” he said. He must’ve known, though, I considered them “examples.”

[Spot rises on HANNAH.]

Hannah:

I couldn’t do it at first. Lost my first four assignments because I just couldn’t do it. I used to use long lenses.....really long lenses...that way I could get in real tight...without getting in real tight. A good three-hundred could let me stand practically miles away and still get that closed-in intimacy I was expected to get. Sometimes. At first, when I still couldn’t get in...I’d lose the shot. Tony would go crazy.

[HANNAH stops in tableau, but the light does not fade. Another spot rises on ELAINE.]

Elaine:

I figured it out fast. Real fast. If I wanted to be a photojournalist, and not just a photographer...If I wanted to win the Pulitzer...If I wanted to have my portfolio used like a textbook in the schools...If I wanted to be a photojournalist like Hannah Tress...I had to get in there. In there. You gotta get right into the middle of it all. Look for facades, wait till they fall. (SHE gives an energetic and inspired “Grunt”) Nailed your ass!
Lucille:

When we got to the end of the hallway, there was a picture of Hannah. Young, smiling, confident as she accepted her Pulitzer Prize. It was a...nice shot. Tony Galeano standing beside her, prouder than a first-time father. He had his hand on her back as ...I dunno...I was going to say the M.C., but it was probably some relative of Pulitzer himself...gave her the award. In the background...projected from behind on a screen...was the photo that won her this tribute. You couldn't see it very clearly in this picture, but I knew the shot. All too well. A middle class living room. A broken woman. A man...being taken away by the police...and... and a little girl, crying and screaming and pointing. I ran to the bathroom to throw up. Why'd I choose this career? It was obviously not for me. Too scared, too shy, too angry. I know I could never wait for the masks to fall. I know I could never get in there like that.

[Lucille looks down, pensively and stops, in tableau.]

Hannah:

I remember the day it all changed. I wasn't shooting for the paper. I was making some extra money on the sly shooting local rock 'n' roll bands for promotion. This one band, I can't remember what they were called, insisted that they didn't want to pose in my makeshift basement studio. I had to shoot them live. In a crowd. I didn't want to be in the way, but I had to get the shots. First I started out, the way I always did, far away...in the middle of the dance floor, shooting real close into the singer's face with a two-hundred. A girl in chartreuse hip-huggers elbowed me and the camera dropped to the floor. When the back opened all the film was exposed and I was livid. I reloaded the film...the whole time scared it would happen again...and looked up at the stage. Suddenly, the band...well, it was just so exuberant, so alive, so animated...I had to get in there. And I did. All my nervousness disappeared. It was as if my viewfinder made everyone else in that room vanish. I looked through and even the subjects, they were barely there...as people, I mean. All of a sudden they were just subjects...endless, animated possibilities for an amazing photo opportunity. My favourite shot from that day was one...God, I was right in the singer's face...you could see the sweat whipping off his head and the spit splattering the microphone. I still love that catch. And I was never shy again.

[The THREE WOMEN become animated once again. HANNAH and LUCILLE are looking about their rooms, ELAINE is approaching HANNAH.]
[Lights dim and HANNAH's "memories," once again, come to life. Stage right, HANNAH picks up her camera and hangs it over HER shoulder.]

Hannah:

Hello? Hello? Is anybody there? Is anybody home?

[SHE freezes when SHE hears the voices, shocked.]

Raymond:

I said I don’t want her here anymore!..Do you hear me? You and your...

[A muffled struggle makes itself heard throughout the House.]

Hannah:

Oh God!

[SHE rushes offstage with HER camera.]

Kate:

Raymond! No!

Raymond:

Bitch!

[Hear the sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER as the image of Raymond with HIS fist raised is projected stage rear]

Kate:

(Crying and pleading) No! Raymond! No!

[Hear the sound of a child calling out "Mommy? Mommy!" before starting to cry HERSELF]

Raymond:

This is my home! This is my home!...

[Scuffles as something heavy is flung to the ground. Raymond grunts]

Kate:

Raymond stop! Please!

Child:

Mommeee!!!!

Hannah:

Lucy! Call the police! Now!

[Hear the sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER relentlessly thundering through the House.]
Elaine:
I sure wish I'd gotten that catch.

Lucille:
I just don't think it was right.

["Every Two Minutes" is projected over the stage, over LUCILLE and over ELAINE. Before the final image is presented...]

Police Officer:
(With the sound of handcuffs being slapped on) You have the right to remain silent.

Raymond:
This is my home!

Police Officer:
If you give up that right, anything you say can be used against you in a court of...

[Sounds of the child calling “Mommy! Mommy!”]

Kate: Child:

(Screaming) Raymond! (Screaming) You hurt her!! You hurt my momm...eee!

[Hear the sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER as the final image is projected. As image fades, and lights rise, KATE appears downstage right. She watches the image fade away before speaking. Stage left, LUCILLE sits down at a desk to examine the day’s assignment sheet and ELAINE, stage right, perches herself on the edge of the sofa and takes out a note pad. As ELAINE skims through the book and LUCILLE begins to write out the day’s assignments, KATE turns to face the House.]

Kate:
We were only able to have one child. At least, that’s what he believed when he kept trying and trying to have another baby and the pills...the ones he didn’t know about...were stopping us from conceiving again. It wasn’t that I didn’t want another child; it was that...well, after Ray lost his tool-and-die business...that was when Lucy was one-and-a-half...he started drinking. A lot. I kept thinking he would stop, but months started to go by, and then years, and then Lucy was nine and...it was too late. I was too old and Ray was still too...miserable.

[Picking up a telephone, ELAINE dials and waits for an answer]

Despite it all, we were in love. And I wasn’t going to walk out on him just because he had a problem. No. He wasn’t always violent....
[As Kate silently mourns HER happiness, ELAINE gets an answer on the phone]

Elaine:

Good morning. I’m Elaine Handley, a photographer with the Times Herald Tribune. I’d like to speak with Lieutenant Diehl please...Hello. Lieutenant...Yes...mmmmm-hmmm...I’d like to see if I couldn’t set up that photo shoot for this weekend...Yes, it is long overdue...Not enough people know exactly what it is you do down there at the coast guard...Actually, I’d prefer to be on a boat...No, no, I won’t be in the way. Saturday, two o’clock? I’ll see you then. (SHE hangs up the phone) Now all I need is a drunken boater. (Flipping through HER note pad) One down, two to go.

[SHE picks up the phone, again, and dials]

Kate:

I really never thought it would go as far as it did. I mean, they charged him with battery. In all his years of drinking, he had never done anything like that...it was just a few little slaps, maybe a shove. But not...battery. (With difficulty) And so, I forgave him...for the most part. At the very least, I had to be more forgiving than the police were.

Lucille:

Oh great. Mayor’s daughter’s accordion recital.

Kate:

A wife should be. After all, for the most part, we were really happy. It wasn’t until the anger and the...

[SHE touches the spot on HER cheek where the bruises so often made themselves apparent.]

I couldn’t think of myself though. His problems were bigger than mine. And, of course, I had to keep the child in mind.

Lucille:

Think they could give me anything more exciting than that? An accordion recital?

[LUCILLE picks up a telephone and dials. Facing centre stage, SHE mirrors ELAINE as SHE, too, makes another call. Stage rear, the image of a crying KATE comforting HER daughter is projected. KATE smiles gently]

Kate:

My Lucy. She gave me the strength to stay. And I had to. Marriage is, after all, not a selfish thing and, if I ran off trying to escape my own problems, our wedding wouldn’t have meant a thing. I had to be there for him. For both of them.
Lucille:

Hello. I'm not sure I've got the right number. Is this the Conservatory?...Yes. Good. My name is Lucille Robson; I'm a photography intern at the Tribune. I'll be at the recital tonight and I just wondered.

[Lucille's conversation is not heard by the audience. Across the stage, Elaine, too, has her own call answered]

Elaine:

Hello. Is this Mrs. Storey? Hi. I'm calling from the Tribune. I was just wondering how your little boy has been doing since the accident....

Kate:

She was only nine. And she needed a father. I couldn't take that away from her. Not just like that. Not because I was too selfish to stay by his side and fight through the bad times.

[Elaine and Lucille complete their calls before hanging up.]

Elaine: Lucy:

All right. I'll see you then. Okay. I'll see you tonight.

[Again mirroring one another, the two women first, hang up, and then pick up their phones to dial]

Kate:

My mother always said: "You have to look through the clouds to see the rainbow." And she did, so why couldn't I? Times with my father weren't always easy, and she stayed. For us, the children, I suppose.

[While Kate ponders over her memories, Elaine and Lucille get answers to their calls.]

Elaine: Lucille:

Hello. I'm Elaine Handley, Good morning. My name is a photographer from the Tribune? Lucille Robson, and I'm I'm calling because... calling from the Tribune?

Kate:

And we were grateful. She once told me, my mother, that "A child without a father is like a room without a floor." That was why she had to stay. Just as I did...and look through the clouds to find the rainbow. 'Cause you couldn't, very well, have one without the other.
Elaine: Thanks very much. I'll be there.

Lucille: Well, thank you anyway.

[THEY hang up THEIR phones and ELAINE begins to make HER way toward HER colleague, stage left.]

Kate: You can’t have perfection without imperfection...Beauty without ugly...Family harmony without discord. (Wistful) Family harmony. It’s not like the story books. More like the clouds than the rainbows, really.

[KATE falls silent, and sits in HER chair, rocking nervously, but gently, back and forth. Leaning back against a desk, ELAINE begins HER speech. Although SHE is speaking to LUCILLE, SHE delivers HER monologue to the HOUSE.]

Elaine: My mother used to talk about “family harmony,” like that. Day and night. That was all we heard. How to be a good wife; how to be a good mother; how to promote “family harmony.” So, there it was. Harmony. The screaming-loud arguments, playing themselves out, oh-so-subtly, over the din of children playing, calling out “I love you, Daddy,” hoping he would just stop his damn screaming. To me, “family harmony” sounds like a bloody bag of hammers hitting the ground after falling seventeen stories. To my mother, it sounded like “Stand by your man.” I bet that’s what it sounded like to your mother, uh?

. [SHE lowers HER eyes for a moment and walks to a spot downstage]

Lucille: Yeah. I think she tried to justify it as God’s will, or something ridiculous like that...you know...(in imitation) He punishes and He pleases...and from pain we learn.

Elaine: Oh yeah. I got that crap from my mother day-in-and-day-out. I always think of her at times like this. Me, trying to set up photo stories, hoping a drunken boater will smash into a dock, or that a plane will explode, or that I could get the catch of a nine year old paraplegic in therapy. She wouldn’t have liked this at all. She worked so hard to find the good things in life, my mother. Willing to search ‘em out so that she could use them to escape my father’s yelling, screaming, sexist, tyrannic ways. I like my way better; it keeps me far away from that kind of idealism—and it keeps me focused.

Lucille: Let me guess. Unlike Kate Mannery.
Elaine:
You got it. That lady makes me embarrassed to be a woman.

Lucille:

That's a bit harsh, don't you think?

Elaine:
Let me put it this way. At least my mother had the smarts to get out.

Lucille:
And maybe "that lady," as you call her, believed in the family so strongly that she had to stay.

Elaine:
Would you stay?

Lucille:

No.

Elaine:
Maybe that lady was an idiot. Hannah did a good thing putting those pictures in front of the world. Maybe it changed some woman's life...somewhere.

Lucille:

(Quietly) Yeah. Maybe. I just think...

Elaine:

Think of this. You're a photojournalist now. And you got more important things to think about than Hannah's thirteen year-old abused women story. Go out, get your camera in their faces, and get some images that'll make a statement.

Lucille:

In their faces...

Elaine:

Yeah. If you're lucky, you'll get a shot that'll keep people thinking and talking and debating for thirteen years. Something hard, something honest, something exciting.

Lucille:

Exciting. Like a man beating his wife.

Elaine:

Oh come on! How do you know the story didn't help them to realize...
Lucille:
They thought Hannah was on their side. They didn’t know she was just...

Elaine:

What? Exploiting them? Come off it!

Lucille:
They relied on her.

Elaine:
They didn’t depend on Hannah. She was just a photographer.

Lucille:
Exactly. But they thought she was a friend.

Elaine:
Oh God! You’re starting to sound just like her.

Lucille:
She was the friend who saw it all, the one who could have used her camera to bash him in the bloody head and stop him from hurting her.

Elaine:
Come off it, Lucille. She...

Lucille:
Instead, she used the camera to get a Pulitzer. That woman and that child were all alone.

Elaine:
My mother and her children weren’t alone. And they knew it because the press published photos like Hannah’s, told stories like the one she told.

Lucille:
And where’d it get them?

Elaine:
It woke them up, for God’s sake. Got them outa there!

Lucille:
(Quietly) She left him?

Elaine:
Yes.
Lucille:

Did he hit her?

Elaine:

Sometimes.

Lucille:

My mother stayed.

Elaine:

Oh God, hon. No wonder you're so obsessed with this.

Lucille:

Yeah. No wonder.

[ELAINE and LUCILLE fall into a tableau: LUCILLE is sitting in a chair, ELAINE is standing over HER with a concerned expression on HER face, one hand on HER chin, the other on LUCILLE's shoulder]

Kate:

Lucy was too little to really understand. God help me, I was glad. Six months later, it was like it never happened for her. She and Raymond, playing on the swings at the new house, eating canned peaches with whipped cream, smiling and laughing together. Like it should be. I made sure she never saw the pictures, and the memory...well, it was like it just went away for her. For me, even though we had a new house, on a new side of town, with new friends who couldn't recognize me as the woman who...well, those memories were still alive for me. Even though I had a new kitchen, all white, with a ceiling fan, and a big bay window, I never could forget the way those blue tiles felt against the side of my head. Even now, with the memories mostly faded...sometimes, just sometimes, I feel like I still live...here.

[SHE runs her hand over the counter, sadly, before sitting in the chair and, nervously, fingering HER dress.]

When he...when he had the relapse, I just didn't know what to do. I was so scared it would all come flowing back to her. It was only about a year-and-a-half later, but she was older then. I hoped not too old to forget. And...and I thought I might explode when that bastard...yes, when that bastard hit my baby. She didn't mean to spill the maple syrup. I couldn't talk any sense into him, though, and he...he hit her so hard that....I just picked her up and ran right out the door. We just ran and ran, me and my baby, unconscious in my arms.

[SHE stands and quickly walks a few feet, remembering]

There was a pay phone at the park and...I didn't know who to call...we just needed to go somewhere to keep warm. I had Hannah's card in my purse and I remembered
what she said about if we ever needed her. So I called. And we waited.
Shivering cold in the late autumn we waited. And then, finally, when the sun started
getting low, we went back home.

[Again, she strolls through her “kitchen”]

Raymond made us tea. With honey. And we...we looked at the sad, repentant look in
his eyes and silently agreed to make believe it didn’t happen. Family harmony, you
see. We just had to move on from there.

[Exit KATE.]

Elaine:

(To Lucille) They never got divorced?

(LUCILLE shakes her head)

How do you cope with it now?

Lucille:

I don’t really. How ‘bout you?

Elaine:

I just thank God she left him.

Lucille:

I hated my mother for staying.

Elaine: Lucille:

I’m always afraid I’m turning into her. I’m always afraid I’m turning into her.

[THEY look at each other for a moment, surprised, before turning away for a brief
silence]

Elaine:

(Happily changing the topic) Watcha shooting today, anyway?

Lucille:

(Relieved) Very funny. Almost as if you didn’t know.

Elaine:

Kite-flying challenge.

Lucille:

Yes. Are you and Hannah responsible for the accordion recital on my assignment list,
too?
Elaine:

Yeah. Why? You don’t like it?

Lucille:

(Sarcastic) No. I love it.

Elaine:

Too much excitement for you maybe?

Lucille:

Absolutely. I’m gonna have to get a faster motor drive. Just to make sure I don’t miss any of those thrilling inhalations (motions as if pulling an accordion apart) and exhalations (HER movement is graceful and rhythmical as SHE pushes her hands back together).

Elaine:

That’s right. You should try to sneak a tape recorder in, too.

Lucille:

Why’s that?

Elaine:

Bootlegs of ole “Debutante Debbie” doin’ “King of the Faeries” could be worth a fortune someday.

Lucille:

“King of the Faeries?” You’re kidding.

Elaine:

No, but you wish I was, don’t ya?

Lucille:

Yes, I do. Hey, are your psychologist pics going in this week?

Elaine:

Who knows? They keep bumping them. “Tomorrow,” Mike tells me, “today I’ve just got to do the one on the retired pianist.” Then the next day, he says, “Tomorrow, today I’ve got to do the sunset over the sunflower field...”

Lucille:

I’d want to strangle him.
Elaine:

Yes, you would. But, of course, that wouldn’t be too good for your budding career.

Lucille:

Oh yeah. Budding.

Elaine:

Come on! Give yourself a break. You’re young, you’re interning at a damn good paper. What’s next for Lucille Robson? No doubt a full-time photo job. Then a spot news award, then a Pulitzer Prize, then...

Lucille:

Oh no, I understand I’m better suited to a nice career in, say...social work?

Elaine:

What?

Lucille:

I heard you the other day, talking to Hannah. “The girl shouldn’t even be in this field. We’re not social workers...”

Elaine:

Oh. That.

Lucille:

Mmmmm-hmmm.

Elaine:

I was just...Lucille, you were philosophizing the whole situation. It was making Hannah crazy. And I can’t stand working with Hannah when she’s crazy.

Lucille:

It may have made her crazy, but it made her ask herself the question.

Elaine:

Good, kid. What’s that question going to do but take a great photographer and turn her into a philosophizing incompetent?

Lucille:

So, I’m a philosophizing incompetent now?
Elaine:
No, no. You just think too much. You just have to tell the stories — not wonder if
you have the right to. Don’t be so intense about it.

Lucille:
I just wanted to talk to her about...

Elaine:
I know. “Every Two Minutes....” You’re too close to that one. You’re better off
leaving well-enough alone.

Lucille:
Aren’t we all? It’s just that...

Elaine:
Enough. No more photo story debates. Thirteen years later, that thing’s more thought
about than ever. No more.

Lucille:
But I have to...

Elaine:
None.

Lucille:
But you don’t...

Elaine:
Nada. Now. Tell me what picture story you’re gonna go after this week. Tell me
what it’ll look like, what it’ll tell, what emotions it’ll evoke.

Lucille:
I can’t do that.

Elaine:
Why not?

Lucille:
Because I haven’t found a story yet.

Elaine:
My point exactly. How are we gonna prove we’re better than the men around this joint
unless we get out there and find some stories.
Lucille:
Is that why we do this? To prove we’re better than the men?

Elaine:
Oh, I’m not getting into that right now. You don’t go for it? Then ignore it.

Lucille:
All right.

Elaine:
I’m just trying to tell ya: you got to get out there and look for some strong images!

Lucille:
I’ve got no time to go out image-scouting with the boys today. Got to shoot a kite flying challenge and an accordion concert, you know.

Elaine:
Oh yeah. (Laughing) We really did you in today, uh? All that excitement you’ve got coming to you.

Lucille:
Hmmm. All that excitement.

Elaine:
Well, look on the bright side. I promise you won’t have to finish your internship shooting stuff like this. We’ll give you something better.

Lucille:
Good. Because I don’t think I could take another two weeks of this.

Elaine:
It’s good, though, that you’re getting used to it. Not every day’s chock-filled with excitement in this business.

Lucille:
I know.

Elaine:
We were just trying to get you used to the realities of the career.

[Enter HANNAH. SHE is exhilarated, still wearing her photo-vest, and holding a handful of film canisters]
Hannah:
Realities of what career?

Elaine:
Short-order cooking, of course.

Lucille:
Hi Hannah.

Hannah:
(To LUCILLE) Hi. (To ELAINE) Very funny, you.

Elaine:
You got that look on your face like you got a good catch. Watcha got there?

Hannah:
Actually, I got beans. Just a shot of a burned-out apartment, but...

Lucille:
A burned-out apartment?

Hannah:
Don’t look at me like I’m crazy. It did burn down today.

Elaine:
Anything powerful?

Hannah:
Yeah, oh yeah. Tenant crying, fire-fighter trying to comfort her. Gutted building in the background. It’s nice.

Elaine:
Problem, though. Mike says they’re all set for tomorrow...once they get the kites and the debutante!

Hannah:
(To Lucille) Oh yeah. What did you think of today’s assignment list?

Lucille:
It’s great.

Elaine:
Yeah. Great. She loves it.
Hannah:
I can tell.

Lucille:
No, really. It’s okay. Like Elaine says—not every day can be chock full of excitement.

Elaine:
But I’ve got a feeling today can. (Following HANNAH about the office) Watcha got there, Hannah? You got that look.

Hannah:
Yeah?

Elaine:
What is it? I know you got a lead on something good.

Hannah:
I’ve got a great lead.

Elaine:
Well, what is it?

Hannah:
You know the bartender down at Cooper’s?

Lucille:
Which one? Afternoons, or evenings?

Hannah:
Evenings.

Elaine:
Ron?

Hannah:
Yes.

Lucille:
Is he the one who always wears those collarless shirts with the ruffles?

Elaine:
You got him. King of the Faeries.
Hannah:

Oh God, I feel terrible for laughing at that.

Elaine:

Why? It was funny. (To Lucille) We were talking about your accordion recital and...

Hannah:

‘Cause he’s HIV positive. That’s why.

Lucille:

Oh no. Is he sick?

[HANNAH is silent.]

Elaine:

Well, is he?

Hannah:

Yes. Very. I never noticed it before, but now that I know... he just looks awful.

Lucille:

How long? How long does he have...

Hannah:

He thinks only about six months.

Elaine:

Sad. Sad. But, he’s going to let you do it? (To LUCILLE) I don’t mean to sound cold, but...

Hannah:

Yes. I start tomorrow afternoon. I’m going with him to his doctor and my extended photo essay officially begins.

Elaine:

Hannah! Congratulations!

Hannah:

Thanks. I’m really excited about it. I know I can do him justice.

Elaine:

Really it’s just wonderful. I...
Lucille:

(Angry) Let me guess. You...wish you could “get that catch?” The two of you make me sick! Congratulations?! You found a man dying of an incurable disease...Wonderful! A battered woman? Even better! Tell me, what would you consider absolutely fabulous? Maybe a murder-suicide where the perp invites you to take pictures? I can’t believe the two of you!

Elaine:

Kid! Calm down!

Lucille:

It just makes me sick!

Hannah:

Lucille, believe me. It’s not that Elaine and I aren’t sensitive...

Lucille:

Oh yeah. You’re sensitive, all right.

Elaine:

You know, maybe you should have been a social worker.

Lucille:

Maybe you should have been a mortician. Boy! Just imagine! Then every minute of your day could be this exhilarating!

Elaine:

It’s a tough career, cookie. We have to deal with these things everyday.

Lucille:

Deal with them? You mean look for them. Got to get that great catch, you know!

Hannah:

Come on, guys. Elaine, mellow out. Lucille, she’s just trying to tell you...

Lucille:

If I can’t stand the heat, get out of the kitchen? I just...

Hannah:

No...that these are stories that have to be told.

Lucille:

I know. But, do you have to be so damn happy to tell them?
Hannah:

We're not happy about them...

Lucille:

Did they congratulate you then, Hannah? Right away? Did you go dancing into the office and say: "I got it! I got a shot of a man beating the hell out of his wife!"? Did they congratulate you then?

Elaine:

(To HANNAH) You'll have to forgive her. She's slightly obsessed with this one.

Lucille:

You two going out for a drink now? To celebrate? That Ronald Fine...oh, excuse me, your "King of the Faeries"...is dying of AIDS? Cheers.

Hannah:

Lucille, you know...I understand what you're feeling. And so does Elaine. We all go through it, but you have to find a balance. Sometimes a story that's too horrible to deal with gets ignored.

Lucille:

I know, I know....and these are stories that have to be told.

Hannah:

Yes. You know that.

Elaine:

Shit! If you didn't think you could handle it...

[SHE is silenced by the glares shot at HER by HANNAH and LUCILLE.]

Lucille:

I can "handle" anything! You've got no idea about the shit I've "handled" this far! What I can't deal with is your unrelenting blindness and bitterness! Has it ever dawned on you that you should...I don't know...take your goddamn pictures from the inside out?

Elaine:

We do. If we didn't care...

Lucille:

Oh really. You actually care what happens to Ronald Fine, dying of AIDS, or are you just interested in getting a topical, powerful photo essay out of him before he goes?
Elaine:

Lucille...

Lucille:

Oh, and then we can celebrate. Yeah. A few drinks, maybe a party with balloons, but...but what about me?

Hannah:

It has nothing to do with you. It's just a job. I can't...

Lucille:

Yeah, and while you're out celebrating, does it ever dawn on you to think about them? The man whose life is being flushed down the bloody toilet, the girl and her mother waiting all day for you in the park...

Hannah:

What? How do you know about that? How do you know I was supposed to meet them at the park that day?

[For a moment, there is silence. HANNAH looks away, and then the sound of the struggle, of the screaming wife, the terrified child makes itself heard]

Kate: Child:

(Screaming) Raymond!

(Screaming) You hurt her!! You hurt my momm...eee!

[The sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER accompanies the projection of the final image as the lights on stage begin to fade]

Hannah:

Lucy? (No answer) Lucy? (Silence) It was you. I...I...I don't know what to say. I'm sorry.

[As HANNAH speaks these last lines, SHE retreats toward HER darkroom and collapses on top of HER stool. Lights are out as the memory of the CHILD echoes in her head once again.]

Lucy:

(Screaming) You hurt her!! You hurt my momm...eee!

[For a moment, the red safe-light shines down on HANNAH whose arms are cradling HER head in agony]

* Blackout *
Act Two

[The stage is dark, but for the light the red safe light shines down on HANNAH. SHE is in HER darkroom which is now cluttered with photographic paper. KATE, in silhouette (like the other characters), is in HER kitchen. LUCILLE is in the living area and ELAINE sits silently in the THT offices.

HANNAH’s work is desperate, a chance for HER to escape the implications of HER life, HER photos, LUCILLE’s anger. HER actions, in the darkroom, are not realistic, but rhythmic, in response to LUCILLE’s accusations.]

HANNAH is bent over the enlarger and we can hear the HUM of its TIMER as SHE dodges the image, shaking HER hands under the light and blocking the paper from exposure. When the enlarger turns off, LUCILLE interjects.]

Lucille:

How? How could you do that to us?

[HANNAH begins again, immediately, trying to distract HERSELF. Again, between exposures...]

Didn’t you know she was in enough pain?

[HANNAH shakes her head, denying LUCILLE’s words, and continues to work more desperately. HER responses are more justifications to HERSELF than actual statements to LUCILLE.]

He beat her because of you, you know. You! He didn’t want you there!...

Hannah:

It wasn’t me! I didn’t create that violence.

[Now, HANNAH begins to move the first print through the developing trays and a blurry image of KATE’s bruised face is projected stage rear.]

Lucille:

You pushed him over the edge....

Hannah:

He was hurting her long before I came around.

[Moving through the trays, the projection becomes more focused.]

Lucille:

But you let us down.
[HANNAH continues to work. As the second print reveals itself in projection, the bruise on KATE’s face is lighter.]

Humiliated my mother in front of the whole world!...

[Again, the bruise is even lighter, and parts of KATE’s face are absent from the print.]

And what about me?!

[In this final printing, KATE’s face has disappeared, leaving only her blouse, the part of HER arm that reached up to cover the bruise, and the background.]

Technical Note: For the purpose of projection, this effect will require multiple slides of the various photographs printed from the same negative.

[When the final image is projected, it is large and overpowering in the darkness. LUCILLE, KATE, and HANNAH, respond to it.]

Kate:  
Hannah:  
Lucille:

(Rising from chair)  (Coming forward)  (Facing HANNAH)
You can’t take that You can’t take that You can’t take
away from me! away from me! that away from me!

Kate:

One smack. One bruise. One....(sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER), and it’s all gone. Everything. My self-esteem, my sense of security, my...

Hannah:

Pride. I’m proud of what I do. I’m proud of my award and I’m glad to have been the woman who took an ugly secret and made people talk about it. I did a good thing and nobody can take that away from me.

Kate:

Until the day we moved, there was no sunshine in our house. None. No sunlight, no view of the old weeping willow tree on the boulevard, no seeing the children walking hand-in-hand with their mothers down the street. We shut ourselves in.

Lucille:

She kept me out of school for a week. I didn’t know why.

Kate:

I had to do it. After the pictures were published, everybody knew.
Lucille:

All I knew was that there was a sign on the lawn, all my dolls and books in boxes, and...and a new school, with new friends. Friends who didn’t look at me funny because their mothers had told them to “be kind. Lucy has a hard life.”

Kate:

Everyone had seen the photo story.

Hannah:

No! It wasn’t my right; it was my obligation. As a photojournalist, it’s my job to document oppression in every and any form.

Kate:

We moved just in time. We were getting sick and tired of looking at the sun-faded flowers on the curtains.

Lucille:

I didn’t know why or what we were hiding. I didn’t know about your pictures. I didn’t know that my mother’s life had been turned completely upside down and...

Kate:

My happiness and my privacy.

Hannah:

My career.

Lucille:

My reality.

Kate: Hannah: Lucille:

You can’t take that You can’t take that You can’t take
away from me! away from me! that away from me!

[As KATE speaks, LUCILLE and HANNAH move warily toward ELAINE and the THT desks. THEIR conversation is mostly muted and improvised, but it is clear to the house that it is the same debate. With gesture, THEY accuse, proclaim, give up, and fall silent with frustration.]

Kate:

I thought it was a good idea, keeping it from her. She was too little to have to deal with all that hurt. And, of course, she didn’t know anything about the photographs. She thought Hannah was in the house to take pictures of her...because she was so
beautiful. She didn’t know about newspapers, and photo stories and facades. She just lived them. I kept the curtains drawn for a while.

Lucille:

(To ELAINE) What I don’t understand, is why you think it’s so noble.

Elaine:

Noble is the wrong word. Necessary, Lucille, it’s necessary.

Hannah:

It was the kind of story that could open people’s eyes, help them to know they are not alone, and that might even help to get them out of a similarly bad situation.

Kate:

It was easier than you’d think, keeping the secret. I told her she had just had a bad dream. Convinced her of it. And life went on, I suppose, because she wanted to be convinced. What she thought she remembered, when she remembered, I denied. “It was just a dream, honey.” It wasn’t something for her to have to deal with. She needed bright sunny days, a carousel ride...rainbows.

Lucille:

But it wasn’t your right!

Kate:

Soon it was all gone. Her father came back from...from his business trip...that was where I told her he’d gone...And, everything was good again. We were a family.

Hannah:

Put yourself in my place, Lucille...

Lucille:

Oh! Couldn’t you have put yourself in her place?

Kate:

We found it easier to go on if we just pretended it never happened. After he died, sure I thought about the bad times, the ones we never talked about, but...

Elaine:

Her pictures mesmerized the whole nation. Made women everywhere see that they weren’t alone. Gave them the courage to escape. It was a good thing, Lucille.

Kate:

But, in the grand scheme of things, they just didn’t matter. I was his wife. I was supposed to stay by his side and love him...for better or for worse. And I did. So, I
willingly forgot. Buried the memories under old flowered curtains and old clothes in the attic. They just didn’t fit us anymore.

[Lights dim on KATE as she falls silently into HER chair and attention is turned, once again, to the THREE women.]

Elaine:
This is exhausting.

Lucille:
I’m sorry. It’s just...just that I need to work through this.

Elaine:
I appreciate that, but...

Lucille:
I can’t do it alone.

Hannah:
We’re photojournalists. It’s our job to document reality and hold the images I capture up to the world as they are...

Lucille:
Symbolic of the world around them.

Hannah:
...symbolic of the world around them.

Hannah:
(Embarrassed) Yes.

Lucille:
You see, it’s all text book, the way you justify what you did, what journalists do.

Hannah:
Well...but, I...What about you? You’re a photographer. You should understand.

Lucille:
I do. Well, I did. I’m having a hard time with it though. Objectivity just doesn’t make any sense to me anymore. Not with regards to things like this. It just doesn’t make any sense.

Elaine:
(To LUCILLE) Look. I understand.
Lucille:
You couldn’t possibly.

Elaine:
You’re hurting and you’re angry and you’re...

Lucille:
How can you say that? You don’t know what it was like for me!

Elaine:
Oh, come on! Now that is something you can’t take away from me. You know what kind of family I grew up in. How dare you...

Hannah:
Okay. Okay. Lucille, just try to stay focused. Think of this from a professional perspective. As a shooter.

Lucille:
I can’t distance myself like that.

Elaine:
Just think about it. It’s what you are.

Lucille:
Among other things!

Hannah:
Just try.

Lucille:
Why? My career isn’t me. What happens to me today, or tomorrow...it isn’t me. If I break my leg skiing on vacation, or a vagrant steals my purse, or if my husband hits me...

Elaine:
It is you! Your experience speaks for who you...

Lucille:
Don’t you understand? My mother...my mother was a wife, a lover, a caregiver, a...

Elaine:
Yeah. But she was also Hannah’s subject.

Lucille:
You say that like she owned her!
Elaine:

The woman who...

Lucille:

Loved to eat peanut butter and bacon sandwiches! (Quietly) Especially on cold Sunday afternoons, and always with a cup of hot cocoa.

Elaine:

Lucille...

Lucille:

What? What were you going to say? The woman who got beaten by her husband in front of the whole damn world?

Elaine:

No. I...

Lucille:

Look. Let me tell you about my mother. She saved seeds from her favourite flowers and grew them on the window sills in the kitchen all winter long. She sang songs, and hated fish, and loved her daughter. She believed in God, in magic...in fate. She weaved beautiful blankets on a wooden loom and she loved her family.

Elaine:

And she existed in a world she shouldn’t have!

Lucille:

Yeah. Journalism.

Elaine:

You know what I meant.

Lucille:

She was a traditionalist.

Hannah:

Lucille, you know, I didn’t mean to hurt anybody. There was truth in those photographs, in my photographs. Maybe more than you can admit.

Lucille:

Truth? You didn’t know anything about our “truth.”

Hannah:

Not just about your family, Lucy, about the world, relationships...
Lucille:

And who were you to decide that...that we should be the examples?

[The WOMEN freeze as the sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER breaks through their debate. Projected, stage rear, are Hannah’s images of the life of KATE and RAYMOND MANNERY...the wedding and the “love pat” from “Love,” and the struggles from “Every Two Minutes.” Stage right, KATE narrates.]

Kate:

(When the wedding photo is projected) I’ll never forget the minister’s sweet voice as he began our ceremony. He said that marriage is a sacred trust between the bridegroom and the bride...a civil relationship, a social institution, and a sanctification encompassing an entire philosophy and way of life. I took his words to heart and I repeated them, delicious, on my tongue. “...A sanctification encompassing an entire philosophy and way of life.” Those words were always in my heart, if they had never before passed my lips. My mother, and her mother before her, had felt that way, and...when I looked up at Raymond, so handsome and happy and innocent, I knew; it was in the shadow of our marriage that I would find...my happiness, my reason for being.

[The second photo (of KATE and RAYMOND and LUCY in the kitchen) is projected and KATE smiles gently. When the next photograph, of RAYMOND drinking, is projected, SHE becomes visibly upset. As the rest of the photo story is projected, KATE paces about almost frantically, trying desperately, and politely to gather her senses, and deny the pain these memories cause her.]

We’re not all perfect. No. So, who was I to condemn Raymond? I wasn’t perfect either. And he was trying. It’s that trying, after all, that gives meaning to our lives, isn’t it? Gives us something to do besides just sit and accept our fates, our lives, as they are, and then die. We all have to strive for perfection. It’s God’s will. And if you do it alongside someone else...the search...it isn’t as lonely. I wanted to do it along with Raymond. That’s all. With Raymond.

Hannah:

Her story had to be told.

Elaine:

Think about it. I know it hurt, but there were a million women like her who needed to hear, to see, that they weren’t alone.

Lucille:

There was nobody like her.
Elaine:
My mother. My mother was like her. Perfect wife, loving mother, dedicated to the point of her own murder, practically. The quintessential do-right woman, standing by her man and staying.

Lucille:
You don’t know what it was all about.

Elaine:
Oh I do know. Too ashamed to admit to the world that she failed at marriage? Too scared and rotted inside to even know that it wasn’t her fault?

Lucille:                                      Hannah:
Just stop.                                 Stop.

Elaine:
Why? (Approaching LUCILLE) You can’t just hide this away, deny it...This (referring to the projection) was your mother’s life. Don’t take that away from her.

Hannah:
Elaine, let her be.

Elaine:
No. I won’t stop. You can’t just come in here and turn our lives upside down just because....This is your problem, girl.

Hannah:

Elaine:
Not mine. Not Hannah’s. Yours. Deal with it.

L...I can’t. Not by myself:

[LUCILLE collapses in a chair, too drained to continue fighting, too needful of support to talk about it any further. Wanting to give HER some time to HERSELF, HANNAH and ELAINE walk to stage right and sit, quietly gathering THEIR own composure. After a moment, LUCILLE interrupts.]

L...She lied to me....She told me it was just a dream and that, when he was in jail, that...that he was on a business trip.
Hannah:
She was just trying to protect you.

Lucille:
No. She wasn’t. She was trying to deny it. Herself. And I...I spent my life loving him, and cuddling with him, and massaging his back after a hard day at work, helping her cook for him...

Kate:
We always made his food the way he liked it. Steaks, well done. Noodles, in tomato sauce, fish, stuffed and broiled. With boiled potatoes. Always, and everything, with boiled potatoes.

Lucille:
I was always there for him. Like she was. He needed us, she said. Perfect, obedient daughter, perfect, obedient wife.

Kate:
He didn’t like to try new things.

Lucille:
If I had known, I would have been there for her. Told her that it would be okay. That we could be all right together. Just the two of us.

[The photograph of the two of them crying together is projected stage rear.]
But I didn’t know then. It all came back to me later.

[The photo story “Every Two Minutes...” is projected stage rear. When it is through, LUCILLE walks up to KATE angrily.]

Why, mother? Why! Why did you lie to me?

Kate:
I didn’t mean to, honey. I just thought you would be better off...

Lucille:
I would have been better off if you left him! How...how could you keep that secret from me?

Kate:
I thought I had to. You were nine years old!

Lucille:
He hit me, too, mother! Me, too. If you thought it was best for you to stay, and be...be his slave...why didn’t you think about me?
Kate:
Oh, honey. I'm sorry. But he's gone now. Now, we can have each other and we can...

Lucille:
Now? You want to be there for me now? He's dead, now, mother. I can't even tell him how much I...Was he sorry? Was he ever sorry?

Kate:
Of course, honey. He never meant to...

Lucille:
Did he stop....Mother, I have to know. (Stopping on each word) Did he stop? When I went away to school, did he hit you then, too?

Kate:
Your father had a bad temper, honey. He didn't ever mean to...

Lucille:
Oh, God! How could you have....Mother, I always thought you were strong...I didn't think you were so small that you would...How? How could you have...(disgusted) been so weak?

Kate:
Now, you listen to me, little Miss Manners. I am strong. I am the strongest woman you know. Don't you take that away from me.

Lucille:
A strong, independent woman would have never put up with that, mother.

Kate:
I am so strong that, despite it all, I stayed with him, and loved him, and helped him through his problems. When I had nobody there to help me, I suffered through the worst of it...alone. That's strength, Lucy. Not running away from your problems.

Lucille:
You could have had me! I would have been there for you. (Quietly) It happened to me, too.

Elaine:
What do you mean, "if you had known?"
Lucille:
I...I just put it away...in here (SHE pushes HER fist into HER heart). It wasn’t something I wanted to remember, I guess.

Hannah:

When did you find out?

Lucille:

When I was in school.

Elaine:

How did you remember? Did it all just come rushing back to you? Were you in therapy? When did it happen?

Lucille:

When I saw Hannah’s pictures. They’re all over the textbooks. And I...I just couldn’t believe my eyes. First I ran to the bathroom and cried. Remembering. And then I caught the next train home...(To KATE) There it was. In my fucking school books! Our living room with those ugly, sun-stained, flowered curtains, and the kitchen...the blue-and-white tiles and...and me, crying, screaming, pointing...

Kate:

Oh no. I didn’t think you’d ever see them.

Lucille:

And you...bruised and crying almost beyond recognition...

Kate:

(Trying to console her) Oh, honey, I...

Lucille:

Get away from me....I saw those pictures today, mother. Today. For the first time ever! Hannah Tress’s Pulitzer Prize-winning pictures, mother.

Kate:

I didn’t think you had to know about them. You were so...

Lucille:

What? So young?

Kate:

Yes.
Lucille:
And now I'm old enough to know? Over ten damn years later...oh, it's all right now for me to know about the photos. Is that right, mother?

Kate:
I should have told you before.

Lucille:
You should have told me, period. Talked to me about it. To find out like this...

Kate:
Oh, honey, I'm so sorry. I truly am. I...

Lucille:
(Angry) She took our lives and made them...

Kate:
(Quietly) Planes.

Lucille:
(Confused) What?

Kate:
(Pensively) It's just something she said to me once.

Lucille:
(To HANNAH) And I hated you, then. Hated you so passionately...

Hannah:
But, believe me, Lucy...I didn't mean to do it. To reduce you that way. I...

Lucille:
I admired you. You amazed me for those three weeks you stayed with us. Independent, competent, strong. Nothing like my mother. Nothing like anybody I had ever met. I wanted to be just like you.

Hannah:
Lucy, I...I know how it must have felt for you. The view from your side, must've been awful. Someone you admired...

Lucille:
And look at me. I almost did it. There I was, getting my photojournalism degree. Becoming just like you. With my cameras, and my darkroom, and my waiting till the facades fell...
Kate:
You'll never be like her. You can't be. You care too much. You feel too much. Your pictures will be different. You'll never be like her, Lucy.

Lucille:
(To HER MOTHER) There's too much of you in me.

[Lights dim on KATE as SHE sits down silently, HER head down.]

Elaine:
Switzer. That psychologist I've been working with. He says people can forget things that hurt them.

Lucille:
Don't tell me. I know.

Elaine:
Yeah. You just put it away. Every thing that hurt (SHE snaps HER fingers)...gone.

Lucille:
But it comes back. It comes back and then you're shocked, and then you're angry.

Elaine:
But who are you mad at?

Lucille:
Elaine, don't play psychologist with me! You know damn well...

Elaine:
Listen. Switzer says we're linked to one another. Psychologically. That even a one minute encounter with somebody else can change the way you think about yourself.

Lucille:  
Hannah:

Or your life.  
Or your career.

Elaine:
Or your memories. How do you know you're not...I don't know...misdirecting your anger?

Lucille:
What?
Elaine:
You were angry at your mother, at Hannah. What about your father? What about him?

Lucille:
I don’t like to think about him.

Elaine:
You have to.

Lucille:
It’s not my issue. Not right now.

Hannah:
But, don’t you think it should be?

Lucille:
I’m a photojournalist and this is something I have to work out. The whole thing offends me...makes me think there’s something terribly wrong with this noble thing we call objectivity. That’s what I have to work out.

Hannah:
It wasn’t me who hurt your mother. Your father had a problem. Don’t be angry with me. I just did my job. You’re redirecting anger at me...It shouldn’t be like that. You should be angry with him. Not with me.

Lucille:
I don’t want anything to do with him!

[ Hear the sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER and DRIVE as HANNAH retreats for a moment and takes a mental picture of the INTERN’s unguarded anger. ]

Elaine:
I don’t blame you, but...

Lucille:
I hate that man! I even changed my name. After I remembered everything that went on, I didn’t even want his name. It was too big a connection. I’ve dealt with that. Now, I have to deal with...

Hannah:
Me?
Elaine:

Lucille, this is not about Hannah.

Lucille:

It is! She...

Elaine:

Look. I know. Hell! Nobody would want to be the subject for that photo story, but...

Hannah:

I didn’t mean to hurt you.

Lucille:

But you did!

[Hear the sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER and DRIVE once again.]

You knew what you were doing! You took our lives and reduced them to nothing. You made all our secrets public and...

Hannah:

Don’t take this out on me! I only told her life. Be angry with her! She could have done something to change it!

Lucille:

Stop it! You’ve hurt my mother enough. And that’s what this is about. I came here to face you! To see what kind of woman it takes to destroy someone’s life like that!

Hannah:

It wasn’t me!

Elaine:

Wait a minute! You came here just to challenge Hannah? Did I get that right? Is that why you got into this career?

Lucille:

I told you why. I was stupid enough to think I wanted to be just like her.

Hannah:

But your internship.

Lucille:

Oh, I worked damn hard to be good enough to get in at this paper. First, it was so I could see you again. (Sarcastically) I remembered you as a friend. And then, after it
all came back...after I saw the photos...it was to say “how”...How the hell could you do that to us?!

Hannah:

I told you. I see it as my job to...

Elaine:

She would have recognized your name if...

Lucille:

She wouldn’t have recognized anything. Robson’s my mother’s maiden name. She knew that. If she gave a damn at all, she would have recognized it. You think I wanted to deceive her?

Hannah:

You didn’t want to tell me who you were. In all this time...

Lucille:

Did you care? We were just subjects to you.

Hannah:

You weren’t!

Lucille:

Don’t pretend we were anything more than that, Hannah. We all know about your sensitive side.

Hannah:

(Frustrated and very angry) You want to know what kind of woman it takes to “destroy someone’s life like that?” I’ll tell you. It’s a woman who feels for her subjects...

Lucille:

Feels for them!

Hannah:

Yes!

[This time, the sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER and DRIVE, captures ELAINE’s vision of the angry, vulnerable HANNAH.]

It was my life, too.

[HANNAH collapses in a seat, trying to control her emotions, HER unleashed anger, HER own, now-open, past. LUCILLE and ELAINE soften, surprised to see the esteemed photojournalist appear so vulnerable. A spot rises over KATE.]
Kate:

When Hannah first called us and asked if she could come stay with us, we were so
honoured. Flattered. She was doing a photo story on true love and Ray and me...we
were going to be the subjects. There was no irony in that...

Hannah:

When I started that photo essay, all I could think about were your parents. I never
forgot them, not in all the years after I shot their wedding. So in love. You should
have seen the look in her eyes....Every time she looked at him, it was like a child,
discovering the joys of cotton candy. I knew I could never have that, looking at
somebody that way.

Lucille:

I don't remember seeing that look on her face. Ever.

Hannah:

He loved her, too, Lucille. You could see that in the way he held, her, caressed her...

Lucille:

When I think of love, I think of faith and trust and learning from one another. Not
bruises and screaming and...

Elaine:

He was a product of another world, Lucille.

Lucille:

That's no excuse.

Elaine:

No, you're right. It's not, but you have to see...

Hannah:

That's what they always said about my father.

[HAHNAH's speech brings HER in and out of a dream-like state as SHE brings
her feelings and memories out for show.]

My mother had a nervous breakdown when she was eighteen. It was just about a
month before they met, but he didn’t find out about it until later. Neither of them ever
talked about it. My grandmother told me everything she thought I should know. My
mother had spent four days, crouched under a corner table, crying and rocking back
and forth, before she let her parents take her to the hospital. When my father found
out, he told my grandparents they had sold him “bad goods,” lied to him so they could
get rid of her. He thought somehow he had, I don’t know, married only half a woman.
He told her that?

Only in the way he treated her.

Did he hit her?

No. He stopped talking to her, except when he had to, kissing her, holding her. He stopped respecting her. And my mother, who once loved to read, write poetry...live...just stopped. One day, all of a sudden, there were no more smiles, no tears, nothing. She was like some kind of phantom. Floating through the house, barely able to look at herself in the mirror, let alone face her children. I hated her.

Hannah, it wasn’t her fault.

Oh, but it was. She let it happen. She had no fire in her! None. Nobody else knew about what went on, how she felt. So she figured she was safe and that she could keep fooling the neighbours. Oh, the Tresses...what a lovely little family we were! Nobody knew she was hard as a rock inside and incapable of feeling.

If she had stayed soft, she would have been vulnerable.

I was vulnerable! If she couldn’t do it for anyone else, I needed her to show some emotion.

That was how she protected herself.

Protected herself from what? She was her own worst enemy.

It wasn’t her fault.

It was. And I had no mother because of it. Oh yes, if you ever
had a chance to ask her why she stayed, she would have told you it was for our sake....But, ‘believe me mother! We would have been better off if you had, at least, fought back!

Kate:

It was just what I thought I was supposed to do.

Hannah:

All she ever thought about herself — if she ever had any good thoughts about herself — was lost to tradition, expectations, and some kind of sham of family harmony.

Kate:

Don’t you see? We were taught that those things mattered.

Hannah:

When it started happening to Kate, I had to show her...your mother, some mother, somewhere, that it was wrong. I had to take those photos.

Lucille:

But you could have helped her.

Hannah:

I didn’t know how to help her.

Lucille:

By being there. At the park that day...or throwing your damn Nikon at the side of his head...and taking me out of there!

Hannah:

It was none of my business.

Lucille:

You said it was. That you had to show her. Why didn’t you talk to her? Tell her your story?

Hannah:

This (referring to the screen) is the only way I know how to tell a story!

[As HANNAH’s monologue becomes more and more tense, ELAINE and LUCILLE become more and more uncomfortable.]

I went around my whole damn life fighting to learn how to feel. I didn’t learn it from my mother. I didn’t know I was supposed to cry when the boys made fun of me in the playground. I thought that was what boys did and what girls did was take it. Swallow it. And harden themselves. When I finally got out of the house, I started going to
church every Sunday. It was strange. I was searching for something. Something I couldn’t find at home. Nobody in my family ever went to church. I thought I might find it there.

Lucille:

Hannah, I don’t understand.

Hannah:

I just wanted to see if that would help me. Religion just made me angry, though...jealous. All that Faith, Love, Togetherness...where the hell was that in my life?

Elaine:

I’m sorry. Hannah, I’m sorry that happened to you.

Hannah:

I started playing around with religion, searching for something I could believe in. Changed my religion every Sunday...or Saturday, in some cases. And in every church, synagogue, mosque, it was the same damn thing. Love. Repentance. Emotion! I needed that!

Elaine:

I played around with my religious beliefs, too.

Lucille:

I get the feeling we all do.

Hannah:

(To LUCILLE) Listen to me! Maybe you’ll finally understand.

Lucille:

I’m sorry. I.

Hannah:

It’s my turn now. I spent my whole life bottling it up, telling other people’s stories, listening to yours. I need to tell you this.

Lucille:

All right. All right.

Hannah:

I went into this synagogue and I saw the old men, kissing each other, kissing their holy scrolls. I had never seen anything like it before. That kind of love.
[The sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER accompanies the projection of
"Love" photo number one. At appropriate parts of HANNAH's speech, the other
photos will, too, be projected.]

It came to them so easily. Like they didn't know that behind them, there was a woman
who had never seen such a thing...who was damn incapable of it because...

[HER voice trails off. The topic is too emotional for HER.]

So I knew it when I saw it anyway. And I started searching it out. Who was better for
the job than me? An innocent. It got to be an obsession. Soon I was doing a photo
story on it. Love. If I couldn't find it at my house, I learned quickly I could find it
everywhere else. I found it at the church one Easter Sunday. All the children laughing
and giggling. I had never giggled in church. They were playing there, making bets to
see how many times they could trick the priest into giving them communion, pulling
their little sisters' pony-tails.

[HER anger becomes remorse.]

My brother never touched me. Barely even looked at me. He was just like my father.

Elaine:

And like mine.

Hannah:

Everywhere I went, I saw it. I went to the park. There it was.

[Projected, here, is the photograph of the YOUNG LOVERS.]

I went into friends' houses. There it was. Fathers and sons (project BOY and
FATHER tying tie), mothers and daughters (project KATE and LUCY taking comfort
in one another). (To LUCILLE) I envied you so much. I never had that.

Lucille:

I...I don't know what to say.

Hannah:

When I souped the first rolls of film for that project, I was terrified. It was like a
movie, you know? The sound effect...chink...chink...chink...slam!
Chink...chink...chink...slam!...

[SHE is pretending to be holding a film developing tank, turning it over and
pounding it on an imaginary table.]

...and me, worrying: will I like these photos? Will they tear me to pieces? Make me
jealous? What? I was pacing around the darkroom like an idiot wondering if everyone
who saw them would be able to tell that this...was completely novel to me.
Elaine:
And they could. That’s what made that photo story so special. It made love seem new to everyone who saw it.

Hannah:
I was afraid that they would be able to see my mother in the background.

Kate:
I was not your mother!

Hannah:
But, when the film was done, the images gave me such a strong sense of happiness, and it was like I felt the love in them, like it belonged to me. So when it started happening to Kate, I...

Lucille:
I know. You wanted to right a wrong for your mother.

Hannah:
Yes.

Kate:
I was not your mother!

Hannah:
She was such a beautiful lady, Lucille. She was everything I always wished my mother could have been. And she believed, so strongly, in all the things I hadn’t even experienced.

Lucille:
They were her downfall. I hated her for the things she believed in.

Elaine:
Family harmony.

Hannah:
Faith in God.

Lucille:
True Love.

[The THREE WOMEN, silently acknowledging THEIR understanding of ONE ANOTHER’s like sentiments, slowly reach out to one another and hold hands. LUCILLE is at the centre of THEIR tableau. The projection, stage rear, is of LUCY and KATE.]
Kate:
It makes you feel stronger, somehow, that kind of togetherness. I know. I felt it then. (SHE looks at the projection.) I needed her so much. I don’t know how I would have gotten through it without her, really.

[SHE walks right up to the projection and touches it.]
Her loving smile, her tender hugs...the way she wiped the tears from my face....

[No longer is KATE simply held, in check, in the past. SHE has no boundaries now, and approaches the THREE WOMEN directly. Standing in front of LUCILLE, SHE reaches out and places HER hands on top of the clasped hands of the THREE WOMEN. HER back is toward the House.]
And I need that now.

[The WOMEN are oblivious to HER.]

Lucille:
Until now, I felt like there was nowhere in the world that I could belong.

[KATE begins to move away.]

Hannah:
Yes, I know that feeling.

Elaine:
It helps me...knowing I’m not alone with this.

Hannah:
Me, too.

[KATE, upset at having received no response, finally enjoys an anger, a resentment of her own.]

Kate:
After all this, and all that you’ve gone through...do you still only see yourselves? What about me?

[SHE is on the opposite side of the stage, in HER kitchen, when the THREE WOMEN break from their positions.]

Do I have to stay here, being the phantom mother...the naive woman who ruined your lives? Is that where you’re going to leave me?

[SHE is very angry and hurt.]
I don't want to be alone with this, either!

[SHE comes upstage and faces the House, distraught.]

He told me, when I tried to tell him that...that he shouldn't treat me that way...that my bones were his bones...like it says in the Bible...and...Damn it! I believed in that!

Hannah:

Was your mother...was she ever angry?

Lucille:

What? At him?

Hannah:

At him, at me...anything.

Lucille:

No. If she was, she just hid it away...in here. Forgot it.

Kate:

I was damn angry!

Hannah:

I don't think my mother was capable of anger.

[KATE is visibly infuriated.]

Elaine:

My mother was angry. At me.

Kate:

Well, damn you! You didn't have to go through what I did. Your life, all hopscotch and cotton candy...you didn't have to feel my pain!

Elaine:

I needed her so bad, and she just seemed to go inside herself.

Kate:

You couldn't have understood.

Hannah:

Nothing could bring her out. She was like a phantom.

Lucille:

She dealt with it her way. Alone. She didn't think of me at all.
Kate:
All I thought about was you!

Elaine:
It was like she thought that the only thing that could hurt me was...

     Elaine: Knowing.
     Hannah: Knowing.

Kate:
You don’t know anything!

[Throughout KATE’s speech, the THREE WOMEN are aware, on some subconscious level, of the feelings and emotions KATE espouses, but by no means are THEY involved in any discourse with HER.]

You sit here and pride yourselves on having come to some kind of understanding. You don’t even see that it doesn’t count. It can’t count. Not until you’ve seen me! Me!

Lucille:
You know... I don’t know what she really felt. I never asked her.

Kate:
I was angry... damn angry!

Elaine:
I was too involved with my own feelings to even think of her. It was always my life, my problems, my messed-up family. I never even considered the possibility that she didn’t leave him just for me.

Hannah:
I didn’t think she felt anything.

Kate:
I was not a phantom!

Hannah:
She was just so... accepting of it all...

Kate:
I had no other choice!
Elaine:

I thought she had just found...something...maybe inside herself...to help her deal with it all. I didn’t think she felt like...like she needed anyone.

Kate:

You want to know how I felt? I was sick and tired of having to hold it in...be a good, loyal wife and a protective mother! Protecting her (SHE refers to LUCILLE) ...for this! For her to just turn around and hate me, thinking only of herself, thinking I was some kind of curse on her...

(To LUCILLE) Well, curse on you! I was in pain, too! I didn’t have anyone to turn to!

Hannah:

I would have been there for her, if she let me.

Kate:

But I was too much like a phantom? Cold? Emotionless? It was all I could do! (In anguished mockery of an older time) We had to keep such things quiet, you know. It was our “cross to bear,” my mother always said. And hell! She was right. There was nobody there for me!

[The sound effect of processing film begins. It is just as Hannah described it earlier: a rhythmic, metallic, “chink, chink, chink, slam.” It should not be invasive, but telling, accompanying the “development” of a new view.]

Elaine:               Lucille:               Hannah:

I didn’t mean to      I didn’t mean to      I didn’t mean to
be so selfish.        be so selfish.        be so selfish.

Lucille:

She was all alone. It must have been horrible.

Hannah:

(Nodding) Being constantly belittled, and controlled and...obedient.

Elaine:

She didn’t have what we have.

Kate:

(Frustrated) All I had was the role they made for me. A costume that didn’t fit me at all...but that I had to wear anyway.
Lucille:

Everywhere she went for help...her priest, her Bible, her family...told her the same thing.

Hannah:

To stay, swallow hard, and bear it.

Kate:

It was what we thought we had to do.

[As the sound effect begins, again, HANNAH, ELAINE, and LUCILLE begin to move about the stage, each dealing silently with HER own new perspective, as KATE proclaims the rules SHE was forced to live by.]

Never show your anger. Never leave your husband. Always be an ever-resilient member of a society that keeps...slapping your checks, slamming you into the counter, and pretending it never happened.

Elaine:

Somehow, it all left her by the wayside.

Hannah:

(Nodding) She didn’t have the support she needed...to break out of that role.

Lucille:

No. Nobody ever told her she could. Even after he was gone, she still felt like she had to have some strange semblance of respect for him. I thought she’d be honoured...but, she didn’t even want me to change my name.

Kate:

It wasn’t right. You can’t deny your history.

Lucille:

She hated the whole idea so much. A child should have the name of her father, she said.

Lucille:

He’d roll over in his grave if he knew you had done this.

Kate:

He’d roll over in his grave if he knew you had done this.

Elaine:

He’s dead?
Lucille:
Yeah. Cirrhosis. He was an alcoholic.

Elaine:

How long was he sick?

Lucille:
Forever. Well, my whole life, anyway.

Hannah:
She was always taking care of him.

Kate:
(Facing the House) It's just what we do.

Lucille:
She took care of everybody.

[HANNAH nods]

Hannah:
She made me soup when I was sick.

Lucille:
(Nodding) Barley? (HANNAH nods) With lots of onion.

[For a moment, THEY are silent. When ELAINE interrupts, the sound effect begins again.]

Elaine:
(Quietly) I never did anything for her.

Lucille:
Just demanded.

Hannah:
She wasn’t supposed to need me. She was just supposed to be there...the perfect mother, wife, woman.

Kate:
That’s what he thought. Damn it! That’s what he thought!
Hannah:
Lucille. I...I'm sorry. I shouldn't have taken those pictures.

[Dealing with THEIR more immediate situation, LUCILLE and HANNAH silently acknowledge ONE ANOTHER's feelings on the topic of journalism. THEY are too entranced with ONE ANOTHER, and THEIR issues, to respond to ELAINE's frustrated opinions and appeals, and, of course, KATE's frustrated comments come from another level of consciousness.]

Elaine:
Hannah, you don't have to apologize for what you did. It helped people. It helped my mother get out. It helped me.

Kate:
It didn't help me.

Hannah:
Maybe if I had been there for her...

Lucille:
She was alone. There's no strength in that...in alone.

Hannah:
I should have...

Lucille:
You should have helped her. But, instead...

Elaine:
The photo story was a good thing.

Lucille:
At least, you could have offered your help...

Hannah:
Honestly, I didn't know I had any to offer.

Lucille:
You were just so cold.

Hannah:
How can you say that? I shared the most intimate moments of my life with you!
Lucille:
And my mother shared the most intimate moments of her life with you!

Elaine:
You know why she did it now, Lucille. It's over.

Lucille:
It's not over! I'm not taking Hannah's phantom-mother and her hurt and her pain and selling them to the world for a lousy two hundred and fifty dollars! I'm not using her pain to solve my own problems and I am not exploiting everything she revealed to me when she...

Hannah:
(Quietly) Let down her mask.

Lucille:
Yes.

[There is a moment of silence as the TWO WOMEN face-off, finally understanding ONE ANOTHER.]

Kate:
Was I so much like her, Hannah? Like your mother?

[LUCILLE and HANNAH are, while not oblivious to the words, unresponsive as THEY continue to consider one another.]

Elaine:
The world needed to see those pictures.

Kate:
If I was so much like your mother, the pain...it must have been unbearable.

Elaine:
Hannah. It wasn't a bad thing...that you did it. You needed to do that picture story.

Kate:
She needed to see that she wasn't alone.
Elaine:

It hurt you so much, for so long.

Kate:

The pictures were wrong.

Elaine:

It was...your catharsis. You had to do it.

Kate:

It was wrong. She did it wrong.

Elaine:

Like talking about it. Letting your feelings out. You feel better now. Don’t you?

Kate:

She did it wrong.

Elaine:

Hannah?

Kate:

If I was so much like her, and it hurt so bad...it should have made you, at least, look at the child...

Elaine:

Hannah?

Kate:

She was like you were. In as much pain as you ever were.
Elaine:
Lucille. Tell her it's all right now, that talking about it helped.

Kate:
She didn't want to see that happen to me. She had just as much anger as you did.

Elaine:
Lucy! Tell her you forgive her.

Kate:
Forgive me.

Elaine:
It wasn't all that horrible. It couldn't have been. You're a shooter. You should understand...

Elaine: (To LUCILLE) Kate: (To HANNAH)
Hannah didn't cause your pain. I wasn't the cause of all your pain.

Lucille:
I hated her for so long. For letting that happen to her. For letting you into our house...

Hannah:
I was angry at my own life. I didn't mean to use your mother as...

Kate:
It wasn't just me.
Hannah:

...as a scapegoat.

[Shaken by the sound effect as much as by KATE's influence, the THREE WOMEN begin to move. THEY are on THEIR way to THEIR final tableau; how THEY get to it, matters not as much as that they get to it. In the final image, HANNAH is sitting in KATE's chair, her pose paralleling that of LUCILLE and ELAINE, who stand beside HER.

Depending on the eccentricities and instinctive gestures of your actresses, this can vary, but I imagine it as a peaceful pose, with hands clasped under chins, heads tilted and eyes down...pensive.

For a moment, THEIR tableau will be undisturbed. Then KATE will take HER place...]

I did do it wrong. She said so, and she was right. I framed her on his terms...on their terms. I didn’t mean to. I just...I didn’t have any other view from there.

[ELAINE and LUCILLE, victims of the same problem, contemplate HER words, while KATE enjoys some satisfaction and begins to make HER way to stage right.]

If I had taken those pictures...as you say (referring to LUCILLE) from the inside-out...they would have been different.

Elaine:

(Understanding) In solidarity.

Hannah:

(SHE nods and then slowly, forms HER ideas) I approached that scene without entering...without looking, really. I was photographing a...a phantom. If...well, maybe if I had entered her world...as a woman...who understood...then maybe I would have seen...
Lucille:

(Approaching HANNAH) Your mother, your feelings...

Hannah:

(Nodding) Our world.

[In the darkness that envelops the rest of the stage, the THREE PHOTOGRAPHERS make THEIR way toward THEIR final positions. KATE is slightly upstage left of THEM, near the kitchen, where the lighting is warm.]

Kate:

(To the House) I was going to be the woman who loved and cared for Raymond Mannery. Instead I became...first, a plane, then a symbol, and then a nurturer of friendships and the emotions they spring from. Somehow it is warmer here...and life, life is fuller.

Lucille:

When I think of her now, I have forgotten the pain, the pictures, the hurt.

Elaine:

(Taking HER place in the tableau)...and I picture her, sitting at a great, wooden loom...

Hannah:

Yes....braiding, and spinning, and weaving...

Lucille:

...This scene.

[The WOMEN-in-tableau are interrupted as KATE calmly walks to THEM, taking all of THEIR hands in HERS. As THEY look at HER lovingly, hear the sound of the CAMERA SHUTTER.]

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About The Author

Eve Pidgeon was born in Windsor, Ontario in 1968. She earned her B.A. in English from the University of Windsor in 1992, and is presently completing requirements for her M.A. in English Literature and Creative Writing at the same university.

A modestly experienced playwright, she has enjoyed the privilege of seeing two of her plays in performance, but wholeheartedly admits that if she could find a comfortable balance between the literary and theatrical values of drama, she would be more comfortable with the title. Presently, she lives in Detroit with her husband, Thomas.